

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:08,580

2

00:00:08,580 --> 00:00:12,780

Isaac, what is-- are you  
getting news about the front?

3

00:00:12,780 --> 00:00:16,710

I mean, clearly there's  
a turn in the war

4

00:00:16,710 --> 00:00:22,260

and there's been a turning  
war since '43 or late '42.

5

00:00:22,260 --> 00:00:23,370

Right.

6

00:00:23,370 --> 00:00:30,960

Well, most of the spring,  
we knew, first of all,

7

00:00:30,960 --> 00:00:36,360

to ask through the British  
connection, primarily, as well

8

00:00:36,360 --> 00:00:40,050

as independently the  
Greek connections,

9

00:00:40,050 --> 00:00:46,770

because the division  
talked to the agents Athens

10

00:00:46,770 --> 00:00:50,580

or the top command of Allies.

11

00:00:50,580 --> 00:00:54,100

But it would come to us  
two or three weeks late.

12

00:00:54,100 --> 00:00:58,680  
So it primarily still involves  
the campaign in Italy.

13  
00:00:58,680 --> 00:01:07,230  
The great event occurs June  
6, when Normandy occurs.

14  
00:01:07,230 --> 00:01:10,155  
We would get also news  
of the Eastern Front.

15  
00:01:10,155 --> 00:01:12,790

16  
00:01:12,790 --> 00:01:17,650  
Well, that was the  
first major event

17  
00:01:17,650 --> 00:01:21,820  
that really didn't have  
an immediate effect,

18  
00:01:21,820 --> 00:01:26,650  
other than psychological,  
but now these two great parts

19  
00:01:26,650 --> 00:01:30,100  
of the Allies are converging.

20  
00:01:30,100 --> 00:01:37,040  
But I think through the  
stream of messages coming

21  
00:01:37,040 --> 00:01:42,110  
from division and from  
Allies' headquarters

22  
00:01:42,110 --> 00:01:48,150  
definitely show an increase  
in the pace of operations

23  
00:01:48,150 --> 00:01:49,630

for two reasons.

24

00:01:49,630 --> 00:01:55,380

First of all, visibly,  
from reports, Germans

25

00:01:55,380 --> 00:02:01,260

are abandoning smaller  
towns and concentrating

26

00:02:01,260 --> 00:02:02,470

in major arteries.

27

00:02:02,470 --> 00:02:06,360

Now, why would they  
do that, since nobody

28

00:02:06,360 --> 00:02:10,050

thought that Greece  
itself was about to be

29

00:02:10,050 --> 00:02:15,190

invaded by Allied troops?

30

00:02:15,190 --> 00:02:20,200

So that was one reason.

31

00:02:20,200 --> 00:02:26,050

Then also, the news began  
to trickle down again.

32

00:02:26,050 --> 00:02:30,580

We had more contact,  
even, from Tito partisans

33

00:02:30,580 --> 00:02:32,900

who have much better  
communications.

34

00:02:32,900 --> 00:02:37,300

And already, we began to  
see that the Russians are

35

00:02:37,300 --> 00:02:42,070  
approaching the southern part  
of Europe, namely the Balkans.

36

00:02:42,070 --> 00:02:46,570  
And it doesn't take a  
strategic Napoleonic mind.

37

00:02:46,570 --> 00:02:49,600  
A short look at  
the map indicates

38

00:02:49,600 --> 00:02:54,790  
that because Greece is  
almost like a peninsula

39

00:02:54,790 --> 00:02:59,320  
at the bottom of the Balkans,  
if the Russians were advancing

40

00:02:59,320 --> 00:03:01,390  
that much, I think  
eventually what

41

00:03:01,390 --> 00:03:02,830  
happened is that  
the Germans would

42

00:03:02,830 --> 00:03:04,600  
have an untenable  
position in Greece.

43

00:03:04,600 --> 00:03:09,730  
So this explains why the Germans  
were consolidating their lines.

44

00:03:09,730 --> 00:03:14,620  
And because in the  
meantime, attempts

45

00:03:14,620 --> 00:03:18,940  
are being made by  
the British mission

46  
00:03:18,940 --> 00:03:22,990  
to try to unite the  
warring factions

47  
00:03:22,990 --> 00:03:24,310  
of the Greek resistance.

48  
00:03:24,310 --> 00:03:28,990  
And eventually, in  
June or July of '44,

49  
00:03:28,990 --> 00:03:32,080  
there was a signed  
agreement that

50  
00:03:32,080 --> 00:03:35,320  
was signed by representatives  
in the Middle East in Lebanon,

51  
00:03:35,320 --> 00:03:43,170  
I believe, Beirut, which then  
held until the end of the war.

52  
00:03:43,170 --> 00:03:44,970  
So we had this pace going on.

53  
00:03:44,970 --> 00:03:50,700  
But again, the day  
to day life for us,

54  
00:03:50,700 --> 00:03:55,380  
food was very scarce, as usual.

55  
00:03:55,380 --> 00:03:57,500  
Although it was  
regimental headquarters,

56  
00:03:57,500 --> 00:04:01,320  
we didn't crops or other food.

57  
00:04:01,320 --> 00:04:05,880

Also, clothing and sanitary  
conditions were not--

58  
00:04:05,880 --> 00:04:08,430  
I mean, if you went to  
sleep at night, especially

59  
00:04:08,430 --> 00:04:12,790  
in the winter, well, in  
the middle of the night,

60  
00:04:12,790 --> 00:04:13,690  
people are getting--

61  
00:04:13,690 --> 00:04:14,690  
they sleep on the floor.

62  
00:04:14,690 --> 00:04:17,680  
People are getting up and  
stepping more sometimes

63  
00:04:17,680 --> 00:04:21,910  
on the bodies, make their  
way to go out, maybe

64  
00:04:21,910 --> 00:04:24,200  
to relieve themselves.

65  
00:04:24,200 --> 00:04:26,720  
But very often, it was  
not for that reason.

66  
00:04:26,720 --> 00:04:30,470  
You would go up  
and open the tunic

67  
00:04:30,470 --> 00:04:34,250  
to let the cold air come  
in to quiet the lice,

68  
00:04:34,250 --> 00:04:38,210  
because in sleeping  
bodies next to each other,

69  
00:04:38,210 --> 00:04:39,780  
the lice begin to get warm.

70  
00:04:39,780 --> 00:04:42,800  
They began to move.

71  
00:04:42,800 --> 00:04:46,310  
And it's not  
particularly pleasant.

72  
00:04:46,310 --> 00:04:49,820  
And to quiet them again, you  
go out and open the tunic,

73  
00:04:49,820 --> 00:04:53,060  
let the cold in,  
and they're quiet,

74  
00:04:53,060 --> 00:04:56,090  
letting you sleep for  
another hour or two.

75  
00:04:56,090 --> 00:05:01,760  
This persisted until  
when you became real warm

76  
00:05:01,760 --> 00:05:07,920  
in the mountains, late June  
and on, because then you

77  
00:05:07,920 --> 00:05:10,110  
could go bathe in the streams.

78  
00:05:10,110 --> 00:05:13,410  
And that's what-- we used  
to do that every day.

79  
00:05:13,410 --> 00:05:16,410  
And at times, in  
effect, it eventually

80

00:05:16,410 --> 00:05:20,940  
happened to me later on  
a month or two later.

81  
00:05:20,940 --> 00:05:24,960  
When I went swimming, I had  
been perspiring, running

82  
00:05:24,960 --> 00:05:27,060  
to get to the place  
to swim, and I

83  
00:05:27,060 --> 00:05:29,520  
must have caught a cold,  
which was then misdiagnosed

84  
00:05:29,520 --> 00:05:32,920  
as malaria and other problems.

85  
00:05:32,920 --> 00:05:37,900  
But this was-- the pace  
noticeably started.

86  
00:05:37,900 --> 00:05:40,540  
There were more  
action from our units

87  
00:05:40,540 --> 00:05:45,970  
in the periphery, plus  
the clear indication,

88  
00:05:45,970 --> 00:05:47,710  
whether they had come  
from headquarters

89  
00:05:47,710 --> 00:05:51,370  
in the Middle East or  
from Allies headquarters,

90  
00:05:51,370 --> 00:05:56,230  
to harass Germans,  
even notably those

91



00:05:56,230 --> 00:05:58,690  
who were retreating  
and going North,

92  
00:05:58,690 --> 00:06:04,450  
but not to attempt  
any major action,

93  
00:06:04,450 --> 00:06:06,340  
even if we were  
able to, the reason

94  
00:06:06,340 --> 00:06:10,300  
being that they didn't  
want to infuriate

95  
00:06:10,300 --> 00:06:13,310  
the Germans because they  
have to infuriate them,

96  
00:06:13,310 --> 00:06:16,510  
they were doing that anyhow  
in many places, namely

97  
00:06:16,510 --> 00:06:18,260  
a scorched earth policy.

98  
00:06:18,260 --> 00:06:22,180  
They attempted to blow up the  
port facilities in Piraeus,

99  
00:06:22,180 --> 00:06:24,610  
and it was only a  
last minute action

100  
00:06:24,610 --> 00:06:28,060  
by the partisans  
in the city that

101  
00:06:28,060 --> 00:06:32,230  
averted the blowing up of  
port facilities in Piraeus.

102

00:06:32,230 --> 00:06:37,980

So noticeably, we saw  
the pace accelerate.

103

00:06:37,980 --> 00:06:40,410

Did you want to join them?

104

00:06:40,410 --> 00:06:40,910

I?

105

00:06:40,910 --> 00:06:41,410

106

00:06:41,410 --> 00:06:43,280

Yes.

107

00:06:43,280 --> 00:06:44,645

I hadn't seen any action.

108

00:06:44,645 --> 00:06:48,150

The only action I saw  
was a month later.

109

00:06:48,150 --> 00:06:50,840

It came inadvertently.

110

00:06:50,840 --> 00:06:53,880

I don't think I had--

111

00:06:53,880 --> 00:06:57,570

I knew that-- it wasn't because  
of the roughness or the danger,

112

00:06:57,570 --> 00:07:00,150

but that really I  
had no experience.

113

00:07:00,150 --> 00:07:04,170

And I had seen enough of  
what had been going on

114

00:07:04,170 --> 00:07:08,340

to know that I should  
not be entrusted

115  
00:07:08,340 --> 00:07:12,760  
with lack of appropriate  
training or anything major.

116  
00:07:12,760 --> 00:07:13,960  
Let me go back for a moment.

117  
00:07:13,960 --> 00:07:16,840  
There wasn't that  
much food, but you all

118  
00:07:16,840 --> 00:07:18,820  
were smoking cigarettes, which--

119  
00:07:18,820 --> 00:07:23,633  
Well, food was always,  
I think, once a day.

120  
00:07:23,633 --> 00:07:26,050  
And most of the time, because  
that was what was available,

121  
00:07:26,050 --> 00:07:29,200  
were I still remember  
the black eye--

122  
00:07:29,200 --> 00:07:32,830  
they look like black eyed  
peas, or black eyed beans.

123  
00:07:32,830 --> 00:07:36,970  
But these were from old,  
even sometimes abandoned

124  
00:07:36,970 --> 00:07:39,910  
governmental warehouses.

125  
00:07:39,910 --> 00:07:42,400  
The villagers would  
make flour available,

126  
00:07:42,400 --> 00:07:45,140  
whatever they were able to do.

127  
00:07:45,140 --> 00:07:49,570  
And those things were  
usually spoiled, rotten,

128  
00:07:49,570 --> 00:07:53,330  
you find little crawling worms  
inside, but not after boiling.

129  
00:07:53,330 --> 00:07:55,600  
We used to joke that  
we would eat meat also

130  
00:07:55,600 --> 00:07:57,685  
while eating the beans.

131  
00:07:57,685 --> 00:08:00,730

132  
00:08:00,730 --> 00:08:08,720  
But again, relief would come  
from hunger in the summertime,

133  
00:08:08,720 --> 00:08:12,422  
then, because of vegetables and  
the availability of vegetables.

134  
00:08:12,422 --> 00:08:16,580

135  
00:08:16,580 --> 00:08:18,500  
I forgot what you asked me.

136  
00:08:18,500 --> 00:08:20,030  
I was asking about cigarettes.

137  
00:08:20,030 --> 00:08:20,780  
Oh, yeah, yeah.

138

00:08:20,780 --> 00:08:23,390

Well, the only way  
to relieve hunger--

139

00:08:23,390 --> 00:08:26,240

and that's where  
I learn to smoke.

140

00:08:26,240 --> 00:08:27,365

But we didn't have tobacco.

141

00:08:27,365 --> 00:08:30,070

142

00:08:30,070 --> 00:08:33,730

So you would take  
leaves from trees

143

00:08:33,730 --> 00:08:38,140

and dry them and crunch  
them, and usually find

144

00:08:38,140 --> 00:08:40,720

a piece of newspaper.

145

00:08:40,720 --> 00:08:44,830

In the area where we were,  
a government warehouse

146

00:08:44,830 --> 00:08:48,790

had been raided and  
tons, literally tons

147

00:08:48,790 --> 00:08:54,050

of contraband  
cigarette paper, which

148

00:08:54,050 --> 00:08:57,410

was used to be sold  
legally to roll cigarettes,

149

00:08:57,410 --> 00:08:59,000

had been found.

150

00:08:59,000 --> 00:09:03,140

But because it had been  
contraband, It was so massive,

151

00:09:03,140 --> 00:09:04,880

you cannot burn paper so easily.

152

00:09:04,880 --> 00:09:07,520

As you know, even in a  
fireplace, if you put a book,

153

00:09:07,520 --> 00:09:09,200

it takes--

154

00:09:09,200 --> 00:09:11,330

it's hard to burn it.

155

00:09:11,330 --> 00:09:15,620

So the government had  
fumigated these warehouses

156

00:09:15,620 --> 00:09:19,580

with sulfur which had  
permeated the cigarette paper.

157

00:09:19,580 --> 00:09:24,730

So if you use that, which  
was in some respects easy,

158

00:09:24,730 --> 00:09:28,400

but it stunk and smelled  
and tasted of sulfur

159

00:09:28,400 --> 00:09:31,088

so much we use newspaper.

160

00:09:31,088 --> 00:09:33,130

The problem with the  
newspaper is you take a puff

161

00:09:33,130 --> 00:09:37,395  
and it's a flame at  
the end of the thing.

162  
00:09:37,395 --> 00:09:38,770  
You think of  
burning a cigarette,

163  
00:09:38,770 --> 00:09:42,280  
with this you have  
a flame burning.

164  
00:09:42,280 --> 00:09:43,810  
And this is the reason why.

165  
00:09:43,810 --> 00:09:48,800  
It was primarily  
to assuage hunger.

166  
00:09:48,800 --> 00:09:51,290  
So it was very difficult  
to actually do that.

167  
00:09:51,290 --> 00:09:52,530  
Right, yeah, yeah.

168  
00:09:52,530 --> 00:09:55,310  
Later on, occasionally,  
somebody would find--

169  
00:09:55,310 --> 00:09:58,220  
because that region  
of Greece also

170  
00:09:58,220 --> 00:10:00,830  
is a tobacco growing region.

171  
00:10:00,830 --> 00:10:03,650  
We were able to find  
tobacco and hide it.

172  
00:10:03,650 --> 00:10:06,050  
Now, were you finding

that in the villages,

173  
00:10:06,050 --> 00:10:09,410  
in spite of your bridge  
failure, that people

174  
00:10:09,410 --> 00:10:10,850  
were supporting the partisans?

175  
00:10:10,850 --> 00:10:12,710  
Oh, yes.

176  
00:10:12,710 --> 00:10:13,610  
There is no question.

177  
00:10:13,610 --> 00:10:15,360  
Because first of all,  
there is no question

178  
00:10:15,360 --> 00:10:21,050  
that without the support  
of the people who

179  
00:10:21,050 --> 00:10:26,340  
had suffered a great deal,  
who also knew that harboring

180  
00:10:26,340 --> 00:10:33,690  
villagers really almost invited  
punitive raids by the Italians,

181  
00:10:33,690 --> 00:10:36,190  
by the Germans.

182  
00:10:36,190 --> 00:10:41,140  
And in spite of  
that, they persisted.

183  
00:10:41,140 --> 00:10:45,100  
And without them, I think,  
not only our movement,

184



00:10:45,100 --> 00:10:51,140  
I think no partisan movement  
can possibly exist, survive,

185  
00:10:51,140 --> 00:10:55,680  
let alone thrive and operate.

186  
00:10:55,680 --> 00:10:58,400  
The Italians taught you songs.

187  
00:10:58,400 --> 00:11:03,290  
And also poems and--

188  
00:11:03,290 --> 00:11:05,540  
So you have a certain  
kind of education.

189  
00:11:05,540 --> 00:11:06,890  
Sure, sure.

190  
00:11:06,890 --> 00:11:09,890  
Were their partisan  
songs that were sung?

191  
00:11:09,890 --> 00:11:14,150  
No, the only Italian or foreign  
partisan songs that I learned

192  
00:11:14,150 --> 00:11:18,170  
was from a captured  
German soldier

193  
00:11:18,170 --> 00:11:25,760  
who turned out to have been  
formerly in Nazi prisons.

194  
00:11:25,760 --> 00:11:30,440  
But as the war is progressing  
and manpower is lost,

195  
00:11:30,440 --> 00:11:33,140  
the Germans began to free--

196

00:11:33,140 --> 00:11:36,170

free-- I mean, let  
the prisoners out,

197

00:11:36,170 --> 00:11:38,030

sometimes eventually  
including criminals.

198

00:11:38,030 --> 00:11:41,210

But first, we started  
with political prisoners,

199

00:11:41,210 --> 00:11:47,530

former Communists and leftists,  
Social Democrats, you name it.

200

00:11:47,530 --> 00:11:52,270

But when they set them  
free, so to speak,

201

00:11:52,270 --> 00:11:56,020

they put them in  
special German units.

202

00:11:56,020 --> 00:11:57,370

In fact, they had a number.

203

00:11:57,370 --> 00:12:03,480

I forget if it was 888 or  
999, something like that.

204

00:12:03,480 --> 00:12:06,950

And they were never  
let in big numbers.

205

00:12:06,950 --> 00:12:10,280

They were dispersed and  
sent throughout Europe.

206

00:12:10,280 --> 00:12:14,480

And generally, they would  
be given menial or clerical

207

00:12:14,480 --> 00:12:17,090

or support jobs,  
so they were not

208

00:12:17,090 --> 00:12:23,540

in any armed way or  
possibly representing a risk

209

00:12:23,540 --> 00:12:26,870

to the other German military.

210

00:12:26,870 --> 00:12:30,080

And so he was captured--

211

00:12:30,080 --> 00:12:32,630

actually, he came  
also willingly.

212

00:12:32,630 --> 00:12:35,960

And he was acting in some  
cases as an interpreter

213

00:12:35,960 --> 00:12:39,080

when we captured others  
and interrogate them.

214

00:12:39,080 --> 00:12:42,320

And he told me  
all kinds of songs

215

00:12:42,320 --> 00:12:45,590

that were sung throughout  
Europe in French.

216

00:12:45,590 --> 00:12:48,810

I learned the  
"Internationale" in French,

217

00:12:48,810 --> 00:12:52,640

a couple of partisan  
songs in German,

218

00:12:52,640 --> 00:12:55,950  
some, lots of them in  
Italian, "Bandiera Rossa",

219  
00:12:55,950 --> 00:12:57,195  
which was "Red Flag".

220  
00:12:57,195 --> 00:12:59,945

221  
00:12:59,945 --> 00:13:02,570  
Do you ever sing any of them?

222  
00:13:02,570 --> 00:13:03,070  
No.

223  
00:13:03,070 --> 00:13:05,780  
Occasionally, I-- I wanted to--

224  
00:13:05,780 --> 00:13:10,930  
I remember many of them, not  
sometimes the complete words.

225  
00:13:10,930 --> 00:13:17,620  
And I tried to find disks.

226  
00:13:17,620 --> 00:13:22,420  
And eventually, some friend  
located, but very few

227  
00:13:22,420 --> 00:13:25,210  
were songs that I  
remembered that we sang.

228  
00:13:25,210 --> 00:13:31,210  
I think that what happened, some  
group got together and maybe

229  
00:13:31,210 --> 00:13:33,370  
officially these  
songs were recorded,

230

00:13:33,370 --> 00:13:35,870  
the songs of the resistance,  
but they were not the things

231  
00:13:35,870 --> 00:13:38,080  
that we sang every day.

232  
00:13:38,080 --> 00:13:41,550  
I have a song that I taped--

233  
00:13:41,550 --> 00:13:42,690  
Oh, the Greek resistance?

234  
00:13:42,690 --> 00:13:45,120  
Not, no it wasn't  
the Greek resistance.

235  
00:13:45,120 --> 00:13:47,310  
Although actually, I  
interviewed someone

236  
00:13:47,310 --> 00:13:50,670  
who was in the Greek  
resistance, and publicly.

237  
00:13:50,670 --> 00:13:53,940  
And he and someone in the  
audience sang one of the songs.

238  
00:13:53,940 --> 00:13:57,818  
I'll have to find it for you  
so you can hear it and see

239  
00:13:57,818 --> 00:13:58,860  
whether you recognize it.

240  
00:13:58,860 --> 00:13:59,650  
Of course.

241  
00:13:59,650 --> 00:14:02,700  
There was an Italian woman  
that I interviewed who

242

00:14:02,700 --> 00:14:04,560  
was in the Italian Resistance.

243

00:14:04,560 --> 00:14:08,040  
And she played from a  
tape one of the songs.

244

00:14:08,040 --> 00:14:09,180  
It's a wonderful song.

245

00:14:09,180 --> 00:14:12,540  
And I'll have to  
play it for you also.

246

00:14:12,540 --> 00:14:16,670  
Is there anything you could  
sing now that you remember?

247

00:14:16,670 --> 00:14:18,920  
Oh, yes.

248

00:14:18,920 --> 00:14:23,980  
I'll sing [INAUDIBLE] a whole  
stanza, but it would start.

249

00:14:23,980 --> 00:14:25,960  
[NON-ENGLISH SINGING]

250

00:14:25,960 --> 00:14:32,410

251

00:14:32,410 --> 00:14:33,370  
And it goes on.

252

00:14:33,370 --> 00:14:38,920  
And it literally means  
we are not afraid.

253

00:14:38,920 --> 00:14:49,450  
We aren't scared of German  
guns or of the fascist swords

254

00:14:49,450 --> 00:14:53,960

because we are all fighting  
for democracy and freedom.

255

00:14:53,960 --> 00:14:56,770

256

00:14:56,770 --> 00:15:01,080

Many tunes, as you  
know, they came

257

00:15:01,080 --> 00:15:04,285

from Russian partisan songs.

258

00:15:04,285 --> 00:15:07,250

259

00:15:07,250 --> 00:15:10,110

But with Greek words, yes.

260

00:15:10,110 --> 00:15:13,470

Now, it's clear that  
the war is closing,

261

00:15:13,470 --> 00:15:15,915

but there isn't an  
action that happens

262

00:15:15,915 --> 00:15:17,040

that's sort of by accident.

263

00:15:17,040 --> 00:15:17,728

Right.

264

00:15:17,728 --> 00:15:18,270

That's right.

265

00:15:18,270 --> 00:15:19,978

The only one that I  
have participated in,

266

00:15:19,978 --> 00:15:24,810  
very quickly, one morning, if I  
remember, it was close to 10:00

267  
00:15:24,810 --> 00:15:25,620  
in the morning.

268  
00:15:25,620 --> 00:15:29,430  
And I was sort of  
manning the telephone.

269  
00:15:29,430 --> 00:15:30,750  
And it rang.

270  
00:15:30,750 --> 00:15:36,790  
And they asked, at the other  
end, to speak to the colonel.

271  
00:15:36,790 --> 00:15:38,250  
But I couldn't get the colonel.

272  
00:15:38,250 --> 00:15:39,720  
And I got the adjutant.

273  
00:15:39,720 --> 00:15:43,540  
But very quickly,  
what had transpired

274  
00:15:43,540 --> 00:15:48,120  
regimental headquarters was  
in a part that was really

275  
00:15:48,120 --> 00:15:51,090  
a short distance from the  
plains of [? Thessaly ?],,

276  
00:15:51,090 --> 00:15:55,600  
but it was at  
considerable elevation.

277  
00:15:55,600 --> 00:16:03,370  
And there was a kind of like an  
entry, a pass, a mountain pass.



278  
00:16:03,370 --> 00:16:05,170  
And essentially, what  
the telephone call

279  
00:16:05,170 --> 00:16:08,590  
said is four or  
five or six German

280  
00:16:08,590 --> 00:16:10,870  
trucks had entered  
this pass, which

281  
00:16:10,870 --> 00:16:15,310  
had been manned by a very  
small unit of partisans,

282  
00:16:15,310 --> 00:16:17,910  
about five or six.

283  
00:16:17,910 --> 00:16:21,540  
And we, of course, knew  
that coming into the pass

284  
00:16:21,540 --> 00:16:24,570  
and going South  
ended in a cul-de-sac

285  
00:16:24,570 --> 00:16:27,090  
because there was  
nothing after you go on

286  
00:16:27,090 --> 00:16:30,810  
for another kilometer, just  
there was a mountain wall.

287  
00:16:30,810 --> 00:16:33,720  
So when they saw that  
happening, that's

288  
00:16:33,720 --> 00:16:35,640  
why they called to alert us.

289

00:16:35,640 --> 00:16:38,430

They were not able-- those  
who were guarding the pass--

290

00:16:38,430 --> 00:16:42,660

to engage how many  
Germans there would be.

291

00:16:42,660 --> 00:16:46,110

And the nearest unit  
of sufficient strength

292

00:16:46,110 --> 00:16:48,840

was at least three  
or four hours away.

293

00:16:48,840 --> 00:16:51,480

So very quickly, the  
commanding officer

294

00:16:51,480 --> 00:16:55,350

decided that the way to do is to  
fool the Germans into thinking

295

00:16:55,350 --> 00:16:57,510

that they are surrounded,  
that there are many

296

00:16:57,510 --> 00:17:00,670

more than actually we were.

297

00:17:00,670 --> 00:17:03,460

So he dispatched  
anybody who could walk,

298

00:17:03,460 --> 00:17:10,280

including us clerical personnel  
in the regimental unit, to go.

299

00:17:10,280 --> 00:17:11,980

So we grabbed our weapons.

300

00:17:11,980 --> 00:17:16,390  
And after running for about  
45 minutes and out of breath,

301  
00:17:16,390 --> 00:17:22,420  
you could see down in that  
cul-de-sac the Germans had

302  
00:17:22,420 --> 00:17:24,730  
literally circled the wagons.

303  
00:17:24,730 --> 00:17:27,579  
And some of them  
had gone hiding.

304  
00:17:27,579 --> 00:17:31,660  
And as they were being  
fired by the unit that

305  
00:17:31,660 --> 00:17:33,250  
was guarding the  
pass, they would

306  
00:17:33,250 --> 00:17:35,410  
return, of course, rifle fire.

307  
00:17:35,410 --> 00:17:39,160  
They didn't have anything heavy.

308  
00:17:39,160 --> 00:17:41,500  
And so we started  
firing at them.

309  
00:17:41,500 --> 00:17:43,840  
And they were firing at us.

310  
00:17:43,840 --> 00:17:46,780  
And since they saw things  
coming from both directions,

311  
00:17:46,780 --> 00:17:50,800  
they really concluded that  
they were in dire straits.

312  
00:17:50,800 --> 00:17:55,990  
And we were afraid that they  
would communicate via radio

313  
00:17:55,990 --> 00:17:58,090  
to their original unit.

314  
00:17:58,090 --> 00:18:03,610  
And they would come to relieve  
them with a much bigger force.

315  
00:18:03,610 --> 00:18:05,890  
But apparently, they  
either didn't have radio,

316  
00:18:05,890 --> 00:18:07,600  
or if they had, they  
didn't know where

317  
00:18:07,600 --> 00:18:10,630  
they were since they got lost.

318  
00:18:10,630 --> 00:18:14,170  
And by that time, in  
about three hours,

319  
00:18:14,170 --> 00:18:20,050  
the main fighting unit  
came and started--

320  
00:18:20,050 --> 00:18:22,090  
partisan units--  
firing at the Germans.

321  
00:18:22,090 --> 00:18:25,810  
And then after  
about a few minutes,

322  
00:18:25,810 --> 00:18:27,430  
we begin to see a white flag.

323

00:18:27,430 --> 00:18:30,460  
But just before that  
happened, suddenly there

324  
00:18:30,460 --> 00:18:36,310  
was a little noise or sound  
near where I was behind a rock.

325  
00:18:36,310 --> 00:18:38,560  
And at the same time  
that I heard the sound,

326  
00:18:38,560 --> 00:18:43,840  
I also felt a kind of a bit  
of a pain, temporary pain

327  
00:18:43,840 --> 00:18:45,670  
in the right knee.

328  
00:18:45,670 --> 00:18:50,740  
And when I bent down, I saw it  
was a tear and something oozing

329  
00:18:50,740 --> 00:18:52,720  
a little bit of blood.

330  
00:18:52,720 --> 00:18:56,650  
And it must have been  
some part of a bullet that

331  
00:18:56,650 --> 00:18:59,290  
had hit a rock and splintered.

332  
00:18:59,290 --> 00:19:01,600  
And part of the  
thing ricocheted,

333  
00:19:01,600 --> 00:19:03,372  
but it didn't go inside.

334  
00:19:03,372 --> 00:19:04,330  
I didn't find anything.

335

00:19:04,330 --> 00:19:06,430

It wasn't a major wound.

336

00:19:06,430 --> 00:19:08,090

And it didn't hurt.

337

00:19:08,090 --> 00:19:10,900

But nevertheless,  
when I was taken,

338

00:19:10,900 --> 00:19:15,100

when I was bandaged by  
a woman who turned out

339

00:19:15,100 --> 00:19:20,560

to be a Jewish woman who  
had gone to school for

340

00:19:20,560 --> 00:19:25,700

midwives with a young girl who  
was next door neighbors to use.

341

00:19:25,700 --> 00:19:29,170

So that was the only  
action that I saw.

342

00:19:29,170 --> 00:19:34,690

I mean, we the number of  
Germans killed was eight or nine

343

00:19:34,690 --> 00:19:36,460

and two were wounded.

344

00:19:36,460 --> 00:19:40,150

They were carried out with  
their leader and three prisoner.

345

00:19:40,150 --> 00:19:42,060

And did you shoot  
when you were--

346

00:19:42,060 --> 00:19:42,560

Oh, yeah.

347

00:19:42,560 --> 00:19:43,240

Yeah, you did?

348

00:19:43,240 --> 00:19:43,930

Yes.

349

00:19:43,930 --> 00:19:45,040

Did you hit anything?

350

00:19:45,040 --> 00:19:48,340

Oh, we didn't see--

351

00:19:48,340 --> 00:19:49,720

we didn't shoot at the soldiers.

352

00:19:49,720 --> 00:19:51,550

Because the only  
thing was the trucks.

353

00:19:51,550 --> 00:19:57,130

So we aimed not  
the trucks so much.

354

00:19:57,130 --> 00:20:01,900

But again, it was psychological  
to impress them that fire

355

00:20:01,900 --> 00:20:03,920

is coming from both directions.

356

00:20:03,920 --> 00:20:07,490

So they feel that they are  
trapped, and which they were.

357

00:20:07,490 --> 00:20:09,243

What happened to  
these two guys that

358

00:20:09,243 --> 00:20:10,410

were captured, the Germans--

359  
00:20:10,410 --> 00:20:11,350  
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

360  
00:20:11,350 --> 00:20:12,650  
The three who were captured.

361  
00:20:12,650 --> 00:20:13,340  
Ah, three.

362  
00:20:13,340 --> 00:20:14,990  
I'll tell you.

363  
00:20:14,990 --> 00:20:19,640  
One was a very young fellow  
I can still remember.

364  
00:20:19,640 --> 00:20:23,555  
Must have been  
really almost my age.

365  
00:20:23,555 --> 00:20:27,470  
At least he looked like that.

366  
00:20:27,470 --> 00:20:30,130  
And I remember all  
throughout the time

367  
00:20:30,130 --> 00:20:34,710  
that he's marched  
and taken up to--

368  
00:20:34,710 --> 00:20:38,720  
he's yelling German curses,  
which I do not understand

369  
00:20:38,720 --> 00:20:44,420  
and Heil Hitlers interspersed  
with German curses.

370  
00:20:44,420 --> 00:20:47,390  
And when we got



here, he was then

371

00:20:47,390 --> 00:20:52,310  
interviewed or interrogated  
by this German soldier who

372

00:20:52,310 --> 00:20:53,960  
came out and he  
told me in French,

373

00:20:53,960 --> 00:20:55,370  
because that's  
how I communicated

374

00:20:55,370 --> 00:20:58,100  
with him in French, that  
it was a hopeless case

375

00:20:58,100 --> 00:21:01,970  
of a fanatic member  
of the Hitlerjugend.

376

00:21:01,970 --> 00:21:05,600

377

00:21:05,600 --> 00:21:09,200  
And I think he was shot--

378

00:21:09,200 --> 00:21:12,530  
actually, not shot,  
he was killed.

379

00:21:12,530 --> 00:21:19,950  
But again, because of a  
bullet was a scarcity--

380

00:21:19,950 --> 00:21:20,737  
I didn't see it.

381

00:21:20,737 --> 00:21:21,570  
I didn't witness it.

382

00:21:21,570 --> 00:21:23,490

But the following  
day, I was told

383

00:21:23,490 --> 00:21:27,120

that they had cut his throat.

384

00:21:27,120 --> 00:21:29,340

Also, it would have been  
a little hard to carry--

385

00:21:29,340 --> 00:21:31,740

I mean, we had to be mobile.

386

00:21:31,740 --> 00:21:36,270

And we didn't have the  
facilities to carry extra.

387

00:21:36,270 --> 00:21:37,620

Did they kill the other two?

388

00:21:37,620 --> 00:21:38,320

No.

389

00:21:38,320 --> 00:21:38,820

They didn't?

390

00:21:38,820 --> 00:21:40,450

No, no.

391

00:21:40,450 --> 00:21:45,850

They were given to the British.

392

00:21:45,850 --> 00:21:47,750

So there were a lot of British?

393

00:21:47,750 --> 00:21:49,120

Well, it was not a--

394

00:21:49,120 --> 00:21:50,290

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

395

00:21:50,290 --> 00:21:51,100  
--mixed thing.

396

00:21:51,100 --> 00:21:54,970  
But I mean, at  
least the British,

397

00:21:54,970 --> 00:21:56,830  
they didn't  
incarcerate themselves,

398

00:21:56,830 --> 00:22:00,760  
but they made arrangements  
with the locals gendarmerie

399

00:22:00,760 --> 00:22:03,670  
in Karditsa to guard them.

400

00:22:03,670 --> 00:22:06,778  
That's after we  
began to descend--

401

00:22:06,778 --> 00:22:07,570  
From the mountains.

402

00:22:07,570 --> 00:22:08,445  
--from the mountains.

403

00:22:08,445 --> 00:22:10,740  
We kept them until then.

404

00:22:10,740 --> 00:22:12,990  
And the British  
were not terribly

405

00:22:12,990 --> 00:22:15,630  
fond of your particular group?

406

00:22:15,630 --> 00:22:17,400  
They were not.

407

00:22:17,400 --> 00:22:20,566  
The British meddled a lot since.

408  
00:22:20,566 --> 00:22:24,390  
In fact, after the War  
of Independence in 1821,

409  
00:22:24,390 --> 00:22:31,710  
they always thought of Greece  
as a part of their own backyard.

410  
00:22:31,710 --> 00:22:39,130  
But look, they were  
primarily interested,

411  
00:22:39,130 --> 00:22:41,560  
as they should have  
been, in making sure

412  
00:22:41,560 --> 00:22:47,470  
that the Germans felt  
the brunt, whether it

413  
00:22:47,470 --> 00:22:51,790  
was harassment or  
actual, you know,

414  
00:22:51,790 --> 00:22:55,390  
telling action like blowing  
up bridges, and so forth.

415  
00:22:55,390 --> 00:23:00,940  
Because if nothing else,  
it kept units pinned down.

416  
00:23:00,940 --> 00:23:05,410  
We could not account for  
pitting crack divisions,

417  
00:23:05,410 --> 00:23:10,415  
but anything, you know, helped.

418  
00:23:10,415 --> 00:23:11,790

But there's no  
question that they

419  
00:23:11,790 --> 00:23:17,820  
were much more inclined to  
help the service forces then.

420  
00:23:17,820 --> 00:23:20,670  
But eventually,  
they saw the light.

421  
00:23:20,670 --> 00:23:24,240  
And it was almost like  
a kind of contract.

422  
00:23:24,240 --> 00:23:27,240  
You take this action,  
blew up this convoy,

423  
00:23:27,240 --> 00:23:32,910  
and then the next two weeks  
liberators would drop in.

424  
00:23:32,910 --> 00:23:33,700  
We used to go.

425  
00:23:33,700 --> 00:23:38,173  
And that's when I got my  
first shoes after an air drop.

426  
00:23:38,173 --> 00:23:38,920  
Really?

427  
00:23:38,920 --> 00:23:39,550  
Finally.

428  
00:23:39,550 --> 00:23:40,120  
Yes.

429  
00:23:40,120 --> 00:23:42,850  
So you were for weeks,  
months without--

430

00:23:42,850 --> 00:23:43,930

Months without shoes.

431

00:23:43,930 --> 00:23:44,888

--months without shoes?

432

00:23:44,888 --> 00:23:46,180

With pig shoes.

433

00:23:46,180 --> 00:23:46,975

Well, except one--

434

00:23:46,975 --> 00:23:48,710

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

435

00:23:48,710 --> 00:23:50,510

I replaced them, yes, right.

436

00:23:50,510 --> 00:23:52,350

Were you wearing socks?

437

00:23:52,350 --> 00:23:54,050

No, no such thing.

438

00:23:54,050 --> 00:23:56,360

So did they cover your  
toes these things?

439

00:23:56,360 --> 00:23:57,670

Yes, yes, it's like a ballet--

440

00:23:57,670 --> 00:23:58,180

It's like a ballet.

441

00:23:58,180 --> 00:23:58,780

--slipper, yes.

442

00:23:58,780 --> 00:23:59,280

I see.

443

00:23:59,280 --> 00:24:01,730

444

00:24:01,730 --> 00:24:04,654

It's a good thing  
it was warm weather.

445

00:24:04,654 --> 00:24:09,370

Now, it's clear that  
liberation is going to come.

446

00:24:09,370 --> 00:24:10,550

Right.

447

00:24:10,550 --> 00:24:12,120

Maybe a few months.

448

00:24:12,120 --> 00:24:17,010

No, it began to be visible  
beginning of August,

449

00:24:17,010 --> 00:24:20,650

even towards maybe the end  
of August, in two ways.

450

00:24:20,650 --> 00:24:24,390

First of all, because our  
units are more active.

451

00:24:24,390 --> 00:24:29,610

But I have to tell you  
that I can remember it now

452

00:24:29,610 --> 00:24:34,920

in my mind's ear because I had  
never heard all of these months

453

00:24:34,920 --> 00:24:36,900

the sound of artillery.

454

00:24:36,900 --> 00:24:39,180

You know, there's no  
artillery in partisan.

455  
00:24:39,180 --> 00:24:42,430  
But now, you begin to  
hear in great distance

456  
00:24:42,430 --> 00:24:44,220  
these dull thud--

457  
00:24:44,220 --> 00:24:46,830  
boom, boom, boom.

458  
00:24:46,830 --> 00:24:50,220  
And at night, you know,  
it's not a heavy sound.

459  
00:24:50,220 --> 00:24:53,160  
It's not continuous,  
but it's there.

460  
00:24:53,160 --> 00:24:56,250  
And at night, you hear the same  
sound, but at the same time,

461  
00:24:56,250 --> 00:24:59,080  
you see also the  
illumination in the horizon.

462  
00:24:59,080 --> 00:25:03,180  
So you know somebody  
is firing, right?

463  
00:25:03,180 --> 00:25:06,060  
So essentially, what  
was happening is,

464  
00:25:06,060 --> 00:25:12,020  
by then, the Germans are in  
very well-organized retreat.

465  
00:25:12,020 --> 00:25:15,300  
They're abandoning Greece.

466



00:25:15,300 --> 00:25:19,330  
And of course, that's  
understood and known.

467  
00:25:19,330 --> 00:25:23,400  
And so the partisans  
units physically

468  
00:25:23,400 --> 00:25:27,920  
are themselves beginning  
to move, first,

469  
00:25:27,920 --> 00:25:30,870  
to harass the rear of  
the departing Germans,

470  
00:25:30,870 --> 00:25:32,700  
but also to get lower.

471  
00:25:32,700 --> 00:25:38,590  
Because the lower parts  
now are themselves free.

472  
00:25:38,590 --> 00:25:42,600  
So it became a  
combination of news,

473  
00:25:42,600 --> 00:25:47,850  
a combination of an action, a  
combination of hearing things,

474  
00:25:47,850 --> 00:25:48,690  
seeing things.

475  
00:25:48,690 --> 00:25:51,060  
And then beginning to  
ourselves be on the move.

476  
00:25:51,060 --> 00:25:53,760  
Because as soon as  
these things started,

477  
00:25:53,760 --> 00:25:57,750

headquarters wasn't going to stay in the rear where we were.

478  
00:25:57,750 --> 00:26:02,940  
We ourselves began to descend to lower elevations.

479  
00:26:02,940 --> 00:26:08,000  
Are you also hearing about killing centers in the East?

480  
00:26:08,000 --> 00:26:08,500  
No.

481  
00:26:08,500 --> 00:26:09,640  
You don't hear anything?

482  
00:26:09,640 --> 00:26:12,530  
That, at least--

483  
00:26:12,530 --> 00:26:16,200  
I mean, I did not hear at all.

484  
00:26:16,200 --> 00:26:16,700  
Yes.

485  
00:26:16,700 --> 00:26:19,500

486  
00:26:19,500 --> 00:26:26,430  
Whether it was known, whether it was known at the higher levels

487  
00:26:26,430 --> 00:26:29,640  
at headquarters,  
I don't think so.

488  
00:26:29,640 --> 00:26:35,700  
Because, for example, I read the memoirs of Yugoslav partisans,

489  
00:26:35,700 --> 00:26:37,890

some of them Bitola Jews.

490

00:26:37,890 --> 00:26:40,150

One of them Zamila

Kolonomos, who

491

00:26:40,150 --> 00:26:44,770

was my mother's maiden

name, although no relation.

492

00:26:44,770 --> 00:26:48,340

And they only find out

at the end of the war.

493

00:26:48,340 --> 00:26:54,490

Because coincidentally, Ilya

Ehrenburg, the Russian author,

494

00:26:54,490 --> 00:26:58,030

had been through a tour

of concentration camps,

495

00:26:58,030 --> 00:27:02,320

and who had been

apparently to Treblinka.

496

00:27:02,320 --> 00:27:10,510

And who told the survivors

67 out of 3,500 Bitola Jews

497

00:27:10,510 --> 00:27:18,580

that all were exterminated in

Treblinka with no survivors.

498

00:27:18,580 --> 00:27:20,890

So I don't think that

this kind of thing

499

00:27:20,890 --> 00:27:30,740

was known until really

I think the Russians,

500

00:27:30,740 --> 00:27:34,670

because they were the first  
that liberated parts of Poland.

501  
00:27:34,670 --> 00:27:35,180  
You know?

502  
00:27:35,180 --> 00:27:39,410  
My brother, when they  
had to abandon Auschwitz,

503  
00:27:39,410 --> 00:27:41,660  
was because of the  
approaching Russians.

504  
00:27:41,660 --> 00:27:44,690  
So I think through that  
way, but it did not

505  
00:27:44,690 --> 00:27:47,980  
reach the partisans, certainly.

506  
00:27:47,980 --> 00:27:52,630  
And I think even after  
we were liberated,

507  
00:27:52,630 --> 00:28:00,000  
we didn't understand the kind,  
as well as the magnitude,

508  
00:28:00,000 --> 00:28:10,000  
both in kind and in size of the  
horror that had to occurred.

509  
00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:20,000