

Arnold Fabrikant With His Fellow Comrade Kostia Shevyrev



This is me (first from right) with my fellow comrade Kostia Shevyrev (in center). This photo was taken in Czechoslovakia on 22 May 1945. In April 1945 we entered Potsdam and joined in the most horrible action - street fighting. On 30th April 1945 we began our attack on the railway station, and this was also the Charlottenburg metro station in Berlin. On 2nd May, at 12 o'clock. Berlin surrendered. The war was over for us. On this day I wrote to my mother after a long interval - since December 1944. I had thought to myself that I had survived for a long time and that I would probably be killed and that she had better get used to the thought that there was no me. So I lived through the last months of the war with this attitude, but then there was a turning point in my heart and I believed that everything would end well for me. After Berlin surrendered, our unit marched in the direction of Prague in Czechoslovakia. We were at the border of Czechoslovakia, when the war was over. At night we got to a mine field and our unit had to walk step by step to avoid the mines, when all of a sudden we heard shooting somewhere in the rear. We turned our heads and saw tracer bullets flying by. This was a sign that the war was over. This happened at midnight, on 8th May. We camped near the town of Ceska Lipa. We had a quiet, peaceful life there. We had artillery training nearby, where we actually just fooled around drinking beer. It was very inexpensive. The Czechs treated us well and shared food with us. We went to a bar where they gave us a barrel of beer, we went to the field, deployed the battery and ate and drank and then we returned with an empty barrel. We rested till late May in this manner, when we got an order to march back home across Poland.