

Igor Lerner And His Brother-Officer



This photograph taken in Austria in 1948. Here I'd like to tell you about the life of my family after the end of the war.

Now I'd like to tell you about the life of my family after the end of the war. Mom wanted to return from evacuation to our place immediately after the war, but our house was burned to the ground. Both Mom and my brother wrote letters to different higher echelons asking to help them with lodging. And she asked me to interpose in the matter. I wrote an official report to the chief of our political department. Later I got his answer from Leningrad: everything was all right and Mom had already returned to Olgino. During my leave I visited Leningrad and found out that Mom lived on the ground floor in a very cold and uncomfortable room. I had to take up this case again and at last Mom got decent warm room on the second floor. Jacob lived together with Mom, but soon he married a girl from Olgino and left for her place. Jacob was a disabled soldier: he had a bad limp because of the wound and shell-shock. It was difficult for him to get used to the new life. But soon authorities arranged special courses for disabled soldiers. Jacob finished courses for rate-setters and worked at a factory. He died in 1989.

Boris, my elder brother also lived at Mom's place. Before the war he finished a military school and became a specialist in radio communication. He worked much, raised the level of his skill and became a well-known person in the sphere of electronics. He worked in Leningrad, and got an apartment there. Boris traveled much all over the country and equipped new television centers together with a group of coworkers. He even reached the Novaya Zemlya. [Novaya Zemlya (New Land) is an archipelago in the Arctic Ocean in the north of Russia.] Besides he took part in electronic reequipment of the largest ships of our fleet. Boris died in 1998.

Now about me after the end of the war. Headquarters started the process of disbandment of military units. Our regiment became a reconnaissance battalion. A part of our battalion moved to Germany, and I remained in Vienna (at the army staff). I became a chief secretary responsible for confidential documents. I worked there till 1950. I recollect my service with pleasure. At first our command aimed us at rapprochement with population: they waited what political party of Austria

would gain advantage. And while there was a hope that local people would follow the leaders of the Communist Party of Austria, we arranged parties for them. Courting the local girls and even marriages were encouraged. But soon it became clear that People's Party of Austria gained the upper hand and everything changed: we were closed inside our military units and could watch the local life only through the window. Even dismissals were forbidden. As for me, I was striving home eagerly: I wanted to receive good education. Besides I was responsible for maintenance of new strict rules. To tell the truth, it was not pleasant. In our team there was Kostuchenko, a scout (chestful of decorations). He ran away. We had to set out in search and found him in Czechoslovakia. He was given a trial and sentenced to 25 years of forced labor camps for parricide.

In fact I studied in the 10th class not long (before the beginning of the war) and received a paper about finishing school. But it was not a school-leaving certificate of official standard. And I had a dream to receive higher education. After 5 years in Austria I came back to Leningrad. I managed to retire only with assistance of the chief of our political department.