

Yuri Bogdanov



That's me as a colonel. The photograph was taken for my personal record in Moscow in 1961.

I changed 18 jobs during 38 years of working experience. Of course all my assignments were in remote regiments and in the severest conditions.

My wife Elvira was always on my side. She is the one who should be given credit for all the good things happening in my life. Due to her painstaking work, a barrack turned into a cozy house, I always wanted to come home to.

My children, Tatiana and Konstantin became good people because Elvira raised them to be, not by words but with her own example. She was the most decent and just person I've ever met.

Elvira didn't have the opportunity to work like it happened with most wives of military men, who led a nomad life with their husbands.

Usually there were no jobs and not enough positions in the hick places we were stationed in, besides they didn't want to hire people who could leave at any time by getting an order. She has never reproached me for that. She was never irritated.

My nomad life was hard on my children. Every time we moved to a different place, my children had to change school, change their friends.

Other than that they lived like ordinary Soviet children - became Oktiabryata, pioneers, Komsomol members. They went to school, took part in different festive occasions for children.

My wife and I marked Soviet holidays at home not because we considered them to be holidays, just because it was generally accepted. I remained a party member, so it was obligatory for me to mark Soviet holidays and to subscribe to the newspaper 'Izvestia'.

Certainly it was nice to get extra days off and on such Soviet holidays as 1st May, 7th November and Soviet Army Day we got together with my friends in my house.

Only the Victory Day on 9th May was sacred to us. In the morning my family and I went to the Grave of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow and brought flowers there. In the evening the front-line soldiers got together to commemorate the past and to sing military songs.

I felt state anti-Semitism when I was involved in radar work, which was later worth Stalin's state prize. My family name sounded rather Russian, but my nationality didn't fit.

Then my director suggested that I should change my nationality. He said he had already made arrangements for me to get a new passport with the name of Bogdanov, but with a different nationality:

Russian instead of Jewish. Of course, I didn't agree to such a betrayal. And of course, I wasn't included in the list. I was really hurt, but being mean wasn't the price that I was ready to pay for success.