

25% of War-Souvenir Dealer's Sales Are Nazi Items

By ANNA QUINDLEN

New York Times (1923-Current file); Feb 16, 1977;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2007)

pg. 27

25% of War-Souvenir Dealer's Sales Are Nazi Items

By ANNA QUINDLEN

Nazi war souvenirs or, as he prefers to call them, "Germanic Second World War items," make up almost a quarter of the volume of business that Roderick Jones does in military memorabilia. A retired Air Force man, he is happy in the business he knows best and says he has "no qualms whatsoever" about that percentage.

"They are part of military history," said Mr. Jones, who is vice president of Unique Imports, an Alexandria, Va., concern that has a retail outlet as well as a mail-order business. "Because some people are interested in that period for the wrong reasons, it is not to be ignored," he said.

The amateur military historian, who said his clientele included many servicemen from the Washington area, was referring to Frederick Cowan, the Nazi enthusiast and body-building devotee who shot five people to death Monday in New Rochelle and then killed himself.

Among Mr. Cowan's possessions were German helmets and a Hitler Youth

knife embellished with a swastika, both items that Unique Imports stocks, and a Nazi flag and poster photographs of Hitler, which it does not. Mr. Jones said he could state "categorically" after looking over his records that Unique Imports had never dealt with Mr. Cowan and that the dead man's name was not among 55,000 on its worldwide mailing list.

"Those who buy these items range from the pubescent school boy to the military history Ph.D." said Mr. Jones in a telephone interview, "I do not know them all. But he is not in our files and therefore must have purchased these things elsewhere."

Many of the other companies that deal in authentic Nazi souvenirs and equipment reproductions are mail-order houses with post-office-box addresses. Some sell recordings of Nazi war songs and photographs of troops and atrocity sites.

Mr. Jones said he knew of only one concern in New York City that dealt extensively in such items. Called Globe Militaria, it is in a dingy storefront on Fifth Avenue in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn. Yesterday a woman

unlocked the padlocked wooden door there, said "no comment" before being asked a question, and slammed the door. Continued knocking went unanswered.

Unique Imports's sales volume, Mr. Jones said, "is not a public matter," although he later said it would "certainly be well into the thousands." Both its full-page, full-color ads in popular gun magazines and its reputation among local Army surplus stores indicate it does a large amount of the trade in military mementos.

Surplus-store owners in New York, unwilling to talk about the trade in Nazi souvenirs because of the Cowan connection, said that those who bought the items customarily did so through the mails, from pawn shops or second-hand shops, or from Globe Militaria.

Mr. Jones, whose own interests lie with turn-of-the-century military mementos of the British Commonwealth, stressed the legitimacy of the hobby. "I would like to show the breadth of the subject rather than simply the Germanic World War II items," he said. "It is, relatively speaking, only a small part of history."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.