

Lazar Feldman	Russian Vets
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Feldman 1
Duration 12:38

- 00:00 (Interviewer) What is your first and middle name? (Feldman) Lazar Shmulyevich. (Interviewer) Lazar Shmulyevich? (Feldman) I have a difficult middle name. 00:08
- 00:08 That was the reason I was mistreated everywhere...in Russia. (Interviewer) Introduce yourself.00:21
- 00:21 I was born on May 17, 1924. (interviewer) Introduce yourself. 00:35
- 00:35 (Feldman) My name is Lazar Feldman. Shall I say Shmulyevich? (Interviewer) It's up to you. 00:48
- 00:48 (Feldman) My name is Lazar Shmulyevich Feldman. (Interviewer) What did you do before the war? 00:59
- 00:59 (Feldman) Before the war... I finished grade 7 in '40...in 1940. I enrolled in a trade school. At that time trade schools were being organized. I enrolled in a trade school, a turner training program. 01:20
- 01:20 I was to be trained to become a turner. I went to the trade school in '40. In '41 the war started. Um... I wanted to say...I was born a 12th child...I was born in Minsk. My story is unsystematic. (Interviewer) Go on please. Do you want me to put questions? 02:03
- 02:03 (Feldman) I was born in Minsk in 19... Shall I start from the beginning? (Interviewer) Start from the beginning. 02:07
- 02:07 (Conversation) 02:12
- 02:12 Um...I was born in Minsk, on May 17, 1924...um... My family... my family...I was my parents' 12th child, the last one. Well, in '26 our family moved to Moscow. From '26... from 1926 we live...we lived in Moscow. 02:55
- 02:55 I graduated... I did my studies...I finished grade 7 in '40... in 1940. Um... afterwards, I enrolled in #8 trade school located in Miuskaya Street, Moscow. 03:17
- 03:17 I was a student in a turner training program when the war started. In '41 the war started. Well, you know, that mobilization was... all boys and girls...03:33
- 03:33 To prepare for the war...we...um...every building...every street...Near every street and every building, there was set a barrel with water, sand boxes, and various tools, such as pliers, shovels, to prevent... in case buildings caught fire... 04:04
- 04:04 Air raids... bombardment... in July... in June the war broke out...on June 22nd; as soon after as in July Moscow was bombed... at the end of June. Therefore,

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- all boys and girls were prepared... 15, 16 years old... at that time I was...17 years old in May. 04:28
- 04:28 And we... I... the trade school...there... when the war broke out, 4 shifts were organized to work around the clock. 5 am, it was in the summer, 5 am to 11 am; 11 am to 5 pm. 04:51
- 04:51 5 pm to 11 pm; 11 pm to 5 am. We worked those shifts, because we had few machine tools, not enough for everyone, we worked shifts. A team went mornings, afternoons, evenings.05:08
- 05:08 Um...we were trained... we studied theoretical and practical parts. When we were prepared... when the war started...we went to war-time...um...war-time...we turned parts for war purposes. 05:31
- 05:31 ... all kinds of machine-gun and gun locks, etc. Our trade school was part of a military factory, a defence industry factory. It was located on Lesnaya Street, near Belorussky railway station. 05:51
- 05:51 When the war broke out... in June...in July...when air raids were going on, airplanes flew...we, all of us, were mobilized. Once an air raid started, everyone occupied his or her designated position: 06:07
- 06:07 ... on a roof, under a roof... different places...we were assigned our posts... some of us stood near the barrels with sand boxes, water and shovels. First target during the air raids, was Belorussky railway station. 06:28
- 06:28 We were located right near Belorussky railway station where all military factories were. During the air raids... we... at once... suppose we were on our way to our job. If we were halfway and the air raid started, we were pushed to stay in some "corner". 06:45
- 06:45 If we managed to get to the factory, then we were sent to our designated posts to catch firebombs. We were instructed on how to catch and dispose of them. 06:59
- 06:59 We... well...while the planes flew... the searchlights lit... we saw the plane flying...um... at first the planes flew low...they weren't afraid of anything...the searchlights lit planes...and they threw down firebombs. 07:17
- 07:17 Right on... near Belorussky railway station, where the military factory was located... and we... and they aimed at us too... all over Moscow...they aimed at military factories in particular. 07:30
- 07:30 And so we used to catch those firebombs, at first they used to throw them like pouring rain... lots of firebombs...they were small things...once they fell and burst into flame, we began to pour sand or water to put them out. 07:53
- 07:53 If there was a flame it was difficult to put out. So we poured sand to prevent it from burning. Firebombs used to fall down on streets and roofs. They used to fall through roofs onto attics. 08:06

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- 08:06 ... some of us were sitting in an attic, everything was prepared: sand, water, pliers. They...um... ah...in the attic... they used pliers...if they managed to catch a firebomb before it burst into flame... they caught and threw it right out, on the street. 08:32
- 08:32 When it was on the street, there were teams of boys and girls who caught the bomb with pliers and put it right into water or buried it in the sand... if they were quick enough. 08:43
- 08:43 But if there was a flame, it was too late. It put an attic on fire, everything was on fire. At that time... we...it was well organized...boys and girls were well mobilized. Some of us were workers, some were students, all kinds of occupations. 09:01
- 09:01 Well, um... it lasted until October 16th ... the air raids... October 16th was a critical moment. We were on our way to work. Moscow was paralyzed with panic... 09:22
- 09:22 ...when the Germans broke through the last front line...Moscow area...they were approaching Moscow... they were so close that they could see the entire city of Moscow. 09:31
- 09:31 They were aiming at Moscow... they were in the suburbs...at that moment a panic spread, everyone started running away, leaving... some were running away in horse carts, etc. 09:43
- 09:43 I had a big family, I mean, I was the 12th child... well in fact, I was the 9th, I didn't know 3 of my siblings, they had died as long ago as during the revolution, the 1st revolution. 10:02
- 10:02 The 3 of them... I was born the 9th. I didn't know the 3 who had died earlier. Well, and...um... all of my sisters were married with little children... born in '34, '36, '37, '40. That was how little they were. 10:29
- 10:29 Therefore, those with 2 kids... there was a decree: those with children were to be evacuated. They started evacuating those with kids. They brought a train for the evacuees. At first, one sis...rather 2 sisters with kids left. 10:47
- 10:47 One sister was with 2 kids and the other sister was with 2 kids. The last train was on October 16, right during the panic...the last train... freight cars...only freight cars...the last one was brought to Rizhsky railway station. 11:06
- 11:06 The last... old people...kids were leaving on the last train. I... we were gathered...I came to work...we were gathered and told that the Germans had broken through the front line...11:25
- 11:25 ...they were near Moscow. We were told to collect the tools into a pile not to leave them to the enemy...all in one pile: tools, parts, everything...um...well... to be destroyed...11:44

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- 11:44 Afterwards, they called... they went...um...to the accounting department to get the payment... there was no money, everyone had run away: the accountant, everyone. 11:55
- 11:55 We stood there, not knowing what to do. That was the night shift... I was there to work the night shift. Well...a man came to us, he said that the factory would be evacuated and that we were to go with the factory...those who remained in Moscow, those who wanted to. 12:11
- 12:11 We were to be given a 5 days d-ration to go with the factory. Well, my father was old at the time, he was 60 something...mother, father...and the sisters who had left before...12:32
- 12:32 I agreed to go with them. We went...12:38
End of file
- Feldman 2
Duration 12:53
- 00:00 ... she arranged to go with the daughter... rather with the son...born in '39... in '39, he was 2 years old. The father was a political instructor; he had been drafted right away. 00:15
- 00:15 My brothers had been drafted right away, 2 of my brothers had been drafted. They were killed in the war, all of them; and the husbands were killed too... sisters' husbands... only one came back from the war. 00:27
- 00:27 Well... I went with them to evacuation. I came to know that father too... the sister arranged to include father, mother and 2 more sisters on our family's evacuation list. They left on the last train. 00:55
- 00:55 That was a freight train. I also decided...not to leave them on their own...I cancelled my evacuation with the factory...I went with them. I was only 17. I was the draft age. 01:12
- 01:12 I didn't want to leave my old people on their own. I went with them. We went aboard a freight train. It was packed. People were on footboards, everywhere. And it took us a whole month to reach Urals. 01:29
- 01:29 We were bombarded while on our way there. One train car burnt down. We had to make stops frequently... a month... food... each stop... further into the country...we were given hot water...01:46
- 01:46 While on our way... on the stops... we used to run and to stations to get some food... we didn't have any food with us, we only brought the basics. On our way, we would run out...there were stations where we could get some soup. 02:05
- 02:05 Kitchens were organized for evacuees. They gave some soup and some cold water. We would get off the train to get some soup while the train was in the station. 02:19

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- 02:19 Then the train would leave... those who were quick would get on the train, those who weren't would be left behind. It took us a whole month to get to our destination. 02:29
- 02:29 We were aboard freight cars like horses or cows. There were sacks strewn all over the place... our belongings we brought with us: suitcases, etc. We were moving in the direction of Urals. 02:50
- 02:50 After reaching Urals, we changed the direction and started moving in the direction of Bereznyaky...station... town Beraznyaky, Solikamsk...where convicts had been exiled to, years before. 03:06
- 03:06 That was where we headed. True, I haven't told you... at the beginning... that my sister was sent to prison. (Interviewer)03:25
- 03:25 (Feldman) In '30, there were many children in our family. 03:28
- 03:28 We lived in Maryina Roshcha, that was a low-class neighbourhood, so to speak. People lived in small wooden houses... it used to be a suburb of Moscow...officially it was Moscow, but in fact, it was a suburb of Moscow. 03:41
- 03:41 In '30... I was little...one of my sisters worked at a confectionary factory, it was called the Babayev factory. She worked there, and she was a Komsomol member. 03:54
- 03:54 They had a good organization there. There was a cleaning lady working with my sister; she was sick with TB, and she had 5 kids and no family. Her wages was 30 rubles. At that time 100 rubles was the biggest wages. 04:16
- 04:16 Her wages was 30 rubles. She [sister] spoke during a meeting... at that time there were "Pyatiletka's" – 5-year plans for national economy development: 1st Pyatiletka, 2nd Pyatiletka, 3rd one, etc. People were told to make contributions to Pyatiletkas. Money was deducted from people's pays for the purpose of the country's defences. 04:36
- 04:36 That was before the war... after the war... after the civil war...the economy was in ruins...that's why they came up with Pyatiletka's. And so, every Pyatiletka, we were deducted some kind of taxes... 04:50
- 04:50 Well she... there was such an enthusiasm in the 30s, you know, after the revolution...People would say, "Let's go and make our contribution! Let's give away 2 or even 3-months pays!" 05:04
- 05:04 She [sister] spoke during a meeting. She said, "Well, we agree, but look, a TB-sick cleaner only gets 30 rubles. Let's only deduct a 1-month pay from her wages. It's not necessary for her to give away a 2-months pay". 05:20
- 05:20 That speech was noted and labelled "An attempt to undermine national economy". They accused her of undermining national economy. A few days later, they came to our home to search the place. 05:34

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- 05:34 We lived in a wooden house along with 9 other families. Each family occupied a room of 9 or 10 sq. m., with 5 or 3 kids. Your know, that was after the revolution in the '30s. 05:51
- 05:51 Well, we, too, were nine at our place. One of the sisters was sick. And so, after a while they came...they came to us to search the place. What was the point searching, when we didn't have anything? 06:08
- 06:08 We slept on the floor. There were 2 beds in our room for 4 people to sleep on. Other people slept on the floor in the other room. We only had 1 little couch and a drawer, that was all. 06:22
- 06:22 Well, since... I just wanted to tell...since in '17 when um... father and the children left because of the famine, he left...there were... I hadn't been born by that time...06:40
- 06:40 He went off in search of a living. He took with him 3 kids to make life easier for mother. He left. At that time, we received an invitation from America: mother's parents... that is mother's parents, and siblings who had left for America in '17. 07:10
- 07:10 We didn't wish to leave, we stayed in Minsk. And so they sent us an invitation. Father and 3 kids were away. She couldn't leave on her own. We corresponded with each other. They were sending...in the '30s they were sending us dollars... at that time a dollar was golden and valuable. 07:33
- 07:33 The government would take that dollar away from us. Instead they would give us paper coupons to buy things in "Torgsin"... just paper coupons...How many were we? 10, 15 or 12 people. 07:46
- 07:46 What value did those paper coupons have? We used to go to "Torgsin" and get a pack of flour or rice... I was little, I was surprised that the flour was so white. I hadn't seen white flour. 08:00
- 08:00 We always... after the revolution... I was born in '24, after the revolution...The living was harsh...Flour was black... sometimes we were given rice or something like that... a pack... all food was rationed. 08:18
- 08:18 That is why...um...when...they sent us dollars... we were in correspondence...the government would take away the dollar, instead giving paper coupons to buy things in "Torgsin". 08:32
- 08:32 That was the little aid that we had. When um... the sister spoke in a meeting, saying that there was no need to deduct a 2-months pay from her [cleaning lady's] wages, that only 1-month pay would be enough to deduct. 08:47
- 08:47 They came to search our place. They noted that we were in correspondence with America. At that time, in the '30 that was permitted. In '17 many people had left... brothers... but we hadn't. 09:01

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- 09:01 They accused her of corresponding with America, they searched, they started pulling up batten ends, but didn't see anything there. What was there to find? Those were wooden houses. 09:18
- 09:18 That was a search... they searched...and arrested everyone: father, except mother and sick sister, and I. I was a little boy. They arrested everyone: sisters, brothers, everyone was arrested. 09:33
- 09:33 How many were we? 5... rather 6 sisters... they arrested 6 sisters, 2... one brother was in the army at that time...they arrested the middle brother. They were kept in Butyrki prison all day long. 09:50
- 09:50 My sister...she argued with them... with those...Am I going into too much detail? (Interviewer) Please go on (Feldman and interviewer discuss editing).10:12
- 10:12 All of them were arrested and sent to Butyrki prison. The entire family was arrested. They were kept there all day long lying or sitting. The agents were looking for gold, because the Americans had been sending us dollars...10:28
- 10:28 We declared the dollars, getting paper coupons to buy things in "Torgsin". They were looking for dollars. They were looking for dollars... rather for gold. They thought we had gold! We were poor like church mice, with nothing to eat at times. 10:45
- 10:45 Those were the '30s, food was rationed at that time. And so they turned everything upside down and arrested everyone. They kept them in prison all day long. Then Clara, my sister, worked there...she spoke in a meeting for her. 11:06
- 11:06 They let everyone go, except her, because she made a big noise there, arguing. She yelled at KGB men, even kicked them, "Why have you arrested the entire family? What did we do wrong? If I said something wrong, then arrest me and no one else!" 11:28
- 11:28 They let them all go. The entire family was let go... they came back home. She was kept in prison, later sentenced to 3 years. 11:35
- 11:35 She was exiled to Kazakhstan. She served the time there. She was in her early '20s at that time, 19 or 20...She was accused of undermining national economy. 11:48
- 11:48 What kind of undermining could she do? She just said that it was no sense deducting a 2-months pay from a sick old lady's wages... 2-months pay...just 1-month pay. 12:02
- 12:02 She argued and yelled there. A man came up to her saying, "Clara, why are you yelling? Do you think it will help? No way!" She stopped yelling. Everyone was let go. She was the only one kept in prison. She was sentenced to 3 years. 12:22

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- 12:22 She lived in exile in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan for 3 years. (Interviewer) (Feldman) When she... I was a student at the time. When she returned after 3 years in exile, the neighbours in the backyard, said, "Here she is, back from exile". 12:43
- 12:43 And then, KGB people came to our place and said to her "Get out of here in 24 hours. Go wherever you want, except Moscow, Leningrad and Peters... 12:53
- 12:53
End of file
- Feldman 3
Duration 5:47
- 00:00 ... and Kiev. Go wherever you want...she wrote...24 hours... she was ordered to leave within 24 hours. She didn't know where to go. She knew...she had had a girlfriend in Alma-Ata. 00:15
- 00:15 She had been released. She called the girlfriend who lived in Kaliningrad, 200 km away from Moscow...in Kaliningrad, a small town. Later on, it was renamed to... Kalinin or whatever. 00:30
- 00:30 She got in touch with her; she said, "Come". And she went there. She took a suitcase and went away. She lived for a year there. She wrote a letter to a childhood friend who lived in Yalta. 00:49
- 00:49 She had known him since her childhood years in Minsk. She asked, "Can I come to you?" "Please do". She came to Yalta. In Yalta, she was... I am jumping the subject again...01:09
- 01:09 In Yalta, she was...she lived there, she got married there. In '40... in '41...in '41 she got married. She married an ethnic Russian... a Russian man, a driver. She worked... she got a job as a typist there. 01:29
- 01:29 She married a driver. In '41... when we left... she... um...the Germans invaded Yalta. They murdered all the Jews there. She lived with a Russian. People were saying that she was a Jewess too. 01:58
- 01:58 She was arrested by Gestapo. They took her with her little child. She had just born a child. She had been thrown out of the hospital... out of a maternity hospital. She had come home. 02:09
- 02:09 She was alone. He worked...prior to the capturing of Yalta, I talk unsystematically... (Interviewer) I understand. (Feldman) Please correct...He had worked as a ZIS driver. 02:29
- 02:29 ZIS was a model of a car manufactured at Stalin Automobile Factory. He had worked as a personal driver... prior to the German invasion...he had been a personal driver for Yalta's party secretary. 02:42

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- 02:42 When Clara was arrested... the Germans, seeing that he had a car..."You are going to work for us!" they said to him. "You will work as a personal driver for our general". 02:55
- 02:55 He had nothing left to do... By the way, he was a Finnish war veteran, where he had been wounded. He had been sent home. Finnish war had taken place in '39. Um...he worked... he was a personal driver for a German general. 03:14
- 03:14 He drove him to Simferopol and back to Yalta. By that time, the Germans had occupied the entire Crimea. She... she...was arrested by Gestapo. They tortured her, "Say who you are!" 03:29
- 03:29 First of all her first name was Clara. Her last name was Polotnyanenko, it was his last name; but they found out that her maiden name was Feldman and her first name was Clara. 03:43
- 03:43 She said that she... "Who was your father?" She said... well she had been taught what to say. She... we found out later on...Later on... when the war was over. 03:56
- 03:56 That was when we found out what had happened... I'm telling... (Interviewer) I understand. (Feldman) Before, we didn't know anything. We just evacuated, that's all. 04:04
- 04:04 We evacuated... but she...she said, that she was Armenian. She was a dark-haired woman. She was 20, or 22 or 23. She said she was Armenian. She knew a few Armenian words. 04:23
- 04:23 "Who is your father?" She said, "My father...my mother slept around... I had lots of "fathers". I don't know which of them was my real father". "Was you father a German?"04:35
- 04:35 Her surname...first of all... they figured out...the surname ended in "man", which was a German ending, like Feldman, etc. "Was your father a German?" She said, "I don't know. I don't know my father because... I'm Armenian, I don't know who he was. 04:54
- 04:54 My mother had many husbands". That was what she was saying. She had to say something, right? They put the baby on the table. They put their hands on his legs..."Say who you are. If you're Jewish, we'll cut... tear your baby apart right now..." 05:13
- 05:13 She screamed and cried. What was there to do? She said, "No, No!" They kept her there, torturing her for several days... until... her husband found out that she had been arrested. 05:24
- 05:24 He said to the general, "She's not Jewish, she's Armenian. Why did they arrest her?" They released her thanks to her husband. He talked to the general... general... 05:37

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- 05:37 He said, "My wife..." He said, "My wife was arrested by Gestapo". Thanks to him, she was released. 05:47
- 05:47 End of file
- Feldman 4
Duration 12:29
- 00:00 He took her to his parents near Simferopol. People there, too, said that she was Jewish. Again, she was arrested and tortured. Again, he pulled her out. And then, the father was... the father...there, his father...00:22
- 00:22 He was appointed a headman... the Germans...he was literate...everyone there was illiterate... he was literate...he was appointed a headman..."You're going to be our headman". 00:34
- 00:34 He had nothing left to do. He... there... the Ukrainians...were the watchmen there. There was only one German coming to control the Ukrainians...that was how it was... 00:48
- 00:48 "On this or that day, you are to give away this many cows, that many... etc." He did whatever he was ordered to. He gave them some and he didn't give them some. Later they ordered to give away all cows. 00:58
- 00:58 And then he called for a meeting. He said, "What do we do now? They are going to take away all our cows, what are we going to eat? Go to the woods. Go to the woods". 01:10
- 01:10 And they decided... when everyone had left...they decided...there was a village...everyone took their cows, and their goats, and chicken...There were mountains all around the place...there, in Yalta 01:27
- 01:27 They left for mountains. They got to the partisans and... with the partisans there... 3 years...almost...um... after the war... after the war when we found out that she was alive...01:43
- 01:43 We found out...reporters came to her, asking her how she managed to survive with the kid. She told them...3 years... a book was written..."3 Winters in Yalta". 02:00
- 02:00 If you find the book, she's there, in the book, her husband's there, in the book ... Clara Polotnyanenko and Clara Feldman. (Interviewer) OK. (Feldman) We found out after the war, that she had survived. 02:19
- 02:19 (Interviewer) Let's get back to the time when the war started. 02:22
- 02:22 (Feldman). OK, I evacuated...when I evacuated, I got a job in Bereznyaky... a job at an ordnance factory, we reset the machine tools that had been evacuated...we reset the machine tools. I worked as a turner. 02:38

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- 02:38 I worked as a turner, 12-15 hours shifts. There were 2 shifts: 8 to 12 and 12 to 8 am. I worked...we ate at our work stations. We turned shells... we turned weapons... there were Polish exiles working there... 03:00
- 03:00 They suffered same as we did... sleeping on the floor... many Poles...our family was given a small room to accommodate the sisters... 2...3...rather 4 sisters with kids and father and mother, and I. 03:19
- 03:19 We, all of us, lived in one room... later on we were given... as a big family...we were given another room...one more room... we lived there... I worked as a turner. 03:31
- 03:31 (Interviewer) And then what happened? (Feldman) Then, I turned 18...I turned 18...I was drafted to the army by the military commissar's office. 03:44
- 03:44 Well, not exactly drafted to the army...It's just I was 18...I was taken to the preparatory...um... well...I passed the selection process...and we...There was a siege of Leningrad at the time. 04:02
- 04:02 They needed drivers...I got... um...the doctors sent me...what is it called...to a drivers' school... the military commissar's office... the military commissar's office sent me there. 04:19
- 04:19 I was to be trained to be a driver. I became a full-time student at a drivers' school. The school was subordinated to the military commissar's office. I was in drivers' training. 04:30
- 04:30 This is how they taught at the school. There was a picture showing a motor in section. There was something under the motor... some little thing here and there... 04:38
- 04:38 They showed us the motor for a month. We went to school for a month. Afterwards, they started... we were 30 men there...30 or 40 men... not quite sure...maybe 50... 04:52
- 04:52 Afterwards, we were sent to some kind of a hangar...where a broken GAZ truck stood. At that time GAZ trucks were small... they were called one-and-a-half-ton trucks. 05:09
- 05:09 They were small trucks. And a five-ton... not exactly five-ton...what might it be called...um... hell, I forgot... (Interviewer) It's not important. 05:23
- 05:23 Well, there were 2 trucks there. One of them was a GAZ and the other one was a five... um...a five-ton... hell...I can't remember. And so we were trained how to take apart and put together a truck with the help of a technician. 05:40
- 05:40 We were being trained to put a truck together... how long was the training? A month or two. We were being trained to put it together. They put gas in the tank. We, all of us got into the truck bed; he made us go back and forth for a whole month. 05:53

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- 05:53 Each and every student was called by the instructor. "Sit down..." There was an army technician there, a real driver he was! He was our instructor. It was an in-depth training, a kind of... 06:07
- 06:07 We were driving... putting into gears...1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th...picking up and stopping...we were taught the stopping techniques...He told us how to do stuff, we did it in turns. 06:22
- 06:22 Hardly a student would pick up speed, he would say, "Stop!" Exam passed, student gets his B grade. He gave B grades to everyone. Everyone passed their exams. 06:31
- 06:31 Afterwards, we were drafted into the army. We were drafted...that's... well...um... (Interviewer) What year? (Feldman) '42. In October '42... in May I had turned 18... for some time I had been going to a drivers' school...afterwards... for some time I had been going to school...07:02
- 07:02 For some time more we had been drilled, etc. Afterwards, we were drafted to the army. We were put on a train and taken to um... Kurgan...town of Kurgan, previously Chelyabinsk region. 07:17
- 07:17 On arrival, we were placed in a wooden building, previously an hippodrome, a place where horses had been kept, a big empty building. We entered the dormitory and saw plank bunks, four tiers of bunks.07:34
- 07:34 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th tier of bunks...high ceilings..."Make yourself comfortable!" And so we started making ourselves comfortable. Some guys chose 1st tier, some got the 2nd one. I got myself comfortable on the 3rd tier. 07:48
- 07:48 ...the plank bunks... We had slept in our own cloths until uniforms were given out. We got our uniforms: coats, boots with leggings and...there was this, what was it called... the drill manual... we read the drill manual...08:11
- 08:11 We became military men. They started pushing us... it was in November...November was a cold month... there were splits all around the place...08:21
- 08:21 There were 4 tiers of bunks. Every bunk was occupied by a soldier. We were told to take off cloths, only leaving the underwear on. "Go to bed". No bedding, just bare boards. 08:33
- 08:33 No pillows, no blankets, just nothing! Either you had to lie on the trench coat, covering yourself with pants or something like that, or you used your trench coat as a blanket and that was how you were supposed to sleep. 08:47
- 08:47 We slept on boards. We weren't let to sleep long. 6 am... 5 am...or 6 am...the reveille...we would get up and right away would get to classes and drills..."Begin to sing!" You know how the army was. "Begin to sing!" and then again, "Begin to sing!" 09:08

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- 09:08 Among us, we had guys who had been in combat, and wounded...they were our commanders. One of them was senior lieutenant... a Georgian man. And so... um... according to the schedule...classes...drills...marching ... 09:27
- 09:27 We were being drilled on marching...we spent 3 months there if I'm not mistaken...3 months...right... probably 3 months...we were there. (Interviewer) What happened after that? 09:38
- 09:38 (Feldman) After that, well, a boss came calling, "You, you, you and you..." He called soldiers by their names. "Tomorrow you get on the train and go to Moscow". 09:52
- 09:52 We packed up our things, got on the train and off we were to Moscow. We came to Moscow... we didn't reach Moscow... we reached Los...railway station Los, near Moscow...railway station Los. 10:04
- 10:04 There was some kind of a hamlet there. Almost all the houses were run-down. This time we were placed in a house with bunks. 2-tier bunks had been prepared for us, with pillows and blankets. 10:17
- 10:17 That was where we were placed. We were being instructed there...There were trucks there... broken down trucks...brought from the front line. We repaired them. 10:31
- 10:31 We stayed there for about 3 months...stayed there... trained in warfare...and automobile repairs...we were being trained to drive trucks...we were awarded...we had been trained... we were awarded...10:59
- 10:59 ...not this thing... no, we were given papers confirming that we had had an in-depth training. And that was all. After a while, an order came from Moscow... to form a 10... no, how many? 50... a 50-truck column...11:09
- 11:09 We went to the automobile factory to accept new trucks, the ZIS model...later renamed to ZIL. The ZIL factory was located in Moscow. We went to accept new trucks. 11:21
- 11:21 We spent 3 days there, without food...We waited for the transfer confirmation. We didn't have anything to eat...The last day... 3 days... on the 3rd day we were given sandwiches. We couldn't buy food because you could only buy food with your rations cards at that time. 11:38
- 11:38 We went to stores... lying on the floor in some room...we had to kill time during those 3 days...nothing to eat... a sandwich was the only food they brought us. 11:51
- 11:51 On the third day we were taken... oh, and we were given the trucks... a truck to each one...um... we drove as far as the gas station...we had little driving skills...as far as the gas station... filled the tanks with gas...12:08
- 12:08 We formed a column and um...auto battalion... a 50-truck column...we drove to Moscow. On arrival in Moscow, we were given further directions - to drive to some small township - to receive shells...boxes with... 12:29

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12:29 End of file

Feldman 5
Duration 3:23

00:00 We drove there to receive boxes with shells... full boxes...and we were given an itinerary... the commanders were in the front and in the back as there were many young men... half of the men were as young as I was, 18 years old.
00:16

00:16 There were also 50- and 40-year old men there. Therefore, we were placed in the middle... we were poor drivers...we drove to um... the town of Kaluga... or some other...00:34

00:34 In the direction of Kaluga. We drove in the direction of Kaluga. On our way to Kaluga... those 50 trucks spread all along the road from Moscow to Kaluga. Some could drive, some couldn't. Some stayed over night. But later on we would pick them up. 00:55

00:55 On our arrival there, later on, we picked them up and drove to Astashkovo. Astashkovo was some kind of...We passed by Kaliningrad...Kaliningrad...Kalinin...the city of Kalinin. 01:11

01:11 The one...We passed by...The Germans had just been kicked out of the city. They Germans had been kicked out. During the battle of Moscow... they had been in the Moscow suburbs...01:22

01:22 They had kicked them out before we arrived there. We arrived in the city. It was destroyed. We passed by that city. We drove to Astashkovo, We stopped in Astashkovo. 01:35

01:35 We stopped to repair the trucks. We repaired the trucks and air raids started. We saw German planes flying over our heads, heading to Moscow. They flew by. 01:49

01:49 They flew by... one day...the Lovat river ran through Astashkovo. Afterwards we drove... um... closer to the railways...bound to Leningrad...some small township. 02:09

02:09 I can't recall its name. That was where we stopped to do some repairs. We were given itineraries...5 trucks were given...for 5 days...this... um...food...to drive... they drove for 10-15 days. 02:30

02:30 Some were lying... some were knocked down... whatever...on the way...drove... um... in the direction of the Lake Ladoga...in the direction of the Lake Ladoga. We drove for 5-6-7 days... devil knows how long...it depended...02:46

02:46 Some trucks were knocked down, some needed repairs. Some drivers were left behind... some were knocked down. When you carry shells and a bomb hits your truck, the shells explode and nothing is left. 03:02

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03:02 We spend all summer there...it was in the summer... oh and I got to the front line in March...with the trucks...with shells... to Astashkovo...(Interviewer) March, '43? (Feldman) March '43.

03:23 End of file

Feldman 6
Duration 6:24

00:00 Little by little, we drove there...several times... and my truck was sometimes out of order. I switched to another truck. Afterwards, when there were no more trucks... our entire auto battalion was destroyed...00:13

00:13 Only 10 or 12 trucks out of 50 were left, and they, too, were broken down. Our unit was disbanded and um... sent to a reserve regiment... those who remained, only 10 men... 00:33

00:33 Those were all that were left...out of 50 men...we were sent to a reserve regiment. A reserve regiment was a unit where all the remaining men of destroyed units were gathered. 00:43

00:43 Suppose, a unit is destroyed... a tank unit or an artillery unit... we spent a month there loading boxes with shells on freight cars... a whole month long...we were given some pottage to eat. 00:59

00:59 There was a pot of cold water for us to drink...to eat... and back to work... all day long...morning to evening... we had to work there...a whole month...we wore ragged uniforms and all the same...01:15

01:15 Then we...um... in the reserve regiment...we... when we were taken to the reserve regiment...the reserve regiment was stationed in the woods...no houses, nothing, just "Get comfortable", that was all...01:29

01:29 And so we got ourselves... some sat on the floor, some on a tree, every which way...got themselves comfortable... we worked there for a month. After that, we were given new uniforms, as our old ones were all ragged. 01:40

01:40 We were pulling boxes with shells. Those boxes... I was a thin guy... some of the guys were robust... guys from behind the Urals...they load a box on your shoulders and back, and tell you to get it to the woods. 01:54

01:54 I got boxes on my shoulders and back so that I was unable to make a step with my foot. I twisted my foot and fell down with the box weighing down on me. 02:04

02:04 Someone took the box off my back...That was how it was then. When we arrived... oh and after a month in the reserve regiment...2 officers came from the front line. 02:22

02:22 I can't recall now... a lieutenant or a captain...they came... "We need... an artillery regiment is being formed, 395th artillery regiment is being formed

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- near Starye Russy". At Starye Russy, 3 offensives had failed to reach their goals. 02:46
- 02:46 Ours was the 3rd offensive. When we got...um... we were taken...those 2 officers took us with them...and we... almost 3 days... no, 2 days...walked day and night to the front line. 03:02
- 03:02 ... to the weapon emplacement...we were brought to...um... this...a place close to Starye Russy, right next to the front line. Starye Russy was occupied by the Germans, while our units were stationed 2 km away from it. 03:19
- 03:19 The shooting... the shelling... shells flew by. It turned out... um... um...from Iran...the Americans gave us... from Iran and on the Arctic Ocean...from Iran and on the Arctic Ocean...03:46
- 03:46 They provided us with their assistance... that was from Canada... and the Americans... from Iran...new trucks...a new gun... a 122 mm gun...a howitzer...and trucks... the model was called "Inter" meaning "International". 04:04
- 04:04 "Inter" was the short for "International". It was a 5-ton one, big as a tank. To get into the truck bed, one had to climb a ladder. All the wheels were driven...the chains there...if stuck or tripped on a trunk, it got itself out. 04:26
- 04:26 Those were new trucks...driven to Starye Russy...there were good dugouts there. Soldiers there received us. We started studying the truck. While we studied the truck, shooting was all around the place with shrapnel flying in all directions. 04:48
- 04:48 Well, afterwards, when we had adjusted to the situation a little, we met... we went to the weapon emplacement where the guns were situated. We met everyone in the guns crews. 05:04
- 05:04 We were ten. We were distributed among all the regiment units. I don't know where they went. I know that two our men... I knew 2 men...well...what was an artillery regiment? 05:19
- 05:19 2...2 artillery battalions... 2 artillery battalions, each artillery battalion had 5 batteries. Each battery had 5 guns. I was in 2nd artillery battalion...um...um...5th battery...5th gun... that was where I was. 05:41
- 05:41 We met... they weren't situated close to each other...50, 100, 200 meters between them. They weren't supposed to be situated close to each other. A gun would cover a large section. 05:53
- 05:53 The regiment stretched several kilometres wide...the regiment... I was taken... we were taken to the guns...I was attached to a certain gun... as a crew member...once there was an operational readiness, an attack or a retreat...06:11
- 06:11 I was supposed to get to the gun and either drive back or forward. We met each other. We drove to the side... 06:24

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06:24 End of file

Feldman 7
Duration 0:47

00:00 Um... and so we started this... um...ah...on August 18th, we were in the 3rd offensive operation. 2 offensives... 1 offensive was in '41, 2nd offensive was in Starye Russy area...um...ah... well... in '42; the one I'm talking about was in '43. 00:23

00:23 Troops were pulling up... passing by us...everything...On August 18th... it was dark...I stood by the truck and all of a sudden... oh, and a flame flew from behind... those were the Katyusha's. 00:39

00:39 Katyusha's... at night...Katyusha's fired... everything was lighted up...it was dark... nothing could be seen...00:47

00:47 End of file

Feldman 8
Duration 12:06

00:00 Our guns started firing. Airplanes took off. 18th of August was the Aviation Day. Airplanes took off. The town was bombarded all day long...all day long...After that, tanks started moving on. 00:13

00:13 All tanks got stuck in the swamps...we stood by... our guns were firing...and the Germans were firing too. Shrapnel was flying all over the place. When we... we couldn't sit in the truck because if a truck had been hit, it would have been destroyed. 00:33

00:33 We... while the firing was going on...we would run away from the truck to hide from shrapnel...finding a hole or something like that to hide...00:43

00:43 (Interviewer fixes microphones and talks to Feldman).01:00

01:00 The offensive failed. An order was issued... we fought for 3 days...3 days...we were ready to take on the gun either to go back or forward. Well, 3 days passed...the offensive...everything failed. 01:21

01:21 An order was issued to retreat to the previous lines. As soon as we retreated to the previous lines...um...um...went...drove...to Nevel, in the direction of Pskov...Pskov...Pskov... if I'm not mistaken. 01:42

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- 01:42 Nevel was a little township. There was another offensive there too...another unit...We joined them... we got to the town of Nevel. We had stayed there for 3 days before the Germans started surrounding us. 02:02
- 02:02 We were surrounded, we got into a 'sack'. It was a big 'sack'...an entire army... an entire army got into a 'sack'. We got into a 'sack'. We had nothing to eat...there was no supply, no nothing. 02:17
- 02:17 We were starving there for 2 or 3 months, with nothing to eat, we were given some kind of water with powder... nothing to eat...scurvy and night blindness broke out. 02:29
- 02:29 I got sick with night blindness. I didn't see anything, unable to drive...the Germans firing endlessly...and so... they decided... 5 trucks... no, 10 trucks...10 trucks...to send them... to try and break through the neck of land... 02:47
- 02:47 ...The neck of land which was still open. The entire army group got into a 'sack'. We...10 trucks...drove through the woods... there was no way driving on the road...02:59
- 02:59 The roads were destroyed. We drove through the woods... being bombarded endlessly. The trucks kept getting out of order. We reached the place, breaking through the neck of land. 03:10
- 03:10 They would drop some kind of parachutes with lights...hanging high up in the sky and throwing light on the ground...the entire space was lit...and firing at us...No way to hide from shrapnel...When they would start firing we had to run away from the trucks, when carrying shells. 03:33
- 03:33 We drove there without shells; and we drove back with shells, boxes full of shells. We drove through the woods. Those were bumpy rides...with all the jolting, we were afraid the cargo would blow up. 03:45
- 03:45 While driving along the road...um... when we entered...this...they fired over us...over us... yes...they hit a squadron...they hit...horses running around... wild horses...falling down...lots of soldiers in the woods, building roads...04:13
- 04:13 They would hack the horses down with their axes... that was how hungry they were...they had nothing to eat, no grubs at all...there had been no food supply for a long time...04:24
- 04:24 We would eat horse meat...a bucket of...[inaudible].When on our way back...through the woods...I don't know how many days we were on the way back...04:37
- 04:37 All of a sudden a truck blew up following a shooting...some place ahead of the column...one of our trucks...probably it was one of our trucks... not sure...the fact was I tore along, don't know where, such was the explosive wave...trees were falling on men and trucks...everything...stones were falling... everything was falling...05:02

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- 05:02 I tore along...don't know where...I hit on the ground...buried under stones and trees...I passed out. I lied there until I gained consciousness...I saw lots of dead bodies and broken trucks lying around. 05:22
- 05:22 I lied on the ground...I came to myself...looking for... everyone... dead bodies...many soldiers building roads...there were lots of dead bodies...they were buried right away. 05:36
- 05:36 ...pieces of flesh...[inaudible] they were buried right away. Wounded were picked up...wounded were put on a truck. They were searching the place looking for me...all day long... or 2 days... don't remember. 05:50
- 05:50 Not exactly for me... looking for wounded...just... there were hundreds of them lying around...don't know how many. They found me, pulled me out...pulled me out...my legs were swollen, black...red... red...06:04
- 06:04 My legs were swollen, I was unable to move...I was lucky, all the dirt, everything fell on the front part of my body...I hit my head...my head was covered in blood...my face, everything. 06:19
- 06:19 They cleaned me up and put me on a truck. That was how they drove me to the place... I was almost unconscious...my legs were swollen like this...black all over. 06:30
- 06:30 They brought me there. Seeing that I was in such a poor condition, they sent me to the hospital...they took me to some hospital...a field hospital...one field hospital...we were lying on the floor in that hospital...06:44
- 06:44 The field hospital was a tent with 2 orderlies. All they did was dressing wounds, oiling with some stuff, that was all they did. And...and...um...um...I had stayed there all day long before being transferred to another hospital. 07:01
- 07:01 ...where we were lying on the floor too for a day or 2. They changed the bandages there. There was a 3rd hospital or a 4th one. I was brought to Velikie Luky. That was a town called Velikie Luky. That was a big railway station. 07:17
- 07:17 Trains were already running. Sanitary...I stayed there...um... all they did was changing the bandages. I thought I was going to have a gangrene: everyone there had their legs cut off. 07:30
- 07:30 Gangrene...they would have their legs cut off...or die. I was lying and lying there...um... several days...I was lying on a bed. There were beds there too, A medical train pulled up, I was put on the medical train and taken to Vologda. 07:51
- 07:51 On arrival in Vologda, they told me...my documents...how things were...I was given a paper confirming that I had been wounded. They gave me documents stating under what circumstances I had been wounded. 08:06

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- 08:06 Documentation... they stropped me naked...and there... and...they told me to put on some kind of gowns...they brought me to Molochny village. 08:16
- 08:16 Near...um...this...near...Vologda...Molochny village...There was a 4-storey school there turned into a hospital. They admitted me to the hospital. I was in the hospital... I stayed in the hospital for 6 months. 08:32
- 08:32 While I was staying there... my 4th months there, I underwent an operation. They cut off my toes, as they were black. I was afraid they would cut off my foot... but they only cut off my toes. 08:45
- 08:45 My foot was blue, while my toes were black. The toes were almost dead. Well, also I had a wound on my head. They dressed the wound. I stayed there for 6 months. 09:03
- 09:03 6 months... until May. Afterwards I was sent home. I was sent home...um... my house had been destroyed by a bomb. There was nobody around to be seen. No one to be seen. 09:15
- 09:15 One of my sisters had returned from evacuation. I went to my sister's place. The house didn't exist any more. I came... there was no house any more. I went to live at my sister's. 09:27
- 09:27 Later on, my mother and father came back. We, all of us, lived at my sister's while trying to obtain an apartment or a room...I, being an inval...I was given a status as a war invalid...09:38
- 09:38 I was given a document... I still have it here with me...well and um...and um...I went to the district executive committee...I went to the district executive committee's housing department. 09:48
- 09:48 I went to Moscow City Hall, I wrote to Stalin, Len... this...um...I wrote a letter to Voroshilov... um...in fact, at that time there were hundreds and millions of wounded and sick people, all kinds of people...10:03
- 10:03 At that time new buildings were not built at all. Everything was in ruins. "Well, we'll put you on..." Oh, and I went as high as district executive committee. District executive committee was dead. 10:13
- 10:13 They were putting war invalids on a waiting list, in the first place. They put me on the list, "You'll have to wait", Later on that became a common phrase, "You'll have to wait". 10:21
- 10:21 Only those who bribed, were getting something. And that was how I suffered for 15 years. Oh, and my father got a job at the Marine Ministry. He got a job there... he found that job right after he returned. 10:34
- 10:34 He was given... the Ministry... when in '60...new buildings were being built...I suffered there for 15 years...um... I was given... oh, and I was given a room...a walk-through room. 10:48

Lazar Feldman

Russian Vets

- 10:48 That was a walk-through room... I slept on the floor...15 years...afterwards someone brought me a bed...I slept on the bed...my father and mother slept with me. 11:00
- 11:00 I slept with mother and father for 15 years...in the walk-through room... people walked through my room when I slept. Only in '60 I was given a room, 15 sq.m., a room for 3, on the 4th floor. I had, with my wounded foot, to climb stairs to the 4th floor. 11:18
- 11:18 Afterwards, in '89, during the glasnost era, war invalids were not as numerous as right after the war, letters were written to newspapers...I was put on a waiting list, a privileged list as a war invalid. 11:36
- 11:36 A privileged list again! I got an apartment, a one-bedroom apartment for me and my wife... I had married...a one-bedroom apartment for me and my wife...I had lived there for a year before moving to Canada.11:50
- 11:50 My daughter had left for Canada and I...my wife went to live with my daughter to help her...I wanted to come too... she said, "Come to Canada". How... first of all, I had a one-bedroom apartment...12:06
- 12:06 End of file
- Feldman 9
Duration 3:51
- 00:00 In Toron...that...the Embassy...in the Embassy, they told me, "You can only go to visit your daughter in Canada after your wife has returned home". My daughter with husband had moved to Canada earlier. 00:10
- 00:10 She had married, and all that...and so...um... I wasn't given visa...and in this...in this...um...ah...in the United States, in America, my niece lived in America. 00:25
- 00:25 She had moved there earlier, in the '70s or '80s. She... daughter...rather granddaughter... my niece with husband and child...ah... um... my wife wrote her a letter, "Send him a visitor's invitation to America". 00:48
- 00:48 She lived in Boston. And so, she... to me...um...she invited me as a visitor, like. And so, through the American Embassy...I left to America. My grandnephew lived in America. 01:07
- 01:07 He had left earlier. He worked in "Merry Guys" Orchestra. [inaudible]. He had left in the '70s after the orchestra split. I went to him. The train... rather the plane was not headed to New York...rather not Boston, but first to New York...01:26
- 01:26 Then there was a connection...I reached New York...he met me, he lived in New York. He met me. I spent the night... he saw me off to Buffalo...train, oh a car rather...and I reached Toronto. 01:44

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Russian Vets

- 01:44 In Toronto, they arranged with lawyers here for me to be permitted to go. Well, I came here, at first I wasn't permitted to go through. They did the screening...I spent a week there. 02:00
- 02:00 Afterwards, the lawyers came to pick me up...lawyers...lawyers...and I was permitted to go through. I came to live here. 2 or 3 years later, my wife passed away. I was given this thing... and now I live here. 02:15
- 02:15 (Interviewer) One more question. Did you, as a Jew, encounter negative treatment by authorities or people? (Feldman) No, I didn't encounter anything of the kind. National...national...5 drivers...we lived separately...02:34
- 02:34 ...because the guns were placed on weapon emplacement...we would step aside. If a gun was out of order...it was impossible... a 122 mm gun was impossible to carry...02:46
- 02:46 In old times guns were carried by horses, later by trucks. We were 5 men living together: I was the only Jew, the other guys were: a Gipsy, a Ukrainian, a Russian and... who was the 5th? A Georgian, a truck driver. 03:03
- 03:03 We, 5 men lived at some distance away from the gun. But during the shooting, when they shot...the gun...the gun was there...a few kilometres away...03:16
- 03:16 2, or 3, or 4 kilometres away...we were stationed there... we were situated a distance away...they shot over us...shells were flying past us. They shot at us too. Shrapnel flew like pouring rain. We had to run away. 03:35
- 03:35 One had to run away during a shooting...looking for a hole or a stone to hide from shrapnel...shrapnel... if a truck was hit that was it...nothing to pick up. 03:51
- 03:51 End of file
End of interview