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Summary

Ilan Palat was born in Krivoy Ozero, Ukraine April 10, 1924.

Father: Yakov Palatnikov, mother- Betiya Arber. He had older brother and a younger sister.

In 1927 during collectivization conducted by the Soviet Government, all family possessions were taken away including small house and a bakery where his grandfather and father worked. The family had no choice but to move to Far East to work at a collective farm.

They traveled in the train cart with a bucket of coal and hay. There was another Russian family that lost everything and was sent to Siberia to work.

They even didn't have hot water. They were traveling for about 1.5 month.

Train stopped in Village Tihonikoe, and then they were transported 50 kilometers to the village Birafeli. Right in the middle of taiga (huge forest), no nearby roads, dirt, insects. With time collective farm have them materials and his father built a small house. There were plenty of wood. His father worked very very hard and he received special prices. Ilan helped his father in the woods.

The work was extremely hard and they dreamed of getting out of this place.

In 1932 Ilan's father was sent to Birobidzhan to an accounting school, while the family remained in the village

His mother worked day and night in the open field under burning sun, and freezing snow.

One day his father bought a small cow and sent a message to the family asking for some hay, food for the cow. Ellen was not yet 10 years old but he got a big bag and walked 50 km from the village to his father. On the way he stayed in the bee house with his father's friend. People were starving, honey was a luxury.

He stayed with his father for several days and walked back home, as there was no transportation.

When his father finished school, he was offered a job in Birobidzhan. The post office gave them money for their house and they were able to move.

He went to a Jewish school for 5 classes. In 1937 Jewish school was closed. Many Jewish people were killed during that time. The Government and the Communist party had full control of what people could say or do.

At age 16 Ilan finished high school and dreamed of becoming a pilot.

He was accepted at the local pilot school that supposed to prepare him for military training.

At age of 18, In 1942 he was enlisted in the Soviet Army, but not to the pilot school. He had a high school degree and was sent to Komsomolsk on Amur to the Artillery school.

Just after several months Ilan and other young men were sent to the front. Ilan knew the assistant of the principle of the school and he felt good having close friends there. He offered Ilan to stay at the school verses going to the front, but Ilan felt that he had to go to the front to be together with his friends. His sister, who became a nurse also went to the army.

On the way to the front in the middle of the night the train stopped in Birobidzhan and his family came to see him.

Ilan and his comrades were sent to Kurskaya Duga, where Soviet Army had a major battle with Germans. Very many people died t that battle, but Soviet army won the battle. They were looking death in the eyes every day.

Near Harikov in the village Olhovka, they faced Germans with tanks, while they had a few rifles. Very many people died, but his Russian friend carried him from the battle field.

He saw how a bomb that killed almost all his comrades. He ended up with a small contusion. Soon after, Ilan and another young man engaged in a battle where his leg was wounded. Ilan's friend Sasha pulled him from the battle field towards one of the village houses. He gave Ilan a gun, some food, cigarettes and he left. His friend who saved his life later was killed in the battle.

After some time a woman realized that there was a solder and she took him to the hospital, she was about 60 years old. It took them about 4 hours to get to the hospital.

The doctor operated on his leg, but he had bad infection. He was offered to amputate the leg, but he refused, he was just 18 years old. He was transferred to the army hospital. He was very lucky, because a new very experienced surgery doctor Dora Ivanova just came to that hospital. Ilan remembered the day when he saw that doctor. She told him that she had to do another surgery that will safe his leg. After 4 months, he was discharged back home.

He was walking on crutches. He received some money. Everything was organized very well. In each train every cart number 5 was designated for wounded soldiers; they received hot food, canned food, some bread, sugar.

He came to Birobidzhan at night. There were a lot of people at the train station, everybody was waiting for their son, husband.

Eventually Ilan was able to walk without crutches. Two of his friends helped him to learn how to repair watches and he worked with them for some time.

Military doctors advised him to move to a warmer climate due to his wound. Ilan decided to go to Tbilisi. He didn't know anybody in the city. One day he met a very nice man who was a

jeweler. He invited him to stay in his house with his family. Ilan worked with him for a short time. Ilan wanted to study at the university. It took him about 1.5 years to learn Georgian and he enrolled in the civil engineering department. He worked during the day and studied at night.

He became an engineer, had many friends. His doctor Dora Ivanovich visited him in Tbilisi.

Ilan helped his parents and then his sister and brother to move to Tbilisi. In Tbilisi Ilan worked on major construction projects and was well known and respected among his colleagues. However, Ilan and his family decided to immigrate to the United State to help his children to have a better life.

Many people came to the train station to say goodbye. He left for America and never hoped to visit Tbilisi again. Four years ago he went back to visit Tbilisi and meet with friends.