

Hennes, Gerhard G.-1 of 2

[Speaker 4]

This is the road that you would have taken in the old days, in Nashville.

[Speaker 1]

I spent a couple of weeks in Nashville in the General Hospital in 1944. They have a kidney stone removed. It was a peculiar experience because the enemy was operating on me, you know.

I wasn't quite sure about that thing. How did they free you? In the hospital?

[Speaker 13]

Yes.

[Speaker 1]

Well, are you having a microphone or something here? Yes. You know you have to tell people.

[Speaker 11]

I'm sorry, I was just testing it out to make sure everything was working.

[Speaker 1]

You're slick, you're slick. I have a microphone here, Gerard. It's on right now.

The operating officer, Lieutenant Colonel Balding, was very competent. He also believed in the practice. You know what a cystoscope is?

A cystoscope? Yes. It's a piece of metal.

They ram down your thing.

[Speaker 14]

Yes.

[Speaker 1]

He also believed in doing that without any anesthesia. Well, that was bad enough. But after about an hour or so, I had to let some water.

Well, I tell you, I had to hold on to the walls of that particular restroom. It was nasty. Then the operation was fine.

Local anesthesia. And I kind of could feel him pluck around there in the back. I have a six-inch scar.

And obviously he got the stone out. And I had asked that they keep the stone for me. I thought that would be an interesting memento.

And so they did and put it off of cotton. And then I put it on my night table. Well, about 36 hours later, I had terrific pain because the bloating intestines were pressing on that large incision.

And I had a somewhat, well, I'll use a mild term, a somewhat detached nurse. Unfriendly and didn't like the enemy in the first place. Well, lo and behold, during the night, she took that cotton piece away on the stone.

She stole my stone. And six weeks later, I was playing soccer again. I was one of the, you know, the leading soccer players.

And at about that time, he came from Trinidad, Colorado. And so the first evening when he was introduced to the gang at the dinner table, there was also an announcement that tomorrow I would play for the first time again for our compound. So he would go around later on in life and tell these stories about him in the POW camp.

But he never let on to his inner struggle. Never. He was not a revealing man.

[Speaker 11]

Your father was from Trinidad?

[Speaker 1]

Trinidad, Colorado. He was transferred from Trinidad, Colorado, his prison camp, to Crossville because he knew where I was when he was taken normally. And so he was transferred and had to pay for it and had to pay for the guard to come to Crossville.

And we were together for the last year or so of our captivity. Very interesting and certainly newsworthy, everybody. Your father is with you?

[Speaker 4]

Did you share the room with him?

[Speaker 1]

No, that was the first word that came out that my father would join me, you know, in Crossville. Well, surely you're going to move together. I said, hell no, because I hated nothing more than patronage from my father in the middle.

He was a Signal Corps officer also. Patronage from my father, you know, I just wanted to make it on my own, you know. And yes, he did exercise one act of patronage.

I was in the labor camp in 1939 and students who could claim, people, graduates from high school, who could claim that they would go on to study at the universities. Why, after six months or seven months on the secret ditches and so on, they were allowed to leave the labor service. And they didn't need to give any proof or show papers of admission or anything like that.

So most of them left because labor service was not a pleasant affair. But I had no particular intention of studying. I thought I might, as soon as possible, the war had begun.

I joined the military, so I stayed in that camp. So my grandmother, who was my special patron saint, must have worked on my father. Now, Fritz, she said, you get him out of there.

She didn't want me to get stuck in some labor service camp and miss life or miss the war or whatever. But one day he came unannounced. He was a captain by then in the armed forces and saw the camp leader who was a captain.

And in so many words, the labor service spies had great respect of the real military. So he quickly persuaded our camp leader that I was also one who would go and study. So within 24 hours, I got out of that camp.

And then a month later, I joined in occupied Poland. So that was the only time, but I think my father got pushed around by his mother-in-law. ...for service in Russia. At age 52 or 53. Was two and a half years in Russia as a battalion commander. And then in 44, they were transferred to France.

And he had himself captured, not voluntarily. He had one interesting observation. Is this all right?

Of interest? I know you are recording or something. He got to know Russia rather well.

Especially the southern half, Ukraine, as much as a German soldier or Russian. Spoke a little, I guess. And coming to America and seeing this vast expanse provided me with a very deep insight, which hasn't left me.

He was a sharp guy. But he saw real similarities between Russia and the USA. Mostly the spaciousness.

And of course, geography, forms of people and nation. Not just her history. And it has gone with me with some similarities.

Certainly in the landscape, in the vast vistas as you go out west. And all of that. The immense fields between the two countries.

But the resemblance may also be more subtle and profound at the same time. And I translate it into the present in the following way. That many Americans see and have been conditioned to see today.

In the breakup of the Soviet Union. The triumph of western democracy. And in particular, capitalistic democracy.

We got them licked for these tenuous similarities. I cannot help now and then, but have an uneasy feeling. As if the breakup yet union along lines of separate nations within.

The great distance between the centralizing government and the suffering people. That particular is not the result of American superiority in terms of democracy. Because of the similarities that I seem to sense.

It may well be that in the end, the Russian breakup, the Soviet breakup. May be but a precursor to that already latent in our own country. That is, if we see something in Toynbee's theory of fissures developing in a society.

And it was internal contradictions in the Soviet Union that brought her down. Which I think is more likely. Then we do well about statements of superiority.

Can you follow me or does it go against your grain?

[Speaker 13]

Is there something to the opposite?

[Speaker 1]

And I don't see it get any better for all the glossy and wonderful economy that seems to hide it. Than to reduce it. Am I off?

Well, I mean, I listened to him the other day when he announced his separation from the Republican baby. And it struck me as certainly not as constructive. Morocco, why you had a pretty soft job.

And he looked it. And he was the colonel that we got on the soccer field and he promptly broke a leg, you know. He never took it out on us.

He was very jovial kind of sort. But he lost 40 pounds and we had a few that lost that much. Within four or five months after the end of the war.

The re-education was called, yes. And the thing that all of a sudden hit the Americans that this was not right or not good. Was at one, I think it was noontime.

A morning, no, it was a roll call in the morning. And we had a rather artistic interpreter from Berlin. And he looked artistic, had long hair.

Just trifle determined. At any rate, he wasn't the strongest thought to begin with. But in the middle of the roll call, the interpreter keeled over.

And that set off a little alarm bell, you know. Official policy that our rations should be reduced. And then we went on a hunger strike.

Because of the fact that we thought we were entitled to decent rations.

[Speaker 6]

How long was the hunger strike?

[Speaker 1]

Three days. And had a very competent and trusted senior officer who negotiated with the Americans. And the thing ended by a petition to the American colonel.

That a Swiss delegation, Red Cross, should come. And inspect the conditions in the camp, especially the rationing of food. I have a hunch that it was at the state level or somewhat high up.

With which, especially in the first year or two, some of the American officers caught. And we had money to buy. And the YMCA provided sports equipment.

Recreation things. Music instruments. Plenty, you know.

That was it. Use the opportunity.

[Speaker 9]

I know your father came in, what, 93 or 43?

[Speaker 1]

No, he came just before Christmas 1944. He had been taken in Normandy.

[Speaker 9]

So you and your father, or any of the prisoners here, were actually able to have correspondence with family back home. It seems like the American prisoners, in many cases, were able to get.

[Speaker 1]

To the best of my knowledge, this was reciprocal. That the American prisoners in Germany were given coupons at the same grade level as we were here. To buy their extras.

Mostly beer in the case of Crossville for some of us. The letter writing for us was on impregnated paper. You could not write with invisible ink or fool the censors.

I believe they were censored.

[Speaker 2]

We were counseled to write about things concerning our daily life.

[Speaker 1]

Not about things that might have caused the censor to strike it. Twenty, twenty-five lines by normal handwriting. We had to give you a POW number.

[Speaker 4]

Was it censored here in the camp?

[Speaker 1]

To the best of my knowledge, it was censored here. Just as letters from Germany were censored in Germany. I think that was the pattern.

[Speaker 3]

I don't know what they had written, but they marked it out.

[Speaker 6]

Yes, we had communication.

[Speaker 4]

But I also read that the German authorities censored sometimes the letters from...

[Speaker 2]

May well have been.

[Speaker 4]

They told that they had good food or good treatment. They didn't want people... It would make sense.

[Speaker 1]

Albertson? How would I know his name? Coming back to the United States.

What was his name? Zielinski or some Polish sounding name? Or Silesian name?

[Speaker 4]

He was a studious person. He got a year's credit.

[Speaker 1]

So did I.

[Speaker 4]

When he went to the university. He took the debt class as well. Yes, so did I.

[Speaker 1]

University of Minnesota. I had my certificate for two semesters.

[Speaker 4]

I did not know.

[Speaker 3]

He wrote a nice little letter. He did that after he came here. I told him about the piano.

He was telling stories when he was interested in writing. He said there was... He told me he didn't know what had happened with his friends.

They had come over here before. They had met in Germany. They were all Christians here.

Somebody came in the early 50s or 60s. What happened was... Wow, wow.

[Speaker 4]

I don't know. I don't know. The publications in Germany were the same person.

They didn't know how to react. I'm sure that's what he did. I don't know whether it was a warning or anything.

He was just saying that the cross for people who are controlled by the government.

[Speaker 3]

I had never heard that before. I had never heard that before. I was told, those that were here, they were not supposed to take pictures.

They were never supposed to do that.

[Speaker 6]

I never knew about this breakout attempt someone mentioned.

[Speaker 2]

It was a small group. If they did it at all...

[Speaker 3]

Someone asked you about the tunnel.

[Speaker 2]

Yeah.

[Speaker 3]

And I'm sure that there was a tunnel.

[Speaker 4]

I think it was never discovered at the time.

[Speaker 1]

Obviously, they would not want to share it except the small group. Well, now that's interesting. That's interesting.

You could argue that. But I knew those guys personally. I've been thrown together with two submarines in one of the camps south of the city of Algiers.

Who told me the story how their U-boat was bombed and by the explosion of the bombs underneath thrown up to the surface. Asked me to bring this report back home if I ever got through. They knew I was planning to absent myself and get to Spanish Morocco and so on.

And tell responsible people in the submarine force about the fact that in the Mediterranean, while the new U-boats had an unbelievable depth capability because of the sun intensity, could still be seen at, I forget what the number was, 108 feet depth. Something like that. And that it was important for the people in charge in Germany to realize that the U-boats that made it through the Strait of Gibraltar, not many did, were that...

And I said, well if I ever got through, you know, I'll tell. Now not only that, two of those guys were in crossing. I met them again.

Not only that, their commanding officer, a guy who had the... I think he may have had the night cross with leaves. Who had sunk something like 100,000 tons of ships.

Was here and was fairly promptly transferred to the camp down in Georgia where they collected the Nazis. And he was quite a guy. I mean he must have been quite a guy.

And I met him briefly. But so this U-boat business, I wouldn't be surprised. These guys, I mean, they were resourceful.

I mean resourceful.

[Speaker 4]

But they ended up at the concrete wall.

[Speaker 3]

Periodically, the fence will go down. And then they'll just go over and they would have another barrier. And they hit one wall and the other way.

And just happened to go left. And the story is that they went right.

[Speaker 1]

They might have had an opening.

[Speaker 3]

Yeah, it would have been open. I think it's a wonderful story. They hit one twice.

They just happened to turn the wrong way.

[Speaker 1]

I never knew. And I found it extremely difficult and risky to get out of a place like the crossroads.

[Speaker 3]

I'd be afraid.

[Speaker 6]

Oh, here's a picture. I wonder why the guy didn't want her. I don't know if it was.

[Speaker 3]

We hope.

[Speaker 10]

I had several girls go there with me.

[Speaker 3]

The way I understood, everything that they took from here when they got the tunnels to leave, their food, their bags, their things, on both sides of the train tracks, they made it. So they did nothing. They didn't realize they were stealing everything that they had with them.

They all fell off.

[Speaker 4]

Our friends, according to these maps, were not able to get down here.

[Speaker 6]

Until they had to turn over here.

[Speaker 3]

A hundred thousand years later, they have the map here.

[Speaker 4]

It's December.

[Speaker 3]

It's about that near the parking lot where we're going.

[Speaker 1]

From time to time, so-called traitors, who looked like he was an attorney or judge, judge from an unfriendly, a very sharp guy, and a signalman. A big pond was created because some debris and dirt and leaves and so on had blocked one of the major drainage pipes in camp number four into the woods. Betting was only by the case.

One guy bet it with me, or bet with me, that Koblenz was not the capital of the Rhineland. Now that's a foolish thing to do because I came from Koblenz.

[Speaker 8]

And you knew where Koblenz was?

[Speaker 1]

Sure. Prove it, you know. So I got a case of beer.

But this guy, who looked everything but the sporting type, desk man, glasses, not very fit, you know.

[Speaker 2]

Why?

[Speaker 7]

It was a big brown, dirty, ice-cold pool in February or something like that. The couple made a bet.

[Speaker 1]

I think it was about three cases of beer. And it was maybe 110 feet or something like that across.

[Speaker 7]

He would swim across that pool. Well, half the compound was assembled to watch. By golly, he made it through collecting three cases.

[Speaker 2]

Oh, that was a lot of fun.

[Speaker 1]

And, of course, it went with an awful lot of thinking. Under the barracks and so on.

[Speaker 2]

Well, we didn't know much about that, but it was a thing to do. It became a fashion, you know.

[Speaker 9]

You could buy beer.

[Speaker 2]

Yeah, that's right.

[Speaker 9]

I don't know. We got it.

[Speaker 2]

We got it at the PX or whatever it was. I do not know, and I don't think. The contact with the guards was actually very slight.

[Speaker 10]

The camp was run by the Germans.

[Speaker 2]

Oh, certainly.

[Speaker 10]

Yeah.

[Speaker 2]

But the contact was very slight. slight.

[Speaker 10]

The camp was run by the Germans.

[Speaker 2]

Oh, certainly.

[Speaker 10]

They cooked for themselves. Anything they did, they did it all in the compound.

[Speaker 3]

If they worked in the offices over here, that would be the only work they had in that compound.

[Speaker 1]

I'll be later on, and I think may only have been enlisted men.

[Speaker 3]

Do you want me to get that video? The one that you did back there from the heartland?

[Speaker 4]

Sure. Yeah, we have that. That's in the archive, too, now, if you want to see that again.

[Speaker 6]

I made a copy. Those heartlines were about three minutes long, the real short.

[Speaker 4]

Yeah, but I only had a copy in hand at the time.

[Speaker 6]

I'm not the guy who does the heartline, too.

[Speaker 4]

That would be interesting for you to see. It's a very quick video about the camp.

[Speaker 6]
Sure.

[Speaker 1]
I came home on January 30, 1946, and immigrated to the States on January 6, 1953, with our young camp. The signal corps units at the division level were horse-strong, and I came to officer school in the spring of 1941. In North Africa, poor North Africa, all the units were mechanized.

The Italians had some infantry units that actually marched across the desert. We were all motorized, mechanized. That may have been Air Force.

Without glasses, I'm blind. Yes, men, oh, men, if anyone is taking any pictures later on to share, I mean, my family would love this. I mean, I've got copies of these.

[Speaker 7]
The only thing that would interest them, you know.

[Speaker 1]
This is a Panther man, and we didn't have anyone with Panther uniforms until 1944, when they came from Normandy. I don't recognize any one of them, and they may have been in another compound.

[Speaker 3]
I have some more pictures. And who is this? Do you remember this?

No, his name should be on there.

[Speaker 1]
Well, this is in our, and there was behind one of the barracks, a kind of, what would you call that, a veranda or something like that. And this is where the nice music band. Well, that's the band on the, this is the same picture.

This is the same picture. You can see, and here's the fat colonel that we got on the soccer field. He was of a long lineage.

We used to say in Germany, his lineage, or his castle and so on, goes back to 1300, and he'd never been outside the house. This was the commandant for a while.

[Speaker 5]
He was a lieutenant colonel in the air force, and I think he was transferred to the so-called Nazi camp. These were our first and second lieutenants. I remember the guy by face who played the guitar.

[Speaker 3]
He is supposed to be one of these groups.

[Speaker 2]
That may well be so. I don't remember.

[Speaker 3]

This was a Christmas picture that was taken here, that they sent home to his family.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, I have the same kind of picture taken. It cost five dollars. That was the first lieutenant, but he may...

[Speaker 4]

He was a Oberleutnant.

[Speaker 1]

Yes, but I don't know him. Don't know him. Yeah, but I remember these guys, and they played Viennese tunes, and I mean, this may have been the camp interpreter.

The one with the long hair and the kind of, you know, kind of finer features, who keeled over on that one occasion.

[Speaker 4]

It was like a very pleasant scene.

[Speaker 1]

This was fun.

[Speaker 4]

Yeah. That's the one I recall. That's the one who died.

[Speaker 1]

I don't remember that either.

[Speaker 5]

This was one of the pictures?

[Speaker 4]

Yeah, last night, you remember, they were talking about it? And this painter who did the painting in my...

[Speaker 1]

How difficult it would have been to get out of the camp.

[Speaker 4]

So this was the recreation hall?

[Speaker 3]

Look how beautiful.

[Speaker 1]

Yes.

[Speaker 3]

Now, you have an opposite club, or whatever you want to call it.

[Speaker 1]

That may well have been so, but you see, you did break up a little bit into the four of these compounds, and the cliffs were forming a little bit of context.

[Speaker 3]

And also, you broke up by function. But Mr. Albertson, I know he was in the first camp, number one.

[Speaker 1]

Number one. They were the elite, and we were in camp number four. We came somewhat later, because they were...

[Speaker 3]

And yours were later, because that's where the Italians used to stay.

[Speaker 1]

I was in camp number four, or compound number four. And so the cliffs were forming naturally by the barracks, by the way they were together, and they were forming about the special interests that they had. Well, I played soccer and tennis.

You know, that was my interest, and I taught English. But my buddy from Koblenz died earlier this year. He got much of his study in medicine done here in Karlsruhe, and of course applied the credit when he began after the war in Germany.

And so I started at the university, and I had my little credit book, and so on. We had a real university going. As I said, I think it was just over 500 subjects.

[Speaker 4]

And you have the German prescription on how to run these schools, because it was directed by the... I have a certificate.

[Speaker 1]

Well, this is really something that... Coming... Yes, but this I remember, the afternoon on a day like this, you know, the band would play, you know, and...

[Speaker 8]

Well, let's look... Gerhard, can I ask you one question?

[Speaker 2]

Certainly.

[Speaker 8]

Would you describe to me sort of how the set up of the fits were, and possibly how close you could come, the space and the height?

[Speaker 1]

Well, I believe this is inside or outside. I'd better get my glasses. I don't know which is outside.

Right is inside or left is inside? Yeah, right is inside. Well, here you see the barracks, and this was at one of the areas where the runoff is from the plateau where most of them were.

This may be camp number five. At any rate, so the ten feet would be somewhere at this grade, at this slope, as it gets steeper, and it was level in most places. I'm not sure anymore whether soldiers, I mean guards, actually walked in between, and the spaces between the towers were what?

A couple of hundred feet? Something like that? And, of course, the guards were there, and we always laughed a little bit, ridiculed their non-military behavior.

You know, the captain would come by, and the guy would kind of look, everything okay, captain? I mean, unimaginable in the German army where they would snap to attention, you know, that kind of thing, and that always impressed me because I was impressed by a more civil, more civilian society and not the kind of snap to attempts that they had in the German army. Yes, were their feet dangling over the railing?

Yeah, everything is okay.

[Speaker 4]

Were they locals?

[Speaker 1]

No, I don't think so. Now, this is the entrance here. The soccer field was here, and it was below that.

Any one of the barracks was not properly aligned, but that may have been it. Now, the main avenue of the camp went in that direction toward camp number four on the right-hand side. You see two barracks.

I told you the story about that big pond there, and that's where the runoff was between those two barracks on the right, four barracks in the rear, and the mess hall, the long vertical building near the lane in camp number four. You see, and I work on the right-hand side, the left one, and my father then was put into staff officer barrack. They had more space and got more money right near the fence.

So this is company one, two, three, and at the far end, number four. Five and six were enlisted. You see the fairly large building on the left-hand side of the main street, and that was the assembly hall where special things were celebrated, and on April 30th or whenever it was, we had our last, in that sense, military assembly with the announcement that he killed himself or had died fighting in the ruins of Berlin, as they say.

To the left was a large drainage area. You see the open area here in this model, and that's where they had built a, well, a real theater on rising ground with steps, and that's where they played this production of Julia, and I think it was competitive with, say, the city theater in Goebbels. And we used all these, I explained that yesterday, all these cans in silver and in gold, and they made real uniforms.

So you saw these Roman soldiers running across the scene, and their armor was tinkling, tingling, and rattling, and I tell you, it was some production, and the American camp leaders

and some soldiers had front seats, you know, and they were clapping, not quite knowing what was going on. They knew probably as little about Caesar as some of us, you know. I'm not sure, this is where I think the...

On the left-hand side, as I look at it here, is that longish building, and that was the assembly hall. Now, the PX was further down, almost at the borderline between Camp 4 and 5, and was a relatively small barrack, but I do think that in this regard, this model is not accurate. Six companies, six compounds.

I don't remember that either. I was under the impression that that whole area, except for the assembly hall, was declined toward the left, and there were some run-offs. It could have been the canteen.

There was no chapel inside the watered-off area. If there was that, it was somewhere in the... And here's the movie house where we saw that dreadful film.

Probably, although I do not remember that. I do remember the activity that we had. Some people were very intense on expressing their artwork and so on.

Some were wood-carving, others were painting. I think some people worked with metal, and very gifted were their hands, and of course, plenty of time on our hands. Well, then I would have stayed away from that in the first place.

Not very true, but obviously, I'm not very...

[Speaker 8]
In English?

[Speaker 1]
From the fence.

[Speaker 8]
Key point here. Okay, good point.

[Speaker 3]
Now, this may have been more outside, isn't it? This is some items. There were three EMP groups here, three 18th and three 16th, and a few military police force.

[Speaker 1]
Okay, interesting, yes.

[Speaker 3]
This is mainly some stuff from that. Some of the animals that we found when we were digging.

[Speaker 1]
You've done a wonderful job. I'm mean. I'm mean.

What about you, Gary? Is this interesting to you? Is it crisp for you?

This is the type of head that they had in the cockpit.

[Speaker 6]
Looks short.

[Speaker 5]
Well, I don't know.

[Speaker 1]
Well, if a guy was accepted to this tour, the same with him that they did in the Greek history, which we know very well, they would cut his feet off, so that he would fit.

[Speaker 3]
What is the flag from? Is this from the camp? Yeah, that's what I was told.

They had German flags that they put up.

[Speaker 1]
This may well have been, so.

[Speaker 11]
Were the prisoners allowed to fly the Nazi flag?

[Speaker 1]
I would assume that there was no prescription. No prescription to that, yes. Just as it was permitted to wear your insignia and wear your...

especially something like the German cross, which we would call Brunhilde's tits. No, it was protruding. A big swastika on top.

So the name for that was her tits. I would call a mistake. Brunhilde is one of those Germanic, well, curiously enough.

I thought it was a proper expression of the times to take. And if someone had the night cross, we'd call it spinach. Although we did not salute with a Nazi salute until after July 20th, 1924, when it became mandatory.

We kept...

[Speaker 5]
Well, because Hitler's life had been attempted, and this was one way of expressing loyalty to Hitler.

[Speaker 1]
We continued to salute passionately. And there were no Nazis in that official sense or party-related units in North Africa.

[Speaker 5]
We did not have any, what he called, Praetorian guards. He was, by that time, very disenchanted already with the system.

[Speaker 1]

And became ever more so, which led to his being implicated in the plot. Although he may not have had...

[Speaker 12]

Can she work? No, no.

[Speaker 1]

Well, not really written, but you were under him. I was somewhere, somewhere down below.

[Speaker 12]

Didn't he commit suicide?

[Speaker 1]

He did.

[Speaker 12]

I mean, how did the camp feel when he heard the news?

[Speaker 1]

Rommel was severely injured in a strafing attack by British planes near his headquarters on the Seine River, near Norfolk and Paris. Around, oh, I would say, early in July 1944. His driver was killed, as were a couple before.

His command car turned over, went into a ditch. He came to lie under the car. Had very serious head injuries and other injuries.

Was not expected. Was sent home for a long recuperation. Tough as he was.

Made it through this normally deadly injury. Was on home furlough and two generals from headquarters of Hitler's cabal came and after half an hour of private talk with the field marshal, he came out and said, well, I have to go with these gentlemen. Said goodbye to his wife.

He was still badly scarred. And about an hour, and said goodbye to his son, who was about 13 or 14, later Lord Mayor of Stuttgart. They drove off in the direction of Ulm and within an hour and a half he was delivered to that hospital in Ulm, a dead man.

On the understanding then and the publicity pertaining thereto that he had died after all from his very serious injuries. A state funeral had already been ordered before the senate. And so there was a state funeral presided over by the senior officer in the German army, Field Marshal Rundstedt, who was not informed naturally about the background to his death.

But the most striking thing about this sordid affair for a man of Rommel's integrity and so on and competence was when you look at his death match. There is an expression of utter contempt on that face. So if you ask what happened to the man or whoever you know, that's the story about Rommel's destiny.

And he was implicated because he had drawn up a list of people who might be used in a new civilian government to be at least acceptable to the western allies. And his name was prominently on that list among friends here. I have always thought that his Chief of Staff might have been implicated.

He had nothing to do with that. His Chief of Staff was General Speidel. Also, Dirkenberger.

Rommel was not a Prussian officer or anything like that. He was stout, short. Not always very well because he'd been in the desert for two years and he had the shades and he'd drawn this and so on.

But I still believe because in the reading that I've read and the film that I saw recently about the events of the 20th of July 1944 was that this General Speidel wiggled out of it, was the term. Well, you did not easily wiggle out of conspirators on July 20th, 1944 and having your life intact. And I just almost had a just a bit of suspicion that he kind of turned the field marshal.

The field marshal was not directly in the plot, in fact.

[Speaker 5]

Eight o'clock or so, the bell would ring near the Dietheim mess hall.

[Speaker 1]

We would run for breakfast or walk for breakfast. We would gather after breakfast for a roll call. We had one or two, maybe three in our compound of 100 men or so who were late in the morning.

You know, there are people who can't get up in the morning. They can stay up all night but they can't get up in the morning. So my roommate was one of those.

And by the time they were beginning to call the names, his began with a W. He came running, sneaking behind the barracks and quickly got into place. So you had roll call after breakfast and then you had leisure time of which there was plenty.

Lunch was maybe around 12 o'clock. The bell would ring. It was mostly sports for people like me, tennis, soccer.

Of course, later on we had a whole university going and so there were subjects taught and learned, and I mean everything. I learned German English shorthand which came very handy later on when I worked in international meetings and I could take notes and so on. I went for Spanish for beginners and taught two classes in English.

My father sat there, you know, trying to learn English which was very hard for him, especially the pronunciation. Then around six o'clock or so it was suppertime. The bell would ring.

The evening, as far as I'm concerned, was spent playing cards. Skat, S-K-A-T, a German kind of man's game. Rough and ready.

Fists banging, you know, and all this kind of stuff. And heavy drinking. Beer.

Beer, you know, like going on beer binges the way you have with students today. I was the same. I was 21 when I came to Causeville so we had plenty of beer.

Then there was, for officers, there was no curfew. So the nights extended into the morning, you know, and I told the story already to one or two that by the time we were half full and had to go out and spring a leaf, you know, you couldn't distinguish between a man standing there quietly or Juniper Bush. Where's Conrad?

Let's see what I can... I have a hunch that that might have been the heating plant. Conrad.

In hindsight, some didn't think so.

[Speaker 6]

I forget.

[Speaker 1]

But you could buy an awful lot of beer for \$20. And then the captains were given \$30 and my father as a major was given \$40 which was a very respectable sum. He had none of the...

He didn't drink, he didn't smoke and so on so he turned it into books. No, we had a good life and behind it as a background you also knew once you were POW and especially in America you were reasonably sure that you would survive the war. I think if they had sent me to Russia it might have been a different equation.

[Speaker 6]

When I came back today?

[Speaker 1]

Well, there's nothing left of the camp. That's certainly the first impression when you see a compound of very nice buildings, a 4-H camp. It bears no resemblance.

I think the second quick reaction is when I look at these pictures. That recalls the way it was. When I think of that little scene where we were sitting in the sun.

No, yes. Yes, it's not like coming home but it's certainly a memorial trip. Or look at the compound or some of these things or hear these stories.

What distance from the fence and stuff like that. Be familiar. The problem you have is can you quickly jump over the distance in time and distance in place when you compare my life today with my life in 1943.

First impression, this is not our camp. Second, oh yeah. Then the worms come out of the woodwork.

Does that make sense? We were born at that time easily was lost in the war. Easily.

I just told him that out of eight only two came back. Vintage 1922. We have no conception in America about these losses.

No conception. Heavy though they were and sad and all of that. About 8 million Germans were in war.

20 million Russians. And maybe what? 400,000 Americans, 350,000 something like that.

Every family. Every house was touched. Or smitten by.

And soldiers died. And the very sad thing is and it continues to this very day. If you want to put something as sad as that into your notes.