

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARMONDE S. PATULLO

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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PISCATAWAY, NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 28, 2012

TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Armonde S. Patullo on November 28, 2012, in Piscataway, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Mr. Patullo, thank you very much for having me here today. To begin, can you tell me where and when you were born?

Armonde S. Patullo: I was born in Bound Brook, New Jersey, October 20, 1923.

SI: What were your parents' names?

AP: My mom's name was Carmella Patullo and my dad's name was Carmine Patullo.

SI: Starting with your father, what do you know about his family background, where the family came from?

AP: Well, they originally came from Italy and that's where it all started. We were born here, us children.

SI: Do you know what region in Italy they were from?

AP: They were from Campobasso, Italy. It's just, I guess, north of Naples and there was a little town there. I did go back there in, I believe it was in '71 or '72. I went back there for a trip with the whole family. Kids had a great time there, and then, come back home after--we were there maybe a couple of weeks.

SI: How old was your father, approximately, when he moved to the US?

AP: At that time? Oh, he was maybe about ten, twelve years old when he got here.

SI: Did the whole family come over at once or did they come over one at a time?

AP: Yes, his parents came over at that time, but I don't remember what year that was, though.

SI: Do you know if they came into New York first or did they come straight to New Jersey?

AP: No, they landed in New York, at Ellis Island, and that's where they got off the boat.

SI: Did they settle in the city first or did they settle in New Jersey?

AP: No, they settled right into New Jersey here.

SI: Do you know why they came to this area?

AP: I guess for a better life, that's about it. There was nothing for them there.

SI: Did they already have family in the area?

AP: They had family here, but I don't know who it was at that time.

SI: They were not coming to New Jersey to join family that was already here.

AP: Yes.

SI: They were.

AP: Yes.

SI: Did your father ever tell you any stories about what life was like in Italy?

AP: No. He got here when he was, like I told you, ten, twelve years old, and that was about it, yes.

SI: What about your mother's side of the family?

AP: I didn't know too much about my mother's side of the family, just that was it.

SI: She was born in this country.

AP: No, she was born in Europe, too. They both came from Europe, both of them.

SI: You do not know what region she came from.

AP: No, she came from the same region, that area my dad came from, but they come over here as youngsters.

SI: Do you think she was probably about the same age?

AP: Yes, close to the same age as my dad was.

SI: Her family also settled in New Jersey.

AP: They all settled here. They all settled in this area, in Bound Brook. That's where they were.

SI: Do you know how your parents met?

AP: No, that, I couldn't tell you.

SI: What did your father do for a living?

AP: My father worked. He worked in Thomas Young Greenhouses for a long time, in Middlesex. That's where he stood [stayed] for a good part of his lifetime.

SI: Was he a gardener there?

AP: Yes, there was a garden. They used to raise orchids there. I don't know if you remember--you wouldn't remember the place, though.

SI: No.

AP: Yes, but it was right on the corner of Harris Avenue there, Harris and [Route] 28, and he worked there until we kids grew up. That's where I remember where he worked all the time.

SI: Did your mother ever work outside the home?

AP: No, she stood home. She was home.

SI: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

AP: I had two brothers--three brothers, one died--and five sisters. It was a pretty big family.

SI: Where do you fit in the birth order?

AP: Number seven.

SI: That is lucky.

AP: Yes, "lucky seven," yes.

SI: You grew up in Bound Brook.

AP: Grew up in Bound Brook.

SI: What was your neighborhood like?

AP: Well, the neighborhood, it was a great neighborhood, all us kids. The streets in Bound Brook, there was Fisher Avenue in the north, Fisher was all Italian, just about all Italian on the whole block. The next block over were all Polish people, all Polish, and the next street, there were all mixed, Italian, Irish, Polish and stuff like that, the whole area. In fact, on that street there, I could name you every kid that was born on that block, every one. In fact, I was talking to my sister, maybe just about a month, a month-and-a-half ago, and I named her every kid that was born on that street that I remembered, on both sides of the street, in all the houses, and their first and last names, and then, after, named all the nicknames.

SI: Wow.

AP: Yes, my kids couldn't believe that I remembered all the names and the nicknames that we had, the kids, the nicknames that they had. Some names they were--[laughter] I'll tell you, we used to call one kid "Cement," "Ton-a-bricks" to some other kids, different. Every kid had a different name.

SI: What was your nickname?

AP: Mine was cut short. Armonde, they called me "Mondo." That was mine, but the other ones were something.

SI: Was there a lot of interaction between the Italians and the Polish in your neighborhood or did the Italians stick with the Italians?

AP: No, we got along great with mostly all of them that were in the area. We knew each other. Kids, growing up, we'd play baseball or football, whatever, the kids, together. We got along great as kids, in our era.

SI: You mentioned there were a lot of kids. Were these single-family homes or duplexes?

AP: Oh, yes, they were all single-family homes, but each family had, I'll bet you, no less than four kids in the family, four, five, six, seven, eight, ten. There was big families, I mean big, like the (Pinto?) Family had about six brothers, six boys, two girls, eight, nine in the family. Families were huge.

SI: When you were about seven or eight, the Great Depression started.

AP: Oh, they were tough days in the 1930s.

SI: How did that affect your family and your neighborhood?

AP: Well, things were just tough. It was a tough era and jobs weren't around, nothing like that. You're going back into--I can remember 1929, 1930. I was five, six years old already by then, 1933, '34, and then, as we were growing up as kids, we'd sit on the curb and name each car. You could name each car, but you can't do that today.

SI: You mean you would know who owned it.

AP: You could distinguish it and you'd know who owned the cars, yes. They were great days, though. They really were.

SI: When you say it was tough, can you give me some examples?

AP: Well, the job era was terrible. People really didn't have much.

SI: Was your father's employment ever affected? Was he cut in his hours or did he lose his job for a time?

AP: Oh, yes. Well, they didn't work that many hours and they didn't get that kind of a pay. Their pay was, you're lucky if they made twenty-five bucks a week. They were tough days.

SI: Did you and the other kids have to do things to help out during that time?

AP: Well, we did what we could, but what could the kids do? Like, on a Sunday, say, an uncle would come over or something, would give you a quarter, you thought, "What a wealth." Quarter was big bucks in them days, compared to what we've got today, yes.

SI: How much older was your oldest sibling?

AP: My oldest sister was ninety-two when she passed away.

SI: How many years older than you?

AP: At that time?

SI: Yes.

AP: Had to be maybe a good fourteen, fifteen, eighteen years difference.

SI: Would the older children go out and get jobs to help with the family?

AP: If they could, but jobs weren't great. After a while, say in the late '30s, then, you started to see, like, maybe a sweatshop would grow up where they had--like, in Bound Brook, I could remember the sweatshop on the corner. It's still there. It's that academy now, some kind of an academy, they call it. It was a shop. They used to have pants in there, small pants for people, and girls would go in and clean them up and take the thread off. I got a part-time job there as a kid, when I was a kid, sweeping up after school.

SI: How old were you when this started?

AP: Maybe I was thirteen years old, twelve, thirteen years old, yes.

SI: How many hours would you work there?

AP: After school, a couple hours, go in there and clean up, and then, after that, another big store popped up right next to it. It was a food market, not like the ones we have today, but it was pretty big for our day then, at that time. You'd go in, put cans on the shelf and stuff like that.

SI: You worked there as well.

AP: Yes. Then, I started--that's when I got started in the mechanical field. I had a cousin that was working in a garage and I got a job in there, after school, worked every day after school and all day Saturday. At the end of the Saturday night, like, at six, seven o'clock, the boss would come over and pay me, give me fifty cents, maybe a buck once in a while, all week. That was our days.

SI: They just taught you on the job.

AP: Yes, well, I was in there learning. They were doing body work and mechanical work, and then, that's where I started with automobiles. That's where I stood in that field, after.

SI: Going back to when you were younger, you grew up in an Italian-American household. Were there any traditions kept up in your family?

AP: Oh, all the time, celebrated, like Christmas and all them holidays were big. They were big holidays. It was nice and all the food was all Italian.

SI: Do you remember anything in particular that made it an Italian Christmas?

AP: Well, we probably thought we had better food and I think it was true, in them days, because a lot of the kids that we knew, like some of the other kids that we knew, would like our food. In fact, after I grew up and I was about sixteen, seventeen, one of my friends opened a garage in Metuchen and I used to go to Metuchen every day to go to work there then after. I would bring my lunch and my mother would make, like, peppers and eggs and stuff for us, and Italian bread. I had to watch out--one of the young guys that used to work with us would go over and steal my sandwich and put his in there, because he wanted our food, my food. [laughter] So, I'd have to hide it after. That's the way it went.

SI: Do you remember any special dishes you would have for holidays?

AP: Oh, I loved macaroni and I still love it today. You say special, I liked the big macaroni, compared to the thin one, and my mother would make them all the time, because that's what I liked.

SI: In terms of language, did your parents speak English all the time or was it a mixture?

AP: No. Well, my father did. My father spoke great English. He didn't even have an accent. You wouldn't even think he came from Europe, but my mother didn't. My mother didn't speak, very little, English and I spoke Italian to her all the time. I still can speak it today, yes.

SI: Was it just spoken or did you learn to read Italian?

AP: Well, I could read it because my dad used to read the paper, the Italian paper, and that was printed. As long as it was printed, not written out, if it was printed, I could read it and understand what I was reading. See, now, my kid brother couldn't speak it at all and hardly understood it, but I did and all my sisters did. They could speak it. My two older sisters could speak it, read it and write it. I couldn't write it and I couldn't read their [handwriting]. If they wrote it out, I couldn't read it, in writing, unless it was real clear.

SI: Were there a lot of other family members in the area? Had they settled in New Jersey also?

AP: Oh, there was a lot of cousins. My father was the oldest of four brothers and, in the four families, his brother--my father was the oldest, the second one--they had twelve kids in that family. That is big families. Today, you couldn't afford it. [laughter] So, that's the way it went.

SI: They were all in the Bound Brook area.

AP: Yes, they all lived in the Bound Brook area, every one. Out of three brothers, there had to be about thirty kids. The one brother had no children.

SI: Were there any family members still in Italy that they corresponded with?

AP: No. They were all here. The four brothers all were over here.

SI: He always worked at the orchid growers.

AP: Most all of his life, yes. That's where he worked, yes.

SI: Growing up on this street, what would you and the other kids do for fun?

AP: Well, the other kids, well, we would all play together, like I told you, baseball and football. We'd play the games that we had in those days, like, I don't know if you know it, the name of it was called "Buck, Buck, How Many Horns Are Up?" A guy would get up against the wall, he would be the (pillar?), and then, the other five guys or six guys would all bend over and the other team, with five or six guys, each one would jump up on top of their backs to try and cave them in. Then, you'd reverse the procedure and that went on. That was one of the games. Then, Ringolevio was another game, Kick the Can was another game. [Editor's Note: Ringolevio and Kick the Can were games of tag popular in New York City neighborhoods during the first half of the 20th Century.] That was our games, and then, football, we couldn't afford to buy footballs like the kids have today. We'd get an old sock, fill it up with all rags, whatever we had, and that's what we would pass out, throw it to each other, and that was it. Baseballs, we couldn't afford the hard balls. Our balls used to be taped up and re-taped, you couldn't believe it, with black tape. We didn't have any money. If the kid had a half a buck, you're not going to go spend a buck for a ball. You couldn't afford it in them days. They were tough days.

SI: Were there any organized activities, like Boy Scouts?

AP: No, nothing like that around in them days, nothing. Later on, Boy Scouts came around, but hardly any of us ever joined it.

SI: For your family, was going to church an important part of your life?

AP: Well, my sisters and them would go on a Sunday, mostly just every Sunday.

SI: Which church did your family go to?

AP: Well, in Bound Brook, in them days, it was only St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, either church.

SI: Was one church considered the Italian church?

AP: Well, no, they weren't Italian. One was a Polish church and the other one was--St. Joseph's was mostly all Irish--but people went to either/or. We went to the Polish church. It was close to home, a block away, two blocks away, still there, and St. Joseph's is still there, the old one and the new one, in Bound Brook there. One on Second Street, the other one's on High Street and St. Mary's is on Vosseller there, right on the corner.

SI: I know a lot of families would, to some extent, raise their own food during the Depression, have big gardens.

AP: Yes, my mother had a garden all the time, always had a garden. In them days, I think practically everybody had. It was okay, though.

SI: Were there other chores that you did, particularly during the Depression, to help the family?

AP: Well, in them days, no. Like, if you got wood--we had coal stoves. You needed the wood and, a lot of times, my father would get wood and they'd buy a cord of wood or something. They'd come home, would be all cut and split. They would just dump it there in the driveway or in the yard and our chore was to throw it in the cellar window, and then, go downstairs and stack it up against the wall. That's what you had to do.

SI: Were there any community activities that your family got involved in?

AP: No.

SI: Was there an Italian-American club or something like that?

AP: No, there was very little activities like that, nothing like that around.

SI: Your father had a pretty steady job with this orchid grower.

AP: Yes, he worked there.

SI: Were most of the other families tied in with local industry?

AP: Well, there was not many, many industries around at that time. Then, Calco [Chemistry Company], after, opened up, where the [Somerset] Patriots ball field is now, and it was there until right after the war then. Then, after, people started getting jobs in there and things started to break out a little bit in the late '40s, and then, things got a little better. It was okay. I don't regret my days.

SI: I just wanted to know.

AP: I don't regret anything I'd done right up to this day.

SI: That is good.

AP: I wouldn't change anything, either. It was okay. It was tough, but we kids had a lot of fun though. We used to go out, play during the day. We had a lot of fun, really, come home. Then, you had to be sure--my father made sure--that you were home for supper. Like, supertime was between five-thirty and six o'clock, you'd better make sure you're home, none of this business calling you. You're home. You know what time it is, supertime is. He was tough that way, but he was good. He was good to us kids. They'd done what they could for us, whatever they could afford in them days. When you had to go for shoes or something, well, you got shoes this week; next week, somebody else got them. It wasn't that they could afford to buy every kid a pair of shoes. That's the way it was in our days. Kids of today don't know how lucky they are, but, like I say, I wouldn't change anything I did in my lifetime, not at all. Everything I did was okay for me.

SI: You started getting these part-time jobs when you were pretty young.

AP: Oh, yes.

SI: Going in the sweatshop and the grocery store.

AP: Well, could you imagine working six days a week--like, it wasn't hard work--but being in the garage and the guy would give you half a buck at the end of the week or a buck? Once in a while, he'd throw me a buck and I thought, "Wow, that was great."

SI: When you worked in the sweatshop, what were the conditions like?

AP: They were all ladies working in there, just all ladies. It was a sewing factory where they got clothes in there and the girls would [finish them]--like, they had to be sewed together. They would sew them up, and then, they had ladies that would clean them, like all the strings and stuff, and they'd just throw them on the floor. I went in there every day after school, sweep it up, put it in the bag, put it out the garbage.

SI: Do you think you were treated well by your employer?

AP: Oh, yes. They were okay. They weren't nobody that were making big bucks. In fact, I can remember a couple of them. Yes, they were good days.

SI: When you were growing up, what did you know about the larger world? Did you follow national news?

AP: Well, when I was in school, I liked geography and history, so, I knew a lot of the names that we hear today. I knew them in them days myself, where they were in the world. That was it.

SI: When things would happen in Europe, like Hitler taking over Germany, you knew about it.

AP: Oh, yes, I knew right away. That was funny. As I was growing up, that war started. It was going on before even 1939, where Hitler was just starting to move out in the late '30s, you remember, like '35, '36, '37. We knew them stories, but I figured, "Nah, nothing's going to

happen." Then, when the war broke out, I figured, "Well, it'll over before I'm of age to go." That wasn't true. All of a sudden, it's 1939 and '40, and, "Wow." By that time, I was maybe around fifteen, sixteen years old and, sure enough, I was old enough to go in.

SI: Were these issues discussed among your friends, among your family?

AP: Well, all us guys knew something was coming up. We knew we were going to go in, and then, they declared war and that was it. We were there.

SI: Do you remember any strong factions within your neighborhood, people who were either pro or anti-Axis, before America got involved, in the late 1930s?

AP: Most of the people didn't even think that war was going to go on, really, but mostly everybody was caught by surprise, I think.

SI: Growing up in an Italian-American community, was anybody vocal about Mussolini, one way or the other?

AP: No, not in our days. Us kids didn't even care, no. We didn't have much as kids. We hardly ever paid any attention to that kind of stuff.

SI: Tell me a little bit about your early education.

AP: Well, I went to school, got through grammar school and everything, got into high school, and then, after my first year, second year, I didn't want to go to school no more. I decided I wanted to stay in the automobile field and that's what I did.

SI: You were already in that.

AP: I quit. We had a truant officer in those days; I don't know if you know about that, a truant officer. She used to come all the time. So, one day, she appears at the door and my mother opens the door. She wanted to know where Armonde was and my mother says, "He's in school." She said, "No, he hasn't been in school for two weeks." She says, "Well, where is he at now?" My mom says, "He must be outside in the driveway." There I was, playing around with a car. She says, "Well, if you decide you're not going to go to school, you have to go get your working papers." In them days, you had to go get working papers. So, that's what I did.

SI: Did your family have a car?

AP: My father had an old Chevy, 1931.

SI: Did you start out playing around with that?

AP: Yes, playing around with that. I had an older brother and he would steal the car from him at night. My father worked nights sometimes, had to go to work at night. My brother would take it during the day. Well, we were pretty sharp as kids. We'd hotwire it and get it running. We

didn't have the key and no steering post was locked in them days, and off you'd go. That's what we did. That's when I started to go to work, yes.

SI: Did you leave school in the sophomore year or after the sophomore year?

AP: No, second year.

SI: Second year.

AP: Second year of the school.

SI: Before that, had you had any kind of shop training, anything that would prepare you for work as a mechanic?

AP: No. I worked after school in that one garage in Bound Brook; that's still there. I worked in that one from when I was in my teens then. From there, then, I broke out. Then, I wound up in Metuchen, and then, I started working in a sewing factory. Then, the war came along and that was the end. That was the end of that. That's how come I got into the field--when I got in the Army, I went into the service outfit. I went to mechanic's school in South Carolina. They had mechanic's school, big, big--they had a big building. It was real long and they had cars, engines set up on planks. They had the older guys, that were older than us, the officers that were there, would work on them, would make it so [that] the engine wouldn't run. You'd have to try and find out what it was, why it wouldn't run, and that's how we started out.

SI: When you worked in the mechanic shops in Bound Brook and Metuchen, had you had experience with a lot of different types of vehicles?

AP: All kinds of vehicles. Not like today, guys will specialize in one or the other. No, we worked on everything in them days, Chevys, Fords, whatever came in, Oldsmobiles, Pontiacs, and I think that was better than it is today, because they just specialize in certain things. They don't know anything. In fact, I have a friend that's got a body shop on the boulevard right now. He does mechanical work, only all front end work. He learned from his dad. That's all they do. In fact, every once in a while, I'll get a call home here and he leaves word, "Give me a call. I have..." He had a 1939--a couple of years ago, he called me--he had a 1939 Mercury. He wanted to take the front end out of it. He couldn't get them out and it had kingpins in them days, not like each wheel today, individual. You know what the kingpins were? They would go through this axle, this solid axle--didn't know how to get them out. So, I went over that morning, after I got up and left here, went over and showed him how to get them out and showed him how to pull the other part that he wanted to take out, like the A-frame. I helped him with that and got one side together with him. I says, "Okay. You're on your own now. You know what else to do on the other side." Yes, every once in a while, he'll call me. It was a 1939. They were nice cars in them days. That was a big car, Mercury. They were beautiful. There's a few of them around, yet, a couple of friends have them, that I know.

SI: Outside of work, did you work on cars as well? I know a lot of mechanics also build roadsters.

AP: Yes, I've done that all the time, steady, yes.

SI: Did you race or do anything like that?

AP: No, I didn't go in for that. I didn't go for that kind of stuff. I just worked on my cars, done what I had to do, and then, after, I had my own garage. I opened up my own garage and that was it. After I came home, November of '45, let's see, I had an uncle that was working up in Summit. He was working in the Rambler dealer at that time. So, he says, "I can get you a job." So, he got me a job and I would travel from Bound Brook to Summit every day, '45, '46, '47, '48, '49. Around 1950 or '51, '52, I quit and didn't want to work there no more. I worked for a Rambler dealer up there, and then, I worked for a Ford dealer up there. Then, I left and I came back home to Bound Brook and I said--no, then, I got married--and I took over a garage in Middlesex, right, the shopping mall there, where the brake shop is now. I took that, went over--it was a Shell station--and I had that one for ten years. Then, I was on my own, worked on everything. Then, I left that one after ten years. I went down the street from there, where CVS is. I had another garage there and I stood there ten years and that went on that way.

SI: In-between the mechanic's work and entering the service, you worked in a sewing factory.

AP: Yes.

SI: What did you do there?

AP: Well, I was just sweeping in there, cleaning up as a kid then.

SI: That was after you had been a mechanic.

AP: Yes.

SI: When you were getting older, working as a mechanic, were you still living at home?

AP: Oh, yes, I was at home.

SI: Were you living at home by the time you went in the service?

AP: Yes, I was. Up until I went to the service, I was at home.

SI: What do you remember about the day Pearl Harbor was attacked?

AP: I'll never forget that day. I was sitting in the movie in New Brunswick; I forget the name of it, Rialto [Rivoli]? We were sitting in the movie and, all of a sudden, they stopped the movie, all the lights came on, a guy came on the stage and mentioned, "We're at war. The Japanese just hit Pearl Harbor." I'll never forget that day, that's that.

SI: You said you were aware of things in Europe, but were you aware that we were heading towards a conflict in Asia?

AP: Oh, yes. We knew that. All us guys at that age, at that time, were just about seventeen, eighteen. We knew we were going to be in and, sure as hell, we were. That happened in late '42, early '43, and, by that time, '43, we were on our way.

SI: Were you still working as a mechanic when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

AP: Yes.

SI: Working in that industry, how did you see it change as a result of the war?

AP: Well, practically everything stopped. You couldn't buy a car no more. You couldn't buy a car. You couldn't get tires anymore for cars. If you did, you had to get on the rationing list. Most of the time, you would get a retread, a recapped tire, one of them. That was it. Then, the gas stamps come out and that was another thing.

SI: Could you see business drying up as time went on?

AP: Oh, yes. Things were getting tough. You couldn't buy a car. Gasoline was hard to get anymore. Tires were hard to get. All that stuff got really tough.

SI: Did you also see any changes in the Bound Brook area, like new facilities opening up?

AP: Well, like, the chemical plants started to really gear up for stuff. You could see the difference in Union Carbide [Corporation]; it was Bakelite [Corporation]. Then, it got bigger. It kept growing and it became Union Carbide. Calco's--after [it was] bought out, it was American Cyanamid--and they were all the chemicals they made there. [Editor's Note: American Cyanamid purchased Calco in 1929 and Bakelite merged with Union Carbide in 1939.] I'm sure a lot of it went for the war effort and that's the big plants we had around here, when I was a kid growing up. They were there. I can remember when they started. They were such little places. Then, they were huge. They were hiring two, three thousand people in them, yes.

SI: Did a lot of your friends, people your age, work in there?

AP: Yes. Guys a little older than us were there and some guys, a few of them, were held back because of the work that they were doing, and I could see that, yes.

SI: Did you make a decision that you wanted to just wait until you were drafted or did you look into your options?

AP: Well, we were thinking of going and, before that happened, we were drafted anyway. We were just of age, just eighteen, nineteen years old.

SI: Tell me about the process of getting drafted, where you reported, what the physical was like.

AP: Well, we had to go to Newark. They picked us up on a bus in Bound Brook. There was a busload of us, maybe fifty of us kids on there--I call them kids. We went over to Newark and that was funny. When I sat there talking to the guy that was behind the desk, like you're there now, he was a little guy. He says, "Well, I see your parents are originally from Europe. Do you mind going to Europe?" That question, he did ask me, or about the Asian campaign. I thought to myself, "Yes, you're going to give me my choice, right?" We were five cousins that went that day, yes, and he says, "Well, where would you like to go? Do you mind going to Europe?" I said, "No." He said, "You have any relatives there?" "If I do, I don't care," I said. "Okay," and he had a big stamp, it was about that big, just took it and stamped it, big "E."

SI: Six inches.

AP: That was Europe. I got Europe and that was okay. I'd rather have that and, yet, when I talk to some guys that were in the Pacific now, they go, "We would have never wanted to go to Europe." I said, "Why?" "Well, it was too cold." I says, "Well, I was glad I went to Europe, instead of going to Japan."

SI: What was it like going from civilian life, where you had a lot of freedom, to the rigors of the military?

AP: Well, that was tough, but, like I say, I liked everything I did. I didn't mind it at all. I didn't mind what I did, maybe because I survived it. We were lucky. We were three or four guys. Maybe next time you come, I'll try and get the book from my daughter; it's got pictures in it. I go see my Army buddy up in PA [Pennsylvania] a lot. He was in the same division, Fred, he's a nice guy. We were together all that time up until the time we joined the 34th. He was in it, too, and another guy from Ohio--Joe (Torre?), he's Fred (Muchi?), they all happened to be Italian. It was funny and we had a great time after, though. We went to Europe. Like I say, we did what we had to do and we come home and, like I say, we went over, we went to fight a war, we won that war. We done what we had to do there. We done our job and we done it the best that we could and we did a good job. Then, I was in the service company. Then, they yanked me out of there three or four times and, after that, I says, "Well, I had enough of this." My buddy from PA couldn't believe it. We didn't have no Special Forces in them days. They came around asking, they wanted thirty-six volunteers and two officers. They had the two officers already and I can still remember their names. One guy was named (Hannebaum?) and the other guy was (Goss?). Now, (Hannebaum?), he was the first lieutenant, (Goss?) was the second lieutenant, but (Hannebaum?) was--I don't know if he was a German Jew or whatever--but he was A-Number-1. He was out of this world for an Army officer, great; (Goss?), terrible, terrible officer. In fact, he deserted us one night, left, and they shipped him back to a rear echelon [assignment] after, but that (Hannebaum?) was out of this world for an officer, fantastic officer. I loved the guy. He was great.

SI: What were you volunteering for?

AP: They made a special group and they called us the Blue Devils. We only went out at night, because I didn't want to [sit in a foxhole all day]. They yanked us out of the outfit. They'd come

in service company and all, even to the cooks, they'd go over, "We need ten guys tonight. Ten guys got hit." We weren't getting replacements fast enough from the States. Then, after, guys were getting hit like flies. They yanked us out of the outfit and we had to go up front with a gun. So, that happened to me two or three times. I said, "No. I'm not taking this no more." So, I joined that outfit. I'd rather go to that outfit, because that outfit, we only went out at night, say, after two in the morning, and we had to be back within three, four hours, before daylight, before, really, dawn. That's what we did in that outfit for a while. My buddy from Pennsylvania, to this day, couldn't believe I joined that outfit. "What'd you do that for?" I says, "Because I didn't want to sit in a foxhole all day long, day and night in a foxhole. The hell with that," I says. So, I was in that outfit for a while, for six months.

SI: You decided to permanently join the Blue Devils.

AP: Yes, and I stood with that outfit for six months. Then, after that, they disbanded that outfit. We'd done what we had to do. We went out at night, try and get prisoners and find out any information that we could, which we did. Then, they says, "We're shipping you back to your company." I says, "On temporary duty or what? If it's temporary duty, I'm not going." He says, "You have to go; you're out of this outfit. We don't have it no more now," and that was it. Then, I went on from there.

SI: When you first joined the service, you said you went into Newark.

AP: We went to Newark, and then, from Newark--well, it was a few days after that, or I don't know how long now, really--the day came that we were leaving and we left here. We went to Fort Dix, Camp Dix. It was Camp Dix, Camp Dix in them days. We stood there for a little bit, not long, a week maybe, two weeks, if that, and then, they shipped us to Camp Croft, South Carolina. That's where we got our basic training, but, within six months of that, we were overseas already. We had our full basic training and gone.

SI: They identified that you had these skills as a mechanic right away.

AP: Yes, and then, when we got into Europe, they put us on trucks. I'll never forget that day either. As we were going into Italy, I'm coming around the Coliseum. That was really amazing to see, though. I can remember reading [about] that and seeing pictures of it when I was a kid, in history books. It was really amazing to see, yes. It was really something, something you never forget. You don't forget. Then, after that, that day, we got to a camp somewhere in Italy, and then, they put us on other trucks and took us to different places, like where the 34th was, where they had their infantry outfits and the service companies. We stopped at every one and we stopped at the service outfit and the Captain over there--I'll never forget him, his name was (Hayden?), Captain (Hayden?)--he says, "Yes. I could use two guys." It was me and another fellow. They took us off the truck and we were there. I joined them there and I joined the mechanics, the service outfit there, and that's it.

SI: They had already taken Rome by the time you joined them.

AP: No, we hadn't taken Rome yet. No, Rome wasn't taken. We were there, and then, after a while, when I was with the service outfit, we took Rome and we were moving on after that. Gradually, it kept moving on. We got all the way up in Bologna. We got that far up and snow was that deep.

SI: Two feet deep, three feet.

AP: Easy, and cold, whoa, in the mountains up there, and that's where we were.

SI: It was March of 1943 that you joined the service.

AP: Yes, March, yes.

SI: How long were you at Camp Croft?

AP: Well, about maybe six months, if that. I don't even think it was six months and we got our basic training. Boy, we were gone and we went to Camp Patrick Henry, like I told you. From Camp Patrick Henry, we came back to Jersey, then, we went to Newark, Fort Dix, and that's it.

SI: What was being in the South at that time like?

AP: I found it okay. I wasn't the type of guy to go running around at night. I stood on base. Even when I got over in Europe and North Africa, I wouldn't leave the camp area. I would stay right where our camp was, because you didn't know the country. Why wander off? I was with our groups at all times, yes.

SI: Was your training group mostly from the Northeast, from the New York-New Jersey area?

AP: Well, after a while, when we got in the 34th, then, you had all the guys from out West. Most of those guys were regular Army, a lot of guys were, like my friend, the guy Wimpy. I talked to him up until the day he died, two, three years ago. He was in Florida, but he was originally from Illinois. Then, there was another kid there and they were great. They were great guys, all of those guys, and those guys mostly were German, mostly Norwegians, Danish, Dutch, names like (Traxinger?), Peterson, Paterson, all those kind of guys. They were mostly all blond hair and blue eyes, most of those guys, and we were dark skinned, dark eyes, dark hair, black hair. They were really nice guys. I liked just about every one of them. We got along good with them, yes. I'm that way even today, though. I can get along with anybody.

SI: You did not join the division until you went over to Europe.

AP: Over in Europe.

SI: You were training as a replacement in the States.

AP: As a replacement, yes. We were all replacements. We were all replacements until we got there. Then, after a while, when we were there a good while, then, the 88th Division joined us.

The 88th Mountain Division, that was, and there was the 45th Division with the eagle patch. I can remember the patches to this day. The 82nd Airborne, they were attached to us for a while and, in that special outfit, we rode in on the 82nd Airborne Division tanks, when we spearheaded that attack going into the beachhead that morning--caught the Krauts asleep that morning.

SI: Salerno?

AP: No, at Anzio, the beachhead. That was something, yes. We were lucky. We were lucky, never got a scratch. [Editor's Note: In Operation SHINGLE, the Allies landed an invasion force at Anzio and Nettuno on January 22, 1944, to bypass the German Winter Line and seize Rome. When the Allies failed to move in from the landing zone, a marshy basin surrounded by mountains, German forces were able to encircle the beachhead and flood the area. The Allies endured months of intense shelling and casualties until a breakout was achieved in late May. The Allies then liberated Rome on June 4, 1944.]

SI: What do you remember about the crossing from the US to Europe?

AP: That was okay; we went on ship. It was a big ship going and some of our other guys went on Liberty ships, thirty-three days to get across the ocean. We were on a big liner. We went in seven days.

SI: Was it one of the *Queens*?

AP: No, it wasn't the *Queen*, but it was something else. Then, we got to New York and we were off. Then, coming home, we got on a ship that used to be an American ship and they had given it to Scotland. It was a big luxury liner. That's what we came back home on, seven days--like ten thousand guys on that ship, big.

SI: Where did you land when you got to Europe?

AP: We went to North Africa first. We went to North Africa. I landed in--I don't remember if it was Casablanca or Oran, one or the other. I was in both places, Casablanca and Oran. We stood there a little bit, but not too long. After that, they took us with British ships. We went across, over to Italy, from Casablanca or Oran back to Italy. That's where we started off.

SI: What were your impressions of being in North Africa?

AP: I didn't like North Africa too much. We happened to get on the desert for a couple of nights; it was cold there at night. At night, it really was cold. During the day, you roasted. That's the days.

SI: Did you have any duties or was it just waiting for an assignment?

AP: No. We were just waiting for assignments and we were waiting there for maybe a couple of weeks. Then, we got out of there. I was glad we got out of there, though. I didn't like North Africa at all.

SI: When you got on these British ships and went over to Italy, where did they drop you off?

AP: We landed in Naples. It was funny, like I say, I could read the names, the Italian names, and the guys couldn't. Guys that were with us marveled, because they couldn't even say the names. [laughter] I could read it and they'd go to me, "How do you know those names?" "I can remember my mother saying it."

SI: Did you have any feeling about serving there?

AP: I could read their road signs. Like we have road signs, they had some big ones, not as many as we have. It would be just a big sign on the side of the road, naming the town or the city, and I could read them off. They were written out in Italian. I could read them, yes. They called me a couple times to go speak to some of them. They were pretty good.

SI: It was north of Naples that you joined the 34th.

AP: Yes, just above there, yes. It's where we joined the outfits. Like I told you, they came with the six-bys [slang for a six-wheeled vehicle], the GMC trucks. We were on them and we stopped at--you stopped at every place there, like service outfit, the infantry outfit, and so on. The commanding officer would come out and say, "Well, I need three guys here or two guys," and that's how you got there. That's how I got into [the] service outfit.

SI: Even though you had all this experience as a mechanic, was there still a chance you could have been thrown into the infantry at that point?

AP: Well, they pulled me out of the service company.

SI: Later on.

AP: Yes, like three or four times. That's when I says, "I had enough of this. I don't want this, laying in the foxhole all night long." So, that's when they came around asking for thirty-six volunteers and two officers.

SI: How long were you with the service company before that happened?

AP: Maybe six months or even a little longer, but they came and they would take you. They would take three guys from this outfit, three from the cook area, and so on, ordnance or the guys that were there dishing out clothes. They would take--well, if they lost ten men last night, you've got to replace them. The replacements were coming in too slow from here. It was tough.

SI: Before we talk about that, I want to ask about your daily activities with the service company. What was joining them like? What was it like getting integrated into the unit?

AP: All the guys were great. In fact, I made really good friends with a guy that was from Virginia. He was a buck sergeant at that time and that's the way it went. They were all good

guys. Well, what we did was, if a truck got hit, we picked it up or something happened. You were forever putting brakes on, especially in Italy, because, between the snow and the rain and you're out in the fields in the mud and they're bearing down, you were putting brakes on them every three, four thousand miles, because all the grit and the stuff would just chew it up. We'd need to put new drums on and new brakes, trucks were out again, stuff like that, jeeps, same thing, yes.

SI: Do you think you had adequate supplies at that point?

AP: Oh, yes. They had quite a bit of supplies. If not, you went to the bigger ordnance company and they carried a lot more stuff than we did. We'd go down and pick it up, whatever we needed. If you needed--like, some of them, bumpers had to be replaced and stuff like that--you'd replace them all.

SI: I imagine you would have to periodically reestablish your camp as the division moved up.

AP: Oh, yes, but we moved, we took everything with us, everything that we could.

SI: What was that process like, packing up, moving someplace new, setting up your operation?

AP: That wasn't bad. It was funny after a while. When it was getting close to the end of the war, some of our officers would say, "You guys look just like the Arabs." We were putting everything on the trucks and taking it along with us. [laughter] It was great. That was nice.

SI: When you were in the service company, if a truck got hit or stuck, would you have to go up to the front to retrieve it or was it usually behind the line?

AP: No, sometimes, it was close up to the front. A couple times, we got tied up that way. We went to get a truck one night and we didn't get out there early enough and the Krauts had zeroed in on us. So, we had to get out of there.

SI: Would you go up with a wrecker?

AP: Yes, we went up. Yes, we had a Dodge truck that was a wrecker that we took with us. It had a boom in the front and a boom in the back. I can remember one night, going after one. When they were taking troops up to the front, one of the guys had missed a turn and it was close to the edge, to going over a cliff. The front end had just--it had dropped--it was already hanging and it was this way.

SI: Teetering on the edge.

AP: The guys all jumped off. I don't blame them. It was Wimpy and I that went after that truck. We were wondering now, "Should we tie up to this thing and try and yank it back?" If you don't do it the right way, you're going over the cliff with it, with that truck, but we managed to get it back on. What had happened, after they did that, it broke a gas line, wouldn't start. We had to

repair it right there to get it going and get it the hell out of there or tow it out of there. There were days. There are stories.

SI: While retrieving these vehicles, were you ever fired upon by the enemy like that again, where they were zeroed in?

AP: Well, that one spot, they zeroed in on us. They put a shell in every corner, to let us know that they could hit any spot they wanted, zeroed on every corner. The captain we had there, his name was (Hayden?), like I told you, he was great. He was a good captain. That lieutenant was out of this world, but the other lieutenant, the second lieutenant, was no good.

SI: When you were with the service company, when was the first time you remember being under enemy fire?

AP: At Cassino. [Editor's Note: From January 1944 to February 13, 1944, the 34th Division took part in the drive on Cassino.] When they sent us up the first time, that's where I was under fire then, badly. We were right at the bottom of the hill. There was two little towns there--what the hell were they? One was called San Pietro and I can't remember--(Lanuvio?) was the other one. There was two little towns, were side-by-side below Cassino. There we were, behind--maybe it was a rock as high as this--and we thought it was so great to have that shield, laying down.

SI: From the table up.

AP: Yes.

SI: Only six inches.

AP: If that. They were on high ground; we were down below. We were trying to get up there. That was tough. They were tough days, yes.

SI: What do you remember about the drive to Cassino? Was it difficult?

AP: Oh, that was tough. That was tough driving up there, because I can remember going back. I told you, when we went back for a trip, my one daughter, my second daughter, wouldn't drive in the car with me going up there. That's how steep it was. She stood; she waited down below. She wouldn't come up with us. That was quite a ride, yes.

SI: What were the conditions like? That battle started in Spring of 1944.

AP: Yes.

SI: You had been through the Winter of 1943-44.

AP: It was cold. Like I told you, it was cold and we had snow that deep, and some places deeper than that. Like, going up to Bologna, it was even higher than that. I could remember a

couple of Christmases we were there, them years, and the snow was like that, deep, I mean deep and cold. They were some bad days. Cassino was a tough, tough area. That's when I says, "Well, I've got to get out of here." That's when I joined that outfit.

SI: When was the first time that they came asking for volunteers? Was it at Cassino or earlier?

AP: No. It was around by Cassino and it was late at night. They'd come waking you up, if you were asleep already. "Hey, get up." "Where you going?" "Get your gun. You're going up front." That's the answers you got. Well, after that, I said to my first sergeant--he was a great guy. He's regular Army, was from the Dakotas. His nickname was "Gunner." He said, "No, I'll try and hold you guys out." I says, "You can't hold us out too long, because they're going to take us anyway," and we had to go. They'd come in the cook area, [take] out three, four guys from there. They were cooks. Then, they came in our outfit and took three or four guys, get ten guys, twelve guys, and you went up. "Grab your helmet. Grab your gun. Get your bandoleers," and up front you went.

SI: Before that point, had you been in situations where you had to fire your rifle?

AP: No, not really, no, not there. After, when we got into the Blue Devils, like I told you, then, we did. Like, we were out one night and we happened to meet a German patrol. They wanted no part of us and we wanted no part of them, either, but what they did, they had a young kid with them, maybe all of about--maybe he was sixteen years old, if he was that, because we got up there after--they left him there with a machine-gun to hold us up and he did. So, what we did, we flanked him. When we got around him--and they took off. The older guys took off. They were probably forty years old. We were only in our twenties, if that, and they took off, left him there. He held us up for a little bit, not too long. We got around him and that's when he threw his hands up, but he never lived to tell the day. That was it, because we were thirty-six guys and two officers--everybody opened up. That was it. That's how them stories go.

SI: Do you remember where that was, approximately?

AP: Where that was? No, I can't remember where that was.

SI: Was it after Cassino?

AP: Yes.

SI: Tell me about that first night that you went out. What do you remember about the patrol?

AP: Oh, the mission, that was good. Like I told you, that first lieutenant was great. We came back with information all the time. Like, one night, when we were out there, maybe, say, if we're here, see them houses across the way? we're laying in the field here. We could actually tell, you could see the silhouette of the tanks, the Tiger tanks, there was, like, eight of them and, boy, wanted no part of that. We couldn't get into a conflict with them. So, we got the information that we wanted and we pulled back and we got away. That officer was good, that first lieutenant, I told you. He called it in. They zeroed in on that spot, and God knows what

happened. We know some of them tanks got hit and we got out of there. Another time, when we were coming back, we came across a creek bed, maybe from here to the wall or longer than that, a little bit longer, and the water was trickling. Maybe it was only about that high. All of a sudden, one of the guys spotted something and stopped and there was a box mine. It was wood and the minesweeper wouldn't pick it up anyway. [Editor's Note: *Schu* mines were German antipersonnel mines housed in wooden boxes, which made them difficult to detect.] Everybody stopped dead in their tracks. There were mines in the creek. The water had washed some of the dirt away, and so, the Lieutenant says, "All right, stay still. I'll go first. If I make it, you guys follow in my shoes, in my footsteps," and that's what we did and we all got across. That guy's name was (Hannebaum?). He was great.

SI: Were these officers from the 34th or from another unit?

AP: No, they were from the 34th.

SI: Were all the men from the 34th?

AP: They're right in the 34th Division.

SI: All the volunteers were from your division.

AP: That guy was great. After a while, they made him--he got a great job--he had a job driving the generals around, great after that. He was great. That guy, would have followed him anywhere. He was good. He had guts. He wasn't afraid. He was good, yes.

SI: Do you remember any of the missions that they sent you on during the Cassino battle?

AP: No. Those actions, like I told you, that was about it, but, after that, I went back to the service outfit and I was okay then, after that. Then, we just moved along, wherever we were going.

SI: When did you make the decision to permanently join the Blue Devils?

AP: It was right after Cassino. I says, "I'm not going to sit in foxholes." You know the kind of gun I had? I got that when I joined the outfit. I had that old Thompson submachine gun, with the old drum, what the mobsters used.

SI: The Tommy gun.

AP: That's the equipment we had, fighting World War II, until we got started. That's what some of these guys, I told you, couldn't believe. Like, I talk to some of the Korean vets or the Vietnam War vets and they go, "Wow." They really couldn't believe that. Like, later on, after we got the BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle] and stuff like that, that made a big difference. Of course, the Thompson was a good gun, but it was close range; everything was close range. You had no distance with it. That was all close stuff.

SI: When you were with the service outfit, you said you had a rifle. Was it an M-1 or a carbine?

AP: Yes, it was the old M-1, yes. That was a good gun. The M-1 was a good gun. The little carbine was a good gun. They were good. Then, with that outfit, we carried, like, three grenades. We had them strapped to our straps that we wore, carried three grenades.

SI: With the Blue Devils?

AP: Yes, with the Blue Devils. We carried the dynamite sticks with us. We had that and all the ammunition you could carry. When we went out at night, we carried no water. The canteen pouch was full of slugs. You filled it up with extra slugs, all you could carry. We'd have bandoliers on us and stuff, and forty-five slugs are heavy, compared to the .30-30s [Winchester rifle cartridges].

SI: Can you give me some examples of how that unit would work? You said it was thirty-six men and two officers. Would all thirty-six go out at once?

AP: Yes, all at one time. We all went out together.

SI: Were there squads?

AP: Thirty-six guys and the two officers.

SI: How long would these patrols or missions last?

AP: Four hours, four, four-and-a-half hours. You went out when it got dark, say, like, around twelve or after twelve, and they wanted you back by five or before, before it got real light, yes.

SI: How often would you encounter the enemy and have to fire?

AP: Well, we didn't want to get in any conflicts if we could. We just went out to try and get prisoners or try and get any information that we could, like we said, like, with the tanks and stuff, and get back with it. Then, like, that officer was great. He would radio back and call it in. He knew everything. Boy, he was good, knew the area and he'd call it in. That was good. They were good. Like I say, though, there was good days and there was bad days.

SI: Was it always the same thirty-six guys?

AP: Same guys. In fact, when we spearheaded the beachhead there that morning, we only lost one guy. He got hit and he died on the way back to the field hospital, but the rest of us all made it through, even that morning. We caught the Krauts asleep that morning, lot of them going, "What the hell?" They were tired just like anybody else. A lot of them had their boots off, taking a break.

SI: Tell me about how you prepared for the Anzio landing and what the whole day was like.

AP: Well, that day--that was horrendous. You know the LSTs [Landing Ship, Tank]? You know how the front dropped out of them? We pulled up; well, the Navy was taking us in. We went in just so far. I don't know how far, they knew how far it was, enough, because it was tough for a lot of guys. We were carrying all our gear. You're dropping into water maybe up to your neck or even higher. A lot of guys drowned from the weight. When we pulled in that morning, we couldn't get the hell out of the water fast enough, because they were strafing us pretty good, between the strafing and the shells landing. In fact--one, two, three--the fourth LST from us got a direct hit, front of us, to the side of us, when we were coming in. That was a tough landing, but, then, when we made that landing, by nighttime, our outfit had pushed--well, it wasn't only the 34th there. There was other divisions with us, alongside of us. We had moved pretty good that day, like maybe three, four miles in, and they thought they were going to keep us in the water and we moved out, yes. Then, the ordnance outfit made what they called the Bangalore torpedoes. It was a bunch of pipe. I mean, it was pretty big pipe. They'd put it in front of a tank or whatever it was, a tank destroyer, and they'd push it out as far as they could, the pipe. Then, the tank would back up, back away from it. They had, like, a periscope on it and they'd shoot for that and it'd blow up everything on both sides of you. Whatever was alongside of it was going to die anyway, from the concussion alone would kill you, and that's what happened. They'd open that beachhead and we moved on in. That was good, yes. They were the days.

SI: Were you in the initial landing at Anzio or was this when they were breaking out of the beachhead, after they had been there for many months?

AP: No, when we were breaking out. Some had been there before us, just before us, and it was moving pretty good, but everybody thought it was a mistake, but it wasn't a mistake, really, because when Anzio opened up, they had "the Longest Day" [the June 6, 1944 Normandy invasion] going. That was to draw troops away from the Longest Day. That day, that's what happened. That's why we went out at Anzio and it helped the troops at D-Day in France. It really caught the Krauts off guard, because they thought they were going to land here and here and it didn't happen. It happened in different spots. Our generals were pretty sharp.

SI: How long were you at Anzio?

AP: I stood there until the war was over. We kept moving up and pushing through, all through those little towns. Man, they were really devastated. When we went through--you just saw this destruction we had here, just from the hurricane [Hurricane Sandy in October 2012]--those towns were terrible, really destroyed, cement, brick, laying all over the place. You had to go in with bulldozers and open up the roads. Yes, it was bad, but we were lucky, yes. I brought the German helmet home. I've got that stuff. Maybe I'll get that and show you.

SI: Did you have any opportunity to interact with any of the enemy soldiers, like the prisoners you would take?

AP: Oh, yes. In fact, the German 34th Division gave up to the American 34th. We got a medal for that. I don't even know where the hell it's at. They gave up. In fact, we were passing them on Highway 65, they called it. We were passing them. We were going up to the front and they

were coming back. They gave up, they surrendered, and then, before that, we got another bunch of them and there was a bunch of officers in there. A couple of them, we went in to talk. They spoke good English, some of them. We were talking to them and the one guy, he wouldn't believe that the war was over. He figured that, "We're still going to win this war," and we were telling him, "The war is over for you guys and you're not going to win it," we told him, actually, my buddies and I, yes. That was it. That was something. Boy, they were really dressed sharp, man, them officers. They had that blue uniform they wore. They were sharp. They were good, but they couldn't believe the war was going to be over. Then, we took them, the whole 34th in as prisoners, gave up to the American 34th. [Editor's Note: The German 34th Division surrendered to the American 34th Infantry Division on May 1, 1945, as part of the German LXXV Corps' surrender near Biella.]

SI: Do you know if you ever encountered any SS troops?

AP: Well, there was a lot of SS troopers all through Italy, that we fought. They were tough. They were tough cookies, yes.

SI: The Anzio battle led to the taking of Rome. Were you in Rome when it was being liberated?

AP: No, we came after. We had taken it and we just moved on through and we kept going up through the little towns, up through Pisa and all on up. Florence, that was a gorgeous city. That was pretty. We drove through that. In fact, the guy from Pennsylvania, his parents came from there. See, they were born there, not him, but his parents, like my parents. It's funny that I should meet up with two other guys that were Italian in the outfit and we got along great with all the guys, though.

SI: Did you get to interact with the locals at all?

AP: Oh, I talked to a lot of them. Oh, yes, I could speak pretty good. I got along pretty good with them. A couple of times, when we were sitting in some of the fields over there, like, I would come back one day and one came over and says, "Oh, there's Germans up on top of the hill there." Of course, once the officers heard that, "Well, we've got to check this out." One of the guys says, "Hey, Patullo can understand. Go get him." I said to the guy, "Why don't you keep your mouth shut?" [laughter] come over and got me. I had to go and I went with him. We went up and we checked it out and there was nothing there. Everything was okay, stuff like that. Then, in another place, where a farmer had a bunch of sheep, they wanted to take them to run them over a minefield. I went over and talked to the old Italian. He didn't want to give them up. I says, "If you don't give them up, they're going to take them anyway." They didn't want the money, because the money was no good to them anyway. They couldn't buy nothing. There was no food to buy and the sheep was his only livelihood. I says, "Well, you'd better take it, because if you don't take the money, they're going to take the sheep, whether you like it or not," and we would just take them. Finally, I talked him into it and he finally gave them up. I felt sorry for him in a way, but, hey, we've got to do what we had to do. I told him and he gave them up and we got the sheep and they used them for what they ever had to use them for. A couple times, I'd done some talking for them. That was good. Like I told you, I learned that from my mom.

SI: You said, after a while, the Blue Devils group was disbanded.

AP: Yes, after the campaign. Then, the war was just about over. It broke up and we were back to our other outfits and that was it.

SI: How often would you go out on these patrols? Was it every night?

AP: Oh, yes, went out every night. Regardless, if it would rain or shine, you went out. I didn't like that, but that's what happened.

SI: In the Anzio operation, you lost one guy. Were there other casualties?

AP: That was the only guy in our outfit, that I know of, that got hurt or passed away, but we all made it in our outfit, the bunch of us.

SI: You would go out between midnight and five. What would you do the rest of the time?

AP: Well, during the day, you laid low. That's why I liked it. You didn't have to sit in a foxhole, rain or shine. You couldn't peer out of it, because you'd get hit. So, that was a better deal.

SI: Would you go into a farmhouse or were you just further back?

AP: No, no. We would lay--we were in the woods. You weren't in no farmhouses or nothing. You laid in the field all night long. That's what we did. Yes, it wasn't easy for us, but, like I say, we're here and we're lucky about it.

SI: You mentioned you carried dynamite with you.

AP: Yes, we carried sticks and we carried grenades, if we had to blow a small bridge up or something like that. That's why we carried it.

SI: Did you ever have to do that?

AP: No, we were lucky. We didn't have to do none of that stuff, because we were pretty good. I'll tell you, like I say, that officer was really great.

SI: It seems amazing that he pulled together this group of people from all these different areas--cooks, service people, infantry.

AP: The higher command decided that. The officers volunteered, too, and that's what it was and they called it the Blue Devils. I could still remember the patch. It was about--say, about that long, about that wide--and it had a pitchfork upwards with a skull head on it and it was a black and purple patch. My grandson was trying to look that up in the [National] Archives in Washington, DC. When he went to check it all out, they told him they got lost in the fire. They

burned it up. It burned up. Now, I don't believe some of that. They say they can't find no record of it now.

SI: There was a fire in the 1970s in St. Louis. They did lose a lot of records, but they also, I think, blame a lot of things on that fire. [Editor's Note: Sixteen to eighteen million Official Military Personnel Files were destroyed in a 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri.]

AP: Oh, yes. I think it's a lot of baloney, because that's true--you can't lie about it, because we're here to say it. If you don't believe me, you could see my buddy. He'll tell you, and some of the guys that were in it. They could never come up with anything, they says.

SI: Were there any other close calls that come to mind on these patrols?

AP: No.

SI: Any stressful moments?

AP: No. We were good. Like I said, we were lucky. We didn't get hurt and we came back with information every night and that's what they would do.

SI: When you were not on patrols, would you do training operations?

AP: Well, we were all trained for that kind of stuff and every guy knew what we had to do. We carried so much ammunition. We carried all the guns that we had. You had the grenade launcher with you, but you're not going to tackle, like I say, six or eight tanks. If it's one, you've got a chance, but not six or eight. They were huge and you could actually hear the Krauts talking. So, they were some days, let me tell you, every night, yes.

SI: After the Devils disbanded, the war was pretty much over, you said.

AP: Yes.

SI: Do you remember where you were when V-E Day was declared?

AP: Do I remember it?

SI: Yes.

AP: Yes. In fact, they didn't want to tell us and the only way we found out, we happened to have a truck that had a radio in it and they were broadcasting it. They didn't want us to know, because we were going to get ready to go to Japan. We were getting ready to go to Japan.

SI: Was there any celebration?

AP: No. The guys, everybody was happy that everything stopped, because we knew we were heading home, or, at that time, they were getting ready to go to Japan, but we didn't know that, either. That's the way it panned out, yes.

SI: How long did they keep it up that you might go to Japan?

AP: The war ended, what, May, wasn't it?

SI: Yes, in Europe, it ended in May. [Editor's Note: V-E Day was declared on May 8, 1945.]

AP: It ended up in May, and June, July--I don't think we got home for, let's see, it ended in May, June, July, August, September, October, November--six months.

SI: You were just on occupation duty.

AP: Yes. We were occupation then and they wouldn't tell us when we were going to get ready to go, yes.

SI: That whole time, until the war ended in August, you thought you were going to the Pacific.

AP: Yes, but they were holding us up. They wanted to see what was happening, but, then, before that happened, six months, that's when we dropped the A-bomb [atomic bomb]. Then, we knew for sure the war was over, but we were getting ready to go to Japan, but they wouldn't tell us. None of the officers would say that we were going home, no way.

SI: In that time, you were in the service company again.

AP: Yes. I was back to--well, I told you, they sent me back to service company.

SI: What were your daily duties like then?

AP: In them days?

SI: Yes.

AP: Well, we were taking care of our stuff, and then, by that time, we had moved all the way up to Sanremo. That was a beautiful area, along the coast, very close to the French--what was it?--the French Riviera, not too far from there. Well, I got to see the big gambling casino there, forgot what it was.

SI: Monte Carlo.

AP: It was over there somewhere, in Switzerland or over there anyway, but the French were along the area there and they didn't want to move out. They wanted to take something else and we had given up all our guns, but, then, [word] from the American high command came down and told them that they had to move out, gave the French an ultimatum, "Move out or you will be

pushed out." Then, they finally pulled out. They didn't want to move, though. I guess they figured they were going to grab part of the seaport there, whatever it is, but that didn't happen.

SI: At any point, when you were in Italy, did you get a leave or liberty?

AP: Oh, we had leaves to go. You could have went to Switzerland. You could have went to some other places. I wouldn't go. I didn't go on any of them. I figured, "I'll stay here and wait." You had the hash patches after. Do you remember the hash pats?

SI: Yes, one for each year you were in the service.

AP: One for every six months.

SI: Every six months.

AP: Yes. If you had X amount of them, you were eligible for furlough or whatever, and I figured, "No, I'm not going anywhere. Be my luck, I'll be out there and I'll miss my spot." Well, I just stood where I was. I waited and my number came up and I'm on my way home; yes, the hash marks, the yellow ones.

SI: What rank were you at the end of the war?

AP: T/4 [Technician, Fourth Grade], yes.

SI: It sounds like you had a fairly high opinion of most of the officers that you served under, except for that one officer you mentioned.

AP: He was one of the best. That guy, I don't remember where he was from, (Hannebaum?) was his name, though. I'm sure they would find that out, but he was fantastic, great. Well, you've got to have guts to walk across a pond like this, say this wide, even just this small area, say, to walk across there with mines in it. He went across and he made it and we all made it. We followed his footsteps. Their mines, box mines, are about this big, that wide, about that high, and step on one of them, you're done and guys behind you get hurt.

SI: Were there other cases where you ran into mines or booby traps?

AP: Well, we came across fields that were marked. Like, our engineers would be there, get there before us and mark them. If this was the field, you'd walk in the center here or that side. The mines were all over the place, though, and they weren't in a straight line, either. They had them staggered all over, but they had a lot of guts to do that, though. Couple times, we had to go probing for them, though, with a dagger, with your bayonet. I didn't like that.

SI: Was that when you were out on these patrols or was it some other time?

AP: Anytime. Anytime you were out and we thought there was mines around you, you had to start looking. You had to be really careful, but they're the tough days.

SI: With the Blue Devils, were you able to get the supplies you needed, ammunition, food?

AP: Yes. Well, in fact, we had better rations than the guys that were up front. We got the rations that were in the cartons, boxes. They had, like, biscuits in there and they had jelly, like marmalade and stuff like that in there, where the other way, you just ate out of a can. Remember the cans that were about this big?

SI: Yes, the C rations.

AP: Yes, the C ration. You had that little opener, can opener, to open them up, eat it cold. Imagine eating that hash--man, it's like wax, eating it cold. If it's warmed up, it's not as bad, but eating it cold.

SI: Was it a K ration or a ten-in-one? [Editor's Note: The ten-in-one food parcel was a field ration made to feed ten men.]

AP: Well, in them days, I think we called them K rations. It came in a box, in a cardboard box, about this big, square, and about that high, and it had all that stuff in there. That was a lot better.

SI: You could heat it up.

AP: Well, you could heat it up, if there was nothing around you, heated it up with a candle. You had nothing else. That's the way you even heated up some coffee. You make coffee cold. They had the packets of coffee. That's where I first learned to drink it, throw it in there and mix it up with the water and drink it. Well, it was either that or you have nothing. That was pretty good. Like I say, the guys up front, all we got were the little cans like that and you eat that cold, where the other ones got K rations. That was better. I don't know what the guys have today, what it is compared to what we had, but I'm sure--and then, we had the chocolate bars that were about, say, like that.

SI: Six inches.

AP: Yes, about like that, but it was thick. You couldn't eat too much of it at one time. You'd get sick, but it gave you a lot of drive and it was pretty good.

SI: Did you ever scavenge food or wine from locals?

AP: Oh, no. Well, the guys that drank wine, yes, they'd go looking for it. They'd find it and drink it; I wouldn't touch it. No, even to this day, I don't drink any of it, but guys would go there. It was funny; we had the guy, like in our service company, he was funny, (Morgan?) was his name. He was [in] charge of the service outfit and he took care of the supplies and stuff. He was a welder. He was an Irishman--man, could he drink. Oh, man, he'd make a still, get a big can--these guys were sharp--a big can and take the copper tubing, whirl it around. Then, he'd put the torch underneath it, light it up, the wind. It would heat it up and, all of a sudden, the alcohol would drip out, clear white. Then, they'd cut it with orange juice, or something like that, and

drink it. Man, that's too strong. I don't know how they could even drink it. That's what the guys would do, though, or look for raisins. Like, we would get raisins, the mess hall, and the cooks were pretty good with the guys, used to come in big bags like that, the raisins, and he'd give it to them and he'd cook them up. Oh, my god, it was dynamite. Christ sakes, it was pure alcohol. Guys would drink it. They would cut it with orange juice, grape juice, anything that they could get, yes. It was funny.

SI: Are there any other memories of your time in Italy that stand out?

AP: No. After a while, when we went around [sight]seeing, we got to see the Coliseum and we went to some of the other places. They were great to see. Like I told you, when I first saw it, I was really amazed. I was driving. I was on a six-by and driving around it and seeing it. I saw it in history books when I was a kid, going to school. Did you ever think you would see something like that? no, really something to remember, yes. Then, after, we got to fraternize with the civilians. You'd go into town. You got along good with them and had no problems. That was something to do, but people were pretty good, though. We didn't have hardly any problems with any of them.

SI: I know there were some elements in Italy that were still pro-Nazi. They were saboteurs.

AP: With the Germans, yes.

SI: Did you encounter any of them?

AP: No, we never came up against any of them, no.

SI: You described the incident where the sixteen-year-old kid had been left behind with the machine-gun. Were there other cases where you got that close to somebody, that you could see them or had to take them out?

AP: No, that was the closest one, and it was really a young kid, yes. Then, it was funny; we had a little Italian kid that hung around with us. We would shield him from the officers and take him with us from place to place. He traveled all over with us.

SI: He was a local. He was a native.

AP: Yes, he was a local. We didn't know--he didn't know anymore, probably lost all his parents--he didn't know anybody. You know how, like, say, we were camped here and maybe across the street, we would dig a big pit, where we'd drop all our garbage in and, when we left the area, we would cover it up? I always says that no troops in the world were as clean as us GIs were. We would dig a slit trench for our latrines and, when we left, we would cover it up. We'd throw lime on it and leave. The Krauts didn't do that, the French didn't do that, the English didn't do that, none of them. We were the cleanest of them all, really. See, there's things like that that you remember. I don't know how these other ones lived.

SI: This kid who would go with you, how old was he, approximately?

AP: Oh, this little kid? Oh, he had to be maybe twelve, fourteen years old. He was just a young kid. He would go in the pits where we would clean our mess kits out and go in it to eat. Then, after the guys felt sorry, we'd give him stuff and hide him. We'd give him clothes. He'd wear clothes. Some of the officers were pretty good with us, but, then, some of them were tough. Then, finally, one of the officers says, "Hey, we've got to get rid of this kid or we're going to have problems after." So, finally, when we got into one of the cities, we told him. We felt bad, but he had to go and that was it. Yes, we were pretty good to the kids. We gave them our candy. I used to give them all the candy I had, the chocolate bars we had and all the other candies. We always had candies. Then, of course, some of those kids learned to smoke. They wanted cigarettes. We gave them cigarettes. I didn't smoke. I never stood around guys that smoked at night. I got away from them. I didn't see that. Some guys didn't care; they'd light up. That was a no-no.

SI: Did they ever have any entertainment for the troops, like USO shows?

AP: Oh, later on, after, they did, and then, if you got into, maybe, close to a city, they would have a USO club. I didn't bother with that, yes.

SI: Earlier, you told me about the trip back to the States. Were you discharged right away?

AP: Yes, it didn't take them long, maybe a week or so. We got from place to place. Then, I finally landed back up at Fort Dix, or Camp Dix in them days, got discharged from there. How the hell did we get home from there? I think it was by bus. They were pretty good. They dished you out there and that was it.

SI: Had any of your siblings served in the military during the war?

AP: No, like I told you, though, four or five of us cousins went in, though. We were first cousins, some of us. I had one of them, he was a nice kid from Bound Brook, he was in one of the bombers. They were over Germany at the time and he was on his last mission. You remember a few--I don't know if you've got the information--if you had twenty-five tours, or whatever you want to call them, over Germany, or bombers, you were eligible for homecoming.

SI: To rotate.

AP: Rotate. He got hit on the last mission, never made it. He was a great kid. He was the only one that we lost out of the bunch. The rest of us all made it over and back. (Carmen?), he was a good kid--last mission, imagine that, bomber got hit.

SI: Did you ever have any moments where you thought you were not going to make it or you had low morale?

AP: No, the only time we had low morale is when we were going overseas, overseas and back. Well, back, the war was over, but, going over, we went over, one ship, no escort, no destroyers with us, nothing, but it was a big ship and it was a fast ship. All it did was zigzag across the

ocean and we made it there in seven days, where our other guys went on Liberty ships, they were thirty-three days. Can you imagine that, thirty-three days on a Liberty ship? That's like a matchbox on the ocean. Man, I was so happy to go on a big ship, but, during the day, a few times, they had drills, that we thought we were going to get hit. They thought we were going to get hit and got us up. They were some of the days that were bad.

SI: Did you have any difficulties readjusting to civilian life?

AP: No, I had no problems like that.

SI: You said you went right to work for your uncle.

AP: Yes, after, when I got home, I got the job, like I told you, in Summit and I traveled to Summit every day. I was working in the garage up there. Then, I decided, after four or five years, I didn't want to work for anybody and I didn't. I worked for myself.

SI: Did you always have the same gas station? You said it was down here.

AP: I had one, two, three of them in Middlesex. I had the brake shop in the shopping center there. Then, I had one up the street from there, two blocks away, for ten years, and then, I came up [Route] 28, closer to Bound Brook, with the last one I had.

SI: What were the names of the businesses?

AP: Armonde's.

SI: It was always Armonde's.

AP: I started out, it was Armonde's Shell. Then, the next one was Armonde's Sinclair, and then, the other one's Armonde's Mobil. I had the three of them [after] I come home.

SI: Did you ever use the GI Bill for any reason?

AP: No, never went for it, didn't go for that. What did they call it when you come home?

SI: The 52/20. [Editor's Note: The GI Bill included a "52/20" clause, which provided twenty dollars a week for fifty-two weeks to discharged servicemen while they looked for work.]

AP: 52/20, no, didn't use that, either. No, I just went out and got a job and that was it.

SI: Did you get involved in any veterans' organizations?

AP: No, I belong to the VFW, but I hardly ever go. I was in the American Legion; I dropped out of that. Some of them are like cliques and I don't bother.

SI: It sounds like you kept in touch with some of the men you served with in the 34th.

AP: I went to quite a few of the reunions out West. I made one trip, it was back--can't remember when it was, what year. Let's see, when did the Thunderbird come out for Ford, '55, '56? something like that. I made a trip with a Thunderbird all the way out--I drove from here to Springfield, Illinois, to the guy, Wimpy, met him there and his wife. Then, we got there and he says, "Well, how about taking my station wagon?" We drove over to Nebraska, and then, from Nebraska, we jumped in the car, in the wagon again, the four of us, and we went from there all the way out to the Twin Cities, St. Paul, Minnesota. We drove from St. Paul, Minnesota--we were in a Radisson Hotel there. We had a great time there. Then, from there, I drove up to North and South Dakota, and then, back home. In ten days, I made that trip. That's some trip in ten days, isn't it? all the way out that way and back, all the way out West, and then, back home.

SI: That was in the 1950s.

AP: Yes, in ten days.

SI: Probably before they had all the highways they have now.

AP: Yes, didn't have all the highways we got now, but that was some trip.

SI: You started going to reunions pretty early on.

AP: Yes, I did. Then, I met Wimpy a few times in Florida, when we went to Florida. He had moved from Illinois to Florida and I think he passed away a couple of years ago, because I never heard from him no more after that. Then, he didn't have anybody else in his family, so, that was it.

SI: Did you ever have any difficulty revisiting the war, telling stories or talking about it?

AP: No, I didn't have any problems like that. In fact, I never started talking about it until about--when was it? We were in Pennsylvania one year, maybe it was seven, eight years ago, and my buddy started telling them stories about what we were doing there. I come in and I say, "What the hell are you telling them stories for?" [laughter] He said, "Well, they wanted to know." So, he was telling--they couldn't believe it and he couldn't believe it. Yes, we talk about it. He and I, we get along great, though. I go see him all the time, because he doesn't like to drive anymore, and I go up there. In fact, I'm planning a trip now, go up and see him. I used to keep in touch with the guys from North and South Dakota and the guy, Wimpy, that was in Illinois. Then, there was another kid that made it back home. Let's see, he got killed in a car accident, (Sharp?) was his name. He was with us. He was in service company. He was a great kid, too, great guy--go through the war, and then, die in a car accident, oh, that's sad. He brought home a machine pistol. He got a machine pistol, imagine that, in them days. I brought home a P38 with the holster. I gave it to my son-in-law; he's got it. I kept the helmet. I got it. I'll show you one day, when you come back. My grandson's got my Eisenhower blouse, just the way I took it off, with my campaign ribbons, on a mannequin. It looks like a person up at the end of the stairs in their house. He's got that. I gave him a bunch of books. They got every German vehicle that was made in them. They're great things for him to have. He's good. He works for the government,

like you. He works for--he's a Harvard graduate. He was a professor in Boston and he gets into the Archives in Washington, DC. He's a pretty good kid, nice. Nicky, yes, he's good.

SI: Can you tell me about the family you started after the war, how you met your wife?

AP: I met my wife. She was from Brooklyn and it was funny, I said to her, "Well, six months after I'm home, we're going to get married." She says, "Okay." She had everything set and, sure enough, I got home in November, we were married in June. We went on from there. Then, I had four kids, four daughters, and everything's good. Everything's fine. Girls were all good. I get along great, yes.

SI: How many grandchildren do you have?

AP: I have four, three boys and one girl, nice. The kid, the one that's the Harvard guy, he graduated Harvard, Columbia and he graduated from Seton Hall. He works for the government, too. The other kids--one boy's a lawyer in Florida with a big law firm. The girl has got a job with Price Waterhouse [PricewaterhouseCoopers]. The other little guy's an athletic director for one of the colleges in Florida--so, not bad. So, like I say, I wouldn't change anything I done, really. I don't feel sorry about anything. It was good and I enjoyed my Army career. I kept my nose to the grindstone. I was not a drinker in them days, and smoking, I'm still not. Maybe I'll have a beer once in a while. Say you and I were talking here, you say, "Well, want a beer?" We'll have a beer, or, "Let's go out and we'll have a beer." That's about it. I never smoked and still don't smoke. I can't see it. First of all, I think it stinks, but to each his own. Like I say. I never regretted my Army days.

SI: Looking back, do you see any ways that your experience in the military affected your life after, how you dealt with your business, the things that you did?

AP: Well, a lot of guys maybe couldn't cope with things, but I never came across anything like that, you know what I mean? I don't know. They'll go to me, "How could you watch an Army picture?" That doesn't bother me. Like I say, we saw so much stuff that that's only a picture now to me. Guys were hit alongside of you. You came across a lot of guys who were dead. That was sad, but, outside of that, what else could you say? We had some bad days, we had some good days. What else could you say?

SI: Did you have any kind of lucky charms? Did you find yourself going to services often?

AP: No. We carried on our tradition, like, if you were whatever, you say your prayers or whatever, whatever you believe. Hey, you believe, whatever you are. Now, in our outfit, we were all kinds of guys. We were--you could call us "WOPs," whatever. That never bothered me, if somebody says that or whatever. That's fine. We were joking around, if you were a Kraut. There was Krauts, I'm sure a lot of those guys that were against us, but war was not good for anybody, but you're there for your country, you're there. They felt the same as we did and you have to do your job. No, we never had nothing like that. I feel good about it. Like I say, we were all mixed. Like I say, that outfit was all Danes, Danish, Norwegians, Dutch, Krauts. We

got along great and I don't look at it that way. I'm against some of the things that go on today, like I don't like, but we can't change them.

SI: Is there anything else about your life that you want to add to the record?

AP: Well, like I say, I wouldn't change anything that I did. We had to go, we knew we had to do a job. The only think I like is, like, when we were in, we had to do a job, we done our job. Today, I don't think it works that way and I can't see it. To me, if you're going to go over there and you've got a job to do, I think you should do it. I don't care who it is or where it is. Like, when that guy asked me at induction time, "Do you have any [family in Europe]?" "I don't care if I do or not," I says. "I don't know and I don't care," and that's how I felt and that's how I feel today. So, if you send me there to do it, it's just like you--you're out to do a job, you're doing your job. If you've got to say this, this is what you say, but I can't see somebody telling you this and it isn't true and you say, "I don't buy it." That's the way I always felt. Then, like I say, I was pretty sharp. I didn't drink, I didn't smoke and, after the war, I still carried the thirty-eight, after it was all over. I never in my life--when we came to a city or we were in a town and, say, like, you know how buildings are close to the sidewalk?--I never walked [on the sidewalk], I walked in the gutter. I never wanted anybody to drag me into an alleyway or something, waylay you, whatever you want to call it. I was pretty sharp.

SI: Was that from the war?

AP: Oh, yes. Well, you smarten up. Why get dragged into an alley and get beat up by three or four guys or something? Say we're in a foreign country, like you say, when I was in North Africa, I didn't trust them at all.

SI: How long did you carry a weapon after the war?

AP: I carried it until I left.

SI: You said you carried a thirty-eight when you were here after the war.

AP: No, overseas.

SI: Overseas.

AP: Not here, no. In fact, I gave everything, the guns, away. I brought a couple of them home, I gave them to different ones and I kept the helmet. I'll give it to one of the kids, yes. It's a German helmet. It's got the insignia of who they were still on the helmet, yes. I showed it to some of the young kids, like in the liquor stores when I go in. I get my lottery numbers. I brought it in one day and showed the kids. They couldn't believe it, some of the young guys, like, eighteen, nineteen, twenty years old. They couldn't believe it. "Wow," they go. Some of them said, "Could we take pictures of it?" "Yes, go ahead. What the hell?" and they like to hear stories, some of them. I go, "Well, I could tell you some stories."

SI: You earned campaign ribbons and the Good Conduct Medal, but you also earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Bronze Star.

AP: Yes, and I got that German medal, that we took the 34th Division, took the German 34th Division prisoners. I don't know where the hell it's at, though. I'll have to ask one of my daughters.

SI: We can put that in later.

AP: I knew I had it, but I don't remember.

SI: Is it a Presidential Unit Citation?

AP: It was a presentation to our whole division. [Editor's Note: Major General Charles Bolte, the 34th Division Commander, had a souvenir replica of the German 34th Division's insignia, with an inscription on the reverse and an accompanying citation, made up and distributed to his men to commemorate the event.] We took the German 34th prisoners. They gave up to us. That was amazing to see. I mean, you see that now, these guys, and they're pulling their guns, all their guns yet with them, and we're passing them on Highway 65 in Italy. It was Highway 65, we called it. I can remember that outfit. In fact, when we were there--where the hell was that at?--somewhere off of Highway 65, going into Rome, I think. One of our outfits, not from our division, our tanks, were under French supervision. I can't see that. We're an American Army; we should be conducted by our American units, not any foreign units. This guy calls up, "Two or three tanks coming up," and the Germans were sitting there waiting, knocked two of them from right out, guys were killed in it. See, I can't see that, but, like I says, we were sent there to do a job, you do your job, and we did. Like I say, I have no regrets and, what I did, I had to do. We were there to do a job, like I says, and we done it.

SI: Thank you very much for all your time today. I appreciate you answering all my questions.

AP: Yes, that's good.

SI: Thank you very much.

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Reviewed by Molly Graham 6/15/2014
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 7/7/2014
Reviewed by Armonde Patullo 10/19/14
Reviewed by Molly Graham 10/29/14