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[Speaker 1]

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, at the time when the families were notified, and surely at the time of the Vietnam War in the United States, it was said that they gave their lives for their country. They didn't give their lives. Men, their lives were taken.

So let's not have any of that, you know, easy patriotic stuff. They were taken. 58,000 Americans in Vietnam.

Don't put that in your notes. And no one was ever held to account. The measly second lieutenant.

Don't put that in the notes, for heaven's sakes, because I have a heavy file with the CIA already.

[Speaker 2]

And don't mind people who understand that, like that was my mother. She lost her brother in...

[Speaker 1]

Quite, yes, and I can feel that.

[Speaker 2]

He was a pilot. And it wasn't that long ago.

[Speaker 1]

Not in terms of history? And it is not imaginable, even not fathomable, for people who have not lived through war, and on the losing side, with so many victims, not to be marked and marred for the rest of your life. It is the forming experience of your life that will never leave you.

But they are at the same time and in the same breath, you need to say, well, think of the misery that the Germans, the soldiers, the administrators and all those brought on other peoples. And this is where some of the essence of my attempt last night came in. That responsibility, that we were not just the victims, we were also the perpetrators.

And especially the perpetrators. Which experience, again, Americans have not had, not even with regard to Vietnam. Because we thought we did the right thing.

Given the setting in 1955, 1965, 1974, I was in Vietnam twice during the war. The Vietnamese were considered not quite the same as us Americans. Some were a little bit lower on the scale.

[Speaker 2]

I mean, we need to remember so that this will never happen again. And do you think that people are, the people of the younger generations now, do you think it seems so distant to them? Or too distant to them?

Or do you think it's real to them?

[Speaker 1]

No, no grasp. No chance for a grasp. Even Vietnam.

And that is one reason why at least it is so slack among the younger people, say up to 25 or 30. Well, that's water over the dam, man. I'm so busy with my life now, studying, working, having a new family.

You know, that's old stuff. Certainly World War II was. Why is he talking about these things all the time?

In that sense, I think lessons are not being learned in such a fast-moving world where the difference is not just between and among generations, but the pace of change has so accelerated. Nobody has time anymore. Nobody takes time.

I mean, much. Don't read my stuff. That's very personal and maybe a little sad.

They may read it when I'm dead, perhaps, you know. My father has written about his childhood. I cannot imagine that I would not lap it up, read every word.

How was it in the 1890s in that part of Germany? That is, the sense of history, the desire to understand a different time, a different place, I think is largely run out by the pace of modern living. And frankly, by the abundance of communication.

We are so over-informed by this mass of communication coming at us and so also influenced by the media and, pardon me, manipulated, never mind the politicians, that we can no longer physically, mentally digest it all. So we call on professionals to help us with even simple decisions, like buying a house or seeking a career option. We need the professionals to prop us up.

And at the same time, the professionals, certainly the politicians, have us by the tail. That's why they make bigger money and the regular guys make less money. The society has become so complex, the pace so fast, that the time for perception, digestion, historical understanding, has no more room.

It's a very dangerous tendency not reflected on by the leader, certainly, for whom image is more important than reality or memory. Can I create a new, adjusted image every five minutes? Hey!

That's the wave of the future. The reliance on technology. I mean, technology will do the trick.

You know, Clinton goes to Africa and talks about having computers for the kids there. Well, they don't have any decent water to drink.

[Speaker 3]

Exactly.

[Speaker 1]

You know.

[Speaker 3]

Yeah.

[Speaker 1]

So, things are out of whack. And the most serious aspect of that is, and this is another somewhat frightening parallel to Hitler Germany, is that the people no longer perceive these problems because they are so embedded in their own, what I call, culture-crust. Well, dad, what are you complaining all the time, says our very successful real estate program, making money, you know, that I could not even dream of.

Dad, well, that's the way things are. I'm not yet at the point where I don't ask, well, must they be so? You know.

[Speaker 2]

Dad, you're all the time complaining. You were saying last night, though, that when you were growing up in your uniform as a young man, and that was the way things were. That was what you knew.

[Speaker 1]

Uniformization. In dress or in mind. Or in spirit.

Is a very dangerous thing. Uniformity. To be politically correct, you know, like my, especially the one son-in-law.

That for him is, you know, that's it. The hell with being politically correct if I think it's wrong. Or doesn't promise improvement.

We live in a very open society that is beginning to be very calcified. And when you think of the fact that America, of all countries, relies, unfortunately, very often, on military means to impose its will on others. Why in the world would such a free and wonderful society rely on gang bombers?

I may be totally wrong. But I do see some aspects of similarity in the two societies moving to what I call the right. We are right and the other guy is wrong.

But I mean, I've talked to a lot of business. There's nowhere other than... It may be interesting, though.

I don't know what... It is definitely interesting. What is on the agenda?

Have you asked all your questions so that later on they say he wrote such a... Sure. This is the one guy that...

[Speaker 3]

There's a lot in here that are going to be from the Americans. What is this? That's for the flower gardens.

[Speaker 1]

That's where they supposedly put some of the dirt. German Afrika Korps. This would spell with a K.

And Korps would spell with a C. And this is the way to spend the summer, yes.

[Speaker 3]

So this is what Conrad's talking about, rebuilding.

[Speaker 1]

You're trying to have one watchtower and make this a building project? Beautiful. Here's the famous tea, afternoon dance music.

Now let's see. Yeah, I remember that guy, but I don't know what he's named. I remember that guy, sure.

[Speaker 3]

Wearing pit helmets?

[Speaker 1]

I guess that's what it was. Yeah. I don't have any...

I don't know what that is. What is it? These...

[Speaker 3]

Honestly, I'm not sure. That's the water tower and the hospital complex. I don't know exactly...

[Speaker 1]

Possibly so. Let's see whether I remember any one of these. There he looks vaguely familiar.

As a general indication, Germans don't smile when their pictures are taken, which is a nasty comment. None of these were senior guys. Oh, that's my father's picture.

That's my father's picture. And the original is here. And I have one different original.

Is that the original that was always here? Because I have a second original.

[Speaker 3]

And it's in my book. Your father drew that?

[Speaker 1]

Yes. It catches like few... These are the famous juniper bushes.

But it catches the mood in the camp. I mean, he was just an amateur. But it catches this beautifully, the muted colors, the setting, the presence of the towers and the barbed wire.

It's a very nice piece. I'm amazed that you have an original. He must have made several.

He had all the time in the world, I guess. These are native. Were these German prisoners?

I was told those were Italian people that worked in the kitchen. That may well have been so before my time. We had enlisted men that helped in the kitchen.

Yes, here's this again. Just taken, going to the mess hall and so on.

[Speaker 3]

Well, I don't know where they're going.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, I think that looks very familiar. That would be typical.

[Speaker 3]

I've had several people ask me why would someone ride a bike? I mean, did they have bicycles?

[Speaker 1]

This is an American who had duties. This is the way they helped with the grounds, I think.

[Speaker 3]

That was taken from inside a jeep or so.

[Speaker 1]

I didn't do a stroke with my hands. I saw them playing handball. This is the guy again with the glasses, isn't that?

[Speaker 3]

Yes.

[Speaker 1]

What was his name again?

[Speaker 3]

That one I'm not sure. That's the one that was also in the band.

[Speaker 1]

Well, these are typical pictures. I don't remember wearing a necktie. But there's an interesting story to the necktie if you want to get that on your machine.

I had gone through six or eight mission camps and eventually landed in a what might be called a collection camp. It was run by a German general by the name of Franz. He was a bad guy.

He belongs to the category of people that make commentary when you see a movie. You know the type? Yes, I'm sure you appreciate him.

And he was that kind of type. He also wore a monocle. He had the monocle on a little black...

Yes, something like that. In mock surprise or so on he kind of let the thing drop and you were always tempted to catch the thing. But you were not supposed to move when you stood in front of the general.

You were a little guy. And he ran this camp where these officers that came out of the autumn camps were then collected eventually to be shipped to America and that kind of thing. And this Franz guy sat in a barrack.

Well, you know how these Nissen barracks were very long and big. And he sat at one end and another general sat at the other end. And they couldn't stand the sight of each other.

And especially this general Franz couldn't stand anymore the sound of this other general playing what is solitaire. The kind of slight sound of cards being laid on the table. So the two of them were, you know, not on speaking terms, understandably.

But it was this Franz guy whom I'd run across before and I didn't like him that insisted that when the officers came and just had their arms, neckties were not worn in Africa although it was part of the uniform even for people like me in the regular army that we have neckties. And early on in that camp, camp in Great Britain, why he insisted, he ran it like a general. I mean, and the British let him run it.

And it was like an officer's. And he would demand that the people who came into the camp would sit at his table than the way it would be in the officer's casino. And then, of course, he would report I wanted to walk in there.

Well, someone said, well, you better salute and report your unit and that kind of stuff. Well, I was a POW. What did I care?

You had to salute and he insisted that we have neckties. Well, I took the lower part of my Africa military shirt, cut off a piece which was wider at one end where I sat and made a halfway decent necktie and on for the occasion. And he would remember your name and he would proceed exactly.

You would address a junior officer by his name. You would address a senior officer by his rank. You know, I mean, it was an officer's club anywhere in Germany in 1939.

He ran that thing. Then he got on the ship with us. We were on the Queen Mary coming to America from out of Glasgow, Scotland.

And the generals were not quartered with us. We were somewhere down low in the hold, you know, in that tremendous ship which zigzagged and was faster than the U-boats. Anyhow, they never caught up.

Anyway, well, we were let out twice a day for what was called recreation on a hike which was open. We could see the sea and the ship. We could feel that it was zigzagging and so on.

And he was General of France. Monocle and all. Terrible food.

The British can't cook, some people say. And here we got this mush. You know, and it came in big kettles.

Well, he was General of France and he was determined to improve conditions. He was just a man. Well, he stood there, the little guy that he was, he came up and had one of these troughs in his arm like a baby.

He called a guard. Guard, general. So, get me the head person.

And the bursar came, a jovial fellow, a little on the fat side, you know, saluted. The general didn't speak much English. He didn't need much English.

He took this trough and shoved it in the arms of the bursar who stood there embarrassed. They were ready to sink into the ground. And the general said, here, food fit for pigs.

Walked off with his wet baby, you know. I mean, it was glorious. And the general had done himself proud, you know.

I heard later that he'd gone nuts and it didn't take very far for him to go nuts, you know. He was a bad dude. Oh, I met him after the war.

Met him after the war, strangely. It was 49 or so. There was a little cafe in Bad Homburg.

They were in a corner laughing, talking. Was a bunch of German officers. You could see them because they still had their dyed uniforms without the insignia and that kind of thing.

It was very clear this was a bunch of officers. And they were carrying on and then eventually they got up and this General Franz tried to get into my dyed overcoat, black. So I walked.

It was only then that I recognized him. And I said, I think you are trying my overcoat. Oh, yes, yes.

And I said, aren't you General Franz? Yes, yes, he said. Were you in my division?

I said, no, I was not in your unit. And so I met the guy again, monocle and all, as a civilian in 1949 as if he had pursued me or I him. He was a bad dude.

He was in charge of the 19th Flak Division. And he got captured just in time to get his night cross. I'm a little nasty when it comes to higher officers.

Well, let me look at this. No, I don't recognize, except distantly by face. You don't have my picture in here?

[Speaker 3]  
Just a few.

[Speaker 1]  
That guy I remember. Yeah. That guy I remember.

This one I don't.

[Speaker 3]  
You got this one identified?

[Speaker 1]

This is the first lieutenant. Me? Yeah.

[Speaker 3]

Yeah.

[Speaker 1]

Yes. I think that was that must have been Christmas 43. And here's my father.

Oh, look at that.

[Speaker 3]

I mean, did I send that? Yeah. And your father?

[Speaker 1]

This was my father in Russia. That is exactly the father, yes.

[Speaker 3]

That's your father, right?

[Speaker 1]

Yes, and these were the black uniforms with the, what do you call it, the skull. No, no, no. Nothing to do with that.

These are tank units. They had black. What do you know?

Well. Yes. Here are some of the women that we had in the camp.

It was real nice.

[Speaker 2]

How nice was it?

[Speaker 1]

Without the women? Well, it was kind of difficult, wasn't it? Should I leave the room so you can?

I have no secrets before you, ma'am. I'm kidding also. Where were these women from?

I think they were outside the camp. They may have been secretaries or communicators, you know, with the...

[Speaker 3]

There were several nurses.

[Speaker 1]

Nurses, yes.

[Speaker 3]

Yes. That's Crossville. That's the highway patrol.

[Speaker 1]

Yes, yes.

[Speaker 3]

I didn't know anything about it.

[Speaker 1]

Not in Crossville? Hell no. That would have been a riot.

[Speaker 3]

You don't know anything either about anyone having...

[Speaker 1]

We suspected some men to have relationships with other men.

[Speaker 3]

But none of the other camp... Well, you know, it's...

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, I remember those guys. No, those may have been... Were these people keep area in front of air duct open?

No, these were American soldiers. Yes. Now, who was this, Enfield?

I don't remember. Yeah, the major was... His name was Prandtl.

We dealt mostly with him. And he was quite all right at the beginning, but when this re... Dudley was the top man.

Dudley remained distant. The practical day-to-day dealings were with his chief executive officer, Major Prandtl. Dudley was much higher ranked and stayed distant from...

Except for when he got the strike and things of that nature. ...that he had hanging around his neck.

[Speaker 3]

The Brunhilde you were talking about?

[Speaker 1]

The Brunhilde Pete. Or Tete. Yes.

He was highly decorated. In the first war, he had the Poulet Merite, meaning the highest decoration that the old army had to give out. He was a first lieutenant in the first war.

[Speaker 2]

And the rest of those are not here. They're here in Yorkshire. You know,