

Daniil Zharnitsky	Duration: 56:52	Russian Vets, Interview date Mar 21/2011
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- 00 00 (State your name, date and place of birth) **Daniil:** I was born on May 19, 1927 in settlement Illyntsy, Vinnitsa Region. (What's your name?) Daniil. (Your full name) Daniil Semenovich, my father's name was Semen. 00 31
- 00 31 (Repeat) Daniil Semenovich Zharnitsky. I was born on May 19, 1927, in Vinnitsa Region, Illinetsky District, that's a small settlement Illyntsy. (Were you a partisan at the beginning of the war?)01 09
- 01 09 That wasn't at the beginning of the war. When the war began I was evacuated with the cattle to Kobeliatsky District, Poltava Region. I worked at a collective farm, because of the age, I was 14. 01 29
- 01 29 Afterwards, I got to Volgograd meat processing and packing factory where the cattle was brought. When the Germans approached there I brought the cattle to Stalingrad. 01 45
- 01 45 In Stalingrad I... well, it's a long story...I got to the Germans there. Without giving you any details... I managed to escape from the train. I walked or... at night... there were buffers on trains where train cars were connected... I either walked or otherwise...02 23
- 02 23 I reached Ukraine. In Ukraine I found out that my parents were alive. I managed to meet with them there. When the Germans found out that I returned they wanted... they made a swoop and we ran away in different directions. 02 53
- 02 53 After that I left for another district where I met a member of an underground organization. To make my story short, from there I got to a partisan detachment. 03 09
- 03 09 After the partisan detachment, in '44, I got to 29th Sniper School. On graduation I was given the rank of a senior sergeant. After that I was sent to a transit camp in Kiev. 03 51
- 03 51 At the transit camp I was...it's like the "Arabian Nights"... the story... you see... what can I tell you...After that I was picked up and taken to work at SMERSH. I was a liaison agent working for SMERSH. 04 23
- 04 23 SMERSH is the acronym for the Russian of SPIES MUST DIE (СМЕРТЬ ШПИОНАМ). I worked there for several years. When I was dismissed I enrolled in Communications College. 04 44
- 04 44 On graduation... they had a military department... I was given a rank of a lieutenant. I was sent to Glavvoenstroy (Central Department for Military Constructions) in Moscow. 05 04
- 05 04 They had an office in Kiev. I was sent to a construction unit. At first I was a deputy commander of a military construction company. Afterwards I was promoted to the company commander's post. 05 25

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05 25	There were approximately 150 men in the company. They worked in construction. Our company was responsible for construction and erection work. (sighs) Under my command the company was awarded the title of "Communist Labour Company". 05 54	
05 54	I have a special badge for that. Afterwards... I was promoted...I was taken to 32-536 military unit, which was a construction and erection unit. We worked in various areas, from Ukraine to Primorsky Region. 06 22	
06 22	I was in Vladivostok. To make my story short, I've been to many places all over the USSR. Well, I was in the army for 27 years total, if not longer, in the army. I was promoted to lieutenant colonel before demobilization. 06 49	
06 49	That's my story. There were various incidents there. Well, it's all mixed up: horses and men (a quote from a Russian poem). After so many years, you know... 07 02	
07 02	I even don't remember your name, sorry about that. I'm not the man I used to be. Do you have any questions? My medals... for partisan... (Tell your partisan story). Well if it's interesting to you. (Yes, it is). 07 40	
07 40	(b/g conversation) When we brought the cattle to Stalingrad meat processing factory, they gave me a job there. I wasn't old enough to be drafted to serve in the army. 07 57	
07 57	I got a job at the meat processing factory in Stalingrad. I worked at a sausage shop. I was so happy, because all the workers were given 100-150 g of bread. 08 18	
08 18	Life was so difficult. I was... well I don't know if it's worth telling you... well I did the deboning, which means that I separated bones from meat. The meat was used to do sausages. 08 40	
08 40	The bones were sold – hundreds of people were lining up, I would leave the premises during the lunch break. I had small pieces of meat stuck to my apron. 08 56	
08 56	People would rush trying to scrape them off my apron with their knives. People were starving. God forbid anyone would know how it was. I was... a person asked me where I lived. 09 13	
09 13	I said I lived in a hostel. "Come live with me! I have a young girl, just come live with us!" That's because of the meat. To make my story short, I was taken as a tenant. 09 27	
09 27	The husband worked... his name was Vasily Sopin...he worked at the Red October Plant, which was an iron and steel works. It was so difficult working there. 09 45	
09 45	There was a workers' settlement near the Red October, Barricades, the Tractor Building Plant further on...The meat processing factory was located on the Mamayev Kurgan, Stalingrad. 10 02	

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- 10 02 We lived nearby. When the Germans started bombing Stalingrad...there was a Volga crossing near the Red October. The Germans bombed and bombed it every day. 10 23
- 10 23 The houses were made of wood. They burnt and burnt and burnt. People would even put their houses on fire to avoid being bombed by the Germans. They would go hiding in shelters. 10 39
- 10 39 By the way, that house caught fire from a firebomb. It wasn't put out because there were nearly no houses left there. We would go to Mamayev Kurgan to hide there. 10 58
- 10 58 One fine day, after we left in the evening, we were caught by the Germans in the morning, some civilians and I, a young boy. They took us to drive us to the army rear. 11 24
- 11 24 There were people previously evacuated from Ukraine, Russia... so many evacuees. They selected young people to go to work in Germany. I was examined by a medical commission, along with other people...I was given a relevant document. 11 45
- 11 45 The document read that such and such was recruited to work in Germany and what kind of job in the occupied territory it was supposed to be. It was a Germans document. 11 57
- 11 57 I had a Russian one, but that's not important. To make my story short, we were waiting to be sent. One fine day, the German military gendarmerie, to make it short... we waited to be sent... the guy came...12 20
- 12 20 "you, you and you - go!" They took us, the 3 of us...to help people with their luggage. We put their luggage on the train car. It wasn't too long before the train went. 12 44
- 12 44 With people going to the rear, Ukraine. To make it short, I didn't hurry to go away. The train went, and I was on the train car. I left the train after awhile. I started my way back: sometimes walking, or going on train in the evening. 13 13
- 13 13 At any place...That's how I got back to Ukraine. In Ukraine I found out... there were friends...very good friends...(sighs) what can I tell you...When I was on my way I ran into a policeman who recognized me. 13 40
- 13 40 I tried to deny, saying "Where could you see me? You're mistaken". In Kazan, or some other place...He said "We played football with your brother", mentioning the name of the square they played football. 13 56
- 13 56 To make it short, I met a man who previously worked with NKVD and who was connected with the partisans. To make it short, with his help, I got to a detachment. 14 20

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14 20	A partisan detachment where I met with my father, sister... my mother had been killed, my younger brother had been gone too. To make it short, I stayed there until we reunited with the Red Army. 14 37	
14 37	By that time I was a year older. I was sent to 29 th district sniper school which came from Baku. The 27 th district sniper school. Afterwards I was sent to a transit camp where I was picked up... picked up by Glavvoyenstroy, Moscow. 15 21	
15 21	Military unit 28-630. There was a construction and erection unit. They had various construction specialties. I was taken to them... as a company deputy commander. 15 47	
15 47	That was in Kiev. After a while I was promoted to company commander. I received medals there because the company...well I don't want to boast, but I was a good commander. 16 05	
16 05	There were about 150 men. I behaved in a proper manner. I had had experience. There were 13 nationalities in my company. I could punish for a misconduct even I could pardon...if he called somebody's names...I punished severely. 16 34	
16 34	When he called people names... like you're a...a Jew or no Jew...or how they were called... or a Uzbek...or a Turkmen... 13 nationalities...there were even Germans...the Russian Germans...the Volga Germans...who lived there. 16 56	
16 56	To make it short, after that I was... being a deserving and decent...I was promoted...to make it short, I was promoted to a captain's rank. After that I was taken to a special construction department, military unit 32-536. 17 19	
17 19	We were in construction: electricians, sanitary technicians, communications men, all kinds of specialists. Everything is mixed up, everything...I was promoted to liet...(Interrupts. About the partisan activities)17 52	
17 52	The Association I am currently a member of... from the Soviet Union...they issued a brochure...wait, who told me that you have it...to make it short...there's my article there. 18 10	
18 10	There's one of my stories there. If you want I can tell it. Only if you want, It won't take too much time. Eh? (Tell the story for video). I remember, I'll tell a short story. 18 34	
18 34	It happened in '42... in 1942. The article says where I was and who the commanders were. It's a pity, I should've...making it short...the partisans at the Lenin Partisan Regiment where I was, found out that the Germans were preparing a raid against partisans and members of the underground organization. 19 07	
19 07	They were expected to come to the Dashev area where the German gendarmerie was. (sighs) Making it short, they decided to send a man to find out the time the gendarmes could be expected coming to carry out the raid. 19 32	

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19 32	They found out about the date. They decided to send a man to find out their numbers. Making it short, they decided to send me. What they did was: they tackled a horse with a cart. I was put on the cart. My task was to get there...20 03	
20 03	... to watch how many Germans arrived to let the partisans know their numbers. They put a small pig on my cart, the little pig was painted with brilliant green (zelenka). 20 24	
20 24	Iodine was in deficiency during the war. So the little pig was stained with brilliant green to stop the Germans from taking it away. They tied a cord to the pig's leg. 20 44	
20 44	I kept the end of the cord in my hands. They took me to Polevoye, near Dashevo. They let me go there with the driver. We agreed with the driver that after I found out about everything, we would meet near the Kamenogorsky Sugar Plant, 8 km away, and he would take me back to the detachment. 21 13	
21 13	That's how it turned out. Early in the morning a truck full of Germans came to gendarmerie. I counted about 30 Germans there. They had submachine guns and 2 machine guns. 21 34	
21 34	They were 29 or 30 men. I counted how many they were and went to meet the driver. He put me on the cart and took me to the detachment. When I got to the detachment I reported to the regiment command all the details. 21 57	
21 57	They sent a detachment (interrupts. Please go back telling your story.) When I found out how many Germans were in the gendarmes group, carrying submachine guns and machine guns, I went to the Kamenogorsky Plant where I met the driver. 23 01	
23 01	I went to the detachment where I reported to the regiment command. They thanked me officially, of course and considered of giving me an award. Afterwards they attacked the German detachment. 23 24	
23 24	30 men were not too many. We were more numerous and well armed. To make it short, we destroyed the band taking their weapons from the dead bodies. That was the end of the operation. 23 44	
23 44	As I said, I was thanked officially and promised to be given an award. That's it. That was the incident. (Tell about the reserve regiment and sniper school) No, that was a district sniper school. 24 11	
24 11	We were trained there. (After that?) We were trained in shooting. After that the war was over. I was sent to 148 reserve rifle regiment. There they took several times... those were the snipers...24 33	
24 33	They took several times... including myself...to Carpathian Military District to attack the Germans. There were snipers among them, you see? Do you know what snipers were? 24 48	

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- 24 48 That's it. That was the end of my sniper's work. I was taken to a construction department where I worked for the rest of my military career. I traveled from West Ukraine to Vladivostok, Primorsky Region. 25 17
- 25 17 Kamchatka, Vladivostok...all the time in construction, construction, construction. Military construction. I am a military constructor. I have those (shows medals) That's how it was. 25 33
- 25 33 I retired as a lieutenant colonel. I kept my uniform. My memory is not as good as it used to be. I have hearing problems. The only thing is my wife can hear me. Otherwise... 25 55
- 25 55 Oh, I don't know what to say... (sighs) (Tell about your battles after the sniper school). Well I was sent to a transit camp where I got to... well after that I wasn't sent to the front. 26 32
- 26 32 (What did you do when you weren't at the front?) As I said I was in construction: from Lvov to Vladivostok, you see? What does it mean in construction? Military facilities. 26 57
- 26 57 Before that I was in SMERSH. That job was... how to say...THE SPIES MUST DIE. If you are suspected you collaborated with the Germans...there were people who collaborated with the Germans...27 19
- 27 19 Some surrendered...this is off the record...what was going on... policemen were recruited by the Germans...(What did you do in SMERSH?) I wasn't a boss...I was just a liaison agent. 27 47
- 27 47 My rank was senior sergeant. I was given an assignment to go and find out a person's address...to find out some information... he was caught and interrogated about what he had been doing...that wasn't my responsibility...28 08
- 28 08 I was just an executive officer. "Go and find out who lives there...his contacts...and other details..." I reported to them and they made decisions. I didn't have a military rank there. 28 28
- 28 28 (Interesting stories about SMERSH) As I said, I wasn't the boss there. I was a subordinate, a senior sergeant. I was told "Go there and find out that..." I went, found out and reported. 28 53
- 28 53 I didn't manage the cases there. I wasn't supposed to. What was I? A little sergeant...(chuckles). You see? That's how it was. It was important for them. They didn't want to do what I was doing. 29 12
- 29 12 I was being sent or stopping a train heading to Germany carrying POWs. You go on mission, finding out what was there...reporting and so on. You know, I'm not as good as I used to be... 29 42

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29 42	I... (sighs) (did you catch anyone?) I... I didn't catch...what does it mean catch? They were grown up men. I was a young guy. All I could do was just putting on the track...30 21	
30 21	Telling them that Ivanov or Petrov lived here and there and that they had such and such contacts. That was my responsibility: spying on them. That's it, and reporting... 30 37	
30 37	I didn't manage their cases, no, I didn't. I can't hear you. What are they interested to know? There was an operative group...they disrupted communications by sawing down poles. 31 17	
31 17	The communication lines, sawing down all the poles from one station to the other one, or stopping a train and letting the people go home. Those were partisan detachments. 31 32	
31 32	That wasn't a regular army. I can't hear. (did you catch anyone when in SMERSH?) I'll tell you once again. As a sergeant, I was involved along with other people. 32 05	
32 05	I didn't catch anyone or say... no, I didn't. That wasn't my responsibility. There were generals... all kinds of commanders...generals...general Charkin, head of Glavvoyenstroy. 32 24	
32 24	The USSR Ministry of Defence. I was a military constructor. I was in communications, doinh electrical and sanitary works... Soldiers worked, well...I was their boss. That's all. 32 45	
32 45	I don't claim to be a Hero of the Soviet Union, be sure. (Interesting stories of Jewish war heroes). (sighs) What I can tell you id that in our regiment, one of the 3 regiments...in our regiment, there was a Jewish battalion. 33 34	
33 34	In the territory of Vinnitsa Region. It consisted only of the Jews, they were...survivors of the German occupation, those that had run away from the Germans...33 53	
33 53	The battalion commander's name was Mudrik, a Jew. That was his name: Mudrik. It only consisted of the Jews: old people, children, those who were incapable of doing operative work.34 10	
34 10	That wasn't an easy life, because they weren't treated very well. I wouldn't go into that. Who was to blame? The Soviet authorities? They were involved too: disrupting communication lines, etc. 34 35	
34 35	What do you mean "heroes"? Brave people were everywhere. And scoundrels were too. It's hard for you to understand, that's ok. You see? Policemen recruited by the Germans...34 55	
34 55	It's a long time since it all happened. (any interesting stories?) During the war I was in a partisan detachment, the 2 nd Stalin Brigade. The incidents... I don't mean to say that I was the only one...35 25	

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35 25	I was involved in operations along with everyone there. What did the partisans do? I was there, although I was 15. I have forgotten a lot of things. (Where were you wounded?)35 52	
35 52	I was injured with a shrapnel, here it is (shows), the scar. A mild shrapnel injury, a hand injury. I didn't have any major injuries. (How did it happen?)There were no special battles, like facing each other, etc. 36 20	
36 20	The partisans mostly attacked the gendarmerie, the Germans and the moving trains. When we were shooting back, there were chances for anyone to be injured. 36 34	
36 34	They used mortars and grenades...only that. We didn't have battles involving artillery, tanks and heavy guns, no we didn't. (Where was it?) In the territory of Vinnitsa region. 36 56	
36 56	(What did you do in that battle?) Same as others did. The Germans established themselves and we had to force them out of their position. We attacked them shooting and being shot at. 37 14	
37 14	(Were you in ...mispronounces NKVD?) Pardon? (Repeats... NKVD?) No, I wasn't. I just was in the unit. The partisans were not part of NKVD. It's only when I was in SMERSH... 37 49	
37 49	That was NKVD, you see? We were dealing with spies, etc. I was a liaison agent there, you see? (How did you start your military service in the army?) After reuniting with the Red Army, after reuniting (How did you get to SMERSH?) 38 27	
38 27	I couldn't be drafted at once because I was 15, you see? Afterwards I got to a transit camp, I had to be sent somewhere. Those old enough were drafted. I was just 15. 38 56	
38 56	Where could I be sent? I was sent to a transit camp. (sighs) Repeat your question. (Repeats) After the partisan detachment reunited with the Red Army some of the partisans were old enough to be drafted and to go to the front. 39 31	
39 31	Those who were too young to be drafted were sent to a transit camp, including military brats, and those who volunteered. I was sent there. The problem was... (Interrupts: where were you when the war ended?) 39 57	
39 54	Where was I? I was in a sniper school, about to finish the sniper school when the war ended. They sent me to 148 reserve rifle regiment. (What was your reaction?) What can I tell you? 40 21	
40 21	Like everyone else waiting for the war to end. The war caused everyone's sorrow, so many people died. Oh, what else can I say? My older brother was killed in Karelia just before the war ended. 40 48	

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40 48	He was a captain. He didn't make it to the end of the war. He was killed. (sighs) Oh God! My younger brother was killed too. What can I tell you? So many relatives were killed too. 41 09	
41 09	Me too...(Did they know in SMERSH that you were Jewish?) In SMERSH? (yes) Not everyone, but some did. Some did, because I ran accidentally into an acquaintance of mine, we had been students in the same school but in different classes. 41 51	
41 51	Yura...what was his last name? Yura Gusarov. And he went to the post at Kamenogorsky Sugar Factory. He saw me from far away. He started shouting "Danya, wait!" 42 23	
42 23	I pretended I didn't hear, but I recognized him. I realized he wasn't going to let me alone. I stopped. He came up to me and said "Hi, how are you?" I went "How do you know me?" "What do you mean how I know you?" 42 40	
42 40	"We were at the same school!" And he added "Don't be afraid of me". His family was a very decent family, his parents were teachers, I knew them and his siblings too. 42 50	
42 50	He goes "I'm not going to betray you. So you don't have to be afraid of me". You see? Some people were like this, but some other people were bastards. To be honest I had an incident... I wasn't going to tell about it...43 22	
43 22	When I was going through a medical check up to be taken to Germany, I was given a German ID saying that I was recruited to go to Germany and I wasn't to be hired in the occupied territory. 43 41	
43 41	It was written in German. That ID document helped me a lot. How? A German, or a gendarme stopped me... they all spoke German...asking me who I was and what I was. 44 02	
44 02	I said that I was going to Germany, missed my train and wasn't able to catch up with it. "Do you have an ID?" I showed them my ID document. "Where are you going?" 44 14	
44 14	"I go to the gendarmerie or to the council (Uprava), as it was called, to be sent to Germany, as my stuff and everything was there. "Well then, you can go". Because of the German ID documents. 44 28	
44 28	What are you showing me? (Please sit straight). Sit straight? (Which medals are you most proud of?) For Victory over Germany. Here it is (shows). The war was over. And people felt better. 44 59	
44 59	I have a Partisan's medal, 1 st class. I have Order of the Patriotic War and Medal for Combat Merits. Well, a few days ago, Ukraine gave me...what it's called...for Defending the Motherland (says in Ukrainian). 45 43	
45 43	The Ukrainian one. And 60 th anniversary of Liberation of Ukraine too. There's one called "60 th anniversary of Victory over Germany". And this one was sent to me by Ukraine. 46 01	

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- 46 01 Just a few days ago, signed by the then President Kuchma. Of course everyone was happy about the fact that the war was over, everyone was happy! Basically... (why are you most proud of the Medal for Victory over Germany?) 46 33
- 46 33 Because the war was over and the Soviet Union, so it was called, won the war and people survived. If God forbid the war had continued there would have been more losses. 46 52
- 46 52 The war is not good. That's all. That's why I'm proud. (Why do you think there were so many Jewish war heroes?) You see, I wouldn't say that there were more Jewish heroes than other heroes. 47 20
- 47 20 As with any nationality, there were good and bad people among the Jews. There were some... I don't remember his name... the Germans appointed him as a "starosta"... the Jews... well a "starosta"...47 42
- 47 42 He used to say "You had a good life during the Soviet power, and now I have a good life". That's what the Jew said. You say heroes? They weren't more numerous...there were some heroes...47 58
- 47 58 There were bad people in every nation. There were good Russians, and even good Germans...well not of them. There were good Germans...many of them... I knew some... There was a Dr. Geine in our town. 48 26
- 48 26 He was a German. True, his wife was a Jewess. He saved so many people...He'd send young girls to Germany to save them from being killed here. He'd give them IDs... He was a head of the council (Uprava). 48 44
- 48 44 He'd sent them to Germany where they survived because nobody would touch them there. There were bastards though. Going robbing... robbing who? The Jews. 49 00
- 49 00 They found out in the evening that it was going to be the next morning. They came to stay overnight. They knew that the Jews would be rounded up, so they would take away their stuff. 49 12
- 49 12 That's how it was. So people were different, here, there and everywhere. I can't say that everyone was a hero, no I can't. (sighs) My problem is that I keep forgetting things.49 36
- 49 36 That's too bad, I keep forgetting things. I can't remember your name. (Don't worry. Your highest rank in the army). I retired as a lieutenant colonel. What's the English for...50 04
- 50 04 Colonel lieutenant. I was deputy head of 7th department of Glavvoyenstroy. That's Head Department for Construction. That was it. My job during the years in the army was as a military constructor. 50 32

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- 50 32 You see? A little bit here, a little bit there. (What year did you demobilize?) in 1979, yes. Later? Or in '80. Honestly... I have my records... (Did you have Israel connections in the army?) 51 14
- 51 14 No, I didn't. No, I didn't. (Have you heard of Raoul Wallenberg?) Wait, he was a German...If I'm not mistaken he helped the Jews. I heard the name of Wallenberg, but... as far as I know he helped the Jews in Germany. 51 53
- 51 53 (did you hear about him?) The name sounds familiar. Raoul Wallenberg...As far as I know he was good to Jews, seems to me...Wallenberg...Yes... honestly...I don't remember any details. 52 26
- 52 26 No details...but the name sounds familiar. (Your message to Canadians about the war) You see, what can I say? There is a song "I was born in the Soviet Union, the USSR is my Motherland". 53 18
- 53 18 That was a popular song. I was brought up during the Soviet power, you see? The Soviet power... I went through much. I knew much, in the army and...it doesn't exist any more. 53 47
- 53 47 What can I say? The war is a bad thing. We should be human. No matter what the nationality is, all the nationalities were created by God our Lord, all of them. Everyone must be friends with everyone. 54 11
- 54 11 There should be no such thing as "you're white, you're black, you're red, etc." People should be brothers and sisters. That's the most important thing. There shouldn't be such thing as "you're this and you're that". 54 25
- 54 25 Be human! The youth and... I'd say...What else can I say? (Thank you) I don't wear my medals too often.. I don't like...55 09
- 55 09 (Close up of medals) A well known newspaper... Kiev military district...(Talks to his wife?) I'm going to show...(Pause)56 52
- 56 52 End of interview