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JV

May 20, 1985

Dear Mr. Schmidt:

I hope you won't mind my answering your letter to Don Regan. He showed me your letter to the New York Times and I wanted to thank you personally for both your letter to the Times and for sending it on to us. re:

During and since my trip to Bitburg I've heard a number of stories having to do with incidents that reveal as yours does that humanitarian instincts are not limited to one side in war. Such stories only add to my belief that we can build a permanent peace and I'm going to keep on trying.

Thanks again and give my regards to your sons.

Sincerely,

REAGAN-REGAN

Mr. Werner A. Schmidt
9 John Jay Place
Rye, New York 10580

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

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85 522

HANDWRITING FILE

To Dr. Warner A. Schmidt & John Jay Pl.

Dear Dr. Schmidt — Rye N.Y. 10580

I hope you won't mind my answering your letter to Don Regan. He showed me your letter to the N.Y. Times and I wanted to thank you personally for both your letter to the Times & for sending it on to us.

During & since my trip to Bitburg I've heard a number of stories having to do with incidents ~~in~~ ~~there~~ that reveal as yours does that humanitarian instincts are not limited to one side in war. Such stories only add to my belief that we can build a permanent peace and I'm going to keep on trying. Thanks again & send my regards to your sons.

Bitburg

WERNER A. SCHMIDT, M. D., M. A.
9 JOHN JAY PLACE
RYE, NEW YORK 10580

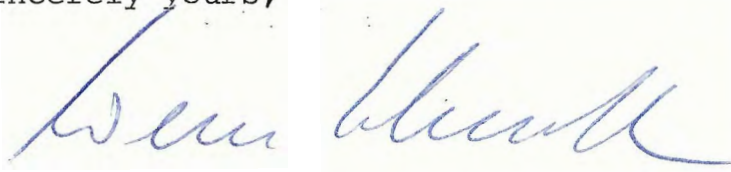
May 9, 1985

The Honorable Donald T. Regan
Chief of Staff
The White House Office
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20050

Dear Sir:

When I heard the President's speech at the Bitburg Air Base in which he referred to the meeting of three American and four German soldiers in the farm cottage within the Western Front on Christmas 1944, I thought that the event I described in the enclosed copy of a letter to the New York Times might also be of interest to the American public.

Sincerely yours,



WAS:hv

1 Encl.

WERNER A. SCHMIDT M.D., M.A.

9 JOHN JAY PLACE
RYE, NEW YORK 10580

The New York Times Co.
229 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036

May 6, 1985

Re.: President Reagan's Visit to the Bitburg Cemetery

Gentlemen:

In 1942, at the age of 17, I was a highschool student in Gelsenkirchen, Germany. One Sunday morning the upper classes of my school were ordered to appear at the Town-hall where SS officers selected those students they wanted to have for the Waffen SS, an elite unit of the armed forces, contrary to the SD (Sicherheitsdienst) also a sub-unit of the SS responsible for the concentration camps. None of us had a chance to avoid this selection process. Fortunately I already was a candidate for the medical corps of the Navy and could go home. By 1944, I had become a medic in a German infantry division retreating from the invasion front in Normandy. The division was flanked by two SS divisions with many brave young soldiers. I was assigned to a field hospital where all wounded soldiers were treated. One day a long line of soldiers was waiting for treatment, among them members of the SS divisions. When a badly burned American tank crew, just captured, was brought in I then saw the young SS soldiers giving up their places in line so that the Americans could receive immediate treatment.

This was the reality of the war in France in 1944. A few days later I was captured by partisans. Fortunately, American soldiers were around within a few minutes and saved our lives. With all this in mind, I feel that President Reagan is absolutely right by going to Bitburg, and stretching out his hand for further reconciliation and the building of a safe and peaceful Europe.

I have been living in the U.S. for 22 years. Both of my sons are members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Sincerely yours,



JV ,

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May 20, 1985

Dear Mr. Davis:

Thank you very much for writing as you did.
I'm truly grateful.

You are right about the "absolute moral evil of Nazism" and that we should not forget. What struck me forcibly in Germany and gave assurance that what I was doing was right was the evidence that Germany is determined not to forget. They have preserved the death camps with all the evidence of the Holocaust horror. Each year they bring their schoolchildren to these camps so they will grow up determined there will not be a repeat of that obscene chapter in their country's history.

I have enclosed copies of my speeches at Bergen-Belsen and later that day at Bitburg where our Airmen are based with Germans on the NATO line.

Thank you again for your kindness in writing and for understanding.

Sincerely,

Mr. Curtis W. Davis
290 West End Avenue
New York, New York 10023

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

Encls: (2) Press Releases on Speeches

85 522

HANDWRITING FILE

To Mr. Curtis W. Davis 290 West End Ave.

Dear Mr. Davis

N.Y. N.Y. 10023

Thank you very much for writing as you did. I'm truly grateful.

You are right about the "absolute moral evil of Nazism and that we should not forget. What struck me forcibly in Germany and gave assurance that what I was doing was right was the evidence that Germany is determined not to forget. They have preserved the death camps with all the evidence of the Holocaust however. Each year they bring their school children to these camps so they will grow up determined there will not be a repeat of that obscene chapter in their country's history.

I have enclosed copies of my speeches at Bergen-Belsen & later that day at Bitburg where our airmen are housed with Germans on the Katolnie.

Thank you again for your kindness in writing & for understanding. Sincerely RR

Send copies of speeches
with the above.

1-5-



CURTIS W. DAVIS

290 WEST END AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10023

(212) EN 2-1656

May 10, 1985

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

After thinking over what I saw on television this week, I have changed my mind about your visit to Bitburg. I had considered it a profound mistake. I now think that your visit taught us much, although the venue chosen by your staff was less than felicitous. You have honored a wreath laid in a cemetery where S. S. graves abound, and many have mourned your act.

Leaders perform symbolic acts throughout their stewardship. When Napoleon took the crown into his own hands at his Coronation and placed it on his own head, he may have elated the French, but he caused Beethoven to tear up the dedication of his "Eroica" symphony. When Anwar Sadat went to the Knesset he won the admiration of Golda Meir, and sowed the seeds of his later demise. I remember Franklin Roosevelt, campaigning bareheaded through the rainy streets of New York, in 1944 still carrying the banner of the happy warrior, with only months to live.

The evil deeds of the past cannot be eradicated, but with persistence and faith, hate can. I turned 17 just a month after V-E Day, and was expecting to be drafted in six months. Most Americans have forgotten that we were taking young men into the service then at 17-1/2. Instead, right after V-J Day, the draft age went back up to 18, and was then abolished, until Korea. I finally went in then, already into a career at 22, and was sent to Germany, where the evidences of war remained present everywhere: a tentative coexistence had only just begun.

Among the young Germans I met then, the most persistent question was "What will you think of us now?" In my liberal family tradition, I tried to reassure them, but in my heart I had no ready answers. I have thought about that question often these past decades, and while watching you and General Ridgway on tv I found some answers, at least for me. The absolute moral evil of Nazism and the



Reagan 5/10/85

2.

Holocaust is as unthinkable as it is unforgiveable, but to bury the past does not mean to forget it. Adolf Hitler, that feckless Austrian watercolorist who made his dream to become a third Kaiser, burned in upon our memory, at incalculable human cost, the knowledge that hate and prejudice, married to greed and brutality, and allowed to fester for a century, can threaten human survival, especially when rallied around a charismatic leader. The German nation was not yet a century old when Hitler took it, shook it, and left it broken in half. Centuries from now Germans will still bear the scar which their forebears so eagerly sought, prostrate before "Der Fuehrer," as if in some collective Manson or Jones cult, a frenzy beyond reason.

That past is now 40 years behind us. As we saw, it lies buried at Bitburg, as it does under the Berlin Wall. We continue to move on, as we have every day since V-E Day, vigilant and hopeful. To equate that movement with forgetfulness is false, I believe. Indeed the lesson of your action is of another order altogether.

"With malice toward none" was Lincoln's last message 120 years ago. How truly unthinkable those words must have sounded to many at the time, with that war not yet over which pitted brother against brother. How heavily Lincoln paid for them. Your words and deeds have reminded us all, vividly and painfully, how passionate are the feelings which remain in our hearts, how unquenchable the memories, how unhealed the wounds. It has been a useful, a necessary lesson. The consequences for your stewardship remain ahead of you. Yet you have made us all examine ourselves deeply, and for that we are in your debt.

Sincerely,

Curtis W. Davis

JV

May 20, 1985

Dear Mr. Purcell:

I can't tell you how much your letters meant to me and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I read your words about your son Tim and the orchestra's reaction to some of my people here in the White House. I had difficulty getting through it because of the lump in my throat and the tears in my eyes. (re: Bitburg)

Please thank Tim for me and ask him to give my warm regards to the other members of the orchestra. We are friends.

Sincerely,

DONALD REAGAN

+

Mr. Thomas J. Purcell
604 Oakland Place, N.E.
Austin, Minnesota 55912

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

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HANDWRITING FILE

~~To Mr. Edward J. Malouf 11226 Colleton - Dallas Texas~~

To Mr. Thomas J. Purcell 604 Oakland ⁷⁵²²⁸ P.O. NE
Austin Minn. 55912

Dear Mr. Purcell

I can't tell you how much your letter meant to me and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I read your words about your son Tim & the orchestra reaction ~~in Tim's~~, to some of my people here in the White House. I had difficulty getting through it because of the lump in my throat and the tears in my eyes.

Please thank Tim for me and ask him to give my warm regards to the other members of the orchestra. We are friends.

Sincerely RR

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Sample

May 7, 1985

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you could guess from my previous letter of support to you in mid-April about your then planned visit to the German Military Cemetary in Bitburg, I was very physically and emotionally involved with the trial that some Americans put you through.

I wish there would have been some way for me to absorb a lot of the flack that was hurled your way from people who could not grasp the message you were trying to give the German people from the American people. "It's over! Let us shed our tears together for our fallen sons."

I was extremely proud of your speech at the American military installation at Bitburg and I shall keep it for as long as I live.

A few things happened to me in the last few weeks that I thought you might find interesting, and the incidents would serve as some evidence that a large group of American combat veterans were behind you.

The word got out here that I had written you a letter agreeing with your visit to Bitburg. I seemed to be, at that time, standing pretty much alone, and the local Commandant of the VFW and the leaders of the local American Legion unit took me to task. It really got me down until I started hearing, one by one, from combat veterans throughout our Southern Minnesota area.

A paratrooper who made a number of combat jumps and during his last jump beyond the Rhine and behind enemy lines was severely wounded at Haltum told me, "Tom, they weren't all SS. They weren't all Nazis. They were guys just like you and me. I am sorry so many of them had to die." That was pretty typical of the reactions I got.

The MINNEAPOLIS STAR AND TRIBUNE ran some excerpts of my letter to you and also some additional thoughts that I gave them and that produced a few very hateful, almost maniacal letters that were very upsetting, but Mr. President, I received more letters from veterans who agreed. One Finlander from the Iron Range who lost most of his jaw in Europe told me, "I really feel sorry that the Jewish people are so upset, but I think I can understand their position. I wish they understood my position that I am ready to say, 'It's over! I wish we could have all come through it alive.'".

Finally, I have a very special son who plays French Horn in the Opera Orchestra at the Graz Opera House in Austria. He is one of two Americans in the orchestra and the international ensemble features dancers, singers, musicians from all over the world, but most of them are Austrians and Germans. He just called me from overseas a minute ago, and I was so touched that I had to write and tell you what happened in Graz when you gave your speech at the American Military Base in Bitburg.

He knew exactly how I felt because I sent him a copy of the letter I sent to you April 15th. He was trying to assure many of the Austrians and Germans that not everybody in the United States still hated them and that you, Mr. President, represented many Americans in wanting a true reconciliation to bring a final end to that old war. Tim told me that they felt that despite your stand, most of the American people still hated them and they wondered how long they would have to be held guilty for things that they didn't know anything about, or that they had not been born yet, they were considered by most Americans to be part of the Nazi madness.

Tim asked me, "Dad, did you hear President Reagan's speech at Bitburg?" I replied that I hadn't, because the networks had only chosen bits and pieces, but I had read it and I was going to keep it.

"Let me tell you what happened here."

Apparently, Mr. President, the Austrian national network had made plans to carry your speech in its entirety. And it was the number one topic of conversation for a number of days before

that. There was great anxiety, concern and an atmosphere of great tension and, as Tim put it, "They had almost a pleading hope that the President would say something that readmitted them to the ranks of the rest of the decent and honest people of the world."

Television sets were brought into the rehearsal hall to let the group see and hear your speech. The orchestra assembled in the hall and Tim said he had never seen nor heard that group so quiet and reserved.

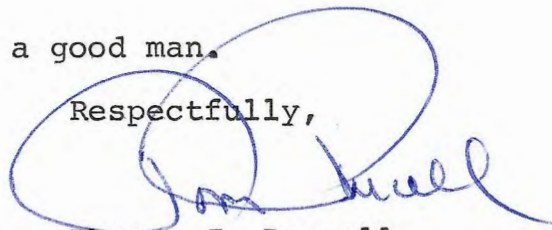
Prior to your speech, they showed the scene at the cemetery where General Ridgway shook hands with General Steinhoff. A number of the older members of the orchestra, who were veterans of the war, broke down and cried.

Then they started the live broadcast of your speech, and as your talk unfolded, the eyes of the German and Austrian members of the orchestra began to glisten and by the time you ended, Tim said, the rehearsal hall was filled with tears of joy.

One old musician said, "God bless that good man. Now I can die in peace."

God bless you Sir, you are a good man.

Respectfully,



Thomas J. Purcell
604 Oakland Place NE
Austin, MN 55912

P.S. Tim said it was impossible to conduct a rehearsal. The joy of reconciliation had filled their hearts and emotions were running very high. Tim said he was very proud to be an American. He said, "There is a special kind of heart in this world, an American heart.".

Hang in there, kids ... you're doing great!

I.P.

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1 JV

May 20, 1985

Dear Monsignor Horan:

Thank you very much for your kind letter and generous words. I am truly grateful and particularly so for your approval of my recent visit to West Germany. I felt from the start that I was doing the morally right thing, and feel that even more so now that the trip is over. Your letter strengthens my conviction.

May I also thank you and your associates for the great, good work you are doing. I'll do my best to keep the "safety net" in place but government efforts are useless without the voluntarism of all our citizens.

My thanks again and very best regards.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

X

The Reverend Monsignor Kenneth T. Horan
Diocesan Director
Catholic Social Services
Diocese of Scranton
400 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18503

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

85 522

HANDWRITING FILE

To Rev. Messr. Kenneth T. Horan 400 Wyoming Ave.
Scranton Pa. 18503

Dear Rev. Horan

I thank you very much for your kind letter and generous words. I am truly grateful and particularly so for your approval of my recent visit to W. Germany. I felt from the start that I was doing the morally right thing and feel that even more so now that the trip is over. Your letter strengthens my conviction.

May I also thank you & your associates for the great, good work you are doing. I'll do my best to keep the "safety net" in place but govt. efforts are useless without the voluntarism of ~~you~~ all our citizens.

My thanks again & very best regards,
Linnery RR



CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
OF
LACKAWANNA COUNTY

MOST REV. JAMES C. TIMLIN, D.D.
PRESIDENT
REV. MSGR. KENNETH T. HORAN, M.S.W.
DIOCESAN DIRECTOR

400 WYOMING AVENUE
SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503
(717) 346-8936

May 10, 1985

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D. C. 20013

Dear Mr. Reagan:

I was very pleased and happy with the results of the 1984 election which served as a confirmation of the peoples' acceptance and approval of you personally and the policies you espouse.

I have long been concerned with the defense preparedness of our great country and the liberality of the Democratic office holders who seek to usurp from the people the obligation of solving problems at the local level.

What prompts me to write at this time is the sad events which have taken place in the last three weeks by an unforgiving group who seek only to promote their own heritage and opinion.

I was very proud of you and the manner in which you handled these difficulties by refusing to submit to their attempted direction of your travel plans. Your message given at Bitburg certainly underscored our Christian attitude of forgiveness and hopefully will serve, when things are calmer, for your opponents to put things in perspective.

Although there are some hardships being caused by your present policies, nevertheless, I see the need for the hard decisions you are making. Our office, which is dedicated to the care of the poor, is doing its best to support your efforts and making certain that your "safety net" is in place. So far, Thanks be to God and the programs you have made available, no one in our eleven county area has starved to death or frozen to death.



A United Way Member Agency

President Ronald Reagan
May 10, 1985
Page 2

Please continue your efforts on behalf of the good of the country
and be assured that we at the local level are proud to be your
supporter.

Asking God's blessings on you, I remain,

Sincerely,

Kenneth T. Horan

Rev. Msgr. Kenneth T. Horan
Diocesan Director

KTH/hwo

copy to Mary Wenzelbach 2-24-87
Room 572 Ex

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JV

May 20, 1985

Dear Barney:

Thanks very much for all your encouraging words and for all the history. I especially liked that high-level inspection and watering down of the dragon's teeth.

Barney, I felt from the start that I was doing the morally right thing, and I'm even more sure now. I've received some of the most moving letters -- some of the other kind, too, -- they are from veterans with stories to tell that put a lump in your throat. They think I did the right thing, too.

I'm enclosing copies of my speeches -- the morning talk at Bergen-Belsen and the afternoon one at Bitburg Air Force Base.

Thanks again and best to Vada.

Sincerely,

Ron

Colonel Barney Oldfield, USAF, Ret.
360 North Crescent Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90210

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation

Encls: (2) Press Release on Speeches

BB 522

HANDWRITING FILE

To Col. Barney Oldfield 360 No. Crescent Dr.
Beverly Hills Calif. 90210

Dear Barney

Thanks very much for all your encourage-
ments and for all the history. I especially liked
that high level inspection & watering down of
the dragons teeth.

Barney I felt from the start that I was
doing the morally right thing and I'm even
more sure now. I've received some of the most
moving letters (some of the other kind too) they are
from veterans with stories to tell that put a
lump in your throat. They think I did the right
thing too.

I'm enclosing copies of my speeches - the morning
talk at Bergen Belsen & the afternoon one at
Bitburg A.F. Base.

Thanks again & best to Vada.
Sincerely Ron



Col. Barney Oldfield, USAF (Ret)
(Consultant)

May 5, 1985

Dear President Ron:

How fantastic it was to see the escorts chosen for Chancellor Kohl and yourself at Bitburg, two gentlemen I've known and respected -- with good reason -- for a long, long time. Luftwaffe General Johannes Steinhoff was the one selected by the new Federal Republic of Germany on Oct. 1, 1955 to "walk the plank" when he came in civilian clothes as MR. Steinhoff to Luke Air Force Base in Arizona to check out how it would work if his country elected to train the sons and grandsons of the old enemy there in the American southwest. He ultimately was told and savored it very much that the high standing of Luke in the eyes of Arizonans was owed more to the Luftwaffe trainees than the Americans. That facial disfigurement has reconciliation written on it, too. When his jet blew up, his whole face was burned away to the bone and it was a British Royal Air Force flight surgeon who rebuilt for him the face he wears today. When we brought our Cactus Starfighter Squadron into being at Luke, he was the logical selection to be its "Commander" and he still is. You may remember his contribution to our books, Those Wonderful Men in the Cactus Starfighter Squadron (see attached) for which you and Chancellor Kohl contributed prefaces.

It was Ridgway, just ahead of Normandy, that I had to tell of witnessing the heart attack of our airborne troops founder, much-loved old Maj. Gen. William Carey Lee, which took him off the command of his baby, the 101st Airborne Division just before Normandy. Ridgway sent over from his 82nd Airborne Division a feisty Brig. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor to take that division in on D-Day.

Ah, so much history was in step with you at that Bitburg Cemetery.

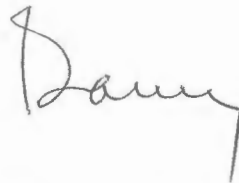
Just north of where you were, when Prime Minister Churchill, accompanied by US Gen William H. Simpson, Field Marshal Montgomery and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Alan Brooke, was going to make his first foray onto German soil he wanted to see the famous "Dragon's Teeth" of the Siegfried Line defenses. When the entourage arrived, I was asked to gather up all the war correspondents' cameras "for a moment", then they could take all the photos they wanted. This was like asking them to hold still while I knocked out all their teeth with a ballbat, but eventually the cameras were stashed. Then the foursome walked in among the Dragon's Teeth, unzipped and piddled of Hitler's impregnable defenses. The cameramen ran for their equipment

but were too late -- and I'm cursed roundly by the survivors still for having robbed the historical record!

Personally, I think you have outflanked the fear-and-dreadists. You did the right thing, in a right place, and because none had been brave enough to take that step before, it has to have been the right time.

To you and Nancy, Vada and I send our best, and a couple of extra hurrahs as well. We pass a milestone of our own tomorrow, 50 years in lockstep, and we still talk to each other -- and enjoy!

Always,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan Quayle".

President Ronald Reagan,
The White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

320758

AP

JV

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May 20, 1985

Dear Joe and Dorothea:

Thanks very much for your kind letter and for the column. I enjoyed reading it, something I rarely have a chance to say about "The Free Press."

re:

I'm enclosing copies of the two speeches I made on May 5. The first was at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Later in the day, the second was at the Bitburg Air Base where our men are based with a German unit.

Again, thanks and best regards.

Sincerely,

Ron

Mr. and Mrs. S. Josiah Penberthy, Jr.
35560 Heritage Lane
Farmington, Michigan 48024

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

Encls; (2) Press Releases on Speeches

85 522

HANDWRITING FILE

To Mr. ~~Joe~~ Penverthy JH. 35560 Heritage Lane
JOSIAH Farmington Mich. 48024

Dear Joe & Dorothy

Thanks very much for your kind letter & for the column. I enjoyed reading it, something I rarely have a chance to say about "The Free Press"

I'm enclosing copies of the 2 speeches I made on May 5. The 1st was at Bergen-Belson concentration camp. Later in the day the 2nd was at the Bitburg Air Base where our men are based with a German Unit.

Again thanks & Best Regards
Klutch



5-3-85
**Nickie
 McWhirter**

Reasons for Bitburg visit buried in nation's anxiety

Bitburg is driving us crazy. President Reagan plans to visit a cemetery in that small West German town for 20 minutes on Sunday, at the suggestion of his host, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Suddenly, nothing else about the presidential mission to cement political and economic union with our European allies seems to matter. We are in the throes of a national anxiety attack.

Stripped of raw emotional response, anti-Reagan cheap shots and easy moralizing, there are sound international, political reasons for this presidential stopover at the Bitburg cemetery in 1985. And the job of any president, in large measure, is international politics.

Please remember it was Chancellor Kohl who asked for the cemetery visit. Do you suppose he did that out of respect for Nazis, out of disrespect for Jews, out of thoughtlessness, naivete? Hardly. Neither do I suppose Reagan agreed for any of those reasons.

Put aside old hatreds

Perhaps we forget that just as Germans were our enemies in World Wars I and II, so were we their enemies. Just as we were carefully conditioned to think of Germans as unfeeling killers of innocent civilians, so were Germans conditioned to think of us. We remember the burning of London as an act of barbarism. Germans remember the firebombing of Dresden as an act of equal barbarism.

Why should they feel otherwise? The German people were force-fed even larger doses of wartime patriotic propaganda than we were. Heaven knows, we got our share, and it took effect.

We and our allies won that last and most brutal of the global wars. In so doing, we killed most of a generation of young German men and boys. I don't suppose their families love us for that. And when the war was finished, the allies split the nation that had been Germany in two pieces and gave half to the USSR as a kind of trophy. I don't suppose the German people love us for that, either.

Forty years after WWII, however, we need to put aside old hatreds and grudges. We need the Germans and figure they need us. Despite history, which cannot be changed, and propaganda, which tends to lurk in dark corners of human minds avoiding the light of reason, West Germany and the United States must work co-operatively and enthusiastically for our mutual survival and prosperity.

We need never forget

Chancellor Kohl is having a little trouble holding up his end, convincing voters American missiles belong on West German soil, insinuating war again. So he asked President Reagan to pay a brief, unceremonious visit to a small cemetery that contains the remains of German civilians as well as soldiers. It would be a visible symbol to Germans that Americans are no longer insensitive to German humanity. If we want our missiles on their soil, perhaps we need to demonstrate we understand that they bleed and die in wartime.

We need never forget, write off or otherwise discount the agony of the Jews in the Nazi death camps. We need not forgive, certainly not honor, those responsible, including SS troopers. German voters need some demonstration that America recognizes our mutual, war-bred hatreds have been put aside, however, and that we accept the mortality, the humanity of German people today.

That's the only message of the cemetery visit. That's the reconciliation Reagan says is morally just. It has nothing to do with forgiving or honoring murderers.

May 5, 1985

Hon. Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

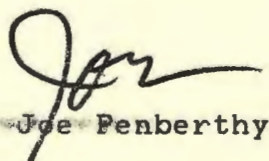
Dear Dutch:

Bitburg - as I write this you are speaking at the airport. Bitburg, I'm afraid, has become a name which is wearing a bit thin. The politics which has been injected into the matter is a complete turn-off but I must say, your handling of a most awkward situation demonstrated leadership and tact which all Americans can be proud. Thank God for your good sense to go through with the visit.

The NBC coverage of the day seemed to be an attempt to make a "star" out of Mr. Wiesel of the Holocaust Committee. I become disturbed when I hear "my people" from such as he, although I know what he is talking about, it is separatist talk. In the United States we are one people, Christians, Jews, black, white, whatever, led by you, our President. That simple fact is most difficult for some to understand.

The enclosed McWhirter article which appeared in Friday's "Detroit Free Press", is perhaps the best on the subject I have read and I surely hope you take the time to read it too. The general editorial policy of "The Free Press" carries with it particular significance. Nicky's usual approach to your administration is not what one would call the most flattering, but occasionally she does take what I like to think of as "the proper stand" on an issue.

Again, Dorothea and I send our very best to you and Nancy and pray for your continued good health and well-being.


Joe Penberthy

1988:

Name	Date
Osborne	6/2/88

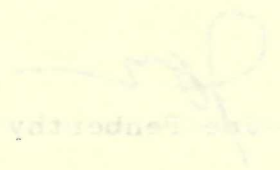
Hon. Ronald R
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500
Dear David:

Birney
I was glad to hear this you are speak-
ing at the airport. Birney, I'm afraid, has
become a name which is wearing a bit thin.
The politics which has been injected into the
matter is a complete turn-off but I must say,
your handling of a most awkward situation
demonstrated leadership and tact which all
Americans can be proud. Thank God for your
good sense to go through with the visit.

The NBC coverage of the day seemed to be
an attempt to make a "star" out of Mr. Wisel
of the Holocaust Committee. I become disturbed
when I hear "my people" from such as he,
although I know what he is talking about, it
is separatist talk. In the United States we
are one people, Christian, Jew, black,
white, whatever, led by you, our President.
That single fact is most difficult for some to
understand.

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and I am sure you take the time to read it
too. The general editorial policy of "The
Free Press" carries with it particular signifi-
cance. Nicky's usual approach to your admin-
istration is not what one would call the most
flattering, but occasionally she does take
what I like to think of as "the proper stand"
on an issue.

Again, Dorothy and I send our very best
to you and Nancy and pray for your continued
good health and well-being.


The Secretary

JV 1

320759

AB

4648

TR123-81

CO054-02

PA001

N0016

JR087

PR00502

PR003

May 20, 1985

Dear Mr. Rosenfeld:

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your letter of May 8. I appreciate more than I can say your kind and generous words.

My purpose was never to suggest we forgive and forget, and I found that today's Germans do not suggest such a thing. They have preserved the camps with evidence of all the horror of the Holocaust, and they say along with us, "never again."

You were kind to write as you did and your letter means a great deal to me.

Again, thanks.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN

Mr. Robert T. Rosenfeld
1215 Terminal Tower
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

85 522

HANDWRITING FILE

To Robert T. Rosenfeld - Walter, Haverfield, Busscher &
Chockley.
1215 Terminal Tower, Cleveland Ohio

Dear Mr. Rosenfeld

#4113

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your letter of May 8. I appreciate more than I can say your kind & generous words.

My purpose was never to suggest we forgive & forget and I found that today's Germans do not suggest such a thing. They have preserved the camps with evidence of all the horror of the Holocaust and they say along with us, "never again".

You were kind to write as you did and your letter means a great deal to me.

Again Thanks.

Sincerely
PR

Walter, Haverfield, Buescher & Chockley

Attorneys at Law

Paul W. Walter
D. Rusk Haverfield
Edward D. Wyner
F. Wilson Chockley, Jr.
Homer W. Giles
Arthur P. Steinmetz
Robert L. Musser
J. Robert Malloy
Robert T. Rosenfeld
Michael T. McMenamin
Robert S. Horbaly
Charles T. Riehl
John H. Gibbon
William D. Buss II
Jeffrey G. Wyner
James E. Betts
Henry B. Fischer
William A. Welty
David W. Welty

1215 Terminal Tower

Cleveland, Ohio 44113

216/781-1212

In Columbus, Ohio
16 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614/221-7371

May 8, 1985

Christopher L. Gibbon
Victor J. Leo
Marcia E. Hurt
Frederick W. Whatley
Mark D. Weller
Marian C. Abram
Nancy A. Noall
Kenneth A. Zirm
Mark T. Wassell
Robert M. Humphrey

Loyal V. Buescher (1915-1979)

Of Counsel
Susan E. Batal
Oscar H. Johnson
Walter J. McNamara III

President Ronald W. Reagan
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to you not only as a proud American but also as a thankful Jew, proud of your courage at Bitburg Cemetery and thankful for your remarks at Bergen-Belsen.

I, too, before your visit joined hundreds of thousands of Americans in disagreeing with both the purpose and the act of your visitation to the cemetery. However, having observed your remarks at the airport and those of Chancellor Kohl, it became clear to me how important this act of symbolism was. I thank you for your courage.

In retrospect, I think that your visit to the concentration camp site and your compassionate remarks were among the highest points of your presidency to date. No one could have listened to you and observed you without feeling both the anguish and compassion which you must have felt at that moment. Through your words I felt that same anguish but I never could have expressed it as well as did you. I thank you for saying to the world what needed to be said in 1985.

Again, my heartfelt thanks.

Very truly yours,


Robert T. Rosenfeld

RTR:kaw

320760

2300

AB 4640

TR12301

CO054-02

HU030

PA001

ND016

PC

JL007

ST039

PR005-02

PR003

1: JV

May 20, 1985

Dear Judge Weisberger:

I can't tell you how much your letter meant to me. You were more than kind to write as you did and I'm most grateful for your generous words.

You are so right about not forgetting or forgiving those who committed the atrocities of the Holocaust. What struck me in this whole episode was the determination of today's Germans that they were not going to forget or ask forgiveness. I learned that, in addition to preserving the death camps with all the evidence of the evil done there, they bring their school children each year to these camps, so they will grow up determined it must never happen again.

Looking back through history, we see how wars in the past planted the seeds of the next war. When peace came, the rivalries and hatreds remained. Forty years ago we did something different. Now forty years later erstwhile enemies are friends and allies. It was in this spirit I accepted the invitation to visit Bergen-Belsen and Bitburg. I still believe it was the morally right thing to do.

Well, again, my heartfelt thanks to you.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Joseph R. Weisberger
Judge
Supreme Court of Rhode Island
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

HANDWRITING FILE

To Judge Joseph R. Weisberger - Supreme Court of Rhode Island
Providence Rhode Island

Dear Judge Weisberger

I can't tell you how much your letter meant to me. You were more than kind to write as you did and I'm most grateful for your generous words.

You are so right about not forgetting or forgiving those who committed the atrocities of the Holocaust.

What struck me in this whole episode was the determination of today's Germans that they were not going to forget or ask forgiveness. I learned that in addition to preserving the death camps with all the evidence of the evil done there they bring their school children each year to these camps so they will grow up determined it must never happen again.

Looking back through history we see how war in the ~~past~~ past planted the seeds of the next war. When peace came the ~~seeds~~ ^{rivalries} & hatreds remained.

Forty years ago we did something different. Now forty years later erstwhile enemies are friends & allies. It was in this spirit I accepted the invitation to visit Bergen-Belsen & Bitburg. I still believe it was the morally right thing to do.

Once again my heartfelt thanks to you,
Sincerely RR

3

Pro-Trip



Supreme Court of Rhode Island

JOSEPH R. WEISBERGER
ASSOCIATE JUSTICE

Providence

May 10, 1985

The Honorable Ronald Reagan
President of the United States
White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Reagan:

The events of the past few weeks relating to your trip to Europe have included many critical and difficult elements which must have been productive of extreme distress on your part. I, therefore, feel constrained to write to you in order to express my deep feeling of pride in the dignified and steadfast manner in which you have withstood the cacophonies of criticism and the many slights and discourtesies which have been visited upon you.

I strongly believe that your determination under the circumstances to visit the cemetery at Bitburg was the right decision to make. Many well meaning people were highly critical of this courageous act on your part. I share with those critics, as I know you do, complete revulsion and horror at the atrocities committed by the rulers of Nazi Germany.

However, I believe that they misassessed the purpose of your trip. That purpose was in great part to demonstrate our reconciliation with the Republic of West Germany forty years after armed conflict had ended. I recognize, as I am sure you do, that it is impossible to forgive the part in

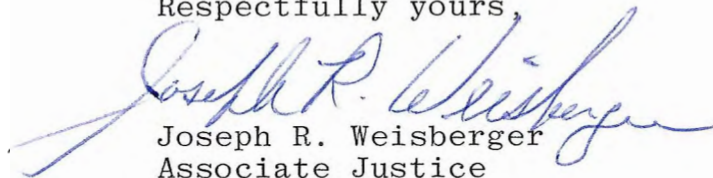
The Honorable Ronald Reagan
Page Two
May 10, 1985

these atrocities played by members of the Waffen SS and many members of the German bureaucracy. Nevertheless, we cannot expect the German people and government to remain tarnished by guilt forever. There is no question that Germany is probably the strongest member of NATO and the keystone of the arch of our alliances in western Europe. Therefore, a slight to the German Chancellor and government at this time would have accomplished far more counterproductive results than those which could have been beneficial to persons who suffered under the Nazi regime.

I therefore wish to compliment you on your skill and perceptiveness in carrying out what must have been a most difficult and heartrending decision. Your address at the cemetery was a masterpiece of declaration of reconciliation, without forgetting the terrible events of the past. Your address before the European Parliament in the face of discourtesy and attempted disruption was dignified and statesmanlike. You turned aside the barbs of your detractors with gentle humor and good natured tolerance.

In summary, the events of these past two weeks have made me very proud of our President and very proud to be an American. As a lifelong Republican, I am also proud that our party is represented by one who can rise above the expedience of the moment to achieve a foreign policy goal which will be of lasting benefit to our country.

Respectfully yours,



Joseph R. Weisberger
Associate Justice

JV 11

May 20, 1985

Dear Judge Houston:

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I am most grateful for your kind and generous words. They mean a great deal to me, especially in view of your own war-time experience.

It seems to me we achieved something most unusual forty years ago. Back through history wars were settled in such a way they planted the seeds for the next war. The hatreds and rivalries remained. Not this time. Here it is four decades later and our erstwhile enemies are our staunchest friends and allies.

Again, my thanks to you and very best regards.

Sincerely,

[Faint stamp]

A

The Honorable E. J. Houston
Judge
District Court of Ontario
Court House
2 Daly Avenue
Ottawa, Canada K1N 6E2

RR:AVH:NM:SEV:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

320761

4640

3400

TR 12301

CO05402

ND 016

PR001

CO028

PR003

PR00502

JH007

HANDWRITING FILE

To Judge E.J. Houston - Judges Chambers Court House
Dear Judge Houston _____ 2 Daly Ave. Ottawa Canada
Kin. 6E2

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I
am most grateful for your kind & generous words they
mean a great deal to me.

own war-time experience. —

It seems to me we achieved something most
unusual forty years ago. Back through history
wars were settled in such a way they planted the
seeds for the next war. The hatreds & rivalries
remained. Not this time. Here it is four decades
later and our erstwhile enemies are our staunchest
friends & allies.

Again my thanks to you & very best regards,
Sincerely
RR

5/ Pro-Trip



THE HONOURABLE EDWARD J. HOUSTON
JUDGE
DISTRICT COURT OF ONTARIO

JUDGE'S CHAMBERS
COURT HOUSE
2 DALY AVENUE, OTTAWA, CANADA
K1N 6E2

May 5th, 1985

President Ronald Reagan,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.,
20500

Dear Mr. President:

Through the miracle of television, I have watched the events in West Germany today.

May I congratulate you on your actions. It took great courage to do what you did. I heard two addresses by you. Both were in good taste and will contribute to world peace which is the aim of all right-thinking people.

I know Germany. In January 1944 I was shot down while preparing to drop bombs on Berlin - my eighth trip. Five of our seven-man crew were killed.

After about twenty hours I became a P.O.W. While in Germany I was from time to time with thousands of U.S.A. P.O.W.'s - mostly B-17 crews.

I know about the Gestapo and Hitler Youth from personal experience. Your account today about the German mother reminded me of a German soldier who was very kind to me when we were on the march near the end of the war. I can assure you that I fully understood your message.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'E. J. Houston'.

Judge E.J. Houston

320769
5380 AB
TR 123 01
CD054 02
PA001
VDO 16
VA
PR00502

FJW

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 22, 1985

Dear Lisa:

Thank you very much for your kind letter. It was kind of you to write as you did and you warmed my heart.

I've heard from a number of veterans who, like your father, had stories to tell about moments in the war when deeds of human kindness momentarily bridged the gap between enemies.

One thing that made me want to do the trip was the knowledge that in these forty years since V.E. Day the Germans have become our friends and allies and have never asked us to forgive or forget the Nazi evil. Indeed, they take their school children to the concentration camps and show them the horror of the Holocaust. They do it so such a thing can never happen again.

I've enclosed my speech at Bergen-Belsen and the one later in the day at an air base in Bitburg.

Again, my heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Mrs. Lisa Zanatta Henn
Apartment 1
114 Barnson Avenue
San Mateo, California 94402

HANDWRITING FILE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Lisa

Thank you very much for your kind letter. It was kind of you to write as you did and you warmed my heart.

I've heard from a number of Veterans who like your father had stories to tell about moments in the war when deeds of human kindness ~~momentarily~~ momentarily bridged the gap between enemies.

One thing that made me want to do the trip was the knowledge that in these forty years since V.E. day the Germans have become our friends & allies & have never asked us to forgive or forget the Nazi evil. Indeed they take their school children to the concentration camps & show them the horror of the Holocaust. They do it so such a thing can never happen again.

I've enclosed my ^{SPEECH} ~~speech~~ at Bergen-Belsen and the one later in the day at an airbase in Bitburg.

Again my heartfelt thanks,
Jimmy R.R.

4-27-85

Dear President Reagan,

I hope this letter finds you and Mrs. Reagan well.

I'm writing you to offer my support for your visit to Bitburg Cemetery. I have been following all the news coverage and I must admit I have felt somewhat disappointed in the reaction from the American people.

You know from reading my "D" Day story how much World War II and all the events of those years means to my family. My father made sure we understood what World War II was all about. We were taught about what was done to the Jews by the Nazis. My father had stories of liberating concentration camps that could bring tears to our eyes. We all know what happened to the Jews was horrible - that it should never be forgotten. But at the same time, I believe we must reach out beyond that and try to go on.

2

I remember asking my father what the Germans were like. I grew up with T.V. and movies portraying the Germans as evil beyond belief. My father had many face to face encounters with them. He told us that what surprized him most was that they were "just like us." "They were just as scared, just as confused and wanted to go home just as bad."

When the war ended, my father was in Germany and he said for a few minutes it didn't matter whether you were American, Russian, Italian or German. It was over!

I know that if my father was alive today, he would be happy that you were planning to visit Bitburg. After 40 years we should be able to just feel the sadness of losing beloved men - whatever nationality. I hope that the people who oppre this visit will be able to feel some sort of sympathy for the Nazis. I'm sure they are paying for their horrible deeds.

My thoughts will be with you during your trip to Europe. Thank you, Mr. President for sticking to what you believe in. I admire your strength.

Forever your supporter,

Lisa Janatta Fear

WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

TR123-D1

O - OUTGOING

H - INTERNAL

I - INCOMING

Date Correspondence Received (YY/MM/DD) / /

Name of Correspondent: W. Melianovich

MI Mail Report User Codes: (A) (B) (C)

Subject: Congratulates President on decision to visit Biltburg Cemetery

ROUTE TO:	ACTION	DISPOSITION			
Office/Agency (Staff Name)	Action Code	Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response	Code	Completion Date YY/MM/DD
<u>PLKOJE</u>	<u>ORIGINATOR</u>	<u>85105114</u>			<u>C 85105114</u>
<u>✓ CO HIGG</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>85105123</u>	<u>AVH-388</u>		<u>C 85106119</u>
<u>DM</u>		<u> / / </u>			<u> / / </u>
		<u> / / </u>			<u> / / </u>
		<u> / / </u>			<u> / / </u>
		<u> / / </u>			<u> / / </u>

ACTION CODES:

- A - Appropriate Action
- C - Comment/Recommendation
- D - Draft Response
- F - Furnish Fact Sheet to be used as Enclosure
- I - Info Copy Only/No Action Necessary
- R - Direct Reply w/Copy
- S - For Signature
- X - Interim Reply

DISPOSITION CODES:

- A - Answered
- B - Non-Special Referral
- C - Completed
- S - Suspended

FOR OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE:

- Type of Response = Initials of Signer
- Code = "A"
- Completion Date = Date of Outgoing

Comments: _____

Keep this worksheet attached to the original incoming letter.
Send all routing updates to Central Reference (Room 75, OEOP).
Always return completed correspondence record to Central Files.
Refer questions about the correspondence tracking system to Central Reference, ext. 2590.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ONLY

CLASSIFICATION SECTION

No. of Additional Correspondents: _____ Media: C Individual Codes: 4400

Prime Subject Code: TR12301 Secondary Subject Codes: 4401354

PRESIDENTIAL REPLY

Code	Date	Comment	Form
C	_____	Time: _____	P- _____
DSP	_____	Time: _____	Media: _____

SIGNATURE CODES:

CPn - Presidential Correspondence
 n - 0 - Unknown
 n - 1 - Ronald Wilson Reagan
 n - 2 - Ronald Reagan
 n - 3 - Ron
 n - 4 - Dutch
 n - 5 - Ron Reagan
 n - 6 - Ronald
 n - 7 - Ronnie

CLn - First Lady's Correspondence
 n - 0 - Unknown
 n - 1 - Nancy Reagan
 n - 2 - Nancy
 n - 3 - Mrs. Ronald Reagan

CBn - Presidential & First Lady's Correspondence
 n - 1 - Ronald Reagan - Nancy Reagan
 n - 2 - Ron - Nancy

MEDIA CODES:

B - Box/package
 C - Copy
 D - Official document
 G - Message
 H - Handcarried
 L - Letter
 M - Mailgram
 O - Memo
 P - Photo
 R - Report
 S - Sealed
 T - Telegram
 V - Telephone
 X - Miscellaneous
 Y - Study

Byelorussian American Republican Federation

P.O. BOX 317, Hereford, Maryland 21111

May 6, 1985

The Honorable
Ronald W. Reagan
President Of The United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

320828

Copy

Dear Mr. President:

We, the members of The Byelorussian American Republican Federation, wish to send you our warmest congratulations on your firm decision to go to Bitburg Cemetery. It must have been painful for you and Nancy to undertake this journey in light of the venom that was unleashed by the press and the special interest groups.

We hoped and prayed that you would not waver under such overwhelming pressure. Once again you have demonstrated to us that you are a man of vision and determination. Once again you have shown us that with you America's interests come first. God bless you for that.

We, Byelorussian Americans, many of whom came out of the Nazi slave labor camps and factories know very well what it was like for the Slavic people to live and die under the Nazi rule. Millions of Slavs died. Every fourth Byelorussian perished. Many were herded like cattle to Germany to slave for the master race. They were branded as "OST" on a white patch with blue letters.

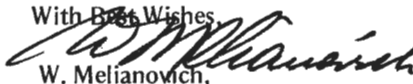
At the end of the war these people chose to stay in the West as refugees never again to see their beloved homelands. They did not want to live under a new tyrant — The Russian Communism. The Russian Communists and their collaborators are now the masters in their land. Thousands were forced to go behind the Russian lines to certain death. However thousands survived. Some had to lie to escape the dragnet. Now many of these individuals are hounded by our Justice Department OSI division. Many are accused of crimes they did not commit. In most of the cases the accusers are the KGB who delight in persecuting those who dared to stand up against them before, during, and after World War Two. The Soviets find many collaborators in the United States who eagerly do their bidding.

Often the charges are leveled against Byelorussians whose only crime is of being anti-communists. The communists can't forgive them for standing up against communism even under extremely harsh conditions of Nazi occupation. The Soviets and their collaborators know well that most of these people are innocent of crimes that the communists accuse them of. Not being able to catch them the Soviets try to discredit and ruin them economically. Our Justice Department has been tricked into doing the dirty work of the KGB using the taxpayers money. Why are we using the taxpayers money to hound many innocent people while we cut our defenses? Why are we denying these accused the full protection of the Judicial System that we Americans assume that every citizen has? Why Soviet fabricated evidence is used to prosecute these people without giving them even a chance of examining the witnesses and of being judged by a jury?

Mr. President, we admire your stand against communism. Please don't abandon the Nicaraguan and Afghan freedom fighters. Far too often the West has abandoned the anti-communist fighters. America needs you more than ever. Don't let her down and the people who stood by you, believed in you, and followed you in good and bad times.

God Bless You and your family.

With Best Wishes,



W. Melianovich,

Chairman

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

JV

May 16, 1985

VI 320851
2200
TR12301
CO05402
NDD16
PA001

Dear Russ:

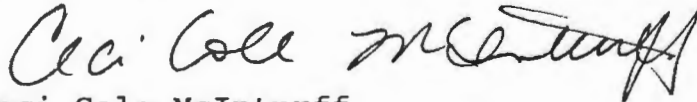
On behalf of Mitch Daniels, I would like to thank you for your recent letter of welcome and for sharing your personal experiences as a member of the 99th Division in the U.S. Army during World War II.

PC
ST035
FB00601

Thanks too for providing me by telephone with further detail of your heartwarming accounts of the human sensitivities demonstrated by the Germans and Americans during that deadly war. I shared your experiences with others here at the White House and appreciate your thoughtful support for the President's effort to visit the Bitburg Cemetery in Germany in the spirit of reconciliation. A copy of the President's remarks at the Bitburg Air Base are enclosed for your benefit.

Please continue to keep in touch.

Sincerely,



Ceci Cole-McInturff
Special Assistant to the President
for Intergovernmental Affairs

✕
The Honorable Russ Guerra
Representative of the State of Ohio
State House
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Enclosure

May
pls draft
reply to Lane
talked to him
re: possible use
of this story in
pres. speech
FYI - will
amend

pending whether
or not it's
used...

It -

April 27, 1985

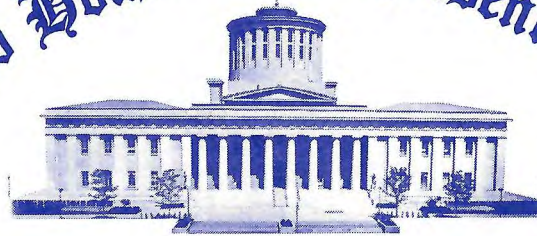
Bernard Epstein's last contact with Russ Guerra was 10-15 years ago...
Epstein believed to still live in Boston...
family has lumber interests in the area...
Epstein is former Massachusetts Insurance Commissioner...
no address or phone number available from Guerra.

FYI.

CCA¹

Grannis -
Did you draft report
or are you holding it?
See re outcome with
re anecdote?
JRS
4/29

Ohio House of Representatives



SC. act. 16/16.
from Cei -
replied

Columbus
43215

RUSS GUERRA, JR.
STATE HOUSE
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
(614) 462-8051
(513) 836-9883 - Home

COMMITTEES:

Local Government
Ranking Minority Member
Highways and Highway Safety
Finance and Appropriations
Sub-Committee General Section
(Finance and Appropriations)
Reference
Capital Planning and Improvement
Advisory Board
Advisory Board
Welfare Oversight Commission

April 24, 1985

Mr. Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
Deputy Assistant to the President
Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Daniels:

Welcome to your new job. I hope that our relationship will be as pleasant as it was with Lee.

I have been troubled these past few days with the heat that Mr. Reagan has been taking for his trip to Germany. This unease was compounded when I attended a memorial service for the Holocaust victims at a local temple. Although I am a Roman Catholic, my background and schooling in Dayton has earned me the status of an "honorary Jew" from the multitude of friends I have in that particular religion. This is point 1.

Perhaps a bit of further explanation will qualify my position on this matter. As soon as I could after graduation from high school, I joined the Army, ultimately ending up with the 99th Division right in the middle of the Bulge. I lost some very good friends, but we also took a lot of the Germans too. I was subsequently captured and spent the next several months in a POW camp. This is point 2.

My platoon commander was a 2nd Lieutenant from Boston, Mass. His name was Bernard Epstein, and his religion was Jewish. Epstein was hit and suffered a chest wound. We carried him for at least five miles and the Germans instructed us to leave him. We refused, thinking that they were either going to abandon him, or possibly shoot him after we were out of sight. A German infantry officer, not SS, understood our situation and gave his word that the Lieutenant would be well cared for with the German casualties. Further, he recognized Epstein as Jewish and he told us to discard his dog tags since he had his paybook as identity. After the war, Epstein told me he was well treated and had fully recovered as a result. This is point 3.

Mr. Mitchell Daniels, Jr.
April 24, 1985
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During the period of my confinement, we had a definite personality conflict with the camp personnel. On one occasion I thought I had bought it and was pretty badly mauled by a guard. There was no doubt that on our return to camp I would face additional and more severe punishment. In the interim, by virtue of a pair of stolen and concealed scissors, I was able to remove my beard while we were en route. It fooled all but one guard, and he did not turn me in. Later, I found that he had a son who was a prisoner in Oklahoma, that he was grateful for the treatment given his son, and that he wanted to show his gratitude. He did, then later deserted. In addition, numerous civilians tried to help us in the camps and on work details by slipping us food, clothes, or just words of encouragement mixed with bits of war news. This is point 4.

Mitchell, I had to go this long way to try to make my point of support for Mr. Reagan and his trip to the German cemetery. A lot of the guys we fought and killed are buried there. They were young kids mostly, with some experienced front line combat soldiers leading them. They were not a lot different than we, and they acted as humanely as one can in a war. These were ordinary troops, not the butchers of the SS or the other special forces. At Memorial Day services, I think of those we killed too.

To claim that this cemetery is filled with "murderers" because of the presence of a few of the SS, is like categorizing the entire U.S. Army on the basis of Lt. Calley and the My Lai incident. Hitler did not come to power by acclamation. He was not universally accepted by the German people. If he had been, they wouldn't have needed the SS or the Gestapo. The President is honoring those who died in the service of Germany, not Hitler's Madhouse.

I want Mr. Reagan to know that I believe he is doing the right thing. I am disconsolate about the seeming "crybaby" condemnations offered by some segments of the Jewish community. My constituency includes maybe 10% Jewish, but I would stand with him on this issue. If you get the chance, relay my feelings to him.

Thanks for your time, and I look forward to working with you in the near future. Please contact me if there is anything I can do at this level.

Sincerely,


Russ Guerra
State Representative

RG/ck