

Yuri Bogdanov



That's me, senior lieutenant on the day I was conferred the military rank. The photograph was taken for my personal record, on 21st May 1944 in Minsk.

In January 1943 fascist troops were forced to retreat from Stalingrad. The Stalingrad battle was crucial in the course of the war. It was often broadcast in the roundups that our troops were attacking.

During the first two years of war there were mostly messages about the retreat of our troops from such and such city after severe battles. We were attacking on all fronts; it gave us hope. I had

another reason to rejoice - my wife was pregnant.

Our daughter Tatiana was born in 1943. It is difficult to put my emotions in words. In spite of war, rivers of blood and devastation, a little human being was born - my daughter!

We moved forward. After Stalingrad our division went for replenishment in Romania. I was a senior lieutenant at that time. I have dearest recollections of Romania. Cernavoda was the first city that was liberated by us in Romania right after crossing the USSR state border.

All frontier towns were devastated, but that one seemed to be safe and sound as if there was no war there. I was going in a jeep along the city and there was a car column.

Suddenly I noticed a group of people clad in black hats with payes. They stood by the synagogue.

I heard that the king of Romania, King Michael agreed with Hitler not to touch Romanian Jews and Hitler had fulfilled that agreement. I stopped the car and greeted them in Yiddish.

They thrust through to me with the exulting sound of 'Acheron, Acheron!', pulled me out of the car and brought me to the synagogue.

The car was waiting for me, I had to be off, but they didn't let me go. Everybody wanted to thank me and give me a hug. I will remember the meeting with the Jews of Cernavoda for ever.

After Romania, we liberated Bulgaria, then Hungary. I finished the war in the Austrian city of Baden near Vienna.