

Simon Gonopolskiy And His Mother Rosa Gonopolskaya



This is me and my mother Rosa Gonopolskaya, nee Weiser. The photo was taken in Odessa in 1950 when I came there on leave. When Odessa was liberated in April 1944 my mother wrote to the Volkovs, our neighbor tenants. They replied that we could return to our apartment. I was 17 and I was to be drafted to the army in one year's time. My mother said that when I was to be recruited she would go home to Odessa. I went to the military registry office to volunteer to the army. My mother left for Odessa. She returned to our apartment in Privoznaya Street. The Volkovs lived in the smaller room and my mother lived in the bigger passage room. My father didn't return from the front and we didn't receive any notification about him. My mother told me after the war, when I was in the army, that my father's fellow comrade found her. He told her that he was in the same military unit as my father. They were near Sevastopol and after Sevastopol was left to the Germans they relocated to Novorossiysk. They became friends and promised one another that in case one of them perished the other one would find his family. This man found my mother. He was a shoemaker and made my mother a pair of shoes in memory of my father. My mother said that he brought her shoes and she never saw him again. I failed to find him later. Shortly afterwards my mother received the notification that my father was missing. After the war she received a pension for my father. In the army I served as aviation mechanic. In 1945 our military unit relocated to Novosibirsk. During that time I joined the Communist Party - my faith in Stalin was still firm then. An order was issued stating that all officers that didn't have a higher education could receive it in the military unit. Evening schools for officers were opened. I obtained a permit to attend an evening school even though I was a master sergeant. I went to the 9th grade skipping the 8th grade. Pilots' wives were teachers in our school. Since I lived in a barrack I arranged a little spot for doing homework. I finished evening school in 1951. I demobilized in the rank of master sergeant in 1952.