

Emma Balonova And Her Family



We were photographed in Leningrad in 1948 at home. My elder son was 4 years old at that time.

I guess we took this photo because my husband was going to leave for Germany and wanted to take a photo of his family with him. But here I'll start my story several years earlier.

In spring of 1943 I graduated from the College. They gave me my diploma written on the yellow parcel paper. They offered me to choose a place of work: Dzerzhinsk near Gorky or Zagorsk near Moscow.

I chose Zagorsk, because I hoped to see my husband one day before the end of the war. I hoped that they would send him to Moscow on a business trip.

You see, at that time my husband served as a medical officer near Leningrad.

The factory I worked at produced gunpowder and colored smokeless pistol-flare-lights for the front. Earlier I never saw gunpowder, and in Zagorsk I kept the keys to powder-shop. Imagine what serious responsibilities I accepted!

Colored pistol-flare-lights were used first of all as a signal system and a means of communication. For example, the red rocket was a signal to take the offensive, and the green one - to retreat.

Therefore it was very important that shipment of red pistol-flare-lights never contained green ones. You see, it could cost thousands of soldiers and officers their lives.

My dream to meet my husband soon came true. He had to accompany a badly wounded pilot to Moscow. From Moscow he came to me (to Zagorsk).

I cried all the night long: I was very happy to meet my husband and very sorrowful to part again. Soon I moved to Leningrad and gave birth to my eldest son Mikhail.

In 1944 Soviet armies liberated Baltic republics. My husband served in air-units and participated in liberation. He was left there to serve. I left my factory and moved to my husband together with my newborn son.

Once at night some person called my husband and informed about unconditional surrender of Germany. Early in the morning all Tallin citizens were in the Ratusha square, the main square of Tallin.

They were dancing, embracing, crying, singing. They did not care about nationalities: Russians, Estonians, Jews were together there. It was impossible to be forgotten!

In Tallin we lived about four years. After that my husband was sent to Germany. I did not go with him, because at that time authorities did not allow wives to go abroad together with their husbands.

In Germany they started activities of the Soviet military government, where Soviet people worked to plant soviet ideas. My husband had to teach Germans soviet methods of health protection.

He said 'God forbid them to learn it! For a hundred years we can be only dreaming about their level of public health service.' While Isaac served in Germany, my son and I lived in Leningrad. I worked in the Institute of Toxicology.

In 1952 my husband returned from Germany and was assigned to Ukraine. I went with him. Of course our son was with us. In Ukraine they moved my husband from one place to another.

During 6 years we changed 5 places of residence. We lived in Kremenchug, in Uman, and I even have forgotten names of the rest places.

In Kremenchug I taught chemistry at school. But soon I had to leave the school, because by that time there came children born during the war time.

Number of such children was very small, that was why a lot of teachers were fired, first of all those ones who had no pedagogical certificate. And I was among them. In Kremenchug in 1955 my younger son Yakov was born.

During his work in Ukraine (and during his life) my husband was never oppressed because of nationalistic reasons.

Possible reason was my husband's great scholarship, compliance and sense of humor. He always easily made friends with people.