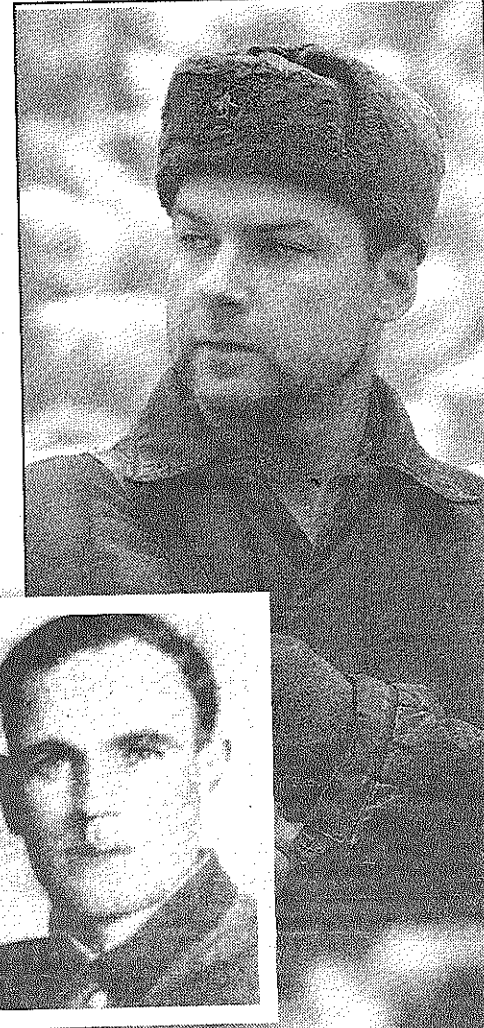
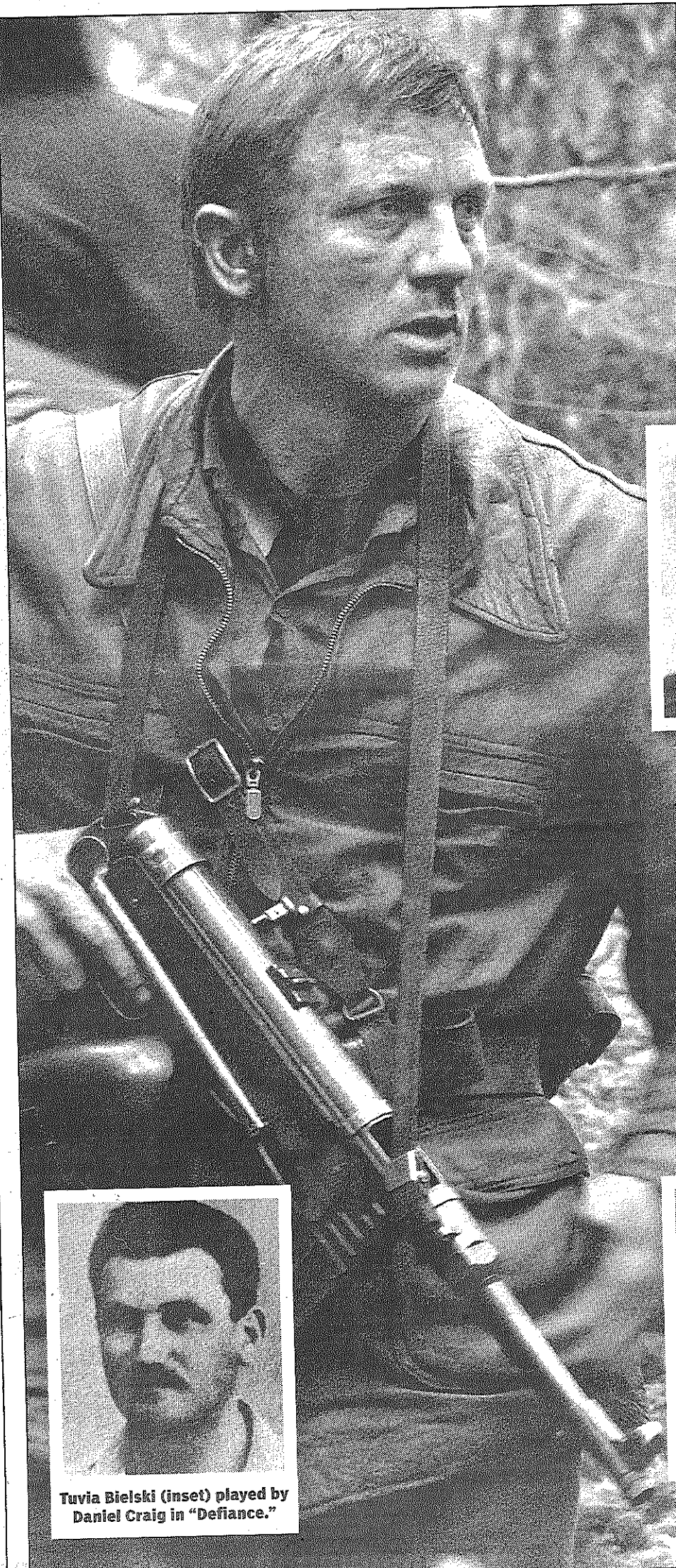
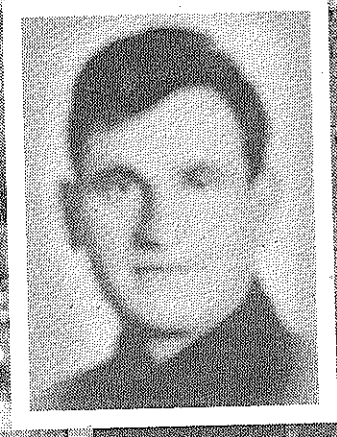
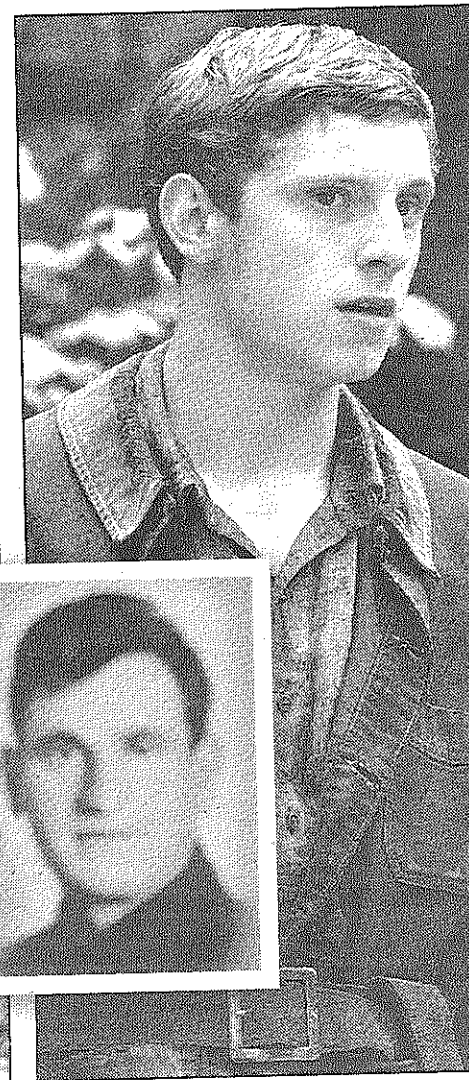


REAL 'DEFIANCE'



Liev Schreiber as Zus Bielski (inset)



Jamie Bell as Asael Bielski (inset)



Tuvia Bielski (inset) played by Daniel Craig in "Defiance."

FAMILY - FROM B'KLYN

Three brothers' heroism saved 1,200 in WWII

BY CORKY SIEMASZKO
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

GROWING UP in Brooklyn, Robert Bielsky heard the story at the dinner table about how his father and uncles fought the Nazis and saved more than 1,200 fellow Jews by hiding in the woods.

Now that tale is a Hollywood movie called "Defiance" and Bielsky is still reeling from the surreal experience of seeing the newest James Bond play his father, Tuvia Bielski, on the big screen.

"Daniel Craig kinda looks like my dad," said Bielsky, 50, who changed the spelling of his last name.

Bielsky, who lives on Long Island, said it was even stranger seeing his 22-year-old son Jordan playing a Nazi collaborator in the movie.

"The director, Ed Zwick, wanted a real Bielski in the movie," he said. "He put my son on the wrong team."

Still, Tuvia Bielski, who was 81 when he died in 1987, would have loved the movie, his son said.

"He didn't look at himself as a hero," said Bielsky. "He looked at himself as somebody who had to save himself, and there happened to be 1,250 other people he had to deal with."

While Tuvia was the commander, his brothers Zus and Asael were the muscle. Their youngest brother, Aron, was just a boy and served as their messenger. Now 81 and called Aron Bell, he is the only surviving Bielski brother.

"My father told me stuff when I was growing up, about how he killed people," said Zus' son Zvi Bielski, 56, of Brooklyn. "Before he died, he gripped my arm and told me, 'You tell the world what I did with my brothers.'"

Born in what's now Belarus, the brothers escaped to the forest after the Germans invaded in 1941 and their parents were murdered. Soon, they were smuggling other Jews to their hideaway, which had camouflaged dugouts for sleeping, a kitchen, bathhouse, school — even a theater.

"They didn't go into the woods looking to be heroes," Bielsky said. "It evolved into a lifesaving mission."

Tuvia and Zus, who had both served in the Polish Army, waged a guerrilla war against the Germans. They took no prisoners. They raided peasant villages for food. They did not take no for an answer.

"They were ferocious fighters," Zvi Bielski said. "Revenge was a big part of their existence."

They had what most of the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust didn't have — a chance to fight back, their kin said.

"That's why this movie is important, so



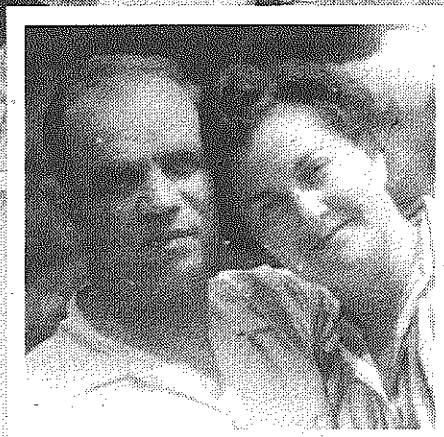
Cast and some of their real-life counterparts get together on movie set in Lithuania in September 2007 (from l.): Robert Bielsky, Jamie Bell, Ruth Bielski, Jordan Bielsky, Zvi Bielski, Liev Schreiber, Daniel Craig, Michael Bielski, Edward Zwick, Sharon Rennert and Brendon Rennert. Photo by Susana Bates. -



Aron Bielski, now Aron Bell, was youngest brother and is the only one still living.



Tuvia Bielski and his wife, Lilka, in 1985 at son Robert's wedding. The elder Bielski died in 1987 at 81.



people know that," Zvi Bielski said. After the war, the Bielski brothers landed in New York.

Tuvia Bielski went to work for a trucking company owned by an older brother, who had emigrated to the U.S. before the war. He and his brothers bought homes near each other in Midwood, raised families and lived quietly.

The release of "Defiance" comes as Jewish partisans under Soviet command — who were operating near the Bielski hideout — have been accused of murdering Polish civilians in the villages of Koniuchoy and Naliboki.

The Bielski brothers' kin hotly deny they were involved in atrocities.

"My father did not take part in any massacre, and I have the documentation to prove that," Bielsky said. "The bottom line is that because of what my father and uncles did, 1,250 Jews walked out of the woods, and five generations later they have thousands of descendants."

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Zus Bielski outside his home in Brooklyn with family pet Mack, and with his wife, Sonia (l.) in 1954 in Israel.