

Tibor Gohman With Miklos Gohman



This is me, Tibor Gohman (on the right, wearing a military uniform of a soldier of the Soviet army), and my older brother Miklos Gohman. This photo was taken in Uzhhorod in 1953 when I came home in Mukachevo on leave from the army in the Far East. Miklos and I were photographed so that I could show this photograph to my wife Valentina Novikova who was waiting for me in Vladivostok.

After World War II Miklos went to work as a tailor in a fashion shop. People wanted to dress nicely. Miklos had many orders and earned well. I went to work as a joiner in a shop. We received Soviet passports and became citizens of the USSR. I had the name of Tiberiy written in my passport and Miklos became Nikolay. My brother and I began to study Russian. We understood that our past life was over and we had to adjust to life in the USSR.

All citizens of the USSR were subject to military service after turning 18 years of age. A military registry office acknowledged that Miklos was unfit for military service, while I was registered for

future service. In autumn 1948 they sent me a notification to make my appearance at the registry office where they announced that I was recruited to the Soviet army. All recruits were taken to Byelorussia where they were forming a military unit and from there we moved to Khabarovsk in the Far East, in 7000 km from home. In Khabarovsk I had some training and then was assigned to the Pacific Ocean Navy. It was an electric engineering battalion dealing in installation of electric equipment on aerodromes. Our battalion was sent to Uglovaya station in 30 km from Vladivostok. Although I was the only person in my battalion who was not a Komsomol member they appointed me chief of a logistics platoon. I was in command! A year later I was promoted to the rank of sergeant. We lived in barracks. I was the only Jew in my battalion, but I never faced any anti-Semitism at that period. I had friends of many nationalities, but none of them gave much thought to my Jewish identity. My management also treated me well.

I corresponded with my brother, my only kinship. He wrote that a cotton wool factory was opened in Mukachevo and my brother became its director. He was seeing a Jewish girl in Mukachevo. She was also in a concentration camp. Her name was Fiera, but I don't remember her surname. In 1953 they got married. They registered their marriage in a registry office and had a chuppah at home. Shortly after the wedding the family moved to Uzhhorod. Miklos went to work as a shop assistant in a store.

I met my wife to be when I was in the army, her name is Valentina Novikova. I married Valentina in 1953, when I served in the army. We didn't have money and we couldn't afford a wedding party. We registered our marriage in a registry office and in the evening I received a 3-day leave that we spent together at Valentina's home and then I returned to my military unit. In 1954 I demobilized from the army. My wife finished her college and moved to her grandmother in Novosibirsk. I arrived there after demobilization. When I arrived, all I had included kersey boots, my military shirt and overcoat. My wife and I could only rely on ourselves. There was to be no help from somebody else. I went to work as a car mechanic at an equipment yard and later I became a driver there. I worked as a driver for the rest of my life. Our daughter Natalia was born in 1955 and son Victor - in 1956.