

# Rita Vilkobrisckaya's Father Michael Vilkobrisckiy



My father Michael Vilkobrisckiy at the class of aviation unit discussing decisions of another Plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. There is a big portrait of Stalin on the wall. Photo made in Khabarovsk in the late 1930s.

In 1929 my mother married Michael Vilkobrisckiy. At that time he had an important position in Minsk aviation regiment. They had a civil ceremony at a registry office and a wedding dinner at home in the evening. She wasn't in love with him, however, in due time she fell in love with him while he just adored her. The more my parents learned about one another the closer they became. They lived their life in love for 25 years.

I, was born on 28 October 1930. I got a Jewish name of Riva at the time of birth, but was always called Rita months after I was born my father was transferred to study in Leningrad [St. Petersburg at present] and we moved there: grandmother Hasia, father, mother, my half brother Ilia and I. My father studied at the Military Political Academy named after Lenin. My mother went to work at a big printing house and in 1932 she went to study at Rabfak school at the printing house.

In 1934 upon graduation from the Academy my father was transferred to Eysk town near Rostov-on-the-Don (in Russian it sounds 'Rostov na Donu', it stands on the Don River) in 1000 km from Leningrad. My father was a commissar of a navy air squadron. My mother also went to work as organizer at this same unit: she taught young mothers housekeeping, childcare, cooking while grandmother took care of her own home.

At the beginning of 1935 the squadron was transferred to Krasnaya Rechka town near Khabarovsk in the Far East in 7500 km from home. We lived in the neighborhood for families of the military - there were few two-storied buildings there. We had a two-room apartment in a two-storied building.

My father loved me dearly. He was very busy at work and came home late after work, but he always found time to go for a walk with me at weekends and I always looked forward to his returning home. He took me out of town where we could enjoy beautiful views walking. Father bought me candy and toys, took me to the cinema and in winter we skied and tobogganed. Once

my grandmother and I went hiking in the hills out of town. I saw a plane and a man with a parachute jumping out of it. I screamed 'That's my father flying there!' It happened to be my father, indeed. This was his regular jump with a parachute, but it was unsuccessful: his parachute didn't open and he landed with a reserve parachute and injured his arm and face. This was his last jump - he never did it again.

We lived in Krasnaya Rechka for over a year and in 1936 we moved to Khabarovsk where my father got his next job assignment. We got an apartment in a two-storied building inhabited by families of military.

Like many other families of the military we moved from one place to another so often that we left our suitcases unpacked at a new location. I didn't have time to get used to a new school or schoolmates when we had to move again. All military traveled a lot. They didn't discuss and obeyed orders from their commandment. We packed within three days and loaded our belongings on a truck to go to the new area.