

Semyon Tilipman During Military Annual Camp



It is me, Semyon Tilipman, during military annual camp. This photo was taken in Belaya Tserkov in 1938.

I was born in 1916. According to gradations of Soviet authorities my father was a 'non-working element' [a term that determined businessmen in the former USSR at that period]. I went to school in Odessa at the age of six in 1922. There were specific schools where I could be admitted as a son of a 'non-working element'. There was a big higher secondary school in Komsomolskaya Street where they didn't admit me. I went to lower secondary school #64 in Vneshniaya Street.

I finished the 7 years school in 1930. To continue my education I needed to get some work experience. It was difficult to find a job. There was an employment agency in a lane in Grecheskaya square. I obtained a recommendation to a vocational school at Odessa cinema factory: this was how Odessa cinema studio was called at the time. I studied at this school three years and worked as an electrician at the studio. I joined Komsomol at vocational school, but I never took an active part in it. I met Yuzef Chizhyk at work and we became lifetime friends.

Yuzef Chizhyk and I entered short-term communication course in the Odessa Communications College. I finished the course in 1933 and entered the Faculty of Telephone and Telegraph Communications in this College. I was a student during the period of famine in 1932-1933 and had meals at our students' diner. We had all food made of soybeans: soup, cookies and a drink. I don't remember mass arrests in 1937, but I remember us marching at our military training classes singing: 'We shall sing a song about Yakir, our army commander!' and later this Yakir was arrested and executed. In 1938, after finishing my fourth year I was awarded the rank of junior commanding officer of a platoon.