

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Veterans Project

37th Division Veterans World War II

O.H. 193

DOMINIC J. ANZEVINO

Interviewed

by

Jeffrey Scott Suchanek

on

December 6, 1980

DOMINIC JOSEPH ANZEVINO

Dominic J. "Dixie" Anzevino was born on August 25, 1918 in Youngstown, Ohio, the son of Crist and Amelia Anzevino. Dominic grew up in the Briar Hill section of Youngstown, a highly ethnic neighborhood. He completed the 11th grade at Rayen High School before economic conditions caused by the Depression in the 1930's forced him to terminate his education (due to his father's illness). Immediately after his marriage to Mary Calabria on January 23, 1941, "Dixie" was drafted into the United States Army and assigned to the 112th Medical Battalion of the 37th Division. Initially drafted for only one year, Dominic's term of service was extended after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. He subsequently participated in the New Georgia and Bouganville Campaigns, first as a medic with the 135th and 136th Field Artillery units and later as a front-line medic with the 145th Infantry Regiment. After the Bouganville Campaign, Dominic was rotated back to the United States and he was recruited for the OSS (Office of Strategic Services.) He subsequently performed duties ranging from espionage to rescue operations for political prisoners in foreign countries.

Discharged from the Army in July of 1946, Dominic returned to Youngstown and found employment with Republic Steel Corporation, with whom he still remains. He is a member of Sacred Heart Church, 37th Division Veterans Asso-

ciation, Sons of Italy, Struthers Gridiron Club, Holy Name Society and the Idora Dance Club. He and his wife raised 11 children. Once a candidate for the mayor's office in Youngstown, losing to Anthony B. Flask, Dominic's interests include dancing, music and reading.

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INTERVIEWEE: DOMINIC JOSEPH ANZEVINO
INTERVIEWER: Jeffrey Scott Suchanek
SUBJECT: The Great Depression; New Georgia and
Bouganville Campaigns; medics; Office of
Strategic Services (OSS)
DATE: December 6, 1980

S: This is an interview with Mr. Dominic J. Anzevino for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program 37th Division Veterans Project, by Jeffrey Scott Suchanek on this, the 6th of December, 1980, at 585 Sexton Street, in Struthers, Ohio at 10:15 a.m.

Okay Dixie, I'll call you Dixie.

A: Yes, fine, that's good.

S: Tell us when and where you were born.

A: I was born in Youngstown, August 25, 1918, born up in Briar Hill. That's what it's called, was called. It was a neighborhood where every nationality, color, creed of people lived and just a big family, one big family. I mean, there was nothing like so much of what goes on today.

You would be ill or some kid had a headache or a toothache in the neighborhood, the parents never had to worry about it because everybody would take care of everybody. You never had to lock your door.

My mother had an outdoor pizza oven, well it was an outdoor oven. My dad used to let me go with him to the railroad tracks when they rebuilt the tracks and pick up the old logs -- we had a little wagon -- and cart them old railroad logs back home, help him saw them and

and split them, then burn them in the oven.

Well, we would be playing ball around the area or in the street, some kind of game which the kids don't even know today. The games: Kick the Can, Go Shippy Go, and Ally Ally in Free, those are different games that a lot of the people today don't know because they have television, radio. That kind of stuff we didn't have them days.

Then, we would get the smell of the pizza and we knew it was time and we would all go over the house and line up and mother would pull them pizzas out of the oven and give you a wedge and then throw the bread in and bake the bread.

We grew up very close. Everybody in the neighborhood was close because of our parents coming from Europe. This one didn't know how to speak and that one didn't know how to speak, so we in turn would go to school and we would learn English and then we would come home and we would speak our tongue with our parents--whatever the language was. And most of us young kids got to be linguists, you could say. You got to learn the Polish language, the Slovak language, the Italian language; you had Negroes and you would learn how to talk their way too. But I mean, it was all one big happy family. There was always fights. You have kid's fights; that's normal.

But as far as being raised, it was all strict. Some fathers would whistle when they wanted their kids home and the kid knew the whistle. Whatever, if he was even at bat, getting ready to swing, and he heard that whistle, the bat would fall and he would take off, home, because if you didn't get home, then when you did come home, prepare yourself for a whipping, because they did not spare the rod. No, they didn't let the child get away with anything.

At the time you don't feel: "Well, hey, I shouldn't have gotten punished for that or this or that," but after you grow up you find out that it didn't hurt you. It made a better person out of you. And you learn to accept people, sometimes maybe a little too trusting, like in the world of today there's so much "con" going on and whatever. It seems like when you meet somebody the first thing they're thinking is how can they get their hand in your pocket.

S: Where did you go to school?

A: Well, I started out at Briar Hill. The school is no longer there. It is a playground now, but it was right behind the house. We used to jump over the fence and get to school.

S: Was it a one-room school house?

A: No, it was a two story building. Well, you had only one room though, in there for your whole class. Everything that went on, you had one teacher for. It's not like education is today where you move from different classes. Then from Briar Hill School we went to Jefferson School. Some of the kids from Briar Hill went to Todd, some went to Jefferson. Then from Jefferson School we went to Hayes Junior High. Hayes, about that time, was first coming into its being. And then from there you would go to Rayen. At that particular time, Rayen High and South High were the two main schools in our area there.

The saying was, well, either you belonged to one side of the track or the other, but if you belonged on the right side of the track you was in the elite group, so to speak. And the other side of the track was the poor people, what we would say poor people. It was hard for you to be accepted into the higher echelon of people there, unless you were a great athlete or something on that order.

In high school, well, there was different times, but I was sort of a person who liked to help the under-dog all the time. I'd see a guy in trouble, I would try to help him. And this one particular time a fellow was--I didn't know who he was then--but he was being beaten up by three guys and I run over and jumped in and equalized it a little bit. Here the wind-up was he became Doctor Gastein, the dentist. But through this incident of good samaritan, whatever you want to call it, I was more or less accepted with the high echelon through Dr. Gastein's son. His dad was a dentist and then he became a dentist.

This was the first time I ever got to wear a tuxedo, when they invited me to a big "shindig." Well, I couldn't go because I said, "Well, hey, I ain't got no money. How could I?" "Don't worry about a thing," he says, "We want you to come." I am trying to think of the name of the place. It's where Sacred Heart retreat is now I think. It was called the Mansion then, at that time. There is a Mansion now up on Market Street. I mean, for me this was something you dream about, going to a party, dinner, dance. And he got me

the tuxedo, whatever, picked me up, and we went to the dinner, a girl for me, the whole bit.

We had chicken. And I see these people with forks and spoons and knives; here they are trying to cut up the chicken. And I said to him, "I hope you don't mind, but I think the only way to eat chicken is with your fingers." So, I picked up the piece of chicken and started eating and everybody dropped their hardware and followed suit. I guess they only needed one guy to do it and I was excusable because I didn't know any better. But they all loved it. We had a good time.

S: What do you remember about the Depression?

A: Well, first thing when you mention Depression comes into my mind is soup lines. Okay? Well, our people were proud and they didn't want you to go begging for food or anything like that. Find out if we could work first somehow, get something. Then, of course, a bunch of us guys used to go down to where it was called . . . There was two bars down at Briar Hill, Benny's White Elephant and the other one had Elephant name in it too, Elephant Cafe or something like that. This is the area that I recall. I could be wrong, but this is the area where they used to make the soup. And the guy that used to make it we used to call him Skunahporka.

S: How do you spell that?

A: Skunahporka, that's an Italian name for a man who skins pigs.

S: Can you spell that for us?

A: Skunahporka, well you just have to go by the syllable. "Skun" would be s-k-u-n; and the "ah," a-h; "pork" would be like pork almost, p-o-r-k-a or p-o-r-k-o or however; but this was his nickname. Jim, Big Jim we used to call him too, but he was quite a character.

One time, to get back at some guys for doing him wrong, Big Jim killed and roasted one of their pet cats--believe me, this was a big cat--and then invited them to eat this special meal to show them he held no hard feelings against them. They loved the meal and after they were all done eating, Big Jim told them what they ate; and believe me you should have seen a bunch of sick men.

Anyhow, we used to go in the line, used to get a tin cup. We didn't care much about the soup. It was the

fresh Italian bread we used to get there. They would give us a big slice of it. We used to eat there and then we would go home and never say nothing.

S: What did your parents feel about you going in that soup line?

A: They didn't know. We wouldn't tell them, because if they told them, it meant we would get whipped.

At West Lake Crossing they had a warehouse down there where the government supplied flour, butter, coffee and sugar, staples, food, and you used to go down and pick this stuff up and then you would bring it home. And, of course, our people could make a meal out of almost nothing.

Dandelion time you went around and got dandelions. You picked dandelions; you brought dandelions home and mother would clean them and cook them with beans, maybe, and if possible, garlic. Naturally, it was one of our biggest things, garlic. You heard the story that garlic saved most of the foreign people from the flu epidemic that killed so many.

Clothes were hand-me-down things. The kids would all get together like a team and share whatever you had; it was always shared. You didn't have much greed, whatever. If you could help somebody, you would help them, feed them, whatever. You came to my house, you ate pasta e faggioli; I would go to your house, we ate pasta e faggioli. You know what I mean. It was the same chow, but you both shared it. And the people were all wonderful. A woman having a child never had to worry about her other children. The women in the neighborhood would take care of her. And of course, you burned candles. You didn't have much of a social life because there wasn't sociability.

One day we were playing ball, on the street of course, and Joe Schiavone, who is an undertaker, called me and asked if I would help him. I said, "Yes." So, we got in a wagon--in those days you went to wherever to pick up a body--and went to this big house and on the third floor is where the body was, with winding stairs and all. We had quite a time getting him down and I banged this person's head, by accident of course, and Mr. Schiavone said to me, "Dominic, you have to be more careful because we treat these people as though they are alive." Believe me, Joe is one swell guy,

Anyway, we get him back and start cleaning him and do what has to be done and then we start dressing him. Joe says to me, "Put his socks on." So, I start putting on his socks. One foot was okay, but the second one kicked out of my hand. Boy, was I scared. I stepped back and stood in the corner, then Joe explained about nerves and tendons letting loose and I understood what happened. So, we finished the job and everything was okay.

And then winter time coming, why, we would go down to West Lake Crossing and we would hop the freights, coal freights coming from West Lake Crossing to--there was a bend up there by Briar Hill. And we knew by the time that bend came we had to have the coal kicked off the freight because it would start picking up speed then. But this is what we would do! We would go down there and jump the freights and push the hunks of coal at the end of the car. Then when we would get up to our area, we would start pushing coal off. And by the same token, some wood, whatever you could use to keep warm. And then we would get together with wagons, pick up the coal and distribute it.

S: Do you know of anybody who ever got caught doing that and what happened to them?

A: No. What made us stop, one of our buddies got his leg cut off. I mean it is strange how the names elude you. This kind of put a crink to us. We stopped hopping freights after that. Because, hey, you see one of your buddies lose his leg, you know that's the end of freights.

Well, then a couple of us guys would hop, jump freights and go travelling around the country.

S: Where did you go?

A: Well, I went to almost every state we have. Florida was one I didn't get to. Well, we would bum rides, hop freights, hitch-hike. There wasn't too many cars then. I was a pretty young kid, but I went around with an older guy from the neighborhood. Being that our family was so large, we always made a joke of it. They never missed me till I got home. I would be gone for a couple of weeks, sometimes a month, come home and slide in at the table at supper time. No one would say, "Well, where you been?" They figured, well, hey, that was one less mouth to feed."

But we travelled around and shied away from the southern part of the country when we heard about the chain gangs. This was one of the main reasons, I think, I have never been to Florida. That's one of the states I haven't been in, yet to my time or right up to today I haven't been to Florida, and Alaska. Those are the two states I haven't been in, I have been in all the rest.

S: What did you do when you hopped these frieghts? I mean, where did you go?

A: Oh, well it was more or less lark. Your buddy would say, "Come on, let's go take a ride," and we would get on and maybe the thing would be going too fast; we would start getting a little scared and we would want to get off; and you look at the ground and--I don't know if you ever were on a train and look down at the ground and the way the speed--and you ain't going to jump. So, you stayed on, and you stayed on, and you stayed on, and finally, when it slowed down enough, you jumped off. Then you had to scoot out of the yards because they had railroad detectives, they used to call them, guys walking around with a big club. Most of them were pretty nice.

S: Did you ever run into any of them?

A: We did. We ran into some of them and they'd just scold us. They never hurt us or hit us. They would just give us a good talking to. They would say, "Well, hey, after all, railroad property, you are not supposed to be riding like this. You could get hurt." This was their main concern, if you would get hurt. Their job was, yes, to keep you off the railroad.

And then we would go around, and one thing about me and my buddy, we'd always ask for work. We would go to a grocery store and offer to sweep up, help carry boxes, whatever. It wasn't like the stores are today. You went in a grocery store and somebody behind the counter served you. They took your order, whatever you wanted, and they would get it for you. We would go in these different stores; sometimes we would meet up with guys, I guess, didn't want to be bothered with you. But lot of times you met up with a pretty nice fellow. He would say, "Yeah, how about coming in the back here and sweep out or help carry the boxes or something," and then he would give you something to eat. Now, this is the way we made it around. We would go knocking on doors sometimes and offer to cut grass, hedges, whatever, just so we could eat. And of course, school time come, you had to be back home for school. Patched clothes was

something we wore then, them days.

S: Were there a lot of people riding the rails at this time?

A: Well, there was quite a few. There is a difference between hobos and bums. I don't know if you ever heard, but the hobo is a guy who will offer to work, and a bum won't. A bum wants to bum, that's it. He wants it for nothing. But you would run into these camps of these people and they would be gathered around just like you see in the movies sometime. They would be gathered around a fire there, a big empty can cooking something. "What do you got? Do you have something to contribute?" Well, when you're new you don't know, so you say, "No, what do you mean?" "Well, hey, you're welcome to eat what we got, but if you're here tonight, you have to bring something." So, you would go to a house, store, or something and offer to work. And then, whatever you got you would bring it back to share it with your buddies who helped you eat. So, this even on the road was nice.

Sleeping was sometimes a problem. In the summer time it was nice. You would learn to get a newspaper and you would go into the cemetery, and no one bothered you in the cemetery. You would put newspaper on the ground, lay on the paper, put a couple sheets on you, and you went to sleep. No one would bother you. So, you learn a lot from the older guys. And as time goes on, you pick up yourself.

Then working your way up through the CCC Camp--I don't know if you ever heard of that, came into being. It was sort of the tail end of the Depression. You had to be a poor family to be able to go.

S: That was the Civilian Conservation Corps.

A: Civilian Conservation Corps. Some of the people that got in there were not poor people. They got in because maybe their parents thought it was a good experience for them or to get rid of them. You hear stories. Well, hey, these people are wealthy, they don't want their kids at home. Send them to CCC Camp.

You would find a lot of people in there that never were away from home. Now, I was away from home. I became like a big mother to a lot of these people. Like when they got their shots, and stuff like that, a lot of kids would get sick at night. I would get up and go over and talk to them to try to console them, calm them

down. Homesickness, the kids had never been away.

S: What kind of shots did they give them?

A: Well, you had typhoid, typhus, made sure you were inoculated for small-pox. Well, that's about it, at that particular time, what they had going.

S: Where was the CCC Camp that you went to?

A: Well, I went to one in Xenia, Ohio. And then from Xenia we went to, I am trying to remember, because I was in quite a few of them. We went to Redmond, Oregon, and another one was in Wickiup, Oregon; Bend, Oregon and up in Seattle and Portland, Washington.

S: Now, did you get to these places by train?

A: Train. They took us by train. For a person that never rode inside of a train, it was really nice, comfortable where they put the bunks down at night and you would get to sleep and you would eat on a train. I mean, it was an experience that anybody that done it could never forget.

S: How long did it take you to get to, say, Portland, Oregon?

A: Oh, those days, it was about five days, I'd say.

S: And the meals and that were provided for you?

A: Oh, yes. On the train we would eat. And then once you got off, the truck picked you up. This was similar to military-type of thing.

S: What years were this, the period?

A: 1936, 1937 and 1938. And prior to this there was such a thing as the Citizen's Military Training Camp. That was in fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. And quite a few of us from the neighborhood went there. It was a dual purpose thing. You had your meals; it was like a vacation, and you learned military. Now, we were in heavy weapons and infantry type thing.

S: Who did the training?

A: Regular Army officers. There was about 20,000, I imagine there was, total troops in the area and then they would make competitive things; they would drill you and so on and so forth.

S: Did that help you once you got into the military?

A: Oh, yes. Yes. The training?

S: Yes.

A: It was fantastic for us because basically, I think this is why we were in the first draft out of Youngstown. I imagine they went through the records and figured, well, if the man had any military experience--I am just dreaming this; whether it happened I don't know. I imagine that it would, being that they wanted to bring the National Guards up to quota. And we were the first gang from here to go.

At that time I played a guitar. I used to sing. I won a medal for excellence, which was one of the best drilled basics--is what they called you when you first went in--one of the best drilled basics in the whole outfit, and it was a surprise. You're standing out there in the field and sweating. That Indiana sun, man, I mean it beats on you. They used to warn you, "Don't drink any water," this and that and the other. And of course, I was a rebel. I used to drink a canteen full of water, at least before we would go on parade--I had a thirst--and it would never bother me. I never collapsed or never passed out, but a lot of them would do it. In the military and you're marching, passing in review, what they called it, you walk right over them if they fall down. You're not allowed to avoid them. You try not to step on them, but you're supposed to stay in line and go ahead.

Well, we went there. I did, for three years. Now, the fourth year, if you go four years in a row, you would have been eligible to take a test and become an officer, at that time.

S: An officer in what?

A: Reserves. In the Reserve Army. Of course, some of the people did go, but a bunch of us from Briar Hill there, we went like our third year, then you start growing up and you get a little bigger in your ideas, maybe, and some stay in the military and others go otherwise.

So, to get back now from this to the Three C Camp, in Onio we learned how to make culverts out in the country. You would fix culverts and trim the brush. And then there was a bigger demand for you out West. We went out into Oregon. We were responsible for or detrimental in building a dam that eventually took water to the

farmers 65 miles away, the ranchers or whatever you want to call them. And the people loved us because they knew what we were doing, our purpose there.

And you learned how to dynamite because you would get into the mountains and the lava rock; you would run drills, hand drills, jackhammers. They had small tractors with, like, a big sheet on it with a cable, like a sled in other words. Sometimes when the dynamite would blow, you would get a pretty big rock that you could roll, and you would roll it on the plate and then he would haul it away instead of busting it up in smaller pieces. You would try to eliminate the big stuff if you could.

You learned how to cut timber. You learned how to fight forest fires. That was a real experience there. One fire that we had, we fought it for a couple of weeks. And if you don't have proper supervision, you could loose your life real easy. We had experiences like that where you could see the fire coming towards you. If there was no way out, the best thing you would try to scoop out a hole for yourself, which gave us experience in later life for fox holes. You would scoop out needles away so you could get down to the dirt. And hopefully that fire would pass over you.

A forest fire, if you have never been in one, if you never seen one, they are a tremendous thing. The tops of the trees are like when you strike a match. You hear it go zip, and your match is lit. Now, the tops of the trees will do the same thing. They go zip, zip, zip, and then are trees just bursting into flames. And the smaller stuff falls down and it will burn the years and years of pine needles that have been laying there and naturally, they're dry and they get going good then the tree gets going good, and the sap in the tree starts. Some of it will explode and when they explode, man, the fire spreads further.

So naturally, you have to go with people that know the stuff and they take you according to the wind, whatever. You go up so many miles ahead and you try to clear a path, what they call a fire breaker. And then you would get on the other side and you would wait and if some jumps over you try to stomp it out. Sometimes you're successful and if you're not, you know the fire is going to come again so you have to go up ahead so many more miles.

Naturally, when there is a big fire that is hard to control, they would draft everybody available--people.

It used to burn us up because they used to give those people fifty cents a day for fighting fires and we would just get bean sandwiches. We used to get bean sandwiches, peanut butter sandwiches. But we were in the CCC Camp. So, the CCC Camp, you got a dollar a day. Now, twenty-five cents of that used to go home; you never seen it, and the other five was yours.

Some places had tents, some had barracks. It was really, --in later life you found out--it was the military, because they had reserve officers and they had some of the non-commissioned officers running the CCC Camps.

You met a lot of nice people, just like in any walk of life you met nice people and you meet people no so nice, or better, however you want to say. You meet nice people and you meet nicer people. And, of course, the ones you don't care for, you just shy away from. You don't associate.

S: After your experience in the CCC Camp, then how long was it before you were drafted, or did you enlist?

A: When I came home I worked as a bartender while I was going to school. I looked older than my age. So, I picked up a job. I was one of the top bartenders in the area. The pay was \$16.50 a week.

S: Where did you used to bartend at?

A: I used to bartend at the Good Time Cafe, the New Deal Cafe. An old timer owned it by the name of Nick Chime. It was on West Federal and Jefferson, close to West Federal and Jefferson Street. It was on West Federal, but Jefferson was one part of the street that went up. I started out at twelve dollars a week. And I would go to school in the daytime, work till closing time, go home, try to get some sack time in and go.

S: Was it because you looked older than you were that you were able to work?

A: That I was working, yes, in a bar. Well, before the bar, I worked on a farm. I used to work for fifty cents a day on a farm.

S: Where was that?

A: The name of the place, is on Belle Vista Road, and the name of the farm at the time was Tomato King Farm. A lot of people, if they heard the name, they would know.

The job consisted of taking care of the tomato plants, tying them up, pruning the dried leaves, whatever, the suckers, just keep grooming these plants.

S: Was that a major farm? A major operation?

A: That was his business. He was called the Tomato King Farmer. This is what he did. He raised tomatoes.

S: How big was the farm?

A: The farm had about forty acres. He became such a big thing with his type of fertilizer or whatever it was he used. It was strictly a secret. He wouldn't tell even me working for him. I could put it on and all. He had a picture taken with Congressman Kirwin. It was like a big grape arbor. This was one special acre that he used to keep me working in. And I would groom them and groom them and tie them and tie them and tie them and finally made an archway. This whole acre was archways of tomato plants going up. And I am not kidding you, the tomatoes really, really used to come on these plants, produce. You could get a peck basket and put it by the cluster of tomatoes and shake it, you would have half of the peck. Joe Safaldi was his name. He had a picture taken with Congressman Kirwin on either side of the arbor.

It was a way of earning a few nickles. Anything I earned used to go home to mother.

S: I forgot to ask you; What did your father do?

A: My father was a steelworker. He worked in what they call a coal crusher at that time. They used to have a belt with coal on it and they would dump the coal on the belt and the belt would go into these jaws-like, a ringer, roller, but only it had jaws in it and it would crush the coal down. Then they would use it in coke or whatever. It isn't like today. You get different fine coals that they throw into the coke batteries and make coke. In those days it had to be crushed because coke--most people didn't know what it was--but it was very important in making steel. Dad worked as a steelworker, when he worked.

S: Now, how many do you have in your family?

A: In my family there were nine, nine of us. I had three sisters and five--beside myself--brothers.

S: What did your brothers do? Were they older than you?

A: Yes. I was the baby boy, I was the baby boy and I had a younger sister.

Well, really they didn't do too much of anything. There wasn't too much to do as far as work goes. My oldest brother used to work in a plant down in what they called East Youngstown; that was Campbell. And he used to walk because cars were a rare thing. And my other brother worked at GF, General Fireproofing. Tony worked in a mill. Mike worked at GF. Ralph worked for a--well, he was like a salesman; he travelled around. We didn't get to see him too much. My other one brother died; I didn't remember him too much. And then Carl, well, at the time writing numbers I think was how you made a few bucks. If they would let you write numbers, you would write numbers.

S: What do you mean write numbers?

A: What they called "play the bug." Like you have the lottery today?

S: Yes.

A: In those days, it was called "the bug." The different groups, naturally, would be the banks and whatever,

S: This was legal?

A: At that time, oh yes. Things were taken care of. I mean, you didn't get arrested, not at first. Then later on when the bigger cheeses start vying for the empire, then the pressure was put on. This guy, let's get rid of him, and let's get rid of him.

S: Did this happen during your time?

A: My time? Yes, because I used to write numbers behind the bar. You were allowed to do that. People would come in and play the bug. That's what you call it. Actually, as far as a legality, it probably wasn't legal. But the law, at that time, would just overlook it. The higher ups would tell the patrolman, "This is one thing you forget."

At that time, if there was any problems, you had a lot of patrolmen walking beats at that time. You got to know your neighborhood policeman. He got to know all the people in the neighborhood, and he was a great fellow, a great Joe. Now, we had a colored cop in our area. His name was "Lonesome," we used to call him,

Never made a "pinch," [arrest], never, but boy I'll tell you one thing, if he told you something, you would do it. Didn't matter of your color either. He would tell you something to do, you knew he was straight.

So, with people like this, I mean, you had to grow up right, straight, because if you did something wrong, man, you would get knocked on your ear real quick. And if you, my neighbor, would hit me, or if you lived down the block and you would hit me for something wrong, and I went home and told my folks, they would whip me again. They said, "Now, Joe did it because he knew you were doing something wrong. And you're going to get some more now." You learned that, hey, I better be straight because I get whipped over there, I come home, I get whipped again. So, you learned to behave.

If people had apple trees, or in the gardens, tomatoes and stuff and you wanted, all you had to do was go to the door. "Could I have a tomato? Could I have a pepper? Could I have an apple, a plum, a pear," whatever. They would say, "Fine." Instead of going there and destroying the property, trying to swipe [steal] it, as the saying was. You would be allowed to have it.

S: Getting back to your days as a number runner, I guess you could call it.

A: Well, I wasn't a runner. My one brother did that. He was a runner. He used to go around houses. And when this thing first started, naturally, if you would be in the same area as me, you would try to get the business, instead of me. You would try to get a customer, so to speak. So, you would go to a house and a lot of times there was a little fisticuffs that would develop because of this.

S: You mean rivalry?

A: Yes. Like two buddies, they were two buddies and they would start fighting because of trying to get this person's business. But it would pass and eventually evened out and leveled off. Where hey, look, I turn my bug business into you and this guy turns it into the other guy. And okay, so they figured, all right we could be happy that way we could live. And then there was main banks that they would turn into.

S: Main banks?

A: Well, they were the main people. Like you would have two or three in the whole area that were like a main bank. You would turn all your business into this bank.

S: Do you remember who yours was?

A: Well, all I know is that two guys used to come into the bar and pick up the slips. You would write the number on a slip and you had a duplicate slip. You would give them a slip and the amount of money, plus a little commission that you would get for taking care of this. And of course, I never kept none of the money because I always dreamed of, hey, seven dollars for a penny if you hit. In those days seven dollars was a lot of money.

S: Did you ever have any pressure put on you by these gentlemen?

A: No, no, no. Because basically, my job was behind the bar. The guy that owned the bar was in with the number people. So, it was okay for me to write numbers. And then I was allowed a certain commission, so to speak. I would play my whole commission on one number. Hopefully, that I could hit.

S: Now, this was at the bar down on West Federal Street?

A: Yes. On West Federal Street. Yes. Well, it was the hope of the poor people them days. They had a penny well, they played a number and dreamed; hope you could hit by the treasury number, then I think used to be the last three numbers of the total treasury report for that day was how they used to choose the number, until somebody figured out a different way so that they could beat you.

And they had a lot of people working for them. They would check over the slips to see which number was played more than the other and so on.

S: That wasn't any of this Al Capone stuff, was it?

A: No, no. None of that stuff.

S: Would you consider this the forerunner of, maybe, the racket era in Youngstown?

A: Oh, yes, yes, because this is how, eventually, when some of the other people found out that this was a good way and easy way to make money, then they started pressuring people.

S: Did this happen during your time?

A: During my time? Yes. Oh yes.

S: Did you know anybody who got beat up or anything like that?

A: Well, my brother got beat up one time. He was in a gas station and they went for him, and of course, he was pretty good with his dukes, but when more than one gets you--he took a pretty good beating. And then, when he found out who the head of the group was, he went to see him and being bold . . .

S: Do you remember who that was?

A: I am trying to think. At that time, I am trying to remember the names of the people. Their names are hard for me to remember, because I remember, not the real big people. Well, DiNiro, which he is dead now, Sandy Naples, he is dead now, Cadillac Charlie, he is dead now. They were like the head of their group.

S: Did these people go on, later, in the rackets? Were they the king pins in the racket era?

A: Oh yes. Yes, they were.

S: So, they got their start in the numbers?

A: In the numbers, right, in the numbers. Personally, between you and me and the tape here, their downfall was drugs I believe. You may have been told this already by somebody else, but I think that is the reason they got knocked off, because they didn't want to bring drugs into the area.

S: Now eventually, these figures, did they get controlled by somebody higher up, say, like Cleveland or New York? Were they just like a branch?

A: Well, to my knowledge, I would say I don't know. But in this area they were the top people and they learned to live with each other. They said, "Okay, so the west side is yours, and the north side is his, the south side is his and the east side is his. This is the way it went.

The same with your jukeboxes and cigarette machines and pinball machines, see, this type of thing too. And once they learned it was best to, "Okay, let you live and you let me live. This is your side of town that is my side of town."

S: And everybody is happy.

A: And this is the way, until you get someone trying to squeeze in. Now, you get someone who tries to squeeze in, then you cause friction and trouble.

S: Do you remember anybody trying to squeeze in to take over, maybe a block or something? I mean, did that happen often?

A: Well, it happened on occasion. Well, I can't remember the names.

S: Do you remember if your bar ever changed bosses?

A: No, no, no, not where I was. There was a guy that come in there and tried to change it, I know. And I had a little row with him.

S: Can you go into that a little bit?

A: He tried to get me to give him the slips, and the money. And I said, "No, no. I don't turn them in to you." I am trying to think of the guy's name that I used to turn the slips in to. Basically, we used to call him Big Dom. He was a prince of a guy, believe me. I mean, it just so happened he got in this type of business, but he never let anybody go for a want of something, for food. If he knew they needed food, they got it. I mean, he would have somebody over there with food. If they needed clothes, shoes, wintertime, they got it. I mean, this is the way it was in those days. They took care. They knew somebody had to do this. Give people hopes. You go to church and you would pray. You play the bug and you pray.

S: How would you compare this operation, back in your days with, like the Mafia, how they conduct thier business? Is is totally different the way they conduct their business today?

A: Well, I think so. I think it was more of a neighborhood. Like, this is my neighborhood, I take care of it. Where, from what we read about the Mafia, and stuff like that, it is a family thing. But still they own whatever it is they have. People see movies, read books, and so on and go by that type of thing.

S: Okay. You were going to tell us about your encounter with one of Al Capones . . .

A: Right hand man, yes.

S: Right.

A: Well, he was related to my mother. He was a distant cousin. Every Christmas there was an envelope with money in it. This was in Chicago. And I used to hear her talking about Carmen, I think his name was. And I got to call him Uncle Carmen. This preyed on me. You would start reading about the racketeers, the gangsters, and this, that, and the other. So, I said, "I am going to go and see him." My mother said, "Domenico, how you going to go? You are a young boy. How are you going to get to Chicago? That's far." I said, "I am going to go se him, Ma." And I get the address, took the envelope with me, got on a freight, took off.

I know in Springfield, Ohio, I jumped off. I went to a little store and I walked inside and I asked if I could have something to eat, but I would like to work for it first. I said, "Could I have a sandwich? I am hungry, but I want to do some work for it." So, he made me sweep up the store a little bit. Then he said, "All right, what do you want for a sandwich?" I said, "Get some bologna, bread, and some milk." He said, "That's all?" I said, "That will be fine." So, I had a loaf of bread, had a slice of bologna to go in every other slice of bread, and a quart of milk for my efforts.

Okay, so then I got out and I figured I would hitch-hike a ride. Cars were rare and few then, them days. But anyway, I got picked up by a veteran from World War I. And they had just got their bonus at that time. Now, like I told you, some dates, some names, I may remember, but whether I have been brain-washed or what in a future interview you'll find out, I could have been brain-washed because sometime I could be talking and I forget everything. Like so, maybe it is a trait of becoming old. I don't know. But anyhow, there was two of them, and they had an old car, stopped, "Can you drive?" "Oh yeah, I can drive." "Well, come on, jump behind the wheel." Man, they're half-lit anyway. So, okay, I got in there, stickshift, okay, a little humping, humping along, but finally we get going.

S: What year was this?

A: When did they get their bonus? When the World War I got their bonus. What year?

S: Before 1918?

A: Oh, way, way after, you have to come up here after the Depression too--in 1935 maybe. I was a young man.

I was still a kid, but a young man. Now wait, maybe 1935. 1935 I would say, yes.

S: Okay.

A: Yes, because I was about 15, 16, somewhere around there I was in age.

You didn't need a license to drive then. So anyhow, I start driving and every time you would come to a spakeasy [illegal bar], "Stop, we are going to have a drink." And finally he says to me, "What are you going to have?" I said, "Well, I'll have a shot" "Oh no, you ain't drinking. You're the driver." I said, "Yes, but I drink. I was raised on it. When I was little my dad used to give us all wine at the table." It was a way of life. When you ate supper, you had wine. I could drink. I said, "I could drink pretty good." He said, "No, you ain't drinking with us. You're too young to drink. You are our chauffeur. You can have anything you want, but no liquor. We are drinking that."

So anyhow, this is how I got to Chicago, driving these guys. I didn't know what way I was going. They would tell me, and I would drive. I didn't know where I was going, but eventually I get there.

I go to this address, beat on the door. Boy, he was big. I thought, man, he is a giant. I pulled the envelope and, "Are you Carmen so and so?" He says, "Yes. Now, who are you?" "I am Amali's boy." My mother's name was Amali. That's Amelia in American. And I said, "I am Amali's boy." "Oh, hey! Come on in, come on." And he took me inside. We go down a hall and we come to another door. In my eyes the door looked like it was a foot thick. I don't believe it was, but to me it looked, man, a massive door here. He opened the door and we go in and we are like in a reception hall now. He says, "Wait a minute. You wait here. So, he goes into another door, and then he comes out, he says, "Yes, come on in," and we go in and I meet Al Capone. He says, "So you're Amali's boy, huh?" He goes, "You're Amali's boy?" "Ah, yes, I am Amali's boy." "Perche hai venuto?" That means: Why did you come? I said, "I want a job." He looked at me, reached in his pocket and took out a wad, I think it would choke a cow. And he threw it to Carmen and he says, "Get him on a train. Send him home." So, he puts the money to me and I knocked it out of his hand. "I don't want your money." I am mean, mad. I said, "I want to be your machine gunner. I want a

job with you. He said, "Ma [but], this boy is malamenda [bad], and things on this order. He is talking with Carmen. He said, "Who did you say he is?" "Figlio di Amali," that is, Amali's son. He said, "No, boy. You are a little bit too young. Come back in about five, ten years and maybe I could use you."

Man, I was hurt, a young kid. So, Carmen says, "Come on, come on, let's go." So, he took me out and says, "Well, you better go home. Your mother will be worried about you, this that and the other." He said, "You got some money in your pocket?" I said, "No, I don't have any money." "How did you get here?" "I bummed a ride." He said, "Well, I'll give you some money. You will at least have some money in case you want to take the bus, the train. You will at least have some money in your pocket." "I don't want the money." I says, "I want to be the machine gunner for him."

I guess there was a lot of kids had that same idea in their mind: Hey, being a machine gunner for Al Capone. That was the thing in them days you know. So, anyhow, what he does, he packs me a lunch; he gets a lunch packed for me and shoves a couple bucks in my pocket. He says, "All right, this is from me now." He says, "Leave it there. You don't want it leave it there. You sure now? I'll send you home. I'll have somebody drive you if you want." "No, no," I says, "I ain't going home." I was down hearted. So, I took the lunch and I went and I sat down on a curb in the loop of Chicago.

In those days, naturally, there was some traffic. But dirty, oh man, the dirt. Windy city they call it. I sat there by a pole and I ate that lunch. I ate it all. I wasn't moving till I ate it all. I didn't want to be carrying nothing. So, from there, I went travelling a little more. Picked up a few odd jobs, earned a little bit of money and then got back home. Time to go to school again.

Then I told my mother where I was and everything. She almost cried. She says, "What you mean you want to be a machine gunner?" I said, "Ma, that's a big job. Make good money." "No, no, not my little Dominic, not you. That ain't for you." She said, "You got to go to school, got to learn, education, and graduate." Well, this, naturally, was a lot of the foreigner's hopes, that their children would do.

S: Did you end up graduating?

I had about three months to go. And the irony there, I was tending bar at the time. Well, I used to love dramatics. I took it up at the school. I was always in the shows. I was always a minstrel man. In fact, one of the shows was going on at the time. Tending bar. My dad got hurt though. So, naturally, the money that I was making was more important now to have at home.

My mother, I talked with her a few times and I said, "Ma, I got to quit." She said, "Well, don't quit at school; quit the job." I said, "Yes, but you need the money." I said, "I could quit school now."

You passed, in those days, twice a year. And now it is once a year you're passing. So, you had grades A and B. You could fail a term and you wouldn't lose a whole year's education like you do today. I told her, "Ma, if I quit now, I only have three months to go. I could pick it up anytime. I will work for awhile and then Pa gets better, and then I'll go back to school." She said, "Well, son I don't know. You do what you think is best. This is America; you have opportunity here. Better than we had." I said, "Okay, Ma." She said, "But I wish you would go to school."

So, I am tending bar the night that we're supposed to have a play at Stambaugh Auditorium. The time is coming where I have to get moving. I either got to leave the bar and get up to Stambaugh Auditorium and dress for the show--and I called up. I called them up and told them that I couldn't make it. And this was the start of me quitting.

So, I kept tending bar. Quit school, naturally. And finally, my dad got better, eventually he got better. He went back to work. Come time for me to go back to school, I was out about a year. So, I went back to school. Oh, they were happy to see me. Football was a big thing them days too. And the coach looked at me and he seen my size and he figured, "Oh boy, what a guy I am going to have here," right? And they changed the age limit. If you were eighteen, you couldn't play. And I was eighteen in August, so I couldn't play, and that broke my heart. I did want to play.

I wanted to graduate. But I would go into the classroom and sit there and here these kids are only a couple years younger than me, but it looks like I am their grandfather already. I am sitting in the

classroom and I felt, "Look, I am so much bigger and older than these kids. And here I am in the classroom with them." I said, "It is a weird feeling." If you quit school and go back, boy, it is something that you can't imagine. I would advise anybody, "If you can, hang in there, finish it." Of course, some people have done it, but it got to me. Between that and not being able to play football. I went for about a week, but everyday, to me, was a bigger hassle. To go in that classroom and sit with these guys from my neighborhood, and they would see me in their classroom, they thought it was a visitor or something. Only a matter of a couple years difference.

Anyhow, I said I would eventually go back to school. Now, when I was in the service, I tried. It seemed like my papers could never catch up to me. And my lessons would never get into the--wherever they were supposed to go.

S: Okay, let's get into your military career now.

A: Yes. So, I get a job in the steel mill. And I have been going with a girl pretty steady, and decide to get married. So, I get married on January 23. We leave the church and we go--we got married at Sacred Heart on the East Side; she was from the East Side--and we go to my mother and dad's house and the mailman hands me a letter. Now, this is January 23.

S: What year?

A: 1941. He hands me this letter and he says, "I hope it isn't bad news." I just came from church, just got married right? Here it is: "January 25 you are to be in Camp Shelby, Mississippi."

S: You were drafted?

A: Right now, bong. I mean, just got married right? Hey, I just came from church, bong, here I am. I said, "Oh, for one year." Well, okay, so she shed a few tears and we discussed it. And well, all right so we got married; so we can't go on a honeymoon. We might as well go on an overnight honeymoon, that's all. It was a beautiful day. That night it snowed. So, we couldn't go very far anyhow. Then we come home, packed my little bag. And we go downtown. We got on a bus where the under-pass is now. By the number one fire station, the under-pass. That used to be the Pennsylvania Railroad. We gathered there and then we walked to where the busses picked us up. And we went to Cleveland.

Then January 25 we were in the service, heading for Camp Shelby.

S: Were you sworn in, in Cleveland?

A: Yes. And we got on a train, troop train, we called them troop trains.

And while I am down in Camp Shelby, the newspaper shows a picture of my wife. It says, "The bride is at home with her parents and the groom is spending his honeymoon at Camp Shelby, Mississippi." Well, it was a going joke, because it seemed like I must have been the only married guy in the whole gang. But anyhow, we were figuring, "One year, it ain't going to be bad."

S: Did a lot of the guys from your neighborhood go?

A: Well, there was about fifteen. Well, there was more than fifteen of us. Wait a minute, I take that back. There was about fifteen of us that got in the same company. There was, well, I don't know how many bus-loads of guys, maybe sixty people, total, I would venture to say. There was a couple busses.

How you got chosen for whatever branch you went into, there was some non-commissioned officers waiting when the train pulled into Mississippi there and they were discussing, whether they flipped a coin or what, but as you came off, the one guy says, "This way." The other guy says, "This way." "All right, you guys follow me. You are infantrymen." "You guys follow me. You are medics." "You guys follow me. You are service people." How you come off and the guy counted you, what number you were and you went over in that direction. So, this is how you got chosen.

S: There was no . . . ?

A: There was no test, no asking you, "What would you like to do? Would you like to be this or this?"

S: You went into the 112th Medics? Right?

A: I went into the 112th Medics. At that time it was a bigger division. I forget what they call it. But later it was triangularized, what they called. And they cut some of the companies out. Like they had Ambulance companies, Medics was A, B, C, D, and then later they cut them down to three companies, instead of four or five there was only three. But they joined

them with collecting the ambulance companies. Well, we went into an ambulance company is what we did.

S: Describe your feelings when you got off the train in Camp Shelby. What did you see? Can you remember?

A: Seeing those guys there and just trees, woods in front of us. There wasn't too much population where we were.

And of course, to me, being that I had military service, it might reflect differently from somebody else who never did. So, I had been away and I had been on trains, and I had contact with military people, and CMTC and CCC camps. All were instrumental in my being able to accept all this, maybe. To me it was almost like going to Fort Benjamin Harrison again.

S: Now, being in the 112th Medics, what kind of training did you get that was, maybe different than an infantryman got?

A: Now, here you go, the first thing you have to do is get basic training. Every person that goes into the service, the basics are about the same. You condition your body, whatever.

And I was a great one for eating and I hated to see food wasted. They used to say, "Well, Anzevino is the first one in the mess hall and the last one out."

Now, a rare thing, the Indianapolis Star published this. One of the reporters, such as you're sitting here, sat and had breakfast with me one morning. Now this is--basic training was almost on its last legs. So, he come down, I guess, to interview some of the kids, see how they were making out, one thing or another. And I put on 22 pounds in basic training. And I was as hard as the next guy. There was nothing soft about me. I could pick up a man, 180 pounds, and run with him over the course. I mean, physically, I was in A, number one shape. The food did not develop into blubber and fat with me. But I used to sit there and the other guys would bring me their cereal boxes. You had individual servings of cereal. Eventually, the mess sergeant gets to like guys like this because it makes him feel good to cook. He figures, "Well, hey, my food must be okay."

Coming from a family like I did where you were taught not to waste food, I learned to eat it. The chow was good. We had good chow. And of course, I made a mistake one time when I got my turn at KP [Kitchen Police]

being such a good helper in the kitchen. So, they would give me KP pretty often. Well, a lot of times you got chicken, and they used to throw the gizzard, the heart and the liver away. Well, this is something we never did throw away in our family. So, I asked the sergeant, "How about letting me have that stuff. Could I have it?" He said, "What are you going to do with it?" I said, "Don't worry, I'll fix it up and eat it later." He said, "You God dang degos." He says, "You eat anything, don't you?" I said, "Well, you reserve that for later, okay?" So anyhow, I cleaned all the stuff up and bummed a couple of peppers and onions off of him. I says, "Well, how about could I have a couple peppers and onions?" "Okay." So, I cleaned all the stuff and I cooked the onions and the peppers and I threw this livers, gizzards, hearts, chopped up into the pan. The inspecting officer happened to come in. Oh what an odor, smell, smell good. "Hey, what is cooking?" I said, "Well, stick around awhile and you will taste it."

From then on I had a hard time getting away from the kitchen because they knew I could put up little different things you see. Well, we wouldn't make nothing go to waste. We would hang in there and eat the stuff that they used to throw away.

So, we went into a National Guard outfit from Westerville. They were the cadre, what you would call. They were the main people. And it so happened a gang that was from Youngstown went in there to bring it up to strength. So, for all the basic training time, we took all the chores. We did all the work. Those guys didn't do nothing. They just laid in their tents like sultans. We had college graduates with us, too, guys by the name of Barrett, Joe Barrett, Connors, and O'Connel. These guys were educated people. They had gone through college. At that time, going to college was really something. To graduate from high school was something. We would get together in the evenings, naturally, and talk.

- S: Did you get a feeling that the cadres felt that they were better than you?
- A: Oh yes. They were. They made us eat that, that they were better than us. We were their servants. Some of the boys read the rules and they found out that after basic training is over, you are equal to anybody in the company, outside of noncoms [noncommissioned officers], of course. The noncom had a higher privilege, the officers and so on. But duties would be shared by

everybody.

So, on our last day of basic training, that evening, of course, before our last day, we celebrated. We had beer from the PX, cookies, whatever you could buy. And we sat and had a few beers and celebrated, "Hey, basic training is over." Right? So now, we got together and we appointed Barrett as one and the other one, what was his name? They were the spokesmen for all of us.

When it came time to fall out for details, none of us was falling out. This was what happened. Fall out for detail. We would all go out there, but the National Guardsmen, a lot of them would be in their bunks yet.

Well, we were in tents by the way. We had to put up tents. Pram tents is what we lived in. We had a tent and then in the middle of that you had a box with a stove, dirt and a stove that you would burn coal, wood, to heat it when it was cold.

They would stay in their bunks and we would go out and go to the details. Well, this morning, we fell out, called out details. And all right, fall out, and nobody moved. And naturally, "Hey, what are you doing here? Mutiny huh?" So our spokesman got up there and says, "Well, we would like to talk to the captain."

We had a captain by the name of Captain Fink. He was a doctor that came into the service. And he wasn't wise of the military-style either. He got himself in trouble when we were issued clothing. We had World War I clothing issued to us. The long overcoats and the button-up tunics and leggings and such.

He was proud of his boys; he wanted them to look nice. So, he didn't know the rules of going to the next guy in command and so on. He went to the top man. And he got in trouble over it. They didn't like this, see. He went up there and hollered, "I want nice clothes for my boys." It was harder for us in the long run because of this, see. But eventually, we made out.

Eventually I fixed my coat. I cut it and made it decent. I put a wedge into the pants. You had stove pipe pants. And I put a wedge into it, made it flare. Well, I made the suit, to me, presentable. In the CCC's you wore a wedge in your pants. This was the style. This is where the idea came. So, hey, when I

fell out, the captain looked at that and said, "Where did you get that outfit?" I told him I did it. "You did? You are handy with a needle?" "Yes." "Then how about taking care of the rest of the company." He said, "We will give you Wednesday off, half a day, and you do whose you can." "Okay," so I agreed to do it. And everybody agreed to give me a quarter. Twenty-one bucks a month was your pay. So, a quarter for doing this was all right too. It helped. Well anyhow, I got the clothes all done. We were presentable.

This morning Barrett talked with Fink. They went and got Captain Fink. And he come over and Barrett explained why we were doing what we were doing. "And we feel that the details--we didn't say nothing up until now, but now that we have finished our basic, we feel that everybody should share the details. And Captain turned around and told the sergeant to go make the roster over. Take it alphabetical and put everybody gets their share.

So, then it come time to issue ambulances. We would go to class and they would tell us, show us. We would have doctors show us how to put bandages on and how possibly to treat a wound. You would have books to look at. You learned how to work splints.

S: Was it intensive training?

A: Oh yes. We were hitting it pretty good. It used to make us mad because the National Guards would just sit back like. But like me, personally, I could say, I felt that if I ever had to help somebody, I wanted to know how to do it right.

S: Did that knowledge ever come in handy for you?

A: Oh yes, very much so, later. Then we took tests and whatever. And I was one of the guys they asked to go to officer's training. They asked quite a few of us. You took an IQ [Intelligence Quotient]. Well, we talked it over and you get to be an officer, you got to stay five years. We were going home in a year. Well, that was the way it went, but still, when it come to training and all we took our lumps. You had to do your share so you did it.

S: Were you taught all about the ambulances at this time too?

A: Well, this is, I am coming now. Some of us were given an ambulance. Well, then the National Guardsmen

were kind of angry because some of us inductees, or whatever you want to call us, draftees, were given an ambulance. They felt they should have all the vehicles. Well, we had an old Chevy ambulance. It was open in the back; you have like a half the door, and you slam it and that was the door.

Me and my buddy, from Youngstown, Rocky Bartholomew, worked as mates to run the ambulance. And you go through. You had to take care of your vehicle; you had to clean it; make sure it would pass inspection. At the same time, take care of your own personal stuff, your gear or whatever. You had to have it all ready and we would go on maneuvers, problems, whatever.

And a problem came up one time, they needed an ambulance; they were sending a detail to New Orleans. We got the job because the captain felt that we could handle it. So, we had to go and catch this detail that had left already. And we were given directions and so on and so forth. It's like a game you play. You are on the highway and you turn the siren on and hit it for awhile. While those days it's a game. And finally we caught up with our detail, convoy, and we reported and told them.

Okay, so we go to New Orleans, and our job down there we had to man a prophylactic station. What they called prophylatic stations. Now, I don't know if you know what that is or not. In those days, any troops that were going out into the city were given for sexual things, what we call prophylactics, rubbers, whatever you want to call them. Any drunk that was picked up by the MP's [Military Police] was brought to what they called an aid station and you automatically had to give him a "pro." You didn't take a chance that he did give himself one or what, but this was to eliminate disease in the ranks because this could spread like crazy when you are close to people like this. So, this is one of your jobs that you have to do. And they would bring drunks in and the MP's would hold them and you would have to go through the process. And once in a while someone would heave on you. But it was all part of the job. And there we thought we were going to have a good time. Oh, what a headache.

We were in the school and we got a call and we had to go pick up a bunch they held someplace and they told us they would give us directions how to get there. And here I am driving and one way streets I never heard of. Then I am going down a one way street the wrong way. Finally, I get to where the gang is and I pick them up and we are going back again and I still make

the same mistake. I am going down a one way street with an ambulance full of guys and a taxi driver pulls in front of me. He starts to bellow and holler and swear. And a cop comes over, "What's the matter?" "Well officer, I am sorry, but I have an ambulance full of sick people here and I have to get them to the station." And he got out there and he started chewing that cab driver out. So he told me the first street available, "Get over there and go down," and okay. So, this was one of the first details that we took over. And everything turned out okay. We get back to camp.

They knew they could depend on Rocky Bartholomew and me, so whenever they put us on a job, whatever the detail was, they felt pretty good about it. They figured; "These are two guys we know work good together so we let them stay there." And they did this with the other people too. If two guys didn't pan out, they would switch and this was part of your survival in the war, really. When you wound up working with a buddy, you knew his way, he knew your way. So, you knew you could depend on him. If you were going to do something, you knew he would be looking out for you, you would be looking out for him. And this is what, I think, brought a lot of us back home, for that simple reason. When you are out there in the jungle you don't know . . .

S: It was teamwork?

A: Oh yes, a lot of teamwork.

S: December 7, 1941. Do you remember where you were and what you were doing when you heard the news that Pearl Harbor had been attacked?

A: We were getting ready to come home. We were packing our bags saying, "Well, we ain't got long now. Hey, December, one more month to go. We will be going home." Some of the older guys did go. They were already rotated back home. And well, we were in good spirits. We figured, "Hey, man, ain't much more to do now!" And we kept hitting it along, just doing our chores everyday, waiting for time to pass. Well, when December 7 happened, naturally, we were dumbfounded, hurt, but you didn't have long to think about it because you had to start moving. So, they started getting us ready, convoy-wise, to come up to the Indiatown Gap in Pennsylvania. And we drove.

Now, I used to have a little knack I learned. I used to make a little, what we call "Kick-a-poo juice." I

used to use lemon extract and a few other little things. And I always had it in the ambulance. The guys knew this. So, whenever we had a pit stop on the convoy, well, they would come running to the ambulance, "Hey, Dix." "All right, I'll give you a little hipe, give you a little shot." And it wasn't anything to get them drunk, unless I gave them the whole thing, then it is different. But it was just like a little pick-me-up, like. So, I was known pretty much for this. You need a little help, Dixie got it.

And in the jungles it became this too. Some of the guys would get some of the alcohol and bring me some of it and I would mix it with grapefruit juice or whatever I could mix it with, because you don't drink no ethyl alcohol because that's too rough, like 190 proof. But anyhow, I always had this, but I never made it like a bar. I mean, eventually I had my own little chest with medicines and bandages and whatever in it.

S: What were your feelings about the Japanese at this time? Did you think that they were a worthy opponent?

A: Not at that time. We figured, "Why them little so and so's. We are going over there and we are going to eat them up." But it turned out that they wasn't so little so and so's; they were well trained and this was their way of life from when they were little children. They were brought up to die for their emperors. And we were not taught that type of life. Well, it was hard, harder for the American people to understand why it was taking us so long.

Now, I keep bouncing around here because of things that we are saying and things that come into your head and one thing and another. Like the Japs on New Georgia Island, those were called the 6th Imperial Japanese Marines. They were known for a very infamous act. They roped the city of Nan King in China. After the 37th Division's 145th Infantry annihilated them, Madame Chang-Kai-Shek promised each and every man who was responsible would be given a Glorious Medal as a thank you. Of course, this medal never came.

If they weren't six foot, they couldn't belong. They had to be six foot or over. And from what we could understand, they were bred with some Koreans, evidently, and they were all big.

Now, our Youngstown group, 145th Infantry, was very instrumental in wiping them out, because they wouldn't

surrender, and you had to kill them all. Even as far as they were walking, backing down, and we were like, up on a ridge, and you could see the water, and they would walk out into the water rather than surrender. Well, now you are laying up there with your rifles and all and you are making a little wager with your buddy, "Ill get that guy over there and you pop him off," basically doing this type of thing rather than let them go out there and drown. You was doing him a favor. If you want to die for your emperor, we are going to help you. I mean, because some of the bad things that they did to our boys--whatever you call it, the word tangles up in my mouth.

S: Atrocities?

A: Atrocities, that's the word I'm thinking of. Now, you go walking in the jungle and you would find your boys hanging by their thumbs or by their toes with their genitals cut off, put in their mouths.

S: Did you see any of this?

A: Yes. And when you see this type of thing, you get shivers up your spine. I mean, if you don't control yourself, you're going to wind up getting killed quickly. A lot of kids would start screaming and running, hay-wire, with their gun, going out and start shooting stuff, regardless of what, they were just shooting. And you would have to catch them and knock them down and try to calm them down and, "Hey look," bring them back to reality. "Here look now, so the thing for us to do now is to take care of our buddy, there."

You would cut them down. If they were alive you would try to help them. And if they weren't, the next best thing, what do you do? Dog tag, whatever, and they wind up being buried.

But this kind of stuff starts changing your mind about the Japanese. He was no longer a person, he was something that was unworthy to live. And you were going to do everything in your power to eliminate him.

S: It was a personal hate then?

A: Oh yes. It became very personal. Up until you seen your guys killed, your own, you didn't feel this way.

The first death I ever seen was a pilot, P-38. We were on a beach of Guadalcanal. We were the first army to releive the Marines on Guadalcanal, 37th Division. We came to the beach and we were sitting

around on the beach and dog fights was going on and shooting and so on. There is a lot of noise, war. And I see the P-38 coming and it looks like he is getting away from the Jap. You see the Jap tailing him. No smoke, no nothing. The plane goes right in the drink; our P-38 dives right into the water, pretty close to the shore. And I am watching. The minute he hits the water I am looking for somebody to be going after him in a boat, rescue. And it don't happen. I am over there and I am saying, "Hey!" We are talking among us and we are saying, "Hey, why don't somebody go out there and get in a boat and get that guy?" And of course, later on you find out that it is impossible to try to do that. If he could have got out, he would have had his canopy open and he would have jumped or whatever.

S: He was evidently dead then?

A: He was dead. And of course, later on, much, oh maybe weeks later, then they went down to try to salvage the plane, bring the plane back up. And of course, this area of Guadalcanal was known as Iron Bottom Bay for the amount of ships that were sunk in it and the planes and everything else.

But this started making you realize what kind of a thing we are in. Here it is a guy who is hurt maybe, maybe they could save his life, if they go after him. But then, later on you realize, well, if you did send a boat out there, you would be risking that crew, that boat, while the planes were still there. If you would come out in a boat, they would be strafing you. They would get you. So, you would lose more lives. So, you just have to accept the fact that that person is gone, and look out for you.

So, next they come strafing from the beaches. And we were just to numb to move. This is all happening so quick.

S: Did it seem real at first?

A: Well, not at first, no, not really. You think you are in a movie, a dream. And then when you see the dirt spitting, coming up, well, then it hits you real quick. Now, like me and my buddy though, it is just like it is happening now that I am telling you, really. We had our packs on and we had set them down and we were sitting by our packs, packs on the ground. My back is to mine and his back is to his. And we are huddled, and we are just trembling, shaking. The

planes quit shooting and we hear a guy holler, "Hey, over here, over here." And we turn around and there are all kind of people around you, but they are in holes, see. We didn't know that they were there, fox holes. A couple of Marines called us, "Come on over here. Hurry up." We didn't need no second invitation. We made some tracks, man. We got in the hole and we sat back to back again. It sort of helped us. We were over there back to back and we stayed in that hole till the next morning. I don't think we slept a wink. We just stayed in there, shaking with each other and tried to talk to each other, back and forth.

S: Okay Dixie, let's go into New Georgia. What were your feelings when you knew that you were going to into combat for the first time? I think you said that you got transferred into the 135th Field Artillery?

A: 135th and from there to the 136th. I was in both Field Artillery units. It was weird because I never had no experience whatsoever being around the big guns. I was transferred in the dead of night. I didn't have a friend in the world. The sergeant that took me there in a jeep, when he dropped me off, handed me a .45 [calibre] pistol. He said, "Dixie, hate to see you go, but this is all I can do for you, give you a gun, anyhow." Now, we didn't have guns. Medics didn't carry guns.

S: Had you had any training with a gun at all?

A: Well, basically the only training we had with guns was what we learned in the CMTC. So, this is where I profited in the long run. I knew how to strip a gun down, and I could handle one. And this is really what we had when we first went into combat anyhow. We had the old guns.

I don't know if anybody told you, but on Guadalcanal the Japs knew that our .03 calibre rifle would only hold five rounds. And stupid like everybody thought they were, they would count the shots, from, say, a field of fire. They would count the shots and then they would advance when they knew you was out of ammo [ammunition]. It would take a couple seconds for you load up.

Now, where the surprise came to them is when we finally got some M1's. Those were a clip of eight. And when they started advancing on you, you had three more rounds and that was enough to give the other guy a chance to load up. And you had a continuous field of fire there then.

And this was one of our ways of overcoming a lot of the grief that we had because you just knew in your mind, knew that those "dirty bums," or whatever you call them. It wasn't that name; it was unprintable words. "Now they are going to come and we are going to get them." You would gleam. Really, you couldn't wait to shoot them!

Being a medic, I did carry guns every time I got a chance, but anytime an officer seen me with a gun, he would take it away from me. But I felt when we first went over there we were wearing a bazaar, that's what you call it, if that's what you call it or a red cross on your arm, the band. And all those things were, was targets. The Japanese learned to holler, "Medic," and you would come running. And probably part of their training was that if you kill them, that will demoralize the troops. So, it didn't take us long to get rid of our arm bands.

S: Did you have any buddies shot like that?

A: Yes, I had one. Seen him run out. And it reminds me of when you go shoot rabbits. He was running; he heard somebody holler, "Medic," and he goes running and the next thing you know, plop, he flipped over just like if you ever shot rabbits. You see, that's how they do. And that was the end of him. Well, from then on, anytime I had a chance, I grabbed a gun and I carried it.

S: Did you ever use it.

A: Oh yes. I got a scar on my hand later on with a Jap coming at me with a bayonet, fixed bayonet, and parred it away. Parred the rifle off, took it off of him and used it on him. In fact, I brought the bayonet home, as a souvenir for me. I carried it for a long time.

S: Where was that?

A: That was on Bouganville.

S: Do you remember that exact instance?

A: Well, now that we are talking, it seemed like we were in a hole, and we heard yelling and it was sort of evening-like, dusk, where it was hard for you to recognize, really, too much. Guys coming for you and they're running around and not much shooting. And first thing you know, here I see this knife, the blade. And I reach up with my left hand first, and I must have

touched the gun a little bit and with my right palm extended, so the blade of the bayonet--I got a slight scar here. And from there, when I twisted my hand around, it ripped up and scarred me here. And I grabbed his hand on the gun and grabbed the rifle and twisted and flipped him over, turned the rifle around, plop, give it to him and pulled the trigger, released the gun. Didn't think nothing about it, really. I mean, it was done and over with and just picked up my bag and moved on.

A funny thing, I could say I never stopped and had a reaction over anything like this or not. It is just that it happened so quick and my mind said, "got to move, got to get out of here, got to get out of here." Then we got up the road and met some more people we were supposed to be with. Now, this happened when I was in the field Artillery. They were trying to over-run the guns.

But when you go into an outfit from nothing, you don't know anybody. It is really weird because you can't call on anybody if you need help. You don't know anybody.

So anyhow, going into this first night, and the surviving through the night and shaking in my boots all night long, in the morning then, they come looking for me. They heard they had a replacement here someplace. Here I am . . .

S: Where was this at now?

A: This was on a little island. And when you are on so many little islands, it is hard for me to try to remember the names of them, really, I've tried.

S: How does Rendova sound?

A: Well, Rendova. I know I was on there, but this incident I am telling you about was--we were going to support the infantry who was fighting on New Georgia at the time. And these little islands, I mean, watching this Ba Ba Black Sheep squadron [former television show], I knew we were on that island, Veta Levu. There is a lot of the names that sound similar to that, in these groups. Well, you get one of them, then you can go ahead on--Kolombangara. Well, the names, if they come I'll say them. If they don't . . . because you do forget. And almost every island that we were on, it cost us some life, some of our boys paid with a life here or there.

But anyhow, I go to this outfit and they tell me that I am supposed to take care of these people here in this section. Now, these are the old cannons, The old 155 millimeter howitzers that we had at the time yet. Now, we are still fighting with old equipment. We don't have nothing new yet.

I remember the gun sergeant. He was in prison here in this country. He was in jail for something he done and he was offered a chance to join the service and be exonerated, which he did. And he was a wonderful mechanic, believe me. He kept those guns together with wires and whatever he could so he would keep shooting. Pouring salt water down the gun barrel to bring the gun back into battery. Bringing a gun back into battery means that it has got to come all the way back to a certain position before it's ready to shoot again.

S: Recoil?

A: Right. And they were so hot, they wouldn't recoil. And he would just grab a bucket of water from the ocean and dump it. The guns were right on the beach, see. They had gun emplacements cause you needed . . . We were on one island and we were shooting to another, to support the infantry.

Now, this particular night, I didn't know anything about a big gun and I hear people hollering. They need this, they need that. "Where is it? Where is it?" "Over here, over here." One hundred and fifty five millimeter howitzer shells, now, they are pretty heavy. And they keep them stacked and there is rings in the nose of the shell. It is a ring. And you run over.

S: Was it like a piston ring?

A: Well, like a ring on a bolt that you would string a clothes line. And eye bolt, in other words, okay?

And I went over to the pile and I would stick my fingers into one in each hand, one in each hole, and I would grab two of them and lift them and run with them. Now, I didn't know this was hard to do. Believe me, I didn't have any idea. I would see these other guys, they are regular field artillery guys, they are carrying one in their arm and bringing it up to the gun. And I am over there grabbing one in each finger and I am hoisting them up and I am running with them and I swing them out and lay them down and I run over, get a couple and bring them back and this is how

I am carrying ammo. And finally one of the guys stop me and says, "Hey, wait a minute. Take a break." He says, "Do you want to pull a lanyard?" "Well, heck yes." He, what do you think?

So, setting the fuses--I didn't know nothing about setting fuses. They take these rings off and put a fuse in. Well, the guy sets a fuse, whatever it has to be. Later you learn 'delay,' 'instant contact,' whatever, 'up in the air.' Sometimes they want them to go off in the air before they hit on the ground. So, it is a time fuse. But you got to know what you are doing because you could hurt your own people, see?

You ask any of the infantry boys, they will tell you. When they found out I was in the infantry, I mean, they make you feel good in a way sometimes. They would hear, like when the shot goes off sometimes, there is a brass ring on the back end of these rounds and sometimes it gets frayed a little bit and it makes a weird noise--phew, phew, phew, something on that order. And they used to say, when they were laying in the fox holes and they heard it, they would say, "Come on Dix, give it a little gas, give it a little gas." They knew I was in the field artillery. "Don't let it land here, man." And of course, later on you find out if you heard it, it ain't going to get you. It is gone already by the time you hear it, see?

So, I remember one instant there that they had called back. They were pinned down by the Japs pretty much and they needed a constant field of fire all night. And this is the time that these guns were getting so hot. Man, they weren't coming back and this gun sergeant is over there and he is pouring water on the old baby, let it come back, and vroom, again.

This was an all night long thing, man. Go, go, go. And my head was about as big as a balloon because I never been that close to any cannon. And here, man, it is booming, booming, booming. Don't have sense to reach and get some cotton out of my pouches. So anyhow, we survived the night and later on we found out that the job was well done. Man, those shells was falling right in a ring around our guys, keeping the Japs out. Didn't hurt anybody, according to the report. Our boys were okay; and they were grateful, naturally.

From the 155 millimeter's, a little later on I went to the 135 [field artillery]. That is a smaller shell and everything, but I did come back to the 136 [field artillery] again. And the reason I think they sent me

to the 135, they were short of medics. And they sent me there. And the day I got into that area, a shell landed into the area and wounded 28 men. I was the only medic there. I mean, that's like leaves falling off a tree. You see a bunch of guys and all of a sudden--zunk. Here they are; they are down. And you run over and you do what you can.

S: Can you remember some of the injuries?

A: Yes. The only dead one out of the 28 wasn't injured. He was dead from concussion. And I thought he was sleeping or he passed out or something. Well, you see guys with a piece of his butt sliced off from the shrapnel and a lot of wounds is what it really amounted to, nothing too serious in this particular case.

S: What would you do for the wounds? Would you use some of that sulfa?

A: Well, I look at them and naturally, sulfa was the first thing and they had their aid kit if it was big enough, I figured to use it. You stop the flow of blood as quick as you can. If you could see the shrapnel, you don't touch; you leave it. You don't dare pull it out because maybe this would finish them off. They are bleeding, but if it is in a main spot, you leave that up to the doctor to do. You do what you can. Broken arm, broken shoulder, put a sling [on]. You took care of everything you could.

S: How about morphine? Did you give any morphine?

A: Yes. Oh yes. We had them in surrets. At first we had a little stove that looked like a pack of cigarettes and there was a needle in there and a syringe and the top, when you opened the top, it was like a rain spout in there. And it had a little stove in there, a little alcohol stove. You would cook the pills. You had pills and water and you would cook them and melt it down, take the stuff out and give it to the people.

You were told, naturally, that the very serious--like when we got the surrets later on--the very serious you could give a whole one to. But try to use one of them for two guys if you could, if there was that many laying around. You could jab one guy and jab another before you use it all up.

And at that time, of course, when we first went over there, we had the pills, strictly the pills. We had

morphine pills. You had phenobarb; you had codeine and of course, aspirin.

A lot of people used to call the medics 'pill rollers' because of any injury, first thing you used to get, aspirin, aspirin. And throughout the years they are finding out that is still, to this day, the best, one of the best pills I think we had in the world. It takes care of your pain more than people realize. It is cheap and it don't hurt you. You can become addicted if you start eating them like ten, twelve at a time, stuff like that, but if you take them like most people, most eight in a day, they would never hurt you. And they did do good. A lot of people realized this later. Tecause they told you, they commented on the fact. At first you were called a 'pill roller.' "That pill roller this, that pill roller that." But after a while, anybody that had been in combat will tell you--I mean, I am not bragging or trying to give the medical people praise--but the guys would say, "Don't you dare call him a pill roller. He is an okay Joe." Because they seen us go in there with no weapons when we would go into the areas where they were being shot at and one thing or another.

Well, one time I went after a sergeant that was wounded. Everybody hated him. He was hollering for help. There was fire around and I said to my buddy, "Well, I am going after him." "No, leave him die; he's no good anyhow. Let him out there, let him die!" Well, I am not that way. I knew he was wounded and he was out there so I humped my butt out there and I got over him and turned him over on his back and got a hold of him and clamped his hands together, like so, in a vise form and put them behind my head and put pressure on him and I dragged so, and got him back to an area that was clear. And of course, he was later evacuated. Patched him up and he got evacuated, never did hear any more from him, whether he lived, died, back in the service.

S: Did you know where he was hit?

A: I think he was hit in the stomach, because I mean, I don't know how bad it was. I had his first aid thing wrapped on him.

Well, one of the worst things I've seen was a guy's belly peeled open. Just imagine your shirt front, open it and peel it open. And this is the way he is laying with everything laying out. And I mean, it is

fantastic how your body sometimes can take so much and still live, and sometimes nothing and you go. But when I seen this, the only thing that was close was a burlap bag. His clothes were torn, and I just dumped everything, I dumped sulfur, dumped it back in him and pulled what I could over his clothes and put the burlap bag on the hole and get pressure and tied it real tight. Stopped a jeep coming down the road the told him to get him to the clearing station. Now, I don't know if that man ever lived or what.

Another pretty bad thing I seen was one of the Fijians. They were some of our best friends that we made in the jungle. They showed us a lot, how to survive in the jungles. And we found this one guy tied to a tree, a banyard tree. And he must have had ten bayonet holes in him and he was still alive. I remember we got him back to the clearing station, what we called. And I asked the doctor later about him and he says, "Yes, they cut quite a bit of his bowel and had to do quite a bit of surgery on him, but when they flew him off the island, he was still alive." Yes, they were beautiful people for us to have over there. Without them, I don't know how we would have made out.

- S: Did you ever run into any situation where you would run to a wounded man and by the size of the wound and the type wound, you knew he wouldn't make it. And, you knew that there was another wounded man that maybe you could help, would you leave, or did you know of anybody who would leave the guy that you figured wouldn't make it?
- A: I had, almost, you could say, not really--the guy got out of his fox hole and was hit, tore up with shrapnel. My way was never to leave anybody go. I did what I could for the guy, give him a quick shot. This is when I had a surret in fact, and I heard this other guy holler, and I gave him a quick shot and I knew I couldn't do anymore for him, so I left him there and I went to the other guy. By the time I took care of this guy, there was somebody else and I kept moving up. So, evidently, when I did come back around this area again, these guys are gone. So, somebody picked them up. So, a lot of times you don't know how they make out some particular times.

I know this one kid had both of his legs blown off. And I tied tourniquets on and got him back and it just so happened this one doctor that I knew I met later and I asked him, I says, "How about this kid?" He says, "Oh, the operation, really we saved the kid's

life, but in the morning, blood clot and he died."

And I remember them burying him. I remember seeing them bury this kid. And a couple weeks later in the jungles, things deteriorate so fast you can't believe it. It seemed like only a couple weeks later in this particular area that the Graves Registration come in, they were going to move the graves.

Now, when you know you are going to have a big push, they dig holes and everything. They estimate approximately how many people are going to get killed, and this, that--so they have holes ready. Some people can't take this. They can't believe it. But all it is, is to protect the ones that don't get hurt or killed from diseases. You got to bury the dead, regardless, you got to bury them.

S: Who took care of that?

A: The Graves Registration gang. This was strictly their job.

S: Regular detail?

A: Yes, regular detail. And a couple of weeks later, when they come around to dig these marks up again, there was hardly nothing left there. That is just how fast your body deteriorates in the jungle.

S: What did they bury them in?

A: Well, a blanket. You use a blanket because, I mean, war is hell. No one ever better think it is a game, and a joke. It is something our people here in this country, you may hear a lot of them say, "Well, I rather have them come here and fight." But to us, I feel, that have been over there and seen what happens to your women, children, your homes, your property, if it is at all possible, you would rather keep it out of here. You would want to go over there and try to stop things before they get here. You can't realize . . .

You see an earthquake, that is devastation, that is something that happened through mother nature. But now, when you have willful killing going on too, you see, like, well, in the Philippines, you seen and heard things that people--you can't hardly believe. Pregnant women, the Japanese would just love to go around bayonetting them. Now why? They made games of doing things like this. Now, those people, maybe, are dead

and gone that used to do this, but at that particular time, why do you want to harm a person here who has a little one inside of them? Why? What are you bothering them for? You know what I mean? You are fighting. All right. Try to kill the man, never mind them, and they would make a game of stuff like this. Talk about vicious.

S: What was the most vicious thing you saw, as far as atrocities go? Did you see a lot of atrocities? Occasionally?

A: Well, no. Not too much. I seen something being done by one of ours, I'll tell you. And I hate to say, but I really wanted to see him finish the job. I was going through with a lieutenant. I was walking through this area and we come upon four Fijians. One is holding this Jap by one arm, with his arms, like you see a wrestler holding him. They got him spread eagle. And one is on top of him and he has got his bolo knife and he is skinning him. He is just peeling his hide off of him alive. And he is screaming and hollering. And of course, I had no feelings for the Jap. I was cheering, actually cheering the Fijian on. "Go ahead, keep it up, keep it up. Kill him. Kill him." But they did not want to kill him, just wanted to skin him alive.

One of the reasons, I mean, you go back and you find out that when the Japs did start taking over in the Pacific, they overran one of the islands that belonged to the Fijians and they took all their women and young people, took them away. And of course, the people never forgot it, see, and they figured that some way or another they are going to get back. And by helping us, maybe it was one of the main reasons, and then anything they could do to help us.

After awhile, being around a Fijian, he could teach you to smell in the jungle. You could smell a Jap, you would know. It takes a while before you learn that. But you would never learn that if you wasn't taught by these people.

And they were experts at night, coming in on people. They proved it to us by coming into our camp, letting us know that they are coming. And they would come in there and they were gone. And in the morning, me and you would be looking at each other and I would be laughing because you had a mark on your head and you would be laughing because I had one on me. And we didn't know we were marked, and we were dead as far as

those Fijians. They came in there and marked you and were gone and you never even knew it.

S: Were the Japanese that good at infiltrating?

A: Some were pretty good. I imagine Danny [Pecchio] may have told you about the one that was on Hill 700 in Bouganville there. He was a sniper. He was in the area for so long. And he killed, I think, he said, about eighteen before they finally got him. And he laughed about it. They captured him. And he laughed because he says, "Well, you ain't going to kill me. You want to keep me. And I got eighteen of your officers already. So, this was another thing if you had a little grudge against somebody or something. You tell them, "Hey, look man I'll start yelling out that you are a colonel or something and if there is a sniper around, he is going to get your butt." I mean, it was one way of letting off a little steam too. "Hey, don't mess with me, I'll call you a colonel or something."

S: Salute you?

A: Yes. That, in the jungles, well, in combat this is for your own protection and the officer's too, that you don't call anybody by rank. You recognize them.

I don't know if Danny showed you the picture that we took up there on Bouganville. Because anytime I got a chance, I used to go to visit these guys cause they are hometown boys. And I knew there was a lot of action going on where they were. If I got a chance man, I would hit for that area, unless I was assigned by them.

Well, after the New Georgia battle, I bummed an ambulance and I went around. Danny may have told you this, I don't know. But, I went around and I picked up clothes. I went to every guy I knew. "How about some blankets? How about some clean clothes? Socks, pants, shirts, whatever?" And I had quite a bit of clothes in the ambulance. And I went out looking for the 145th Infantry. And I finally see a gang of guys coming up over a hill, and I parked and I waited. And I said, "Hey, where is Pecchio at? Where is Poluse," some of the guys from our home area. And finally, here they are coming up. "Hey," I said, "how about some clean clothes?" They are mad, and of course, they were surrounded for so many days, in the mud, and so on in the battles. And now they are coming out. And here they are stinking in their clothes. And I had,

naturally, to my buddies first, right. Then the rest of the clothes. And Danny makes a remark yet sometime to this day when you hear him. He says, "Well, I am only this wide and Dixie gave me a pair of pants that wide." He says, "But they were clean, that is what counted."

And I used to always try to do things like that too. If I could find food, I would take it. I would help anybody, really, but I mean, here I am trying to take care, look after my buddies.

Danny was hurt and in the hospital one time. And I found out and went to the kitchen and bummed some flour and I made him a cake. I brought the cake to him, and one of the guys went to tell the captain and I got a stripe taken away from me, because I made him a cake. I mean, why did I do this? I mean, only a couple hands full of flour, and a little bit of vanilla, little bit of baking soda, a little bit of sugar. I made him a cake and brought it up there and all them guys had a little hunk of cake in the jungle.

Now, at another time when I was cooking--now I am going back again to when I was cooking--in the jungles, who ever heard of an ice box cake or a pie? Now, I got ammunition crates and I make an ice box within a box. Some packed ice around it. And I got graham crackers, and butter and butterscotch pudding and I made pies. Now, when it comes serving time, here I am, I am giving these guys pies, in the jungle. You know what I mean? I mean, it is something, the more you think about it and when you are the cook, if you are cooking for the troops.

There was so many cooks that didn't want to do nothing. Because you will get some reaction from a guy that says, "Spam? Man, that's it? Spam?" They would open a can of spam, slice you off a chunk and throw it at you. Here it is. "Here is your supper. Here is your supper." Well, you get tired of that.

Well, when I was in the kitchen, George Chelekis, he used to have the Brass Rail. His dad used to own it and he and I were, like, the head people in the kitchen. And we're trying to teach other guys to cook. So naturally, we would try to do different things with Spam. I remember we had a lot of peanut butter in number ten cans, we would have. We would have a lot of jelly, jam. And you had a lot of spam. Well, we would use the Spam in different ways.

I remember one time we would dice it up and make like a braised beef--like you would braise a beef. And we would get sauce and make sauce and braise the beef, and give this out. You would have dehydrated potatoes; you would try to make french fries out of them instead of mashing them. I mean, you would try to make life a little bit better, if you could, for these people. And like I say, baking, I didn't have to bake, but I used to make cakes and everything else. And when you lose a stripe for making a cake for a buddy, I mean, it gets you in a position where you don't want to do nothing anymore.

Another thing I'll tell you, a group of us from from Youngstown did--we were on Fiji Island and the first ship loaded with wounded was coming back. There was approximately 500 people on this ship. Now, these was all kinds, Australians, Fijians, Americans, Marines, whatever. It had been all service people that had been wounded. And the guys from Youngstown, we got together in a company and we said, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a spaghetti dinner for them?" Okay, so the enthusiasm got built up.

So here, where are we going to get spaghetti? And we went to the natives and we asked them, could they make macaroni? Could they make this? Could they make this? And one of their main things out there is a root called the taro. It looks like a rudabaker. Do you know what rudabaker are?

S: Yes. Can you spell that?

A: All right. And a taro would be t-a-r-o, I guess. And it looks on that order. It grows, and this is one of their main staple foods. They used it for potatoes, mash it, slice it, eat it raw.

S: Like kohlrabi would be?

A: Well, I mean, but it is a big root. Okay. Yes, this is one of their main staple lines of eating. I lost my train of thought here.

S: Spaghetti.

A: Spaghetti dinner, okay. So, we figured maybe they grind this up and make some kind of macaroni. And we are looking for macaroni, right? So, we got guys going down the docks, details, or unloading ship or whatever. We sat down and made a list of what we'll need--meat and this and that, all the ingredients you are going to

need for spaghetti. And we run into this Navy officer, his name I can't forget, Lieutenant Giannini I think he was from Brooklyn. And we get to talking and joking around, one thing or another. He says, "Boy, I'll tell you it has been a long time since I ate some real good Italian spaghetti. You know anyplace I could get any?" And I said, "Well, if we had the stuff I could cook it. No problem if I had the stuff." He said, "Man, what do you need? You know I'll get it." And I just reach in there and show him the list. He said, "Why, you dog you." Here we are down there looking for stuff, see. It is just like a miracle, it happened, here he is, he is ready."

So, he looked at the list and, what are you guys planning? We said, "Well, we heard on the radio that the ship is coming in with the wounded. We thought it would be nice if we had a spaghetti meal for them." He said, "Boy, you guys got to be something." He said, "Yes sir." I'll get you everything I could on that list."

Now he goes to the ships, naturally. Now, I know we had a whole cow. The beef that we got winds up as a whole cow frozen. We don't have nothing to thaw it. I get these buddies. Well anyhow, he gave us a whole bunch of stuff that we needed, right, to make the spaghetti dinner. On top of that he gets Imperial, quarts of beer, candy, cigars. I mean, it turned out to be a wine, a real picnic.

Now, these are the first troops we got coming back from Guadalcanal. Now, you don't know how you are going to feel, you are over there fighting a war. And I mean you never seen so many guys cry in all your life. The guys were brought there in wheelchairs, on stretchers, as long as they were able to eat.

S: Well, they had been through hell.

A: We got them in our area. And such an operation, planning it. I had these guys chopping the beef up with an axe, getting it up in small bits so we could grind it with a hand grinder. That is how we got this ground up, hand grinder.

Anyhow, all the work got done. Now, this lieutenant gave us a case of juice. He said, "This is for the guys that are helping you. At least have a little drink while you are working." It was grape juice. And I got sick over this later on. Here we went through all this trouble. Now, only the guys from Youngstown

pitched in and helped. And our company, these other guys, they are looking; they are going around and some of them are griping, "Spaghetti, spaghetti, blah, blah, spaghetti." There is a couple people in the world that don't like spaghetti, naturally. So, the majority of the company, really, there was only two guys that wasn't for this whole thing.

Somehow, we are all through serving these guys. They are crying like babies and all the guys, man, you are really--your butt is dragging. We made a lot of meat-balls and cooking the spaghetti and everything.

And the way we worked it. I never handled a gang like this. So, cooking the spaghetti, and then we had these field ranges. I don't know if you seen a field range. It is like a refrigerator, on the order, smaller refrigerator, or bigger than your stove. Has a big door you open up and there is a trough and it slides out and it has got these big pots there. Now, on the bottom of this there is two tanks that have your fuel, petrol, that you burn. And then on the top there is a flat rectangular pan that you would use for, like frying. Well, into that, when you would light the burner, you could move the burner up if you were going to cook on the top. And you are going to cook on the bottom. And then there are splash pans in there. We cooked running on the trucks too, by the way.

This is another little incident after the spaghetti dinner, if you care, I could relate a little bit of that. Well, maybe I should right now while we are talking about it. We would be moving from one area to another. And a kid by the name of Bazocco was in the kitchen, he and I. While we would be going in the truck, he would say, "Dixie, let's get together and cook while we are going, okay?" So we did. And with these splash lids that they had on the pots, is the only thing that saved it from spilling. The truck is rocking and rolling. We got the fires going and we would be cooking.

S: Was that dangerous?

A: Oh yes. It was. But you figured time is of essence there. So, as soon as we get to an area where we are going to bivouac, we would tell them, "All right men, chow is ready," ten, fifteen minutes. Well, the higher officers couldn't believe this. "Well, how can you guys have this food ready already?" "Well, come and try it. See what you think." A lot of the officers were dumbfounded. Here is a couple of Joes, the minute you get into an area, they got their supper

ready and these other guys ain't even getting ready yet. They're pumping up their stove. So, a lot of the other cooks got to hate us for this. But I mean, we are looking out for our boys, too. Who are we looking out for by doing this? We didn't have to do nothing. We could have sat in the truck, waited until we got to where we were, got out and start cooking. No, this way we are cooking on the run, we are going.

Okay, so once or twice we had a live load behind the convoy and they came back and gave us heck for being slow, because we told the driver it is pretty rough. Things are getting pretty hairy back there. "Hey, Joe, take it easy a little bit." And then we would ease up a little bit and we would start falling behind. "Hey, come on."

I think one time it saved our life, really, because the area that we was supposed to be bivouaced was bombed by the time we got there. But we were late. If we would have been there on time, who knows? But it wasn't our time. We wasn't supposed to go.

But anyhow, to get back to the spaghetti dinner, the way we had, the guys would come with the dishes. We even had dishes. I don't know where they accumulated all the dishes from, but you had real china. Guy got it from the ships. We had "dog robbers," what you call them, servers, waiters. They would come over and I had the big pot with the spaghetti right in it. So, you would dig in the dig some spaghetti out and put it on the plate. The next guy would put sauce and meatballs. And you would cart it over.

Well, hey, everybody enjoyed it, mucho. Now, it come time, I figured maybe I ought to eat a little. It is getting late and I am starting to get myself a little spaghetti ready and the captain comes over and he says, "Anzevino, what's this I hear? Rebar came to me and he says you was giving your friends from Youngstown company food." I said, "What do you mean, captain? It's company food?" I said, "None of this food belongs to the company, what we have here." He said, "Oh yes, you had juice that you was giving the men." And I almost cried, I was so angry. I said, "What do you mean I had juice? This was given to us by the same man that gave us all this other stuff," I says, "and if he wanted some all he had to do was come over here and help crank on that grinder or chop some of the meat up, or open some of the cans." I says, "He would have been welcome to it. I didn't give none

to anybody that didn't work." He said, "You know that was wrong. You should have gave him some." I said, "No, I don't feel like I should have. If he worked, I would have gave him some gladly." So really, this whole dinner came about from only the cooperation of us Youngstown people.

Now, as far as food goes, I mean, like I started to tell you about this spam. A lot of these guys had corned beef, all these other cooks. And they would come over and we got a lot of spam, but we don't have much corned beef. So, we will swap you. And you want to swap so you try to swap food. Well, I would swap them spam for corned beef. They would give me five cans of spam for maybe one corned beef. We are making out like bandits.

So, what we did this one day, George Chelekis suggested, we were grinding up the spam, we were going to make meatloaf. He says, "Hey Dix, how about if we put some peanutbutter in it?" "Okay, let's try it." So, we opened up some cans of peanut butter and shot it right in there and mixed it all up and put some powdered eggs in with the thing, and made loaves. Guys come to eat, meatloaf, mashed potatoes, gravy. "Where do you get this stuff in the jungle?" The other officers are coming around, they want to know how come we got it and their cooks don't. So, naturally, they get an invitation. "Come over, come and eat with us." And they find out it is Spam.

So, we used to do everything we could imagine with Spam. We would make different things with it. Instead of, like you heard maybe, a lot of guys would just open a can. Now, Spam was in about a five pound square. I mean, oblong, a square loaf, oblong, maybe twenty inches long. The guys would open the can up, shake the loaf out and cut it and just slice it down an inch thick, and throw it on your mess kit. "Here, here is your supper." Now, I don't care who you are, you keep eating Spam like that, or anything, steak even, you are going to get sick of it.

S: So, you fixed it up just to break the monotony?

A: So, we used to change. Hey, one time after I got out of the kitchen, I remember we got in the chow line. . .

One thing about atabrine, I got to let you know, atabrine was our substitute for quinine. A lot of guys were getting Malaria. Quinine was supposed to be your salvation. Well, when the Japs took over our quinine

supplies, our druggists, whatever, come up with atabrine. He would get an atabrine and a vitamin tablet. A lot of the guys would throw them away, instead of taking them. So, in my outfit, my gang, this is after I moved into the field artillery, I wouldn't give them to the guys. I was the head of the mess line. As you came, open your mouth and I would dob it in, made you get a swallow of water from the lister bag. A lister bag is a canvas bag with a lot of openings around it that you squeeze and get your water, like an udder bag on a cow. Only, you would squeeze the knob and your water, get a shot of water and come on. Dob their pills in their mouth and make them take them. This may be one of the reasons, that if it is in the record at all, you'll find out that where I was a medic in the field artillery, we had less than one percent on the sick list.

S: I think the 37th Division was one of the best, as far as that goes.

A: We had some pharmacists too, that were very concerned about our boys. They would try to do things,

Another bad thing we had a lot of, they called the "jungle crud." It would get under your arms, in your crotch, anyplace where your body was close and sweaty. It was a rash. They would come to pimple heads and break and the liquid that would spread, spread like wildfire, all over you, drive you crazy.

S: Now Dixie, you were saying that you got, somehow, into the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] right after the Bouganville Campaign. Is that right?

A: Yes, when I started to complain about the Jap prisoners we had. They were giving them all new clothes to wear and they were letting us keep our old clothes. And Mrs. Roosevelt had come over there. And I had run into her and I had a little conversation with her.

S: Do you remember that?

A: Yes. And she said that we had been in the jungle so long that she thought that we were barbarians and that we should not be brought back with the public so soon. That we should be brought back in quarantine for a time. And that all the germs that we would be bringing back in our clothes, who would know?

S: Mrs. Roosevelt said that?

A: Mrs. Roosevelt told me with an aide that she was with. That I actually bumped into her and this woman, I never seen a woman so big, grabbed me by the back of the neck and picked me right up. I was putting somebody in an ambulance is the way it happened, and I slammed the door and turned around and Mrs. Roosevelt was standing there. I didn't even know they were there on the island. And I ran into her. And this woman grabbed me, very big, but then it was a precaution that she grabbed me. She figured maybe I was going to attack her or something.

She made that remark that we were actually like barbarians. That we've been in the jungle so long that we didn't know how to be humans anymore. And that we would have to be quarantined before we would be allowed to come into society. Well, maybe from her viewpoint you could see that, but . . .

S: Did that comment shock you?

A: Oh, it nailed us a little bit. Hey, here we are over there fighting a war and now we are going to be quarantined?

Well, that's another story. When I did get back I was quarantined for awhile on Angel Island. My guards were Italian prisoners of war. They were guarding me, I was in a compound with a fence around it, barbed wire and Italian prisoners of war were guarding me, walking around with rifles. And I had talked with them in Italian and I found out. This is how I knew. And they had USO's for the Italians there. They were supposed to be prisoners on Angel Island. And they had all the benefits of the American Soldier. And we were quarantined. I mean, this really galled at us.

S: Why?

A: Well, because Mrs. Roosevelt had figured that we had been in the jungle so long that the society wouldn't be safe if we was put out there with them, without being quarantined.

S: Okay. Go on with this conversation you had with her.

A: Brainwashed.

Well, I mean this is what it amounted to: "How are you soldier?" And naturally, I knew who it was. I says, "Oh fine. And what are you doing here?" And she said, "Well, I just come over to see about the well being

and to help my husband, if possible, in any way, knowing he can't come here. We are touring around the island. You are doing a very good job and all. And hopefully the war will end soon." And this was the end of the conversation. And she got in her jeep and gone and, "Take care," and so on.

From the time she was on the island, we were not allowed to walk around and take a bath in the river without having our shorts on. Well, we used to bathe in the river, and you bathe nude. As long as she was there, we had to wear shorts. But naturally, it is a little thing to get a little joke out of. You see a woman, a woman that raised kids or whatever. And you wasn't allowed to be nude anymore, okay.

I told you when I did come back, I was quarantined. Well anyhow, I got out of the quarantine and I was commenting about our clothes so much. I says now, people and Mrs. Roosevelt said that we shouldn't be bringing our germs back here and one thing or another. I said, "Why did they let us come back with our clothes then?" I says on the way coming back, "Why don't they let us change clothes? Take all out old clothes. Give us a new outfit. Take us to another island. Change again. And keep doing this until we finally get home. We will have new clothes and the Jap prisoners that are there, let them wear them old clothes. Wash them, clean them, let them wear them. No, they are giving them new uniforms, new shoes, stuff that even the combat boys need, they are getting and we need the shoes up there where the fighting is going on.

So, when I got to Frisco, I don't know how it came about, but they sent me to Washington. And I had a meeting with the Senators and the Congress. I was brought into the room and I didn't know who they were. But they started asking me questions. And I expressed what I just said, about changing clothes and so on and so forth and shoes and one thing and another. I says, "And this is one way if it is possible, to eliminate bringing the germs back into this country is by doing that." I says, "It is only a simple thing." And the next thing I knew, a guy called me into a room and he interviewed me, asking questions about what happened and this and that. What I did, so on and so forth. And he said, "How would you like to come with our outfit?" I says, "Really, I don't know anything about anything." I says, "All I would like to do is get home and visit with my family." And he says, "You sign with us and you can go home right now if you sign with us." So, I sighed and he gave me a week's furlough and I went home.

And in the meantime, they had checked this one week. They went in the neighborhood, where I was born and raised and where I had lived and whatever I had done. I didn't know this till later that they checked me out. Went to the neighbors and asked the neighbor what kind of a person I was and so on and so forth. In other words, was I fit for what they were planning for me or whatever?

S: Did you know what the organization was at that time?

A: No, no, not at that time. I didn't have no idea. And so, my week was over and I went back. I walked in one building, sat down, talked with a guy and they put a uniform on me, officer's uniform. They says, "Now, we are going to try you out on this kind of a thing here. There is going to be a party tonight by one of the senator's wives." It was a little, simple thing. At that time they were using food stamps, a red stamp for you to buy food, meat. You needed this stamp to be able to buy the meat. Without the stamp you couldn't buy the meat. It was sort of a rotating thing.

And the problem was very simple. They wanted to find out if I could find out how the senator's wife gets all this meat to have these parties. I mean, it was just a simple thing like that. And they told me, "Don't get your picture taken any way if possible because this will finish you in this type of work."

So, all of a sudden I thought, "Gee, that is pretty good." Okay, so I am brought there with some other guys and later on I found out they were the same OSS people. And this was our chore, all of us. We were supposed to look out for this that and the other. And you mingle with the people they introduced you to. You danced with whoever. I mean, it was really a nice time that you had. And you had to use your own way to try to find out how the meat got there. And of course, one way you would start asking questions in a way that, "Oh boy, that meat looks good." "Oh man, that is fine. I wonder where it came from? I wonder where I could get some like that? Boy, I sure would like to be able to get a hunk of that," one thing or another. And you keep this up, and you keep going around talking to one waiter and another waiter and another, so on and so forth. And then finally somebody comes up with the answer for you. And you go back with it.

S: Well, what was the answer?

A: Well, they pay, they pay somebody, pay off to get the meat. And who would it be? It would be from the service. They would pay some noncommissioned officer money to confiscate some meat and bring it over. In other words, "I have a couple sides of beef, come over here."

S: Like the black market?

A: I don't know however, if it was on the black market order, but they would do some favors for the man, get some favors done somehow, either a stripe or however. But this was a simple thing. It was accomplished.

S: So, were they pleased?

A: Oh yes. Very. So, then they moved me into a place, at the time, I don't know if it is in existence today. It was called Callinwood. It was a big mansion right outside of Washington. And we had Jap prisoners as our house boys, did the cooking, and everything. They would put us guys in rooms, and well, we are socializing. We would play cards and somebody would bring a jigsaw puzzle out and you would start working puzzles. And outside the river ran. It was a big, enormous place. It was a big mansion. So many hundreds of feet, oh, maybe 500 or better, feet back in the back yard like, say. The front yard was maybe 500 feet, and 500 more feet the river was there. So, you had access to a boat if you wanted.

We would start working these puzzles out and playing cards and one thing and another. And one day they come in there and asked me, "How about coming in there and work this big jigsaw puzzle?" What it was, was film of enemy concentration places and they made it into a big jigsaw, cut it up. And I was pretty good at putting jigsaws together. This might be one of the reasons they picked me for this particular detail. And they had cameras taking pictures as I was putting the jigsaw together. But I didn't know this. They just says, "We got a nice big one we want you to work." And I go in there and I work it.

Now, what happened, as I'm working the puzzle and the film is being taken of this, this is how they found out like this mike is here; it is camouflaged. And I would put this piece in maybe and there would be something odd about the picture and the other guys, who knew what they are hunting, would find it, but I never knew. All I was doing was working the puzzle. Then they put me on another one and time me. Say, well give me time. I

did this for quite a while. I worked different puzzles for quite a while.

And then they says, "How would you like to go to Washington?" So, I went to Washington supposedly on a furlough with another guy. While I am with this guy he tells me, says, "Well, hey look, we got this money. They gave us this money to spend. And we are going to meet a couple girls and we are supposed to tell them that this certain ship is going to be leaving. And we are kind of teed off about it because they just came in and our buddies don't even get any time to spend with us. And just because the British want these planes, and these parts for the tanks," and stuff like this see, that pertained to military information. And we were supposed to give some of it was true and some of it wasn't. Now, what was true and what wasn't, we didn't know. But all we were supposed to do was drink, spend money and pretend we got drunk.

Now, I was a pretty good drinker. I could drink. In fact, I never been drunk in my life. And I have drank some booze, believe me. Well, I mean, you program yourself, knowing you are going to go out, so you eat the proper foods and you grease your insides up good, and drink moderately and you handle it pretty good.

So anyhow, we go in this place and you are trusted with the money. I mean, the thought never enters your mind to try to pilfer a buck, really. You are on a detail and this is all that is in your mind. So, you meet these two, and boy, they were dolls.

S: Do you remember any names?

A: No. Two beautiful blondes, but they were spies, really is what they were. They were our enemies. And part of the other OSS people found out that they used to get guys drunk, even drug some of them. I had one buddy almost died through drugs from this one beautiful blonde. I was supposed to meet her and he went on his own. And we always worked with a team, when you work this kind of stuff, because if drugs was involved . . .

Like the one time, I went on a job and I had to take drugs to prove to them that I was one of them. And I smoked, like you seen the Arabs have the glass pipes the bowl with the hoses on. I smoked hash and horse, and whatever else you want to call it, with them to prove I am one of them. And you do whatever you have to do to acquire what they ask you to get.

Naturally, after drinking and whatever, spending money like crazy, they see all the money you got. Money don't interest them, see. They know you got a lot of money so they figure all right, you got to be high echelon officer. And so, once you get through, even if it means going to bed, it is part of the job.

S: Did you?

A: Oh yes. Sometimes you had to. Sometime you didn't want to, but you had to. Sometime you wanted to and couldn't. But this was part of it.

From one job to the other, you would accomplish what? Now, if you was taking too long on a job, there was always back-up people. If you was taking too long, they would move in. And you were taught this. Somebody comes in, saying properly whatever, that okay, it was time for you to move out or something, and let them take over.

This is one of the ways, I think, that when they had me on this hot shit--I am sorry there--but the hot stuff, that if we didn't have back-ups, we would have probably been dead, because they figured if we were getting it, we had been there long enough. And we were programmed in a hospital. They let us drink stuff. We were given shots for a period before we went out on detail. And two weeks was the longest time they would ever let us be on it.

S: Would you be in uniform for these operations?

A: No, not something like that. Sometime you would be in uniform, but when it came to the dope stuff, no. We were more or less trying to be like a black market person, see.

S: And where did you go? Was this all in Washington?

A: All in Washington. Once in a while a little surrounding area. Went on a boat one time, Hudson River. Like today you can take these boat rides? Went on a boat there and made some contact with people.

Well, one time we moved. This stuff moves around so fast in your mind you forget sometime.

S: Go ahead. Go ahead. You are doing fine.

A: But we moved. I had to go to Quantico and do a little chore there. Sometime the jobs were so menial you thought that it was nothing. But like clothing, and

shoes and things like that, there was so much of it evaporating and I was sent there as a Marine. I had to find out why this stuff was being let go so much. And I found out that a lot of the guys used to get the clothes and sell them. Our own boys would sell them because they were short of money. And they they could go get more. And this was the only thing. It was maybe wrong in a sense. In a way it wasn't stealing. They weren't stealing it. They were paying for it and then selling it for more money. And this is the way that they were getting what they were doing.

Well then, eventually, they put me in the Blue Ridge Mountains. They put me and my buddy. We were in a little house, like an out house. It was strictly off-limits land. Even the cab drivers in the area wasn't allowed to come up within a certain range of this area. We lived in a little hut like an out house, the two of us. And we had a little musette bag that had our needs. And that was it. And we were prepared on a moments notice to go wherever they called.

And what we didn't know was some of the time, some of the jobs that you get called for, you never were trained for. They take us out on a range, teach us to shoot a pistol or a rifle or whatever other weapons, machine guns. And I turned out to be pretty good with a rifle. And they would pick your jobs for you, I guess, accordingly. And we always had officers there that were training for something.

And this one night, me and my buddy was sleeping, well, who knows what time in the morning, and they come and they beat on the door, "All right, let's go." You don't argue about nothing. You grab your bag and you go. Get in the jeep and you go, go to the base; they put you on a plane and you're flying. While you are flying, the guy hooks a parachute on you, "Hey man, I never jumped out of no plane." "That's all right son, you are going to now." I don't know where we went, but I know the door opened and he says good luck. Boom and me and my buddy were out. And we hit the ground like nothing flat, boom, boom, boom. I don't know how short the jump was, but it was awful quick. We didn't get hurt or nothing. People were there, grabbed us.

And we went over and we were instrumental in getting somebody out of a building that they needed, real quick like. Didn't have to shoot, nothing.

S: This was still in the United States?

A: I don't know where, really. Don't have no idea, Never did.

S: How long was the flight?

A: Oh, we were about four hours.

S: So you could have gone like . . . ?

A: Could have went across someplace. But it's like a dream when you think about it. Here it is. You tell the guy, "Hey Sarge, I never jumped." You don't know if he is a sergeant or what. And he pats you on the back, "That is all right son." Next thing you know, the door is open and boom, he pats you on the back, zonk you are gone. You are out there in the air and boom, the thing opens. I never jumped. Never in my life did I. And about the time I got over the shock of that thing opening, I hit the ground. So, it must have been low. Before I could turn around, people were there, had the harness off of us. Zoom, one thing, boom, off. And we were gone.

S: So, you said you had to get somebody out of a building?

A: Yes. They had this person there that later, some through the grapevine you hear, they were afraid the guy was going to break down. I guess he was a political prisoner. And he was going to break down. I don't know why they chose us, but we did do the job. We went in there quickly and I was more or less, I imagine, from my rifle, that I could use that in case we were ordered that if we couldn't get him, we would have to kill him. So, this was the shock. But we did get him out. And we went out on a rubber boat, got in a sub [submarine], and I mean, it happened so quick that just as if it was a dream. And the next thing you know, where am I, I am back in the Blue Hills, the Blue Ridge Mountains.

S: How long did this whole thing take?

A: It was like a matter of, well, it was done overnight, overnight and then, in the daytime these people kept us like feeding and eating and not letting you out of their sight. Like in woods, jungle. You thought it was jungle, but it was a woods not a jungle because you know how trees grow and the brush in the jungle is altogether different.

And you were back to the Blue Ridge Mountains. And then we had a general, at the time. Can't remember what his name--general of the OSS--was. Donovan,

General Donovan came at our camp after that, came for breakfast. Now, this is just a little bit of something that I, knowing that I am handy in the kitchen and one thing and another. A lot of the guys got shook up knowing that the General was there with a whole gang of guys. And the sergeant come up to me and he says, "How about helping us, Dix? Could you give us a hand?" I says, "Sure, what do you want me to do?" He says, "Well, the dog robber is afraid to go in there and ask them what they want to eat for breakfast." I says, "Okay, give me the coat." So, I put the white coat on and I walked in and put my arm on the general's shoulder. I says, "Morning, what are you going to have for breakfast?" And he turned around and looked at me and he says, "Anything you got, I'll eat it." I says, "Okay, we have eggs, sausage, ham, bacon, whatever you want." He says, "Well give me the business." I says, "How do you like your eggs." He says, "Over easy." "Okay, yes sir." There was eighteen officers around that table and I took all their orders at one time and I went in the kitchen and I gave the orders out.

And I came out, and you wouldn't believe how I could carry, how many things I could carry on my arms and hands, how many dishes. Well, right now I would lie. I would say one, two, three, four, possibly four and two in my other hand. Six dishes, maybe, for breakfast. I went around to the officers and I didn't make a mistake. I served everybody what they wanted.

And after the breakfast was over, the General called me over. And he says, "One thing young man, I want to know how did you remember what everybody wanted?" I says, "Well, General, it was easy. I was trained." And that was all.

So, they took a collection up, and eighteen bucks, so they must have given a buck apiece. It was eighteen and a bottle of booze was my tip. And the regular guy came over to me and he says, "Well, you got to give me some of the money." I says, "No, I'll give you the booze, but I am keeping the money." Because I was looking to come home on a weekend. This was my biggest kick. Anytime I could get home, I would come home on the weekend.

But a lot of the incidents that we went through, a lot of it was hairy, a lot of it was nice. And then one thing they told me, they says, "If you are ever caught and taken away and you mention to the people that get you, 'OSS,' we disown you. We don't

know you. You won't have this on your Army record."

But I did, they sent me something like that plaque there. That is from the 37th Division, but they did send me a small token thing that I belonged in OSS.

S: A certificate?

A: A certificate kind of thing, yes, like that. And pretty soon it was time to come home. And when I came home I couldn't tell my wife anything, naturally.

S: Did they tell you not to?

A: Well, they put me in a hospital before I came home. I'll explain that to you. They put me in a hospital, Walter Reed Hospital for about three weeks. And they told me I was taking tests. And they says to me, "Well, there will be a time that you'll be saying something"--this is before I came home--"you won't remember. So, don't worry about it because it is just part of your life." This is when I talked to you first. I said I could have been brainwashed because a lot of times we are talking, when the 37th is having meetings and things, and we are talking about things that happened and the guys that are with me tell me, "You remember this and you remember," and I don't. I can't for the life of me remember what it was. Even though they know I was there.

I had this one guy tell me, when I came home and wanted to go to college, that I was wounded and laying beside him in a hospital. And I didn't know anything about it. And he says, "Well, I know. I was there Dixie. I know when they brought you in. And I was with you all the time." And he wrote a letter to Cleveland and wherever, trying to verify the fact, and they claim that there is no medical records of me. So, I mean, I couldn't get the advantages they were giving a man that was wounded.

S: You didn't get a purple heart or anything?

A: No. None of my medals I've gotten, whatever I am supposed to get.

Oh, one time when we was over in the Pacific, the Rangers came and asked me if I would go with them on a mission. After the trouble, I was ready to go anyplace. And we went to New Guinea. And we hit the beach there and went in and I went into a mog like quicksand and yet not. I sunk down to my waist

so quick it was hard to believe and the roots from the trees growing, naturally, I leaned over and grabbed them. I had a terrible time pulling myself out of there, but I did. I managed to get out, I got back to the men.

I went along as a medic, is really what I was, in the Rangers. The job was accomplished. It happened that fast. It took me that long to get out of this muck hole and no one needed me, which was a good thing. But they smelled me coming. They said, "Whoo! Where were you man, tough, get into the water." So, I went in and washed it off. But it's just how quick a person can end his life. You come off of the beach. It's sand and you hit the foilage and everything and you don't know. Zonk, here I went, right down. It's just luckily that the roots was close enough and that I leaned over to grab them before I went down any further. I mean, it is weird, weird feeling when you are walking and all of a sudden, ping, something happens here and ping, something happens there.

S: Do you remember what that Ranger mission was for?

A: No, not really. All I know is, they asked for volunteers to go on a . . . They said they had a mission to go and I heard Rangers, and man I wanted to be in the Rangers. I said, "I'll go," and I went.

Well, there are so many things that happened to you. As you talk sometimes something will come back, something will start coming back and leave you, fade. And this is why I say I put this so I can more or less . . .

Another time I was on a ship and we were being attacked. Japs were diving down on us, and gunners were hollering, "Ammo, ammo, ammo." And my buddy, his name was Taggert, I remember pretty much because he was a type of man, he could do medical work, but he was afraid. He shook and he would stand in the corner. He was on the ship, but he was standing in the corner and just trembling, trembling, trembling while all this was going on.

And the guys were hollering for ammo. I said, "Where is it?" They told me where to go get it, so I would run over and I would carry two clips of 20 millimeter ammo, one in each hand and one over, give it to this guy and put it in his gun, went over and give it to another guy. And grab the empties and go back and get some more and come back. And just as I came to this one guy and give him a clip, there are the

planes coming broad-side at the ship, and he fires on it and all you seen was a flash, boom, nothing left, flame. He hit it and it exploded; things zipping all around you. Nothing got me; nothing got him. He was so happy, he did a summersault and broke his shoulder. So, I put a splint on it.

Another time on a ship, It was on a different kind of a ship, landing troops they call it. It was like a tin can, is what I can say to you, like a tin can with steps coming down. They would come into the beach and the troops would run off and run down the sides of these ships. And we was coming up the gangway and see all these planes up there, Jap planes, they see the bomb bay opening up. I mean, you get a weird feeling, cause man, oh, there are fighters going on and whatever and somebody from another ship, right in the bomb bay, vroom, and the thing exploded. And well, naturally, you cheer, you holler, you scream, you forget where you are at.

But different types of ships that I have been on, I volunteered to be a gunner in a plane. I did a lot of this stuff without my commander knowing about it because once I left this first outfit I was in, and I made friends with everybody. Every place I went I made friends. So, nobody really worried about me too much.

I used to have a box, like I said, I had a chest with my name on it and a red cross marked on it. And I had another little box. I used to have a .30-.30 machine gun in it. And a lot of times when we were being strafed, I'd manage to have some ammo or whatever and I would use it. I says, "Well, hey, I don't know, maybe I am doing good, maybe not, but I am feeling better inside as long as I am throwing something up there." And some Lieutenant caught me with it and he took it away from me. "You are not allowed to have a gun." I said, "Yes, but why don't you explain it to them people, they are coming down here. Maybe I ain't doing no good." He said, "I knew where my guns were and I seen fire coming from this area and I knew I didn't have a gun here." So, luckily, I didn't get killed because they would have shot me, but knowing that the bullets was going up instead of at the men. It is weird, really weird.

S: What is the hairiest experience you can remember when you were in the OSS? What was the most dangerous thing that ever happened to you?

A: Oh, in OSS. Well, really it wasn't with any enemy. It was up in the Blue Ridge Mountains, I think, and it was with the elements. I mean, it is scary that you are living in a woods in the mountains and there is a little old bug that could kill you. We had an officer, a very healthy young man, and this bug bit him and he died. A tick, Rocky Mountain Fever, I guess you'd call it. I call that hairy, to me, because here you are a grown man and everything and that little old stinking thing like that could bite you and kill you. It really made me feel, "Phew!"

Well, I was on the President Coolidge when it got sunk. That was hairy.

S: Do you remember that?

A: Oh yes. I just happened to be on the right side of the boat when I jumped off, jumped in the water with my medical pouches and canteen and belt on and went for the shore. We wasn't too far between islands when that happened. But to see a beautiful ship sunk like that, fantastic.

S: How was it sunk?

A: Mine, hit a mine. And another time I was sunk was on a landing craft going into the beach. And I went down with full equipment on. I never shed it. I go down, I wasn't too far, couldn't have been too far, but I know I went down under, over my head. And to this day I am still afraid to put my head under water. I thought I drank half of the ocean. I would hit the bottom and bounce up and come up and paddle. Never giving it a thought to shed my gear. Kept it on and went down again, and under the water, coming and coming up. It reminds you of the monster things you see on television. Finally come out and was spitting and sputtering.

And in those days we had iodine in a capsule we would get on an island that didn't have any water or you had bad water and you would have these capsules you would break in a lister bag. Now, later on they had some kind of a pill that you would use to purify your water to drink. A lot of islands we got on had no water. Some places we dug wells; we tried. Dug wells, water came up and it was salty, no good.

But there is so many islands over there that it is hard for a person to imagine. Almost every island that we went on we had to lose somebody.

S: How many people that you knew lost their lives in the islands? Were there a lot? Did you lose a lot of buddies? The second half of this question is-- before we finish up here, in conjunction with that-- how many men do you think you treated as a medic?

A: Oh man, I tell you, now that is pretty hard. That is pretty hard to ask me in numbers, because when the guys found out that I was that type of a man-- I would take care of you; I had an interest in getting you well if something was wrong with you. Well, let's see, by the two field artillery outfits there, the batteries, oh, maybe 500.-- I don't know if that is putting it mild or exaggerating--I would say that I treated, in the course of the time that I was over there. And I've treated guys with jungle rot that their hands and feet were rotting off and got them well.

A little incident happened on Bouganville between two brothers who didn't see each other since the war began. I believe thier names were Joe and Angelo. I can't remember the last name. They were from New York. I had a spot set up like an aid station and guys came to me for some kind of aid, maybe a pill or get a bandage changed. Anyhow, they would put their name down in the order they came and I would call their name. Now, when I called Joe's last name, they both came in and saw each other. What a happy time for them. I have their picture and as soon as I find it, I'll show you.

S: Was there more treatment for diseases and stuff like that then than, maybe, for combat wounds?

A: Gun shot wounds? Well I did, I took care of more cause when I went to the field artillery, see when you are in the infantry, well, I was there for awhile too; I eliminated that. But because I was an aid man, you are with the people there, when they holler, you go. If they are shot, you could help them. If they are whatever, you try to patch them; you try to help them, save their lives.

S: It seems to me that takes a special kind of man to run out under fire.

A: Well, sometimes you do without thinking.

S: Was that drilled into you?

A: Well, I mean with me, I used to do that. I would be, maybe like I say before, the training that I had in

CMTC could have been basis for this. That I knew, as long as there was bullets flying, keep down low and move. And look for something, kind of thing to get behind. Something higher than the level of the ground. Hide and move and move and don't stay in one place too long because they would locate you and nail you.

S: But getting back to the disease part . . .

A: Yes, a lot of this jungle rot. Like I say, in my outfit though, as far as malaria, malaria was down to a very minimum because of being conscientious like I was about this malaria pill. Now, when I come back here though, I was very yellow. Everybody thought I had malaria. They had me in a hospital for awhile. I was bit by something over there that paralyzed me for about twenty days. One side of me was paralyzed. You could pinch me, stick needles in me, which they did. They thought I was trying to, maybe, get out of the service.

It was 'black alert,' a 'black alert,' if I can explain it quick enough, it means that nobody moves that's American. Anything that moves is enemy at this time of night. Those usually would come when the moon was down. It was black. You couldn't see your hand in front of you. And I would always dig a hole if I had a chance to dig a hole big enough so that if somebody was wounded or hurt, I could drag them to the hole and work on them. I always did that.

This particular case, it was getting dark and we got the alert. There was a 'black alert' going on. And somebody hollered they were hurt and I run over. I remember I patched them up and I went back to my hole. It was dark and by the time I got in my hole, soon as I got in there something hit me on the back. Now, to this day, there is a little hole back here. You could see it, I think, if you want to look back here, right here. A single hole.

S: Yes.

A: Now, whatever it was, hit me there and immediately it felt like fire and I knocked it off and it hit me in the arm, this arm. And then I shook it off again. And I remember trying to hit it and all I could hear is like, clang, clang, whether it was my shoe or what. But anyhow, it wasn't too long after that, boy, I started to burn like fire was going through me and somebody hollered, "Medic! Medic!"

Someone was calling, "Medic." And I grabbed my pouches and I slid out of the hole. Maybe I was in a delirium. I don't know. But I remember I got over to this kid and he was hurt. And I gave him half of the surret and I stuck the other half in me and I went back to my hole.

And I wake up in the morning. I don't remember no more what happened that night. I wake up in the morning and I think I had one shoe off. And I put on my shoe and I started out of the hole and I bumped a tree and didn't feel nothing this side of me. I went up to the lieutenant and we're talking and I said, "I feel funny, awful funny." He said, "All right, we'll call back at the clearing station." So, they call the clearing station and the doctor says, "Well, have him come back here. I want to see him." So, I went back there and I had to watch where I stepped. I put my right foot down and I couldn't feel nothing. And I'm looking at my hand and it feels so funny, weird. Like if you ever had your hand fall asleep on you? It felt in that order. And I'm moving it around and I can't feel no movement.

But anyhow, when I get up there I told him what happened. I said, "I looked in the hole to see whatever it was bit me or whatever." And he checked my back and he looked at my arms. He started talking to me and let me lay down on a litter. And one guy was sticking me with needles. They told me after, I didn't feel nothing. They were sticking me with needles, back here and I thought they were giving me shots anyhow, but he told me they were testing me to see if I was feeling any pain. My legs, took of the bottom of my shoes, sticking me with pins and I couldn't feel a thing. So, they watched me for a good while. And they told me, "Well, that's all we could do with you is watch you. We don't know what happened. You were poisoned, evidently, somehow." And I came out of it pretty good because eventually my feelings come back. I was okay.

S: And you still don't know, to this day, what that was?

A: No, but every once in awhile I start getting a weird feeling and I start watching what I eat now. If that feeling starts coming on me, I quit eating peppers, hot pepper and black pepper and it seems to help.

S: Well, I feel we're running out of time here so I'd like to thank you for this interview.

ANZEVINO

68

A: Well, it was a pleasure doing it, Jeff.

S: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW