

Boris Vayman And His Brother-Officer (first Sergeant)



This photograph was taken in Port Arthur in 1946. Here I'd like to tell you about my life there.

War with Japan began. In June they sent us to the Far East by trains. We got off in Chita and went at the march through Mongolia. It was extremely hot there (about 30 degrees centigrade), our way ran through sands. Because of the hot weather, we moved only at nights. They drew a rope between the endmen to prevent soldiers leave the column and be lost in the dark steppe or get under the tracks of tanks (tanks were moving along the roadsides).

So from Chita we moved through Mongolia, through Great Khingan Mountains, reached Manchuria [China] and met the Japanese army. It appeared to be a great surprise for the Japanese; they began to surrender, and we captured Port Arthur [a port in China]. On September 4 Japan capitulated. I went on serving as a soldier in Port Arthur. First I served in the regiment, then in the commandant's platoon (the commander's guard). Later the commander made me his personal driver. In 1948 he gave me leave of absence and I went to Leningrad, but came back. I served there till 1950 and at last I received my demobilization documents ... but at that time a war between Northern and Southern Korea burst out. We had to convoy tanks for Northern Korea. We reached the place, handed tanks over to the local military and moved to Vladivostok [the USSR port on Pacific Ocean] by a warship. From Vladivostok I moved home. So in fact my service ended only in 1950.

I returned to our apartment near Fontanka River, which remained safe. Mom came back from evacuation in the beginning of 1945. It was possible for the citizens to return to Leningrad only if they had a document that your former living space remained safe. Her brother sent her an invitation and the document, therefore she returned to Leningrad together with my brothers. I saw Leningrad not right after the war, but only in 1948 (being on leave); therefore I do not remember ruins or other effects of war. By 1948 Leningrad was already repaired (for the most part) and put in order.

I returned home and became a metalworker at the Krasny Treugolnik factory. [The Krasny Treugolnik factory produced rubber goods.] I came there on November 1, 1950.

I never discussed the question of emigration and never wished to emigrate: in this country nobody ever griped me, I had no conflicts with local authorities. I was a member of the USSR Communist Party. Probably I was not a 100-percent communist, but I really believed in the bright future. Nobody from my close friends emigrated. Some of my acquaintances left for the USA. I took their departure hard: I felt like a piece of my body broke away, but the idea of leaving never came into my head.