

## VICTOR IVANOVICH STEPANOV: AN OUTSTANDING MINERALOGIST OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

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Thirty-five years has elapsed since the outstanding mineralogist Victor Ivanovich Stepanov (January 1, 1924–August 6, 1988) passed away. He played an important role in developing museology in Russia, first and foremost, at the Institute of the Mineralogy, Geochemistry, and Crystal Chemistry of Rare Elements (IMGRE) and Fersman Mineralogical Museum, Russian Academy of Sciences, in Moscow. His unique mineralogical collection contained more than 1297 mineral species and was the third largest one in the USSR (after the collections of the Leningrad/St. Petersburg Mining Museum and Fersman Mineralogical Museum in Moscow; 1795 and 1968 mineral species, respectively; both collections were replenished by large research teams on a regular long-term basis (Nikiforov and Shkurskii, 1998) in terms of the number and diversity of mineral species. His collection is now housed at Fersman Mineralogical Museum of RAS in Moscow.

Much has been written about Victor Ivanovich (Belakovskiy, 1998; Gerasimovskii, 1998; Zhabin, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Matrosova, 1998, 2015; Kantor, 2014; Belakovskiy *et al.*, 2014; IMGRE research team, 2014; Maximyuk, 2014; Maleev, 2015; Naumov, 2015; Pekov *et al.*, 2015), but a new generation of researchers, mineralogists among them, has grown since then. This publication is addressed first of all to them.

Victor Ivanovich Stepanov was born on January 7, 1924, in the town of Semenov in the Gorky (now Nizhniy Novgorod) region. In 1941 he got into Sverdlovsk Mining Institute, but his study there was terminated by the war. He was drafted into the army in September, 1942, as is specified in his military service record card, which is stored at the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (<https://pamyat-naroda.ru/>) (Fig. 1). Upon graduation from an infantry school in 1943 as a lieutenant, V.I. Stepanov carried on war in the 393<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Division of the 46<sup>th</sup> Army at the Southwestern and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ukrainian Fronts, was injured when involved in the forced crossing of the Dniester River, and then served as a military interpreter in Bulgaria until his military discharge in June, 1946. In 1985, he was awarded with the Order of the Great Patriotic War, 2<sup>nd</sup> degree (order document #179 as of Nov. 6, 1985). After his demobilization in 1946, Victor I. enrolled at the Moscow Institute for Geological Prospecting. In 1950, he transferred to the Department of Mineralogy at the Geological Faculty of Lomonosov Moscow State University, where he successfully graduated in 1952. Upon a short period of work at the Institute of the Geology of Ore Deposits, Petrography, Mineralogy, and Geochemistry, AN USSR (Academy of Sciences of the USSR), V.I. Stepanov started to work with the Institute of the Mineralogy, Geochemistry, and Crystallochemistry of Rare Elements (IMGRE), at which he focused primarily on establishing a museum for minerals of rare elements. He worked at this institute until 1986, and his activities there resulted in an outstanding mineral collection of more than thirty thousand specimens. In 1986–1988,

1. Victor Ivanovich Stepanov, 1942. Photograph from the personnel archive of the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense (CAMD, Box 198, Drawer 13), <https://pamyat-naroda.ru>.



From Tamara I. Matrosova's album: Victor I. Stepanov in expeditions to the Caucasus in 1977 (1, 2, 3, 4) and to the Khibiny in 1978 (5, 6, 7, 8, 9), and in Moscow (10, 11). All photos: Alexander A. Evseev.

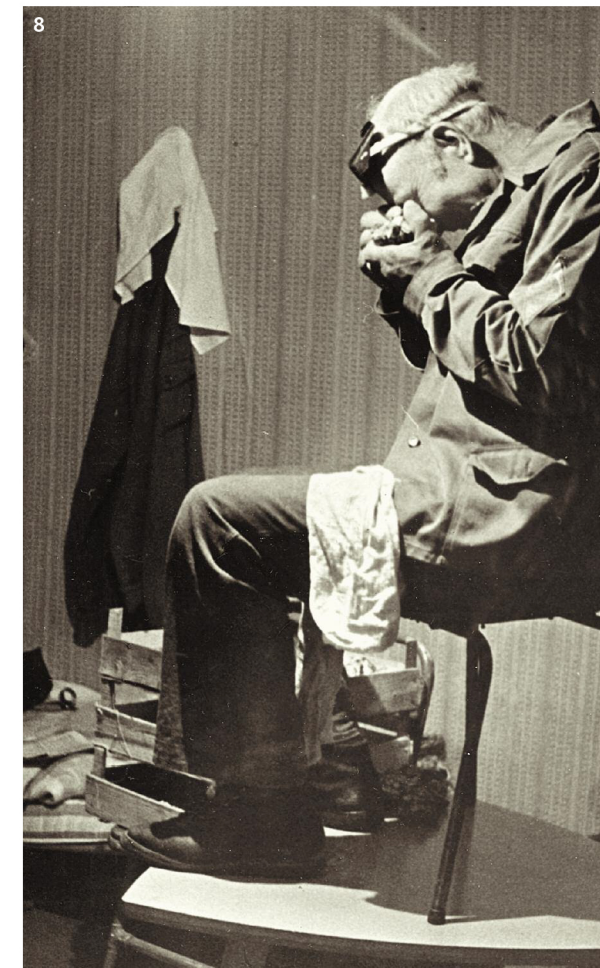


7. With colleagues in the Khibiny.



8. At the base of IMGRE: "Closer to the light!"

9. Work at the abandoned core storage facility. Koashva.



10. In the Mineralogical Museum of MGRI (from left to right): Vladislav B. Semyonov, Victor I. Stepanov and Alexei V. Sverdlov during photo session for the album "Malakhit." Early 1980s.

11. Victor I. Stepanov's birthday: with T.I. Matrosova, January 1988.

