

TESTIMONY OF DMITRI ANDREYEV
(EXPANDED)

I was born in 1895 in Russia. My father was Russian and my mother was half-Russian, half-Roma(Gypsy). When my father died my mother took me to live with her parents in Moldova. Thus I grew up around Gypsies and their music. The Gypsies had been slaves in Moldova until the 1860's and I discovered my grandparents had been among those enslaved. I struggled with pride and shame of my Gypsy heritage. When the Soviet Union took over Moldova in 1940, I was taken into the army away from my family. I wanted to stay and defend Moldova from the Nazis, but I was sent to Russia to fight.

I was in Stalingrad in 1942 when the Nazis attacked us there. The orders had been given to hold the city at all costs. At all costs that is what we did. My platoon was surrounded and cornered into a single apartment building in the city center. Our sergeant, by the name of Pavlov, would not let us surrender. We set up machine-guns at the windows and turned the public square outside the building into a mine field. For twenty-five days we held off the fierce attempts by the Nazis to drive us out of there. Our spirits began to sink wondering when help would come.

It was on that twenty-fifth day that a balalaika was found in one of the apartments. Some of the soldiers had heard me mention I could play and they came to me where I was sleeping. They woke me and pleaded to me: "Dima, please play us a song." I was so exhausted, but could not refuse. I played and the soldiers sang and some even danced. Those fighting heard us singing and became enheartened. We were not to be defeated. We held that house for another thirty-four days until reinforcements finally came. We went on to win that battle and the war.

I continued with the army until the end. When I returned to Moldova, I found that my family had been taken away with all the other Gypsies – taken to the Nazis' death camps...

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TESTIMONY OF TOMITA KYU
(EXPANDED)

I was twenty-one years old when I was sent from my home in Tokushima to a base in Hiroshima. I had only been there two days when the bomb was dropped. I was outside on the drill-ground when came a sudden, bright flash. I was thrown to the ground. I felt that I was burning, but when I looked at myself I could see no fire upon me. My commander came and helped me. He told me to persevere; that I was needed to help survivors in the city. I was in pain, but I went with him and other soldiers into the city.

The city was burning and wherever I looked the only colors seemed to be red, black and brown. My face was swollen and I had to hold my eyes open with my fingers to be able to see. I remember seeing people burned so badly I couldn't tell the back of them from the front. When we came to a river I was so hot I wanted to jump in, but there were many dead bodies floating in it.

Then it started to rain – big, black pelting drops. I was so thirsty, I tried to catch them in my mouth, but I only caught one or two.

A young girl came crying to me asking