

# *The no name partisan. . .*

I have always thought that one's dearest moments in life must be the conversations with their grandparents, especially when the person is just a child and with the tendency to delve deeper into different topics that he is curious about. And the story I am going to show the world, is a true story too, and told by my grandfather. I was always full of questions for whom I fought to find answers, and asking my grandfather about answering these questions used to be one of my favorite things to do.

The majority of people around the world may not know, but Albanians are a people full of traditions, a people full of details that are way deeper than they may look at first sight. One of our most known traditions, as a symbol of survival against the enemies that have always risked the fate of our little country, is the Albanian people's names. Most of people think that Albanian individuals have got "weird names", but they don't really understand the meaning, the importance and the value of these names, which is a great symbol of survival against the enemy, inheriting our Albanian language. But this is a fact that, as a kid, has always confused me and never understood why our country used to name people with specific Albanian words.

And today I wanted to talk about my dear grandfather's brother's, whose name was Partisan. When I was just four years old, I asked my grandfather if he had brothers or sisters, and he told me that he was a brother to three sisters and three other brothers, and one particular name caught my attention, Partisan. I asked my grandfather why did his parents chose this name for their first-born child, and there, my story begins.

My grandfather's uncle used to be a partisan, a great soldier who since at an early age decided to join the Albanian army because he wanted the best for his country's future. It had been six months since the last time his family had seen him, but they exchanged letters with him every month, and there had been two months without any news by him, so the family was very stressed out, since they didn't know what had happened to him...

My great-grandfather, was very stressed about his brother, what might have happened to him; where he was, how was he surviving, but he had also another big thing waiting for him, because his wife, was pregnant with her first-born child, who was going to be my grandfather's brother...

...It was late at night, and everyone was sleeping. And then, they heard a knock on the door, but no one used to come for a visit that late at night. My great-grandfather got up with terror and fear in his eyes. As he approached the door, he heard another knock and without opening the door, with his heart beating faster than anytime he could ever remember, he heard someone whispering, but didn't understand what the man was saying, so then, my great-grandfather opened the door and there was this young man laying down on the floor with bloodstream on the side of his forehead. My great-grandfather didn't recognize him, he surely knew that he hadn't ever met this man before, so he was surprised frightened when he saw him. Then he realized that the man had his leg hurt, so he couldn't get up, but as the first seconds passed, he understood from the uniform that the man lying on the floor was a partisan, and helped him get in and closed the door behind him.

When he helped the man get in, the women of the house and the other men were all up. While the women were preparing some water and napkins so they could clean the blood in his face and also help him heal his leg, men helped him to lay in a better position and brought a blanket for him. Then the partisan talked and asked if it was the family of his beloved friend, who had lost his life from the german attack while trying to protect the young partisan and ended up saving this man's life while sacrificing his, and they nodded silently... They didn't try to bother him, as they saw that he was sick and without any amount of energy left in him, so they let him get some rest while the other ones went to get some sleep too, even though none of them really slept, but thought of their dead brother and his contribute to his

country's future. Or, as my grandfather said: "He died as a great man who chose to fight for his people, he died as he had always wished to die, died for a great cause as many other Albanian men did."...

But the other day, when the sun hadn't risen still, my great-grandfather woke up to a loud scream coming from his wife, but she wasn't laying next to him on their bed. He got up fast and ran down the stairs and went to the main room, where one of the family's women went to him and said that his wife was going to give birth to his child. Then, he joined his other brothers in one of the other rooms, where with them was the partisan too...

...But then, the unexplainable happened. Someone knocked furiously on the door. The person who knocked seemed angry and started screaming in a language they didn't even understand. One of the brothers got up and took a glance out of the window and saw three germans standing on the other side of their door house. Everyone got up and took the Albanian partisan with them, but they didn't know where to take and hide him, because the germans finding the partisan meant two things, he was going to get killed by them, and also, the family was going to get persecuted by the german army, which probably meant that they were going to kill the whole family, considering them as traitors.

Then, two of the women walked to them and told the men to hide the partisan in the room where my great-grandmother was waiting for her first child to be born. They did as they were said and they hid the partisan behind the future newborn child's bed. My great-grandfather opened the door and the germans took him outside with the other men of the family, and went in to check for the partisan. They searched everywhere and then, lastly, they went to check in the main room where they were hearing a woman's screams, and when the germans opened the door with force, saw a dozen of women circling another woman, which germans realized that she was having birth to her child. So, they didn't mind to check in it and left...

...Some hours later, the baby was born and it was a boy...

...A day later, the family found a letter which was written by the partisan. He told them that he was leaving, because he didn't want to risk their family because of them helping and hiding him. He wished them luck and also wished them the best for their baby...He had considered himself to be very lucky to had met them, because in them, he saw the great people of his country, the ones that would sacrifice themselves just for a great cause, even if the cause would be saving a partisan's life. And then he left, but he never mentioned his name ...

And there was another problem, the new son of the family didn't still have a name, so they chose to name the baby after the partisan whose life they saved, and his name would be until the last day of his life, Partisan, the first-born child of my grandfather's family...

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They never learned his name, but the story of the partisan will always be a reminder of the war that the Albanian people led with the german forces throughout the WW2. These partisans, these young men, chose death and sacrificed their lives in the name of our nation. They went over to death, chose to forget about their dreams, and sometimes, I really wonder what dreams they had, what their thoughts and ambitions were...

But they didn't took any step back, because our nation's future came first to them, because it had been two thousand years under the control of the other nations, and another invader meant losing our independence, our sovereignty and our future as a free nation with the will of building a nation where the children and the women wouldn't be afraid anymore to lose their fathers and their husbands, where, raising your voice and fighting and wanting the best for your country wouldn't be considered a crime. For these men, the nation came first, or as our great writer of the Albanian Renaissance, Jeronim de Rada says: "One cannot be happy when the homeland has caught fire." That is what they were, some martyrs who will always be remembered as the foundation of the country that they dreamed to built.

Some of them happened to come back from the war, to go back to their families, to their wife who God knows how many tears had ran off of her face, strangled in the sea of the fear of losing their husbands. These great partisans went

back to their children who, most of them didn't even know who their father was, having the only opportunity to dream of them before sleep, to dream of how they looked, who they were, were they good and would they love them, and driven in their dreams, wished for one thing, for the war to end so they could finally meet their father. Many partisans got the chance to live and to be next to their family after the war, and also, lots of them didn't.

We, as a country, had had plenty of big, great losses, but just the thought of the young partisans who weren't meant to come back from the war, as their lives began just to end with the WW2, might be, in my opinion, our greatest sorrow. They were the partisans who dreamed of a future for themselves, of a great one, but after all, they dreamed more of a future for their children, for us...

But luckily, being an Albanian, means that the history will be inherited in every little detail in our lives, in our people, because each of us, every Albanian is a glimpse of history in themselves, a glimpse of the past. And one of those people made of glimpses of a past, of a partisan, a young one, is also my grandfather's brother, Partisan, who, in him, hides a great story of the Albanian people, filled with sacrifices, hope, and at the same time, fear, but in the name of one thing, in the name of the proudness of being Albanian and loving and sacrificing for a future for our descendants...