

## A firefighter's story April "About the Chornobyl experience"

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**Piedzīvoto Čornobilā atceras **Ainars Upenieks**, 1986.gadā Ļvovas PSRS IeM Operatīvā pulka (k.d Nr. 3238) Pirmā bataljona 3.rotas (Ukrainā) obligātā militārā dienesta karavīrs, pēc atvaļināšanās Valsts ugunsdzēsības un glābšanas dienesta Saldus brigādes ugunsdzēsējs glābējs.**





**Ainars Upenieks**

In 1986, Ainars Upenieks served in the 3rd Company of the 1st Battalion of the Operational Regiment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR in Lviv (K.D. No. 3238) (Ukraine), and after his compulsory military service he became a firefighter-rescuer of the Saldus Brigade of the State Fire and Rescue Service Republic of Latvia.

A.Upenieks remembers: "On the evening of 28 April 1986, the regiment was put on combat alert. On the morning of 29 April, the personnel went to the railway station and the mobile equipment was also ready. The next morning the regiment arrived in Kijiva and drove the rest of the way to its accommodation with its motorised equipment, stopping at a beautiful meadow in the woods where we set up camp. There we also learnt about the Chornobyl accident.

The regiment set up control posts and organised the first patrols, but did not disclose information about the nature, purpose and posts of the operation to the soldiers remaining on the base.

Because of the high level of radioactive contamination, the camp sites were changed four times, and then it was realised that the theory that had been taught for decades about what to do in the event of nuclear war was useless..."

Later, Ainars took part in the evacuation of people who had stayed in the village homesteads within the 30-kilometre zone around the Chornobyl nuclear power plant. Ainars took 187 people out of their houses, carrying some of them by hand. Later, the militia arrived at these homesteads and shot the remaining animals and livestock.

At the end of 1986, Ainars was sent to rescue operations for the second time. Then the soldier's service was already easier, because marauding and robberies were eradicated.

<https://www.muzejs.vugd.gov.lv/en/article/firefighters-story-april-about-chornobyl-experience>