

Second Lieutenant Otto Schvalb



This photograph shows me as a soldier in the year 1959. The photo was taken in Presov behind the building I used to live in.

I did my army service as a dentist in an army hospital in Kosice. So, one can't say that I was in the army as such. Later I was even on army exercises. We also had exercises in the army hospital. When I was on call, ambulances had to report to me what calls they had had, and so on. Then I had to report this to the hospital commander. I had the rank of second lieutenant, and so I had it good.

There are of course many experiences connected with my army service. Once I was on duty in the army hospital in Kosice. I had my own room there, and signed leave papers for the soldiers. One older man from Kosice, who was on army exercises, came to me and asked me for a permit. He told me that he wanted to be with his wife in the evening, could I make it until midnight. Midnight came, and he was nowhere to be seen. At 1am someone pounded on my door. I opened it. Before me stood two guards with the soldier that I had lost. 'Please sir, we caught him in a cafe, what should we do with him?' The man was afraid of what was going to happen to him. But he was very lucky; they punished him by forbidding him further leaves. Then I asked him why he hadn't asked for a permit until 2 or 3am, that I would have signed it for him, and why hadn't he returned? He told me that he had gotten into a fight at home with his wife...Those were the kinds of laughs we had in the army. It was good army service. The soldiers liked to go out with me, because I didn't need a permit. In the coffee house they would sit down with me, because when soldiers would go around and check permits, they wouldn't ask anyone sitting with me, because I was a second lieutenant. It was a gas.