

## GERMAN BABY-BOOMER RECALLS FAMILY'S ROLE IN WWII

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**COOKEVILLE** – Prior to World War II, Alfred Noll was a young, 20-something professional German soccer player.

He is described as a kind man who worked so hard to provide for his family who came from what was known as the Eastern Zone. Soviet occupation zone or simply East Germany.

All of that changed in an instant when Germany plunged into the war and soldiers of the German Army demanded Noll join their ranks.

“They came and told him he needed to go but he didn’t want to join in that.” Evelyn Allison, Noll’s niece said. “He said, ‘that’s not for me.’ They put my whole family – my mother, my grandmother and my grandfather against the house. They said, ‘We’re going to shoot every one of them.’”



Noll agreed to join the German Army in order to save his family from execution.

(Pictured: Evelyn Allison holds a picture of her uncle Alfred

Noll who was forced to join the German army during World War II. He and his family worked to secretly help American soldiers during the war).

According to Allison, Noll hadn’t been in the army long before getting separated from his group during the fighting.

“He got lost somewhere,” she said.

That’s when he stumbled upon a camp of approximately 40 American soldiers.

They gave him packages of chewing gum, looked after him and even offered to take Noll along with them and take him back to the states with them.

Allison admits she doesn’t understand why the American soldiers were so kind to her uncle but, for whatever reason, they were.

“He was always a friendly guy,” she recalled. “He stayed there a couple of days and they told him, ‘Hey, we could take you with us to the states.’”

Noll considered leaving but couldn’t leave his family behind.

After all, they were counting on him to help support them.

“He went back,” Allison said.

The German soldiers were curious about Noll’s whereabouts while he was separated from the group.

“They asked him, ‘where were you,’ and he said, ‘I got lost,’” she said.

Noll was searched and there, in his pocket, was a piece of chewing gum the American had given him.

When asked where the American were, Noll kept telling them he didn’t know.

According to Allison, Noll’s foot was placed in “a machine” and each time he refused to tell where the American soldiers were, crushing pressure was applied.

“He would say, ‘I don’t care, they could have killed me. I would never have told where they were because they were too good to me...I would have died for that,’” she said.

After that, Noll had a difficult time walking and could no longer serve in the German army.

Meanwhile, Noll’s family was also secretly helping American soldiers.

“My mother, she worked for the Americans for a while,” Allison said. “She ironed clothers for them. When she washed them and ironed them she had to hide them in the straw in the attic. Because if the Germans found it...”

According to Allison, some of the American soldiers were also helping German civilians.

“During the war (American) soldiers brought duffle bags full of food,” she said.

People like Allison’s mother and grandmother would collect the food in old baby carriages and sneak it home.

Allison recalls that her family thought well of the American soldiers and were grateful for their help.

Today, many mysteries surround the story of Noll’s wartime experiences.

Unfortunately, they will likely remain a mystery.

He passed away in Germany last month following a battle with pancreatic cancer.

“When my mother died of breast cancer 13 years ago, he was holding her hand,” Allison said. “His only daughter, his only kid, he held her hand when she died of cancer. Then, about three years after that, his wife passed away and he held her hand.”

A distant relative called to tell Allison that Noll had passed away.

“No one held his hand,” she said.

Even while Noll was alive he didn’t like to talk about the war or his short time in the army.

“He didn’t ever like to talk about it,” Allison said. “I could only get so much out of him.”

The only person that Noll would talk to about his wartime experiences was Allison’s husband, a two-tour Vietnam veteran.

“He said always (to my husband) ‘you all are good people,’” she said.

\*Read more wartime stories and the History of Putnam Co., TN at:  
<http://www.ajlambert.com>