

0. THE DUEL - Story Preface

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Vasily had confirmed Major Konings was a "super sniper." He seemed as patient as the Siberian. With knowledge gained from three days of observing the enemy's habits, Zaitsev made a plan.

On the 4th day, while the afternoon sun was behind Vasha and Nikolai, blinding sunlight would be directly on the iron sheet. If Konings moved at all, chances were good Zaitsev would spot reflected light.

Holding his rifle in the afternoon shade, Vasily focused his telescopic sight on Konings' lair and waited. William Craig:

A piece of glass suddenly glinted at the edge of the sheet. Zaitsev motioned to Kulikov, who slowly raised his helmet over the top of the parapet. Konings fired once and Kulikov rose, screaming convincingly.

Had Konings been more like a Siberian hunter, he would have stayed put after his shot. Better not to gloat just yet. Instead:

Sensing triumph, the German lifted his head slightly to see his victim. Vassili Zaitsev shot him between the eyes. Konings's head snapped back and his rifle dropped from his hands. Until the sun went down, the telescopic sight glittered and gleamed. At dusk, it winked out.

Konings was dead. Zaitsev, according to legend, claimed the give-away scope as his trophy.

Is this story of the duel true - or - was it Soviet propaganda? With the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian archives are now available for historical research. What do they reveal?

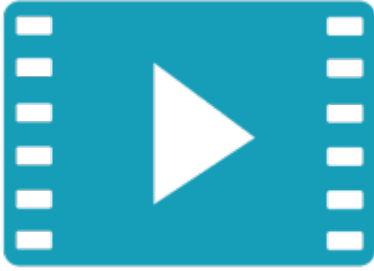
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Media Stream



Trailer - Enemy at the Gates

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