



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** We Shall Never Forget – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Ret. U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Well, hello, everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

**Dr. Tim Clinton:** I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host here of the broadcast at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm honored to serve alongside Dr. Dobson as resident authority on mental health and relationships. Thank you for joining us. America stands for freedom and liberty under God. And that freedom we enjoy every day was fought for, paid for with the blood of courageous men and women. And on this day, Memorial Day, we remember and honor those who sacrificed everything, who gave all, their lives for our freedom. We have a very special guest today that's going to help us honor those who did that very thing. US Army retired Lieutenant General William G. Jerry Boykin. He's a man with numerous awards and accommodations including Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts. Currently, Jerry serves as Executive Vice President of the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C.

Early in his military career, he became one of the original members of the US Army's Delta Force. He then went on to command these elite warriors in combat operations. During his 36-year military career, general Boykin was involved in numerous high-profile missions, including the hunt for Pablo Escobar in Columbia and the Black Hawk Down incident in Mogadishu, Somalia. Also, Jerry's an ordained minister with a passion for the gospel and he encourages Christians everywhere to become warriors in God's kingdom. General. Boykin and his wife Ashley enjoy spending time with their five grown children and a growing number of grandchildren. I love that.

Welcome back to Family Talk, General Boykin. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley send their regards, their love and appreciation for you and your service.

**Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin:** Well, thank you for having me on, first of all, especially on this very special occasion and I am praying for Dr. Dobson in that he will be as strong as Sampson was as he goes through the rest of his life. So I love the man and he's been a real special friend.

Dr. Tim Clinton: General, he's got a lot of vinegar in him and for such a time as this, we've got to be strong, courageous, and bold right now. Pray the church awakens and takes her rightful place. General, it's Memorial Day and thank you again for your service to our country, FRC, what you're doing there, Family Research Council. And I want to say a special thank you to all those veterans out there listening today as well. We appreciate the great sacrifice and we honor your service to our country. I also want to extend a thank you to the families of our military that have lost loved ones and those that carry on while their loved one is away serving in the military somewhere abroad.

General, Memorial Day traditionally is seen as the start of summer, grilling, chilling, hitting the lake, but most importantly, Memorial Day, formerly known as Decoration Day, celebrated the last Monday in May is a sacred day to commemorate all the men and women who have died in military service for our great country and we honor their families. It has a special place in your heart, General. Tell us what's on your mind as you think about Memorial Day.

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin: Yeah, thank you very much. It is a special day. It's a special day for me. And as you said, it is an opportunity to remember those people who died serving their country. Now, it's okay that people honor all veterans, all people that have served the nation, but this is set aside specifically to honor those who died in combat or died in service. And for me, it's a very special day because I reflect on those people that I was with that didn't come home or those people that I was with that took a long time to be able to find them and account for them, which is probably the worst scenario you can have, the MIAs. So for me, I reflect on the faces, the names, and the actions of those men that I fought with and ultimately saw them die.

Dr. Tim Clinton: General, when I was a boy, my dad, who by the way was part of what Tom Brokaw called the greatest generation ever. He was a World War II veteran, served on the USS Pennsylvania. He would take us to Dubois, Pennsylvania to what was known as Morningside Cemetery. And on Memorial Day weekend, it was quite a spectacular. You'd drive through there, you'd see a sea of American flags. And my dad would say things to us like some gave all, or he'd tell us that freedom isn't free. And General, that's when I think it began to really sink in that sacrifice is what Memorial Day is all about and we get to enjoy the freedoms in our country because of that great sacrifice of those who've gone on before us.

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin: Yeah, that's right. And it's not a matter of people going off to war wanting to die for their country. The point is, they're willing to, they're willing take the risk. They're willing to make that sacrifice as you just talked about. And many of them have. And again, one of the most sacred places in the country is a memorial cemetery for veterans who have fought, Arlington being the obvious one, but there are veteran cemeteries all over the country. So on this Memorial Day, may I encourage all of your listeners to go, if you have anywhere near you, anywhere within a reasonable distance, you have a cemetery that has veterans, there will be a percentage of those veterans that died in combat and this will be a great time for you to go and visit that cemetery and pay your respects, put a

flag on a grave. I do that for my dad and for a couple of other people. I just put a flag on their grave or do something that recognizes their sacrifice.

Dr. Tim Clinton: I think a lot of people do that. I think they visit cemeteries and monuments. Several national traditions on Memorial Day include flying the flag at half-staff, I think from dawn until noon. They place flags, as you said, on graves in national cemeteries. I remember taking my son, Zach, to Arlington General. Never forget it, as a boy, I wanted him to see what was going on up there. My wife, Julie, and Megan were in Washington, DC, wanted to go a mall shopping. I said, "Zack, let's jump in the car. Let's go over to Arlington. I want you to see this." General, we pulled in there pretty empty that day, put that car in park. We jumped out and started to walk. And I will never forget walking beside my son as a young 14-year old boy and what that did to him, the sea of crosses, white crosses through that place.

And I know on Memorial Day weekend, they put flags in that cemetery and we made our way up the hill to the Tomb of the Unknown. General, that's a solemn moment. I think as we walked up the hill, there was a funeral going on to the right and we stopped and we stood at attention as a sign of respect to that family. General, boy, I'll tell you, you do this in honor because, again, it reminds us and if we lose our traditions and a lot of people want to scrub out our history, General. But boy, oh boy, this is a moment to go back and look at history. History's our greatest teacher if we'll let it.

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin: Yeah. I'm very concerned about how we have removed history from the public schools. And I talked to David Barden about this and David is probably the finest historian, certainly on the founding of the nation. And David told me that he had looked at some of the new history standards and he said it's abysmal. It leaves out the contributions and the sacrifices that America is responsible for. And instead, it talks about things that really make America seem like the enemy of freedom, the enemy of democracy, the enemy of representative government. And that is really a shameful thing because you did exactly what every American needs to do. You took your son, the next generation, to a cemetery on that special day so that he could see that it is proper to honor the men and women who have served this country. Whether they died in combat or not, they served and they were willing to put it all on the line.

And that's what is so meaningful to all of us as Americans is that there is a sector of our society that is willing to go out there, put their lives on the line, and a percentage of them are not going to come home and others are going to come home, but they're going to be in bad shape for the rest of their lives because of their wounds, their injuries, because of the psychological impact that it has on them. So people need to understand that America has paid an incredible price, not only for America, not only for our nation and our people, but they've paid an incredible price. They've died in combat in places around the world in most of our wars of fight around the world. And these people have sacrificed for other nations that other people may be free because they believe

in this concept of freedom and representative government. And we are losing our focus on that, on the special sacrifices that have been made by America.

Dr. Tim Clinton: General, I read that your dad too was a World War II veteran. I think his name was Cecil. And General, when you were growing up, maybe he shared some of his stories with you. What kind of experience did he have and what kind of impact did the war have on him?

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin: Yeah, you have to bear with me on this one. He didn't talk about it, not to me. I got very few things out of him with regards to that. But I would listen when he and his brothers or he and his mates that were there with him would talk about it. I would listen intently. I would listen with great fascination as they talked about their wartime experience. But it wasn't something that he talked to me about to any great degree. And I think that is because as it brings up emotions in me to talk about him and his wartime experiences, it did the same thing for him. And he didn't want me to see him in an emotional state. Now, ultimately I did. And when Saving Private Ryan came out and my dad was wounded at Normandy, he was wounded there driving a Higgins boat delivering the First Infantry Division there.

And so when I finally pieced it all together and found out I thought, my goodness, he's more of a hero than I realized as I was growing up. But he was wounded there and he was not conscious of what had happened until he got back to Bethesda Naval Hospital where he woke up, really, out of an induced coma and realized there was something wrong. And then the doctors told him that he had lost his left eye and it was a shock to him. But nonetheless, he went right back to the farm and went right back to work. Married his sweetheart, started raising his family. And what is incredible is, a disabled veteran had the opportunity to join the Army during the Korean War if he could pass the physical. And he did, he passed the physical and went back for the Korean War. And that is something that, for me, it is one of the proudest things that I can tell about my dad.

He was wounded in World War II, but he wanted to serve his country so much that he went back in the Korean War and he even went to Vietnam. He worked for the Marine Corps and he went to Vietnam to Da Nang at the air base there at Da Nang and served there in that war as well as a Marine Corps civilian. So my dad's an unusual man, but he left me a legacy.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah, he did.

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin: And he built a foundation in my thought patterns and in my heart, he built a foundation of service and sacrifice and that's why I am so proud of him.

Dr. Tim Clinton: What a legacy and love for our country, General. I know God called you uniquely to serve our country too. You spent the majority of your life in military service. You rose to Lieutenant General. In the midst of that journey, I'm sure you

learned a lot about military leadership and more. General, I wanted to ask, when I think back on World War II, I think too about my dad who was over there. He would tell us those wartime stories of being on that USS Pennsylvania, I'd sit at his feet just mesmerized by what it was like. But General, the United States back in those days, I think they struggled going into World War II. They pretty much avoided the conflict, didn't they, up front? And then it wasn't until Pearl Harbor when that went down that everything went sideways then. But General, can you reflect on what was going on in our country during that time?

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin: The country was very divided as we went into World War II. The country wanted to support our allies in Europe, especially the British. And we did that through a thing we called the Lend Lease Program, which was we would lend them or allow them to lease military equipment, tanks, airplanes, even ships. So we wanted to help them, but the majority of the Americans, because we were just really just coming out of World War I, the majority of Americans didn't want to put boots on the ground over there until the 7th of December when the Japanese attacked us at Pearl Harbor in 1941. As Roosevelt said, "December 7th, 1941, a day that will live in infamy." Well, it was a day that lived in infamy and that is why it's so important for us to pass on to our children everything we know about that period, everything we know about that because when those men hit those beaches in Normandy, they were there to win.

There was no turning back. There was no expiration date in terms of how long they were going to be there, like we did in Vietnam. They were there to win. They were there until they won or until they were sent home either wounded or in a body bag. And that is such a story that is so important for the next generation to know about that. But they don't, they don't know about it and they're not taught about it. And again, it comes back to this whole issue of history. What do you know about American history? And if you don't know about the stories that came out of World War II of the incredible heroism, but also the incredible sacrifice then you're missing an important part of our history and it'll make you proud to be an American. If you know the story of those men and women that left the farms and the factories and that left all their jobs in America and went off to war and when the war was over, they came back, right back, most of them, to the same or similar jobs, but they asked for nothing.

They asked for no special treatment except they wanted to be able to go to a veteran's hospital and have their medical needs taken care of because there were many, and many of them were psychological. They wanted to be able to get treatment by reputable doctors through a VA center. That was really the thing that they wanted. And they asked for nothing more. They went on with life. And that's why Tom Brokaw calls them the greatest generation, is they went to war. They came home and they went back to work and they didn't say anything with regards to what they experienced unless it was to another veteran. They didn't go around bragging about what they did unless it was with another veteran. But they also didn't ask for anything other than what was absolutely reasonable, which was take care of my medical care.

Dr. Tim Clinton: General, you and I have talked a few times about your service, 36-year military career, 13 years in the Delta Force. You were involved in a number of high profile missions including the Iran hostage rescue attempt, Black Hawk Down incident in Mogadishu, Somalia. General, there was a time when you witnessed the horrors of battle and the loss of life of our soldiers. I think five of your soldiers were dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. You were angry with God, you cried out, like, "God, where are you? There's no God." And General, can you take us back there and tell us what happened in your heart, what God did?

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin: It was the 3rd of October, 1993 and we were fighting in the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, as you have already pointed out, at the end of that 18-hour firefight, I watched a five-ton truck come back into our base and I knew what was in that truck and I did not want to drop that tailgate, but I knew that I had to. And I reached up and dropped that tailgate and there were the bodies of my men that had been killed in that 18-hour fight. We know it as Black Hawk Down now, but to me it was the most devastating thing I'd ever seen.

And I looked, the dead were on the bottom and the wounded were stacked up on top of the dead. And I don't have the words or the vocabulary to be able to tell you what it did to me. It broke me. It broke me emotionally as I said, "God, where were you? Where were you? How could you let this happen, God?" And when we got everybody evacuated, dead and wounded, we got them all evacuated, I went over to my bunk just as it got dark there in Mogadishu and I sat down on my bunk. I wanted to talk to God, but my anger against God was burning like you wouldn't believe. Now, I know some people say, you got angry with God. Yes, I got angry with God and I'm not the only one that's been angry with God, but His love is much greater than my anger. I learned that very quickly. But I just sat there praying, saying, "Why, God? Where were you?"

And then the answer came and the answer was, "There is no God. There's no God. If there was a God, this would not have happened." But let me tell you something, and all the people can say what they want to that hear this right now. But the moment I said, there is no God, I actually heard the voice of the Lord. Now, to me it was audible. Whether it was actually audible to the people around, I don't know. But I know that it was audible to me as I said, there is no God, the voice of the Lord said to me, "If there's no God, there's no hope." And I immediately broke and began to weep. My chest was heaving and I was sobbing as I was saying, "God, I'm so sorry, I am so sorry."

And the Bible tells us in First John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness." And it was just like that man named Peter that sat by a fire one night and denied Him three times after walking with Him for three years and watching Him do miracles. And then Peter sat there and said, "No, I don't know Him. No I don't know Him." It even says he cursed. Well, that's where I was. I was sitting there saying, "There is no God, I don't know any God", until that moment came that the Lord spoke to me and I broke. Again, I broken began to weep. But I opened my Bible, I said,

"God, I don't understand. I do not understand what happened here." And I opened my Bible and I said, "Just give me something. Wherever I open this, Lord, give me something."

I opened my Bible and I opened it to Proverbs 3:5. I had marked it. Trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on to your own understanding." There are things that we, with our carnal human minds, we're never going to understand on this side of the Jordan River until we cross over to spend eternity with Jesus Christ. And I'm sorry, I sound like I'm preaching and I am, but this is important. When we cross over that river, we can ask God anything we want to, we can find out. But I don't think we're really going to care once we get over there. I don't think it's going to be important to us because we're going to be in the loving arms of a loving God who is there with us even in our darkest hour. We can't understand because we don't have the mind of God, but we need to rest on His promises that He'll never leave us nor forsake us.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

General, you've made me appreciate Memorial Day a whole lot more. And I know this, righteousness exalts a nation. And Romans 13:7 says, "Render therefore to all their dues. Tribute to whom tributes due, custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear is due, and honor to whom honor is due." Happy Memorial Day. Hey, get out, fly a flag. Put a flag on a grave at a national cemetery, visit a monument. Do something to show your appreciation and great love for this country and for the God that we serve, who loves and enjoys in the freedoms that we all can partake in. General, can't wait to have you back again tomorrow as we're going to talk more about D-Day, as we talk about D-Day and several more implications about what's happening even in our country at this very hour for such a time as this. What would I like to have you. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, our entire team here at Family Talk, we salute you and appreciate your great service for our country and for taking time to join us.

Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin:

God bless you and thanks for having me on.

Roger Marsh:

Wow. The young men that were called to fight in World War II are quite certainly the greatest generation indeed. Friend, you're listening to Family Talk and that was retired Lieutenant General Jerry Boykin, executive vice president of the Family Research Council and his conversation with our own Dr. Tim Clinton. If you enjoyed today's program, be sure to tune it again tomorrow for part two of this special conversation. Men, as you know, much is being asked of you these days from managing an increasing workload to making every possible effort to raise a Godly family. And that certainly isn't easy. Finding time for rest and recuperation may not always be in the cards either, but we want you to know that the James Dobson Family Institute is here for you with an abundance of resources, encouragement, and prayer. So consider signing up for the 10-day Straight Talk to Men email series. It may help put a little spring back into your step.

To sign up today, just visit [drjamesdobson.org/straighttalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/straighttalk). That's [drjamesdobson.org/straighttalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/straighttalk). You'll be glad you did. I'm Roger Marsh, and

from all of us here at the JDFI, thank you for joining us today. Remember to take a moment and consider the sacrifices that were made by the courageous men and women who gave their lives for our freedom here on this Memorial Day. Please join us again tomorrow for part two of this conversation featuring Dr. Tim Clinton and Retired Lieutenant General Jerry Boykin right here on Family Talk.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.