

Yakov Gelfandbein

Russian Vets Interview date Aug 28, 2012

Card 1

975 5085

duration 00 15

00 00 ...10 editions of a work describing the process of cancer onset, which ... (00 15)

975 5086

duration 00 04

00 00 (Yakov Aronovich... sorry... one last thing) 00 04

975 5087

duration 34 03

00 00 I'm sorry, I need to know in order to select the storytelling style. Will it be translated into English? (Yes). Am I supposed to speak in short phrases? That is very important for me. I didn't know if it's supposed to be translated into English... (It will be translated into English) 00 21

00 21 (It will be edited) Something will be cut off, something...(Please try not only to answer my questions but to express the full idea) I understand that. This is not my first time...(Alexander tells about a "Chinese interview")01 15

01 15 Do we start now? (yes) (Please state you name, place and date of birth) It's important that I state my academic credentials. (We'll start the formal part. Repeats the question) 01 43

01 43 I understand. My name is... Well, let's go. My name is Yakov Aronovich Gelfandbein. I was born in 1922, in Kherson, Odessa Region, Ukraine. During the post-war period I lived in Kharkov. 02 12

02 12 (How did you meet the war?) I learnt about the war literally half an hour after it was announced on the radio. At 9 in the morning I was in the area under German bombardment, a railway station "Luga", near Leningrad. I was in an artillery camp. 02 51

02 51 We loaded our stuff and got on a platform and by the evening time we arrived at Tallin, the towns of Tappa and Rackvere...those were 2 small towns. (how did you get to the artillery forces?)03 15

03 15 It's a simple story, how I got to the artillery forces. The thing is... before the war, every boy dreamed of serving in the army. We knew that the war was imminent, despite all of the agreements and pacts...03 33

03 33 We knew that a war against Germans was to be soon. We knew we needed to be prepared...I enrolled with the 2nd Leningrad Artillery College for Corps Artillery. (What happened to you during the action?)03 52

03 52 Well it's a very long story talking about all the military action...Anyway, during the first day... we were on a train which was obviously planned according to a mobilization plan... we arrived at a town of Tappa... 04 19

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- 04 19 ...where there was an aviation bombs depot, and where a forest airdrome was being built for the Soviet Fighter aviation. Our task was to stand and camouflage, not to do anything that could reveal us... 04 49
- 04 49 ...wait till the night time... when, according to the data collected by intelligence agents, German paratroopers were expected to land in the airdrome area...and engaging 2 corps artillery battalions equipped with 152 mm howitzers and 122mm guns, destroy them the very moment they would try to land. 05 20
- 05 20 (What were the most important episodes?) The most important episode was this. Of course we waited for 1 or 2 or 3 days. On the third day we heard Stalin's speech addressed to the Soviet people. 05 43
- 05 43 "My children..." At night a radio communication came: the transport had taken off and we needed to be prepared to meet it. The flying time wasn't very long. It departed from Riga, 20-25 minutes away...06 10
- 06 10 We took out the ammunition, removed grease and started preparing ourselves for their arrival. After a while we heard the humming sound of airplanes and saw an armada of about 70 airplanes approaching us from south-west. Then we saw them turning and approaching the landing strip. 06 35
- 06 35 However, the moment the first airplane signalled to light the landing strip, a series of red flares came from under the bomb stack, and the airplanes took off without landing and flew back to their airdrome. 07 15
- 07 15 The operation failed. The search for those who gave the signal didn't give any result. However German submachine guns, gas masks and other equipment were found under the stack. (Your further participation in the war?) 07 40
- 07 40 What was next? We got even for what happened. We moved out of the place because we were sure they would return to bombard us. We broke through to the Tallin-Leningrad highway. After that we forced our way via Narva, crossed the Narova bridge and that's when our command came up with a plan. 08 16
- 08 16 Our commander's name was General Luniov. He was the commander of military educational institutions, Leningrad Military District. The thing was: there was a very elevated, 3 to 4 km long, embankment to the west of the river Narova. 08 46
- 08 46 The embankment was exposed to fire from the right and left sides as well as from the forest edge. There was an impassable swamp under the embankment. And so we placed in disguise a howitzer battery on the left side and a gun battery on the right side, near the forest edge.09 14
- 09 14 The Germans were hoping to manage a break through to Leningrad and to capture Leningrad by storm. They spread themselves along the embankment, 3 km long. We decided that the right-hand guns will fire one gun from tail to head, and the left-hand howitzers will fire one gun from head to tail. 09 48

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- 09 48 The middle part would be done in due course. So when they entered the embankment, there was a command to open fire. The last tank blocked the embankment, the second one more so. The third one was knocked down from the embankment...10 11
- 10 11 ...the forth one was knocked down, the fifth one was knocked down. The front line tanks were knocked down too, part of them blocking the embankment. And slowly, one by one, not letting the tanks fire back, all the 70 tanks were destroyed on the embankment. 10 41
- 10 41 That was our response... that's how we saved Leningrad from being captured directly. We transported our tanks to...what it's called... forgot the name...Volosovo, if I'm not mistaken, right...a small town near Leningrad...11 07
- 11 07 We turned them in to active Red Army units. We, the students, were sent to Leningrad. On November 15, sorry on July 15, one month later we were given the rank of lieutenants and sent to the front. 11 35
- 11 35 that's when my most unpleasant war story began. The thing was, I was sent to 260 Rifle Division which consequently, to be exact on October 2, 1942, was surrounded. A little more than 90% of the division was left in the Bryansk forests' encirclement. 12 41
- 12 41 As it turned out later, I am the only survivor from the division to date. During dark nights, breaking out of encirclement, with no food available, eating berries, mushrooms... when it was freezing cold, the winter of year 1941 was a freezing cold one...13 19
- 13 19 ... eating berries and mushrooms, sometimes we were lucky to wing a sparrow or a crow...we were moving eastwards, during the nights, along dark pathways, breaking out of encirclement. 13 49
- 13 49 What saved me after the encirclement was the fact that I carried out the Party Candidate Card. Being an officer I was supposed to be a communist and a leader to my soldiers. And one more thing that saved me was the fact that I carried out my Jewish passport sewed inside my costume's trousers. 14 25
- 14 25 I have kept my Jewish passport till present, I have it now, I can show it to you right now... can we have a break? (Only if you're tired) I need to bring the passport (I'll make a note). OK, I'll show you my Jewish passport later. 14 55
- 14 55 What saved me was that all the men who had been surrounded were checked by SMERSH (army counterintelligence). On the one hand I was a Jew. On the other hand I had saved my Jewish passport. You'll ask me why? I was interrogated by SMERSH like everyone else. 15 31
- 15 31 I proved that I was a Jew. My Jewish passport had entries of my date of birth and the place the passport had been issued. And there was the notorious "5th line". And so they trusted me. 15 55

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- 15 55 They trusted me and I was sent to city Tula to be enlisted in a new unit. After that I participated in the defence of city Tula during which I was wounded near Tula. I caught 7 pieces of shrapnel in the head. 16 19
- 16 19 I big piece of shrapnel in the back, I lost my hearing, lost my teeth, got a present from Hitler for the whole war, thank God...and went on fighting. After that I was in a hospital, where there was a girl by the name of Galya Shevchenko. 16 57
- 16 57 She was from Zhitomir, Ukraine. She had carried me from the battlefield where I was wounded, and brought me to a medical battalion. She accompanied me on my way by train from the medical battalion to the hospital. 17 16
- 17 16 She was by my side 8 days and nights until I regained consciousness on the New Year day when I was on the medical train. She brought me to the hospital and stayed with me in the hospital in town Novograd-Volynsky. 17 44
- 17 44 She wrote me a card, in Ukrainian: "Remember of me if you think I'm worth remembering. If I'm not worthy, then forget about me. Remember of your comrades". I kept the card all through the war. But Galya and I lost track of each other during the war. 18 17
- 18 17 I remember her now and I'll remember her as long as I live. I stayed in the hospital for quite a while, quite a while... After that I was sent to Stalingrad area. 18 47
- 18 47 When in Stalingrad, first I was in reserve. After the reserve I was sent to an operating unit at the east foremost post of Stalingrad Front. There were no Germans to the east of the post. The post was called the Pichuga Gully. I'll show you the photo. 19 27
- 19 27 In this gully Pichuga, on a bell tower, I was catching German shells. Under the bell tower, in the gully, with 3 poplars nearby, which are still there in the gully, and I'll show them to you, my battery was positioned. 19 59
- 19 59 At that time I was assistant battery commander, meaning I was the officer who was in command of battery firing. The commanding officer commands "fire". He does the rippers and conducts firing being the commander of all the gun crews. 20 22
- 20 22 The officer was the assistant battery commander. An enemy bomb hit between the second gun's carriage cheeks. It didn't explode. Someone had to take it out. I called a tractor, hooked a long rope and carried the gun out. As it turned out later, the bomb was stuck in sand. 21 10
- 21 10 What I did was: I dug it out of sand, and hooking up the rope pulled it out. When it was detonated and the fuse was taken out we found out that it was full with sand. 21 31
- 21 31 There was a note written in Russian inside the bomb: "We try to help as much as we can!" That was one of the stories. 21 52

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- 21 52 In Stalingrad I had to act along the entire right-hand flank of the front. While the regiment was a reserve unit for the Supreme Command in Chief...my commanders were prominent Marshals of the Soviet Union: Rokossovsky, and others who were in command of the Stalingrad Front's northern section. 22 41
- 22 41 I had to fire at Mamayev Kurgan, on 90 occasions. There was Airplane Gully there, Nechetka Gully and some other gullies making one big gully which could be seen through up to Mamayev Kurgan. 23 43
- 23 43 We had to fire by direct laying. We were firing from open positions or from an observation post I used to occupy in the night time. I used to drag a metal thing which was part of cartridges tied up on both ends which was used as a toilet. At night I used to throw everything out of the trench. Then I used to pull in the other end connected to the observation post. 24 51
- 24 51 I used a periscope for observation, used a periscope for observation. I remember one of the battles when an observation post well observed by me was situated at a farm named "Proletarsky". 25 35
- 25 35 Despite the fact that it was situated on a hill I could see it very well, because I sat at the opposite side of the hill. The Germans realized that I could see it well. 25 56
- 25 56 I remember, one morning, around 5 am, a group of German soldiers coming out and capturing a couple of buckets of water. The Germans needed water desperately. To get some water they had to run to the opposite side of the hill near village Kletskaya kept by us prior to the offensive and where we took the offensive later. 26 35
- 26 35 A German platoon led by a corporal came out. The Germans had a tradition: a German platoon consisted of 4 squads. Here I'm going to open a secret organization of the German army. 27 03
- 27 03 The first squad was led by a corporal, rather not a corporal, but a junior sergeant, what the hell it was called...do you remember? (What happened to you?) I'm going to tell you right now, don't worry. I'm going to tell you... 27 35
- 27 35 What the hell... all right...And so he pulled out 2 buckets of water. They washed themselves and starting shaving themselves. He drove out a car. They loaded themselves on the car. 27 58
- 27 58 One of them looking like a real German pig got in the car and started playing a cheerful march "Nach zu Est" – March to the East. And so when he played "Nach zu Est" I commanded fire!: 2 batteries of 24 guns, 2 seconds, running fire. 28 37
- 28 37 Do you understand what is 2 seconds? 2 seconds is a craziness. They really sat and after 2 seconds I repeated one more time. And of course the battery was destroyed. 29 14

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- 29 14 Later I published the story entitled: March to East or the story with a harmonica. I recall many different stories. I am going to jump ahead of myself and tell you a similar story. 29 48
- 29 48 On the river Miuss, a well known Miuss Front...we broke through and liberated the entire Ukraine, advancing to Perekop, capturing Sevastopol. I took part in the combat. My uncle was killed during the liberation of Sevastopol. 30 15
- 30 15 His name and the name of his ship are on Honours Board in Sevastopol. He was a chief seaman gunner on Destroyer "Kaliakvia" later renamed to "Dzerzhinsky Destroyer". 30 46
- 30 46 That's when the story I'm going to tell you took place. At the Miuss Front I occupied a flank post – observation post located conveniently so that I could see a very deep canyon, about 100 m deep. 31 10
- 31 10 The Miuss Front itself was known for many canyons and a broken country. The Blue Miuss was cut across. When a German platoon came to that place, they didn't expect it to be seen by us. 31 45
- 31 45 My scouts saw that platoon coming to the place, the soldiers taking off their cloths, hanging their uniforms on trees. Germans were very clean and neat. They used to crush lice every day despite the fact they didn't have a chance to wash themselves every day. 32 08
- 32 08 They hung their cloths on trees, they hung their submachine guns on trees. Then they started splashing hot water at each other to exterminate lice. Well, at that time we kept ammunition untouched. We were allowed to use only 2 shells a day per battery for adjustment. 32 51
- 32 51 To make use of them, we had to ask for our regiment commander's permission. The battery commander asked the regiment commander for his permission. We had to report to higher command of usage of 2 shells. 33 07
- 33 07 Although we had a reserve stock of 2 ammunition sets: 130 shells making 2 train cars load. We used them and used them spending a half, and taking the other half to use in Sevastopol. 33 24
- 33 24 Somehow or other I got the permission and fired 2 powerful fire volleys to put everything on fire you see...a 43 kg shell with a fougasse charge! It fell down and exploded. There was a river there, it fell down in the river going deep down. (Telephone ringing) 34 03
- 975 5088
Duration 14:51
- 00 00 (You were talking about... Miuss) I was talking about Mamayev Kurgan. I just digressed and jumped ahead of myself. (Let's talk about). Yes, I'm going to force forward. (Your military career) Yes. Are we on? (Yes).00 27

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- 00 27 About the defence of Stalingrad. Talking about direct firing at Mamayev Kurgan, I can highlight 2 most important episodes which had a considerable impact on surrounding the Stalingrad army group. 00 54
- 00 54 The first episode took place on December 22, 1941. The second one took place on November 19, 1942. Did I say '41? No, it was '42. The first episode was this. 01 25
- 01 25 All of a sudden we received an order issued by the Commander of the Don Front... was it Marshall of the Soviet Union Rokossovsky at the time? He ordered ... 10 am was an unusual time to start an artillery preparation... to open a whirlwind fire at an area... not a particular target... 02 05
- 02 05 ... of course including zeroed target...mainly at an area. The entire artillery from the Stalingrad North flank was gathered there. It was gathered in a dark night in the steppe of Stalingrad...We had batteries placed close to each other. One battery next to the other, and another...Some batteries had 8 to 12 guns. 02 36
- 02 36 Suddenly those batteries opened violent fire. The number of shells was unlimited. There was a large supply. Shells were transported in freight cars from a station named Frolovo, north of Stalingrad. 02 59
- 02 59 They were brought to the position day and night. A desultory fire was going on for 2.5 or 3 hours, The second episode... it wasn't on 19th. That was the third episode. It took place on November 7, the Day of October Revolution. 03 29
- 03 29 On that day the second Front newspaper was released with Stalin's photo in it. He was pointing at Kalach. The caption read: We are going to have a celebration in our street! Meaning in Kalach. 03 52
- 03 52 That day, a huge fire was opened at the German troops. It was also desultory, also at an area. A huge number of shells were fired. Almost 2 freight cars load of shells per battery. 04 21
- 04 21 What happened? The Germans were scared of our breakthrough. They sent Italians to the right flank. After sending Italians to the right flank on November 7th, they got more scared. And so they sent Germans from Serafimovichi (from far north) and even farther, to the south-west of Serafimovichi. 05 00
- 05 00 We removed the batteries and concentrated them...in course of 2 or 3 days...in the area of station Kletskaya. The station was located on Don's right bank which we never surrendered to the Germans. 05 31
- 05 31 On November 19, an offensive took off of this springboard. The armoured corpses just created by Stalin were involved in this offensive. The breakthrough armoured corpses... after an immense artillery preparation. 05 52

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- 05 52 They rushed to the plateau and moved forward in the direction of Kalach without looking back to see what was going on behind them. I was involved in that breakthrough. I supported the march to Kalach. 06 12
- 06 12 The thing was that the Germans used to utilize Soviet tanks T34 for anti-aircraft defences. They often sent the tanks from a firing ground north-west to Kalach to Kalach. There was a German column moving on. 06 40
- 06 40 We moved closer to that column. I was the detachment commander. I had an infantry battalion under my command marching in front, followed by a platoon with 2 anti-tank guns, followed by my howitzer battery (close to the German column, the Germans identified by its sound). And so we approached the left bank of the river Don, marching through Kalach. 07 10
- 07 10 When entering the bridge, with all the tanks lined up in a column, their headlights on, we slowly approached the river crossing. The Germans didn't expect that. They had 2 anti-aircraft 88 mm batteries: 1 platoon...rather 1 battery was neutralized after we approached the crossing, the second one was neutralized once we entered the river crossing. And so we captured the river crossing without a shot. 07 51
- 07 51 We approached the farm Marinsky 5 Kurgans. 3 days later, at 3 pm the Stalingrad ring was closed. It was then that I was awarded my first combat medal: Medal for Combat Merits. It was a big honour for me. There were no medals for the defence activities. 08 16
- 08 16 (What happened after the Battle of Stalingrad?) After the Battle of Stalingrad we advanced to Miuss Front. We remained for 8 months there, engaged in defences activities. We defended a tank dangerous direction later switched to the front line. After that we captured a well known (inaudible) grave and advanced to the left bank of the river Dnieper. 08 44
- 08 44 We went on to capture Perekop. I participated in the assault on Stalingrad. Let's move to that room, I'll show you the souvenirs and the photo given to me by ... general...Yakov...Kreizer. I participated in capturing Stalingrad as a member of a paratroopers crew. 09 23
- 09 23 (You said you captured Stalingrad?) Sorry I mean Sevastopol. (Tell us about Sevastopol) Sevastopol... I captured Sevastopol, and this is a well known fact, in caskets. The Germans realized they wouldn't be able to keep Sevastopol. 09 50
- 09 50 ...despite the fact that they had kept it for 173 days. We captured it in 3 days. I captured it on my birthday – on May 8th; my son was born on May 10th. So we mark 3 occasions...10 09
- 10 09 What happened? They brought the caskets to the northern side's bay. What was it called? Ah... the 9th ravelin. We captured the caskets in the evening. Soldier's wisdom: captured the caskets, caulked them with... what's it called... damn it...well what do they use to caulk (hemp?) No, hemp and poured with black resin...11 00

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- 11 00 Every casket cover gave us an oar, because we removed the upper part. The lower part was caulked and was used as a boat. This way we had 4000 boats – and 8000 men. 11 21
- 11 21 this is well known from the History. I and my scouts, the radio operator and a small support crossed the bay by swimming 1200 m to the northern bay. I have a Jewish passport with traces of Black Sea water on it. 11 53
- 11 53 We landed on the Graf Wharf following the landing of amphibians. We went on to occupy... what's it called... it stands on top...(Nakhimov's monument) It was erected later on. 12 39
- 12 39 It was on top of the Panorama... Khaldey made my photo...the photographer...the official photographer for Pravda newspaper...he took my picture saluting the liberation of Sevastopol. 13 12
- 13 12 On the 3rd Sevastopol was captured... well Khaldey captured the image on film...we used the remaining shells...after Perekop...we had had only 2000 shells remaining...13 38
- 13 38 And that was a huge amount. It was easier to use than move to Belarus. In Belarus I participated in operation *Bagration* liberating Belarus, Poland and Auschwitz. (Tell us about liberation of Auschwitz.)14 04
- 14 04 When we came to Auschwitz we saw 2000 exhausted people, mainly women and children. We moved them out, took them to... what's it called, damn it...not far...from Oppeln, what was it called then? 14 51
- Card 2
975 5089
Duration 9: 58
- 00 00 Auschwitz... that's interesting... (We'll start the camera) and I saw a red tablecloth , at Oppeln plant warehouse in Auschwitz. I unfolded the cloth and read that it was from town Gradsk, Poltava region. I wrote a letter to Gradsk, Poltava region, looking for the lady whose name I found on the cloth. 00 45
- 00 45 I also found her address, the embankment in the town of Gradsk. I never found her. This story was published on the Internet. The story was entitled "The red tablecloth of Auschwitz". (I have a question: You were in artillery, how come you ended up in paratroopers?)01 10
- 01 10 I didn't understand, what paratroopers? (repeats question) Oh, I was in artillery, I captured Sevastopol as artillery man. That's simple: a group was assigned to move forward, leaving everyone behind. It joined the paratroopers along with its units. 01 48
- 01 48 (What happened after Auschwitz?) After Auschwitz? Well that was almost the end of the war. I was sent to Dzerzhinsky Academy. I had a double major: Artillery instruments, and Space. I was sent to a space launching site named Kapustin Yar. 02 20

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- 02 20 I worked with Korolev. I have a photo with him and myself, a top secret at the time. Well I was involved in the shooting of little dogs. The little dogs were used in academic launches. We used them to research space radiation and impact of particles on development of cancer. 02 52
- 02 52 I wrote a book. Nobody can understand this book because it's based on 4 scientific subjects: math, philosophy as a main science and reflection of math, medicine, oncology, pathology – many related sciences. 03 23
- 03 23 The book is difficult to understand, there's nothing I can do about it. The book stood 9 editions. The last one was released last year. I have it with me and I'm going to show it to you. 03 37
- 03 37 (Is there another word for the shooting of little dogs?) Yes, the shooting of little dogs is a professional term. You see, the shooting of little dogs implied that dogs were launched into vertical space. 04 03
- 04 03 This is "sub" while space is around the Earth. We launched little dogs which were "sub optimal". They were launched up to go down with parachutes. Some of them went down from 100 m altitude, some – 200 or rather 500 km.04 36
- 04 36 With some of them the parachute opened at 5 km altitude with no previous parachute opening, some – at 95 km altitude, 5 km without a parachute, some – at 500 km altitude, 5 km without a parachute, third – 5km altitude, 500 km without parachute. 05 03
- 05 03 (the most memorable episode of your service at space launching site) well, there were many episodes: rockets falling down, when Korolev launched little dogs vertically and at the same time...a device was launched to research the spectrum of solar radiation. 05 49
- 05 49 A so called heliograph. It was located at the end of a rocket. This is how it was: first came the rocket, then the rocket's parachute module, then the instrument module, then the instrument module for saving instrument module, then the wing MiG 33 with a triangular wing, and then the heliograph, inclined at 14 degrees. 06 26
- 06 26 It was broken off. It fell down while the rocket was heading up to the end. The instrument module and heliograph, like a young one, went down. Those were the Korolev's rockets. 06 48
- 06 48 (Your medals during the war and afterwards) 1 have 2 medals: 2 orders of the Great Patriotic War; 2 orders of the Red Star; 2 medals for Combat Merits, a medal for Stalingrad; a medal for Moscow; a medal for Warsaw, for new lands, 2 medals for Kiev (here they are) and many more, total 38 medals. 07 35
- 07 35 And a recent award, a very important award from Canada's Prime Minister. It's big and original, you may read about it in the next room. (Jewish passport. As a Jew, were you treated differently?) 08 09

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08 09	During the war we didn't understand what anti-Semitism was. There was no such a concept. Jews, Russians...in my battery units there were... probably people of all ethnic groups of the Soviet Union...08 31
08 31	There was nothing... nothing at all...For instance...my soldiers liked my very much, very much... for being fair and kind, for caring about soldiers, for having sympathy with the soldiers. There was no such a notion. 08 59
08 59	After the war? Yes, after the war it started... well to be honest, I was treated differently at the end... before Stalin's death. Obviously that was because the Jews didn't meet Stalin's expectations in relation to Israel. 09 27
09 27	For some reason we forgot that Israel owes its existence to Beria, owes it to Stalin. Stalin smashed his fist down on the table. All the captured German weapons were given to Israel. Stalin supported Israel's struggle against the Palestinians. 09 49
09 49	this is a fact we forgot about. This is a well known fact. (Background conversation) 09 58
975 5090 Duration 5:15	
00 00	(What young generation knows about Jewish WWII veterans heroism?) You know, here in Montreal, we have a very good veterans' organization: more than 100 members. Mark Groysberg, its president works hard for our young generation's education about veterans' heroism. 00 40
00 40	The Russian Consulate is working too: they organize the Jewish veterans receptions, they pay their respect to the veterans during those receptions. I think we're doing well in this respect. 01 08
01 08	(the young generation is remote from the history of WWII). It's like Napoleonic wars to them. (do they need to know about Jewish heroism?) Yes, they should know about the Jewish heroism and the Soviet heroism as a nation. 01 29
01 29	That's why your program is of tremendous educational and human importance. (Looking back what was the most vivid episode during the war?) 01 50
01 50	The most vivid episode... well, Sevastopol, with its caskets... well, of course, the 19 th of November near Kletskaya, the time was turned back. Churchill said back then: "Time point of the World War II". 02 26
02 26	The time turned back. The huge artillery pressure and the movement of armoured and cavalry corps, as well as infantry divisions wiped German occupants from the face of the Earth, at Kalach river crossing. 03 02
03 02	I have already mentioned that I participated in the capture of Kalach. And this was the most vivid memory of the war. I have many more such memories though. Any memory of the war is vivid, with its blood, horrors, lives and

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losses – all the same, all the memories are vivid and are comprehended as one great victory.03 36

03 36 Once the Germans said “Nach Osten”, they signed their death verdict. Hitler signed his death verdict once he said so. Their destruction was predetermined. There was no way defeating the Soviet Union.04 00

04 00 There had never existed a power to defeat Russia since Ivan The Terrible’s era. (last question: Do you see yourself as a hero?) No, I don’t. I consider myself a war soldier. Although, everyone here is considered a hero.04 25

04 25 They (the Canadians) consider everyone as a hero. Well, this is a Canadian point of view. “Hero”...I consider myself a war soldier, like the rest of us – generals, soldiers, officers, everyone. 04 44

04 44 Just a soldier. I was lucky. There’s no fault in being lucky. Things could have turned worse. Just a good luck. All the time at the front line and just 3 contusions and this one (points).05 08

05 08 (Thank you so much) Is that all? (Background conversation) 05 15

End of interview