

Juls Zvoncheck

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Question: So you're getting ready to go home and all these gentlemen --

Answer: Yeah, they wanted to talk to me and express themselves to me about me. And them. And I found that to be a very touching experience. But these are older men, they were 10, 12, maybe 15 years older than me. And I -- I appreciated what they had to say. So I got on the train at this particular town in Germany and we went eastward. A day later we were back in the same town that I started from. And we continued westward on the train towards Marseille, and they put no supplies on the train. So we had no -- nothing to eat. So the train would stop beside another train going another direction, we were in the station, and we would hop off and take cartons of -- cases of food from the trains and bring them onto our train. And it turned out that our group got cases of peaches. The fellows in the next car got cases of pineapple. Sliced pineapple. And so it went. I mean, they had these big, I don't know what they call, No. 11 cans, big gallons. So you couldn't waste the food and you'd say to somebody else, hey, you ready to have some peaches or something, and you'd open the can and you enjoyed it. So that as one of the funny spots. But, something had to be done. And then I flew over to Casablanca and I came down with a fever and my plane was to take off the next day. So it was said that you should drink a lot of water to break the fever. And here again the GI's around you comes rallying around you. So I'm laying on a cot there in a tent and they're bringing me water and water and water and water -- and sure enough, the next morning, my fever was gone. And we took off for the Azores. And from the Azores we went to Bermuda

Answer: But between the Azores and Bermuda, two engines conked out, on one side. So we're flying, you know, awkwardly. But you want to know something, I never doubted that we would make it. People say, wow, the engines went out, but we kept flying. So they repaired the engines in Bermuda and we landed in Miami. We got a good meal in Miami, it was steak, I remember, steak and eggs. And that same day, or maybe the day after, I was put on, with a lot of guys, on a train, and heading north. I was taken to Indian Town Gap, Pennsylvania, for discharge. And when we got there, we just wanted out. Cause you remember now, we were in Europe one Thursday and in Pennsylvania the following Thursday. Psychologically that is a tremendous, tremendous change. I mean, you -- you just don't know what you're doing. All you know is you want out. And we insisted on being discharged. And we were. But all I had was the uniform I was wearing, the cotton, you know. And in my little bag I had a change of underwear and my toilet articles and personal things. And I was taken out of the Army. As I came out of the room where I got the discharge, into a lobby type of place, four men converged on me. And they wanted me to join the American Legion, Veteran of Foreign Wars, you name it. And I remember saying, what the hell is the matter with you guys? Don't you say hello or welcome home? I said, I've been gone a long time. And I wouldn't join, I never joined them for that reason. So now there was another fellow from my home town who was being discharged from the Philippines -- from -- from the Pacific. He had put in his five or six years. So we both took the same bus back to my home town. Actually the town below -- my home town was on a hill, and the main highway was down in the valley. So we walk up the hill and come into my home town and, nobody here. Hi, Jules, how are you. Period. You know. I thought there'd be some enthusiasm. Hey, where have you been, hey, you know, how did things go? Nothing, nothing. In fact in my autobiography, I had in big letters, I said I'm home. Where's everybody? And that's just the way it was. Nobody cared. Nobody cared. And I found that difficult, you know. Well, again, psychologically, this was a difficult time for me. Like I said, I went in the (inaudible) service, uncultured. And came out virtually uncultured. All I had was military life. You know, what little I went into the big cities and did, it was minor, it was very little. So I was picking up my life where I left it off in 1940. And I expected those people to be more or less what I remembered them to be. But they weren't. They just weren't. And even my father is indifferent. And my step-mother didn't know -- didn't care. In fact I didn't stay at home, I stayed at an uncle's house. So after

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two weeks I decided to go to New York, to the city, and find my way. Now I always was hungry for education. So I decided I'll go up to Ford University and enroll. Because they had a good journalism school, you know. And when I tried to enroll they told me I couldn't because I needed more academic credits. In fact you need two years worth of academic credits. Now here I am, alone and in a big city. Having to make my way in life. I couldn't go any where in high school to make up those credits. Again, I didn't have the courage to yell. Say let me talk to a Dean or somebody here, I think I deserve some kind of consideration. After all, I'm -- I'm a veteran, I put in -- as I say I got my rear end wet and shot at and what have you. Least you could do is give me a courtesy of something. But I didn't and I had to get a job. So I took a job in the post office of the midnight tour so that I would be -- have half the days to look for a job. So I took a job with the Veterans Administration, the only talent I had was to know shorthand and typing. So I was assigned to the legal department, Veteran's Administration. Which was okay, you know, I got a job. But then I found that I was doing all the big jobs. I took the minutes of their -- of the lawyer's meetings every Tuesday, everything was verbatim. I'd stay up the night before and practice, get my speed up by listening to Kenneth Banghart, the news announcer, who spoke at the rate of 235 words a minute. So if I could get up to his speed, then I knew I could do the job the next day. But that's the way it was. And I was, you know, serious about my job. And they did send me up to the Bronx Courthouse, take some depositions. And at the same time, there was a fellow who was working there with a higher rating than mine. I was doing his work. And of course you couldn't ask for a raise because you'd had time in the Service, you know. So after awhile I thought the hell with this, I'm not going to do this man's work and -- so then I went into the public and I was, again still the shorthand and typing. I thought I'd go into a business -- I worked for a sporting goods man who was very successful, and I organized for him, leagues, softball leagues, basketball leagues, and not only did we furnish the playing fields and the officials but we sold them all their equipment. It was then -- we had it made. For example, we had the paper companies, we had the hotels, ..