

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
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Part 1

- 00 00 **Leonid:** Yes, my name is Leonid Aleksandrovich Sheinker, with "i". Shein means beautiful. (Interviewer). My name is Leonid Aleksandrovich Sheinker, with an "i". I was born on March 6, 1920 in the city of Tashkent where I lived all my life except for the years spent at war, in the army, and the studies at the Academy.
- 00 29 I lived in Tashkent all my life. The war began...When I learned that the war began I was a 2nd year student, Arms Department, Zhukovsky Air Force Engineering Academy, Moscow. After awhile I was appointed...since before the college....before the Academy, I finished machine gun department of Tashkent Infantry College, I was appointed a commander of anti-aircraft/machine gun emplacement...
- 01 02 ...Building A, Petrovsky Palace, Moscow. That was the place where my friend Kolya Zakharov and I shot down, while we were on duty, a German bomber. I have a picture painted by Kolya. He was a good artist. Besides, this story is in my other materials.
- 01 30 Later on, in October...this is another story. During one of the German air raids... not only our machine gun was installed, there were machine guns on all the roofs on the campus...there were also search lights around the parks...Once a plane got into a search light, and it was fired at.
- 02 03 This is exactly how we caught the plane – with a search light. I haven't mentioned before, I had finished a sniper school. I was a sniper, champion of Tashkent in sniper shooting. We shot down the plane. We found out about it later, when it was officially confirmed. All the shot planes were being checked.
- 02 31 Commissions were checking how exactly the planes were shot down – with a gun or a machine gun, etc.. Later on we found out, not immediately. That happened in August. In October the Academy was evacuated to Sverdlovsk.
- 02 52 We had already moved to Sverdlovsk when a letter came in confirming that we had shot down the plane. All the materials are kept in the Academy Archives. It's in my memory. That was my first contribution to the war.
- 03 14 My feelings? I was overjoyed. We had a small drinking party, naturally. I had a friendly circle in the Academy; professor Venzig used to call us "Sheinker and his epicureans". We were friends spending time together. My last birthday party was on March 6th, '41. After that had happened we had a small drinking party at Kolya Shikin's place.
- 03 48 That's how we marked what had happened. At that time... I was promoted to lieutenant's rank on January 10th, '39 in Tashkent when an order by the Minister of Defence was issued stating that we had graduated from Tashkent Infantry College.
- 04 09 That's when I was promoted to lieutenant's rank. I was sent to Shepetovka to serve as a commander of an infantry platoon, infantry regiment. Later I enrolled in the Academy, having passed a competitive examination. I can go

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- on and on, it'll take a lot of time. (Laughs). I have already told Mila how I prepared for the exams.
- 04 36 When I came to the Academy... I will try to make it short. I submitted an application to the Academy. I received an invitation letter. When I got the invitation, my regiment commander called me to his office.
- 04 50 He said "You must serve here, you are not going to the academy! You will serve here as a lieutenant. Go on serve!". I went on to serve. You see. the machine guns, you may have seen a "Maxim" machine gun in "Chapaev" movie, the machine guns used to be part of a battery. You need to be good at math – algebra, geometry, trigonometry, etc..
- 05 17 ...whereas my battalion commander only had grade 4 education. In '39 few educated people served in the army. So, I went on to serve. But how lucky I was: 2 weeks or so later, the regiment commander was promoted and transferred to the division.
- 05 41 He was promoted to assistant division commander. A new regiment commander was sent to us – a colonel from Kushka, Central Asia. You know a small town Kushka, very hot there. He called me to his office saying "Go to the Academy, Lieutenant. Go to Moscow, look around, and visit theatres and museums... I doubt you will be admitted. You'll see, you'll come back to us. Every year I send young guys to Moscow, they always come back to me".
- 06 12 And so I went to Moscow and joined the preparatory program. I realized that my chances to be admitted were not high: 5 math examinations, Arms Department, 5 math examinations – written and oral. Once, when on my way home after classes, I saw a note on the wall saying: "Katzenellenbogen. Math lessons for University applicants".
- 06 40 I rushed to him. We agreed on the conditions. At that time, as a lieutenant, I was making 1,200 roubles. Every day after classes I went home, had a 1hr nap, a shower, a dinner and went to him. We stayed up until 11-12pm. He had a huge archive of math problems, theorems, etc..
- 07 10 When the exams started I had no problem passing them successfully, for all the math exams I got mark "5". The only "4" was for my favourite physics. And so I was admitted. Later on the guys told me that I was the only infantry officer out of 13,000 applicants who were mostly from air forces, and some were from the navy, artillery, etc..
- 07 23 The studies were difficult. At first we were transferred to the technical department to be trained as technicians. It was in Sverdlovsk. We spend all day in classes; the food was poor, we had little time to sleep, etc.. Soon an order from the commander in chief came in ordering to start training us as engineers.
- 08 03 In '42 I got to the front as a trainee for the first time: 15th air force army, Bryansk Front, SB bombers. I was wounded, contused in a bombing raid. 3 German planes suddenly appeared and bombarded us. The caponiers opened fire at our landing field and disappeared.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 08 40 I was lucky. I had been at the front for only 1 week. We were instructed to hide in slit trenches. When my technician rushed to a slit trench I just followed him. I jumped down, but got head injury and hearing contusion. The technician didn't make it and was killed.
- 09 07 He didn't make it to the hiding. I got a treatment at the medical battalion and returned to the Academy where the medical unit was very good, better than hospitals. I was treated there for concussion. I had got first medical aid for head injury at the medical unit.
- 09 33 I still have bumps on my head. Thank God, I didn't get bold, I still have hair at 90 years old, although my father was bold since he was 24. I remember the name of the location: village Balabanovo near town Donkov, where we were stationed.
- 10 04 I didn't write down, but somehow I memorized: village Balabanovo, near town Donkov. There was a field airdrome for SB bombers. The planes were in caponiers. We were preparing our individual planes for combat missions. Suddenly 3 German planes appeared overhead, the anti-aircraft artillery guys must have missed them.
- 10 33 They appeared from nowhere. It lasted minutes. They bombarded the airdrome landing field, firing at the caponiers where the planes were, and disappeared. It didn't last long. Several men were killed, and several men got wounded. I was among those who got wounded.
- 11 01 I wasn't severely wounded. The surgeon told me that had the shrapnel hit 1 mm wider he wouldn't know how I would have ended up. I just had a small scratch that gradually healed. But the hearing contusion remained serious. It persisted no matter how much treatment I got.
- 11 32 As for the right ear, in Tashkent in the '80s I was treated by Dr. Shenker, my name is Sheinker, and his name was Shenker. He performed a surgery, cutting through periosteum, I remained knocked out for several days. Gradually it went away, and my hearing improved.
- 11 51 Currently my right ear hearing is quite decent, but still I always say to my wife "Speak up, speak up". She normally speaks in a small voice, she used to be a lab manager, used to speak softly.
- 12 10 No, I wasn't a sniper. Snipers are infantry, while I was in air forces. I used my sniper's skills though, when I went on missions as a gunner. As an armament engineer I used to have in store incendiary bullets. I used them to fire at German planes. I wasn't a sniper in the war.
- 12 47 I went on missions to replace those gunners killed in action. When we were short of personnel, everyone went on missions, subject to the command permission. I wasn't supposed to get into the cockpit saying "I'm going on mission".

Leonid Sheinker Part I Duration: 44:26 Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011

- 13 06 Only subject to regiment commander's permission. Mostly I used to be sent to accept new airdromes. Our regiment was following the infantry. Did you hear about the recent tragic death of the Polish officials? They got caught in the trees.
- 13 21 Assault planes used to be low-flying. My task was to check if high trees were not in the way of assault planes. I used to accept airdromes, signing the acceptance papers. We had special battalions preparing new airdromes before the regiment flies in.
- 13 43 I was accepting those airdromes. Mostly we accepted...as I said we checked if the airdrome runways were free of trees. It wasn't only me, other men were involved in accepting runways – if they were well rolled and suitable for the planes to land and take off.
- 14 08 There weren't concrete runways at the time. Those were field airdromes. (Interviewer). My job was engineer's. (Interviewer). No, I wasn't. I only was a sniper before I came to serve in the air forces. Back then, in the infantry, I was assistant chief of division's sniper team.
- 14 41 In aviation, I used my sniper's skills on an individual basis, when shooting at German planes. I was an excellent marksman. My position wasn't a sniper's, I was an engineer. I am often asked about heroism.
- 15 04 My heroism was thousands of Nazis killed by our aviators, hundreds of tanks and automobiles and railway trains – that was my share of heroism, because those were my bullets, shells, bombs and Katyusha's missiles prepared by us, the armament engineers.
- 15 31 When the aircraft's arms were reliable, the Germans called those aircrafts "Black death". If it's faulty, it becomes a target, an easy target because it was low-flying. It would be an easy target for a rifle. That's why the infantry fired volleys – entire companies or platoons used to fire at planes.
- 16 01 I would like to show those planes. No, I'm not saying I flew much. I did fly, but not much. (Interviewer). I didn't fly much – I wasn't allowed to. Just give me the model aircraft and I'll tell you. This plane's main advantage, main advantage was the entire fuselage being a reinforced capsule.
- 16 38 A reinforced "egg", a capsule, with the engine, wings, fuselage and undercarriage fastened up to it. When a plane was shot down, the pilot and gunner normally stayed alive, if they hadn't been hit. The armoured protection was very reliable in such planes.
- 17 06 That was the most important advantage. As for the arms, that was the heaviest aircraft in terms of the arms. Why? Because it had 3 machine guns and 2 guns. At first the guns were 23 mm diameter. Later they were replaced with Nudelman cannons –
- 17 29 ...Hero of the Socialist Labour, professor Nudelman. 37 mm calibre, very powerful cannons. They were difficult to work with, to do the charging, etc..

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

Besides, within the wing there were 4 compartments for smaller bombs, anti-tank bombs.

- 17 49 160 bombs with fastened up detonating fuses placed in the compartments – I had to do all that. Under the wings there were fastenings for missiles, Katyusha’s rockets. They were smaller than those used in Katyusha trucks. But all the same, they were reactive missiles.
- 18 17 10 of them and 2 outside suspensions for big bombs. A plane used to go on 4 to 5 combat missions a day. They were difficult to work with, in terms of the armament, especially in freezing temperatures of 35-40 degrees. Both ‘41 and ‘42 were hard and cold winters, especially ‘41.
- 18 45 One more difficulty for us, armament engineers, was that most of armament technicians were young women. For some reason, while motor mechanics and other mechanics were men, armament technicians were women. Well, they weren’t your conservatory girls – they were athletes, strong and healthy girls.
- 19 06 Still they were girls. When 37 mm cannons were installed on IL-10 aircrafts, we had to give them a helping hand. I started as a mechanic, being around those aircrafts all day. I had 12 aircrafts to take care of. I had to check the cartridges: you push the button, the cartridges go off and the bomb falls down.
- 19 35 Also my job involved checking mechanical ejectors. There were some incidents with young inexperienced pilots who were nervous on their first missions, forgetting to push the ejectors to the end. We had an incident when a plane landed and bombs started pouring out.
- 20 00 Thank God the pilot got away with it. When I had arrived at the regiment the chief engineer told me “If God forbid anything wrong happens, post a guard and don’t let anyone come close to the plane until I come”. It’s always a technician’s or engineer’s fault.
- 20 18 There was an incident; he got on board and checked: the cartridges hadn’t gone off, they hadn’t been made use of, the ejector handle hadn’t been pushed to the end, that’s why the ejector locks had hung down. That was a single incident.
- 20 35 Otherwise everything was OK, everyone did their best, me too, and everything was in good order. However that was difficult, very difficult. (Interviewer). We used to sleep under plane wings. In the summer time, it was a long way to the dugout.
- 21 00 Of course in the winter we had to go to the dugouts. Dugouts were like this: 50 men in each dugout, half of them smoking. They were heated with stoves, burning bricks with kerosene or fuel oil. The lighting was made of cartridge cases with wicks.
- 21 25 You get up in the morning with a black face, you have to go outside and wash your face with snow. We were young, everything went well with us. No, in our

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

regiment we were 5 Jews. My regiment made its way from Moscow to Berlin, my regiment, in which I fought, changing 3 staffs.

- 21 53 I don't know how many Jews had been in the regiment before I got there. There were 5 Jews when I got to the regiment. My pilot friend, Misha Mometsvalov, later I found out his real name was Chaim Aronovich Mometsvalov; a flight gunner, I don't remember what his name was; regiment's chief engineer, I have his portrait; myself and a special equipment technician.
- 22 21 We were 5, best of best. (Interviewer: were there Jews among the women technicians?) No, there weren't. They were mostly Russian girls, one of them was an Armenian; mostly Russians, maybe Belarusians and Ukrainians.
- 22 43 I don't remember exactly. I don't know how some stupid chief decided that females worked as armament technicians. He thought that was not a hard job as compared to a motor mechanic or an aircraft mechanic. In fact theirs was a hard job.
- 23 00 A hard job! Men should have been given those jobs. There were men too, but mostly they were girls. They were doing their job well, those girls. They were not same youths as now. (Interviewer) We were raised as patriots of our country.
- 23 22 Many of us enlisted voluntarily, before being conscripted. I enrolled in the College in '36, before I turned 17. I went on missions as a gunner replacement. According to the personnel list I was squadron's armament engineer.
- 23 43 But sometimes I went on missions as a gunner replacement, when we were short of gunners. If there were no gunners available I went on missions as a replacement as per commander's permission. I got into some happenings, but nothing extraordinary.
- 23 57 Nothing extraordinary. I want to emphasize, firstly, I was a sniper; and secondly, I was pulling my rank as an armament engineer, charging incendiary traceable cartridges, instead of regular ones. When my friends and I used them for shooting at the Germans, the Germans saw that the next battery salvo would be directed at them, and buzzed off before it was too late.
- 24 30 I was wounded on the ground. In the air everything was OK, my pilot was an ace. I wasn't wounded in the air – only on the ground. When asked what my heroism was, I say it was in my being wounded, contused and most importantly, our regiment's pilots were using my job and my subordinates' job...
- 25 09 ...bombing and shooting down German machines and equipment, which resulted in our regiment's getting the "Guards" status and many war decorations – 3 orders, ending up in Berlin. That was our job at war.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 25 23 War is primarily a job and a hardest one too. For example, take tank men or artillery men. Their first task was to dig round before taking a position – 40 cubic meters of earth, in order to make a caponier for a gun or a plane.
- 25 45 In aviation that was easy: every regiment had an airdrome maintenance battalion preparing the airdromes, including the caponiers. The pilots used to arrive, land and just take care of their business. They wouldn't have managed otherwise.
- 26 03 Combat situation was tough. As I say, every soldier used to see the war from his own trench. All the battles were planned by big shots, and whether or not the plans had been carried out – we used to learn that stuff much later. When I started my research on the war, collecting materials – it was only then that I started going deep.
- 26 31 At that time all we knew was our immediate combat task: preparing the aircrafts and armaments, making it all workable so that you could be calm. Remember I mentioned before, an incident when after a pilot landed, bombs started pouring out of his plane.
- 26 51 The squadron commander started running towards him with his gun in his hand... SMERSH [counterintelligence] commander also started running towards him. I was smart enough to post a guard until the chief engineer arrived, figuring it out and letting them all calm down.
- 27 07 They used to always put the blame on technicians...never on a pilot...That was hard. I am often asked a question about anti-Semitism. (Interviewer). I have never...(Interviewer). I have told about...what's his name? (Interviewer) He was recommended 4 times.
- 27 37 (Leonid's wife's voice) Stratievsky! That's right. There was a guy in our division by the name of Nathan Stratievsky – flagman gunner, bomber regiment. He shot down several enemy planes. 3 times he was recommended for Hero of the Soviet Union.
- 27 54 3 times! And instead, every time he was just given a medal, not a Hero. It's all in my book. And when his commander recommended him for the 4th time, they realized... Oh, the recommending commander was a Hero of the Soviet Union himself.
- 28 14 ... they realized it was no use going on denying... eventually they gave him the Hero's award. In our regiment, Misha Mometsvalov was recommended for the Hero's award... "just wait, just wait". He had an argument with the regiment commissar, hitting him in the face, the argument was about some woman... he had insulted a girl and Misha hit him in the face.
- 28 39 He was denied the Hero's award. In our regiment there were 11 Heroes, no Jews among them. The only Jew was Misha Mometsvalov, the rest were Russians, a few Ukrainians and Belarusians; mostly Russians. 11 Heroes. Afterwards, when I started collecting materials, I found 156 Heroes.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
29 13	I went to Minsk to work at Minsk WWII Museum. At that time the Book was published for the first time... they used to publish books like "Ukraine's Heroes", "Residents of Kiev – Heroes of the Soviet Union", "Georgians – Heroes of the Soviet Union", "Residents of Uzbekistan – Heroes of the Soviet Union".	
29 41	There were 2, 3 or 5 Jews among them. I was collecting the materials...collecting the books, collecting the people...making up lists, collecting materials, working in libraries, ordering the books I needed from the Lenin Library in Moscow. The books were on film. I had the portraits made in Tashkent portrait atelier.	
30 07	They can make your grandma's or grandpa's portraits. I had these portraits made there. Why did I decide to collect? When I returned home from the front and found out that Georgy Mikhailovich had returned too, I went to see him.	
30 28	He was our pioneer team leader. We had grown up together as kids in the same pioneer team at the Red Army House with other military personnel's children and the children of civilians working for the army. My mother worked as a book keeper at Turkvo [Turkestan Military District]. My father-in-law worked as a typewriter technician, right?	
30 55	In '30 we were brought to the pioneer team. She was 8 and an "October Child"[oktyabrenok], while I was 10 and a pioneer. We grew up there: an excellent team, excellent team leaders, and young Komsomol members – our leaders. Later on almost all of them went to the war in Spain.	
31 17	Some of them didn't return... So we grew up there. I was dreaming of enrolling in the Military Academy. I found out that only lieutenants – graduates of military colleges – qualified to be enrolled in the Academy.	
31 35	They didn't admit civilians. And so I enrolled in Tashkent Military College. (Olga: why did you decide to collect materials on Jewish Heroes?) Yes, I digressed a little. I came to Georgy Mikhailovich and we had a conversation. At that time he was Head of <i>Znaniye</i> [Knowledge] Society.	
31 55	A military department in <i>Znaniye</i> Society. They were delivering lectures on heroism, soldiers' heroism. He gave me an assignment to lead the department. That's how I started collecting materials – at first I collected materials about my class mates at the school and College...	
32 15	... my friends from the pioneer team and the Academy. That's how I started collecting... Later I happened to read a book by Erenburg stating that it was our duty to publish a book about the Jews at war. I started collecting materials for that book.	
32 34	That's when I got engaged in collecting and gradually... for the first 35 years I had been collecting in Tashkent until we left for Israel. When the Meskheta Turks were moved...not moved, what did they call it? Resettled (interviewer) from Uzbekistan to Georgia, when pogroms started in Uzbekistan, kind of a civil war, my kids made a decision to emigrate. We applied and left for Israel.	

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 33 21 We couldn't think of partying with our grandchildren, not my wife. Although our situation in Tashkent was excellent: we owned a house, a car and a motor boat. We were well respected. I worked as a lecturer. She worked in an institute, receiving her old age pension and salary.
- 33 41 (Laughs) Everything was excellent with us. (Interviewer). Take Smushkevich, for instance, twice Hero of the Soviet Union (interviewer). Then Kreizer. (Interviewer: I see Kreizer). Then, shoot, how could I forget? Give me my book!
- 34 06 I am going to look it up. "Jewish Heroism at War". I want all the 3 books here. Ola (interviewer), please take all the 3 books – the white one, the red one, and the thick one, the German one. I want them to be taken pictures of. I don't have that portrait. (Voices). Taking out from the folder? (Ola: yes) Taking out.
- 34 31 Shall I read? (voices) All the details are in the book. This is a short version. [Reads] Corporal Ocheret, Mikhail Iosifovich. He was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union – on May 31, '45, town Ritzen, Germany. He was 17. (Guys' voices, long pause)
- 35 22 (Voices, Olga: Please repeat his name) Ocheret, Mikhail Iosifovich, corporal. Corporal Ocheret, Mikhail Iosifovich. (Len's voice) 17 year old soldiers were awarded with the title of Hero. He was a regiment's control point guard. All of a sudden German tanks broke through, one of the tanks moving right towards the control point.
- 35 55 He tied grenades round himself. At first there was some shooting. One of the tanks broke through to the control point. He tied grenades round himself. When the tank was close, he threw himself under the tank. The tank exploded, the Germans were killed and he died too.
- 36 16 For the heroism and selflessness he was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union. (Olga: Posthumously?) Posthumously. Of course posthumously. (Interviewer). The next one. [Reads]. Bumaguin, Iosif Romanovich. (Len, Olga: one more time). [Reads loudly] Bumaguin, Iosif Romanovich.
- 36 47 He served in the Far East. All through the war he was sending one report after another asking to be sent to the acting army, to fight against the Germans. He was refused. Finally everyone got tired of his reports and he was sent to the front in April, '45. He arrived in Posnan, Poland and was given a platoon.
- 37 16 He might have arrived earlier, but all happened in April. In one of the combats his platoon got under the close-range fire of German machine guns – 2 machine guns, on both flanks. The soldiers couldn't raise their heads. Similar situation happened to Abram Levin, near Moscow.
- 37 39 He was closer than anyone to those machine guns. He pelted one machine gun with grenades and threw himself on the other one. He was killed and

Leonid Sheinker Part I Duration: 44:26 Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011

they won the fight. I tell you he had only stayed at the front literally a month or so.

38 05 Military technician, 1st class, Gorelik, Solomon. [Repeats] Military technician, 1st class, Gorelik, Solomon. (Olga: one more time) [speaks loudly] Military technician, 1st class, Gorelik, Solomon. (Len, guys) He was assistant commander, equipment, tank regiment; [repeats] assistant commander, equipment, tank regiment.

38 37 His job was pulling out and fixing broken tanks. Some place on the side. But he was always eager to go into action, to drive a tank himself. In one of the combats, when he was leading a tank platoon, a shell hit his tank. Everyone was killed except him. Staying in the burning tank he destroyed enemy artillery, etc. He was killed in that combat.

39 11 He was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union for his heroism. It wasn't his duty to drive tanks, his job was fixing them. But he was eager to go into action, participated in several combat actions, and was killed like that: he was the only one staying in the tank, he could have stopped, etc. but he chose to fight to the end.

39 41 (Olga: thank you. Len's voice. Olga: What medal was he awarded?) The Gold Star of the Hero and Order of Lenin, posthumously – his family received. [speaks loudly] Kreizer, Yakov Grigorievich. [repeats] Kreizer, Yakov Grigorievich.

40 05 (Len, Olga, guys)

40 31 Kreizer was one of the most outstanding generals – commanders in the Great Patriotic War. He was a Jew. At the beginning of the war he was a lieutenant colonel, a division commander. By the end of the war he was promoted to colonel general. After the war he was promoted to General of the Army. He was the only Jewish General of the Army.

41 00 He was the first in the Red Army to be awarded Hero of the Soviet Union – for stopping the offensive of Guderian's army on river Berezina, near Borisov. It's a long story. In short he was the first to be awarded Hero for that battle.

41 24 After the division he was a commander of corps, armies, making it to the end of the war, and being promoted to colonel general. After the end of the war he was promoted, for his heroism and skills, to General of the Army. He was one of a kind. There were many Jewish generals, but he was the only General of the Army.

41 55 (Interviewer) Kreizer, Yakov Grigorievich. (Interviewer: give us the details). I need to open the book, everything is there. Looking up Kreizer, Yakov Grigorievich. Lots of details. He was transferred from one army to another, with promotion. (Interviewer). Smushkevich, Yakov Grigorievich, Yakov Vladimirovich. Smushkevich, Yakov Vladimirovich.

42 34 (Interviewer, Len) Smushkevich, Yakov Vladimirovich, twice Hero of the Soviet Union. His activities were significant and intense. He participated in the

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

fight against Japan, when the Japanese attacked Mongolia. He was awarded with Hero of the Soviet Union there. He participated in the war in Spain.

43 30 During the Spanish war he went by the name of "General Douglas", right? On coming back he was appointed AF Commander in Chief, promoted to Lieutenant General. His bio was impressive. He ended his life getting under repression. He was taken right from the hospital and brought to Beriya's office. That was a big loss for our aviation.

44 02 He was executed during the war. Beriya executed a group of generals. His bio is very impressive. He was an outstanding pilot and an outstanding commander. But that was how he ended up.

44 25 (Interviewer)

44 26 End of part 1.

Part 2

00 00 Leonid: My name is Leonid Aleksandrovich. My father's name was Aleksandr Efimovich. I don't like the way they say names in Canada. Why not mention your father? That's why I always state that my name is Leonid Aleksandrovich.

00 19 But I always respond to "Leonid". My last name is Sheinker with an "i". Later, when we start shooting... When we lived in Raanan, Israel I had a museum "Jewish Heroes of the Soviet Union". I had a poster saying "Greatness does not die". You may take a picture of it.

00 46 What I wanted to tell you about myself...(Interviewer in the frame). First I'll tell you about myself. In 1938 on graduation from Tashkent Military College, machine gun department...Tashkent Military College... I was sent to serve in Shepetovka, Ukraine.

01 16 I served in a regiment. Later on, in '39...eh? In '39 I enrolled in Arms Department, Zhukovsky Air Force Engineering Academy. When the war began I was a 2nd year student at that department. And because I had finished the machine gun department of a military college, I was appointed a commander of an anti-aircraft gun.

01 44 I have an album with materials regarding all I just said. This picture [shows] was painted by my partner and friend we were on the watch with. Here's his portrait - Kolya Zakharov's. We shot down a German bomber. I remember very well the German plane falling down after I fired at it.

02 16 That was my first contribution to the war. Later on I had quite a number of front trainings - in '42 and '43. In '44 I graduated and went on until we

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

reached Berlin. I made it to Berlin. This is my short story. (Shuffles materials).

- 02 44 Now I'd like to tell you about my family. My book about Jewish Heroes of the Soviet Union is about to be published. (Interviewer)[shows a picture] In this picture you can see my little sister and myself. She was 1.5 years old at that time.
- 03 15 When I enrolled in the Academy, Moscow, I found out that there was a forest school near Moscow – a sanatorium for children sick with poliomyelitis. At that time my little sister was 13. She was a cute kid, unfortunately sick with polio.
- 03 36 I went there and arranged with the Head Physician for her to come. I brought her from Tashkent to the sanatorium. She flourished there. It was in a forest, with fabulous clean air. She literally flourished. I was happy.
- 03 55 I was planning to take her with me to see our mother during my next vacation. (Interviewer) In this photo [shows] you can see my little sister Leya, born in '27, and myself. (Interviewer). She was sick with polio. When I enrolled in the Academy in '39 I found out about a forest school near Moscow...
- 04 28 ...a sanatorium for kids sick with polio I rushed there. I arranged with the Head Physician and brought my little sister from Tashkent to the school. She flourished there. I was planning to take her to our mother next year on my vacations.
- 04 50 Unfortunately the war began. I didn't have a chance to go and see her. I had a training practice at the front. On my way back from the front training I wanted to drop by and visit my little sister, but I was told not to.
- 05 06 The Germans had occupied the area, burnt down the school with the kids and medical personnel inside. That's how I lost my little sister. I have no information how it all happened. I wrote a letter to the TV program "Wait for me" and I hope they'll get information on how it all happened.
- 05 32 Several years ago Germany, trying to redeem the sin, built a Medical Centre for Sick Kids in that area. Maybe they built a memorial to the kids murdered there. That's a short story about my little sister.
- 06 01 [shows a picture] In this picture you can see my cousin Grisha Vaksin with his 2 friends. My cousin is on the left. (Interviewer). My cousin Grisha Vaksin added a year to his age to enlist in the army. He was killed in his very first combat near Vitebsk.
- 06 24 We had several pictures. After the war a memorial was built near the village to those who were killed there during the war, including my cousin. I have a picture of the memorial. I went to see it with my grandson. We paid tribute to my cousin who died in the war. That's it in short about my cousin.
- 07 05 [shows a picture] (Interviewer). This is his father, my uncle – Semen Grigorievich Vaksin. Under his influence I enrolled in the Military College when

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- I was just 17. He went through 3 wars: the Civil War, the Great Patriotic War and the war with Japan.
- 07 27 He was wounded. He was decorated with the highest war decorations. He died at the age of 96. He got back home and lived until he died at 96. His son was killed in his very first combat. He was a regiment commissar during the Civil War. During one combat, he was told that mounted reconnaissance platoon got captured.
- 07 55 On hearing that, he turned around and galloped there. Some soldiers scattered, some were walked to be burnt. He managed to gather all the soldiers, attacked the "basmachi" (anti-Bolshevik fighters in Central Asia), and captured some of them thus saving his soldiers.
- 08 16 For his heroism he was awarded Order of the Red Star and Order of the Red Banner. All the documents are kept in the Military History Museum in Moscow. For his next combat action he was awarded the Gold Star of Bokharan Republic.
- 08 34 It's in the picture. I have a plaster cast of this Order. The Order was made of gold. That was the end of the war for him: he got sick with malaria and returned home. He was 50 when the Great Patriotic War started. He enlisted, and went through the war. He was awarded Order of the Red Star.
- 09 06 His regiment was sent to Manchuria, Japan. He went through the entire campaign with the regiment, only returning home in '46. He worked at a factory and died at the age of 96. His other son, grandchildren and great grandchildren now live in Israel,
- 09 33 ...in Raanan, ISRAEL. This is his short story, I could give you more details. They are all in my upcoming book. (Interviewer). He started the war as an ordinary submachine gunner. His old ranks and positions were not taken into account. He started in the war as an ordinary submachine gunner.
- 09 59 His credo was "always be ahead". His idea was that being ahead was less dangerous than being behind. He made it to Hungary, where he got an arm injury. He stayed in the army and was awarded the order.
- 10 20 He fought in Manchuria against the Japanese. I don't remember his final rank. We didn't mind ranks. (Interviewer). That was the highest heroism – saving one's commander's life or saving one's soldiers' lives. (Interviewer).
- 10 45 Yes, of course, I can tell about this. Did you see the "Chapaev" movie? He was inspecting the posts to see that the guards didn't sleep and watched out not to be attacked. A soldier galloped to him riding a foamy horse and reporting that a mounted reconnaissance platoon got captured and that the "basmachi" were going to burn them.
- 11 13 He turned around and galloped there without a thought how dangerous it was and that he was on his own. When he got there he managed to gather the scattered soldiers and attack the "basmachi". Do you know what "basmachi"

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

means? They were fighters in Central Asia during the civil war fighting against the Soviets.

- 11 44 He attacked the "basmachi", capturing "kurbashi" and liberating the prisoners – those who hadn't been burnt. For his heroism he was awarded Order of the Red Combat Banner. For his next heroism he was awarded Gold Star of Bokharan Republic.
- 12 08 It's an equivalent of Order of Glory. It had 3 classes. 1st – brass, second – silver and third – gold. Or the other way around: 3rd – brass, 2nd – silver, and 1st – gold. He was awarded the 1st class – the gold. That's his short story.
- 12 33 That's enough. [shows a photo]. Be quiet? OK. [speaks loudly]. This is me, right after the end of the war, in Berlin. I had just received a new jacket with high collar, waiting for a car to drive me to my unit. I saw a photo salon, walked in, and had my picture made.
- 13 02 I have several different photos. Not about the picture – but about myself. (Interviewer). I can tell you a little about myself. When I was an Academy student I had saved 10,000 roubles for my wedding. In '40 we got engaged to be married in '42.
- 13 26 But the war began. I donated 10,000 to the Defence Foundation, for building Zhukovsky air force squadron planes. There was a meeting. I received a telegram from the Supreme Commander in Chief. Our Academy donated several million roubles.
- 13 45 My first contribution was my friend Kolya and I shooting down a German bomber. My second contribution was donating 10,000 roubles to the Defence Foundation, getting a thank you telegram from the Supreme Commander in Chief.
- 14 02 During the war I was sent to front for 3 training periods. My first training was in '42 – I got wounded and contused. After the treatment I recovered. My surgeon told me "Thank God it wasn't deep, which might have resulted in much more serious consequences". I recovered fully except that my left ear hearing is still impaired.
- 14 34 I have managed to get my right ear hearing restored, but the left one is still impaired. I had my next front training in '43. The first training took place on the Bryansk Front, and the second one – on the First Belarusian Front.
- 14 49 My third front mission was after my graduation from the Academy. With my regiment, I made it to Berlin. This is my short story. For more details please refer to the upcoming book which has more details, you may read it if you want.
- 15 11 I don't want to spend much time going into details as we are going to talk about heroes. [shows a picture] (Interviewer). Do whatever you think is right. (Interviewer). I'm going to take this folder.[puts on glasses] If you need the dates...[shows a picture]. This is a picture of Abram Levin.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 15 31 He was a private. What regiment? I need to look it up in my book. I don't remember by heart. He graduated from a college at Likhachev Automobile Factory and enlisted voluntarily (Interviewer, Len: Just say his name)...Abram Isaakovich Levin. [loudly] Abram Isaakovich Levin.
- 15 55 [black screen]...Tver Region. What was Matrosov's heroic feat? Pillboxes were concrete dug-in guard posts, normally equipped with loopholes through which to fire machine guns. They used to pin enemy soldiers' heads down to the ground, they were unable to raise their heads.
- 16 20 Under such conditions there always was a soldier who managed to crawl up to the machine gun throwing himself onto the pill box, blocking the machine gun with his own chest. This heroic feat was committed by Matrosov in '43, Aleksandr Matrosov.
- 16 38 This heroic feat was named after Aleksandr Matrosov. That was in '43, Whereas Abram Levin committed that same heroic feat in '42 – a year before Matrosov. It happened near Moscow. All the war museums in Moscow wrote about it – the City Museum for the Great Patriotic War, the Likhachev Factory Museum...
- 17 08 ...the school museum at Abram Levin's school – everywhere. However he wasn't awarded. A military clerk just made an entry: Private Levin was killed. That's all. The company went on fighting. It wasn't until many years later that school students investigated the war heroism finding Levin's tombstone in the village. The tombstone was build thanks to my teacher, colonel Goldberg, right? a Muscovite, who sought and managed to have the tombstone built.
- 17 52 Besides, there were many publications... I gave you a folder... newspaper publications in "Komsomolskaya Pravda". "Pravda", "Izvestiya", etc., demanding that he was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union. People who learned about his heroism and that he wasn't awarded, started demanding that he was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union.
- 18 17 But instead of Hero he was awarded Order of the Patriotic Was, 1st class. This is a short story of Abram Levin. The awards often depended on staff personnel. For example, in Air Forces, our aviators were given orders based on the number of successful missions.
- 18 40 Meaning that combat missions were confirmed by a photo/cinema/machine gun planes were equipped with and by the infantry reports. In '41 this kind of heroic deeds was treated negatively. The idea was "We don't need kamikaze. Matrosov committed his heroic feat in '43.
- 19 11 There were more than one occurrences of Matrosov's heroism. It happened because of combat circumstances. Earlier I mentioned Bumaguin. When his platoon started attacking the enemy, two machine guns on both flanks opened close-range fire, so that the soldiers couldn't raise their heads.
- 19 37 He happened to be close to the machine guns. He pelted one machine gun with grenades and threw himself onto the other one. He had only been at the

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

front for a month. All through the war he had sought to be transferred to the front. After just one month at the front he was killed after committing a heroic feat.

- 19 56 Matrosov's heroic feat was recognized in '43, not '41. The second reason was his name: Abram Isaakovich Levin. Had he been "Ivan Aleksandrovich" that would have been a different story. True, not all the Russians were always recognized...
- 20 19 There was a nurse Katyusha, who saved hundreds of sailors. When she was recommended for the title of Hero, there was a long delay: staff workers couldn't understand how a girl could have committed such heroism.
- 20 36 She was robbed of her medals, some girls came to her.... She is having all her medals replicated. Life goes on. Medals were hard to get; nowadays there are medal hunters.
- 20 56 Later on he was awarded. I tell you Aleksandr Matrosov wasn't his real name. He was a Tartar. I have his full name written down. How did he get that name? He was an orphan. The story went that he took great interest in the sea, calling himself Matrosov (Matros is the Russian for Sailor).
- 21 18 That's how he made a history going by Aleksandr Matrosov. I don't know all the details, but I have a cassette. It's difficult to sort them all out having hundreds of cassettes. I have written his full name in my note book.
- 21 36 Aleksandr Matrosov. No, he wasn't a Jew. (Interviewer: Please repeat) Aleksandr Matrosov wasn't a Jew. Latest information has it he wasn't a Russian either. He was a Tartar. 300 Red Army soldiers and officers repeated Matrosov's heroic feat.
- 21 58 (Interviewer). Maybe. Millions of war decorations that were not delivered. I learned from TV programs on Victory Day, about millions of non-deliveries. Nobody tries to find... Here's another story. Milkin, a full cavalier of Order of Glory received his last gold order only 5 years later.
- 22 37 They were looking for him and finally found him. He survived to become a professor and a PhD. Here's another story. The name's Zamansky. He received his 1st class golden order many years later. When found, he was summoned to the Military Commissar's Office to be handed the order by the bureaucrats. They should have gathered people in a theatre and made it known to the public.
- 23 11 Receiving awards is a difficult issue. Bureaucrats don't act properly. The award clerks should be those who went through the war themselves, who know the real price of orders and medals.
- 23 32 For example, generals with lots of medals attach the most importance to the Medal for Courage they received when they were soldiers. February 22, '42, not '43. Village Olenino, near Moscow, the Germans were firing from pill boxes – permanent fortified dug-in posts. The firing was so heavy that Abram Levin's company couldn't raise their heads.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 24 08 Deep snow, freezing cold, February frost. Suddenly they saw a soldier getting closer and closer to the pill box. Every pill box had a dead zone – not covered by the machine gun fire. When a man gets too close, he gets into the dead zone.
- 24 37 He got into such a zone, throwing himself on the loop-hole. The firing died out, the company advanced with a powerful spurt. The pill box was captured and the German machine gunners were killed on the spot. Abram Levin was killed. A clerk made an entry stating his death and the company advanced forward.
- 24 59 I don't know why he wasn't awarded Hero of the Soviet Union right away. Many years later, when school students started their researches, it became known to the public, newspaper publications started appearing; all the museums dedicated to the Battle of Moscow started exhibiting the records of his heroism.
- 25 24 Only then he was awarded Order of the Patriotic War, 1st class. Why not the title of Hero? Let me tell you about my letter to the Minister of Defence regarding major Betsis.
- 25 38 He committed the Gastello's heroic deed. He wasn't awarded the title of Hero. I had been collecting materials. I wrote a letter to the Minister of Defence. It's in my book. I got a response stating that major Betsis had been awarded Order of the Red Banner and Order of Lenin too.
- 26 01 And during the Finnish war he had been awarded such and such orders and medals. If at the time of his heroism he hadn't been awarded the title and Order of Hero, it was too late to do it then.
- 26 11 That was their response. Here's another story, regarding captain Kordonsky, a torpedo bomber commander. A torpedo bomber is an aircraft bombarding battle cruisers at sea. They were throwing a torpedo down blowing up ships at sea.
- 26 36 That's why a torpedo bomber, after setting course, wasn't supposed to deviate left or right, despite being shot at. If it deviated from the course the torpedo would miss the target. Kordonsky sank a German torpedo-boat destroyer, but a shell hit his plane.
- 27 01 His plane was a huge machine. Kordonsky then threw his plane on a battle cruiser at a Romanian sea port. It wasn't until 20 years later that Mikhail Gorbachev who was about to leave his post, awarded him Hero of the Soviet Union.
- 27 27 There was an intelligence man, Lev Manevich. He was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union 20 years after he died. I can go on and on. I'll tell you about Stratievsky who served in my division, not my regiment, but my division.
- 27 49 I'm not sure if his rank was lieutenant or senior lieutenant. His commander recommended him for Hero's title 4 times – for shooting down enemy planes

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

and for his combat heroism. It wasn't until after the 4th recommendation that he was given the award. His commander was Hero of the Soviet Union himself.

28 12 Every time he was given a smaller order instead of Hero's, it wasn't until after the 4th recommendation that he was given Hero of the Soviet Union. I met him in Israel, when he flew there. Life is not easy. (Interviewer) [Leonid puts on glasses] Abram Levin? (Interviewer: Yes)

28 32 Ok, wait a sec... Matrosov's heroic feat? [looks down on his papers]. Not only Levin. There were 2 more. I'll tell you, wait a sec. [Looks up in a book] Levin, page 198. (Interviewer) Yes, it's clear. [Reads to himself] February 22, '42, village Olenin, Tver Region. Right? (Interviewer: right)

29 03 February 22. Abram Levin committed his heroic feat on February 22, 1942, near village Olenin, Tver Region. Oleninsky District, Tver Region. I have already told you about the circumstances: the company couldn't raise their heads.

29 28 The fire from the pill boxes was so heavy... And then he committed a heroic deed. Later on, after years of struggle, he was awarded Order of Patriotic War 1st class. A memorial in his honour was built, not by the government, but by his admirers. My friend and teacher, colonel Yefim Davidovich Goldberg participated in that event.

29 58 Goldberg lived in Moscow. (Interviewer) Prizzen and Betsis? (Interviewer: yes). I have already told you about Betsis. (Interviewer). Remember I told you I wrote a letter to the Minister of Defence? The response was that he had been awarded and it was too late to do anything about that.

30 18 Present him again... History repeats itself. It's going to be in my book. Vainer, right? Mikhail Abramovich Vainer. (Interviewer) He was involved in the Battle of Konigsberg. (Interviewer: please explain what Gastello's heroic feat was) Gastello's heroic feat?

30 49 When a plane's hit with a shell and is going down, the pilot dives throwing his plane onto German tanks, guns, anti-aircraft batteries or infantry troops, automobiles, or HQs. If he is sent to bomb at sea then he throws his plane onto battle cruisers or other ships.

31 24 That was called Gastello's heroic feat, because captain Gastello was the first to have committed that act of heroism. Later some sources challenged it, stating that Gastello's act of heroism was not the first of that kind.

31 37 Some sources were saying that Gastello didn't commit a suicide attack, but just went down. That's rubbish. Gastello's heroic feat is when a pilot whose plane has been shot down and caught fire conducts a suicide attack on an enemy ground target.

32 02 That's exactly what Prizzen did. He was shot down and committed the same act of heroism. Gastello was awarded Hero, whereas Prizzen wasn't. After the

Leonid Sheinker Part I Duration: 44:26 Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011

war ended, his brother contacted archives and found a nomination, commander's recommendation for the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

32 30 It's in my book: he didn't receive the title of Hero. Several men didn't receive – that's in my book. What about Matrosov's heroic feat? Tevier Rise committed Matrosov's heroic feat. He was recommended for the title of Hero, but he was obviously injured slightly, not killed. He got to a hospital, recovered and wrote to his comrades saying "Friends, I survived".

33 01 As soon as they found out he had survived, the recommendation was withdrawn. He was awarded an order, and was granted an honorary freeman of some Polish town. His recommendation for Hero was withdrawn.

33 15 There were many facts of injustice during the war. Moreover, in '43 colonel general Shcherbakov, Chief of Red Army's Political Directorate, issued a secret order, ordering not to award or appoint the Jews to high positions.

33 42 There had been Jews occupying high positions. Although the order was meant to be secret, it wasn't secret at all. 500,000 Jews were in the Red Army during the war. 200,000 of them were killed. They were not only soldiers and officers. Some of the Jews were also staff workers.

34 14 Staff officers, personnel department officers were Jews too. Soon Jews and narrow circles found out about the order. Later everyone knew about it. Unfortunately the order existed as early as in '43, long before the end of the war. I found out about the order not long ago. (Interviewer) Eh?

34 43 (Interviewer) Lazar Papernik. (Interviewer) No, I don't have his photo in my folder. Here's Abram Levin's photo. [shows picture] (Interviewer). Lazar Papernik. I'll look up when the detachment was organized... Athletes... All outstanding athletes were gathered and a skier detachment was organized.

35 19 The team was send behind the enemy line to raid German HQs. Lazar Papernik was among the team members. This is a newspaper publication about him [shows newspaper] (Interviewer). I can read to give you more details.

35 37 I'd like to read the dates. (Interviewer). Lazar Shaevich Papernik, right? He had worked at a watch making factory in Moscow. He enlisted voluntarily to be sent to the front [reads] on July 17, 1941 Lazar Papernik enlisted to be sent to the front.

35 57 [reads] At the end of '41 the enemy troops were retreating. The area near the town Sukhinichi was a German stronghold. A skier team of captain Luzhnik was given an assignment to dislodge the enemy from village Khluzdevo and to hold the position until the arrival of our infantry units.

36 24 On the night of 23rd January, '42, 25 skiers, including political instructor Lazar Chaimovich Papernik, advanced to the enemy positions. [stops reading] I can continue telling the story. His detachment went into action, almost everyone was killed. At the end of '41 a detachment was organized including athletes, not just ordinary athletes but champions, masters of sports, etc.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 36 56 A skier detachment or a skier battalion was organized at that time. Lazar Chaimovich Papernik was among those skiers. He was a political instructor. They went into action, killing the Germans and at the same time loosing almost all their men.
- 37 22 Papernik survived. He was wounded. When surrounded by 7 Germans shouting "Rus, surrender!" he let them get closer. When they were close to him he threw a grenade killing himself and the Germans.
- 37 44 He was awarded for his heroism...(Interviewer)...probably, I'm not sure. There might have been other men. He was the only one who survived. A similar story with Dyskin...I may have told you about him before.
- 37 59 Dyskin was a 17 year old boy. He just arrived at the front. He was sent to an artillery regiment, artillery battery. Battery commander trained his men, you know everyone had his own duties.
- 38 22 One soldier is carrying shells, while another is charging guns and the third one is a gunlayer, the fourth is shooting, etc.. He had been in the unit for a week or so going through the training. When German tanks attacked their regiment...
- 38 40 ...and their battery, their battalion, everyone was killed, except Dyskin. He was doing everyone's job: carrying, charging, laying and shooting. He shot down 7 German tanks in one action.
- 39 00 That's unbelievable: a soldier shooting down 7 tanks! When general Rokossovski received a report about the only gun left in a section, he sent a communications officer to find out the details.
- 39 24 The officer got to the section but didn't find him. The soldier was wounded several times but continued shooting. When the last shell hit him he lost consciousness and got wounded in his leg. Meanwhile, special units removing wounded men and dead bodies from the combat field found him and took him away.
- 39 59 He was transferred from one hospital to another. 1.5 years later he read in a newspaper: Anatoly Dyskin was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union. He read that he was awarded posthumously. He thought it was a mistake, and that someone else was awarded, not him.
- 40 22 He thought it was his namesake. Someone told him to write a letter to Kalinin. So he wrote a letter to Kalinin. Kalinin answered saying, yes, it's you, and I'm so glad that you survived. I wish you all the best, etc.
- 40 36 While in the hospital he was trained as a nurse. After the war he graduated from a medical institute. He lived up to become a professor and PhD at Leningrad Military Medical Academy.

Leonid Sheinker Part I Duration: 44:26 Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011

- 40 59 He shot down 7 tanks! What do you know; everything could happen during the war. I know about a pilot who shot down 9 planes in one action. Unbelievable! There were German aces and Soviet aces.
- 41 18 Kozhedub and other aces. There were aces in our regiment, like my friend Misha Mometsvalov. (Interviewer). Later I found out that his real name was not Misha, but Chaim Aronovich Mometsvalov.
- 41 36 Wait a minute, I forgot: was his name Efim Anatolievich or Anatoly Efimovich. Rather Efim Anatolyevich. Let me look it up. Let me see...[shuffles papers] Ok. Dyskin, Dyskin...Dyskin Efim Anatolievich. That's right.
- 42 01 I told you everything. (Interviewer). Again, Dyskin Efim Anatolievich, Jewish. I have only Jews here (laughs). Only Jews in this book. "Jewish heroism in the war". The title will be "Jews – Heroes of the Soviet Union".
- 42 18 Not only Heroes – full cavalier of Order of Glory is equal to twice Hero, based on the status of Order of Glory. The title of Hero is awarded for one heroic feat, whereas Order of Glory has three classes.
- 42 35 Dyskin Efim Anatolyevich, a Jewish 17 year old boy just got to the front, an artillery regiment, where the commander trained him in all he was supposed to know. His training saved his life – he was able to perform complicated operations.
- 43 02 ...Laying the target, charging – not everyone knows how to do that. After the German air raid and bombardment all the battery guns were destroyed. When the tank attack started, there was nobody to resist. Dyskin was the only survivor who didn't hide or run away.
- 43 35 He started to fight against all the tanks. He carried the heavy shells for 6 mm guns, charged, laid and shot – all by himself. He shot down 7 tanks! The last tank shot him, he was wounded and lost his consciousness. The team collecting the wounded men took him away.
- 44 10 Before being wounded he fought on his own because everyone had been dead. A man assisting him was killed leaving him the only survivor.
- 44 22 (Interviewer). Ok. (Interviewer). Senior lieutenant Sitnik, Iosif Zakharovich. Our regiment's pilot. During the Battle of Moscow... the winter of '41 was very cold with deep snow... at that time our regiment flew old-fashioned aircrafts RZ – R5, with open cockpits.
- 44 59 Our regiment was given an assignment to locate the HQ of 39 Rifle Army that was surrounded providing them with ammunition, food supplies, etc.. Many pilots were given assignments (that was a night bomber regiment) to go on night missions locating the signal fire. At first they weren't able to locate them.
- 45 41 They had to return to the airdrome having failed to carry out the assignment. Finally Sitnik was sent on a mission. He arrived at the place indicated to him

Leonid Sheinker Part I Duration: 44:26 Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011

and didn't find anything, no fire, nothing. He made a decision to land which was strongly forbidden by the regulations.

46 03 He made a decision to land. They had to keep on moving not to let the skis stick to the frozen ground. They kept the engines on, moving forward all the time. He was successful in meeting the 39 Army HQ staff. They agreed on signalling procedure and on the meeting location.

46 29 He returned to the regiment reporting to the command on the results of his mission. He was recommended for the title of Hero. Before him nobody could carry out the task, many men being surrounded and killed by the Germans. That's why he was recommended for the title of Hero.

46 45 Afterwards, after the Battle of Moscow, due to our regiment's successful performance in the Battle of Moscow, we were given new IL-2 fighter planes. The pilots gave their old aircrafts to other units and went on to the reserve regiment to be trained to fly IL-2 planes.

47 11 After that they received fighter planes IL-2 and flew to fight in the Battle of Stalingrad. Sitnik was killed during a fight at Stalingrad Front. He had never been given the title of Hero.

47 32 I have a record of the location he was killed at. This is the story of an outstanding pilot. They should have awarded him Hero posthumously. I don't know why not, probably for the same reason. (Interviewer)[shows photo] (Interviewer)

47 59 I hold it. Higher? (Interviewer). OK. We should have written down all the information and you would have read it yourself. (Interviewer). I would go on telling their stories. I don't remember the exact numbers. (Interviewer: 176 combat missions).

48 24 That's a lot, for a fighter pilot. That's a lot. (Interviewer). At the beginning of the war they used to award the title of Hero just for 30 IL-2 combat missions. Guards captain Rivkin, Boris Mironovich. Guards captain Rivkin, Boris Mironovich. 176 combat missions, 95 fights, and how many planes did he shoot down? Let me see...(Interviewer) How many planes did he shoot down?

48 57 Eh? Yes, it's there in the book. Let me look him up. [looks down at the book]. Only Jews are in this book – pilots, infantry men, artillery men (interviewer), tank men...[reads] He himself shot down 12 planes over 15 air fights. Besides, he shot down 7 more enemy planes as a team member. ...176 combat missions. [repeats] He shot down 12 enemy planes over 15 air fights, and 7 more enemy planes as a team member.

49 31 That's how he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. No you don't put it right: he wasn't a Jewish pilot, he was a Soviet pilot and a Jew. (Interviewer) [repeats] Guards captain Rivkin, Semen Borisovich, right? or Mironovich? Semen Miro...Boris Mironovich...Boris Mironovich...

49 54 Guards captain Rivkin, Boris Mironovich, an outstanding pilot and a Jew, carried out 176 combat missions and shot 12 enemy planes over 15 air

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

flights. Besides he shot down 7 more planes as a team member, along with his friends.

- 50 26 He was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for his heroism. After the war he was promoted to a general and a commander of an aviation college. Most of the heroes we talked about were killed, whereas this man survived.
- 50 46 He was a top-class pilot. ...I can't find it...as they say in Russia, one removal equals two fires. I have moved 4 times already. I have her large photo. [shows the photo]...Gauleiter of Kiev (Interviewer) sent from Berlin to fight against subversive groups and partisans.
- 51 08 I apologize...Tanya Markus, Tatiana Iosifovna Markus, a Komsomol member, worked at Kiev railway station. When the war began Komsomol committee left her in Kiev to work in the resistance against the Germans.
- 51 34 She spoke German and was left in Kiev to work in the resistance against the Germans. They made up a new background for her. According to it she was a Georgian princess, a Georgian princess...She used that story to stay in Kiev.
- 51 52 In reality she was a subversive group fighter. They killed Germans, poisoned German officers and soldiers in cafeterias; they did their best to fight the Germans. Later on a German general arrived in Kiev, a new appointee as the Gauleiter of Kiev.
- 52 25 Tanya was given an assignment to kill the Gauleiter. Again? Tanya Markus worked at Kiev railway station, I can't recall what job she did. I think she worked in the Office of Kiev Railway. When the war began, Komsomol committee left Tanya in Kiev keeping her from evacuating with her family. She became a fighter in a Komsomol subversive group, fighting against the Nazis.
- 52 58 She was carrying out all the tasks assigned by the committee. She was a beauty. She spoke German. She carried out all the tasks. At some point the partisan war was gaining momentum, the Nazis suffering significant losses. A general was sent to Kiev from Berlin, a new appointee as the Gauleiter of Kiev – the Chief of Kiev.
- 53 33 His main goal was fighting against the partisans. As far as I know she worked in an officers' cafeteria. She found a way to befriend the general, who invited her to his house, probably to stay overnight, it's clear...She killed him. She had a small "browning" pistol. She killed him.
- 54 02 After that, the committee made a decision to take her out of Kiev, so that she wasn't caught by the Germans. When they were crossing Dnieper in a small boat, the boat was spotted by the Germans, they were caught and Tanya Markus was identified as the Georgian princess.
- 54 23 She was imprisoned, tortured and murdered. That's how she ended up. After the war there were publications by the researchers telling the story of Tanya

Leonid Sheinker Part I Duration: 44:26 Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011

Markus. Kiev party and Komsomol committees recommended her for the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

- 54 55 Unfortunately she was never awarded the title. I spent 10 years righting letters to every official I could think of and publishing materials in the newspapers and in the book my friend and I published... Finally Yushchenko (Ukraine's president) awarded her Hero of Ukraine.
- 55 21 Where is that sheet? I showed you, it's Ukrainian. Better put it here. I gave it to you. Many years later her younger sister came to visit me in Israel. I had organized a museum dedicated to the Jews – Heroes of the Soviet Union.
- 55 44 Her younger sister came to visit me in Israel. She brought me a bag full of documents about Tanya and Tanya's work. Based on those documents I wrote a book of her life. There's no monument to her in Israel so far.
- 56 12 Hopefully, sooner or later there will be erected a monument to Tanya, who will become Israel's national hero, like Hana Senesh. Currently she is being spoken and written of, both in Ukraine and in Israel. Those who take interest in the Great Patriotic War know about her heroism.
- 56 43 ...Konigsberg (Interviewer: sorry?) Near Konigsberg (Interviewer: yes) Mikhail Abramovich. I want to find the folder with his bio and a publication about his heroism. (Interviewer: do you have his photo?) Yes! I don't know I misplaced it. (Interviewer) I will tell you his story.
- 57 11 (Leonid and Interviewer's dialogue)
- 57 24 It happened near Konigsberg. Mikhail Abramovich Vainer, a private soldier. He participated in an attack against a building with the Germans inside. The Germans were firing, stopping our soldiers from approaching the building.
- 57 43 A so called mass barrage – a heavy fire. Similarly to Abram Levin we talked about earlier, Vainer entered the dead zone not covered with machine gun fire, broke into the building with a grenade, threw the grenade into the room where the Germans were sitting and killed 7 Germans.
- 58 10 He broke into that room shouting "Hande hoch" (Hands up) – you may have seen the popular movie "Quiet dawn" – Hande hoch – and the Germans surrendered with their hands in the air.
- 58 20 He captured them all and taking them to the unit where they were imprisoned. Nobody wanted to die. He broke into the room with a grenade in his hand. That was his heroic feat.
- 58 39 The next day he was heavily wounded in a fight near Konigsberg – not in Konigsberg. He died that day. His son who lives in Vancouver, a colonel, solicits the government of Russia for the title of Hero of Russia for his father.
- 59 03 I am helping him with that. All the materials are in my book. Here's a magazine... a magazine is in my folder...here it is. (Interviewer: what's in the magazine?) My article about him. I wrote an article about him.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 59 23 Here's his photo. (Interviewer) Lev Efimovich Manevich. (Interviewer) You'll see now. There are several photos. [shuffles] I don't remember when exactly I learned about Lev Efimovich Manevich. He was a remarkable strategic intelligence officer.
- 59 57 He predicted that the Great Patriotic War was about to begin in the Soviet Union. Similar to Sorge in Japan. When I started collecting materials everybody was telling me that he was Belarusian, not a Jew. I fought in Belarus, I used to come to Belarus every year...
- 1 00 23 ...to meet with the veterans. I decided to drop by the place where he was born – town Chausy. I came to Chausy and found some photos in the town museums. I found Manevich's and his father's photos. I have those photos, I need to find it.
- 1 00 46 I was told that he was a Jew for sure. His father was a clerk writing letters on behalf of illiterate people – all kinds of applications, submissions, court appeals, etc. I started collecting materials from books and newspaper publications.
- 1 01 16 I gathered a huge amount of materials. I decided to write a letter to his widow. His wife was an intelligence colonel. She sent me lots of photos and materials, including materials about the prisons he had been in. I made an album dedicated to him.
- 1 01 39 I got in touch with a writer – Vorobiev – who had visited all the places Manevich had been to: Italy, etc. He wrote a big book about him entitled "Planet Earth: Poste Restante". Manevich visited Chausy; when asked about his place of residence he used to say: Planet Earth, Poste Restante.
- 1 02 07 In 1936 he was sent to Italy where he set up a design office for sports aviation. The sports aviation pilots came to that office for information on new developments, tournaments, etc..
- 1 02 38 That was only a cover. His real business was spying. Eventually he was arrested and imprisoned. It happened because his secretary...rather his secretary's father talked too much. He got into the spotlight and a surveillance started.
- 1 03 07 And finally he was arrested. But even in the prison he continued gathering materials and fulfilling his secret task. When the war began he was transferred to a more strictly guarded prison with no chance to escape.
- 1 03 36 When the Americans liberated Italy, they let him go. He started moving towards the USSR, but eventually got rounded up by German gendarmerie and was put into a concentration camp.
- 1 04 04 He was the leader of a resistance group in the camp. He spoke most of European languages. He always knew what the Germans were planning. When the Germans wanted to flush a mine with the prisoners he organized protesters to block the mines.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 1 04 49 The Germans explained that they wanted to do construction works in the mines, but the protesters knew better and blocked the mine. (Interviewer). After the end of the war...
- 1 05 03 ...As an intelligence agent he supplied his country with a large amount of valuable strategic, political and military information. Military was the most important part. He was a graduate of Air Forces Academy. He was a big...an outstanding engineer.
- 1 05 18 His contribution to aviation was priceless. Besides, part of his work was political intelligence. He predicted the date the Germans would start the war against the Soviet Union. But the most important aspect of his work was aviation intelligence:
- 1 05 39 military aviation; about aircrafts built at Italian factories; about new equipment, for example about night viewing equipment, bombing devices, target-laying devices – everything about aviation.
- 1 05 57 That was his main goal. Besides, he was analyzing political situation. Knowing most of the European languages, he was able to get in contact with many people. He was providing rich materials.
- 1 06 15 I would like to talk about his death. He contracted a TB following all the prison terms. He got a TB. After the war ended and everyone was eager to get back home, he died as a result of a TB relapse. He died in the city of Lenz, Austria. He died 2 months...
- 1 06 50 ... he died 2 month before the end of the war. Rather he died on the 9th... His relapse started... he died on May 9th – the Victory Day. 20 years later a colonel from the army newspaper "Krasnaya Zvezda" came to visit his widow and daughter, asking questions about him.
- 1 07 24 They had no information whatsoever. It happened during the Khrushchev's era. On finding out about Manevich and Sorge, Khrushchev ordered to award them Hero of the Soviet Union.
- 1 07 37 So the colonel who came to visit them, told them that their husband and father had been awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. That's when his second epoch started. Publications started appearing. That's when I learned about him.
- 1 07 54 ...learned about him. It would be useful to go through this publication. It has some details. (Interviewer). He was a civilian. He was sent to Italy, where he organized a design office. The office provided sports clubs with consulting services, with information about lubricants, kerosene, engines – everything concerning the aviation.
- 1 08 41 That was his main task. Alongside he was collecting intelligence and sending it to the Centre. Lev Efimovich. Here he is. (Interviewer). My publisher put his patronymic as Israelivich instead of Efimovich. He was born in 1898. (Voices).

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 1 09 16 His brother was involved in the revolutionary activity. He had to escape to Switzerland taking young Lev with him. Lev went to school there. He learned to speak many languages. After the revolution of 1917 he returned to the Soviet Union.
- 1 09 45 He joined the Red Army intelligence, being promoted to colonel. He went on missions to Austria, Spain, Italy and other European countries. 1936 saw him in Italy where he was conducting intelligence operations.
- 1 10 14 The Italian counterintelligence started a surveillance and eventually he was arrested. He went through all those Italian prisons. But I want to reiterate that even in prison he found ways to collect intelligence and send it to the Centre.
- 1 10 32 When the Americans liberated the area where the prison was, letting him go, he was eager to get back to the Soviet Union and join the army. Unfortunately he got rounded up by German gendarmerie. He was imprisoned and sent to Ebensee concentration camp.
- 1 11 01 Despite being sick with a severe TB, he was actively involved in resistance, collecting information and sending it to the Centre. He died of the TB on the 5th...rather 11th May, 1945. He was buried there and a tombstone was erected.
- 11 11 36 20 years later...I'm not sure if it was Khrushchev's era.. he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. There were many details and intricacies. At some point of time all the intelligence agents were pronounced spies in their own countries.
- 11 12 01 They were being arrested and imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Manevich escaped that fate. His wife lived up to the time when he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. That's not him! (Interviewer). Yes, no problem, no problem, I can go on and on.
- 1 12 24 He had his business – a design office. He collected intelligence. He needed messengers to send the intelligence he collected. He had radio operators, messengers and other communications. When he was in prison he came to know some Italian workers from aviation factories.
- 1 12 58 The workers were seeing their girlfriends who were coming to visit them in the prison. They kissed each other. It was permitted according to the Italian tradition. He found Italian communists who put the miniature intelligence containers in their mouths.
- 1 13 10 When kissing their girlfriends they passed the containers to their girlfriends. The girlfriends then took them to the messengers and on to the laboratories. That was one of the techniques...there are so many intricacies in the spying business!
- 1 13 42 They used to screw off handles, inserting containers and screwing them up again – similar to cocaine or diamond contraband. There were many

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

techniques smuggling secret information. I have a consistent publication in "Forum" magazine.

- 1 14 16 Rather a detailed publication. Besides, there are books about Manevich... (Interviewer) and films. The film's title is "Planet Earth. Poste Restante". (Interviewer). He arranged contacts with Italian communists. I want to open...Give me the magazine, I'll find it.
- 1 14 41 First of all, his call sign was "Etienne". I would like to say that his nickname and call sign was "Etienne". Of course the prisoners there were under surveillance. We know there is a total surveillance. We don't know but we I are under surveillance.
- 1 15 03 All telephone conversations are being tapped – between you and your girlfriends and boyfriends. Everything is being recorded. You watch movies, you know the lawyers say that such and such conversations took place here and there.
- 1 15 18 They had their informers who reported that a prisoner took interest in this and that. There were young communists – workers from aviation factories. It reached the administration that he was a dangerous felon...a rich...
- 1 15 42 He lived there as a rich businessman, an Austrian. At the time of his arrest he was an owner of a design office. He didn't go by Manevich, he went by Conrad Kertner, a rich Austrian businessman. Therefore he couldn't flee to Austria, they would have unmasked him right away.
- 1 16 04 It was just a cover story. In reality he wasn't an Austrian. He was transferred to a prison for dangerous criminals. The prison was located on an island. I tell you if Stalin had wished he could have sent a submarine to blow up the gates and liberate him from the prison.
- 1 16 28 However Stalin didn't wish to. Same as when the Japanese offered Stalin to exchange Sorge for a Japanese general, Stalin said "I don't know him". Politics is a dirty horrible business. (Interviewer). I can give you the magazine, just read.
- 1 16 58 There was a newspaper "Literaturnaya Gazeta" published in the USSR. It had a section "If I were the director..." If I were Stalin, I would have sent a submarine to liberate a valuable agent.
- 1 17 20 One intelligence agent is worth a hundred ordinary people, a hundred soldiers. He's worth a division! An individual's role in history. A certain individual is capable of what others aren't.
- 1 17 34 Yesterday I watched a TV program about Academician Mintz who created radio industry in the USSR, who created powerful radio transmitters before Americans and Germans did. Academician Mintz.
- 1 17 52 That's what an individual can do! Hundreds of ordinary people are not capable of what a certain individual is. I am going to tell you about Bartini – a son of an Italian baron and a Hungarian Jewess.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 1 18 10 He created an airplane, I'll tell you later... He got to the Soviet Union. He became a well know aviation designer. (Interviewer: 1 sec. is he Russian?)No, his mother was a Hungarian Jewess. His father was an Italian baron.
- 1 18 35 (Interviewer). Later. All I want to say is that one individual is worth a thousand. And thousands cannot replace him. Brains is what matters most. I could add some details or did I already tell you..? Despite being sick with TB he was a resistance leader, saving...
- 1 19 12 ...There was a concentration camp named Ebensee. The Germans wanted to get the prisoners into a mine and to flood them with water. He found out about that. People talked, that's how he found out. He organized the prisoners to stay away from the mine.
- 1 19 27 They stayed alive by not going to the mine. He did a lot of good deeds, at the same time sending his dispatches with valuable information. Just take the magazine and read my article in it.
- 1 19 41 It will take you one evening. Or better take my book. I have the only copy left, I borrowed it from my friend. I am expecting my new book coming in any day now. Its title is "Jews – Heroes of the Soviet Union".
- 1 20 00 Manevich's story will be in the book. I can give it to you. Better read my book, you'll start respecting Jews not because you're Jewish, but rather because there were heroes among them. If we have more time we'll go into the second folder. I have 12 portraits.
- 1 20 24 Combat missions. (Interviewer) I can spend half an hour telling about Paulina Gelman. I have her photo some place. I haven't had time to find it. (Interviewer) I can do the presentation, just let me open the book. Come to me some time and help me sort it out.
- 1 20 45 We'll be able to do the presentation if you come and help me. If you want to see all of my materials you'll have to visit me more than once (laughs). Just open the book case and you'll see that it's full of folders – all the materials about the Jews.
- 1 21 04 Paulina Gelman. Here, page 106. When she was in Israel I wanted to meet her, but she was invited by big bosses... Here she is. I have her photo from magazine "Ogoniok" – three heroines in the Kremlin with their Gold Stars on. I'm going to magnify the picture.
- 1 21 32 (Interviewer) I'm going to tell you about her, (Interviewer). I don't need to read, I'll tell you in my own words. (Interviewer). She took interest in gliding, and she learned to fly a glider. Later she took interest in planes and she learned to fly sporting planes.
- 1 22 01 She wanted to go in for aviation. She wasn't admitted because she wasn't tall enough. When you play the piano, you can sit on note books to be taller, whereas in a plane you can sit on a parachute...

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 1 22 22 Anyway, she wasn't admitted. She enrolled in Moscow University instead, history department, as far as I remember. She was a good student. When the war began...what's her name? oh, Grizodubova started organizing women's regiments.
- 1 22 43 She applied and was admitted. She flew PO-2 planes. I have a miniature model of the plane. Over there, it's similar... IL-2 and PO-2. It was called "kukuruznik" (a small and rickety jet). It's a small sporting plane made of sticks and covered with percale, a rag.
- 1 23 05 Those were sporting, agricultural and geological prospecting planes. When the war began it was turned into a bomber. Bombs were suspended and kerosene tanks were added. The plane could be shot down with a rifle.
- 1 23 32 If a company made a volley shooting it could be shot down with just one bullet. That's what the plane she flew was like. She was a regiment navigator. She performed 860 combat missions! An unbelievable number! Incomparable too. 860 combat missions mean getting behind the enemy lines and back 860 times.
- 1 24 05 Flying over anti-aircraft artillery shooting at her. Nonetheless she did it. Those were night missions. They flew behind the enemy lines, approached their target, bombarded, turned around and flew back home.
- 1 24 35 I have a cassettes concerning 46th Guards women's regiment. Despite the danger and the fact that many girls were being killed, she went through the entire war, being an excellent pilot and an excellent navigator.
- 1 24 55 She was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union. After the war she worked as a teacher. That's her story in short. (Interviewer: just state her name). I can tell you dozens of stories about women heroes, they are in my book. Not just aviators. Only one woman aviator was awarded Hero. There's Lia Litvak's story.
- 1 25 27 I'm not sure whether or not she was Jewish. With Paulina, I'm sure she was Jewish. I'm not sure if Lia Litvak or Litviak was. That's why I didn't include her. Rather she was included but open to question. (Interviewer) I can find her full name in the book: Paulina Gelman, a Jewess from Mogilev.
- 1 25 53 Afterwards she lived in Berdichev, right? She was an aviator. She went on 860 combat missions, flying the "kukuruznik". She threw tons of bombs down on the Germans. She was awarded the title of Hero. (Interviewer). I forgot to mention [shows a paper]. This is about me.
- 1 26 18 You can take a picture. (Interviewer). Here I am, sitting, here. The picture was taken in Berlin in front of the Keizer Wilhelm's monument. [shows a picture] Cezar Lvovich Kunikov. Cezar Lvovich Kunikov. I went to Rostov to see my friends...
- 1 26 41 My senior engineer lived in Rostov. At the same time I went searching for Kunikov – looking for interesting information about him. I was shown a house

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

where a Jewish family had lived. They had a son named Cezar Kunikov and so on. I went on collecting materials about him.

- 1 27 05 I looked for materials in many museums. He was a paratrooper unit commander landing at Novorossiysk Bay. The paratroopers went on to capture an outpost named Malaya Zemlya. The episode paved way for a Soviet attack on German forces in Novorossiysk.
- 1 27 32 He was killed in that battle. He was killed. For more details on him I need to consult the book.[looks down at the book]. On the night of February 4, 1943...(interviewer)...yes, I'm going to tell it to you, no problem.
- 1 27 54 Let me take off my glasses. (Interviewer). I'm looking at Dina... Ok, on February 4th ... an operation was planned to liberate Novorossiysk. For that purpose paratroopers needed to be landed near the Cape Myskhako.
- 1 28 18 The plan was to secure the outpost, repulse the Germans and liberate the territory. A special forces unit was organized under the command of Cezar Lvovich Kunikov. He carried out the plan outstandingly. He captured and secured the outpost managing to hold it until the major forces arrived.
- 1 28 40 He sustained a serious injury during the battle. He died in a hospital. He was awarded the title posthumously. The plan was to capture an outpost in order to liberate Novorossiysk. It was comparable to an outpost in Leningrad. It was located on Cape Myskhako.
- 1 29 11 The plan was to capture Myskhako, expanding and securing the position until the arrival of reinforcement. Kunikov was appointed to lead the paratroopers. He carried out brilliantly, capturing, securing and holding the Myskhako outpost until the reinforcement arrived.
- 1 29 39 The battles starting on the 4th of February were bloody and fierce. On February 12th he sustained a grave wound. He was transported to Gelendzhik. The doctors there were unable to save his life. He died of the wounds.
- 1 30 02 (Interviewer). He was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for the heroic feat later described by Brezhnev. We would need to look at the map. I'm not an infantry forces general. I don't know why it was so important. (Interviewer). Why was it important to capture the Leningrad outpost to liberate Leningrad?
- 1 30 29 To break through the blockade. It played a specific role. (Voices). By capturing the Myskhako outpost Kunin stopped the German troops from advancing and capturing Novorossiysk. We are only speaking about the Jews today (laughs). (Interviewer).
- 1 30 58 Emmanuil Davidovich Gotlib. (Interviewer).Major Emmanuil Davidovich Gotlib. (Interviewer) Emmanuil Davidovich Gotlib, a Jew, assistant regiment commander. His task was to stop the Germans from exploding... his task was to stop the Germans from exploding a very important bridge.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 1 31 26 The bridge was important for our tanks to advance. When he arrived there with his soldiers the Germans had already charged mines leading the Bickford fuse. He killed the Germans with his submachine gun, ran to the burning Bickford fuse and bit it apart with his teeth.
- 1 31 54 The fuse was filled with gunpowder. By biting it apart he saved the bridge from being blown up. I can tell you another story – about my sister’s husband. He was a dive bomber pilot near river Berezina. He destroyed a bridge by a direct hit stopping the Germans from advancing.
- 1 32 25 They started running away. Our tanks started overtaking them, etc.. That’s why bridges were very important for crossing rivers. Sometimes the bridges had to be blown up, and sometimes they had to be saved from being blown up.
- 1 32 44 It all depended on the specific situation. He blew up the bridge because it had to be blown up, whereas Gotlib saved a bridge. (Interviewer). 156 Heroes. How did I start collecting? At first I used publications in magazines and books. Every province used to publish their own books: “Residents of Kiev – Heroes of the Soviet Union or holders of the Gold Star of Hero”.
- 1 33 21 “Georgians – Heroes of the Soviet Union”, etc.. Every such book contained information about 1 or 2 Jews. There weren’t books dedicated solely to the Jews. Every book contained 1 or 2 stories about the Jews. Later reference books starting appearing, like the one I have here, a 2 volume reference book.
- 1 33 44 They were published in the ‘80s, containing information of all the 11,000 Heroes. Later on I met a lieutenant colonel who lived in Voronezh. He had materials on all the 11,000 Heroes of the Soviet Union and 2,000 holders of Order of Glory.
- 1 34 03 He was writing books about them. I sent him... My son was in the army during the Czech events. My wife was worrying and crying all the time. I went to Carpathians as a tourist. I found him, he was in the Carpathians with his unit. I sent her a telegram saying that our son was alive and OK. I went back home via Minsk.
- 1 34 37 I spent a week in the Minsk museum – they received an in folio book “Heroes of the Soviet Union” – I was copying out all the Sruliks and Shmuliks, making a big list. I sent my list to Aleksandr Ivanovich, who crossed out some names and added even more names.
- 1 35 04 He added the Jews with Russian-sounding names. For example, Prigov Nikolai Ivanovich, how could I guess that he was a Jew? Let’s take this folder. (Interviewer) Because Jews were good and honest soldiers and because we were patriots. I joined the army in ‘36.
- 1 35 33 I was 17 at the time I enrolled in Tashkent Military College. At that time 22 or 21 was the conscription age. I was champion of Tashkent in sniper shooting. My wife Zinaida and I grew up in a pioneer team named RVS SAVO – revolutionary/military council of Central Asian Military District.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

- 1 36 03 That was a pioneer team at the Red Army House for children of military personnel and staff workers of Turkestan Military District. Our pioneer leaders were army Komsomol leaders – young guys, Komsomol members. We grew up in a patriotic atmosphere.
- 1 36 23 That's why I went to the military college, to the Academy and later to the front. (Interviewer) Nowadays youth are eager to stay away from the army. [yawning], Everyone who fought against the Nazis was a hero. The horror of Nazism is not in their army fighting well and being well trained and equipped.
- 1 36 52 These days so many armies are at war, the rich and powerful making fortunes at the expense of the poor. The ugliness of the Nazism was in Hitler's being the first in the history of the mankind to turn a human being into an industrial raw material.
- 1 37 16 They developed technology and equipment to crush human skeletal bones to manufacture flour to fertilize fields and to manufacture soap out of human fat. I have 7 volumes of materials on the Nuremberg tribunal. It's all there, in the books. ... to use human hair to manufacture print fabrics,
- 1 37 43 ...to make commercial wigs and mattresses. They manufactured lampshades and gloves out of human skin – they developed technologies for that. That's the horror of Nazism. It wasn't their being skilled soldiers. The horror was in their atrocities. I have a cassette. I didn't know before, I thought Austria was a country of Strauss, a country of music, and a country of songs. I found out that the Austrians murdered tens of thousands of Rusyns – Russians who lived in Austria.
- 1 38 32 Those were Slavic tribes living in Germany and Austria, similar to the Russian tribes of Old Believers (starovery). (Interviewer). No doubt, everyone... today we're speaking of the Jews...everyone escaping from the German captivity, or a ghetto, or a concentration camp, those who were partisans...
- 1 39 10 or those who joined the army, there were lots of such people, those who fought against the Nazis – could be considered war heroes and war veterans, there's no doubt. People didn't run away...there were many people who did run away, deserters, many Ukrainians among them...
- 1 39 32 ...those who were hiding in their villages.... The Kalmyks... I have an article about them... up to 2 million people from the former Soviet Union were fighting in the German army. Besides, there were POWs whom they forced to be trained as spies against the Soviets...
- 1 40 03 ...to serve in the German army. Those who ran away from the Nazism, those who ran away from concentration camps, from ghettos – not only Jews, but people of other nationalities – those who joined partisans or the army to fight against Nazism, those were heroes, there's no doubt.
- 1 40 32 Soviet people too, they joined the Soviet Army. Take the Polish Army for example. It was formed in the Soviet Union. I want to take this material out and put it on top. There's a bag there. I want to address the children who live

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
-------------------------------	------------------------	---

in Canada or Israel, anyplace. When we were young we knew that Nazism was brewing, we knew that there was going to be war against Nazism.

- 1 41 02 When I was a student at the sniper school, I was aiming at targets with Nazi uniform on. We were trained to fight Nazism. That's why we were so eager to join the army. When we were not admitted in one place, we went to apply in another place. When the war began, the girls were not admitted to join the army, they sought to be admitted.
- 1 41 29 Yulia Drunina a talented poetess wrote about such girls. Our Soviet youth were eager to join the army to fight against Nazism. A writer Zinoviev said that the war was won by school students of 10th grade. Such was the noble impulse. Of course it was an exaggeration – the war was won by the entire people.
- 1 41 54 10th grade students went to the front and many of them didn't come back. Only 3% of the youth came back from the war, 3% of those who were born in '23 and '24. Nowadays, looking at what is going on in the world, I want to say that all I want is that our grandchildren's generation didn't have to go to war.
- 1 42 23 There's nobody to fight for. Everyone wants power for the sake of money. You remember a joke everyone was laughing at: "there's no sex in the Soviet Union". That's right, there was no sex, there was love". We loved our girls and we courted them. Ask my wife when was the first time that we kissed. Nowadays it's only money and sex.
- 1 42 57 Sex and money and no love. If you are blessed with love you should value it, when there is real love between young people. All I want is that my grandchildren and great grandchildren didn't have to go to war.
- 1 43 16 War is horrible. People are learning to fight with sophisticated weapons – guns, machine guns, bombs, chemical, bacteriological and radiological weapons. People have learned to kill other people.
- 1 43 42 I want everyone to know that there are no super races. The Germans tried to call themselves a super race. Just imagine, Albert Einstein is a subhuman, whereas Hitler, Herring and Himmler are super race. The difference between people is in education and upbringing.
- 1 44 10 No matter what colour your skin is, you may be a romantic, a philosopher, etc. The problem is that people are not enough educated. Now about the school reform: they want to take out math and physics. There should be a gradation, for instance humanitarian and physical/mathematical school.
- 1 44 37 It's possible. Of course humanitarians won't be savvy at physics, no way. Still there is a need in some basics. And everyone must know literature and history, be you a physicist or a mathematician, you must know history and literature.
- 1 44 58 You must read as much as possible. When I was a student at Tashkent Military College, a former "cadet" school, they had a fantastic library. I read almost everything there. (Interviewer). I have 11 more remarkable portraits.

Leonid Sheinker Part I	Duration: 44:26	Russian Vets, Interview date Jan 27/2011
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- 1 45 20 I spent all day yesterday... Go, get that bag, please. (Interviewer). Tremer, Simon Davidovich, a tank brigade commander. He went through... I don't remember exactly, I need to read...the names of the cities, etc. He went through fierce battles.
- 1 46 00 He destroyed a German group, secured his position and ensured our army's victory in that area. He was awarded Hero of the Soviet Union. (Interviewer, Len). Prygov, Vladimir Borisovich. He was a commander of an armoured vehicle (samohodka). In a bloody battle he was wounded several times.
- 1 46 41 His vehicle caught fire, they started putting out fire. He was shooting to the end, until he was dead. He was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for that battle. I found out about him same way I found out about others.
- 1 46 58 As I already mentioned when I met Aleksandr Ivanovich in Voronezh, he gave me the names of many Jewish heroes, whom I missed because I didn't know they were Jews, as their names sounded Russian to me. He confirmed that Prygov was a Jew.
- 1 47 15 Later, the new publications and reference books confirmed it. There were many Jews whose names sounded Russian. For instance, when I was young I didn't look Jewish. Had I said that my name was Shaliapin instead of Sheinker (laughs)... Our commissar suggested that I identify myself as a Russian during a census. I said "I can't; my mother and father are both Jewish. I can't identify myself as a Russian". At that time I didn't realize...
- 1 47 56 ...Prygov, Vladimir Borisovich. [holds up the picture]. Prygov, Vladimir Borisovich. (Interviewer: we're wrapping up).
- 1 48 04 End of interview.