

Raissa Gragerova



My mother Raissa Gragerova photographed in 1944 during the war when she was major of medical service. I don't know where this photo was taken. She wears the uniform of the Soviet Army during World War II. When the war started, my parents were supposed to evacuate to Kharkov with my father's institute in 1941. I was wounded in my first battle and taken to hospital in Kharkov. The hospital evacuated to Baku. During my stay at the hospital I wrote to my father's sister Ania in

Moscow, and she wrote back telling me that my parents were in evacuation in the town of Khrompik in Sverdlovsk region [2,500 km from Kiev]. At the beginning of January 1942 I knocked on the door of the room where my parents were staying. They didn't have any information about me, and my mother feared the worst. Ania's letters never reached them. She was so happy to see me. Sometime after I arrived we received a letter from grandmother Cecilia from Kazan. She wrote that grandfather and she evacuated to Northern Caucasus, from where they went to Stalingrad and then took a barge up the Volga. My grandfather fell ill with dysentery. A few days after they got off in Kazan he died. My grandmother was staying in hospital and asked us to come and pick her up. My mother and I went to Kazan and brought her to Khrompik, but my grandmother was so affected by her husband's death that she was ill for several weeks and finally died. My mother suffered a lot over her parents' death. She went to work at the hospital to get distracted from her sad thoughts. I decided to continue my studies and attended a post-graduate school at the university in Sverdlovsk where chemistry professors from Moscow were working at the time. Since I didn't have any documents with me, I went to Ufa where the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences was in evacuation. I found my scientific tutor Professor Yavorskiy. He helped me to obtain the required documents. I studied in Sverdlovsk for over a year. At the end of 1942 the front moved to the West, and the professors moved back to Moscow and called me to come there. I arrived in Moscow at the beginning of 1943. In the middle of 1943 the hospital where my mother was working moved closer to the front and became a mobile front hospital. In 1944 I visited my mother in the vicinity of Smolensk. She became an experienced surgeon, had the rank of major of medical service and received many awards.