

Grigory Gendler And His Brother-Officers



This photograph was taken in Leningrad in 1996 and shows me and my brother-officers.

In the beginning of 1945 Soviet armies started its full-scale offensive in Poland. We had a task to occupy vodka distilleries and warehouses so that infantrymen could not get drunk. Infantrymen were inclined to get drunk.

We found Poland to be not as ruinous as Istra. Later we moved towards Warsaw (from the South). There we crossed the Vistula River.

One day I was walking together with a group of transport trucks, motor-infantry and artillery. Suddenly several armored troop-carriers rushed out from the forest and fired at our column.

Immediately we turned our guns and fired back. Germans jumped off the troop-carriers, we caught them and took prisoners. It turned out that there I was the superior officer (a captain) and they brought prisoners to me. One of them was from SS troops. I got to know about it from his documents. I took his documents, medals and photos. He took those photos in Krasnogvardeysk (now Gatchina near St. Petersburg).

Later we approached the Oder River near Frankfurt-on-Oder. We crossed the border of Germany, moved to Berlin, and then came to the Baltic Sea near Rostok. Later we joined the Rokossovsky front near Gdynia (Gdansk, or Danzig). After that we turned back to Oder and approached Berlin.

Boyko and Boyarsky were my commanders. Our Brigade operated in reserve of the army. The most serious fights fell to the share of the 1st Guards Tank Brigade under the command of Abram Temnik, the Hero of the Soviet Union, a Jew by nationality.

On our way to Berlin there were a lot of field fortification, but by the end of April we managed to cross the Spree River and appeared in the streets of the city. Every brigade got its own direction towards the center of Berlin.

Infantrymen moved first and cleared neighboring buildings. After that tanks moved forward. On the 2nd of May actions in Berlin were finished, Germans capitulated. We ran to Reichstag: took photographs and left inscriptions on its walls.

We watched the destroyed Berlin. I was encharged with a task to read the text of victorious communique: I read it standing on the truck. Later we moved to Dresden region and formed a part of occupational armies.