

## Zoltan Blum In His Military Uniform



This is a photo with me which has been taken during my military service, in 1950. I joined the military service and it lasted 2 years, from 1949 till 1951.

During the entire duration of the communist era, all those who didn't want to go to the army were sent to work - a rule that applied to everyone, Jewish or non-Jewish. [Editor's note: In the communist period, people who refused to do the military service had to do community work instead.] There were Jews who preferred to work. But I said to myself: 'Damn it, I had my share of work without pay!' And I joined the army. I was in Ploiesti and Campina, both localities are situated in the South of Romania. The military service lasted 2 years. I was discharged in 1951. I did it because I was simply fed up with shoveling dirt! When my brother Matei left for Israel with his wife and daughter, in 1949, I was already serving in the army. I made no attempt to go with him. Perhaps if I had spent more time with him and he had insisted enough, he would have persuaded me to join them... But it wasn't the case.

When I was discharged in 1951 I came back from the army to Fizesul Gherlei, but there were no Jewish girls in the village anymore. As you can imagine, back then, it was considered a shame for a Jew to marry someone who wasn't Jewish. There were cases of Jews marrying Christian girls, but they were very rare. Nevertheless, I didn't find the thought of spending my entire life alone appealing at all. So I found me a Christian girl. Her name was Rozalia, nee Hideg. She was born on 16 September 1933 in Fizesul Gherlei. Hungarian was her native tongue. One of her uncles was a neighbor of ours and that's how I met her. After courting her properly, I asked her if she wanted to marry me. She said yes. She had no income. As for me, thanks to my trade, I did have nice clothes, but that was it - I had no fortune. So I told her: 'Take a good look at me and think it over. I have

nothing except the house where I grew up.' She was poor too, but that didn't matter. We went to the mayor's office and got married. We didn't have a religious ceremony because it's not allowed for a Jew [in case of a mixed marriage]. We got married in 1952. We've been together for 53 years now.