

David Levin



This photo was taken in 1956, just before my demobilization from Soviet Army. I went to the photo atelier to make it, in Leningrad.

I served since 1941. I studied then in the special military naval school, and we've been to Lugskiy front, to Bolshoye and Maloe Karlino [small villages in Leningrad region], to Marienburg [village in Leningrad region], we've been to the second front line, or participated in building the defense lines. In Leningrad we organized the patrols, caught the rackets and racket people.

The bombing had begun on September, the eighth of 1941, and our fortune was that there were plenty of rackets, all city was full of rackets, and Germans just didn't know where to throw bombs, they couldn't see anything. Also we helped to evacuate kids and school children.

I've been to Leningrad front till March of 1942, even including March. Later the dislocation started, they sent our company to Astrakhan [big city in the lower reaches of Volga], and they supposed to send the eighth and ninth grades, which made second and third companies, to Siberia. So it happened so that they picked us to Ladoga Lake [famous lake in outskirts of Leningrad] to the Road of life by train, and then we had to cross those forty kilometers. We were walking on the ice; it was forty degrees of cold.

You walk on the ice and see all those dead bodies of evacuated Leningrad inhabitants and Soviet soldiers under the ice. Thanks to God, Germans didn't throw bombs. And we were lucky because cars and tracks went to Leningrad with wheat and stuff, and they came back absolutely empty, that's why we passed by car some part of the way, to Gikharevka station [railway station not far from Leningrad]. And there we reached the so-called Big Land.

Then they drove some echelons, put us into sanitary barriers, where they washed us, and helped to feel normal. Then they took us to those echelons and to wagons and drove somewhere. That happened for almost forty days. We passed Volkhovstroy [small town on the river Volkhov], Kirov

[today that is Vyatka, big town in the Middle Povolgi], Molotov (it's how they called Perm in soviet times); everywhere they had lights on, it looked like people don't know about the War. So throughout Ural steppes, from the opposite side, we arrived to Astrakhan and we've been there for couple of months.

Then we've got an order to go to Baku [capital of Azerbaijan, city on the Caspian Sea]. In Baku there was a military naval college. There they broke up us. Some were left in Baku, and some (and me among them) were sent to Lenkoran [town in Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea], to the military naval college of waterside defense, in the department of connection. We lost about thirty people by the way.

Then they sent us for practice to the Far East and put us into the Pacific Ocean College. That college was built before the War, according to all necessary rules. So we were there for three months, so it was almost a Heaven. Then they put us to the so-called sixth kilometer and during next two months we were busy with painting the walls, built something and so on. There it was very cold; life was much more hard and unpleasant.

When I turned twenty one, in 1945, I've been the lieutenant already and finished the War in Vladivostok [big city on the Far East]. We were signalers; I worked on the flagman point of Pacific Ocean Navy. That was a hill, and knolls, and inside there was the Staff, so we kept direct connection with Moscow. I arrived to Leningrad on the tenth of July of 1945, being a lieutenant of the Military Sea Navy.

From Leningrad I went to Baltic, to Tallinn [capital of Estonia, city on the Baltic Sea], then they sent me to the highest radiolocation courses, and I started to pay attention not only to the connections, but also to radiolocation. After that I had different services: the learning detachment, ship, named after Kirov, school of radiometric. I prepared staff for Military Sea Navy. They said I was very good in teaching them. I think, I had no problems with methodic then.