

World War II veteran Alexander Kalish of Southfield cuddles his grandchildren Alyssa, 4, and Daniel Kalish, 1½, of West Bloomfield.



Photos by Bill Hansen



Viewing the monument is Ary Gutentag of Southfield who, as a pilot, took part in the bombardment of Berlin. The stone, bedecked with bouquets of flowers, proclaims, "Glory to the Victors!"

A Lasting Victory

Local Russian vets dedicate monument on 60th anniversary of defeat of Nazi Germany.

Story by LEV PERANSKY
Photography by BILL HANSEN

In the former Soviet Union, one could hardly find a family that had not lost one or more of its members during World War II.

That is why, if asked which event of that generation was the most important, the answer would be Victory Day, May 9, 1945. And that is why the Detroit Association of World War II Jewish Veterans raised funds for a monument to fallen heroes — and has found such widespread support.

The monument has been erected on the grounds of the Jewish Community Center in Oak Park, and its unveiling took place on Sunday, May 8 — near the 60th anniversary of Victory Day — in a ceremony attended by more than 300 people.

Locally, there reside about 200 Russian World War II veterans — those who bravely fought against the Germans. Their destinies were different, but all of them were united by

one goal — to defeat Nazi Germany. Here are a few examples.

Blockadniks

The siege of Leningrad was 900 days of starvation and unbearable cold. Worst of all were the losses of those near and dear.

Anya Potashinskaya of Oak Park was a girl of 17 at the time of the siege. After a hard day's work at a factory, she collected corpses of Leningraders who had died of starvation or cold in the streets. She brought the bodies by sled to Peskkarevski Cemetery. Some 600,000 people, many unidentified, were buried there.

Leonard Polyak, as a boy of 16, began working at a Leningrad shipbuilding factory. Because of starvation, he was brought to a hospital. After his recovery, he volunteered in the army, fought at the front. Matilda Polyak, his future wife, also overcame the war's hardships.

I could continue the list of local

"blockadniks." Some include Yevgenia Rahovsky and Joseph Krupnik, both of Oak Park, and Zelda Selector of Southfield.

East Meets West

On April 25, many people in the United States and the former Soviet Union celebrated the glorious day when the American and Russian armies met at the town of Torgau on the Elbe River in Germany. "East meets West" was the makeshift slogan of that time.

At the monument dedication was one of the heroes of that time, Major Naum Levin of Oak Park, who took part in the fight for Leningrad and later the liberation of Kiev and Babi-Yar and battles in Poland and Germany.

Klavdia Shub of Southfield took part in the final battles for Berlin. She was among the victors who put their signatures on the walls of the Reichstag.

Also at the ceremony was Lev

RUSSIAN ROOTS