

<b>Lev Pikus</b>	<b>Duration: 16:44</b>	<b>Russian Vets, Interview date Apr 11/2011</b>
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- 00 00 (Please state your full name, date and place of birth) **Lev:** Lev Mikhaylovich Pikus. I was born in 1927 in Minsk. (please tell us about joining the partisan detachment). We lived in Brest before the war began. 00 32
- 00 32 We lived on the Polish border. In '39 the Germans captured Poland and approached the border. We lived in Brest. My father was a military man. We lived in Brest. I had a sister, born in '25, and a brother born in '23. 00 57
- 00 57 On June 22, '41 Brest was the first to be bombarded. My mother was killed during an air raid. My sister, brother and I were injured finding ourselves in the occupied territory. 01 23
- 01 23 While in the hospital we met Vasily Nesterenko. He involved us in an underground Komsomol organization. Being the youngest and the smallest I was able to enter restaurants, railroad stations...01 54
- 01 54 I would wear a big bag over my shoulder. Under the guise of a beggar I walked places noticing what was there. I passed the information on to be processed and sent on to partisan detachments. 02 12
- 02 12 That was my job – every day walking a tightrope. Being Jews... the underground organization forged Russian IDs for us – my brother, sister and I. We lived outside of the ghetto. In '43, rather in '42 my older brother was killed while in the partisan detachment. 02 47
- 02 47 We were 2 – my sister and I. We lived in an apartment unlawfully: when my brother was killed... the Germans took him... he had documents on him... and the passport with our registered address. We had to change apartments all the time until '44. We lived in different houses, staying overnight in all sorts of places. 03 19
- 03 19 Every day was full of fear. We saw people being executed by shooting... when I was in the hospital I saw the Germans for the first time... my impression... I saw a doctor pushed by the German (says a German phrase with the word "Yude") do you know what it means? A damned Jew. 04 00
- 04 00 (repeats the German phrase). "Yude"... we were afraid of the word... I was afraid... had I been in a bath with the Germans they would have killed me on the spot, no way to run away. 04 20
- 04 20 (Tell us what you did as part of the partisan detachment). I can tell you about an incident with a gun. My older brother was... how to say...a smart and energetic guy. 04 44
- 04 44 He protected me too. He used to put me aside and take the danger on himself. He stole a German gun. It was in Brest in '42. We hid it in a shed. The next day we came to pick it up and send to the partisan detachment, but the gun was gone. 05 15

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05 15	As it turned out someone found the gun and informed the Germans who came unexpectedly... the shed was 20 meters away from the house we lived in. We managed to run away. 05 34	
05 34	When several Germans came unexpectedly to the shed where the gun was hidden we managed to run away and to hide on the Muknovits river bank. That was the name of a river in Brest. 05 52	
05 52	I can tell you an incident with low-grade tobacco (makhorka). My brother found a bag full of low-grade tobacco in an attic. Low-grade tobacco was hard to get at that time. Do you know what low-grade tobacco is? 06 10	
06 10	It's tobacco. He found it ok, but it was hard to smuggle walking through the city with a big bag – a 30x20 cm bag. I had a nonhealing wound, my arm was in a sling. They put the bag under my arm and that's how I walked. 06 39	
06 39	The Germans saw that my arm was in a sling. And we managed to smuggle it. Later on we sent it over to the detachment. (What was your partisan detachment's name? What was the connection with the Russian army?) 07 07	
07 07	The Russian army? (Soviet) the Soviet Army...(background conversation) (What was the name of your underground and its connection with the Soviet army?) The name was Brest Komsomol Underground. 07 32	
07 32	As for the army, the partisans sent information... I'm not aware, as I was in the city, other people operating outside of the city. Under the conspiracy one was supposed to know maximum 2 or 3 people. 07 52	
07 52	That's the maximum...anything could happen... not to betray. That's why the information I gathered in restaurants, railroad stations and cafeterias... what arms (род войск)... I passed the information on to my older brother or to our group commander, Vasily Nesterenko. 08 14	
08 14	I gathered information and passed it on to them to be sent to the Chernak partisan detachment. (Tell us about picking up arms (оружие) and about spreading leaflets). Have you heard about Brest Fortress? You haven't, have you? 08 52	
08 52	Brest Fortress was on the German border. After the German invasion the Fortress resisted for about a month while the Germans had advanced deep into the Soviet territory. After the Fortress garrison was destroyed we went there to pick up ammunition and arms. 09 21	
09 21	We buried whatever we found to later dig it out and pass on to the Chernak Partisan detachment. I was a contact, my job was maintaining contact with the partisans, informing of the time of show up at secret addresses, passing on ammunition and arms. 09 41	
09 41	Guns, submachine guns, revolvers... by the way there is a big book about Brest Fortress' resistance. One of the defender's names was captain Fomin, also a Jew. Ammunition, grenades – everything was passed on to the detachment. 10 13	

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- 10 13      When the ghetto was organized we would come there to pick up medications for the partisans. I was just 14 at that time, going on 15. They would protect me, keep me from involvement in dangerous missions. 10 41
- 10 41      I was too young for that. I was a thin and weak boy because I was undernourished. That's that. (You mentioned you wore beggar's cloths roaming about the railroad station, right?) 11 12
- 11 12      I was given a big bag, I wore it over the shoulder. I kept my arm like this. I was under the guise of a beggar; as if begging, I would enter a cafeteria, looking for arms... what kind of an echelon was on the platform...11 43
- 11 43      On several occasions I was sent away. Once I was kicked so painfully I couldn't sit for several days. I would roam around collecting information about arms, echelons, and which directions they were going. 12 03
- 12 03      I passed information on to my older brother while he was alive. He passed information on to Nesterenko and Zhulikov... have you heard of them? Zhulikov was one of the leaders of Brest party underground movement. 12 19
- 12 19      My sister was with me too. We would make leaflets... they were dangerous to stick on. Anything might happen while you were sticking leaflets on. We would throw leaflets into people's yards. We would roll them up and throw them into yards. 12 41
- 12 41      We would listen to the Soviet radiobroadcasts. We would compose leaflets and throw them into yards or windows. (Tell us about info you picked up at railroad stations). I collected information to pass it on to my older brother while he was alive. 13 17
- 13 17      My brother passed it on to Vasily Nesterenko. They were in contact with the partisan detachment. There was underground resistance movement in Brest, nor sure how many men were there. 13 29
- 13 29      I knew 6 men. Under the terms of conspiracy one wasn't supposed to know... The photo I have brought today... we got together with Nesterenko and Polyakov... my sister Tsylya. 13 49
- 13 49      I collected information to pass it on... I didn't know exactly what part of information was and what wasn't important – I was just a 15 year old boy, going on 16. 14 00
- 14 00      (What happened to info you passed to the partisans?) I can't tell you what they did regarding the information I collected, I wasn't aware of that. My job was just collecting and passing it on. I wasn't aware of how it was processed. Probably it was passed further on to higher levels, to the HQs. 14 23
- 14 23      In '43 professional military men started being sent to partisan detachments. There were HQs to process the information. I didn't know what was important and what wasn't. I just picked up what I saw. 14 55

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14 55	(Was the info from railroad stations used to blow up trains?) I don't know how to say this (clears throat)... Suppose I was in a railroad station. I saw a train with wounded men on. I saw the Germans carrying stretchers, running around, nurses, etc. 15 26	
15 26	I passed info on: a train is in Brest station with wounded men on. The info was passed on to the partisan detachment. They might conclude that a train with many wounded men on meant that the Germans had suffered considerable losses. 15 48	
15 48	I didn't know where the info I collected went further. My job was sniffing out, spying out and passing the info on. Every time my life was in danger. Anyone could shoot or beat me up. 16 11	
16 11	(How old were you at the time?) I was 14 in '41. I had had a birthday party on May 1 <sup>st</sup> . (Say a full sentence) 16 44	
16 44	End of interview.	