

Lev Khapun



This is a picture I needed for some documents. I don't have a better one from that time. I don't really like to have my picture taken, so I only did so when it was necessary.

This is in Vinnitsa at the beginning of 1950s; I am about 25-27 years old. I think this picture was taken for my Komsomol card.

After I finished school war broke out. I was in evacuation in Tashkent with my family. We got there by train as soon as the war began, that was in 1941.

I entered Ashkhabad Infantry College and was enrolled into the army from the second year of my studies. I was in the army until the end of the war.

I stayed in Stalinsk, now it is called Novokuznetsk, after I was wounded. There was a metallurgical plant there. I found myself in the labor army.

Those, who could not serve in the army because of wounds, but could work for the frontline, were enrolled into such labor army. They worked in the hinter-front and close to the frontline.

The Institute was there and it was possible to study part-time, which I did.

When the war ended, I wanted to leave the plant where I worked. I wanted to return home. I wrote an application asking for release. But they didn't want to let me go.

The chief electrician didn't even want to hear about it, he just spat at me. The plant was very big, almost as big as the Moscow district. I took them to court and the court released me, so I left to continue my studies.

After the war my older cousin lived and studied in Dnepropetrovsk. I already worked as a mechanic at that time, but I needed higher education. My cousin studied at a similar metallurgical institute.

We exchanged letters and he invited me to come. We studied in the same group and I graduated from the Dnepropetrovsk Metallurgical Institute named after Stalin.

When we finished our studies, my cousin was already married and stayed in Dnepropetrovsk. I wasn't captivated by the city, and left. I was assigned to work in Makeevka, in the Donetsk region. It was impossible not to go; otherwise one would have been imprisoned.

I was severely injured at the plant there. There was an accident: I stepped on a hot object, tripped and burnt my hands, both palms. The pain was unbearable; I almost fainted. I was told to put my hands into cold water, did so and it became less painful.

When I took them out I felt terrible pain again. I couldn't put on my pants and eat because of the burns. I even thought that they were completely burnt, but my hands got better within a month. I don't know how they healed.

In 1966 I moved to Leningrad, where I worked in Sevmormontazh, then in Glavzavstroy. I both liked and disliked my work. When I recall the brightest moments of my life, I can only recall a few events.

I worked in the North and in the South, in Mariupol and in Murmansk; I was an assembler and had to travel a lot. Later I worked in Krasnoye Selo.