

Rachil Lemberg's Husband Yevgeni Stepanov



My husband Yevgeni Stepanov during his military service. He is wearing a uniform of a lieutenant in the Soviet Army. This photo was taken in Odessa, USSR, in 1947.

In 1946 my childhood friend Yevgeni Stepanov found me in Odessa, where I studied. He was still on service in a town in the Eastern Germany. There was a housing area for Soviet military. It was a nice cozy town called Galle. It stood on the Zalle River (Galle-under-Zalle). He wrote me long tender letters every day. Our correspondence lasted half a year. In summer Yevgeni came on leave and registered our marriage in a registry office. He came on a 45-day leave and then he had to go back to Germany. He sent me money. In 1947, after my fourth year in college was over I went to visit my husband. He lived in a 3-bedroom apartment with his comrade fellow family. They occupied two rooms and Yevgeni lived in the third room. I have very pleasant memories about four months I spent with my husband in this town. In autumn I returned to college in Odessa. In 1948 after finishing the college I received a job assignment to Bolekhov village in Ivano-Frankovsk region [550 km from Kiev], in Western Ukraine. My husband submitted a report for transfer to the military unit in Bolekhov. His report was approved. We received a room in Bolekhov and I went to work as superintendent at a construction site. In 1949 our son Anatoli was born. We lived there 3 years until in 1952 my husband was transferred to Lvov. He went there, but since he didn't receive an apartment my son and I stayed in Bolekhov where my daughter Yelena was born in 1955. In Lvov my husband served until 1956. Yevgeni was a wonderful caring husband and a good father. After

he moved to Lvov I didn't work. After he received a two-bedroom apartment in Lvov we all moved to Lvov. I was a housewife. In 1956 my husband got a transfer to Uzhhorod in Subcarpathia. Yevgeni served there until he retired in 1960. We received an apartment in Uzhhorod. In 1958 I worked to work at the Giprograd construction design institute. I didn't change my surname after I got married. I didn't want anyone to think that I wanted to disguise my nationality with the Russian surname of Stepanov. I kept my typically Jewish surname of Lemberg. I had no problems with getting a job. I never faced anti-Semitism at work. I got along well with my colleagues and management. I worked in Giprograd until I retired in 1977.

In 1960 my husband demobilized from the army. Yevgeni went to work as a dispatcher at the machine building plant. My husband and I were atheists and our children were raised like all other Soviet children knowing nothing about religion. We tried to spend as much time with our children as possible. In the evening our family dined together. My husband and I discussed what happened at work during a day and our children spoke about their school. On weekends we went for walks or out of town, to the woods or to the riverbank. We spent vacations in the Crimea or picturesque spots of Subcarpathia. We celebrated Soviet holidays at home. Our favorite holidays were New Year and Victory Day. We also celebrated the Soviet Army Day since Yevgeni was a military. We had guests in the evening and I cooked for these parties. We also invited friends to birthday parties. We talked and danced. Yevgeni and I went to school concerts on Soviet holidays.