

Grigoriy Golod With Fellow Soldiers In Hospital



My fellow soldiers and I in hospital after an earthquake in Ashgabat. Before our release we were photographed with our medical nurses. I am the 2nd on the right. I finished college at the beginning of 1947 and got a one-month leave. I went to Kiev. My future wife Mirrah heard that I had returned to Kiev from our mutual acquaintance and came to see me on the 3rd day. We began to see each other. In Kiev I fell ill with malaria and I prolonged my leave for two months. I had to go to hospital. When I was released Mirrah and her mother came to pick me up. Her mother changed her mind about me - there weren't many admirers left after the war, and she was glad that I was there. Mirrah's uncle had connections in the city. He arranged a 10-day extension of my leave. It was a difficult period in the country. There was a famine almost like the one in 1933. My situation was not too bad: I received tinned meat, butter, candy and cereals through my officer's coupons. One day I came to the commandant's office to collect my officer's coupons and the commandant congratulated me on my marriage. I didn't understand a thing first, but when I opened my passport I saw a marriage stamp of the civil registry office. I realized that Mirrah's mother had taken my passport to have it stamped for a bribe while Mirrah and I were sleeping. I felt awe-struck, but I didn't say anything to her. When it was time for me to leave I told Mirrah that she was my wife and had to go with me. Her mother was mad at me and didn't let her go. I left on my own. In Ashgabat I became the commandant of a platoon. I served for some time, and then I was sent to an advanced officer training school in Fergana [Uzbekistan]. Mirrah joined me - she left after she had a row with her mother. We rented a room near the fortress. I covered our bed with my uniform coat and we lived there for two weeks. When we returned to Ashgabat I became the commanding officer of a company. We rented a room in a house near the military unit. Our landlady had a big family: three daughters, two sons and their children. One night in 1948, when we were asleep, a terrible earthquake happened. Mirrah fell out of the bed. A beam fell on my arm and broke it. All four children of our landlady perished, but she survived. She was 85 years old. My company perished under the debris of the barrack - all except for one platoon that I had punished and ordered to

march on the parade ground. They survived. I was severely injured and sent to hospital in Tashkent. After I recovered a medical commission issued a certificate for me stating that I was partially fit for service in the army. Mirrah returned to Kiev, because she didn't have a place to live while I was in hospital. The same year she gave birth to our son, Yuri. She wasn't going to come where I was. Her mother said that the child wouldn't feel comfortable in Turkmenistan without the necessary living conditions.