

<b>Fedor Grinberg</b>	<b>Russian Vets</b>
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Grinberg 1  
Duration 0:36

00:00 Please speak a little louder, I have hearing problems in my left ear, my right one is better... so if you speak softly I won't be able to hear you. (Interviewer speaking: I can talk louder) (Grinberg) No, no...Are you going to ask me questions? (Interviewer) Yes, I'm going to ask you questions. 00:21

00:21 Please move your chair closer. (Interviewer's voice) He will look at you. (Grinberg) No, I'm not going to look at you. You are very pretty but I'm not going to look at you...

End of file

Grinberg 2  
Duration 1:29

00:00 (Interviewer) Hello. What is your name and where were you born? 00:08  
Grinberg: My name is Fedor Grinberg. I was born in Kiev. (Interviewer) One second. Let's start from the very beginning so that everything can be heard 00:20

00:20 (Interviewer) Let's ask him. (Interviewer) OK, please tell us your name and place of birth. 00:26

00:26 My name is Fedor. I was born in Kiev in 1923. I was born on May 20<sup>th</sup>. 00:36

00:36 (Interviewer) Where did you go to school? 00:38. (Grinberg) I went to school... I finished 10 grades. After that I wanted to be an officer... it's called "an officer". At that time that was called "Red Army commanders". 00:50

00:50 At that time... I wanted to be a military man. I went to the Military Commissariat. I was sent to Simferopol Military College, in Crimea. 01:02

01:02 I was going to study to become an officer. Yes. The war began when I arrived. I arrived on June 20<sup>th</sup>, and right away the war began. We had studied for 6 months before being awarded a rank of junior commanders. 01:21

01:21 We were sent to the city of Omsk where our unit was to be formed. It was the 308 Rifles Division. 01:29

End of file.

Grinberg 3  
Duration 11:45

00:00 (Interviewer) Please go on. (Grinberg) Shall I go on? (Interviewer) Yes, please. 00:06

00:06 After my graduation from a 10 grade school... 10 grade school...I wanted to become a military man. I went to the Military Commissariat to be sent to a military college. 00:17

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- 00:17 On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942 I was sent to a military college. We passed exams there. When we were going through the exams, the war began. We were granted the rank of a junior commander – senior sergeant. 00:37
- 00:37 We were sent to Omsk, Siberia, where our unit was to be formed, 308<sup>th</sup> Rifles Division. Lt. Colonel Guz was the Division's commander. (Interviewer) What happened there? 00:56
- 00:56 Afterwards we were sent to Stalingrad. The 308 Rifles Division was formed and sent to Stalingrad. (Background noise) (Interviewer) Please go on. (Grinberg) In Stalingrad we were on the right bank of the river Volga. 01:22
- 01:22 We crossed the river to reach the left bank of the Volga in the night time. ... on the opposite side of the river...I was a machine gunner. I was assigned to a gun port where the machine guns were positioned. 01:39
- 01:39 We were there... yes, of course... we stood a great number of German attacks. We used to beat off all the attacks. I had a partner, a guy, I don't remember whether he was a Kazakh or Uzbek, I can't recall...01:52
- 01:52 After we beat off the attacks, [Inaudible] there was a quiet spell. It lasted 3 days. We didn't know anything...I told him... we ran out of food... out of bread...I told him, "You know, please go and bring us some food. I'll stay here and wait for you". 02:17
- 02:17 He said, "I don't feel well, please you go". When I got out of that place it turned out this way: there were 3 women standing down the hill. We were on top of the hill, we, the machine gunners...When I walked down there, I saw 3 women standing down there...02:35
- 02:35 ...and a man who had his cheek torn off. He said, "We got into an encirclement". It was getting dark, the time was 7 or 8 pm. It was getting dark; and then we saw some Germans walking in the distance. 02:47
- 02:47 There were lots of them on the hill. We managed to hide in a dugout; they didn't walk into our dugout. They ran into the dugout where this soldier was. Of course they caught him. They didn't walk into our dugout. 03:06
- 03:06 (Interviewer) Look into the camera. (Grinberg) An hour or so later we saw German tanks running in the distance. I told my commander "Either we are under the tanks or we have to knock them down. There is no other way, no choice". 03:23
- 03:23 (Interviewer) 1 second. (Grinberg) "No other way out. Either they knock us down or we knock them down". We took 2 anti-tank grenades. First, we knocked down one tank, then I knocked down a second one. 03:38
- 03:38 The third tank started... when the third tank moved, the German tank.., it started firing at us. (Interviewer) Shooting at your dugout? (Grinberg)[Inaudible] After we knocked down those 2 German tanks, the third tank started firing at us. 04:01

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- 04:01 I was wounded in the right arm... here... at first I didn't feel any pain...I was scared my arm was torn off...torn off... I felt I was bleeding...I grabbed my arm... my commander was not anywhere near me. 04:18
- 04:18 (Interviewer) Look into the camera (Grinberg) I looked around. My commander was nowhere near. I started crawling... I saw him lying on the ground. He was conscious, but contused. 04:27
- 04:27 I started slapping his cheeks and kicking his legs. 20 minutes passed and he said, "Don't beat me, I am in pain". And so I made him gain consciousness. We started getting out of the encirclement. 04:40
- 04:40 (Interviewer) Look into the camera. When you talk, please smile and look into the camera. Don't worry, it's not a direct TV broadcast. (Grinberg) OK. We started getting out of the encirclement. 04:58
- 04: 58 (Interviewer) The camera please! (Grinberg) I can't remember... I need to recall what happened after that. (Interviewer) Don't worry. You can repeat, don't be nervous. You can repeat and we will do the editing. Look into the camera. Don't be afraid to forget things, we'll ask questions until you recall. 05:32
- 05:32 And then we decided to start getting out of encirclement. We ran into...There was... one moment...The only place for us to get out was through a school. The school was occupied by the Germans. 05:50
- 05:50 (Interviewer) In Stalingrad? (Grinberg) In Stalingrad. In the school...the Germans... there was this school...they sat down to have their meals. When they sat down to have meals... so... at that time...06:04
- 06:04 ...we stood up, we yelled "Platoon, follow me, over the top! We stood up throwing anti-tank grenades at them. We were throwing the grenades trying to hide ourselves to avoid being scathed by the enemy fire. 06:15
- 06:15 Throwing the grenades helped us to break through. We ran to the right side, and the girls ran to the left. Soon I lost the sight of the girls. I don't know where they ended up. 06:27
- 06:27 And so we broke through. The two of us broke through. We were moving on little by little. The Germans occupied the Volga. Suddenly we heard someone ordering "Halt! Who are you?" We realized we got to the Russian position. 06:42
- 06:42 We were taken to the Division's Political Department. They dressed my buddy's wounds. We were sent to the river crossing. When we approached the crossing, the guard started lifting the bridge. 06:59
- 06:59 I said "Please let us walk over". He said "I'm not going to put the bridge down". He didn't let us walk over. (Interviewer) Who was it? (Grinberg) A soldier standing at the bridge. A soldier, letting people cross over to the other side, to get into a boat. 07:20

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- 07:20 (Interviewer) Which side? (Grinberg) A soldier, to the right bank. (Interviewer) In Stalingrad? (Grinberg) Yes, in Stalingrad... to cross the river Volga. (Interviewer) I don't get you. Do you get him? (Interviewer) Ok, go on. So you broke out of the encirclement? Please tell us. So you got out of the encirclement. What was after that? 07:35
- 07:35 (Grinberg) So we broke through, out of the encirclement. At first, we didn't realize that we had broken out of the encirclement. When we broke out [inaudible] because there was a school in front of us. 07:50
- 07:50 The Germans were sitting and having their meal. It was a night time. We stood up, my commander and I, he took 2 anti-tank grenades, I took grenades too. We threw the grenades at them. 08:03
- 08:03 We started yelling "Platoon, follow us". At the same time we lied down hiding from the Germans. After we yelled, "Platoon follow me, over the top!" we broke through. 08:11
- 08:11 We broke through the school. They ran after us, but couldn't catch up. And so we ran away from them. (Interviewer) Were you wounded? (Grinberg) I was wounded. (Interviewer) Were you wounded when you were throwing grenades? (Grinberg) No, I had been wounded prior to that. 08:26
- 08:26 I will tell you why. When we were defending ourselves, the German tanks were moving on, we knocked down 2 tanks. The third tank started firing at us. That's when I was wounded in my right arm. 08:41
- 08:41 My right arm was hit at that time. I thought my right arm was torn off. I was afraid to touch my right arm with my left arm. I had a feeling my right arm was torn off. I didn't feel the pain. 08:52
- 08:52 I felt I was bleeding. That's when I grabbed my arm. There was no commander in view. I walked around looking for him. I saw him lying there... he was unconscious...well conscious but lying down there contused. I started slapping him. He gained consciousness a few minutes later, saying "Don't slap me, I' in pain. 09:10
- 09:10 After I shook him, he gained consciousness. That's when we started our break through out of the encirclement. (Interviewer) So you broke out of the encirclement and got to the Political Department, right?09:24
- 09:24 I was wounded... I got... so it turned out...the Volga... they didn't capture Stalingrad... they were stationed a kilometer or more away from the Volga. That territory still belonged to our troops. 09:41
- 09:41 Stalin issued an order: "There is no territory further, no Soviet Union, no territory to be left to the enemy. Not a single step backwards". That meant we should rather die than leave Stalingrad to the enemy. End of story. 09:53
- 09:53 When I was wounded I got to the Division's Political Department. I told them my story. They sent us to the river crossing. When I came up to a soldier... that was a big luck!10:11

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- 10:11 When I approached the guard at the crossing bridge... he was letting wounded soldiers to cross the river...I said..."Please let us walk over to the boat!" He said, "I won't let you walk, go away!" 10"29
- 10:29 "... I have already lifted the bridge. Go away. Come some other time". That's what luck is! And so they went... and we were staying there. The air raid started. The entire boat was sunk! 10:40
- 10:40 How lucky we were for not being let to get on the boat! The entire boat was sunk! Later, during the dark time of the day we were let to cross the river to the right bank of the river Volga. 10:55
- 10:55 We walked and walked... about 10 – 15 km... there were no field hospitals nearby...The nearest field hospital was 15 to 20 km away from Volga. I had to walk, being wounded...I reached the hospital and was admitted there. 11:17
- 11:17 The members of the medical commission examined my arm. They decided I had a very serious wound. They sent me to Omsk for treatment... to Omsk. When they discharged me from the Omsk hospital...11:29
- 11:29 Before that I had been discharged and sent to the front to join my unit. However I was sick and I got to the hospital. After staying at the hospital for a while, they examined my arm and decided I wasn't fit for troop duties. They gave me... 11:45
- 11:45 End of file.
- Grinberg 4  
Duration: 11:43
- 00:00 They sent me to a rear unit. While serving in a rear unit... Oh, I forgot to tell you... at the rear unit... yes, we started getting vehicles from America... Studebakers, Fords, etc. 00:17
- 00:17 They were in need of drivers. I was sent to a driving school. I finished the driving school. I was given a driver's licence. Of course, it was a military drivers' licence. 00:27
- 00:27 When I first saw the car I didn't know how to sit in this car! (Chuckling). I had never seen Studebaker. [inaudible] I practiced on the spot. Our convoy commander was a fellow townsman from Kiev. 00:45
- 00:45 His assistant was also from Kiev. I asked him how I was going to begin. He sat in my car with me. He drove for about 300 meters. Afterwards I sat in the driver's seat. 00:58
- 00:58 And so little by little I mastered the driver's skills. We were sent to Zaporozhye region. Germans were still there... we were assigned to bring the ammunition to the front line, 5 to 6 km... we also brought food there. 01:21

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- 01:21 We were bringing food and ammunition to the front line. After the front was broken through in Zaporozhye, I was sent to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Belarusian Front. (Interviewer) What was there? (Grinberg) the 3<sup>rd</sup> Belarusian Front. While there, I was also working as a driver. 01:41
- 01:41 During the battle of Konigsberg (Kaliningrad), at that time, that was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Belarusian Front. Again, I was a little contused. I was in an air raid. And so I got to the hospital. 02:01
- 02:01 I was examined at the hospital and was pronounced unfit for the army service because of the arm. While in Konigsberg I was demobilized on December 28 or 29, 1945. 02:25
- 02:25 So I was demobilized from the army and came home. At home, I experienced a terrible tragedy. When I came home, I found our house in ruins. [Crying]. I can't speak... (Crying) 02:45
- 02:45 All my family had been murdered by the Nazis, they took them to Babiy Yar [inaudible] my father and mother, my little brother...[crying] my elder brother...I had been in touch with my elder brother. He had been in a military college in Tashkent. 03:00
- 03:00 He had gone to the front and since then I had never heard from him. My elder brother had been killed at the war. He was 2 years older than I was. I had been in the college at the same time as he had been in a Tashkent college. 03:13
- 03:13 He had studied to become a tank man. I wrote a letter, they said he had left. He had been sent to the front. Obviously he had been killed while at the front. My younger brother... my little brother was gone...murdered along with our parents. 03:26
- 03:26 [crying] (Interviewer) do you want us to stop for a while? (Grinberg) I don't know anything more. (Interviewers talking in the background)03:51
- 03:51 During the war I was at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Belarusian Front. I was near Konigsberg. We were fighting to capture the city of Konigsberg (Kaliningrad). I was a little contused there... I was wounded. I got to the hospital. 04:05
- 04:05 I was admitted to the hospital. While at the hospital with contusion, near Konigsberg (Kaliningrad) the doctor examined my arm and told me I wasn't fit for further military service. 04:15 (Interviewer) We already have this (Interviewer) Where were you on the Victory Day? 04: 25
- 04:25 On the Victory Day? On May 9<sup>th</sup>? (Interviewer) Yes. (Grinberg) On the Victory Day I was already back home. I had been demobilized in December, at the end of December. On May 9<sup>th</sup> I was back home. 04:46
- 04:46 On the Victory day I was back home. (Interviewer) Where did you go in December? Was it Kiev? 04:58

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- 04:58 (Grinberg) Of course I came back to Kiev. (Interviewer) When did you find out that your entire family had been murdered? 05:04
- 05:04 I came back home. I found our house in ruins. I went to a neighbour's house... one of our neighbours... she had been a German shepherd dog [a slang for whores during the Nazi occupation]...I saw all our furniture in her house. 05:21
- 05:21 All our furniture was in her house. I didn't say anything to her. I took my friend with who we had spent a lot of time together... he too just had come home from the war...he had lost his arm... 05:35
- 05:35 So he and I entered her house. We saw our furniture in her house. I didn't say anything. We took other guys who had returned home from the army... we entered her house... 05:46
- 05:46 It was empty... as if there hadn't been anything there before...she had figured out that I would come to get my furniture back...What's the sense... there was no any furniture... what was I going say?05:57
- 05:57 Who was I going to look for? What was I to prove? There was nothing in her house. All our furniture...She had stayed in Kiev during the Nazi occupation. She was like...how to say...(Interviewer)Did you get your furniture back? 06:14
- 06:14 No, when I returned to her house, there was no furniture there any more! I came home with a friend... no I was on my own...our house was in ruins. I went to my neighbour's house. She had stayed in Kiev during the Nazis. 06:30
- 06:30 I saw our furniture in her house. I didn't say a word to her. I pretended I didn't recognize our furniture. I was going to bring my friend to her house to get my furniture back. 06:42
- 06:42 We came to her house, two of my friends and I ...my friend had lost his arm during the war. I don't remember who was the other guy. We came to get my furniture back... 06:54
- 06:54 When we entered the house the furniture had been gone. She figured out that I had recognized my furniture. I didn't say a word. But she had figured out by my facial expression...she had figured out I had recognized our furniture. 07:07
- 07:07 She had moved the furniture out of her house. What was I to do? To whom was I going to complain? (Interviewer) What happened after that? (Grinberg) After that...when I came back from the army... I lost almost all my memory...07:25
- 07:25 (Interviewer) What was going on during the next few years after the war? (Grinber) After the war... after the war... I had a driver's profession on my resume... a driver...it was impossible to get a job in Kiev. 07:44

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- 07:44 My aunt told me... she and her daughter had walked back to Kiev crossing the enemy lines...her husband and her son had been killed...my cousin and uncle had been killed...she and her daughter had walked all the way home...08:01
- 08:01 They had crossed the front line on foot. She spoke Ukrainian very well, very fluently...she had managed to cross the front line. When I came to her... I had been looking for anyone of my family...08:16
- 08:16 My aunt had a family too. They lived in Saksagansky Street. I went to their place. She lived with them. I can't recall... no... she had fought her apartment back. Her apartment was hers again. She had fought her apartment back.08:36
- 08:36 I moved in with my aunt. Afterwards... there was no job...She found me a job...found me a job...in Zhitomir region working as a driver... I can't recall what exactly I carried in my truck. 09:03
- 09:03 I worked there for a while. I started feeling strongly like returning to Kiev. I couldn't stay there anymore. I worked there, I was making some little good money, but I felt nostalgic. 09:17
- 09:17 I felt like returning to Kiev, that's all. I quit the job and came to Kiev. After coming to Kiev I moved in with my friend, for several days... he had been a neighbour of mine... he lived in a different place then...09:40
- 09:40 They had been given an apartment as former evacuees. They had got their apartment back. I lived with them for several days. I thought, I shouldn't live with the people who are not my family. 09:58
- 09:58 (Interviewer) Give us an idea... not like everyday life... but what happened a year or 5 or 10 years later...(Grinberg) a year later... of course I moved out...I moved out...I got a job far from Kiev. 10:18
- 10:18 I got a job as a driver. It was a very good job in Zhitomir region. I was making good money there, but I wasn't feeling at home there. I wanted to come back to Kiev. 10:36
- 10:36 And so I quit the job and left there. It was by an accident that I met this beauty (chuckling). (Interviewer) How old were you when you met your future wife? (Grinberg) I was... Anya, how old was I? I was 23 or 24 at the time. 10:59
- 10:59 (Interviewer) Where did you meet her? (Background conversation) (Grinberg) I met her on a dancing floor. I walked her home. We took a fancy to each other, and that's how we got married. 11:18
- 11:18 We lived in her apartment... in her apartment...in her apartment...afterwards we started building...(Anya) 3 kids...one kid died. (Grinberg) afterwards we started building a coop. 11:39
- 11:39 We bought a coop apartment in Uritskogo Street. We built 11:43



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11:43 End of file.

Grinberg 5  
Duration 3:41

- 00:00 We moved to the coop apartment where we lived until moving to Israel. All Jews started moving to Israel. I said, "Let's go to Israel too." And so we moved to Israel. 00:17
- 00:17 What was in Israel? Anya...Anya... (Anya) We sold our apartment very cheap. (Grinberg) To our neighbours. (Anya) Such a rich apartment! (Grinberg) An apartment with such a furniture... we gave it away for nothing... to our neighbour...00:35
- 00:35 We were friends... we needed money. We simply gave away our apartment and moved to Israel. What was in Israel? I don't quite remember. (Anya) You went to the commission; they granted you the status of a war invalid. 00:54
- 00:54 We, all of us were sent to the commission. I was granted the status of a war invalid. As a war invalid, I received a very good pension. Everyone's pension was like 1000 or 1200, she received 1200 shekels. I was given 6000 shekels as a war invalid. (Anya) 30%... (Grinberg)... as a war veteran. 01:24
- 01:24 War veterans were very welcome. The status was granted to everyone who had any injury. Those who had no injury were on equal basis with everyone else. 01:33
- 01:33 They used to say that Soviet people had shed their blood for Israel. If not for the Soviet people, there would have been no Israel. It was Stalin who made the state of Israel possible. 01:46
- 01:46 When I was in Israel I was given a good pension. (Interviewer) When did you move to Canada? (Grinberg) Anya, when did we move to Canada? (Anya) In '98. (Grinberg) We moved to Canada in '98. 01:58
- 01:58 First our daughter moved. She sponsored us. (Anya) She came to Canada 2 years prior to us. (Grinberg) Our daughter was our immigration sponsor. We lived without a pension for a long time. It wasn't until 10 year later that we got our pensions. 02:11
- 02:11 (Interviewer) What have you been doing in Canada for almost 20 years? (Grinberg) In Canada? We are currently retired. We don't do anything. Of course, we are retired. What help can we provide? (Anya inaudible) (Grinberg) We were retired, but we weren't given the status of WW2 veterans. 02:41
- 02:41 Later, when a new PM came to office... I remember the old PM saying "What are WW2 veterans? Everyone is equal". When a new PM came to office, he raised the issue of benefits for WW2 veterans. 03:03

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- 03:03 He said, "If not for WW2 veterans, there wouldn't have been our nation".  
(Interviewer) So you didn't receive your pension until... (Grinberg) No, no...it  
wasn't until later that we were given our pensions. 03:14
- 03:14 I was given a pension. (Anya) You were given at the same time as everyone  
else. It wasn't just you and you alone. (Grinberg) Like everyone else... I was  
given a big pension, as a WW2 veteran. 03:28
- 03:28 (Background conversation) (Grinberg) They gave the pension later...they did...  
03:41
- 03:41 End of file.

End of interview.