

Iosif Kabanovski	Russian Vets
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Duration 12:55

- 00 00 (Please begin your story. My name is...)My name is Iosif Yakovlevich Kabanovski. I was admitted to the Long-Range Air Force Military College when I was 17. 00 16
- 00 16 (Stop, stop, stop. I apologize. My fault. Microphone...I forgot to fix the microphone. Background conversation.) 01 22
- 01 22 I was a student in Chelyabinsk. (Speak up) I graduated from Chelyabinsk Aviation College as a flight navigator. 01 37
- 01 37 (The sound is good. Wait a second. Start over. My name is...)01 44
- 01 44 My name is Iosif Kabanovski. I was admitted to the College at the age of 17. I studied at Chelyabinsk Order of Red Banner Aviation College for long-range air force flight navigators. 02 01
- 02 01 Right (Background conversation).
- 02 07 I graduated from the College in '44. I was in action for 9 months. 02 14
- 02 14 (Where did you begin your participation in action?)What?(Repeats). I was in action at the Central and Baltic Fronts. 02 23
- 02 23 I don't remember the names of the cities. I only remember Konigsberg very well. It was a tough city. (Which battles were the most memorable?) Konigsberg. 02 41
- 02 41 (Tell us a little about that). It's dreadful telling about Konigsberg. Everything was on fire there. Hitler said he would execute the president of Konigsberg for surrendering the city. 02 56
- 02 56 That's how important the city was for him. (Tell...) I had a lot more tough ones... (Please tell...) I don't remember them. I don't remember... (Tell about your medals, where were you wounded?)03 15
- 03 17 I wasn't wounded. I have the Order of Red Star and the Order of the Great Patriotic War. That's it. (In what other battles were you involved?) Lots, lots...I don't remember them any more. 03 30
- 03 30 Our crew was 6 men. Our team was 6 men. I was not the only man on the plane. I was a flight navigator. That's it. 03 41
- 03 41 (Please tell... as far as I know, during the war, the flight navigators were usually older men. How old were you when you became a flight navigator?) What? (Repeats) 03 54

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- 03 54 When I graduated from the College. (Was it something normal? Weren't you too young to be a flight navigator?) 04 01
- 04 01 Our squadron flight navigator reported to our regiment commander "How was it possible to assign him as a flight navigator?" At that time I was ah 17. He replied "If he wants to live he'll do the job and come back". 04 19
- 04 19 That's it. End of story. They didn't use to talk too much. We had to go on missions [inaudible].04 30
- 04 30 (Do you remember the numbers – how many enemy's planes did you shoot down?) 04 35
- 04 35 I wasn't the one to shoot planes down. (I understand that. But you were involved along with the rest of the crew, weren't you?) 04 39
- 04 39 I don't know. I wasn't the one to shoot planes down. I was the one who directed the aircraft to hit the target. 04 47
- 04 47 I don't know how many planes were shot down. I... I don't know... how many planes were shot down. Those were tough battles. It's hard to say for sure how many of them we shot down. 05 05
- 05 05 We would go on missions only at night... at night. So it's hard to say...whether they were shot down or just 2 planes collided. It's hard to say. (Was your plane ever shot down, did you have to catapult?) 05 21
- 05 21 Not my plane. However, half of the planes were shot down and the crews were killed. 05 31
- 05 31 (When you were 17, did you volunteer to enlist to go to the front?) They didn't recruit the College students through registration and enlistment offices (Voyenkomats), no students were recruited through the registration and enlistment offices. 05 49
- 05 49 They needed very good and educated cadre. So when I was a 9th grade high school student... I lived in another region... their recruiter came to our school. He asked "Any of you want to enrol?"06 03
- 06 03 I wrote an application saying I wanted to enrol. He goes "OK. We are going to let you finish grade 10. Only then we will take you to our College. But in fact they didn't let me finish my grade 10. 06 14
- 06 14 I was halfway through my grade 10 when they called me to the registration and enlistment office. They told me "You are being called by the College. Did you submit an application to enrol?"06 24
- 06 24 "I did". "You are being called", end of story. And so I enrolled in the College. The College was like a whole town. Nowadays it's a Red Banner Aviation College. And so I studied there. 06 41

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- 06 41 (As a Jew do you recall any mistreatment by your commanders during the war ?) No, I wasn't mistreated, no I wasn't. 06 55
- 06 55 When a plane took its course from its initial point of flight, it was the flight navigator who was in command of the course, not the pilot. There were no complaints against me. 07 13
- 07 13 (So in fact the lives of the crew members depended on you?) Absolutely, absolutely. There were 2 pilots, a flight mechanic, a flight radio operator and a gunner. The crew consisted of 6 men. 07 28
- 07 28 (Where specifically were the toughest battles: in Germany or on other Fronts?) It was very tough in the Baltic area. Also it was very tough at the Central Front, the Konigsberg area and the Berlin sector. 07 56
- 07 56 It happened there... there was an innovation introduced by Zhukov that nobody knew about. The last missions at the end of the war started in mid April. 08 10
- 08 10 Once, it was 11pm in mid April, our crew went on a mission. Each plane flew independently. We never flew as flight formations because it was at night. 08 23
- 08 23 And when we were approaching Berlin we saw... what's going on? Why are the lights so bright? Have we ended up somewhere in Africa? As it turned out, Zhukov had ordered for all the aviation flood lights giving light to the planes to start illuminating the German troops. 08 44
- 08 44 And so all the German planes and barrage were illuminated. And so our bombers started hitting those spots. 08 55
- 08 55 (Where were you on the last day of the war?) The first of May was my last day of the war. The war was over for me on May 1st. (Tell us about the last day of the war). The last day...I was sent on a mission to Berlin, I did my bombing and returned home. That's it. 09 16
- 09 16 I was told "You are not going to be sent on missions any more. The war is over for you". Some guys went on missions for 3 more days. That's it. (How did you celebrate?) What? (Repeats question). 09 31
- 09 31 How did we celebrate? Well the war... well... it started at 8 am. At night shooting in the windows started. Those were Poles for whom the war was over. 09 44
- 09 44 We were... at the very beginning... before the breakfast...we were given a barrel that was full of spirit. It was for everyone to drink all you could. 09 58
- 09 58 After coming back from a mission... this is how it used to be...when you got back from a mission you were unable to walk due to a big loss of energy... right after coming back from a mission... 10 13

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- 10 13 You used to sit down. When you sat down... there was a 100 g vodka glass in front of everyone. If you drank those 100 g of vodka you weren't able to stand up. 10 27
- 10 27 Soldiers wound take us by the arms to carry to any available bed and to put us to sleep. We would wear our overalls. There was no way to take overalls off. 10 42
- 10 42 So they would only take off high boots and the helmet, take the gun out of the pocket, that's all they would do. That's how it was. (What did you do after the war?)10 57
- 10 57 [inaudible] I studied and worked, etc. (Please give more details). Well nothing special. I worked in photography. Nothing interesting. (Did you have a chance to share your stories with the youth during the peace time?)11 22
- 11 22 Well we had a law: our regiment veterans were to meet up every 5 years... once in 5 years. Our regiment was stationed in Zaporozhye at the time. We used to receive invitations to go there. 11 43
- 11 43 And so we flew... we went there by train... we were given parties there...we sat in our seats... we were given food...that's once in every 5 years. 11 55
- 11 55 The last time... I had moved here already...the man who lived in my apartment let me know that a letter had come inviting me to come and meet with the veterans. I had already moved here. 12 08
- 12 08 And so I missed the meeting. Otherwise, once in 5 years...(Do you remember during the post-war years, there was the Doctors' Case in the 50s ? The Jews were mistreated...did you sense that?) Yes, I did. 12 27
- 12 27 (Tell us the details)I don't remember much... There was an organization there...that's not interesting...talking about that. It's better to read the newspapers... what they write about that...12 47
- 12 48 (Thank you, thank you, thank you). You're welcome. 12 55
- 12 55 End of interview