

## Evadiy Rubalskiy With His Friends



The meeting of veterans of the 51st guard rifle division. We gathered in Belgorod in August 1988, and were photographed for the memory of our meeting. I, Evadiy Rubalskiy the first from right, beside me my frontline comrade Fedor Tomenko.

In October 1942 I was assigned to Guard artillery battalion 122 of the 51st Guard rifle division. After the Stalingrad battle our division relocated to the vicinity of Yelets town in early March 1943. Our army was ordered to relocate from the Central front to strengthen the Voronezh front. We had to keep the important Belgorod direction and get prepared to strike powerful counterblows, shield Kursk and support deployment of the 1st tank army. We were to cover 150 km. Our battery occupied the firing positions shielding the Moscow-Simferopol [Crimea] highway. Few days later two batteries of our regiment, including the 9th battery that I was assigned to, were transferred into the operative command of the 52nd Guard division to reinforce its defense. We were engaged in the construction and improvement of fortifications until 5 July 1943 [German counter-offensive called Operation Zitadelle started 5 July 1943 in the region of Kursk], and also, surveyed the defense facilities of the enemy. I was a communications operator and was to support reliable communications between the firing positions and the command post at the distance of over 3 km between them. On 5 July 1943 the Kursk battle started. The German fascist units went in attacks and fire and death flooded our trenches. About 700 tanks headed to the combat positions of our army: they were heavy 'Tiger' tanks and 'Ferdinand' mobile units. Hundreds of enemy's planes stroke their deadly blows on our land forces. The artillery roared non-stop. The forces of the 6th Guard army conducted continuous blood shedding battles trying to restrain the tank onslaught of the enemy. The Hitler's commandment was convinced about a prompt breakage of the defense of the Soviet forces, but the enemy was out of counting. Our artillery stroke accurate and powerful blows and the enemy incurred heavy losses of tanks and staff.

I spent 4 years at the front line, in continuous battle operations. I only took rest, if I can call it so, in hospitals. My combat awards are my proof that I had made my contribution into our victory over the enemy: an Order of the Great Patriotic War of Grade I, an Order of Victory, two Orders of the Red Star, order For Courage, medal for Valor, medals for defense of Kiev, for defense of Stalingrad,

for seizure of Königsberg, for seizure and defense of a number of towns. I returned home from the army in 1946.

In the late 1980s perestroika began. I was still a member of the party. There was a meeting where the staff voted unanimously for the policy. I believed this was another promise of a better life. Yes, the situation has improved, there is a Jewish life and people are no longer persecuted for their convictions or religion. However, the break up of the USSR [1991] that the perestroika ended up with, reduced its achievements to zero. There was a strong and powerful state, and there are only small, separated and poor countries left in its place, even though they are called independent. Could any of these small states have won in World War II? No way. Strength is in unity. Everything bad that there was in the USSR should have been eliminated, but we should have stayed together. It is my point of view. After the breakup of the USSR I left the party and I did not join the Communist Party of Ukraine.

I chaired the council of veterans of the 6th Guard in Kiev for 27 years. For few years I've been a member of the council of veterans in the Jewish cultural society of Ukraine. I attend their meetings and meet with friends. These meetings of Jewish veterans are always interesting. Occasionally I make reports and tell them about what I had lived through. I read many military memoirs, analyze and think about things. I receive Jewish newspapers and magazines and read them with interest. I've remained far from religion, but I attend events in the Hesed, when they invite me.