

Vladimir Tseitlin With His Friend Vasiliy Ivanov



The picture was made in Hungary in 1945 after war. This is me with my friend Vasiliy Ivanov. He was a battery commander. Both of us were in one regiment in the rank of a lieutenant.

In 1942, after finishing the Tomsk artillery school I was sent to the front. I was the senior officer of the battery. Our regiment was called SCR - supreme commandment reserve. The regiment was armed with 122-mm howitzer. It was heavy artillery. In 2 weeks our squad was sent to the north-western front. We appeared in the region Staraya Russa, in the vicinity of Demyansk. In Demyansk our troops besieged Germans but did not manage to do away with them as Germans broke through the siege. Our task was to exterminate German groups. I happened in the period of January-February 1943. We had fought in that area by spring and forced the river Glavat and took a defense position.

Our battery consisted of about 100 people and 4 howitzers. The howitzer squad consisted of 8 soldiers and one commander. Battery commander was on the observation point and we fired from the closed firing positions as per his order. The observation point was prepared beforehand. The trench was dug, stereotelescope communication lines were installed. When the target was noticed the data was provided to make artillery calculations. As a senior officer I took the orders of the battery commander and gave instructions on the spot regarding aiming at the target and the timing of the firing.

I came to #41 artillery regiment of rifle division. Germans were vastly retreating and our troops were to persecute them until reaching Dnepr. I was on the major bridgehead to the north from Kiev: it was the attack point. In October 1943 there were fierce battles. We started artillery preparation. Kiev was attacked on the 3rd of November 1943 and on the 6th of November it was captured. It took us hard to take Kiev. Germans were counterattacking trying to undermine our assault. There were a lot of casualties, but nonetheless we captured Kiev on the 6th of November. Our division was conferred the title Kievskaya.

Then Zhytomir was liberated. But Germans were counter attacking and captured Zhytomir once again. They tried to push us in Dnepr. Our division was besieged. It was fearsome. I was afraid not to be held in captivity. I did not know how our soldiers captured by Germans were treated in our country, but I knew for sure that Germans exterminated Jews. We broke through the siege, resisted German's attack and started assaulting. We liberated Zhytomir, right-bank Ukraine and moved forward. I had stayed in that regiment by the end of war. I was promoted in rank - now I was senior lieutenant. I joined the party during the war. It was mandatory for the officers, besides the procedure of entering the party was simplified

We fought on the territory of the Western Ukraine for the city of Ivano-Frankivsk. The city was defended by Hungarians. The war was winding and Hungarians were aware of it. So, they tried to be on our side and not to resist. Our division took part in liberating Budapest. The attack commenced on the 5th of December 1944 in the area to the north-east from Budapest and the city itself was captured on the 5th of February 1945. There were long battles. When we crossed Carpathian ridge, battles commenced in Eastern Slovakia and in the cities Mukachevo, Uzhgorod. The population were rejoicing in liberation. There were fierce battles in Slovakia. I was heavily wounded in the thorax with the fragment of blasted shell during the liberation of Bratislava. All my foot bones were crushed. I was in the hospital. I underwent operation and then I changed couple of hospitals. I met the victory day in the hospital.

I got awards for the battles - 10 orders and medals. The most important are Great Patriotic War Order of the 1st class, Red Star Order, Medal for Military Merits and others. In the post-war period I also received jubilee medals on the occasion of different memorable dates of victory and Soviet army.