

Izia Antipka With His Comrades



This is me during my service in the army, photographed with my comrades Bagdasarov (on the left) and Kharitonov (on the right) in 1948, on the occasion of our trip to Bucharest.

I was conscripted to the army in 1947. I was taken to the school of junior aviation specialists. After finishing it I served as supervisor at the air field in Balashikha near Moscow. Our commanders were very good to us. Once I was granted a leave home under the condition that I would bring a canister of wine before the New Year. I spent a whole month in Kishinev. In 1948 my commandment ordered me to go to an airfield in Bucharest since I was the only one, who knew Romanian. I had two soldiers with me: Kharitonov, a Russian guy, and Bagdasarov, an Armenian guy. We had no money with us: we only received a food ration. I picked some underwear from the storage, knowing

that it was in great demand. On the way to Bucharest we stopped in Iasi, where I bumped into my second cousin. This happened to be the Purim holiday and we spent the whole evening with her celebrating the holiday. This was the first time the guys tried hamantashen.

When we arrived in Bucharest I sold the clothes I had with me in a lady's washroom. Now we had some money. This was a great risk: if we were stopped by a Soviet patrol we would have problems. Besides, we left our luggage and guns in the left luggage and all of this to go to the red-light district. I didn't care, but my comrades insisted that we went there; there was nothing of the kind in the USSR and prostitution was forbidden and strictly punishable. I took them to this street where girls in underwear were sitting before front doors. Seeing handsome Soviet guys they really jumped on us. Bagdasarov got frightened and we escaped. We spent the money we had in street cafes and on street shoe cleaners to polish our boots. We also had our pictures taken as a souvenir. This funny story only proves that I had no problems serving in the army.