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[L.1] Commission for the compilation of the Chronicle of the Great Patriotic War

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Transcript of conversation with Rita Furman.

The conversation was transcribed by the Commission stenographer Comrade Roslyakova

I was born in 1929. Now I am fifteen years old. I was in the fourth grade. In peacetime my dad worked in the city food department, my mom was a housewife.

A month after the Romanians occupied Odessa, my dad, my mom and I went to the partisan area in the Nerubalskoe village, Odessa region. We were in the Usatov village. We lived inside a rock. I went to a market in the city to get groceries two or three times a week. I brought some kerosene, cornmeal. I took Soviet money and exchanged it for stamps. I bought some things for stamps. I brought it all to the rock. We supplied the partisans with kerosene and corn flour.

There was a long cave in the rock, on the sides there were different passages inside the rock, so you could easily get lost. Even those who knew the passages very well wandered too. There was barely any air there. From the atmosphere that was in the rock, sometimes the fire went out because there was not enough oxygen.

The partisans were mostly men. One woman partisan gave birth to a girl there.

I came out by various notes, and reported on the fate of some partisans. I took some forms out of the rock. On these forms, documents for the partisans were made in safe houses. I spoke German and Romanian, I was not scared. Before leaving the rock, we did reconnaissance. I left at four o'clock in the morning, when it was still dim outside and the patrols were not walking yet. By five o'clock in the evening I returned back to the rock. Partisans from the detachment met me and let me in with a password. There was a specific password. None of the partisans came out of the rock. Only at night did they come closer to the exit to get some fresh air, but this was also not allowed. There were five children. A boy Misha, who was my age, walked with me.

When the Soviets retreated, we were all supplied with butter and sausages. We had absolutely everything, rare liqueurs, wine. But all this was quickly squandered. When they retreated, they said that they would be back in two or three months. We thought that in two or three months Soviets would return, why would we spare the food? And they returned after two and a half years.

It seems that in July 1942 the detachment disbanded due to the lack of food. We ate very poorly at that time. When the cows were slaughtered, we had skins. We buried them in the ground, and when there was nothing to eat, we dug out these skins, singed these skins on a stone, fried them without salt in a pan and ate them like cracklings. The cows also lived in the rock. We had scales. Small boats were cut out of tin boxes, sticks

were tied to them. We put two pieces into each one. The cracklings were divided equally. Each of the children wanted to hold the scales, because whoever was holding the scales was given crumbs that remained on the scales. [L.1 the reverse side] We didn't see bread for probably six months. We baked corn cakes. We dug wells and had water.

When the Romanians discovered a safe house in Odessa, after terrible tortures, some of the discovered partisans led the Romanians into the rock and brought them to the place where we lived. At that moment I was in the city. From the rock they fought with the Romanians. There was a well not far from the rock. The Romanians poisoned this well. After that we moved to another rock and dug another well there. We lived a little in this rock and disbanded due to lack of food. I could not leave because two Romanian divisions were deployed in the nearest villages. It was impossible to go and get food. The head of the detachment gave the order for everyone to disband.

The direction was given to go to the Savran forest. My father, my mother and I went there. We had no formal documents. We walked without a pass. We were detained in Starosovka. We pretended not to know our father, that he had supposedly worked as a watchman in Arcadia and he had just joined us. We were accompanied by other women who wanted to take me away so that I could serve for them.

When we spent the night in Tarasovka, we ran into a Russian mayor by chance. At night he brought the policemen, also Russians, who arrested us all – me, my father and my mother. We were taken to the mayor's office early in the morning. The officer showed that I had to cut my hair and throw it away. I burst into tears. He called my dad to his office. He looked at us, returned the documents and pointed to the road, "Walk uphill so that they won't take you back in the village." We went the way that the Romanian officer showed us.

We reached the Balki village, these same police guys caught up with us and said that they would take us back to the mayor's office. At that time, Romanian riders came from the Balki village, checked our documents and arrested us again. We stayed there for two hours. They told me to say a prayer in Romanian to them. I said a prayer in Romanian to them. After that, my mother and I were released. We said that we didn't know our dad, that he had just joined us on the way. My father was arrested and we did not know what happened to him until the arrival of the Russians. When the Russians arrived, on April 22, my father came from Volegotsolove. There was also an underground detachment there.

My mother and I returned to Odessa and lived under the Romanians in Odessa. My mom had no money to live on. She went to a market to sell things. She helped the partisans. Once she gave them 250 marks for food. She bought cigarettes for them. She kept in touch with the partisans until the battles began.

In the detachment there was a Jew Yasha Viderman, who became a traitor. For the whole year he followed my mother. He came to the apartments where my mother lived, but did not find her at home because when he came, my mother went to the attic

and hid there. Then we moved to another apartment in Peresyp and he lost tracks. After that, we broke ties with the partisans.

When Yasha came to us one time, I accidentally bumped into him. He was with an agent. He stopped and I stopped. I knew that he was a traitor, and I ran. He shouted, "This is that partisan's daughter!" I ran out of the yard and ran to the sea. They didn't find me.

Before the Russians came, we went back to a rock, only to another one. A partisan detachment lived in the rock and there were people who were hiding not to be evacuated, and they were hiding their cows. Among the partisans there were Uncle Senya, Uncle Vasya and another one, Belousov, now he is a traitor. When we lived there, [L.2] no one knew who and what we were. Later, when we lived in the city, that Belousov recognized us, but we pretended not to recognize him. We were told that he was a traitor.

When we went to the rock, my mother took five men and six girls with her. Two weeks later the Russians came and liberated Odessa.

Once we went out of the rock to breathe some air. We saw a Romanian running. We pulled him down. When we brought him to the rock, he cried his eyes out pleading not to be killed. I told him that in our country the Soviet regime did not kill anyone, people were brothers and sisters here. I asked the Romanian, "Where is the front?" He answered me, "500 meters away, on the estuary." I said, "Are you lying?", "No, I don't", "You are not telling the truth."

When the guys went to the exit, they took a Red Army soldier prisoner. We thought he was a Vlasovite. We checked his documents. He showed us a letter. The next day the Red Army arrived. We had one Romanian and four volunteers in captivity, we handed them over to the headquarters.