

## David Bald Eagle - Post War Struggles - OSEU 2

I was at... during my army career... towards the end... I had a friend... a girlfriend... from England...that I was going to...who was gonna get married...but we said not to get married till after the war. Whether I'll come back or not, I don't know. So that was a good deal. So, I went to war. I almost didn't come back, but I came back. I was lucky. But I was on crutches and, I came back...back to St. Paul or Minneapolis is where she was living...they came from England. And they came there... her father got sick and she...he was in Rochester, Minnesota...in the hospital. She and her mother were living in Minneapolis and she was upstairs in the Paramount Theater. She danced... She was teaching dancing. So one day, I happened to be up there and I was watching them and... I liked to dance...Marilyn knows that. And so, I started dancing there at that dancing school. And here, this woman was watching me and she's going to dance with me. So, I danced with her. She was younger than I was.

And here, I got acquainted with her and she...she liked my dancing... I had a smooth way of dancing. So she and I teamed up and...here she was running that school and we went to...the first place was St. Paul. I forget what...St. Paul University...St. Paul there. What was the name of that? This ballroom that we danced at...WORD. We danced there and here we took first in dancing. And I became a well-known dancer with her...and we got together and we danced in Chicago...the Tianan Ballroom, is it? Something like that. And then we went back down here...back down to St. Paul. We danced at St. Paul and Minneapolis. We got married after the war... we got married. We were gonna live in Rapid... Minneapolis...and her mother was really happy... it was her only child, you know...they only had one child.

So I...I was going to come to visit at home. We lived in Dupree, South Dakota, then...my folks. So I came back to visit. And while I was visiting with my friends, you know, the sheriff came in. The sheriff came in. He said, "Dave," he said, "I got an emergency call for you. Could you call back? Your mother-in-law." Okay, so I said yes. So I went and I called and here there's been a death in the family. They wanted me to go back...be there. So my dad drove me to Moberly...and they put me on a small plane. And they flew me to Minneapolis. I got up, took a taxi, and went down to the house. I noticed there was a coffin. So I went over there and my wife was there. She was...I blanked out. I became pretty much suicidal then on. That's how I got into a race car driving... anything that would... why her and not me.

That's why I got into race car driving... and Daddy Darrell's daredevil driving and... or anything that'd kill me. I went into rodeo...back at the rodeo...bull riding... saddle bronc riding... and everything. And I drove wreck cars for Ford Motor Company. But I never got killed. Instead, my friend got killed.

And then I was rodeoing up at Casey Tibbs, and he asked me if I would go to Europe with him to Brussels, Belgium for the World's Fair. So, I said, okay, and so be it. "Be in Denver Monday," he says. And this was Thursday. So I got, my mother said, get ready. That's a good experience. So I drove to Denver. When I got there, I didn't realize... I didn't count on anything. I didn't realize that I didn't have a passport. I told Casey, I said, "Casey," I said. "I don't have the passport." I couldn't go. I didn't realize

it. I didn't realize we had to have a passport to go to Europe. "Oh, come on," he says. "I got one. I got one for you."

"Oh, okay. Okay. We got one for me, guy." So I joined him and... we went to Europe and we got to rodeoing over there... and that's when I met Josie... at the rodeo...and I got hurt. I came out of a bareback horse... and bumped...and led...and it turned around and started towards the chute... and it missed the ground, my legs, and flipped over... and fell right on top of me... and almost broke my back. My back was black and blue, and they took me to the hospital. Of course, I was unconscious for a while. I woke up in the ambulance. They took me up there... and they took me to the doctor's office... and I couldn't speak their language. They...I didn't understand French or...I couldn't speak their language. I couldn't tell what's wrong or anything. It just so happened her mother was there. Her mother could speak English, so she interpreted for me. And so, she really saved me. Otherwise, they wouldn't... I shouldn't be alive...I guess the doctors. But then they assigned an English nurse that could speak English, assigned her to me. So she was my nurse.

And the next morning...next morning...she came in and she said, "You got some visitors. You got some visitors." She...they called me "chief" because I was an Indian. And so I said, "Okay, tell them to come in." And here, Josie's mother and dad were there. Maybe we better go. And I said, "No." I said, "Just go ahead. Just stay here. That's okay." And here it was Casey, Bill Linderman, and all those World Champion bronc riders. Casey, the first thing he said, was "There, I was having breakfast with two bottles of beer sitting there." You know they serve beer for breakfast over there. "See there, there he is. You can't kill an Indian," he says. "Unless you cut his head off, then he probably lives," he said . He'd tell that to Bill Linderman... and I always remember that.