

Riva Smerkovicene And Her Husband Gutman Smerkovicus



These are my husband, Gutman Smerkovicus, and I, Riva Smerkovicene, in Kaunas. The picture was taken in a photo studio in Kaunas on the occasion of Gutman's return from the war.

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, my sister 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 my brothers, Efraim and Berl Idl Gershenovich, were killed in action in that brave battle. When we were notified of the death of our brothers, my mother started getting sick. My parents tried to stick to Jewish traditions, even in evacuation. Every morning they prayed for us, our children and husbands.

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.