

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,880

2  
00:00:07,880 --> 00:00:11,780  
So now you're at a very  
high point in the mountains.

3  
00:00:11,780 --> 00:00:14,490  
And you joined the  
real regiment I gather.

4  
00:00:14,490 --> 00:00:14,990  
Right.

5  
00:00:14,990 --> 00:00:18,170

6  
00:00:18,170 --> 00:00:22,850  
I sort of got interviewed  
by an officer.

7  
00:00:22,850 --> 00:00:26,190  
He was not the commanding  
officer of the regiment.

8  
00:00:26,190 --> 00:00:30,600  
And I think they're  
probably debating

9  
00:00:30,600 --> 00:00:32,200  
about what to have me do.

10  
00:00:32,200 --> 00:00:36,030  
Certainly I was not either  
trained or old enough

11  
00:00:36,030 --> 00:00:41,220  
to join a fighting unit.

12  
00:00:41,220 --> 00:00:46,740  
And then the same afternoon,

I am called to go and talk

13

00:00:46,740 --> 00:00:49,200  
to the second in command.

14

00:00:49,200 --> 00:00:53,430  
Let me parenthetically  
note that in ELAS, there

15

00:00:53,430 --> 00:00:55,860  
was always dual leadership.

16

00:00:55,860 --> 00:00:58,295  
There was the  
military commander.

17

00:00:58,295 --> 00:00:59,230  
I don't want to--

18

00:00:59,230 --> 00:01:02,390

19

00:01:02,390 --> 00:01:05,200  
the second in command,  
it was not a rank.

20

00:01:05,200 --> 00:01:09,250  
But he was the equivalent  
of a political officer,

21

00:01:09,250 --> 00:01:11,110  
if you want to call  
it a kommissar.

22

00:01:11,110 --> 00:01:15,040  
But they were called  
kapetanios, which

23

00:01:15,040 --> 00:01:21,790  
is a generic name for captain  
or an officer of some rank.

24

00:01:21,790 --> 00:01:23,920  
So I go to his office.

25  
00:01:23,920 --> 00:01:31,820  
And he told me that he has  
an important mission for me.

26  
00:01:31,820 --> 00:01:32,480  
They know me.

27  
00:01:32,480 --> 00:01:36,620  
But they had not known  
that I was from Athens,

28  
00:01:36,620 --> 00:01:39,640  
that I spoke French  
and some Spanish.

29  
00:01:39,640 --> 00:01:46,290  
It was very important  
mission because every year,

30  
00:01:46,290 --> 00:01:51,270  
the little rivulets,  
or even creeks, which

31  
00:01:51,270 --> 00:01:55,020  
are dry most of the  
year, but in spring

32  
00:01:55,020 --> 00:02:00,510  
after the snows fall, then  
these creeks flood and even

33  
00:02:00,510 --> 00:02:02,820  
the little rivers flood.

34  
00:02:02,820 --> 00:02:09,110  
And always there are  
people who drown.

35  
00:02:09,110 --> 00:02:12,690  
Now, our mission, the mission

I want to entrust you with

36

00:02:12,690 --> 00:02:16,730

is this, because we don't  
know when the next sweep is

37

00:02:16,730 --> 00:02:17,960

going to come.

38

00:02:17,960 --> 00:02:21,620

And we want to be sure  
that our line of retreat

39

00:02:21,620 --> 00:02:25,540

is available to us.

40

00:02:25,540 --> 00:02:28,310

We don't want to have to ford  
something that's not passable.

41

00:02:28,310 --> 00:02:31,180

So what I want you  
to do is I'm going

42

00:02:31,180 --> 00:02:34,990

to put you in charge, 16 and  
a half years old, put you

43

00:02:34,990 --> 00:02:39,220

in charge of a group.

44

00:02:39,220 --> 00:02:42,290

And there'll be two  
Italian officers.

45

00:02:42,290 --> 00:02:43,720

They are both engineers.

46

00:02:43,720 --> 00:02:46,750

And your mission is to go  
to a number of villages,

47

00:02:46,750 --> 00:02:51,670  
which he had written down,  
near some of those rivers.

48  
00:02:51,670 --> 00:02:59,290  
And you will tell them that  
you have orders for the village

49  
00:02:59,290 --> 00:03:03,590  
people to help  
you do two things,

50  
00:03:03,590 --> 00:03:08,110  
first, cut down trees  
to provide material

51  
00:03:08,110 --> 00:03:09,940  
for building the bridge.

52  
00:03:09,940 --> 00:03:13,570  
The Italian officers  
would measure and find

53  
00:03:13,570 --> 00:03:14,740  
the appropriate place.

54  
00:03:14,740 --> 00:03:21,160  
And then the villagers would  
help with labor to cut the logs

55  
00:03:21,160 --> 00:03:25,720  
and also, with materials such  
as nails and things like this,

56  
00:03:25,720 --> 00:03:28,810  
as well as labor to  
assemble the bridge.

57  
00:03:28,810 --> 00:03:32,890  
So he gave me official orders,  
signed, whatever it was.

58  
00:03:32,890 --> 00:03:36,070

I don't even know  
if it was a seal.

59  
00:03:36,070 --> 00:03:39,830  
And then I was introduced--

60  
00:03:39,830 --> 00:03:41,740  
they were in the outside--

61  
00:03:41,740 --> 00:03:45,850  
these two men, officer uniforms.

62  
00:03:45,850 --> 00:03:48,370  
They were also armed.

63  
00:03:48,370 --> 00:03:49,990  
Now I do not know Italian.

64  
00:03:49,990 --> 00:03:55,540  
But between French  
and the Ladino,

65  
00:03:55,540 --> 00:03:58,330  
I could make out a few things.

66  
00:03:58,330 --> 00:04:00,690  
And we could begin to  
understand each other.

67  
00:04:00,690 --> 00:04:04,260  
I think they had been  
briefed, that's now

68  
00:04:04,260 --> 00:04:07,130  
the word, about what  
the mission was.

69  
00:04:07,130 --> 00:04:10,390  
And so the following  
morning, you

70  
00:04:10,390 --> 00:04:18,680

have the Nehama group  
walking to our destination.

71  
00:04:18,680 --> 00:04:20,570  
And it took us--

72  
00:04:20,570 --> 00:04:24,800  
Isn't this rather unusual to  
have a 16 and a half year old

73  
00:04:24,800 --> 00:04:26,800  
who hasn't been in this  
group for more than four

74  
00:04:26,800 --> 00:04:27,410  
to five weeks?

75  
00:04:27,410 --> 00:04:31,660  
Look, I can only speculate  
that probably it was either

76  
00:04:31,660 --> 00:04:34,600  
a stupid, half baked idea.

77  
00:04:34,600 --> 00:04:39,100  
Or it was a serious idea,  
but a half baked notion

78  
00:04:39,100 --> 00:04:42,370  
of how to implement it.

79  
00:04:42,370 --> 00:04:46,000  
Or it is not they wanted to  
get rid of me from there,

80  
00:04:46,000 --> 00:04:52,300  
but the plausible  
explanation is that this

81  
00:04:52,300 --> 00:04:54,880  
was a real need, right?

82

00:04:54,880 --> 00:04:58,180  
That was not the only way  
to skin that particular cat,

83  
00:04:58,180 --> 00:04:59,470  
or fording a bridge.

84  
00:04:59,470 --> 00:05:03,220  
But they thought, why don't  
we take advantage of--

85  
00:05:03,220 --> 00:05:06,430  
because the military  
engineers are

86  
00:05:06,430 --> 00:05:10,570  
trained to do things like  
this using what locally

87  
00:05:10,570 --> 00:05:12,730  
available materials are.

88  
00:05:12,730 --> 00:05:17,320  
So it was not a crazy  
notion of trying to build.

89  
00:05:17,320 --> 00:05:19,360  
And we aren't talking  
about large rivers.

90  
00:05:19,360 --> 00:05:21,250  
I'm talking maybe  
the biggest one

91  
00:05:21,250 --> 00:05:27,120  
that we had to do was 4 to 5  
meters, which is 15, 20 feet.

92  
00:05:27,120 --> 00:05:29,540  
We're not talking  
about huge things.

93  
00:05:29,540 --> 00:05:35,860



So the notion was certainly  
plausible and necessary

94  
00:05:35,860 --> 00:05:38,530  
in order to maintain open  
line of communication.

95  
00:05:38,530 --> 00:05:42,160  
You don't want to be repeating  
and suddenly have your backs

96  
00:05:42,160 --> 00:05:43,240  
to the river.

97  
00:05:43,240 --> 00:05:46,650  
But I mean, if they wanted  
to do it very seriously,

98  
00:05:46,650 --> 00:05:49,100  
they wouldn't have sent a  
16 and a half year old boy.

99  
00:05:49,100 --> 00:05:52,460  
They would have  
something else, maybe

100  
00:05:52,460 --> 00:05:54,020  
another contingent  
of two or three

101  
00:05:54,020 --> 00:05:57,370  
who would then also participate  
in the actual building.

102  
00:05:57,370 --> 00:05:58,550

103  
00:05:58,550 --> 00:06:01,160  
Up to this point, these few  
weeks that you're the group,

104  
00:06:01,160 --> 00:06:03,470  
do some of the older

men befriend you?

105  
00:06:03,470 --> 00:06:05,540  
I mean, do you feel--

106  
00:06:05,540 --> 00:06:06,230  
Oh, yes.

107  
00:06:06,230 --> 00:06:06,740  
They do.

108  
00:06:06,740 --> 00:06:07,820  
Oh, yes.

109  
00:06:07,820 --> 00:06:08,960  
They welcome you in.

110  
00:06:08,960 --> 00:06:10,580  
Right, right.

111  
00:06:10,580 --> 00:06:12,500  
And do they in  
some sense try to--

112  
00:06:12,500 --> 00:06:15,250  
you're the youngest  
person there, right?

113  
00:06:15,250 --> 00:06:15,850  
Yes, yes.

114  
00:06:15,850 --> 00:06:16,808  
And there are no women.

115  
00:06:16,808 --> 00:06:18,610  
It's all boys.

116  
00:06:18,610 --> 00:06:19,490  
Or are there women?

117  
00:06:19,490 --> 00:06:20,290

There are women.

118  
00:06:20,290 --> 00:06:22,600  
But I didn't see them  
yet, when the partisans--

119  
00:06:22,600 --> 00:06:28,460  
until after the end of  
that mission that failed.

120  
00:06:28,460 --> 00:06:29,063  
Right.

121  
00:06:29,063 --> 00:06:32,560  
OK, so you feel very  
comfortable with these people.

122  
00:06:32,560 --> 00:06:34,470  
Yes.

123  
00:06:34,470 --> 00:06:36,420  
I share their life.

124  
00:06:36,420 --> 00:06:38,160  
I eat with them.

125  
00:06:38,160 --> 00:06:38,700  
We talk.

126  
00:06:38,700 --> 00:06:41,220

127  
00:06:41,220 --> 00:06:42,960  
Now, all this time,  
of course, you

128  
00:06:42,960 --> 00:06:45,810  
are still preoccupied  
in some way with what's

129  
00:06:45,810 --> 00:06:47,960  
happening to the family.

130  
00:06:47,960 --> 00:06:49,370  
Yes, I'm preoccupied.

131  
00:06:49,370 --> 00:06:53,480  
But it's the kind of  
a thing that I don't--

132  
00:06:53,480 --> 00:06:55,970  
I have no contact left anymore.

133  
00:06:55,970 --> 00:06:57,950  
I thinking of them.

134  
00:06:57,950 --> 00:07:02,240  
But it's a kind of  
thought that goes nowhere

135  
00:07:02,240 --> 00:07:04,460  
because there is  
nothing I can do

136  
00:07:04,460 --> 00:07:09,530  
in trying some method of  
trying to get news from them,

137  
00:07:09,530 --> 00:07:11,570  
either deliver my  
news or their news.

138  
00:07:11,570 --> 00:07:14,940  
So I-- so that I'm  
getting adjusted even

139  
00:07:14,940 --> 00:07:17,965  
to the notion of  
being out of contact.

140  
00:07:17,965 --> 00:07:21,870

141  
00:07:21,870 --> 00:07:26,236

Do they ask you about  
your family, these guys?

142  
00:07:26,236 --> 00:07:29,080  
Look, I don't think  
we spoke very much.

143  
00:07:29,080 --> 00:07:31,330  
I mean, occasionally the  
conversation would come back,

144  
00:07:31,330 --> 00:07:35,530  
because later on,  
when I was part

145  
00:07:35,530 --> 00:07:40,390  
of a real ongoing military  
unit after this mission

146  
00:07:40,390 --> 00:07:44,440  
that I returned from, there  
was a large contingent

147  
00:07:44,440 --> 00:07:48,100  
of regimental headquarters,  
where we were really living,

148  
00:07:48,100 --> 00:07:49,630  
and staying together,  
and talking.

149  
00:07:49,630 --> 00:07:51,850  
And we started exchanging.

150  
00:07:51,850 --> 00:07:56,400  
But in the first  
month or two, most

151  
00:07:56,400 --> 00:07:59,260  
of the time we are  
talking about is

152  
00:07:59,260 --> 00:08:02,578

first of all, the  
next preoccupation--

153  
00:08:02,578 --> 00:08:04,870  
or the only preoccupation is  
what are you going to eat?

154  
00:08:04,870 --> 00:08:07,390  
Because there is  
no food to be had.

155  
00:08:07,390 --> 00:08:10,443  
This is not a unit where you're  
going to go for chow when

156  
00:08:10,443 --> 00:08:11,110  
something rings.

157  
00:08:11,110 --> 00:08:13,450  
You have to scrounge for things.

158  
00:08:13,450 --> 00:08:16,980  
So most of the time,  
and necessarily,

159  
00:08:16,980 --> 00:08:21,585  
is you're thinking about  
only one thing, survival.

160  
00:08:21,585 --> 00:08:24,510

161  
00:08:24,510 --> 00:08:26,750  
All right, let's describe this--

162  
00:08:26,750 --> 00:08:28,933  
it ends up being a  
somewhat failed mission.

163  
00:08:28,933 --> 00:08:29,850  
Right, failed mission.

164

00:08:29,850 --> 00:08:31,642

Very briefly, we went  
to the first village.

165

00:08:31,642 --> 00:08:33,480

I approached the teacher.

166

00:08:33,480 --> 00:08:35,640

I showed him the orders.

167

00:08:35,640 --> 00:08:38,460

And they said, sure, sure.

168

00:08:38,460 --> 00:08:43,394

The following morning, we  
will gather, sure, sure.

169

00:08:43,394 --> 00:08:46,120

Of course, they put  
us up for the evening.

170

00:08:46,120 --> 00:08:47,910

They were a little  
skittish I could

171

00:08:47,910 --> 00:08:53,820

see in their eyes of  
having to also host

172

00:08:53,820 --> 00:08:59,340

two Italian officers, armed,  
because you got to remember,

173

00:08:59,340 --> 00:09:03,480

for the previous two years,  
that region from time to time

174

00:09:03,480 --> 00:09:06,030

would have incursions  
of Italians who

175

00:09:06,030 --> 00:09:07,590

would burn their villages.

176  
00:09:07,590 --> 00:09:10,680  
I mean, I saw the rims  
of that, the hulks

177  
00:09:10,680 --> 00:09:16,470  
of just nothing but the  
walls with the open sky.

178  
00:09:16,470 --> 00:09:20,130  
But at least they  
did not attack us.

179  
00:09:20,130 --> 00:09:22,470  
They would put us up.

180  
00:09:22,470 --> 00:09:23,910  
But they wouldn't show up.

181  
00:09:23,910 --> 00:09:26,620  
And although I tried  
to get in then,

182  
00:09:26,620 --> 00:09:28,990  
they would say again  
the following morning,

183  
00:09:28,990 --> 00:09:32,190  
the long and the short is  
we went through two or three

184  
00:09:32,190 --> 00:09:35,130  
other villages with  
almost identical results.

185  
00:09:35,130 --> 00:09:41,100  
But the third or fourth  
village it was just,

186  
00:09:41,100 --> 00:09:51,210  
I think, after Christmas of  
'43, maybe December 28 or 29.



187

00:09:51,210 --> 00:09:52,440

We got to this village.

188

00:09:52,440 --> 00:09:57,610

And although the story  
was the same tomorrow.

189

00:09:57,610 --> 00:10:02,770

But they didn't put us up  
in a house in that village.

190

00:10:02,770 --> 00:10:07,540

Instead they guided us something  
like close to a half an hour

191

00:10:07,540 --> 00:10:09,430

walk from the village.

192

00:10:09,430 --> 00:10:12,820

And in the middle of nowhere  
there was a little barn.

193

00:10:12,820 --> 00:10:14,800

And it was two stories.

194

00:10:14,800 --> 00:10:19,120

And in the lower part it  
was a tethered donkey.

195

00:10:19,120 --> 00:10:22,240

And the upper was just a room.

196

00:10:22,240 --> 00:10:24,710

But it had a fireplace.

197

00:10:24,710 --> 00:10:29,530

So he says, this is where you're  
going to stay during your stay.

198

00:10:29,530 --> 00:10:30,970

All right.

199

00:10:30,970 --> 00:10:33,790

So that's where we  
slept the first night.

200

00:10:33,790 --> 00:10:36,640

When we got up the  
following morning,

201

00:10:36,640 --> 00:10:44,430

it had begun to snow incessantly  
which continued for a week.

202

00:10:44,430 --> 00:10:49,500

Very quickly we were  
totally snowbound.

203

00:10:49,500 --> 00:10:52,260

Fortunately, I mean,  
the way we survived

204

00:10:52,260 --> 00:10:58,710

is once a day around midday  
or so, a poor, elderly woman

205

00:10:58,710 --> 00:11:02,940

from the village would  
trudge all that distance

206

00:11:02,940 --> 00:11:09,080

with a sack of roughly  
ground corn flour.

207

00:11:09,080 --> 00:11:11,510

And that's our subsistence.

208

00:11:11,510 --> 00:11:16,680

We would take the corn  
flour and melt some snow,

209

00:11:16,680 --> 00:11:19,140

knead it into some  
kind of a dough

210

00:11:19,140 --> 00:11:23,160

and pat it to a  
semblance of a bread.

211

00:11:23,160 --> 00:11:28,050

And we would burn  
it on the fireplace.

212

00:11:28,050 --> 00:11:28,940

That's what we ate.

213

00:11:28,940 --> 00:11:35,670

Now, I think the second  
week, she brought us an egg.

214

00:11:35,670 --> 00:11:38,010

And we were, of  
course, you know,

215

00:11:38,010 --> 00:11:39,810

we hadn't seen  
anything like this.

216

00:11:39,810 --> 00:11:41,430

And we were overjoyed.

217

00:11:41,430 --> 00:11:48,060

But very quickly we decided that  
it would be divided into three.

218

00:11:48,060 --> 00:11:50,550

I mean, we would not even  
feel it in our mouths.

219

00:11:50,550 --> 00:11:54,240

So we decided to  
keep it as a symbol

220

00:11:54,240 --> 00:11:59,820

of our eventual deliverance,  
both from the snow outside

221

00:11:59,820 --> 00:12:02,160  
of that mission,  
as well as the war.

222  
00:12:02,160 --> 00:12:04,455

223  
00:12:04,455 --> 00:12:06,330  
And then I can tell you  
very quickly, I mean,

224  
00:12:06,330 --> 00:12:08,910  
we used the egg to play  
games with the mice.

225  
00:12:08,910 --> 00:12:11,340  
The mice would  
come out at night,

226  
00:12:11,340 --> 00:12:14,260  
because it was the gallery,  
I mean, all these things.

227  
00:12:14,260 --> 00:12:18,120  
And we had not thought-- we  
had left the egg someplace.

228  
00:12:18,120 --> 00:12:21,780  
And then in the  
glow of the fire--

229  
00:12:21,780 --> 00:12:25,260  
we used to go out to gather  
branches and burn them--

230  
00:12:25,260 --> 00:12:27,330  
we saw how mice steal the egg.

231  
00:12:27,330 --> 00:12:32,100  
One mouse takes it in  
its paws and the others

232  
00:12:32,100 --> 00:12:34,260

drag it by the tail.

233

00:12:34,260 --> 00:12:35,760

So we discovered a game.

234

00:12:35,760 --> 00:12:39,173

So we used to take the egg  
and have bets made and races.

235

00:12:39,173 --> 00:12:40,340

We would leave it like this.

236

00:12:40,340 --> 00:12:42,390

And then we see the mouse come.

237

00:12:42,390 --> 00:12:45,870

And the bet was how fast  
it will get to the hole.

238

00:12:45,870 --> 00:12:48,600

By the time he reached the  
hole, we grabbed the egg again.

239

00:12:48,600 --> 00:12:51,840

And so that's the  
way-- and that's

240

00:12:51,840 --> 00:12:55,290

how I began to learn Italian  
because spending all day long,

241

00:12:55,290 --> 00:12:57,900

we used to sing Italian songs.

242

00:12:57,900 --> 00:13:02,610

And I clearly  
remember the first day

243

00:13:02,610 --> 00:13:05,580

when the snow ended, it  
was the kind of thing

244

00:13:05,580 --> 00:13:07,995  
that you know when  
the snow clears

245  
00:13:07,995 --> 00:13:14,430  
and the sky is completely  
cloud free and bright,

246  
00:13:14,430 --> 00:13:16,710  
blinding brightness  
because of the white.

247  
00:13:16,710 --> 00:13:21,370  
And we heard a  
drone of aircraft,

248  
00:13:21,370 --> 00:13:24,550  
which was an incredible sound.

249  
00:13:24,550 --> 00:13:25,720  
And we look up.

250  
00:13:25,720 --> 00:13:31,490  
And we see huge formations of  
bombers, which we concluded

251  
00:13:31,490 --> 00:13:33,620  
couldn't be anything  
but the Allied

252  
00:13:33,620 --> 00:13:37,560  
because the Germans didn't  
have very much of an air force.

253  
00:13:37,560 --> 00:13:42,310  
And I think in retrospect,  
because I can tell you

254  
00:13:42,310 --> 00:13:44,650  
the direction which  
they were flying,

255  
00:13:44,650 --> 00:13:49,360

namely northeastern,  
they probably

256  
00:13:49,360 --> 00:13:52,840  
were coming from  
Italy to bomb the oil

257  
00:13:52,840 --> 00:13:55,510  
fields in Ploiesti in Romania.

258  
00:13:55,510 --> 00:13:58,000  
So you know, we could  
almost-- kind of a thing

259  
00:13:58,000 --> 00:14:03,070  
that we all three of us looked  
up and sort of begged that they

260  
00:14:03,070 --> 00:14:06,080  
would come for us very quickly.

261  
00:14:06,080 --> 00:14:14,170  
So after the second week there,  
we concluded that we were not

262  
00:14:14,170 --> 00:14:16,060  
going to get  
anywhere, especially

263  
00:14:16,060 --> 00:14:19,000  
now since the ground  
was covered with snow,

264  
00:14:19,000 --> 00:14:22,630  
even if things had changed,  
the attitude had changed.

265  
00:14:22,630 --> 00:14:26,980  
So I had lost, also, a sense of  
orientation of where we were.

266  
00:14:26,980 --> 00:14:29,530  
Where is the nearest

partisan unit?

267

00:14:29,530 --> 00:14:32,940

We had been on the road  
for practically a month.

268

00:14:32,940 --> 00:14:35,760

So I was told, and we were  
pointed to some direction.

269

00:14:35,760 --> 00:14:39,130

And we got there.

270

00:14:39,130 --> 00:14:47,290

And the first person I saw  
was Saby, Shabetai my friend

271

00:14:47,290 --> 00:14:51,520

and neighbor from our  
apartment in Athens.

272

00:14:51,520 --> 00:14:52,330

I approached him.

273

00:14:52,330 --> 00:14:53,050

I addressed him.

274

00:14:53,050 --> 00:14:55,130

He turn and says, who are you?

275

00:14:55,130 --> 00:15:01,230

And when I told him, he was,  
you know, horrified, dismayed.

276

00:15:01,230 --> 00:15:07,950

I must have been filthy in  
rags, you know, uncombed,

277

00:15:07,950 --> 00:15:12,840

literally dirty because we had  
no means of bathing, washing,

278



00:15:12,840 --> 00:15:17,520  
or anything like that, as  
well as, of course, hungry.

279  
00:15:17,520 --> 00:15:22,980  
But so that was  
regimental headquarters.

280  
00:15:22,980 --> 00:15:28,410  
And that's the unit  
I then became part

281  
00:15:28,410 --> 00:15:30,150  
of for the remaining of my--

282  
00:15:30,150 --> 00:15:31,613  
And he was part of that unit--

283  
00:15:31,613 --> 00:15:32,280  
No, no, he was--

284  
00:15:32,280 --> 00:15:32,780

285  
00:15:32,780 --> 00:15:34,830  
Saby told me very quickly.

286  
00:15:34,830 --> 00:15:38,760  
Saby he was a very  
clever fellow.

287  
00:15:38,760 --> 00:15:40,930  
But he didn't have any  
training like I did.

288  
00:15:40,930 --> 00:15:44,130  
He was two years older.

289  
00:15:44,130 --> 00:15:46,296  
He became a spy.

290  
00:15:46,296 --> 00:15:51,480

And it was-- he would  
go to Trikala, wearing

291  
00:15:51,480 --> 00:15:55,590  
decent civilian clothes.

292  
00:15:55,590 --> 00:16:00,300  
And I guess there must  
have been contacts.

293  
00:16:00,300 --> 00:16:01,590  
And he would stay with them.

294  
00:16:01,590 --> 00:16:07,770  
But he would-- the spy part was  
to try to find out movements.

295  
00:16:07,770 --> 00:16:14,580  
Are there convoys of trucks or  
is there a train that's coming,

296  
00:16:14,580 --> 00:16:17,940  
passing that's laden?

297  
00:16:17,940 --> 00:16:20,310  
So that if there  
would be any action

298  
00:16:20,310 --> 00:16:23,280  
to be taken against  
either a convoy of trucks,

299  
00:16:23,280 --> 00:16:27,240  
or it blow up a train,  
although the British

300  
00:16:27,240 --> 00:16:31,350  
had much greater network  
of intelligence in Greece.

301  
00:16:31,350 --> 00:16:34,530  
And all the major actions  
that took place was always

302  
00:16:34,530 --> 00:16:37,140  
because the British knew.

303  
00:16:37,140 --> 00:16:41,970  
And then they would  
agree with the guerrillas

304  
00:16:41,970 --> 00:16:45,095  
to blow up a train or to destroy  
a bridge, the [INAUDIBLE],,

305  
00:16:45,095 --> 00:16:48,900  
but the most major  
action was done

306  
00:16:48,900 --> 00:16:50,580  
at the request of the British.

307  
00:16:50,580 --> 00:16:53,700  
And a big viaduct was blown up.

308  
00:16:53,700 --> 00:16:58,370  
It was quite a few  
months before my arrival.

309  
00:16:58,370 --> 00:17:00,590  
During my time, there  
were two actions

310  
00:17:00,590 --> 00:17:03,530  
of blowing up  
bridges in the area

311  
00:17:03,530 --> 00:17:05,780  
where my regiment operated.

312  
00:17:05,780 --> 00:17:08,980  
I was not involved in that.

313  
00:17:08,980 --> 00:17:11,500  
So when you-- do

you end up being

314  
00:17:11,500 --> 00:17:13,119  
able to take a  
shower or something?

315  
00:17:13,119 --> 00:17:15,170  
Eventually, yes, I took a bath.

316  
00:17:15,170 --> 00:17:17,260  
There were no showers, a bath.

317  
00:17:17,260 --> 00:17:22,679  
And given-- actually,  
the pants I had--

318  
00:17:22,679 --> 00:17:27,069  
and then, I had lost my  
shoes because in fording up

319  
00:17:27,069 --> 00:17:32,740  
one of the rivers, I was  
told by a partisan, which

320  
00:17:32,740 --> 00:17:35,710  
is true in all armies, that when  
you are going to cross a river,

321  
00:17:35,710 --> 00:17:39,310  
tie the shoelaces and  
tie them around the rifle

322  
00:17:39,310 --> 00:17:41,230  
and hold them like that.

323  
00:17:41,230 --> 00:17:42,220  
So I don't know.

324  
00:17:42,220 --> 00:17:44,380  
Maybe I didn't tie  
them well enough.

325

00:17:44,380 --> 00:17:46,370  
And we're in the middle  
of this little rivulet,

326  
00:17:46,370 --> 00:17:47,530  
this little stream.

327  
00:17:47,530 --> 00:17:49,300  
But it's quite swift.

328  
00:17:49,300 --> 00:17:51,655  
And one of the shoes falls.

329  
00:17:51,655 --> 00:17:54,910  
And I see them  
disappearing down.

330  
00:17:54,910 --> 00:17:57,650  
And it's going too fast  
for me to do anything.

331  
00:17:57,650 --> 00:18:00,100  
So I was left with one shoe.

332  
00:18:00,100 --> 00:18:02,470  
So I thought, I'll  
wear only one shoe.

333  
00:18:02,470 --> 00:18:06,340  
But it's bad because then  
you begin to hurt all over.

334  
00:18:06,340 --> 00:18:07,720  
So I threw the other one out.

335  
00:18:07,720 --> 00:18:12,130  
And I was barefoot all of this  
time in the snow and so forth.

336  
00:18:12,130 --> 00:18:14,560  
I was totally barefoot.

337

00:18:14,560 --> 00:18:18,700  
But the pants survived  
after my return,

338  
00:18:18,700 --> 00:18:22,510  
after they were  
washed by a villager.

339  
00:18:22,510 --> 00:18:28,000  
And I was given a  
tunic, the top, a tunic,

340  
00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:32,800  
an Italian soldier's  
tunic, but no shoes.

341  
00:18:32,800 --> 00:18:38,520  
But a villager gave  
me a pigskin shoes.

342  
00:18:38,520 --> 00:18:41,950  
It's just a piece of pigskin  
which is then pierced and tied

343  
00:18:41,950 --> 00:18:44,260  
with string, which is all right.

344  
00:18:44,260 --> 00:18:48,050  
It's like a ballet slipper  
that you use, which is fine.

345  
00:18:48,050 --> 00:18:51,710  
But two weeks later,  
when I was asleep,

346  
00:18:51,710 --> 00:18:57,370  
a dog ate one of the shoes  
because it was food for them.

347  
00:18:57,370 --> 00:18:59,650  
So did you get  
frostbite on your feet?

348

00:18:59,650 --> 00:19:01,360  
Fortunately not.

349  
00:19:01,360 --> 00:19:04,000  
The feet would get  
very, very cold.

350  
00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:10,770  
And the Italians, maybe  
they had been taught

351  
00:19:10,770 --> 00:19:14,220  
or they knew, they were much,  
of course, older than I am,

352  
00:19:14,220 --> 00:19:15,825  
to rub them with snow.

353  
00:19:15,825 --> 00:19:18,170  
And if you do that--

354  
00:19:18,170 --> 00:19:20,670  
I don't think it's rubbing with  
snow, but rubbing them fast,

355  
00:19:20,670 --> 00:19:23,500  
it just restores the  
blood circulation.

356  
00:19:23,500 --> 00:19:25,850  
This is what you  
have to make sure.

357  
00:19:25,850 --> 00:19:27,750  
Fortunately I didn't  
get frostbite.

358  
00:19:27,750 --> 00:19:32,100  
But three weeks after my  
arrival at headquarters,

359  
00:19:32,100 --> 00:19:37,350  
I got pleurisy, a very bad cold.

360  
00:19:37,350 --> 00:19:42,840  
I mean, a little bit of fluid  
collects in the pleura, not

361  
00:19:42,840 --> 00:19:46,170  
the lungs, but in the pleura.

362  
00:19:46,170 --> 00:19:51,470  
But there was a little infirmary  
and had an Italian doctor.

363  
00:19:51,470 --> 00:19:52,820  
I can still remember him.

364  
00:19:52,820 --> 00:19:58,630  
He was a short, very  
intelligent looking Sicilian.

365  
00:19:58,630 --> 00:20:02,720  
He was almost entirely  
black, so brown skin,

366  
00:20:02,720 --> 00:20:05,570  
but very, very  
capable, very clever,

367  
00:20:05,570 --> 00:20:07,970  
with practically he  
had no facilities,

368  
00:20:07,970 --> 00:20:09,315  
but took care of his patients.

369  
00:20:09,315 --> 00:20:12,015

370  
00:20:12,015 --> 00:20:14,300  
Did he misdiagnose what  
was wrong with you?

371  
00:20:14,300 --> 00:20:15,290



No, no, no, no, no, no.

372  
00:20:15,290 --> 00:20:15,790  
No.

373  
00:20:15,790 --> 00:20:18,120  
No, no, everything was fine.

374  
00:20:18,120 --> 00:20:19,620  
And what did they  
give you for this?

375  
00:20:19,620 --> 00:20:23,610  
Nothing, just  
simply to be covered

376  
00:20:23,610 --> 00:20:26,880  
with additional blankets.

377  
00:20:26,880 --> 00:20:28,770  
There were no  
medicines to be had.

378  
00:20:28,770 --> 00:20:32,370  
Sulfa was beginning to  
be known at that time.

379  
00:20:32,370 --> 00:20:35,970  
And of course, they were  
equipped in their own army,

380  
00:20:35,970 --> 00:20:38,235  
but we didn't have  
such supplies.

381  
00:20:38,235 --> 00:20:42,370

382  
00:20:42,370 --> 00:20:44,400  
So you were sick, what,  
for a week, 10 days,

383

00:20:44,400 --> 00:20:45,250  
something like that?

384  
00:20:45,250 --> 00:20:45,750  
Yes.

385  
00:20:45,750 --> 00:20:50,790  
Unfortunately, behind, it  
was in an abandoned church,

386  
00:20:50,790 --> 00:20:57,870  
an old church, so looking out  
of the window was the cemetery.

387  
00:20:57,870 --> 00:21:01,860  
And I remember another fellow  
patient and I were talking.

388  
00:21:01,860 --> 00:21:04,000  
And we were thinking,  
well, OK, they

389  
00:21:04,000 --> 00:21:09,760  
won't have very far to travel  
if we have to end up there.

390  
00:21:09,760 --> 00:21:11,650  
So you get another job--

391  
00:21:11,650 --> 00:21:12,150  
Yes.

392  
00:21:12,150 --> 00:21:13,500  
--after you get sick?

393  
00:21:13,500 --> 00:21:16,350  
After I got sick and  
recovered, I was--

394  
00:21:16,350 --> 00:21:19,530  
because by that time, there  
was also another transformation

395

00:21:19,530 --> 00:21:24,375

that had taken place a few  
months before my arrival

396

00:21:24,375 --> 00:21:25,350

in the partisans.

397

00:21:25,350 --> 00:21:28,740

Namely, the partisans  
became organized

398

00:21:28,740 --> 00:21:36,810

as a modern army with echelons,  
distinct divisions, regiments,

399

00:21:36,810 --> 00:21:41,460

battalions, companies, at  
least on paper, all right?

400

00:21:41,460 --> 00:21:46,180

And whereas before these were  
independent units marauding,

401

00:21:46,180 --> 00:21:49,030

doing whatever they could.

402

00:21:49,030 --> 00:21:52,840

But this was put on a much  
more professional footing

403

00:21:52,840 --> 00:21:57,790

because by that time, the man  
in command of the entire ELAS

404

00:21:57,790 --> 00:22:02,530

was General Sarafis, who was a  
professional military officer

405

00:22:02,530 --> 00:22:04,270

before the war.

406

00:22:04,270 --> 00:22:07,800

So when I then was  
assigned to the regiment,

407  
00:22:07,800 --> 00:22:14,370  
now, the regimental commander  
was a man whose permanent rank

408  
00:22:14,370 --> 00:22:18,710  
was a major in the former Greek  
Army by the name of Karfis.

409  
00:22:18,710 --> 00:22:21,560  
And he happened to  
have as an adjutant

410  
00:22:21,560 --> 00:22:26,420  
a recent graduate of the  
Greek Military Academy.

411  
00:22:26,420 --> 00:22:30,410  
So he was the usual,  
not spit and polish

412  
00:22:30,410 --> 00:22:32,270  
because we didn't have  
the things for that,

413  
00:22:32,270 --> 00:22:36,560  
but saluting, although there  
wasn't so much saluting

414  
00:22:36,560 --> 00:22:38,000  
the partisans, you know.

415  
00:22:38,000 --> 00:22:42,380  
The method of addressing each  
other was [NON-ENGLISH] which

416  
00:22:42,380 --> 00:22:45,680  
means fellow fighter.

417  
00:22:45,680 --> 00:22:46,490  
It wasn't comrade.

418  
00:22:46,490 --> 00:22:47,675  
It wasn't mister.

419  
00:22:47,675 --> 00:22:52,520  
It was even with an  
officer of superior rank,

420  
00:22:52,520 --> 00:22:57,890  
you would address him as fellow  
fighter and then his name.

421  
00:22:57,890 --> 00:23:03,530  
So because I think of the fact  
that my background, finishing

422  
00:23:03,530 --> 00:23:07,700  
high school, command  
of the language,

423  
00:23:07,700 --> 00:23:14,480  
and so forth, I was given  
a clerical job, primarily

424  
00:23:14,480 --> 00:23:21,130  
encipherment, codes,  
because by that time,

425  
00:23:21,130 --> 00:23:25,270  
there were even radios,  
and nearby, because very

426  
00:23:25,270 --> 00:23:30,230  
near the regimental place  
there was the airfield,

427  
00:23:30,230 --> 00:23:31,390  
if I can call it that.

428  
00:23:31,390 --> 00:23:33,700  
It was just a bare  
piece of ground.

429

00:23:33,700 --> 00:23:36,992

But it was situated in a  
natural plateau, the one

430

00:23:36,992 --> 00:23:37,950

that I fired, remember?

431

00:23:37,950 --> 00:23:39,970

Yes.

432

00:23:39,970 --> 00:23:41,440

My first rifle.

433

00:23:41,440 --> 00:23:48,150

And in the summer months  
when the land was dry then

434

00:23:48,150 --> 00:23:51,090

it was able to support  
the weight of an aircraft.

435

00:23:51,090 --> 00:23:57,030

And they would fly them over  
there from Egypt for missions

436

00:23:57,030 --> 00:23:58,440

back and forth.

437

00:23:58,440 --> 00:24:01,170

And because of the  
proximity, then there

438

00:24:01,170 --> 00:24:06,330

was a permanent detachment  
of British officers, liaison

439

00:24:06,330 --> 00:24:08,820

officers, that had been  
parachuted or brought

440

00:24:08,820 --> 00:24:12,630

by aircraft next to our

regimental headquarters.

441

00:24:12,630 --> 00:24:16,590

So at times I would  
then be asked to go.

442

00:24:16,590 --> 00:24:18,030

I do not know English.

443

00:24:18,030 --> 00:24:21,750

But some of them, some of the  
English officers, knew French.

444

00:24:21,750 --> 00:24:24,510

And I was able to converse.

445

00:24:24,510 --> 00:24:28,810

Plus they were the only ones  
that had long range shortwave

446

00:24:28,810 --> 00:24:29,310

radios.

447

00:24:29,310 --> 00:24:32,650

448

00:24:32,650 --> 00:24:36,610

I mean, the partisans  
only division had a radio.

449

00:24:36,610 --> 00:24:38,140

And in our  
headquarters, we didn't

450

00:24:38,140 --> 00:24:40,240

have a radio in the beginning.

451

00:24:40,240 --> 00:24:44,610

So everything had to be  
through, again, field telephony.

452

00:24:44,610 --> 00:24:50,040

But by then, it was necessary  
because of certain engagements

453  
00:24:50,040 --> 00:24:52,660  
to encode messages.

454  
00:24:52,660 --> 00:24:55,890  
And so I was  
pressed in that job.

455  
00:24:55,890 --> 00:24:57,060  
Did you like that job?

456  
00:24:57,060 --> 00:24:59,260  
Was it interesting?

457  
00:24:59,260 --> 00:25:02,600  
Well, you know, no clerical  
job is interesting.

458  
00:25:02,600 --> 00:25:04,300  
Everything becomes  
routine a little bit.

459  
00:25:04,300 --> 00:25:07,060  
But it was-- the  
thing that amazed

460  
00:25:07,060 --> 00:25:09,470  
me is that after  
a while, I didn't

461  
00:25:09,470 --> 00:25:14,970  
have to look at the decoding  
book to decode text.

462  
00:25:14,970 --> 00:25:18,650  
I had begun to  
learn and visualize

463  
00:25:18,650 --> 00:25:22,420  
the decipherment, the  
decipherment, if you will.



464  
00:25:22,420 --> 00:25:28,580  
But I didn't want people  
to see that because I

465  
00:25:28,580 --> 00:25:33,830  
was told that if you  
eventually memorize it, then

466  
00:25:33,830 --> 00:25:37,700  
if you are ever caught,  
then under torture

467  
00:25:37,700 --> 00:25:38,780  
you may reveal the codes.

468  
00:25:38,780 --> 00:25:40,460  
Although, I'm sure  
that the things

469  
00:25:40,460 --> 00:25:42,690  
that they had to  
communicate were not

470  
00:25:42,690 --> 00:25:46,400  
of momentous,  
strategic importance.

471  
00:25:46,400 --> 00:25:48,530  
But they would also  
change the codes.

472  
00:25:48,530 --> 00:25:50,780  
Yeah, but you do that--

473  
00:25:50,780 --> 00:25:54,650  
we didn't have-- in all that--

474  
00:25:54,650 --> 00:25:57,335  
I'm talking about  
practically from February

475

00:25:57,335 --> 00:25:59,450  
through November,  
practically the nine

476  
00:25:59,450 --> 00:26:07,400  
months that my remaining stay  
with the partisans service.

477  
00:26:07,400 --> 00:26:11,710  
We change codes  
routinely only twice.

478  
00:26:11,710 --> 00:26:13,460  
So there wasn't that  
kind of a [INAUDIBLE]

479  
00:26:13,460 --> 00:26:17,350  
because I don't think they  
were high level codes.

480  
00:26:17,350 --> 00:26:19,340  
But they were important to us.

481  
00:26:19,340 --> 00:26:22,830  
Well, that was not the  
only thing I had to do.

482  
00:26:22,830 --> 00:26:28,390  
Then the adjutant  
orders had to be typed.

483  
00:26:28,390 --> 00:26:31,540  
We found a ramshackle  
typewriter and some paper.

484  
00:26:31,540 --> 00:26:33,490  
I was the only one  
who was able to use

485  
00:26:33,490 --> 00:26:36,550  
that and type some orders.

486  
00:26:36,550 --> 00:26:38,556

So you had learned typing?

487

00:26:38,556 --> 00:26:39,270

Sort of?

488

00:26:39,270 --> 00:26:42,100

Sort of-- [LAUGHS] more

the two or three fingers,

489

00:26:42,100 --> 00:26:43,710

which I still have to this day.

490

00:26:43,710 --> 00:26:46,970

491

00:26:46,970 --> 00:26:50,240

So how are things now?

492

00:26:50,240 --> 00:26:53,030

Is this unit now going  
out and doing sabotage?

493

00:26:53,030 --> 00:26:55,230

Or is it quiet and that's  
not what you're doing--

494

00:26:55,230 --> 00:26:56,270

No, no.

495

00:26:56,270 --> 00:26:59,090

Again, because it was  
regimental headquarters-- now,

496

00:26:59,090 --> 00:27:01,430

it's fighting units.

497

00:27:01,430 --> 00:27:03,950

Sabotage are in the region.

498

00:27:03,950 --> 00:27:06,860

I mean, if I drew a  
circle, it would probably

499

00:27:06,860 --> 00:27:11,420  
cover a radius of  
50, 60 kilometers,

500

00:27:11,420 --> 00:27:17,200  
or 40 miles because then  
we are adjacent to it.

501

00:27:17,200 --> 00:27:23,500  
By that time, in the  
beginning of the partisan war,

502

00:27:23,500 --> 00:27:26,270  
the major things that  
the partisans had to do,

503

00:27:26,270 --> 00:27:36,690  
ordered to do, was a kill  
known collaborators primarily

504

00:27:36,690 --> 00:27:41,040  
to elevate the  
morale of the people,

505

00:27:41,040 --> 00:27:44,640  
to begin to give them a sense  
that there are people who

506

00:27:44,640 --> 00:27:48,720  
are protecting them, that those  
who collaborate with the enemy

507

00:27:48,720 --> 00:27:52,905  
are going to get  
their just desserts.

508

00:27:52,905 --> 00:27:57,880  
And because you cannot  
fight heavy engagements,

509

00:27:57,880 --> 00:28:05,310  
there were occasional skirmishes

and attacks with isolated

510

00:28:05,310 --> 00:28:07,650

Italian or German units.

511

00:28:07,650 --> 00:28:13,660

But in our sector, then we  
began to do a systematic thing

512

00:28:13,660 --> 00:28:16,900

of attacking convoys  
because our unit

513

00:28:16,900 --> 00:28:21,070

was the nearest to  
the main road that

514

00:28:21,070 --> 00:28:25,272

goes from Trikala to eventually  
Karditsa, and then Lamia

515

00:28:25,272 --> 00:28:27,460

and so forth to  
south part of Greece.

516

00:28:27,460 --> 00:28:33,520

So that was essentially the  
mission, if I can call it,

517

00:28:33,520 --> 00:28:34,240

of the regiment.

518

00:28:34,240 --> 00:28:36,250

We never got engaged.

519

00:28:36,250 --> 00:28:38,800

You don't do that with  
the light weapons.

520

00:28:38,800 --> 00:28:42,130

The heaviest weapon I remember  
we had in the whole regiment

521

00:28:42,130 --> 00:28:45,100  
was two heavy machine guns.

522

00:28:45,100 --> 00:28:50,710  
You can't engage an enemy that  
has armored units with two

523

00:28:50,710 --> 00:28:52,270  
heavy machine guns.

524

00:28:52,270 --> 00:28:54,070  
OK, we've come to  
the end of the tape.

525

00:28:54,070 --> 00:28:55,920  
All right.

526

00:28:55,920 --> 00:29:09,000