

The Interviewee



On the reverse side of this photograph it is written: 'The 3rd of August 1941.' Here I am a pupil of the last form. The most interesting thing is that on the 3rd of August I was already not in Kerch. On July 4, I already was in the Naval School named after Frunze (in Leningrad). I sent my documents there beforehand (in 1940). But I am sure that it was taken in Kerch.

At that time children went to school at the age of 8. My school was very good, it was named after Zhelyabov, a Russian revolutionary, a member of the Executive committee of Narodnaya Volya Organization (in 1860s he lived in Kerch). It was situated far from our house, though according to Leningrad criteria it was very close to us: I had to go down, walk along Lenin Street and turn to the seashore.

I also took great interest in water tourism and gymnastics. I was a good gymnast: in 1940 I managed to become a champion of Crimea in gymnastics. I achieved ranking in gymnastics, and in 1941 I started working to become a master of sports, but the war burst out... Gymnastics is a perfect kind of sport; I was able to turn somersaults here and there. I belonged to Vodnik sports society; I was a member of their team. But in future I was going to become a sailor.

When I studied at school, it was very fashionable to be a member of aviation club! I entered aviation club being a pupil of the 10th class (at the age of 17). They did not allow younger schoolchildren to become its members. They used U-2 planes. I finished the theoretical course and flied together with instructor.

But by that time I already handed in my documents to a military college and gave up aviation. At that time everything connected with aviation was in fashion, for instance Tsiolkovsky. I did not read

his works; I only knew that there was Tsiolkovsky, a teacher at Kaluga school. [Tsiolkovsky was a well-known Russian scientist and inventor (1857-1935).] At that time very famous were soviet pilots Chkalov, Baidukov, Belyakov, Gromov, Kokkinaki, Grizodubova, Raskina, and Ossipenko. Everybody got really crazy about them!

During vacations we walked all over the southern Crimea, beginning from Kerch and finishing in Evpatoria. [Evpatoria is a city-port on the western coast of Crimea.] Once (I remember it well) three of us went from Kerch to Feodosiya by bikes. We started early in the morning and arrived in Feodosiya in the evening; but we daren't get back by bikes and went by train.

And it was a long way from Kerch to Feodosiya - so cheerful guys we were! One of us, Vova Khomutov was lost during the war; and I do not remember the name of the other one. We also went on foot from Simeiz to Alupka, through Yalta. I remember that we visited the palace of Bukhara emir, situated in Yalta. [Simeiz, Alupka and Yalta are towns on the southern coast of Crimea.]

On June 14, 1941 I finished my school, on June 22 we were going to hold a meeting in celebration of it, but that day the war burst out. They cancelled our banquet, gave us urgently our certificates, and that was all. Approximately for a week I stayed in Kerch, and Komsomol leaders appointed me to be a company commander.

We participated in patrolling the city streets (2 or 3 men together). And a week later I left for Leningrad. Here I entered the Naval School named after Frunze. I sent there my document beforehand, in 1940. That School celebrated its 300th anniversary in 2001 (it is older, than St. Petersburg itself, because it was created in 1701, and St. Petersburg - in 1703). According to the decree of the President Eltsin it was renamed Naval College of Peter the Great.