

Semyon Tilipman's Wife Tatiana's First Letter Sent To The Front



This is the first letter from my wife Tatiana Tilipman that I received at the front. June, 1942. Tatiana wrote this letter after she received information about my whereabouts and my field mail code from Department of the Soviet army communications. Tatiana mentions in her letters that she is sending two letters in case one gets lost. She cannot believe I am alive and she asks me to confirm this fact to her at the following address: Turkestan town of Yuzhno-Kazakhstan region, Kazakhstan.

In June 1941 after finishing her 4th year Tatiana was supposed to have practical training in a hospital in Pinsk or Brest. I recommended her father to obtain an invitation letter for her to work in the hospital in Chernovtsy village, Yampol district, Vinnitsa region. Tatiana went to stay with her parents and I stayed in Minsk. She evacuated with her parents and older brother Iosif. Her brother managed to evacuate his family and parents on a wagon driven by two horses. They crossed the Dnepr River in the vicinity of Kryukovo station. They went to Stalingrad by train and from there they headed to Turkestan station in Kazakhstan [3,000 km from Odessa]. Tatiana was a physician in Urtak kolkhoz. She lived with her parents. The kolkhoz accommodated them in a house with a garden.

I would like to say that during the war people treated letters with special care. Field mail communications were very reliable. At least letters found us wherever we moved. There were never long delays with delivery of letters to and from the front. A postman at the front was a very special person. Letters from the front could have been different; they might bring sad news, but letters from the rear usually brought good news from families. I do think that a postman is a very kind and hearty profession, military postmen in particular. My wife and I even established our own communication at the front. I wrote her 'You will look at the Moon and so will I and it will be our date' - like satellite communications nowadays. I've kept few hundreds of her letters through the war. I carried them in my backpack. My letters to her were lost in evacuation.