

Boris Girshov



Here you can see me when I was a cadet of the Naval Medical Academy.

It happened in Kirov in 1943.

I became a cadet of the Naval Medical Academy. When I was a student of the 1st course, Daddy came to Leningrad. That meeting was our last one.

I keep it in mind most probably on account of the following. I remember that he came to me depressed, because he had lost his wallet. He was going to give me some money, but failed.

Moreover, I had to give him money for return ticket (and my stipend was rather scanty). Till now I remember his wails apropos of this.

In 1941 the war burst out, by that time I finished the 2nd course of the Naval Medical Academy.

As Germans quickly approached Leningrad, Voroshilov (commander of the Leningrad military district) ordered to raise a brigade of marines consisting from underclassmen of military educational institutions, including our Academy, Frunze Military School, Dzerzhinsky Military School, Kronshtadt Military School, etc.

The brigade was quickly created and we were brought to the Luga firing line near Gostilitsy. We started preparing for defense. For the company they gave us rifles (model of 1891), several submachine guns, hand grenades and bottles with Molotov cocktail (to fight against tanks).

The Luga firing line was situated about 100 kilometers far from the city. We dug entrenchments, implemented close reconnaissance. Germans located us and bombed several times. Then we were brought into action.

Our brigade suffered heavy casualties: Frunze, Dzerzhinsky and Kronstadt battalions were annihilated. My first battle I remember till now: explosions of bombs and death of my comrades around me. It happened in August or September 1941.

Our Academy was to be disbanded, but our chief Ivanov Alexander went to Moscow and obtained permission to keep its status. By that time cadets of the 4th course quickly passed their examinations and became professionally qualified doctors.

The Academy chiefs tried to evacuate them, but on their way across the Ladoga Lake their barges turned turtle because of the storm. All of them were drowned. The chief of Academy received Stalin's order about evacuation of the rest cadets to Kirov.

Therefore they took us away from the Luga firing line and urgently brought to Leningrad. Preparation for evacuation began. It happened in 1942, Leningrad was already besieged and each of us received 125 gr. of bread per day. We crossed the Ladoga Lake on foot (40 km to Kobona village). We were 300.

Later we were ordered to reach Kirov any way we could: on foot, by autostop, by train. Some of us walked to the railway station where hospital train was formed. Chief of the train took us as hospital attendants. We reached Kirov a month later (by the beginning of February).

A lot of cadets went home. In Kirov we were placed to the rooms of the Kirov Pedagogical College. All military registration and enlistment offices received the following order: ALL CADETS OF THE NAVAL MILITARY ACADEMY HAVE TO REPORT FOR THE ACADEMY IN KIROV IMMEDIATELY.

Soon all cadets gathered in Kirov. We started our studies. After the 2nd course we had to do practical work afloat. I was sent to the Black Sea Navy (Sukhumi and Poti). I served on board the ship Krasnaya Abkhasia. It was a part of the separate battalion of gunboats.

These ships were used for creeping and transportation cargoes to front lines, because they were able to approach coast without mooring.