

# Gutman Smerkovicus With The Officers Of The Flight Crew Of The Lithuanian Division



These are the officers of the flight crew of the Lithuanian division, demobilized on 15.10.1945 from Constanta, Romania. My husband Gutman Smerkovicus is the fifth to the left in the top row.

My dear baby daughter Lena was famished from the first days of her life. I starved and I didn't have milk. It was hard for us to nurture the baby. Gutman was willing to go in the lines. He wanted to fight the Fascists, besides he would be able to send me his certificate. At first, Lithuanians were not drafted into the army. As soon as my husband found out about the formation of the Lithuanian division, he said goodbye to us and left for Balahna, where the division was being formed. It was early 1942. We got to know that the Lithuanian government, which was evacuated to Kazan, founded an orphanage for Lithuanian children, who remained without parents. There were Lithuanian children there, who at the beginning of the war happened to be in the pioneer camp in Palanga. Some children were rescued and the rest became first foster children of the orphanage. It was located not far from us, in the town of Konstantinovo, Kirov oblast.

My sister Hanna, Lena and I moved to Konstantinovo, where my sister and I were given a job as mentors in the orphanage. By that time we found out that my parents were in Udmurtia. Soon they joined us in Konstantinovo. My husband wrote heart-breaking letters, full of love. He was in a training unit of the 16th Lithuanian division, and then he was deployed deep in the front, in the vicinity of Orel, where the huge Kursk battle took place. Fyodor Filimonov, Hanna's husband and my brothers were also in that division. My husband and Fyodor survived that battle. All of the other Jewish guys were killed in action. Unfortunately, both of my brothers, Efraim and Berl Idl Gershenovich, were killed in action in that brave battle.

In early 1946 my husband Gutman was demobilized. I was so happy to see him again. Towards the end of the war he served in the summer unit of the Lithuanian division, which was located in the Romanian town of Constanta. Gutman was involved in technical maintenance of aircraft. Upon our return we moved into our apartment.