

Sarra Nikiforenko's Husband Vitaliy Nikiforenko



My husband Vitaliy Nikiforenko. The photo was taken at the front in 1941 and was sent to us in evacuation in Saratov region signed 'Wait for me and I shall return'. Vitaliy is wearing a Soviet uniform of the time of the Great Patriotic War in the picture.

My husband Vitaliy, born in 1908, came from Smela: we were neighbors. I knew his parents and they knew me. They didn't mind my being a Jew. Vitaliy came from a very nice family. His father was a teacher at College - I don't remember at which, and his mother was a teacher, but she didn't work. They had a son and a daughter.

We had our wedding registered at registration office in 1930.

In 1932 my husband was involved in a very important mission: filling strategic stocks of grain. Vitaliy was a very responsible employee. In 1933 he got an invitation to the military Academy in Kharkov. This was a good offer and he moved to Kharkov. He became head of the laboratory involved in scientific research of strategic food storage conditions. Vitaliy was also invited to teach politics and some technical subjects at the Military Academy. Kharkov was the capital of Ukraine before 1934. It was a big industrial center. In 1932 my older daughter Ludmila was born. He received a nice two-room apartment in the apartment building for military officials and lecturers of the military Academy. My husband provided well for us and I didn't have to go to work. My husband worked a lot preparing for lectures and writing a textbook in chemistry. In 1937 our second daughter Tamara was born. The prewar period can be determined with one word - 'enthusiasm'. We sang, laughed and believed in the wonderful future. We had little free time, but when we had some we went to the cinema. We got together with friends, had tea and sang Soviet songs from the movies we saw. My husband was very fond of his work.

Military officers realized that the war was inevitable, but even then, the day of 22 June 1941 when the war began came as a big surprise. Vitaliy was recruited to the front right away. Vitaliy was a major in logistics services - he was responsible for soldiers' meals. Although he was not at the frontline he was shell-shocked twice and rescued from a pile that fell on him. He had an injury of his back, but he remained in service.

In 1945 Vitaliy got a job assignment to Prikarpatiye regiment. He was a colonel. In Lvov he received a big apartment in the house for high-rank officers. His messenger arrived to pick us up in Saratov region. We didn't even have clothes to put on. I made a pinafore dress from a rucksack for me and wore it over my husband's shirt. We didn't have any luggage with us and traveled light. I was very excited about seeing my husband: we hadn't seen each other for four years. Vitaliy didn't change: he was handsome and kind and loved me much. He would have done anything for me. He was very jealous; God forbid if somebody dared to talk with me. He continued his service in logistics units. He was responsible for keeping food stocks in the army.