

Naum Tseitlin Among His Fellow Soldiers



This photo was taken in spring 1945, at the end of World War II, in the vicinity of Berlin. I am here with my fellow soldiers, standing first from the left in the second row.

Our division was awarded the order of Kutuzov, it is normally an order given to military leaders, military units are rarely granted this award. We tore off of the enemy defenses and went to the rear for reinforcements, and fresh forces entered in our stead. Then we broke through in another location. We liberated the Belovezhskaya Puscha. I walked through it two times, a very good place, and I saw live bison. There is a museum in Belovezhskaya Puscha, which I visited. The Germans did not touch it.

I went to Nicholas II's small hunting lodge, I was even in his apartments, I passed through all the rooms of this two-storied building. On the second floor were the apartments of the tsar and his court, and the servants lived downstairs. When I was on the second floor, one of the attendants told me, 'These are Nicholas's private rooms, and this is his lavatory.' Upon which I said, 'I will take advantage of this lavatory.' And I used that imperial lavatory.

Let me also tell you about my correspondence with the writer Ilya Ehrenburg. For some time at the front I was in charge of informing soldiers of political issues. Many of my brothers-in-arms liked bright journalistic articles, including those by Ehrenburg. They frequently asked me to re-read them, so once I decided to write to the well-known author. Imagine my surprise when on June 7, 1943 the field post-office brought me an answer from the writer and his book 'Exasperation' with a dedicative inscription. Needless to say, the letter and the book became very popular among our scouts.

We fought both at the Baltic front, and at the First Belarus front. We were endlessly transferred from place to place, without a chance for a rest. After a week or two for reinforcements, we were again ordered to tear at the enemy defense. At the end of the war we entered Berlin. We finished the war on the Elba, where we met American troops. I finished the war as a sergeant. In 1944, at

the front, I joined the Communist Party. I was demobilized in November 1945.