

Shchekinoazot: lest we forget

... They left a significant mark on our lives. The people who saved the world from fascism, who risked their lives every day and lost their friends and relatives, battled their way through half of Europe. Then when they returned home to a peaceful life, they committed themselves to the revival of their country.

IT HAPPENS that Shchekinoazot was built by people who only yesterday were serving on the front lines. One of the first managers of the gas works of those years, Sergey Jobadze, was an iconic figure: he prepared guerrilla-fighting units, and it is notable that he went to his first assignment as a rule with his own graduates, and took part in the formation of the guerrilla movement. It was Jobadze who developed the tactical and technical fundamentals of the "rail war" while he was still a chemist by profession. Peter Sharov, Boris Lurie, Victor Bizikin, Alexander Philippov, Vasily Polikarpov and many more were managers of the enterprise and its units and ordinary laborers who at one point were fighting on different fronts. All of them came returned home with awards. The backbone and fundamental labor collective during the construction of the enterprise and its establishment consisted of front-line soldiers.

Peace after the war



Valentina SALNIKOVA was still a student when the war came. As a very young girl, she studied the military profession for one month.

"I had to understand what airplane was in the air - ours or the Germans', detect the height and direction of the flight, and provide all this information to the ack ackers as quickly as possible," recalls V. Salnikova. "In good weather - visually, and in case of fog and clouded skies - by sound. It was unheard of to make a mistake: it's obvious that such a mistake could cause the death of a Soviet soldier... can you imagine what responsibility I had then as a young girl!"

She tells about her first shift and the first airplane she saw approaching our positions:

"Junkers 88 had a very similar noise to our medium bomber IL 4, but it was a Nazi aircraft. I was confused, no one was around me; I had to decide by myself what to do, and decide fast. I communicated the information, but my heart was sinking: what if I was making a mistake? It was only when the ack ackers provided information on the shot-down Junkers and thanked me when I started to calm down a little. Things continued like this for three and a half years of the war."

Sometimes she feels like it was just yesterday: a lingering and strained gaze into the sky, sitting through shifts in a listening surveillance trench in nasty weather... Valentina liberated the land of Tula - Belev, Odoyev, and later the Western districts of the country, and also Warsaw.

A peaceful life drew attention to itself with the complete absence of aircrafts in her native Yefremov province, and an imperative need to finally learn a skill. The gas works were in the construction process in Shchekino. People met her hospitably at the construction site, and without any inquiries she was found accommodations in the municipal residential facility, along with a job. There she noticed an announcement on courses for assistant chemists. This was how Valentina found a job in the gas-generating workshop. Later on, the workshop was redesigned, but she continued working there for 28 years in the ammonia production unit. Over the next 16 years, she continued working at the plant's medical unit.

Today, V. Salnikova is 93. All her concerns now center on her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but her native co-workers haven't forgotten her. All holidays always start with congratulations and presents, especially Victory Day. Valentina is a busy bee, and people like her can never sit still. In fact, she still misses her production department, where she has not set foot for a long time.

"People say that a new methanol installation has been built where everything is automated, and nothing has to be done manually at all. That's excellent, well done. I heard the buildings of the plants are also being renovated now... I'd like to have a look at them myself," even at home she worries about her native plant.

Lifetime employment



Vasily NIKISHIN went to war in 1943 on account of his age, and was sent immediately to the Rzhev district. There was heavy protracted fighting and positional confrontations.

"The ground is level," recalls the veteran. "We are on one tuffet, and the Germans on another. We decided to install a self-propelled gun mount and levelled the site, but there was no point: we were in the palm of the enemy. Right after we installed it, we fired it immediately. Later the unit was sent for replenishment to Nevel town, as we only had four people survive from the original troop. Our troop were replenished with Siberians, young men like us and adults too. Everyone was getting ready, there were breakthrough being planned in every direction. We were transported to Orsha district. But perhaps that might be a little generous... In fact, we walked day and night. After all, we were infantry."

Vasily does not discuss the battles for the Orekh settlement in the Orsha district, as this information is available in the award documents. Nikishin was granted the Bravery Medal for his "brave push forward, and the suppressing fire of his machine-gun taking down two light automatic German machine-guns and allowing his troop to advance." He does not consider this a heroic deed. He was a good soldier, and regrets that he never made it to Berlin. A serious injury - there are still 9 fragments in Nikishin's leg - was treated in the clearing hospital in Balakhna, Gorky Region. His treatment here lasted for a long time. When he came back home to Teplo-Ogarevsky district, he did not sit idle here either: he guarded horses, and watched over the grain.

"Stalin granted me a pension of 8 rubles, and there were no possibilities to earn very much on the collective farm. My father died, and mom was not able to provide for the family alone," Vasily relives the events of those days, "so I had to leave my pregnant wife in the village and move to the city to look for a job. For two years, I worked at the construction of the desulfurization works as a bricklayer. Later I came to the gas works of Shchekino looking for a job, which happened to need factory workers. The staff office sent me to one work team, and the foreman looks at me and sees I'm limping. "No, we don't have any open positions," he says. The staff office gives me directions to another work team, but there it is the same story. When I reached out to the third work team I already felt assertive, and there were only the foreman and graduates of the factory apprenticeship school, with the inscription on the wall: "Gena, a skilled master, uglified the face!" Gena, who happened to be the foreman, welcomed me with open arms: of course, at least now he had one experienced specialist. Through our joint efforts, we improved the skills of our factory apprenticeship school graduates. And the work went well. Other work teams worked close to us, and once time I overheard their conversation: "We should have taken that limping man on with us." After Gena left, I headed the team. And after construction finished, I started to work as the operator, the senior operator, all the way up to my pension. The work was interesting, I had a lot of ideas of rationalization, and the team was great.

Even today, Vasily Nikishin is not bored. He lives with the family of his grandson, who he raised himself. His other family is Shchekinoazot. Here people don't just forget about veterans: they are interested in their health and life.

With respect and care

THE Veterans Administration of Shchekinoazot was established 45 years ago in December 1971. It was created by those who served in the Great Patriotic War. There were 424 persons at the enterprise at that time. **Nina PHILIPPOVA**, who worked in the design engineering department her entire life,



spoke on this subject. Even today she comes to the Administration as if she is showing up for work. But in any event, it has another name now - the public organization of social assistance to veterans of Shchekinoazot OJSC and Khimvolokno OJSC. Under her patronage are almost two and a half thousand people who devoted their lives to working at the major chemical enterprises of the region.

Here the memory of the deceased is treasured. On the initiative of the management of Shchekinoazot, for the past two years memorials to S. A. Jobadze and P. M. Sharov were erected, and the memory of the hero of the Soviet Union E. Kalimanov was eternalized. But the endless tributes, care and warmth of souls are poured out by the employees of the chemical company and activists of the veterans administration first and foremost to those who are still alive today. The people under their care also include nine participants in military operations, veterans of work, and widows of officers and men of the Great Patriotic War. And of course, the successors of heroes, or the chemists of Shchekino who brought fame to their native enterprise with their labor.



"We are not just celebrating holidays together, although for seniors committed to the historical traditions of Shchekinoazot, every such meeting is a major event that recalls the best years of their lives," shares the **head of the public**

organization Vladimir SHUVAYEV. "And this year Shchekinoazot also prepared Victory holiday presents for the veterans of the Great Patriotic War, prisoners of concentration camps and widows of dead servicemen, who live in Shchekino district, who currently number 158 people today. On a quarterly basis we organize excursion trips, the routes of which are generated based on the wishes of the veterans. Recently, we visited the Alexinsky local history museum, and travelled along the sacred sites. Indeed, both holiday presents and congratulations for personal anniversaries are very significant and important. It is another matter entirely that the employees of the enterprise got used to feeling socially protected. And everyone who took some well-deserved time off are not excluded from the general rule. Once a year, our veterans relax and undergo medical examinations in the industry-sponsored health and recreation resort absolutely free, and receive every possible support in cases of urgent medical treatment. Unfortunately, people do not become healthier with age. Starting from this year on the initiative of the President of Shchekinoazot OJSC B. Sokol, all veterans of the Great Patriotic War, widows of veterans of war, and minor prisoners of Nazi concentration camps will receive a monthly monetary benefit in the amount of five thousand rubles. But our main goal lies elsewhere. People who dedicated their lives to work at Shchekinoazot should not feel disconnected from their work team. Our veterans become an integral part of all relevant events at Shchekinoazot, and are very interested in the changes and other happenings on the industrial site. And we have no right to forget what these people have done for the enterprise."

Some very important work is also being done right now by the public organization of social assistance to the veterans of Shchekinoazot OJSC and Khimvolokno OJSC. The veteran of labor from the "beginning," Tatiana Chupkina, is currently finishing the transfer of the card-catalogue of the enterprise to the computer. People say it will be easier to work this way; there are more chances not to leave anyone out in the cold, miss any events in the lives of veterans or forget the fate of anyone who fought for peace.

Natalia ZELINSKA.

Photo by the Shchekinsky Khimik newspaper.