

# Best Wishes, Little One!

*It happened early in the morning on September 6. A foreigner came to stay at the Pribaltiyskaya Hotel in Leningrad, and the hotel administration knew absolutely nothing about his identity. This new resident had neither visa nor passport, and he had gone unnoticed even by the vigilant doormen.*

*In just a few hours, however, he was the hotel's most celebrated guest. An enormous bouquet of flowers from the hotel staff appeared on the table in his room, and the management began to debate what kind of gift they could bestow on the unexpected “new occupant.”*

*It's only a matter of time before this foreigner has an identity document. In a few days, there will be an officially registered birth certificate stating the following:*

*Alexander KRUMLAND*

*Date of Birth: September 6, 1984*

*Place of Birth: Leningrad, USSR*

*Nationality: American*

THE AMERICAN baby born in Leningrad is the first child of Jerry Krumland and Ana Costa, a couple from the United States. Baby Alexander came into the world in a room on the hotel's eighth floor, and he was delivered by the father of the child himself. As a civil aviation pilot from San Francisco (“No, no, I don't fly enormous airliners. I fly little planes that transport mail and cargo around California and neighboring states”), Jerry had special training on how to deliver babies in the case of “unforeseen circumstances” in the air. The doctors at Leningrad Maternity Hospital No.13, where mother and son were taken after the birth, later noted that Jerry passed the exam for his “second profession” with flying colors.

And so the birthplace of this American is the Soviet Union. This was by no means an accident. The happy father discussed this matter with our correspondent several hours after the birth of his child.

“My wife and I came to visit the Soviet Union specifically so that our first child would be born here. Don't think that this means that I don't love America. No, I am a patriot of my country, and this is my first time in the USSR.

I admit that I don't know very much about the Soviet people. The important thing is that I very much want for my child, and for all children on the planet, to never know the horrors of nuclear war. But just wanting something is not enough. During this tense time, we all need to do everything in our power to improve mutual understanding between peoples, and especially between the people of the USA and the USSR. Ana and I decided to get involved and to make our own contribution to peace, albeit a small one, to show Americans who are skeptical of you, or even hostile towards you, that it doesn't matter where a person is born, in the USA or the USSR. Every person in both our countries, different as they are from one another, needs peace. We wanted to do more than just speak out for the elimination of prejudice and distrust toward the Soviet Union. That is why my son was born in Leningrad.”

The Krumlands spent a long time preparing for their trip. But when they shared their plans with friends and family, they were horrified. They told the Krumlands in no uncertain terms that the Soviets would take their baby away from them.

“Jerry, you must have

understood that such a long trip would put your future child's health at risk. How could you justify that risk?”

“I am a pilot, and I always have to judge which potential situation carries the greater risk. Right now, the risk of nuclear war is much bigger than any other danger. If my son had been born in the United States, the level of risk may have been relatively lower, but then we would have done absolutely nothing to lessen the threat of nuclear catastrophe, another threat to the life of my son.”

I talked to Jerry for a long time, but I never did find out what, in the life of this “average American,” as he called himself, has led him to such a keen understanding of the greatest threat to humanity, and what has made him so uniquely determined to say “No!” to the sinister plans of nuclear maniacs. We also discussed how Jerry loved playing war as a little boy, and how he would lose himself in his games for hours.

Then there was Vietnam. Jerry ended up in one of the first groups of American GIs sent by Washington to fight against the freedom-loving people of this small yet resilient country. Finally, he thought, he would experience

a real battle, with real gunfire and with an enemy who wasn't imaginary. Jerry kept one hand on the pistol underneath his pillow every night as he fell asleep, and he fantasized about the next day and how he would become a hero.

One day, they raised the alarm. The long-awaited attack by the Viet Cong (as the Vietnamese patriots were called in the US) was imminent. Everyone grabbed their weapons and ran to find a place behind the sandbags. “Nobody taught us how to best defend ourselves. It felt like none of the superior officers cared about us soldiers at all,” recalled Jerry. “And then, when I was lying behind the sandbags waiting for the attack to come, for some reason, my romantic attitude toward war disappeared. I realized we were just pawns in someone else's hands, in someone else's dirty game.”

Jerry was not in Vietnam for very long, but those few weeks were enough for him to develop an aversion to war. Later, when he was flying American planes over foreign countries half a world away from home, he never forgot Vietnam.

“Many of my fellow citizens love to watch movies about World

War II, and in those movies, the American supermen always win,” Jerry noted. “But movies like those are only half the problem. The real problem is that many Americans now think in terms of World War II and believe we could emerge victorious even from a nuclear war. This is a delusion that humanity cannot afford.”

We want to believe that Jerry's current odyssey will live up to his expectations, that it will help someone in the United States to wake up from their delusions. It will be interesting to see how the Krumlands are received by their friends in San Francisco when they return home.

But right now in Leningrad, preparations for a different welcoming ceremony are underway. In a few days, little Alexander, born on the banks of the Neva, will leave the maternity hospital with his mother.

On behalf of Komsomolka, I congratulated Jerry Krumland, a person who knows something about assessing risk, on the birth of his son.

I am certain that before the couple departs on September 18, many more congratulations, including some from our readers, will be sent to the Pribaltiyskaya Hotel, 14 Korablestroiteli Street,

Leningrad.  
V. KISLOV

TOP  
STORY

# “WE’RE HAPPY IN LENINGRAD...”



THE PEOPLE working in the mailroom at Leningrad's Pribaltiyskaya Hotel have never seen a guest receive as many well-wishes as Jerry Krumland and Ana Costa, a couple from the United States, have received over the past three days. The telegrams, postcards, and letters keep coming, from Moscow and Novosibirsk, Kiev and Zhitomir, Taganrog and Voroshilovgrad, Makeyevka and Tashkent... Everyone wants to congratulate the couple on the birth of their first child, a son, Alexander, who came into the world on Soviet soil.

It happened on September 6th at around six o'clock in the morning. Ana's labor came on so quickly that Jerry had to deliver the baby himself; making use of the emergency-situations training he had received as a civil aviation pilot in the United States. But his experience was put to the test on land, instead of in the air, and many miles away from his home city of San Francisco.

A special ambulance crew quickly arrived and took the happy mother and child to Maternity Hospital No. 13. There Ana stayed in a room with three Leningraders, and she quickly made friends with them. Not

knowing Russian was no obstacle – her roommates had also just become mothers, and in that marvelous state, all women on the planet are identically happy.

Little Alexander quickly put on weight, just like he should, and he impressed the doctors and nurses with his constant calmness. He came into life with determination and confidence, as Dr. V.A. Moiseyenko, the head physician at the maternity clinic, said later.

Five days passed quickly, and yesterday Ana and son were discharged from the hospital. Our photograph shows the happy, smiling parents and their new baby.

Everything happened exactly as the American couple hoped it would. They came to the USSR as tourists specifically so that their first child could be born here, in Leningrad. Why Leningrad? "From my experience fighting in Vietnam, I know very well what war is, and I don't want my son to know war," answered Jerry. "We all need to do our part for the cause." Jerry is certainly doing his part. Last year, he participated in one of the largest anti-war demonstrations to date, near San Francisco. "And now

my wife and I have decided to share our joy at the birth of our son with the Russian people."

My colleagues asked Jerry about the amount of risk the mother-to-be had faced, given that their long journey must have been very stressful. "As a pilot, I am used to risk, but I always do everything I can to keep the possible complications to a minimum," he replied. "There may have been a risk, but it was insignificant compared to the current, tangible threat of nuclear war," he added. "Of course, we could have stayed put and calmly prepared to celebrate the birth at home, but we wanted to use our child's birth to reduce the risk of nuclear conflagration. This is our small but very genuine contribution to world affairs."

The parents named their son Alexander due to that name's popularity in both the Soviet Union and United States. "We... wanted to contribute to the strengthening of trust and mutual understanding between Russians and Americans, not only with our words, but also with our actions," said the happy mother.

"Our friends and relatives strongly discouraged us from making this trip," she continued.

"But I don't think they could ever imagine how warmly and attentively the Soviet people have treated us. Medical treatment here is wonderful, and it's free, to boot! At home we would have had to pay anywhere from one thousand to three thousand dollars, and we still wouldn't have experienced the warmth and kindness we did here. We will be sure to tell our friends all about our experiences."

They will probably also show them the commemorative medal that is presented to every young Leningrader. It is a medal of peace, a medal of happiness – two things our guests wish for all of their new friends, and for all the people in the world.

T. CHESANOVA

Photo: A. Drozdova