

Grigoriy Kagan And The Officers Of AACD Northern Corps On The 1st May Parade



Officers of our AACD Northern Corps on the 1st May parade. I, colonel Grigoriy Kagan, chief of communication of the AACD Northern Corps, marching in the head of the column of officers of the army headquarters on the 1st May parade. This photo was taken in Arkhangelsk in 1958.

In 1954 I was offered the post of communication chief in Moscow. It was a significant promotion for me. I finished the war in the rank of chief of division communication. A corps included 3 divisions. Of course, I gave my consent and did not even ask where this corps was located. Actually, this was the Northern Air Defense in Belomorsk, between Murmansk and Petrozavodsk, 6000 km from Moscow. This town was located on the bank of the last sluice on the Belomor-Baltic Channel. My wife, my son and I moved to where my job was. In 1957 my second son Igor was born in Arkhangelsk.

I had to work hard to improve the communication system. Despite my Jewish surname I was significantly promoted by being appointed commanding officer of the 34th communication regiment and then chief of the new AACD communication forces. However, before this happened, I had to do a lot of work bringing the communication system to order. The communication system in my 10th separate army spreading to the south, west and east: with the chief AACD command post in Moscow and the neighbors, the Leningrad and Novosibirsk AACD and units of our army in the south, were based on the communication lines that we rented from the Ministry of Communication and the radio communication system. The radio communication was the only way of communication with 'Novaya Zemlia' [New Land]. The main disadvantage of the radio communication in the Far North was the impact of winter ionospheric perturbations on short waves. The radio waves reflected from the ionosphere, and any ionospheric perturbations terminate the radio communication. One can imagine what might happen, when radio communication with the radio location companies on remote northern areas was affected. I requested General Maximenko, chief of the AACD communication forces to provide middle wave transmitters to us, but he refused. I understood that communication failures jeopardized the defense capability of our country, and I

addressed this request to comrade Loginov, secretary of the Arkhangelsk regional party committee, who was also a member of the Central Committee of the USSR. Loginov listened to me carefully and understood me very well, even though he was not a specialist. He told me to write another request to the AACD Headquarters and show it to him before sending it out. As a result, a cipher message was received from the AACD Headquarters. It read: 'Till when this slob, colonel Kagan shall be fooling busy people!' I showed this message to Loginov. He picked the receiver of direct communication with Moscow and loudly explained to the AACD Commander what was going on. The commander ordered to send back the cipher and undertake investigation of this outrageous disgrace. Loginov told me to write a complaint to the Party Central Committee. I described the essence of this cause emphasizing that due to ionospheric perturbations we might fail to provide communication with the units. I also described what was needed to prevent this. A short time later I was invited to the Central Committee in Moscow. General Maximenko was removed from his position and expelled from the party. His replacement general Gavrilenko appointed my friend and former fellow student Vadim Chuyskiy from Kiev chief of the communication forces of the 1st AACD army in Moscow. He was the first of our peer graduates to be promoted to the rank of General for his involvement in the nuclear weapon training that took place near the Ural in 1954. This training covered 4 divisions, 40,000 soldiers and officers. An atomic bomb was dropped and then an order to attack was given. The official report indicated exposure to fireballs and mechanic jolts, but no exposure to radiation. These poor people were exposed to exceeding doses and died a short time later. Well, the first act of General Gavrilenko was provision of R-640 transmitters that are not affected by ionospheric perturbations. I supervised installation of these transmitters on the 'Novaya Zemlia' in many taiga settlements, in the AACD division headquarters and in the headquarters of the 11th regiment in Vorkuta. My commandment developed a very good opinion of me.