

Potievskiy Filipp Davidovich

Russian Vets

Interview date Aug 30/2012

975_5154

Duration 2:53

- 00 00 (Intro) I am Potievskiy Filipp Davidovich. I was born in '22 in town Malin, currently Zhitomir Region. At the time I was born it was Kiev Region. It's close to Kiev, 90 km away from Kiev. 00 37
- 00 37 (Date of birth) August 6, '22. What else? (Your parents) My parents... my mother's name was Bella Moiseevna Malinskaya (maiden name). She was born in 1901. She was a worker, she had no training. My father was a diesel operator at a paper factory in Malin. 01 29
- 01 29 In '33 he died at the age of 35. He was survived by 5 children. A boy died in '27, so we were 4. In '33 over 1 week's time my father, brother and sister passed away. 02 00
- 02 00 Brother and sister were twins. They were 7 years old. The famine in Ukraine... It was such a suffering. My mother was a cleaner at a shoe making co-op. What were here earnings? 02 24
- 02 24 She was paid 115 roubles a month. It was only enough to buy bread and tea, nothing more. That's how it was. (How did the war begin?) How did the war begin? 02 41
- 02 41 I graduated from grade 7. All my relatives... (background noise) End of file

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Duration 36 30

- 00 00 (How did the war begin?) How did the war begin? Let me tell you how I ended up in the army. I graduated from grade 7. All my relatives are high-class carpenters. Sorry I can't pronounce properly because of my teeth. 00 28
- 00 28 At school I learnt... I had a chance to learn the carpenter's trade from my grandfather, uncle and everyone. At school I found out about metal turner's trade. I wanted to become a turner. 00 52
- 00 52 I went to Kiev to study the trade at FZU (factory apprenticeship school). I entered a FZU where I studied for 2 years. After graduation I was given a job at Kiev Factory "Red Excavator". 01 13
- 01 13 The factory "bought me". I worked as a turner at the repairs shop. I was a Komsomol member. In '40 there started a mass army recruitment campaign. There was a feeling of a soon to come war. In '40 I was recruited to the army. 01 35
- 01 35 I was sent to 5th tank division stationed in Alitus, Lithuania. On June 19, '41, rather on June 14th, '41 Soviet fighters forced a German airplane to land in Alitus, Lithuania. 02 05

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02 05	They collected some information from them, which was not any of my business. I was... I finished a driving training program to learn to become a driver, right? 02 18	
02 18	I was an armoured vehicle driver at intelligence battalion, tank division. My commander was a platoon commander. Our vehicle crew was supposed to consist of 3 men. But for some reason, I was the only driver and there was a lieutenant – platoon commander there. 02 46	
02 46	On the 19 th ... oh, right after the German airplane was forced to land, we collected some information. Every night vehicles went to the border. They went to the border to search the border approaches... that was the East Prussia border. 03 16	
03 16	well, on the 19 th ... oh, my platoon commander was... well it was a detached intelligence battalion. The Platoon commander was ah... was ah... I forgot...he was...damn old age...he had a communication between the division HQ and the battalion staff. 04 01	
04 02	On June 19 th we received East Prussia topographic maps. Those maps were in my hands. We knew... we sensed and knew that the war was soon to begin. On the 19 th of June there was a night alarm. 04 23	
04 23	The entire battalion was alarmed. We drove to the forest. We crossed Niemen to the northern part of Alitus. The division was also stationed in the forest, on the 15 th of June. 04 51	
04 51	At 4:30 am on the 22 nd of June there was a German raid. They started bombing our fleet of vehicles which were located in the forest. There was no tank or vehicle left because all of them had gone to the forest. 05 17	
05 17	There were only men on duty left in the barracks. The German airplanes, especially the fighters, were flying around the barracks shooting from machine guns. They were firing at the barracks where no one was left. 05 34	
05 34	My vehicle commander, by the name of Privalov, he was from... what was the name of the city, the tank city...damn, forgot...never mind... He was the father of a new born child. 06 07	
06 07	The officers' houses were across the street from our barracks. I used to come to them to help them around the house: chopping wood, fetching water, etc. When a man on duty was left in the barrack... oh and we got the maps...oh he was from the city of Nizhniy Tagil, I recalled. 06 35	
06 35	You know Nizhniy Tagil, Urals. Well, when we received the maps...his wife just gave birth to the baby. He was 1 or 2 month old, not more. He ordered the man on duty to accompany her to the railway station as she was going to the Soviet Union.07 05	
07 05	However, hardly she had boarded the train when the German air raid started. The train was bombarded and she and the baby were killed. In short, he lost his family. 07 23	

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- 07 23 And so the war began. On June 22nd, in the afternoon, at about 2pm the Germans forced a crossing over the river Niemen, rather they didn't have to force the crossing as the bridge over the river was still intact, so they just crossed over the bridge. 07 50
- 07 50 So they didn't have to force the crossing, never mind. And the first fight occurred. By 2 pm our division was completely destroyed. There were many wounded men, the majority of the tanks were destroyed or burnt down. 08 12
- 08 12 Only vehicles on wheels remained, I mean cars and trucks. We started retreating. We made a fighting retreat. We went back as far as Kaluga, Kaluga! From East Prussia to Kaluga! 08 30
- 08 30 I don't know how we managed to force a crossing over the river Berezina, Belarus. When passing through Minsk, the Germans had already occupied the city. They were in the city. And we lost the colours! 08 46
- 08 46 When we reached Kaluga, our regiment commander, rather our division commander, colonel Fiodorov... the remains of the division stayed in the forest, not far from the city. 09 05
- 09 05 Well, I saw with my own eyes, the colonel sitting on a stump in the forest, nearly crying, pulling his hair out, saying: "They should kill me for losing the colours and the division. 09 28
- 09 28 In short, the surviving personnel was transferred to a reserve tank regiment. We thought that the division would be formed over. However the division was disbanded. The reason: the colours had been lost. 09 48
- 09 48 The camps of the 1st Moscow Proletarian Division were stationed in Naro-Fominsk, near Moscow. And we were... oh fist Katyusha regiments were formed there. I was sent to the 10th Stalin Guards mortar special regiment. 10 20
- 10 20 Despite the fact that we hadn't been in combat, the title of "Guards" was awarded to our unit. We had a special uniform different from a regular uniform: we had tunics, leather high boots, dark blue peg-top trousers. Well, never mind. 10 46
- 10 46 Our unit formation took as little as... let me see... July, August, September, October... on November 2nd, '41 we were alarmed and sent to the front. Destination: Yartsevo. Do you know where Yartsevo is situated? 11 15
- 11 15 It's on the river Dnieper, in Smolenks Region, not far away from Vyazma. We were called "front artists". Why? Because we used to come, fire one salvo and take off immediately. The weapons were top secret. 11 42
- 11 42 We used to cover the weapons with canvas and leave. Never mind. We arrived at the destination point. The conventional artillery men prepared all the data for us to start firing. 12 02

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12 02	Katyusha fired thermite rockets. Those rockets made soil melt which was unbearable. After the first salvo we caught some Germans who had been through Katyusha's fire. Well, all of them went nuts. The Germans were nuts. 12 33	
12 33	Never mind. There was no artillery supply. Every Katyusha used to be accompanied by... ok, a Katyusha was mounted on Soviet trucks, model ZiS-6, a six-wheeler. 12 53	
12 53	Each Katyusha was accompanied by 2 trucks: ZiS-6 loaded with rockets. The rockets were large-calibre: 152 mm diameter and 1.5 m long. The thing was: Katyushas didn't feature adjusted fire. They were good at saturation bombardment. 13 20	
13 20	The range was about 12 km. Never mind. When the stock was exhausted and there wasn't any fuel, no rockets to fire... every platoon, rather every company had a sapper squad attached in case there was a necessity to blow up the Katyushas. 13 55	
13 55	But that's not what mattered. What mattered was not the Katyusha itself. There was nothing complicated about a Katyusha: just a regular H-bar and nothing else. The most important thing was the rocket inside. 14 13	
14 13	And the rocket's jet action was also important. It fired from a 12 V battery and had 16 charges: 8 bars with one rocket on top and one at the bottom. The firing device could work as far as 30 m away from the truck. 14 46	
14 46	There was a hand wheel: the rocket comes out as quickly as you manage to turn the hand wheel over – all 16 rockets. Later on 32 mm Katyushas were developed, rather 32 rockets with smaller diameter, I mean they were shorter. 15 08	
15 08	So we were sent there, to Yartsevo. When the stock was exhausted... oh well, the retreat started. There was nowhere to retreat. The Germans made a ring: from Smolensk, Vyazma, Yelnya, Gzhatsk. This ring's radius was...I don't know...the ring's diameter was about 500 km. 15 42	
15 42	We came from Moscow region. The Moscow-Minsk highway went through Yartsevo... rather through Gzhatsk. There was an obvious treachery, because we shouldn't have been pushed into the ring. 16 13	
16 13	We got into the ring as soon as we went through. As soon as we went through the gates made by the Germans: 3 km on one side and 3 km on the other side from the highway. And they knew it: as soon as we went through a landing party was sent and the ring was closed. 16 38	
16 38	We were moving towards Yartsevo being surrounded. When we exhausted the ammunition stocks...station Yartsevo, Smolensk region... rather...not Yartsevo, I forgot the name of the station. 17 10	
17 10	Near the station there was a big... the station was in the forest... there was a big platform. The Katyusha regiment was driven together on that platform:	

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- 64 pieces. Please understand: 64 pieces. And all of them were exploded. 17 35
- 17 35 The remains of the fuel were poured out. Those who survived got on the vehicles and started driving in circles inside the ring. As long as there was fuel... when the fuel was gone...there was an order: "Fall out, every man for himself!" 17 54
- 17 54 And so we went away. We were a group of 5 men, including myself. Our battalion's electrician was in our group, rather our regiment's one. He was an electrical engineer. 18 19
- 18 19 He was Hero of the Soviet Union, He was awarded the title at the Finnish war. And so we started moving in circles. It was in the summer. We didn't have anything: no greatcoat, no waterproof cape, nothing. 18 42
- 18 42 I was wounded. The guys carried me to the forest, the forest! There were trenches there from the Napoleonic war, you know in fact it was near Moscow, 300-400 km away from Moscow or less. 19 07
- 19 07 This man... the Hero of the Soviet Union.. he was experienced, he had been in combat in Finland. It was late in the fall, as you may know the fall of '41 was very cold followed by a very severe and cold winter. 19 31
- 19 31 Well, they left me firewood, cut some branches, I had neither a greatcoat nor a waterproof cape, not even a field cap. They left me tobacco and matches. There was absolutely nothing to eat. When I quit the factory, the factory committee gave me a present: a watch, you know a Kirov's model, a big watch with my name inscribed on it. 20 11
- 20 11 I stayed lying there for 4 days and nights with no water, no bread, absolutely nothing to eat. I didn't see any Germans there. A 10 year old boy pastured his cow and a few sheep there. 20 38
- 20 38 Oh, and senior lieutenant told me: "Warm the soil in the day time, inside the trench, when the night comes you'll cover yourself with branches and stay as long as God is willing". The boy was pasturing his cattle. He saw smoke coming from the forest. 21 09
- 21 09 He came to see where the smoke was coming from. He asked me: "Sir, what are you...?" He was 10 years old. I was 19, rather 18. "What are you doing here?" I said: "I am wounded, I can't walk". I could walk but I knew what...(inaudible) does. 21 32
- 21 32 I had heard about that. I was afraid. I didn't know that the Germans weren't there. I gave him the watch. He was just a boy, a country boy. And so the boy had the watch. At that time it was prestigious. 21 53
- 21 53 And promised... he said: "Sir, as long as you stay in the forest I'll be coming to you, I'll be bringing..." He brought raw potato, bread, fat, water, even garlic. I stayed there for 26 days. 22 17

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22 17	26 days! It snowed. The Germans didn't show up in the village. It was the first time that it snowed. I asked him who his parents were. He said that his father was 52. During the war, at the beginning of the war they drafted only those younger than 50. He wasn't drafted. 22 46	
22 45	He was a collective farm manager. The cattle and tractors had been removed. He stayed and I don't know why he was left behind. He might have been left behind for a purpose. He was a very good man. 23 03	
23 03	When it snowed for the first time, he came by. He came by sleighs. There was hay in the sleighs. He put me in the hay and brought home, to his house. They were 10. Why 10? I'm going to tell you. 23 33	
23 33	He, his wife, father and mother, the older daughter was married to an officer, she and her little baby came to visit her father for the summer and stayed. His second daughter Nadia graduated from 10 grade and enrolled in Moscow University. 24 01	
24 01	It wasn't far from Moscow. She got admitted to the University and came to visit her father, rather her parents at home. Another daughter graduated from 10 grade and was going to enrol in some university. 24 22	
24 22	And the youngest daughter graduated from grade 7. And the 10 year old boy. He brought me to his house. They made me a bed in a separate storeroom. They cleaned up my wound. 24 42	
24 42	They applied iodine. I had a tangential shrapnel wound, not to worry too much. I could even walk. I had stayed put for about 2 weeks until I got up. The man asked me: "Can you do anything?" 25 15	
25 15	"Can you work?" I said: "Certainly. I am a 6 class turner. I worked as a turner for a year. Besides, all the men in my family are carpenters and good ones at that. I could have learnt to become a carpenter, instead I chose to be a turner". 25 37	
25 37	When I lied in the forest I unstitched my boots and put inside my Soldier's ID and Komsomol ID... and a few photos. I put them inside. And when I got up from bed for the first time and when he asked me what I can do I answered I could do everything. 26 06	
26 06	"I'll do whatever you want me to". He gave me a saw, a board and some nails. He told me to make a small box. I did. They had a cellar in the kitchen garden. Everything was covered with snow. 26 33	
26 33	When I made the box he said: "Come with me". I went with him to the cellar. "Dig out the potatoes, dig a hole and put the box inside the hole". I did. He took out his party ID and put it there. 26 56	
26 56	I thought he wasn't afraid of me, he didn't know much about who I was. In that case I thought I shouldn't be afraid of him either. I said: "Ilya Matveyevich, I have some documents too". "Go get them and put them there too". 27 15	

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- 27 15 I put my documents there. After awhile...Oh and he sent me to the baths right away. You know in Russia everyone had his own baths. The day was short. The firewood was too wet to chop. 27 35
- 27 35 I could hardly stoke the baths. I thought they would tell me to go to the baths with them. The men there were just the old man and the boy. I was supposed to go with them. 27 58
- 27 58 I took off my cloths and washed myself with warm water. I came to the man and said that the baths were ready. It was dark already. He said that his wife prepared a change of underwear. 28 22
- 28 22 "Let's go to the baths". I sounded like a fool: "I have already been to the baths". "Let's go, you'll give the steam". You know how they did it? You pour boiling water on 2 stones to produce steam. 28 42
- 28 42 "You'll give us steam". "OK". I did everything but I didn't bathe with them. After the baths...there was a samovar on the table. They had beehives. They had their own honey. 29 01
- 29 01 They served tea with honey. Ok. A week passed. I had to go to the baths every week. Being a circumcised Jew, the Germans would have you take off your cloths and they would see...29 20
- 29 20 What should I do? Oh, when I was in the forest, I had a sidearm, a pistol gun, a revolver and a gas mask bag with cartridges. When I came to them I asked the boy to hide my revolver and cartridges under the roof. 29 45
- 29 45 I knew how to get there and all. The second time, when I came back after the baths, he served a home-distilled vodka. If God exists He saw it, nobody else saw it. 30 11
- 30 11 When we came back after the baths he served home-distilled vodka. He poured me a full glass of it. "Drink!" What should I do? I had to drink. I drank and it went to my head a little.30 32
- 30 32 I wasn't much used to it. I went out, put my fingers in my mouth and threw it up. I thought to myself: "Does he want me to be drunk and talk or what?" I got away with it. 30 58
- 30 58 I thought to myself... I charged my revolver and put it in the belt: if he wanted to do me wrong, I would kill himself and myself. But I got away somehow. 31 15
- 31 15 After awhile the Germans came to the village. The village was small. It was situated up the hill. Before the Germans came I had to... they had a cow and sheep. The village was up the hill with a creek down the hill. 31 43
- 31 43 The creek didn't freeze up for some reason. The cow was supposed to drink water from the creek. But it was dangerous: the cow could slip on ice and fall down. 31 59

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- 31 59 It could break its leg and then what? I was to bring water from the well to fill up a barrel – some household chores. Oh and there was the collective farm's grain. It was to be thrashed with chains. 32 24
- 32 24 For that, I was given a pood (16 kg) of grain every month. The Germans came. The Soviet troops started... the war was in November...there was a battle of Moscow. 32 42
- 32 42 You know, the 7th of November Parade in Moscow. The Germans started a retreat from Moscow. The front line wasn't far from where we were, not far. The collective farm specialized in cattle breeding. 33 08
- 33 08 There were lots of sheds there, cattle sheds. A German veterinary hospital came. They placed their horses and there weren't room for all of them. Something had to be done. 33 34
- 33 34 First of all there wasn't food for the horses. They had to cut birch tree branches to feed the horses. They waited for the hay to be brought from someplace. 33 49
- 33 49 Some sheds had to be built. It was January 1st, '41...rather '42. The Germans... Oh, it was December 25, Christmas or Weihnachten in German. There's something else I want to say. 34 19
- 34 19 When I was a little boy I had German friends. Why? Because we lived in a German colony. There were 3 colonies in Malin: Polish, German and Czech. The Czechs worked at the Iron and Steel works. 34 36
- 34 36 They were turners and metal workers. I had German friends, I was able to speak German. Besides, I studied German at school. I learnt how to read and write German. 35 00
- 35 00 I heard everything... oh, and the Germans... the collective farm manager had the best house in the village. It was the best house in the village. When the Germans came they moved us over to the kitchen. 35 21
- 35 21 The kitchen was spacious, just like this room or even bigger. The Germans occupied the rooms in the house. On December 25 they had their holiday – Christmas. 35 37
- 35 37 This is how it was with the Germans: they had a big table, a big vase... no, schnapps.... Vodka, vodka. Everyone in the house was to sit around the table and make a gulp of vodka from the glass. 36 11
- 36 11 Just one gulp for everyone. I was among them: the man, his children, and everyone, and the Germans. What if they knew who was among them?! 36 30

End of file

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- 00 00 (you were around the table with the Germans. What happened next?) Next? It was December 25th. On January 1st... the Germans made a list of everyone who lived in the village. 00 25
- 00 25 The village was small. Everyone who lived in the village was relatives: cousins or in-laws. The Germans wanted to have the village "starosta" elected. My boss was a literate man, former farm manager. 00 55
- 00 55 He was elected the village "starosta". He told the Germans that I was his nephew, that I finished a factory apprenticeship school and came to their collective farm for my practicum. 01 14
- 01 14 Why? Because they had farming equipment: a plough, a harrow – agricultural implements. I was to repair the machinery. The Germans... when they came... oh, Hitler's order was for every young man to go to Germany to work there. 01 50
- 01 50 "Every stroke of hammer is a stroke against communism". One young man went to Germany, another did, and finally my turn to go to Germans came. I didn't say my real name, although my surname is not that typical Jewish. 02 11
- 02 11 I gave them the name of a neighbour and a friend of mine – Bondarchuk. Why? Because I was drafted to the army from Kiev, Ukraine. They asked me where I was from. I said I was from Kiev. They thought I was an ethnic Ukrainian. 02 36
- 02 36 He said: "Bondarchuk is a Ukrainian name. Let it be Bondarev". OK, let it be Bondarev. When the Germans came to the village... there wasn't enough room for the cattle. They decided to saw wood, to bring it to the village and to build something. 03 10
- 03 10 They expected to be staying there for a long time. To make my story short, my boss took a horse, a war horse, a small Mongolian breed. He didn't trust anyone to handle the horse, except me. 03 44
- 03 44 A sleigh, a horse, a harness...I ride... oh and people went to the forest to saw the wood. I was to carry. Not just me, there were some other people too. The Germans had their lunch at 2pm. 04 05
- 04 05 They had their lunch break 12 noon to 2 pm. And so did we. It happened so that I came during the lunch break. I tried to load a log on the sleigh, but couldn't do it by myself. 04 31
- 04 31 All of a sudden a man comes out: he was dark and dirty wearing a uniform. He said: "I am a Greek from Krasnodar Region. I was surrounded... " he was surrounded same time as I was. "We are 3 and we are in the forest. We are dirty, and hungry. Is your starosta a good man?" 05 13
- 05 13 I said: "He is a very good man, a very good man". Before, a military man from Moscow had started an affair with a girl, kind of married her. 05 29

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- 05 29 The boss tells me: "You know what? You are not going to have a lunch. You'll have it later. During the Germans' lunch break you'll have 2 or 3 trips to bring a log for each trip. I'll wait for you in the last barn, I'll wait for you." 05 53
- 05 53 The Germans were new, you see? They didn't know all of the men there. I took all of them: a log and a man, a log and a man. I drove all of them. He sent them to live in farmers' houses. 06 15
- 06 15 He had a niece there: her husband was in the army, she had 3 children. She was a beautiful woman, never mind. He sent Kostya, the Greek to her. And so he took care of every man. 06 37
- 06 37 There was a senior lieutenant there. He was a turner. He had worked at a factory near Moscow. Same day, the Sunday, June 22, they celebrated their wedding. He was taken to the army right from his wedding. 06 59
- 06 59 He married a girl from Smolensk region. He didn't know where from she was. When my boss put him to some old people's house, he just took the photos, that's all. 07 18
- 07 18 When he entered those people's house, he saw photos hanging on the wall. He saw his wife. He took out his one saying: "We had a Komsomol wedding at the factory and I was taken to the army right from the wedding. 07 45
- 07 45 I didn't have a chance to be with my wife, just took a photo". He felt very well. He was a reserve officer. He had a local map, the topography map. To make my story short, in the winter of '42 the Germans made us drive firewood, shovel snow, groom horses, etc. 08 20
- 08 20 The senior lieutenant started... he went: "Listen guys, how long are we going to stay here?" The front line wasn't far away from where we were: it was about 60 km away. The Soviet troops had advanced. 08 32
- 08 32 Well... "Let's try and make it to our army, because the Germans can do us whatever they want". "OK". We started contemplating... we discussed it with the boss. He said: "That's a good idea". 08 53
- 08 53 "But on the other hand, you see, if you leave, the Germans know everyone, they would think you left to join the partisans. They will kill my whole family. There is no chance for the troops to stay in one and the same position". 09 19
- 09 19 You know he was right. Soon the Germans took off. Oh and we started our preparations. There was a big snow there. We made skis and we made camouflage cloaks out of bed linen. 09 51
- 09 51 I had absolutely nothing, no trench coat, no nothing. They made a cap out of a blanket and mittens. I helped... I made felt boots, I did them myself. I knitted fish nets, I made slippers. I wasn't trained, but I managed to make them. 10 22

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10 22	I am a working man, you see? Everything went easy for me. Besides, when there was no snow and was warm... rather... the snow was there...broken vehicles stayed outside. 10 53	
10 53	They needed machine oil for the wheels, for the cart. I was a driver, so I knew where the oil was. I unscrew the back axle and drained a bucket of machine oil. Everyone was happy about that. 11 14	
11 14	They needed oil to lubricate the carts come the spring. Well, to make my story short, the Germans took off and we had to leave too. They prepared a knapsack for me. 11 37	
11 37	They gave me dried crust and tobacco as well as a piece of fat. The boss hugged and kissed me. He said: "I was right saving your life". That's all he said to me. No one from the family showed any suspicion. 12 00	
12 00	At least they didn't show any sign of suspicion, although they may have been suspicious. Ok. It took us 3 days to get to the front line, going through the forests, sending forward scouts. 12 16	
12 16	Why? Because there was a swamp there which wasn't frozen. It was just covered with snow. We knew that the Germans wouldn't stay in the swamps. We sent forward our scouts, who discovered a machine gunner. 12 41	
12 41	The PNP... PNP... well I forgot what it stands for... never mind...it was a night, snow and freezing cold. There was a bright moonshine. We started walking over the swamp. 13 08	
13 08	The Germans heard us walking and started shooting. Kostya was hit in the stomach with a submachine gun salvo. We tied his skis together and started crawling. 13 27	
13 27	And so we made it to our army. We made it...We were sent to different dugouts. There was no interrogation. All they asked me was: "Who are you, where are you from, where have you been?" No court-martial, no nothing. 13 52	
13 52	We were put into different dugouts so we didn't talk to each other. I was sent to a penal unit. Why? 198 regiment, 196 penal company. Well, I had never been in infantry. I was just a young guy, I was short, well I'm short now too. I was even shorter then. 14 40	
14 40	Had I put a carbine on my shoulder, it would have dragged on the ground. Well, to make my story short, I stayed in the penal company and I survived by mere accident - I was wounded. 14 56	
14 56	I was wounded by a sniper. I ended up in a hospital. After the hospital I was sent to a reserve regiment. After that I was sent to a 6 months long topography training program. 15 19	

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15 19	I don't remember the number of the reserve regiment, all I remember it was in Smolensk region. It was a women's regiment. They trained machine gunners, radio operators, and snipers. 15 44	
15 44	There was a company to train in topography. I spent 6 months there. After that I finished the program and was sent to artillery. I was sent to 929 howitzer artillery regiment, 369 Karachevskaya division. 16 14	
16 14	I stayed on with the same regiment until the end of the war. We made it to the river Elba, where we met with the Americans. According to an agreement we had to retreat a little, we went as far as town Schwerin, you may know. Schwerin is the capital of Mecklenburg province. 16. 47.	
16 47	That's where I was when the war was over. Well, um when the war was over in '45 I was given a vacation. I went to see my mother, but I found out that she was dead. My mother, aunt, uncle and their children had moved on oxen from Malin to Uzbekistan. 17 21	
17 21	They were on their way to Uzbekistan for 3 months, they moved on oxen. And they made it. In Voronezh, the bridge had been bombed down. There was a pontoon bridge there. The oxen wanted... it was hot...the oxen were thirsty...17 49	
17 49	I was told later...they jumped into water. They dragged the cart there... my grand dad, who was 86, he was in the cart...and he too... the military men were standing there... they pulled him out, they saved him. 18 12	
18 12	When in Uzbekistan, the grand dad left the house... I don't know where he was heading...he went missing... nobody knew where he got...He might have been eaten by jackals. 18 31	
18 31	As for me... the war was over. In '46 the divisions were merged into corps. They reduced the army personnel. Our division... our regiment was reduced on grounds of redundancy. 19 00	
19 00	Rather not reduced... it was merged. Well, there was issued an order for demobilization of those who were born the year I was born. Well, they sent people as far away from Germany as possible - to the far east, etc. 19 22	
19 22	They were sending men in companies. Those who were closer to Germany were the last to be sent away. Those who were farther were the first to be sent away. 19 33	
19 33	I had no one to go to. My mother was dead. My brother... I had I brother left... my brother was in the army, rather he wasn't in the army, he worked at railways, as an assistant train machinist. 19 55	
19 55	Anyway, he was like a military man. Well, the grand dad was dead, went missing. I had no one to go to. There was another uncle. He um... you know of town Lgov, Kursk region? He worked at a rail car building factory. 20 30	

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20 30	He was a carpenter at a rail car building factory. The factory was evacuated and returned back to Lgov after the end of the war. My uncle worked at the factory. Why wasn't he drafted to the army? 20 51	
20 51	He was a sailor. He wasn't drafted to the army. Why? Because he was epileptic. He was sick. I met a class mate during the war. He gave me telephone... not telephone, the address of one of our teachers. 21 26	
21 26	The teacher knew them. The teacher gave me my uncle's address. I got demobilized. But where would I go? There was no business for me in Lgov. There wasn't anyone in Kiev. My mother's brother was an invalid, he didn't have some of his fingers. 22 05	
22 05	During WWI he was a POW in Germany for 10 years. He spoke German. When he returned from Germany, he got married in Kiev. He married a woman who was a store owner during NEP. 22 31	
22 31	It was a sunflower oil store. She was a wealthy woman. They didn't have children. My uncle spoke German. My aunt didn't want to be evacuated. She planned to open her store during the German regime. 22 53	
22 53	My uncle knew German very well. He thought that the Germans were the same as they were before Hitler. And so they didn't leave Kiev. The Uncle worked for Germans as an interpreter. 23 14	
23 14	The day the Soviet army entered Kiev suburbs he and his wife were executed in the backyard. Not in Babiy Yar, but in their backyard. 23 35	
23 35	Where was I to go? Oh, over the 4 years of the war... if you happen to know...all those liable for military service were paid some kind of benefits. They paid for the last position occupied. 23 57	
23 57	The soldiers were paid... well they were paid 30 roubles a month. 30 roubles! And they were to give the money back to the Soviet Army Fund. They did me a favour. Why? Because I had been in the army from the first minute. 24 23	
24 23	From the very first minute! Even before the war. I served in the army for a year before the war started. Well, our staff commander told me: "You know what?" A train going to Stalingrad region was leaving. 24 44	
24 44	He said: "Go there, I'll help you with the documents...Just cross the border...and tell the train commander... he will give you your documents...and you can go wherever you want". 25 00	
25 00	And I did it! They paid me about 5000 roubles. He gave me... He made a fictitious entry "regiment's motor mechanic, while I'd never been a motor mechanic". 25 16	
25 16	They gave me a fictitious position. I got that money. I crossed the border. They gave me my documents back. However I wasn't given the Kiev residential registration. 25 34	

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25 34	They were not giving the registration to me because I lived at my uncle's who worked at Kiev Locomotiv repairing factory. He worked as a blacksmith. They lived in a factory's apartment. 26 01	
26 01	I had no business living in a factory's apartment. That's why they didn't want to register me in Kiev. What should I do? What to do? I found my father's brother. I hadn't known my father's family. Why? Because my grandfather had lived in Korosten. 26 39	
26 39	Do you know Korosten? Afterwards in the 30s they moved north to Leningrad. We hadn't been in touch with them. I had seen my granddad just on one occasion. I had never seen him since. 27 03	
27 03 End of file	(Background conversation) 27 15	
File 975 5157 Duration 14:36		
00 00	After the war I found a job as a turner. There was a workshop at Kiev... Kiev City Council. The workshop...I didn't work long there, just a year and a half. Afterwards I worked at Medical Equipment Factory. 00 40	
00 40	afterwards, in '54 I quit and got a job at Kiev... damn...let me recall... not Arsenal, no...I worked as a turner. I worked on one machine in the same workshop for 30 years... 30 years! 01 30	
01 30	I left there in '79. (What awards do you have?) You see, when we were leaving... Where are you from? (from the Soviet Union) I know you were from the Soviet Union. Did you leave the country via Chop? 01 52	
01 52	No. There was racketeering in Chop, the bandits! They took away all my medals. I should have one more order of Red Star. While we were passing through the customs they took away all the documents. The Kiev Military Commissariat took away all the documents. 02 22	
02 22	They took away the Red Army soldier ID, rather the work record book was taken at the factory. Kiev Trade Machine Building Factory. They even took away my union ID. 02 44	
02 44	(Just say what awards you have). What awards do I have? 2 Orders of Red Star, a Medal for Courage, Medals for Victory over Germany and Liberation of Warsaw. And then I have the medals I was given here in Canada. 03 24	
03 24	(What was the Red Star given to you for?) What for? I provided valuable information for the artillery. (Do you remember the Victory Day?) I sure do! (laughs). I was in Germany on the Victory Day. 03 45	
03 45	It was in '45. We had a corporal, a contused man. He was unable to speak. He wasn't demobilized, instead he was appointed to work as a chef. On the Victory Day... you know the soldiery? Everyone got drunk. 04 17	

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04 17	He worked at a field kitchen. He worked as a chef. A soldier came to him asking to pour something into his mess-tin. At that moment he dropped the ladle. He was drunk. And he swore dirtily. 04 42	
04 42	He dropped a piece of gore into the pot. And the man started speaking. He hadn't spoken since '43. Of course I remember. What was there to remember? Good food. 05 14	
05 14	(Was there a joy?) Of course there was a joy! (You had been in a penal battalion). Why? What for? I was just a kid left in the lurch. What for? Was it my fault? Who threw us into the slaughter? 05 39	
05 39	In order for me get a lump allowance as a WWII veteran, I had to produce documents. I didn't have any. When we were leaving the country all we were allowed to take with us was a proof of birth, marriage and the document proving that I graduated from Kiev College... damn...06 37	
06 37	Wait, I had never worked as a technician. Why? Because I worked at an experimental workshop for 30 years. I worked as a turner, at an experimental workshop. 06 56	
06 56	I had to be on equal terms with engineers and technicians. I had to read technical drawings. I enrolled in a technical college because as a war veteran I was to be admitted without entrance examinations. 07 20	
07 20	And so I decided to enrol. (As a Jew did you sense any mistreatment?) It wasn't obvious. However, listen...if there was an occasion to infringe a Jew, they did it. 07 49	
07 49	(New generations must know about WWII vets' heroism). You know, for some reason, my only grandson never shows any interest. He was 8 when he moved to Canada. 08 18	
08 18	He says: "I have grown up here". (Your organization?) My organization? You see, I had a gum injury. I lost a few teeth. In 2001 I had prosthetics. I had several teeth missing. I suffered a lot. 09 08	
09 08	I had all those teeth removed and replaced with prosthetics. It was a Polish dentist who did it for me. He did a poor job. He sent me to X-ray, which showed that 5 of my milk teeth are still in my gums. 09 30	
09 30	5 teeth! 2 of them started coming out. They grow too slowly and every time it caused infection. I had to go to a gum dentist. He did the cleaning. After 2 months I had to go back to him. It cost me a lot of money. 09 53	
09 53	To make my story short, he told me: "You have to have them taken out". But you know nobody wanted to take them out. They told me that my lower jaw was very weak. 10 08	
10 08	They said there would be problems. I found a surgeon, a Tartar man from Russia. He took 2 teeth out. I paid him \$500. It was in 2004. After he took those teeth out I had to have prosthetics. 10 37	

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- 10 37 There is a lady... a dentist technician. She made new prosthetics for me. And she did a good job. But after a while the prosthetics became worthless, because the plastic material had worn down. 11 00
- 11 00 Besides, I bit my tongue with the prosthetics. And there was a sore. It didn't heal for a long time. I went to see a doctor. The doctor referred me to a surgeon at Montreal General Hospital. 11 29
- 11 29 He said that it looked like a cancer. I went for an operation. They cut off a piece of my tongue. You can hear now the way I speak. After the operation the prosthetics became worthless again. 11 57
- 11 57 I went to see the same lady. She made these prosthetics I'm wearing now. She did a poor job. I don't want to say bad about her. It may or may not be her fault. 12 16
- 12 16 She tried to do her best, yes she did. My grandson said: "Listen, go for implants and stop suffering". I said: "But that's too expensive". I had just received the veteran's ID Card. 12 39
- 12 39 It read that they pay for prosthetics but not for implants. It wasn't in the vet's card, but they told me they wouldn't pay for implants. Ok. My grandson called them again. He asked them what could be done in my case. 13 11
- 13 11 They told him that as an exception they might pay. I went to see a couple of dentists just for a second opinion. All of them were unanimous. They told me that a new prosthetics wouldn't work for me. 13 34
- 13 34 They said I needed implants and some kind of mini implants too. Ok. A doctor by the name of Nemirovsky referred me to a doctor in the Jewish Hospital. The doctor sent me for an x-ray. 14 00
- 14 00 He said that I needed implants. Not mini implants, but regular implants. And that I needed at least two of them. He said he would do an estimation and send it...It's been over 1.5 month since and I don't know whether or not he has sent it...14 24
- 14 24 (The organization approved) Not sure, not sure. I haven't received any response. 14 36
- End of file
- File 975 5158
Duration 1:30
- 00 00 Not sure, not sure. The prosthetics were not good. I haven't used anything yet. (Background conversation) I am 90 years old. (Background conversation) I want to show you my photo. It was taken before the war. 00 40
- 00 40 As I told you, my vehicle commander was a communications man between the division HQ and the battalion HQ. It was an independent tank

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reconnaissance battalion. He was my vehicle commander. He lived close to our barracks. 01 09

01 09 He used to invite me over. I used to come to him. Sometimes I did the firewood chopping for him, or bringing water from the well, just some household chores. 01 23

01 23 I used to be a very good shooter. I could shoot any type of weapons. 01 30

01 30
End of interview