

## Yakov Furman With His Wife Regina Furmanene And Their Friend



This is I with my wife Regina Furmanene and a military commander of Shauliai, a Jew from Ukraine. The picture was made in late 1940s in Siauliai.

In December 1941 Stalin issued the order on the forming of the 16th Lithuanian division. Lithuanians were drafted in the army from all ends of the country - from Siberia, Far East, Usbekistan. My friends and I got the notice. In early January we were sent in Balakhna, Gorky oblast, where our division was being formed. I was assigned commander of the military platoon at once.

I covered the territory of Byelorussian and Baltic fronts with my division. I went through entire Byelorussia and in summer 1944 I came in my Lithuania. I was lucky, I was slightly wounded for times. I got wounded for the second time near Vilnius in July 1944. I did not leave the leading edge. I wanted to go to Vilnius with my division. On the 13th of July I liberated Lithuanian capital. I was happy and frustrated at a time. I saw many survived prisoners of Vilnius ghetto and understood that my kin was most likely dead.

When our division was approaching Siauliai, I and one of my compatriots asked the commander to send us in reconnaissance. We wanted to be the first to enter our town. I hoped to meet some of the people I knew to find out about my family. We came in a small house on the outskirts of the town, beyond the train station. A young pretty Lithuanian lady was there and gave us a warm welcome. We put the rations at the table- American canned products and sausage, and she suggested that we should stay overnight. She lived there with her parents. When Siauliai was liberated I headed farther with my division. I could not forget that sweet young lady.

I was in Klaipeda when the war was over. I was demobilized after that. I had many awards- Red Banner order, Military Merits Medal, Medal for Bravery and a lot of medals for liberation of the towns. In 1945 I came back in Siauliai straight after demobilization. I came to the lady, whom I

liked so much and settled in her place. Appeared, that she also very much waited for me and very much worried about me, it was a love at first sight. I have lodged in her house. In a while we got registered our marriage.

My wife Regina Poplaskaite was born in 1922. She came of a poor Lithuanian family. Her father was a rail worker. Nevertheless, she got a good education- finished the lyceum and studied for or three years in a commercial college. During the occupation she stayed in Siauliai. She knew many Jews before the war. She studied and communicated with some of them. That is why it was painful to watch what fascist were doing with the Jews. There was a ghetto in Siauliai where Jews were living in the inhuman conditions. Once, Regina gave bread to the Jews who were driven to work. A guy with a white strap ran up to her and she was dreaded to recognize her classmate in him, he was a polizei. He started menacing the girl, but she was not scared and rebuffed him. Since that time she had given Jews some bread and products.

I went to the ministry of healthcare and was given a good offer right away. I was employed at the sanitation department of the Siauliai ispolkom. My wife worked as the cashier at station. In a while I lived in Regina's place with her parents, who were very happy for our marriage and treated me very well. Soon I was given a very good apartment and my wife and I moved there.