

**Angelo Favata
Veteran**

**Interviewed by Senator Patty Richie's Office
Oswego County Legislative Office Building**

I am 90 years old and I was drafted when I was 18 and turned 19 three months later. I was in the Army. They sent me down to Georgia field artillery. There was a cadre down there southern boys they taught us how to be soldiers they did a good job of it.

Interviewer: What were some of the things that they taught you?

Favata: Well we had 105 Howitzers. We trained with them and they found out that we were so good with them, they came out with this 8 inch gun. So we trained with that for a few months. So we'd know how to set it up, fire it and all that. So then we left Georgia and we were in Tennessee on maneuvers and all that, down to camp Florida back up to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and then from there we shipped out to Camp Shasta, New York and I come down with the flu so I went to the medics there. The captain of the medics there some stomach pills to take. I had a temperature of about I guess about 104. We were supposed to ship out the next morning this was late in the afternoon we got there. He says your temperature is not down, I'm going to keep you behind. I thought Jesus I've got to beat this somehow so I took the whole box of pills. The Captain came in at three o'clock in the morning and checked me out. He said I still had a fever. He said I'm not going to let you ship out, I'm going to keep you here. I said gee I want to go with my buddies you know and I called him every name under the sun. I'm surprised he didn't throw me into the brig. But I said I got to ship out with my buddies. He said you're too weak you won't be able to go. I said they'll carry me. So, he didn't want to let me go but I said "Well let's take a chance." He said you know if anything happens to you it's going to be my ass too. He finally agreed to let me go. One guy decided, we had to walk five miles down to the boat to the ocean, he would help me walk and another guy had my duffle bag and my rifle because we had to take the guitar I had. So uh we made it to the boat and I was still sicker than hell. We got on the Queen Elizabeth they made us troops ship out of it. The ocean was just like glass, it was beautiful. We landed in Glasgow, Scotland. I was still seeing the medic to get these pills to keep me going. We went all the way down through the close to Camp it was all the way down the channel to wait for the invasion. So the initial invasion was I think it was June the sixth. So we went, we went across the channel I think it was 4 days later. So we weren't in the initial invasion. We didn't have it as bad as the other guys who went in the first time. We were LST's they dropped the end of that down into the water. We had to walk through water a couple of feet TAKE YOUR TIME. DO YOU WANT ME TO STOP? The water was all blood. A lot of dead bodies floating in the water yet. There were ships as far as you could see. Navy ships, all kinds of ships, boats. They were straight from the bottom of the beach. We were with General Patton at that time, and he had already... they were so far inland and France I don't know how many miles they were in there so we got up on top there. We caught up with them on the front lines and we went to set up our gun. We had a crane operated, uh, truck to set the gun up, dig the holes for it. You ought to see when that gun fired it recoiled 4 foot. So you had to dig a hole for that to recoil in. It had big spades, two on each side

of the gun, probably weighed about 150 pounds apiece so the crane was supposed to do all this. So we had to carry this down and starts to swing the crane around with a big tube on it. They had guys on the end of each rope. I am an ammunition corporal by the way. They must have heard, the Germans must have heard the sound of the engine. So all of a sudden we started getting shots fired overhead. So the crane operator, I'll never forget him, he was great, Joe Montenero, he was from Liverpool. He went like, he put his hands up in the air, the guys all took off running for cover. So when the shelling stopped, we packed up and moved to a different location. But we found out we couldn't use the crane 'cause they would hear that motor running they would find us some way or another. So all these holes had to be dug by hand. So I was with a couple of guys who would go up forward. You were supposed to have a template that you would trace out to dig the hole for but I finally in my mind I knew how to do it without the template. So anyway we got set up and fired. I think we had two months of combat I guess. They brought us back from the front lines to a wooded area there in France to get showered and new clothes and stuff and when I took my shoes off, my socks fell apart, they were rotten. My feet smelled like they were dead, dead flesh. So I got new clothes and showered an all that and they rested us for a week. And we went and joined the front lines again. We made it into Germany, we were on the banks of the Rhone River. We were there for about two weeks, we couldn't get across. We were waiting for the infantry to get farther inside there. So they used to send an airplane out just before dark, the Germans, to see if they could find us or not. So I guess he must have located us, 'cause, uh, toward dark the bombers started coming over us. So the Lt. says, behind us was a German air raid shelter that was empty, so he says everybody go down the air raid shelter. So we go must have been around 75 feet down in there. There was a long corridor there with bunks on both sides. So we were all sitting there and bombs were falling, the dirt falling on top of us. And this is a funny part, this big guy from Alabama, nobody was saying a word, the bombs were falling, the dirt was falling on top of us. All of a sudden he says "just call me a mole, I'm going to dig a cellar to this place." And we all busted out laughing. So anyway, when it stopped we came up and our gun was still intact. We made it through Germany. Well then they had to take us, I remember we were riding on a train they needed us in Belgium, I can't remember what for. We got there about midnight and we were all laying on the ground and all of a sudden one of those bug bombs come over. I'll never forget the Major, we had a white headed major, I guess he was in the cellar of this depot where we were at. We were all laying on the ground. So all of a sudden this bug bomb was floating around and the major came running out of there with just his long johns on and helmet, his boots and two 45's strapped on his funny looking ass. Just then the flame went out and that thing was circling through the air and landed about a mile from us and the sky was all bright red and the ground shook for miles around. But anyway it missed us. So we got farther into Germany then. Winter come on, it was awful cold, it was right below zero at times. And uh, General Eisenhower came up, I forgot where we were, to check the troops, he wanted to know how we were doing, if we needed anything, if we were getting our supplies. One of the guys noticed that he had overshoes on, he said gee general he said we would be a lot better off if we had overshoes like you got. He noticed that we didn't have overshoes. Our feet were froze. So his word was good, a couple of weeks later we got overshoes. It was like a little bit of Heaven. We made it to the Rhine River and I swear that river must have been a mile wide. We had a... Every time the Germans crossed a river they

would blow the bridges out. So we had to cross over on a pontoon bridge that the engineers had built. Them guys, they were awesome. So we started over and we were right in this it was like a tank it was a troop. We were there, we were sitting in that. As we were coming along, I happened to look down. Of course the planes were strafing and bombing, they were trying to blow us out of the water. As we were going, the pontoons starting sinking. I said Oh my God, someone else said we're probably going to drown if they don't blow us out of here. But we made it across. And I uh ... then came Spring I guess later on. Uh, of course we got caught up in the Battle of the Bulge. So then we got to Buchenwald Camp, Buchenwald. The Germans were retreating so fast, there was about a week period or so that we didn't even have to set up our guns to fire. Of course, the Germans had retreated from there. There was still a couple of prisoners there. So they showed us the gas chambers, where they gassed the people. And there was a series of ovens, they had racks there. They used to gas them and throw the bodies on there and throw them in the furnace like cord wood. Burned their bodies up. And outside there was a mountain of ashes about two stories high. Parts of bodies that didn't burn. You could see arms, legs whatever that didn't burn completely. And to the left of that there was a long ditch that they had dug and I guess they must have lined the bodies up alongside then machine gunned them all. They were stacked in there like cord wood. They didn't have a chance to cover up what they did. The smell was so bad and they just... What prisoners were there, what little clothes that they had were just like rags and they were just like skeletons. So Eisenhower issued an order out. He wanted all the troops that could make it there to verify what the Nazis did. An anyway, I made it through the war without getting wounded. All my wounds are in here. I got discharged in January of '47 or '46. I came home and got married. Bought a little house with what I had left about where the atomic plants are now. But my war wasn't over with yet. I guess through the service, having that flu and all, the TB germs set into my body. So, I started spitting up blood. I wound up in Orville Sanatorium. I almost died there. The priest gave me the last rites. I was there for 2 ½ years. I finally came home. But I know I guess the Lord was with me all the while as through the war and he brought me out of this. And I'm 90 years old and I can't believe it and I'm in fairly good health right now.