

Iosif Shubinsky



This is a picture of me, taken on 30th July 1940 in Kiev. When I got married we began to rent an apartment on Novo-Prozorovsky Street, across from my parents'. The street was so narrow that I felt both living at home and living with my wife. We had no kitchen, so we cooked on a Primus stove. We had a small corridor, where we cooked. My wife worked at a secret construction site on Zhukov Island. I worked at the Academy of Sciences. Our life was fine. On 22nd June 1941, at 6am, we heard shooting. We went outside. A son of our neighbor, who had just come home from the army, said, 'Oh, these are training maneuvers!' Later, when I came to work, I saw a piece of a shell - this shell had exploded somewhere near the Bolshevik Plant and one of my colleagues had taken a piece from it. We worked on Sundays. It was hard. We often worked on Saturdays and Sundays. I had a radio for some time, but according to the Soviet law I had to turn it in to the authorities. I remember I took it there, but before I gave it away, I was able to listen to Molotov and Stalin, who

announced the war. There was no panic; people were simply worried. Then I was called up. I came to the military enlistment committee and was sent to the ammunition warehouse. I worked there for two weeks. We loaded weapons. We left Kiev when the Germans were already very close. My wife went with me. We made two backpacks out of sacks, put them on our backs and went on foot. I remember crossing the bridge across the Dneper. We walked on foot, all the time. We stopped at Glukhov. My wife ate with me. I simply sat her down at my table, and my colleagues didn't object. So she stayed with us. Later I gave her a special paper that proved that she was the wife of a soldier and gave her the right to evacuate. I had no rank at the time. I was just a soldier. There was a group of workers of the Academy of Sciences, who were taught some things about fighting. We learned lubricating oil materials. We were taught by General Yakshin. We were joking that after the Academy of Sciences we entered the Academy of Yakshin. We retreated and learned at the same time: during the day we retreated, at night we learned. Well, I can't say it was real studying. Anyway, we finished the course and I got my rank as junior lieutenant.