



NEW YORK, October 24, 2011

Lives of the Great Patriotic War: The Untold Stories of Soviet Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army During WWII

A new exhibit in the Weill Art Gallery at the 92nd Street Y
October 24 – December 6, 2011

Everett Institutes Lecture
Sunday, October 23 - 10:00 AM

Lecture and Panel Discussion
Tuesday, November 22 - 8:15 PM

PRNewswire/ -- The Blavatnik Archive Foundation and the 92nd Street Y are excited to announce the October 24, 2011 opening of a bilingual (English and Russian) print exhibit, *Lives of the Great Patriotic War: the Untold Stories of Soviet Jewish Veterans in the Red Army during WWII*. Featuring war-time diary and letter excerpts, reproductions of archival photographs and documents, as well as excerpts from contemporary oral testimonies, the exhibit brings to life a largely unknown chapter of Jewish history: the participation of 500,000 Soviet Jewish soldiers in the fight against fascism during WWII (known in Russia as the Great Patriotic War).

While the unprecedented victimization of Jews during the Holocaust is well known and rigorously studied, the role of Jewish combatants in the conflict remains overlooked. As soldiers in the Soviet Red Army, they fought in the war's largest military force (30 million) for the country with the heaviest absolute losses (26 million). As Jews, members of a nation targeted for genocide, they survived the Holocaust and contributed to the defeat of Nazi Germany. Almost 70 years later, these remarkable men and women recall their harrowing and unforgettable experiences from the 20th century's most devastating war.

The extraordinary narratives and powerful imagery of the veterans offer an immediate link to the past: pre-war Jewish life, valor and fear in combat, daily life on the Eastern front, Nazi atrocities, mourning for loved ones, and ultimate victory. The exhibit also provides historical context through maps and graphical illustrations of important trends in Russian Jewish history. Suitable for a diverse and bilingual audience, the exhibit is intended both as an introduction to the overall story of Soviet Jewish participation in the war, as well as a commemoration of all the individual soldiers who fought.

“On July 2, 1941 I... ran to the military draft office... I wanted to fight in the war, to defend my homeland.”

Miriam Kogan – Odessa, Ukraine, 2009

“Of the 44 of us [from Birobidzhan] only three came back. One returned without his left leg, another without his right arm, and I came back on crutches.” Ilan Palat – San Francisco, USA, 2007.

“At the end of August 1944 I found out how the Germans executed the Jews. I saw my friends killed, wounded, crippled, I couldn’t cry anymore. Something hardened in my soul.” Arkady Dayel – Or Akiva, Israel, 2008

“We understood that this was a war where we had to save our country, our people, and this war was for truth, for the victory of good over evil.” Boris Rabiner – New York, USA, 2007

SOVIET JEWRY AND THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR (WWII)

ZVI GITELMAN, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Everett Institutes Lecture

Sunday, October 23 - 10:00 AM

The participation of Jewish soldiers in the Soviet Army during WWII remains a largely unknown chapter of Jewish history. Acclaimed author and Jewish historian Zvi Gitelman will offer insight into the unique circumstances and experiences of these Jewish soldiers and provide a contextual history of 20th-century Soviet Jewry.

REMARKABLE STORIES OF SOVIET JEWISH SOLDIERS IN WWII

Samuel Norich, Forward/Forvits; Jonathan Brent, Yivo Institute for Jewish Research; Yadim Altskan, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Lecture and Panel Discussion

Tuesday, November 22 - 8:15 PM

Presenting a largely unknown chapter of Jewish history, conversations with veterans who fought in the Soviet Red Army during WWII offer invaluable insight into the momentous events of nearly 70 years ago.

About the Exhibit and Lecture Series

The exhibit and lecture series is made possible with the generous donations of the Blavatnik Family Foundation, David Berg Foundation and Genesis Philanthropy Group.

The Blavatnik Archive is a private collection of documents, personal letters and diaries, photographs, postcards, periodicals and oral testimonies pertaining to 19th and 20th century Jewish history. Founded in 2005 by industrialist Len Blavatnik, the Archive’s mission is to discover, preserve and share a broad range of ephemera and captured memories that contribute to the study of Jewish history and to a better understanding of modern Jewish identity. Recognizing an important and overlooked chapter of Jewish history, the Blavatnik Archive launched a long-term project in 2006 to video record the oral testimonies of Jewish soldiers who fought in the Soviet Red Army during WWII.

About 92nd Street Y

92nd Street Y is a world-class nonprofit community and cultural center that connects people at every stage of life to the worlds of education, the arts, health and wellness, and Jewish life. A community of communities, 92Y is a home for candid, thoughtful discussions on the most pressing issues of our time. We offer an outstanding range of experiences in the performing, literary and visual arts for both audiences and practitioners; unparalleled access to celebrated artists, teachers and thinkers; and a place to pursue personal journeys – spiritual, physical or intellectual. Through the breadth and depth of 92Y's extraordinary programs, we enrich lives, create community and elevate humanity. Every year, more than 300,000 people visit 92Y's New York City venues, and millions more join us through the Internet, satellite broadcasts and other digital media. A proudly Jewish organization since its founding in 1874, 92Y embraces its heritage and enthusiastically welcomes people of all backgrounds and perspectives. 92Y is an open door to extraordinary worlds. For more information, visit www.92Y.org.

The lecture on October 23 is part of the Everett Institutes, endowed by Edith and the late Henry Everett. The lecture on November 9 is underwritten by The Blavatnik Family Foundation. The lectures on October 23 and November 22 are presented in cooperation with The Blavatnik Archive.

Contact:
92ND STREET Y
1395 Lexington Ave
212.415.5500 / 92Y.org