

Naum Kravets



Here I am tuning the radar station onboard of my aircraft. The picture was taken in Helsinki, Finland in 1944.

I decided to go to the front as a volunteer.

In July 1942 together with my fellow students I went to the headquarters of the Ural military circle requesting to be drafted into the lines.

In January 1943 I finished school and was assigned to the 15th separate reconnoiter regiment of the Baltic Navy, which was conferred the Red Banner twice.

I had to go to Leningrad where the main regiment forces were positioned. I was assigned as operator of the radar station. They decided to include me in the crew of the regiment commander. I think I survived owing to a great crew of pilots. Then I was taught how to shoot. I was an air navigator on planes.

In 1944 Finland came out of war and became a neutral state. Our commandment decided to transfer four of our planes to Helsinki to reconnoiter directly via the coasts of Sweden. I was a member of the crew in Helsinki.

We settled in the hotel of a Russian immigrant, who had fled from Petersburg to Finland in 1917. We had meals in his restaurant.

In 1993 I was in Finland for a visit and visited that restaurant again. Now his son is the owner of the restaurant. He said that his father used to tell him about Soviet pilots who lived in his hotel during the war.

I cannot say that my first battle was the hardest. It was scary all the time. But the feeling of fear was momentous during the first seconds of flight. There was a brutal fear when leaving airdrome: there were creeps and a lump in the throat.

But it did not last long as you see the eyes of your fellow who got over that feeling. When the work is done, you do not fear just get focused on things to be done. You are to be responsible. Then you calm down.