

<b>Arkadiy Novokolsky</b>	<b>Duration 68.06</b>	<b>Russian Vets, Interview date Dec 9/2010</b>
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- 00 00     **Arkadiy:** My name is Arkadiy Novokolsky. I was born in 1921 – a year of famine – in a town of Voznesenk, Odessa Region.
- 00 21     In 1923, on his way home from Novosviatsk, my father was killed in Odessa steppes, along with his 6 friends. They were killed by the remnants of Ukrainian gangs.
- 00 41     My mother became a widow with 4 children. She was 29. I was 1.5 – the baby of the family. The oldest child was 7 years old.
- 00 58     She had no education or training. She learnt to sew women’s lingerie, which became her basic income. I was a Jewish school student from grade 1 to grade 7.
- 01 17     I had applied to a public school. But I wasn’t admitted because my birth certificate had been lost during the hard times. While the Jewish school did let me enrol.
- 01 42     My sister explained the situation to the teacher. The teacher said “OK, we will admit him”. I am happy that I finished a Jewish school because the teachers there were very good.
- 01 56     Especially the teacher in grade 1 to 4 (do I talk too much?) who was about to become a cantor. But at that time there was no need in cantors as synagogues were being closed.
- 02 20     We used to study for the first four hours. After that he used to sing to us. From then on I grew so fond of Jewish songs, I never miss a concert.
- 02 30     in 19... Oh, and after finishing the Jewish school I entered a Ukrainian secondary school. On graduation...or rather when I still was in grade 10, my friend and I applied to a military enlistment office to be sent to Krasnodar Military Aviation and Navigation College.
- 02 58     You see this is how it was then. We were young patriots of the Soviet Union and our Motherland. We were under the impression of the Civil War in Spain. We knew about heroism of our people in Spain.
- 03 16     I want to emphasize: we were patriots. I wanted to become a hero like them. Not only I – all young people aspired to enrol in military colleges or the Navy – we lived in Odessa which was a major sea port with Navy colleges available.
- 03 32     So in the middle of the year I applied to the military enlistment office – my friend and I did. We went through a medical checkup – for color blindness etc. And so after we graduated from grade 10 we were sent to Krasnodar Military Aviation and Navigation College.
- 03 53     I went successfully through all checkups until I had to see the eye doctor. I wasn’t worried because we had gone through the color blindness checkup at the military enlistment office.

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04 08		But unfortunately, according to the doctor, I had a hidden and very rare and serious eye disorder. So I wasn't admitted to the Navigation College, which upset me immensely.
04 33		Instead, they offered me to go to Moscow and apply for Moscow Aviation Engineering Military College for Special Service. I entered the College in 1939. At first I was on an accelerated program – day and night classes... We used to get up early and go to bed late.
04 56		But after the Soviet-German Treaty was concluded, a regular schedule started – as the common opinion was that the Western Front was supposed to be quiet. I enrolled in the Military Aviation College, the Faculty of Aerial photography and Aerial photography Equipment for Aircrafts.
05 22		In November 1940 I graduated with honors from the College. I was given an opportunity to serve in any military district of my choice. As our western borders were considered quiet, I chose to serve in the Far East. But the commanders knew better, so I was sent to serve in the West – the Western Belarus, town Slonim, where there was the 8 <sup>th</sup> Long-Range Reconnaissance Aviation Squadron.
06 04		But we didn't stay long there. Soon the Regiment Commander sent me to Baranovichi to look up the premises the Command provided for us – to see if the head quarters and aerial photography service premises were suitable.
06 26		We needed proper laboratories, because the main weapon in the long-range reconnaissance regiment organized at that time in Baranovichi – the main weapon was aerial photography, aerial photo cameras, aerial photo equipment. My task was to find out if the building had the proper premises to accommodate the facilities for processing photographic films and getting photographic prints, etc..
06 57		I fulfilled the assignment, finding out that everything was OK, and reported to the Regiment Commander. By February we were located in Baranovichi. A new long-range reconnaissance aviation regiment #314 was formed. Brand new modern aircrafts started coming in. Their code name was BB22.
07 33		Later, after the war, I found out that the aircraft's real name was YAK-4. It was a new model, double-fin, motor, cruising speed 650 km/hr. At that time that was an unbelievable cruising speed for this kind of an aircraft. There were no other models with such a speed.
08 18		We were receiving aircrafts, and young pilots and navigators were learning the airmanship. Unfortunately, there had not been enough time to complete the studies, many of men had had only 1 or 2 flights which had obviously been not enough, before the war began.
08 43		Unfortunately, er yes, what I want to say is that the war really started unexpectedly, but nonetheless, on June 21 <sup>st</sup> we had a battle alarm or rather a training alert, but it turned out to be a battle alarm, because we were instructed to place the planes at the forest edge and to camouflage them, to set up machine guns, and to set up aerial photography cameras.

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- 09 22 Same day, June 21<sup>st</sup>, Orsha fighter division landed on our Baranovichi airdrome, Commander Colonel Tatanashvili. I mention his name because I am going to tell you about him later on. Unfortunately, on June 21<sup>st</sup>, we learnt about the war at 12 o'clock. Though there was a battle alarm at 4 am. And as you will understand, the regiment was located on the Soviet-German border.
- 10 02 The thing is, we arrived at the airdrome at dawn, around 4 am. At that time a plane was seen above our airdrome. Some of well-informed personnel started yelling: "100! 100!" But the Chief of Staff said, "What the hell 100. This is a Messerschmitt!!
- 10 28 As it turned out, that was a reconnaissance plane. You see what's interesting is that our reconnaissance regiment only found out about the war after the meeting where we heard Molotov's speech. I would say that was our Red Army's first disgrace meaning that Germans were crossing our border every week. Our fighters even used to force them to land, but later let them free on Moscow's instructions.
- 11.03 They used to let them free, not even removing their aerial photo cameras and cartridges. So that was really unexpected. And that's how we found out that the war had begun.
- 11.25 The first reconnaissance pilot of our regiment, the regiment navigator, went on mission at about 1pm. 1.5 hours later he returned. When he saw me – as I already mentioned, I was our squadron's aerial photography technician – he looked disappointed.
- 11.51 I said, "what's wrong, comrade lieutenant colonel?" (Although at that time the ranks were different). He said, "I forgot to open the hatches when taking photos!" And we all knew that the task of the reconnaissance mission was aerial photography.
- 12 02 And so he went to report to the regiment commander. I went along with him because it looked as if it was my fault. So I heard him reporting to the regiment commander. I repeat the time was 2 pm, the date was June 22<sup>nd</sup>. I heard him reporting, "Comrade regiment commander..."
- 12 36 ...while the regiment commander was sitting in the armoured car and I heard him shouting in microphone "Minsk, I am Falcon!! Minsk I am Falcon"... I realized there was no response from "Minsk". The regiment navigator went on reporting "Comrade regiment commander, I reached Warsaw and even further...
- 12 54 ...From Warsaw to Bialostok I saw endless columns of tank and auto troops moving, approaching Bialostok, passing by Bialostok and entering the highway Bialostok-Baranovichi".
- 13 08 Our regiment commander was an experienced soldier. He had fought in Spain. He knew very well what German tank troops were like. He knew that in 4 hours the tank columns he had seen earlier, could reach Baranovichi.

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13 36		But you understand, our equipment...our equipment, well you understand, our regiment was in danger. So without waiting for instructions from Minsk, he took on himself to make the decision, a right decision: all staff, even inexperienced pilots must get on board and fly to Minsk's airdrome Machulishchi.
13 56		The technicians were also instructed to get on special vehicles and drive to the Machulishchi airdrome. Also the instruction was given to those who had families (only a few men did) to get their families on board available trucks and drive to Minsk.
14 25		In about a day...well, there were unexpected situations, but in general, we were moving quite fast. On our way we saw something unbelievable: on the right side of the highway there were lots of vehicles in the side ditches. One of the reasons was they had been bombed; another reason was they had been driving too fast. So we saw lots of broken vehicles.
15 10		At the same time I saw infantry troops moving on towards the front line so to say, west bound. They were on their feet for longer than 24 hours. And you can imagine many young soldiers were exhausted, their feet hurting. They were dragging their rifles on the ground, without boots on – because their feet hurt.
15 43		They were carrying their boots on their shoulders, dragging their rifles on the ground. They were hardly able to walk. As it turned out later, they were moving towards giving themselves up. Because... I don't want to talk much about that...Everyone knows what was going on then. A sudden attack on June 22 <sup>nd</sup> ...
16 08		...and our infantry and motorized troops, not having time to get organized, without any instruction, or training to resist and repulse Germans... I don't want to talk much about that...but you may know that most of our troops got into so called "pockets" and were captured by Germans.
16 39		All because Stalin had not allowed to prepare the military to resist German attacks! 2 weeks or so earlier, General Golikov, Chief of the Red Army's Central Intelligence Department, sent a major report indicating that 150 German divisions, thousands of tanks, thousands of planes, thousands of heavy guns were concentrated on the Soviet borders.
17 20		And both Chief of Intelligence Golikov and Zhukov reported to Stalin: Tomorrow is the war!! But he did not permit to open Envelope #1 with defence personal instructions and tasks in case of German attack against the Soviet Union.
17 43		When we reached Minsk, we saw a terrible picture. The entire downtown Minsk...all the buildings were bare, without roofs – Germans had bombed down Minsk and obviously the Main Headquarters of Belarusian Military Region.
18 09		We didn't stay long in Minsk, because Germans were advancing unrestrainedly and without resistance as the troops had been taken

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unawares. From Minsk we were moving to Smolensk and Vitebsk, but already having special reconnaissance tasks.

- 18 35 By August 20, 1941...because our regiment like the rest of aviation units suffered major...I forgot to mention that on the first day of the war our airdrome was not bombarded much, only the forest edges, because our airdrome was the newest, with huge runways – Germans saved it for their own long-range bombers.
- 19 17 Er when...er I mentioned the Orsha Division, the planes were both 15 and 16. Many of veterans remember that. They were made of plywood, had low speed, but capable of manoeuvring.
- 19 39 But in about 2 weeks, when in Smolensk... usually when moving from one airdrome to another, the pilots were placed under tents... self-made tents in the woods. Once I overheard...you remember I mentioned the name of Colonel Tatanashvili, the commander of Orhsa fighters division, he was complaining to our regiment commander...
- 20 20 ...saying "that's all, my division does not exist any more". While our regiment, was so drained by August 20, with such severe losses, that er around August 20, the regiment was disbanded. The personnel were sent to Pavlodar.
- 20 54 As for us, we were left in Medyn, with the battalion of airdrome maintenance services. We were left behind our unit. And that was then when my friend Vladimir Golba took the initiative. At that time he seemed to be "old" – he was 35! He married late in his life. He loved his family – his wife and 2 children.
- 21 33 He was so worried and anxious. And that was then, when one day he says to me, it was our third day in Medyn. He says to me "tonight I am leaving here. I signed up for the front line. I can't go on like this any more!"
- 21 57 I say to him "what about me?" He says "It's up to you". I say "who signed you up?" He says "The battalion commander, airdrome service". I literally waded the river to find the battalion commander, airdrome service. I asked him to sign me up for the front line.
- 22 20 That same evening we were on board a truck (total 10 trucks) to go in the direction of Dorogobuzh, 101 motorized division. It took us a night and a day to get there. We got there in the evening.
- 22 47 In the morning Golba went to the division's HQ to join his unit. While I had a conversation with officers near the HQ. I am a sociable person.
- 23 02 They say to me "That's really good. We are short of machine gun company commanders". To be honest, I had only seen machine guns in movies, you know "Maxim" machine gun. But I didn't know a thing about them.
- 23 18 I say "Oh I will have to start from scratch". They say, "don't worry. We are here to teach you". Soon Vladimir Golba comes out of the HQ, looking very upset. He says, "Arkadiy, they don't want to take us with them". "Why?!"

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"Because there are orders from the State Defence Committee: for all officers roaming around, to be sent to gathering stations in Moscow".

24 02 (sighs) What could I do? I had to accept the situation. We made it to get a good meal at the field kitchen – for the first time in my life! For some reason I memorized it very well (laughs). I even remember what we ate: a hot borsch and kasha with meat.

23 21 After that we went to the highway to thumb a ride. A truck stopped, we jumped into the body and there we went. 40 minutes later, approaching Viazma, the driver tapped on the window shield screaming "Jump down!"

24 45 We jumped down into the ditch. When I looked up I saw a huge circle of German planes flying over the forest, and, one by one, diving into the forest. I have a reason to tell you all this.

25 07 The thing was. After a long bombing, "emka" cars started coming out of the forest. You may know those were our best Model M-1 cars. Emkas were very prestigious cars. As far as I remember about 12 emkas left the forest followed by trucks.

25 42 As we found out later, the Germans were bombarding the Headquarters Staff of the Western Belarusian Special District. That was August, 1941. End of August, or beginning of September – I don't remember exactly.

26 10 Getting out of the ditch, I saw a submachine gunner. "Halt! Who are you?" Vladimir showed him the pass to Moscow issued by the HQ Staff of 101 motorized division. And so we were let go.

26 18 We got on the truck and went on to Moscow. As I figured out later, that was Germans' last major attack against Moscow. All that part of the Western Front – from Medyn to Dorogobuzh – was surrounded. And of course many people managed to break through forests, but the majority of the Western Front troops were caught in "pockets".

26 59 And so we came to Moscow. In our papers we had the address of the Air Force gathering station in Moscow. We arrived at the Air Force gathering station. 2 or 3 days later I was called for an interview.

27 28 All I had was just a letter: "This is to confirm that Novokolsky, Senior technician, class 2, is a squadron technician for aerial photography equipment, 314 long-range reconnaissance aviation regiment. Issued June 22, expiry date October 20.

28 00 That was all documents I had. It's understood why the Board at the Air Force gathering station was so strict to us. They were KGB men, aviation men on the Board. They started asking me who I was etc..

28 27 So I told them. "What faculty did you study at?" I say "Aerial photography and aerial photography equipment". "Where was your college located?" "On the campus territory in one of the buildings there". "What were your marks?"

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28 44	I say, "I graduated with honors". "Who is taking him?" Lieutenant Colonel Drugov (as I found out his name later) stands up. "I take him". And so we were taken on... or rather we got there on our own, we were given the address and the directions.	
29 04	We took a local train and got to the location of my service which was 2 <sup>nd</sup> long-range reconnaissance aviation regiment under the Red Army General HQ. That is, it was technically and tactically under the AF HQ Staff and at the same time it was the main reconnaissance regiment of the Red Army General HQ.	
29 39	I was appointed a post of regiment's senior technician for aerial photography equipment. It turned out the regiment's engineer (I didn't have a University degree, but I was given his post), the regiment's engineer had been killed testing photo cameras in field conditions.	
30 06	That was exactly how it was. I was a totally inexperienced technician. Yes many men were inexperienced. To make the long story short, I was appointed regiment's senior technician for aerial photography equipment. Such a well known regiment!	
30 27	That was a new regiment though. You know, as it turned out, things were very complicated. New planes started coming in every week: dive bombers P-2. We had to reequip them, in no time, into reconnaissance planes, equip them with aerial photo cameras, and to equip the cockpit cabins with command equipment.	
30 58	We worked day and night, day and night. Because we had night planes DB3F and day ones "Petliakovs". And soon came the time of the "Defence of Moscow". You see, the Germans I had met near Viazma (joke) were now close to Moscow.	
31 30	What can I tell? Day and night our regiment sent missions obtaining valuable information on Germans positions, on their reserves movements, etc.. And we reported, rather our regiment's HQ reported to AF HQ Staff in Moscow about the situation around the front line.	
32 11	An interesting point. You see, our daytime equipment was good. First FA1, 18x18, Then FA33: 33x33 cm aerial photo pictures. That was a copy of German "Rachenbildung". At the same time the night photo camera was not good. We used the one from WWI for FA19 manufactured under a French licence.	
32 56	My navigator friend and I came to a conclusion: something had to be done: night cameras were not good. Despite being busy servicing the planes day and night, we found time and, following my idea, we created a new camera. The idea was that at night the objective lens needed to be open.	
33 36	When a bomb is released, it explodes, and during 1/50 sec. the shutter should close. We were sitting nights working on creating such a camera. We succeeded. And I went on a testing in field conditions.	

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33 50		We were so excited! I tell you, not a single moment were we afraid. You see, I explain it by the fact that we were young, reckless and fearless. There came my first mission. What did I memorize about it? First of all how we took off.
34 13		One girl...[Olga's voice is heard] What, am I too detailed? [Olga: 1 sec] Too detailed? Our regiment's regulation did not permit technicians to go on missions. However I persuaded our reconnaissance chief, Major Morozov, to send me...
34 43		...because, you see, that was new equipment, and there was a necessity to send a person who knew it well. I had a chance to go on missions on 3 occasions. My first mission...er... was not as much dangerous as it was exciting.
35 10		For instance. When we were over Karachevo airdrome...no, wait a sec...close to Orel, when we appeared flying over the airdrome, we were suddenly in the spotlight of searchlights...interesting...I didn't know... Germans started using colored explosions of anti-aircraft shells.
35 44		Well...you see...what was dangerous in this kind of a mission, we had to be precisely over an airdrome and make a photo of the aircrafts. No way to move sideways, otherwise we wouldn't be able to make a picture.
36 06		We succeeded. When we were in Vitebsk...I repeat, taking photos of Vitebsk Airdrome, that was...you see...the airdrome, as we saw its pictures later, it was covered in snow so that German planes were in snow up to fuselage. We immediately reported to the long-range bomber division HQ,
36 34		...located at the same base as our regiment. They bombarded Vitebsk airdrome for 2 nights. And eventually, I hope, they destroyed the snow covered airdrome, making it impossible for German planes to take off.
36 54		Therefore...er during reconnaissance missions during the defence of Moscow, and also during offensives near Moscow, I repeat, our regiment was on missions day and night. When considerable areas were liberated near Moscow, we started our "jumping" flights, closer to the front line.
37 33		One such "jump" was in Kalinintrad, sorry, Kalinin, In Vypolzovo was the squadron base – one of our squadrons, the closest to the front line. Er, do I have to wrap up (they tell me)? What I want to say is that I was singled out for a reward for participation in the defence of Moscow.
38 14		The Order of Red Star. (Olga: 1 sec.) Well I have told everything. First of all we were servicing planes day and night. The bombers were coming in to our regiment. We reequipped them into reconnaissance planes. We were implementing new equipment.
39 04		Later a swinging device was designed and made with my participation. It was a vertical device, swinging left and right. That way we saved...well 1 plane was performing the scope of 3 planes when taking pictures of a large area.

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39 31		Well, what can I say? (Olga's voice can be heard). I have told about that. The most vivid story was about night missions to take pictures of Vitebsk airdrome, with snow covered planes. We took the pictures, and our Intelligence Chief sent the information to bomber division, which later destroyed them.
40 10		I consider myself to have been involved in the action. What can I add? This kind of positions – regiment's senior technician – [Olga's voice: can you...?] I was not permitted to go on missions. My area was service and maintenance of aircraft aerial photography equipment.
40 43		But after we made a new nigh-vision photo camera, I insisted that I was permitted to go on missions. True, I had only 3 operation missions. That was equal to...if you understand... I already told how we were met in Vitebsk, Orel, Karachevo.
41 15		Powerful anti-aircraft artillery was firing from all guns, all searchlights were concentrated – all on one plane. Therefore, that was literally very dangerous. But, I repeat, I was young and didn't realize how dangerous it was.
41 40		That's it. So I went on 3 missions. But you know, all aviation, aviation in general, consists of flight personnel and technical personnel. Flight personnel is the smaller part of the entire regiment's personnel. The bigger part is made of technicians. So, approximately 60-70% was made of technicians. The most important was, of course, flight personnel, which was approximately 30-40%.
42 22		That is why I didn't have direct combat merits. Only those I have already mentioned. However, you know, that was very important: Marshall Novikov, Air Forces Commander-in-Chief, awarded watches engraved with our names to Sen. Lieutenant Sokolov, who was later killed in action, and me, for making the Device.
43 13		As I mentioned, I was decorated with Medal for Combat Service. Please ask your questions. In 1943...yes, I can continue a little...It's written there, very inexpertly...never mind, it was her idea...[coughing]. In February 1943 our regiment commander sent me, along with my comrade, to Baranovochi, to check out the building which had been allotted for our regiment's HQ.
43 57		The most important things to check were HQ premises, classes and an opportunity to set up a good aerial photography laboratory. When we arrived at Baranovichi we examined the building which turned out to be completely suitable...
44 19		...for the HQ, the classes and aerial photo laboratory, which we reported by phone to the regiment commander. Soon, the entire regiment arrived at Baranovichi. By the way, the families remained in Slonim, which is not important.
44 40		The regiment started military...combat preparation. It's worth mentioning, that at that time we started getting new equipment (I have already mentioned which equipment). Have I answered your question?

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45 06		You know, I have already mentioned, I had no fear at all. Even when I suggested myself to go on a mission with the new device, I had no fear whatsoever. By the way this is what happened on one of the missions.
45 28		All of a sudden, the radio operator/gunner shouts...the third man on the crew..."Commander! A fighter on the right!" I looked to the right and saw a headlight turned in our direction...turned in our direction.
45 56		I was so calm that I wrote down: "1:45 (I remember so vividly) A fighter on the right." The time was 1:45 am. At that time...it happened near Vitebsk airdrome. The pilot – Sublieutenant Ivanov...by the way...I forgot the Navigator's name...so Sublieutenant Ivanov made a wise decision.
46 29		He dived into the clouds. We became invisible. Later, when we were approaching Vitebsk airdrome, he dived out of clouds. When we were getting closer, flying under clouds and over the airdrome, that's when I felt...those sounds of powerful anti-aircraft artillery, those searchlights.
46 58		However, I can't explain it now, at that time I didn't have a slightest fear. What I think, that was youth's bravado. (Olga's voice). I had gone on 3 memorable missions – unallowed but begged. Those were all my heroic deeds.
47 38		...My profession...unfortunately...I wanted to be a hero...applied to the Aviation and Navigation College, but was not admitted. I wasn't let to become a hero. Well...unfortunately...what can I say...Those who graduated from the Navigation College, they were my friends, I remember their names: Yuri and Alexei, they were killed on the first day of war, by the friendly fire from a Soviet fighter, because our forces hadn't been taught the silhouettes of our new aircrafts.
48 27		They mistook them for a German aircraft with a red star added, and shot them down in the air – our fighters, a new fighter MIG-1. But then, two days later, we received information that one of our crews, a reconnaissance crew that were not permitted to attack or follow after, only make aerial photography, that crew shot down a German plane.
49 00		That happened on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> or 3 <sup>rd</sup> day. I must say, I didn't experience anti-Semitism, except on one occasion. You know our Chief of Staff...Operations Chief of Staff, was a Jew: Major Lerner. We had Jews among our pilots. One of them was Yefim Melokh, a recon man, a Hunter.
49 48		He was our regiment's first Hero of the Soviet Union. There were Jews among flight personnel and technicians. I didn't experience anti-Semitism, except this once. We had a banquet to mark the first awarding of a small group of our pilots.
50 17		Our airdrome was very civilized, near Moscow, where there was an officers' club and a theatre. By the way a musical comedy theatre was there on a tour, I will tell you about that later.

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50 46		I just finished a dance with Ms. Petrova – a musical comedy theatre prima – I only had a chance for one dance with her, because Colonel Bankovsky came up, clicked his heels and invited her to dance, I didn't have any more chances...
51 09		So, all of a sudden, a man approaches me, he was our squadron commander's aide or squadron's HQ chief's aide. Everyone was slightly drunk. So he says "Chaim, how did you manage to be invited to this banquet, and how dare you dance with Ms. Petrova?"
51 35		I say, "First of all, my name is not Chaim. Second of all, mind you, I am among our regiment's commanders, while you are a squadron's man, you are below my rank. Please leave, otherwise I am going to complain to Regiment Commander about what you just said to me.
51 55		"All right, don't complain. Go dance." (Laughs) So that was the only incident. One more incident. Back in the military college. In my platoon...I was assistant platoon commander...head of class...I was being promoted...er...two men approached me – two Jewish student boys: Batuner and Milner.
52 32		They tell me...I was our class' komsomol leader...they say "Listen, Arkadiy, you know what, some of the guys behave like anti-Semites, insulting us. I go "You don't say so!" I couldn't believe it because I hadn't experienced anything of the kind. Nevertheless I talked to those guys and they told me they were joking... those guys who insulted them.
53 05		That was back in the college, in 1940. You know, like everywhere, at the front, I mean honesty, and loyalty, and expertise, and heroism of the flight personnel and technicians – I'd like to say they [Jews] were mainly among the best.
53 47		I want to repeat: the first Hero of the Soviet Union in our regiment was a Jew, Yefim Melokh, a Jew from Odessa. Also the operations chief of staff, Major Lerner.
54 07		He was a talented leader. His work was highly appreciated by regiment commander and higher officers...Major Lerner. Now...honestly speaking...I forgot the rest of the Jews' names.
54 30		There were Jews among flight personnel and technical staff, Jews that were acting with honor and were respected by everyone, both pilots and technicians. Yefim Meloch whom I mentioned, was a very interesting guy.
54 48		First of all, he was tall and slender, handsome and funny. Our pilots used to surround him...after a dinner...listening to his vivid and funny stories and jokes.
55 06		He was loved by everyone in our regiment, the pilots...for some reason I remember him so vividly. They called him "Hunter". He had his own technique when on recon missions.

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55 29		For instance. He was among the first pilots, later it became widely spread...when he was descending from a high altitude, over an airdrome or a railway junction, he made it a point to be in front of the sun, so that he wasn't seen well from the ground, because of the glare in observers' eyes.
56 00		He made a good use of cloudiness. He used to successfully hide himself in the clouds and successfully come out of the clouds above the object, and then again hide in the clouds.
56 19		He had lots of combat missions and was very efficient. He collected very valuable information on aerial photo film. It's difficult to believe and to tell you exactly how valuable it was, because anyone can fantasize.
56 50		He used to gain aerial photography information, very valuable information. Besides, first of all, he went on combat missions during the defence of Moscow and our counteroffensives near Moscow.
57 11		Moreover, as I mentioned, our regiment – Intelligence Regiment of the Red Army General Staff...our pilots were sent to various directions, to various zones of the huge front.
57 35		For instance, in 1941, Stalin issued Order #227 stating that our troops were destroyed and were fleeing without resistance to Germans. At that time our regiment's planes flew from Moscow area to Stalingrad...
58 12		...taking photos of the attacking troops and bringing very valuable reconnaissance information. I also recall something about Orel-Kursk offensive, Orel-Kursk battle. Our squadrons participated, along with many other Air Forces squadrons in aerial photography of the area of the future offensive.
59 07		Our regiment's planes had the swinging devices allowing to take photos of 3 times larger areas during one mission. I have already told you about the swinging devices.
59 34		One of the photo shots showed that tanks' traces ended at farmers' barns in Orel area. Our men deciphered the shot and sent the report to the Head Artillery Department and armies' HQs, etc. Therefore, when Orel-Kursk offensive began, the Red Army command knew the exact position of German tanks.
1:00:17		Thanks to those shots, major artillery preparation bombardment was organized before the offensive took place. (Olga's voice) Tell Len.... (Olga's voice) Our recon planes were forbidden to engage with enemy planes.
1:00:54		Our task was to gain recon information by taking photos of a zone, railway junctions, airdromes, troops movement, and troops position. Any contacts with German planes were forbidden. (Olga's voice).
1:01:20		He was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union very deservedly, because he gained very valuable recon information on aerial photographs, which was more important than going on bombing missions.

<b>Arkadiy Novokolsky</b>	<b>Duration 68.06</b>	<b>Russian Vets, Interview date Dec 9/2010</b>
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- 1:01:40 Much more important than going fighting. The reconnaissance planes were not suitable for fighting or bombing. There were many Jews commanders. I mentioned the regiment's Operations Chief of Staff.
- 1:02:05 He was very active and skilled issuing timely combat tasks. As a result, Intelligence Chief made his reports to the General Staff and Air forces HQ Staff regarding the reconnaissance information gained.
- 1:02:32 I think that those who are interested, they have access to good books. For example "WWII"...I don't remember the exact title...2 volumes, where you can find Jews' names – Heroes, commanders.
- 1:03:01 In fact...unfortunately I don't possess...it's not my intention to...you know, there were 33 corps commanders, about 9 army commanders, I don't remember exactly...a lot of generals – Jews.
- 1:03:31 Those who do not take interest, they don't know...but many people take interest and know...they read those books...here in Toronto we have a well known writer who writes about Jews – Heroes of the Soviet Union. His name is Leonid Alexandrovich Sheinker. You must know him. (Olga's voice).
- 1:03:58 Firstly, they must know that their ancestors were well respected people, who, despite the fact that they lived in the Soviet Union, Russia, and other republics, they lived and fought with dignity. Along with other veterans, they made the great victory happen.
- 1:04:42 They must know and be proud of their Jewish ancestors. Holocaust was a terrible tragedy, where innocent people didn't know what was in store for them, without a chance to resist Germans. As a result of this tragedy 6 million Jews were killed. Knowing that, Jewish participation in WWII, the Great Patriotic War, was a great contribution into the history of the Jewish people.
- 1:05:35 Our Committee I have the honour to be a part of, the Committee of WWII Veterans from the Soviet Union, carry out significant job, sending veterans to schools to tell the youth about WWII, about the Great Patriotic War, to tell about Jewish heroes in that war.
- 1:06:09 I would like to say that what you are doing is very important. (Background noise and voices). 20-30-50 years later there going to be only vague rumors, and possibly rumours not in favour of the Jewish people taking an active part in the combat actions...
- 1:06:37 ...during WWII. Therefore your archives are going to be very helpful in bringing up our youths in the future and in our days.
- 1:06:52 (Len's, Olga's, guys' voices)
- 1:08:06 End.