

*It is a duty of every citizen to protect his country. For me and my comrades – it is a great honor. I have been serving as a paratrooper since 1993; first as a draft soldier, then as a reservist. For us the war is a normal way of life.*

*Second Lebanese war was different from all others – the rockets were falling on our homes and our families were in danger. We went to protect our homes, our wives, children and mothers. That's what we were thinking on a warm night of August 9: we knew very well what we are doing and why we came to Lebanon. Our paratroopers' battalion was accompanying the movement of tanks towards Litani River. Early in the morning we took positions in the houses of the village El-Chetyr-Kucir. Our platoon took position on the second floor. Nothing foreshadowed any problems.*

*Suddenly we heard a big explosion near the house and rushed to the firing positions. Second explosion followed shortly after. I felt that I was hit in the right shoulder, saw a stream of blood, fell to the ground and yelled to my comrades that I'm wounded. My commander Chilik Abarzhil and another soldier Igor Kovalek rushed to me and started to pull me downstairs, a few seconds later two more soldiers rushed to help too. Chilik went back to the second floor to check for more wounded. One more explosion. We all fell from the staircase to the first floor. Everything went dark before my eyes; I could not hear anything... When I regained conscience I heard screams of the wounded and felt severe pain in the abdomen.*

*I was told not to move, as I was severely wounded in the abdomen and lungs: a shrapnel piece pierced the shoulder blade and was stuck in the right lung. The battalion doctor who rushed to my rescue told me that there was a severe internal bleeding and an urgent surgery is necessary. The battalion commander called for a rescue helicopter and ordered me to keep conscience at all circumstances despite of severe blood loss, because it was very, very important for the doctors. I obeyed his order, and lost conscience only in the hospital.*

*I was able to regain conscience only twelve days later in the ICU (this is a different and very difficult story); during that time I understood very little and did not know many details. I did not know that we have been hit by our own tanks, who thought that we are Hezbollah; I did not know that my friend Igor was killed and seven other soldiers were wounded; I did not know that the war was over and we have won; I did not know that my wife did not let anybody believe that I might die and how strong she was. I did not know and could not appreciate a lot of things. But I definitely knew that I have survived, that I needed to fight for my recovery and that I missed my daughter a lot.*

*I am very proud that I was wounded while defending my Motherland.*

*Dmitry K.*

*January 14, 2007*

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