

Basya Chaika's Husband Alexey Chaika



My husband, Alexey Chaika. The photo was made in 1944 at the front. I met my future husband, officer, captian of the Soviet Army, Alexey Chaika, and in 1946, despite vigorous protests of my mother and our whole Jewish family, we got married. Alexey Chaika had only one month to make a proposal and to get my 'yes'. However, it was a 'yes' from me, and not from my mother. She did not mind the fact that my future husband was 12 years old than me, but she greatly minded his military profession and nationality (meaning, not Jewish). Just like in the case with my brother Yosif, she reminded me about how Russian husbands betrayed their Jewish wives and children during the occupation. It got stuck in her memory for her whole life. In addition, she was absolutely sure that some time later he would say something bad about my nationality. Just let me tell you once and for all: she was wrong. My husband and I lived together for 45 years, and our marriage was unbelievably happy. Our wedding took place on April 25, 1946. The wedding was a military one; my

father's whole regiment and my colleagues came to see us. There were no relatives, except my mother, at the wedding. My uncle and aunt, members of our Kiev family, officially rejected me. But my husband was right in saying that if my life goes well, all the relatives will recognize us again, but if my life goes badly, nobody will need me anyhow. Since my life was good, we quickly reconciled with the whole Kiev family. Alexey, with his open and kind heart, quickly won the love of my relatives, and first of all, of my mother. Since the end of 1946, my husband and I began to travel all over Ukraine. My husband served at the air regiment, and together with this regiment we moved from place to place. We never stayed in one place for more than six months. In snowy frosty December of 1947, in the town of Belaya Tserkov, not far from Kiev, our daughter Tatyana was born. It happened like this: one morning, in my eighth month of pregnancy, I had to unload a whole truck load of coal - coal was an unheard-of luxury in the then Belaya Tserkov. My husband had brought the truck in the morning, but I did not want to wait till the evening because I was afraid that somebody would steal it. So I unloaded it on my own, and that is why my daughter was born one month early. She was born at night; there was no electricity for some reason, and candles were lit around me. It was hard for my husband to start living civilian life. He began to work at the air factory and later was transferred to the design bureau of famous aircraft designer Antonov. He worked there until his retirement. It was hard for him to take the changes in the nature of relations as compared with his military brotherhood.