

A Letter From Haim Ugolev To His Dear Ones



This is a letter my father Haim Ugolev wrote to my stepmother Galina Ugoleva. He wrote it from the front line in 1943 to Tatarstan, where our family stayed in evacuation during the war. He sent everyone in his family best wishes and asked to write him, the more the better. At that time my father was 40 years old. A year later he perished in action at the front of World War II, near the city of Novgorod. They wrote us that he had died 'a hero's death.' Later his company commander wrote us that my father had been the first to go over the top to launch an attack and had been shot.

Before the Great Patriotic War he worked at a military prosecutor's office of the Leningrad military district; during the war he was appointed a commissioner, he motivated soldiers to go into the assault.

When the war broke out, we were evacuated. We were brought to a village near Kobona on the opposite bank of Ladoga Lake. There was everything necessary for normal life there: hairdressing salons, shoe workshops, photo studio and so forth. We were sent to shoemakers. There we had a rest and were replete with food for several days. My stepmother's sister Valya cooked rice. Then we packed our things: we had ten packages. My stepmother left my father's coat in the charge of her brother Boris. Boris was just going to use it to keep himself warm, but my stepmother Galina

didn't allow him. She said: 'This coat belongs to Efim. I leave it to your care. When Efim returns home from the front, he will wear it.'

Later we continued our way to Tatarstan by train. From there I carried on a spirited dialogue with my father by correspondence.