

Shooting Down MH 17 - BUK 312 Story False Says Ukraine Crew Member

By [Michael Collins](#)

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[Ukraine War](#)

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

The shoot down of Malaysian Airlines flight MH 17 came into greater focus with the [December 15 YouTube video](#) featuring a former crew member of BUK self-propelled fire installation, number 312 (BUK 312). Ukraine's government and others maintained that the BUK 312 unit shot down MH17 while manned by a resistance crew. The Obama administration championed that narrative holding both the resistance and Russia responsible for the 298 deaths on July 17. The interview was conducted by investigative journalist Anatoly Sharij and translated by Marina Stewart (see full text in English at end of this article). ([Image: BUK 312 in Kiev junta territory - Anatoly Sharij](#))

The 23-year-old former BUK 312 crew member revealed that the missile unit was in fact manned by the Ukraine military. He outlines the missile system's location and how it operated. The former sergeant also offered analysis and research indicating the very low probability that the 312 crew shot down MH17.

Claims that the eastern Ukraine resistance shot down MH 17 with a BUK system rely on a Ukraine government audiotape in which resistance commanders allegedly admit to the shoot down. The tape lost credibility when it was discovered that a key part of the recording was made [hours before the crash](#). In addition, the tape was patched together, not a continuous conversation.

The Ukraine secret service (SBU) claimed to produce photographs of a Russian BUK 312 missile system fully capable of knocking MH17 out of the skies. When that evidence failed to pass muster, an "open source" investigation by [Eliot Higgins](#) (also known as *Brown Moses*) allegedly produced evidence that the BUK 312 system was in the town of Snizhne in the Donetsk region controlled by the resistance.

If the BUK 312 was in Snizhne, as claimed, with a capable resistance crew, both doubtful assumptions, we would need to believe that the crew did nothing to protect Snizhne on July 15 (just two days before the MH17 shoot down) when Ukraine's air force leveled major sections of the city ([BBC, July 15](#)).

The real story of who, how, and why MH 17 was destroyed is emerging over time. The interview adds evidence that deserves serious consideration. The former soldier, known as "A," described his role in the Ukraine military and how the BUK 312 unit was staffed:

"I am 23, and I have been in contract service with the Ukrainian army. Last summer the contract term came to an end, but I was not dismissed from service for reasons well known to you. My duty station was the exact BUK self-propelled fire installation (Russian abbreviation transliterated as SOU -

translator) number 312..."

A says that BUK 312 unit had a four member crew. He was the "deputy commander." The unit started out in "Lugansk and [was] relocated to Kramatorsk. Donetsk." The former deputy commander explains the origin of the 312 label:

This is how you decipher 312:

3 stands for the third (Lugansk) division,
1 stands for the battery number, ours was no. 1,
2 stands for one of the 2. service units in each battery, ours was no. 2.

Interviewer Sharij asks: "This BUK 312 was said to be a Russian missile launcher."

A responds: "No. This BUK is 100% Ukrainian one. ... It made us all laugh, the way SBU presented this as BUK of the rebels or Russian BUK."

AS: What do you think about this BUK downing the Malaysian Boeing?

A: No clue. By the time it happened I was transferred to Avdeevka division. I only heard SBU [Ukraine secret police] say this particular missile launcher with board number 312 downed the Boeing. All I know it couldn't have done this. I spoke with my ex-comrades in arms and they said they didn't do it.

In the days after the shoot down, [Robert Parry](#) reported government sources saying that their evidence indicated that a Ukrainian missile crew shot down MH 17. Reporting by [Eric Zeusse](#) followed up indicating credibility to the claim that a Ukraine fighter jet shot down the civilian airliner.

The speculation over the BUK 312 system may have just been a smokescreen to divert attention away from the real culprit, whomever that may be. A review of the full interview shows the value of direct testimony by involved parties.

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FULL TRANSCRIPT – Anatoly Sharij interview with former BUK 312 crew member Posted Dec 17, 2014, YouTube Translation Marina Stewart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ri_D2Iz7EVw

Anatoly Sharij: You may still remember the BUK which photo was published by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) as a Russian one. You may also remember me dwelling on it. I received a lot of feedback saying I was lying etc. Here's an interview with Ukrainian contract sergeant crossing "t's" and dotting "i's".

Anatoly Sharij (AS): Good afternoon.

A: Good afternoon. Good to be talking to you. I have been watching your videos for quite some time now, and I have to say you do uncover the truth.

I am 23, and I have been in contract service with the Ukrainian army. Last summer the contract term came to an end, but I was not dismissed from service for reasons well known to you. My duty station was the exact BUK self-propelled fire installation (Russian abbreviation transliterated as SOU – translator) number 312 you made your video about, I happened to recently come across it on the Internet.

The SOU has 4 crew members: service commander, me as deputy commander, driver and operator. This SOU 312 you made your video about was dislocated in Lugansk and your video shows it being relocated to Kramatorsk. Donetsk has a surface-to-air missile regiment having these BUK M1 on the inventory. The regiment consists of three divisions:

- (1) in Avdeevka
- (2) in Mariupol
- (3) in Lugansk

This is how you decipher 312:

- 3 stands for the third (Lugansk) division,
- 1 stands for the battery number, ours was no. 1,
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BUK is a complex of 4 specialized military vehicles: command post, mobile target detection and assignment station, loading and starting station, self-propelled fire installation.

At the time the Boeing was downed I was out of army already, so I can't say anything about it, but when it all began in the Crimea, this capture of military units, we've been ordered to leave our permanent disposition in Lugansk.

AS: This BUK 312 was said to be a Russian missile launcher.

A: No. This BUK is 100% Ukrainian one. The photo I sent you, the one with Yubileynaya mines on the background, has been made in Lugansk. (3'49")

Our military unit was dislocated in Metallist settlement, on the upland near Lugansk, and this is the view from there. It made us all laugh, the way SBU presented this as BUK of the rebels or Russian BUK.

AS: What do you think about this BUK downing the Malaysian Boeing?

A: No clue. By the time it happened I was transferred to Avdeevka division. I only heard SBU [Ukraine secret police] say this particular missile launcher with board number 312 downed the Boeing. All I know it couldn't have done this. I spoke with my ex-comrades in arms and they said they didn't do it.

The first relocation of our Lugansk division was to Kramatorsk military airdrome. We've been allocated barracks there. In a month we've been moved into the fields in Dnepropetrovskaya Oblast, Novaya Grigorievka village.

The photo you showed in one of your videos, the bad quality one (5'50") was taken when our SOU commander decided to drive it, but the electric wiring inside the SOU ignited. The

missiles nearly exploded, but luckily firefighters came on time to put the fire down. That's why it was moved on the low-base semi-trailer as seen in the picture.

Let me tell you some about the Ukrainian army. While in the fields, the officers were boozing heavily, while soldiers and sergeants were not allowed to go to the nearby shop. I was actually planning to quit after my first contract term, but they wouldn't let me. Being a straight shooter, I was outraged at this, so they started to pressure me, pitted other soldiers against me. The situation in general was very depressing, people kept deserting, many went over to the rebels, I, too, went to the hospital in Kharkov and just didn't come back. The border is close there.

AS: What do you think was the purpose of using BUK at all in the combat area?

A: I don't know. Initially this withdrawal may have been done to avoid BUK capture. Then, I suppose, this may have been due to shortage of manpower on the front...

AS: Strange....

A: But this is

A: But this is my guess only, for even officers didn't know it, so it seemed, may be only commanding officer and chief of staff knew the reason. I am still unaware why would they want to do this, for BUK air missile launchers are deployed against airborne targets, the rebels have no aviation, so we are useless for ATO ["anti terrorist operation[purposes. They did move some people from our division to ATO, a major general came to talk to those who were unwilling to take part in this campaign, I said I don't want to go as I see no sense in it, besides, I already served my term, so I was transferred 80 kilometres away, to Vasilkovka village, to where 1st Avdeevka BUK division was.

When we left Lugansk, only three unusable complexes remained there, and those which did leave Lugansk, also broke down right after leaving the city, some were repaired en route, others were transported on low-base semi-trailers. Those which were left in Lugansk, lacked whole equipment units.

AS: but one must be able to use these...

A: So far as I could gather they do have professionals there. My friends in Lugansk when passing the military unit saw through the fence rebels trying to repair the complexes.

AS: What's your opinion as a professional, who may have downed the Boeing?

A: Judging by firing zone, Ukrainian army did it.

AS: And the purpose?

A: No idea. I only know the kind of professionals they are, it could have happened unintentionally.

AS: What do you mean, unintentionally? They should have been given coordinates, the height, the speed of the target etc., it isn't just a matter of pressing a button, is it?

A: Exactly. There's a friend or foe comms exchange between the complex units, so you are

right, it couldn't have happened accidentally.

AS: Why firing at all then? They couldn't have thought it was the rebels jet fighter, right?

A: I agree.

In general Ukrainian army lacks qualified manpower badly, many people just left the army, my friends are in Moscow, Novosibirsk, Rostov, elsewhere...

(Laughing)

One can't get dismissed from service no matter what he does. If you abstain from entry on duty or, say, curse everyone, you won't be dismissed. Many people just desert the army.

AS: And how are they accounted for? As missing?

A: It's a mystery to me. But we had 15 sergeants and now only three are left, all of them are in ATO zone. They used to send some people to ATO from all our divisions before, now one of the divisions in full is there. I can't make out why would they want BUK divisions there, rebels still don't have jet fighters. It must really be shortage of soldiers, you have a video on rioting conscripts having exceeded their term of service by 8 months.

AS: Yeah, they have all been labeled Kremlin spies when they raised this issue with their commanders. A real Ukrainian should be willing to serve in the army for 2, 3, 5 years...

A: ...for 154 hrivnyas a month...

I am not scared of anything and I have nothing to conceal.

Wish you new uncovering videos!

END of transcript

[Michael Collins](#) – Michael Collins is a Washington DC area writer, researcher, and citizen journalist. Today, Collins is focused on the propaganda and massive deception by the Obama administration and its NATO partners regarding the coup in [Ukraine](#) and attack by the U.S. supported government against its own people. Collins is a featured contributor to OpEdNews, one of top 100 political web sites on the internet. His home page is <http://opednews.com/michaelcollins>

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