



# M.G. Crisci shares his transition from author to cultural advocate for greater Russian–American trust

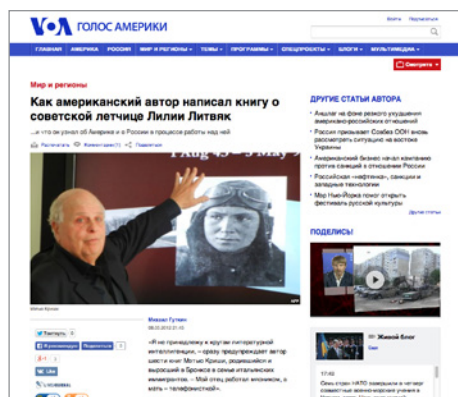


“How and why did American author, M.G. Crisci, write a book about the most decorated female flying ace in Soviet history?”

SELECT EXCERPTS FROM THE ARTICLE:

“I don’t belong to the academic or literary intelligentsia,” commented M.G. Crisci at the outset of our interview...

Lilia Litvyak was an amazingly interesting subject. Imagine a beautiful teenager in a man’s world, who trained Russian male pilots, completed 268 successful missions, had more solo air kills than any women in history? And, despite those accomplishments, is virtually unknown outside of Russia....



The whole thing started with a cab ride in Miami Beach with a Russian PhD. Driver named Boris, who brought me to tears explaining his most disappointing observation about America: “30 million Soviet citizens slaughtered by Hitler during World War II and nobody remembers. Nobody even cares.”

But it wasn’t until five years later, after viewing an exhibit called “World War II through Russian Eyes”, I realized, my world view was forever changed. And, I would make it my mission to tell as many young Americans as I could about what really was clearly the greatest human tragedy in the history, A tragedy that had no U.S. spokesman.

Intellectual curiosity dictated I travel to Russia and Ukraine, and live in the home of ordinary citizens. I also meet the skeptical curator of modest Lilya Litvak Museum, Valentina Vaschenko, and a generous English teacher from Krasny Luch, Yelena Sivolap. They became my collaborators, my personal consultants on Russian culture and, in time, very good friends.

To my surprise, the reaction to Call Sign, White Lily, by the Russian community, here and abroad, has been a pleasant surprise. People always ask how I can be so passionate about a people and a culture in which he has no roots? I give them my answer, and they still don’t understand. They say they are extremely grateful for telling the story in a way no Russian has been able to do. That’s good enough for me.

As my friend at Voice of America have said “the true value of my book, however, is not its historical accuracy, but the experience I went through during the process of writing this book. How I from being an typical, apathetic American to an atypical crusader and an advocate for closer U.S. – Russia relations. Now that’s some to be proud of!

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