

Anthony Avellino
Veteran

Interviewers,
Unknown

Place and time of interview
Unknown

Narrator (unknown) = N.R

Anthony Avellino = A.A

Anthony Avellino served in the United States Army Air Forces during World War Two. He was stationed on Iceland.

N.R : Now the weather stations that the Germans had on Greenland , do you have any idea how people [Germans] that were there that they had captured?

A.A: I don't think there was more than 10. It was a very small operation , right there at the place.

N.R : Did they have a landing strip there ; there was plane going in and out of there every day.

A.A: I don't know if it was a landing strip I'm unaware of the particulars about what they did have and what they didn't have, I never found out.

N.R : When all the bombers were coming back and forth they were mostly going over to Europe , did they land at your site?

A.A: No they landed at Reykjavík.

N.R: What did they do there refuel?

A.A : I assume.

N.R: Did you ever get over to that site?

A.A: Oh yes we were stationed at Keflavík and that would be the army airport and Reykjavík would be more civilian although at the time is very much mostly military

N.R: The radar was fairly new at the time. Was that a problem to learn and monitor in those days?

A.A: Well it wasn't as complicated but it wasn't as developed as it is today.

N.R: How did you go about monitoring the radar, did you have screens?

A.A: Yes , they had a big map of the island in headquarters and as the information would come in the spotters would display the information on the map which was usually the location. Usually there were 3 radar post in any one section of the island and those gatherings would be centered down at the information center than the pursuit officers would collect this info and if it was hostile than they would immediately scramble the planes to intercept.

N.R: Did they ever intercept any planes?

A.A No actually the very interesting thing about that was somehow the hostile German plane knew exactly when we would picked them up and how long it would take us to get to them so within a certain amount of time they would turn around and go back out we would turn around and land by that period of time they came back in take the pictures and scoot back out [laughter] .

N.R: So they [Germans] were spying on you?

A.A: Yes they were. They would come right over headquarters.

N.R: Now were they [Germans] trying to get your strength and the number of bombers you had coming in and out of there?

A.A: Actually where we were at was Keflavík and the bombers didn't reach that part all they were interested in was the radar to figure out it was the same as before, was it more developed, had we moved it to another location. I suppose they took pictures of any development of troop quads and huts that we lived in to see if they had moved or if there was any changes.

N.R: What was the weather like?

A.A: As long as you were close to the sea the snow would come in and the wind would blow it right back out again always around the shore but then if you got inland it got pretty rough. During the summer the sun never set it would supposedly raise in one spot east and west and rise in another, then it would go around and start all over again. During the winter you had the twilight hour between eleven-thirty and

one o'clock. You would see a little bit of light but during the summer we would be playing basketball at three o'clock in the morning

N.R: How'd you sleep during those twenty four hours?

A.A: All the so called windows were covered all the time and during the winter we didn't worry about it

N.R: Was it unusual to be in darkness for that length of time?

A.A: You started to get use to it. The northern lights were beautiful , that flash across the sky would just light up everything.

N.R: What was your best time in service?

A.A: If it wasn't for the uso life would of been very boring there other than that like I said you know the environment is very depressing there is no trees no grass nothing actually in Reykjavík they had one park no trees but they had grass

NR: What would you say was your lowest point while in the service?

AA: When I first got there , things were pretty sad there

N.R: Were you home sick?

A.A: Yeah, always homesick you know we got a lot of letters that helped. Marlene Dietrich came up once that's was the only time and we had chicken and I noticed in the process believe it or not one chicken was stamped 1939.

N.R: What was your scariest moment while in World War Two?

A.A: Thinking about it now the scariest moment was during the convoy before going to Iceland 19 out of 20 ships were torpedoed. The wolf pack back in those days were efficient and strong. But in our convoy we didn't get torpedo because we had cargo ships all around us and we were the troop ship in the middle so in order for the sub to hit us they would have to aim lower than the cargo ships to hit us so that helped not being hit but the scary thing was that we had the alarm ringing away like crazy and had to get ready with the alarms sounding off left and right. So here I am standing by the railing by the ship, so we really went over in the kettle boat that was a piece of junk but here we are standing there and you know how the torpedoes they have a stream of bubbles and it was coming right for us right were my buddies and I were standing but fortunately they missed they went to low .

They also missed the rest of the cargo ships and that was the scariest moment but some of us came back on a big cargo plane 130 L and we stopped off in Maine and went right to Washington from there.

NR: Then you were discharged?

AA: We were discharged in Mitchell field.