

Mario M. Albanese
Narrator

Wayne Clark
New York State Military Museum
Interviewer

October 9, 2009
at the New York State Military Museum
Saratoga Springs, NY

WC: Sir, for the record would you please state your full name, and your date and place of birth please?

MA: Mario M. Albanese, I was born in Gloversville, NY on August 4, 1921

WC: Did you attend school in Gloversville?

MA: Yes, I graduated from Gloversville High School in 1940

WC: When you graduated did you go on to college at that point?

MA: I went to Siena College after World War II when I was repatriated, and I graduated from Siena in 1950.

WC: Do you remember where you were and what your reaction was when you heard about the bombing at Pearl Harbor?

MA: Yes, I belonged to a basketball team called the "Shamrocks" back in Gloversville, and we were playing in Amsterdam, NY. When we finished with the game we were on our way home and we had the radio on, and that was the first that we heard about the bombing. Of course that was a great shock to us, and we knew instantly that our lives would change because of that incident.

WC: Did you experience any sort of shortages or rationing?

MA: Well, yes, I was home before I went in the Army. We had all kinds of rationing: gas rationing, and food rationing, of course. And, there were other kinds of rationing as well. Yes, I lived through that and for a while we blacked out all the lights even. I remember the street lights were on only up to a certain hour and after that they were shut off.

WC: When did you enter the service?

MA: Well, in 1943 I was sworn in, and I left home on January 2nd or 3rd I don't recall...

WC: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

MA: I was drafted, but... I had a surgical procedure, I had a hernia... and I was told that I wasn't eligible to serve, and that if I had the hernia repaired they would take me. That's what I did... I wanted to go because I had three other brothers that were in the service...

WC: What were their names?

MA: My brother William, Artulio, and James and, all my friends were in the service, I had even had a couple of friends who had been killed right up to that point, naturally I wanted to do my part and be with them, so to speak. So I had the surgical procedure, and I was accepted and I had my basic training at Fort McClellan in Alabama.

WC: Why did you pick the Army over the Navy or the Marines?

MA: Well, all my brothers were in the Army... one was in the Air Force, but the Air Force at that time was part of the Army. And so I thought I wanted to be in the Army. Really I had no particular preference, except to say that the Army was good enough, and that was good enough for me.

WC: What was basic training like?

MA: Well it was a big change in my life, obviously. I enjoyed it in a sense, but it was such a big change that I had to get used to the fact that I was being bossed around or limited in what I could do and where I could go.

WC: What were your drill sergeants like? Were they southerners or northerners?

MA: Most of them that I had were northern, one was from Troy and I forget his name now, but he promised me that we would get together after the war [laughter], but we never did. I have some of the names of those people here today. Most of the non-coms that I had were from the north. We had four or five officers and I would say the ratio was more northern to southern.

WC: Your basic training, was it infantry oriented?

MA: Yes, it was strictly infantry. Fort McClellan was an infantry training base, primarily.

WC: Do you recall approximately how long that basic training was?

MA: About four months.

WC: Once you completed your basic training, were did they send you next?

MA: They sent me to Camp Meade in Maryland. That was a P.O.M., Port of Mobilization. It was really a holding camp. I spent maybe a month there before we were sent to Camp Shanks in Rockland County. From there, when the time came, we took a train to our boat. We sailed on the *Île de France*, which at that time was the third largest ocean-going vessel.

WC: Was it a converted passenger liner?

MA: Yes it was a converted ship for the troops.

WC: Did you go on a convoy or single-ship?

MA: We went single ship, because the *Île de France* was a fast ship, the bigger all were. But they had ash can protection and from time-to-time some air protection, as we got near the mainland.

WC: Did you get seasick at all?

MA: No I did not. On the way over I didn't because the ship was a big ship. They did tell us to eat a lot of food, you know, to keep the weight down in the stomach.

WC: What were your living conditions like aboard ship?

MA: Well [Laughter], my name was A, and I was way down in the bottom deck way in the front. I only spent one night there because I didn't like the idea that if we ever got hit, I didn't want to be down in the ship itself. So I slept on deck from time-to-time.

WC: How was the food aboard ship?

MA: Not particularly good, I must tell you that. I remember we had English marmalade and that's about all I lived on for a while... English orange pineapple marmalade or something like that.

WC: Whereabouts did you land?

MA: We landed in Greenocks, Scotland.

WC: Do you recall the date?

MA: I'd say it was mid-October of '44, I missed D-day. A lot of the fellas I trained with in Alabama were in the first wave of the invasion. I don't know how it is I was with some other fellas, set back while they went before that. I think that happened while I was in Camp Meade. But in any event, we landed in Greenocks, Scotland and I don't think we spent any more than three or four hours there. We were put on a troop train and we went through Scotland and England and into Southampton.

WC: Were you sent to a replacement center?

MA: No, right on a ship. It wasn't a center, I think that was our ultimate destination. They put us on a train. Off the ship, onto a train, down through England and into Southampton at port. We got off at Omaha Beach and we had to go up that big hill, that was now American, which you have seen in a lot of pictures about D-day.

WC: What unit did they assign you to?

MA: They assigned me to the 79th Infantry Division, the 315th Regiment. I was in H Company heavy weapons, which was mortars and machine guns.

WC: Had you been trained on mortars and machine guns?

MA: Yes, and rifle of course, as most infantrymen do. You learn to use all the weapons.

WC: So you landed at Omaha Beach...

MA: Yes, we carried our big pack up the hill until we went into a reception center and were assigned to various different divisions. Some of the fellas who I went over with were assigned to different divisions.

WC: You were assigned as a replacement –

MA: Yes.

WC: Once you arrived at your company, or platoon, how were you received as a replacement?

MA: Well they were gentle enough, but they were all trying to rib us and tell us that “you here taking the place of someone that was killed or maimed, so always remember that... listen to what the older fellas have to tell you about how you can save yourself and at that same time be of service to your fellow troops

WC: From that point how long did it take before you went into combat?

MA: Maybe a day or two... It was rainy. After a long march and carrying the weapons and ammunition, the first dead I encountered were two Americans, which really sobered me. It was a shock to me so that I caught up with the rest of the guys real fast. I realized that it was no game and we were playing for keeps. It was a very, very serious matter.

WC: These two dead Americans you saw, was that from an action that happened that day?

MA: The thing that really horrified me about seeing them, and by the way I was always disturbed when I saw a dead G.I. but I didn't feel that way when I saw a dead German and I've seen many of both. What I do remember about it was apparently they must have been hit by artillery percussion, because they were in a position like they were ready with their weapons in hand. The one soldier's eyes were out, he didn't have any eyes. Both of them were like they were frozen, just like they were in position with their weapon. I think that more than anything else disturbed me, to see them in that position.

WC: How long after that was it before you actually encountered the enemy?

MA: The next day we went up and we were told we were moving in position. My regiment was in reserve at the time when I joined them, so they moved us into the front lines. We marched up quite a ways, I would say a mile or two. We had shoe packs, that was the rubber type of shoe, which later on caused me a lot of problems. In any event, we got up there and they said 'well alright, dig your foxholes.' I started digging my foxhole and I would dump the dirt out on the outside and build it a little higher. I thought I was being real smart, when I got down to the bottom I dug it in so that I would sleep with my head under and just my feet and lower body was exposed. Early that morning, I woke up and I hear bullets flying over my foxhole and leaves because it was fall. The bullets were hitting the trees and the leaves were flying and the bullets were flying. I realized how dumb I was because when the artillery come in the grounds shook up, and I said 'boy, if a shell ever come anywhere near that foxhole I'd be buried.' So I never did that again. I only dug two or three other foxholes, and never another one after that. I had bad experiences with foxholes. The first night it was cold in the mountains, it was the Vosges Mountains in Alsace. The other fella in my platoon, we slept back-to-back. We tried to sleep, I couldn't sleep anyway. I just double-timed in the foxhole trying to keep warm. Still you had to suffer it and keep quiet. Nothing happened that night. The next night we moved out of there, apparently the riflemen were able to take some territory, near a village called Emberménil. The Free French with their tanks moved up alongside of us. It was raining and the Free French were good fighters, but they were rather loose with their lighting up places and so forth, and at nighttime that would draw a lot of attention. We started to dig foxholes and it was raining, I'll never forget it was raining terrible. I didn't have a raincoat. The more I dug the more the foxhole filled up with water. So I stopped digging and slept outside, near it. I'd jump in it if I had to. But I swore I'd never dig up a foxhole after that night

WC: You said you didn't have any rain gear, was the rest of your clothing and equipment adequate?

MA: Yeah it was adequate. I had a heavy coat, but we took off the heavy coats. Some of the older guys, who were more experienced than I was anyway, they wouldn't wear the heavy coat. They wanted to be able to move, forwards or backwards as the case may be, hurriedly without being hampered by the coat. The coats were big and heavy. While they protect you from the cold, it was cumbersome to do what you had to do to protect yourself or to meet the enemy coming at you. I mentioned the village of Emberménil, which was the first village that I was with that was captured. We were about a quarter of

a mile, or less, outside of the village and the Lieutenant indicated to us that we outta start digging our foxhole there. I didn't like the idea and I asked the Lieutenant 'Why can't we go in the village and go into the structures and the homes there that would be available?' and I presumed that the French would be friendly to us. His remark to me was 'Albanese, you aren't going anywheres because there are Germans there and they'll shoot your ass off.' I indicated to him that 'I am willing to take my chances with the Germans as long as I can get into a nice warm bed and get some good food [Laughter]. So I think we should go.' And he says, 'Well, we're not going.' In any event, some of the other fellas started to get into the Lieutenant that he thought we outta, at least, take our chances and go into town and see what's what. Because, I was under the impression that the town was abandoned by the Germans. For some reason or another, our Lieutenant thought that we should stay here. He wasn't sure of it. I think he was being too precautious. I'm sure he had our welfare in mind, you know our safety in mind. But from what I understood the town was abandoned and the French were there. We got into town without too much difficulty, although some shells came in at us while we were working our way into town. The first place we stopped, there were about three or four of us together, was a cow barn. I remember staying there for some rest for a while. Before you know it some of the French natives come over and saw us, some offered us food and they were fairly friendly. We asked if there were any 'Bosch' around, that was the French word for the German. They said no, that they had left. So we stayed there a day or two and we did sleep in the homes. That seems to have been the pattern afterwards. While there were occasions where we might have dug foxholes, I don't recall ever digging a foxhole after that night with the Free French. We were always in homes where the Germans had been pushed out, and the natives were there, even in Germany. I never dug a foxhole anyway, in Alsace-Lorraine or when we entered Germany.

WC: You were also in Belgium and Holland?

MA: Yes. While we were in Alsace we were one of the first to cross into Germany. As a matter of fact, I think my outfit captured some of the national line that the Germans captured from the French and crossed over into the Siegfried Line. That was the German's answer to the Maginot line. My outfit, the 79th Infantry Division went way up there. We finally took Strasbourg while we were in Alsace-Lorraine. Strasbourg was a key city, the focal point, in that area. All the towns will be shown here on this map. As a matter of fact there was a program *The Band of Brothers*, that had the capture of some other outfit, I think from the 9th Infantry Division in Hagenau. We were both there. After some time we were in a place called Hatten-Rittershoffen, where parts of our unit were cut off in Hatten. Germans had surrounded the village. After we had finally left Rittershoffen, where there was rather close fighting, we moved up into Hatten. The tankers and anti-tankers, our tank boys, were able to open up a hole into Hatten and we took positions to try to relieve the encirclement by the Germans. I recall it distinctly because it was odd, it was wintertime, and we broke in. The mist from the snow and the temperature, you couldn't see anything at all. It was like a fog for two or three days. Finally when the sun did come out, I would say from here to across the street, there was Germans by the hundreds. I don't know why once the sun come up, they started to run. Of course then the boys really helped them, that is our boys took after them to clear the

city. The city was finally abandoned by us, I'll never forget that. We left around midnight under cover of darkness. We then went back for a rest, and told that we're gonna be moved to the 9th Army that was under General Simpson. We were under General Montgomery, he was an English General. We were told that we were going to prepare for the Rhine crossing. The Rhine crossing was a big naval and army project, in that the Rhine was very wide at that point. They did have navy personnel to assist us in the crossing of the Rhine.

WC: Did you encounter the Russians at all?

MA: Later on, but not then. Later on we did. We moved into Belgium for a while. And then we went into Holland to practice for the Rhine crossing. On the day of the crossing, there were pre-dug foxholes on what would be the west side of the bank of the Rhine river, dug by the 104th Infantry I think it was. So that night we walked into position, and were told when we see the green light to push our boats in and assault. Quite a few of the boys were killed there in my outfit. I had some close calls there myself.

WC: Were you wounded at all?

MA: Well, I never was wounded fortunately. I did have a birthmark here [points to forehead] which was cut, and they gave me some bandaging. I went back for a three day rest. But no I was very fortunate. As a matter of fact I was fortunate in crossing the Rhine. Before we crossed it our platoon leader was killed. He actually had to hit me to get in. What we did was, the boat was in place and we had the green light to go, so we wanted to drop our ammunition and our weapon in the boat and then push the boat in. He come in and brush me [claps hands] on my left side. He says 'Let me in here Albie,' they used to call me Albie. No sooner he did that and a shell came in and I ducked, and he ducked and he fell on me. I knew he was dead because he was bent over backwards. It must have hit him in the back because he was just bent over backwards, his legs were way over on me and his head was up here. I am sure that without him that was meant for me. But, we were able after that, to push the boats over. Everybody was hollering for him, they were asking 'Where's Fox? Where's Fox?' I said 'Forget Fox, he's dead, let's get outta here! It's too hot!' What happened was, prior to Fox getting hit and when we were marching into position, we had over 775 artillery pieces in place. I understand that that was the biggest barrage in the war, up until that time. All along the Rhine, 750 artillery pieces were stationed. This was after Ramagen Bridge was captured, which was just below us. I understand that General Eisenhower and Winston Churchill were there, and the boys were saying 'That was the General!' and 'That was Winston Churchill!' I saw some individuals who were watching us but I can't say for sure that it was, but that's what was reported anyway. So when we got onto the other side, I put the base plate onto my head as we were crossing because the Germans were still shelling us with rifle and artillery pieces and skybursts. They would time it so that it would burst before it hit the ground and spread the shell. We got over on the other side and it was almost humorous because there were Germans, and we were getting mixed up with Germans. You didn't know where the Germans were, and the Germans didn't know where we were. We captured a lot of Germans there, as a matter of fact there was one whole German unit that

surrendered. Our regimental Colonel come over and said to me 'Listen, you better take these guys over.' I said, 'Listen Colonel, I've been sent to go to Headquarters here, and as soon as I get back I'll take them.' But I think he knew I didn't want to take 400 guys back [Laughs]. So he took them to some holding pen where these Germans were kept. It was really humorous except for the fact that so many guys got hurt and killed there. I could tell you about the fact that as bad as the front lines were there was always time for humor. While we were in Holland, we were going to town, to see what was up. We run into two GIs who were Military Policeman. They said to me, 'Where does a guy go out? The wars gonna finish and we want to get to see some action!' I says, 'You wanna see some action? You go down to H Company and ask for Lieutenant Epstein and tell him that Albie sent you. I'm sure they'll find room for you.' Before we crossed, as I told you there were pre-dug foxholes. So when the Germans start shelling, we all jump in the foxholes and there must have been four or five of us in one foxhole. This big guy who wanted to get some action, he was from Minnesota I guess, we called him Smiley. He jumped on top of all of us. I says, 'Okay Smiley, now you've seen some action! How do you feel about that?' He said, 'Well, I'm the sorriest sonofabitch that ever lived! If I get past this day I'm goin' back to my outfit.' [Laughs]. So there is humor at times. What else can I tell you?

WC: Where did you go after that?

MA: Well after that we stayed in a town called Bochum. We captured the town and it was in RuhrValley. The entire area was just bombed out practically. We took over a house, and the trolley car used to come by there. The house belonged to a woman they called the Frauenschaft.. They used to say that nobody liked her because when they used to get on the trolley car she'd make them all say 'Heil Hitler.' So we weren't too kind to her, we took her house over and allowed her and her daughter to sleep on the third floor and we took over the first and second floors. We were there for at least a month or so. We finally moved by vehicle over into Hammelburg, that's near Baden-Baden, in Germany where we sent up tents. We were told we were goin' to be sent to Japan, and that we were gonna go through the Suez Canal.

WC: Was the war ended at that point?

MA: No, it wasn't ended at that point. It ended while we were in Bochum. The fighting stopped after we took them more-or-less, except for some action up around Berlin. That's where we encountered a lot of Russians, PWs, and a lot of other nationalities. All people who were prisoners of the Germans, we set them all free.

WC: Did you have any problems with the Russians at all?

MA: No, we did not. Except they let us know that all the Russians had to obey their commands, and they were not to take orders from us. They were pretty clear about that, they let us know. Some of the PWs and displaced persons were out to take revenge on some of the Germans. While I didn't witness any myself, some of the other fellas in my outfit did. He knew of certain farmers who were killed, Germans who were killed by

DPs, workers on forced labor on the farms. Some of them took revenge on the Germans. Some of the Russians as well. In any event, we were moved by truck into Czechoslovakia. We were in a place they called Eger, in Czechoslovakia, which was Sudetenland. That was the land that the Germans claimed was part of their original homeland. That's where we run into a lot of Russians. They wanted to come over and buy gasoline from us and some of the food. Lot of the guys didn't want to deal with them. I remember going into a town where they manufactured leather. I was interested in that town because Gloversville was a leather producing area. So we went in that town and it was a beautiful summer day, either June or July, of '45 and not a soul on the street. It was funny. Here it was a beautiful day and the town was unscathed, there was no damage to it whatsoever. Didn't see anybody on the street, neither soldier nor human-being whatsoever. Finally some of the natives saw us and come running out. They were talking in Czech. Fortunately one of my friends was Polish, and he understood. His name was Frank [unclear], he just died as a matter of fact. He was able to understand them, because it's a Slavish tongue. All of a sudden there was a big crowd on the street, and the Russian officers come out and the soldiers come out at gunpoint with us, guns raised. They asked us what we were doing there. I indicated to Frank, I said, 'Frank, you better tell this guy otherwise we'll wind up in prison, we'll leave!' After some talk between the Russians and my friend, they told us that we had to get out but we had to double-time while they run with us outta the city. And we double-timed outta the city! That was the last time we went back to that town. So by that time the war had ended of course, while we were still in Bochum.

WC: Was there a lot of celebration?

MA: Oh yeah sure! I threw my helmet in the air and I didn't give the Lieutenant a chance to stop. I didn't care, it was over now! [Laughs] I almost felt like a civilian to be honest with you. It was great. We celebrated. They gave us some liquor, because only the officers were getting liquor at that time. In any event, our division paraded before President Benes. Benes was a big hero in Czechoslovakia, during the war and after the war. He became President of Czechoslovakia, and we paraded before him. It was quite an honor. After that all the boys were being transferred home. I still had some time, I was a low-pointer compared to some of the older guys. So, I was transferred to the 1st Division, 16th Regiment. That's where we did guard the SS men, out in a place called Longvassen. That's the big stadium where Hitler used to make his big... yeah right there. We were right next to the thing, we had the SS men build huts for us. Immediately next to us was the biggest Army depot in the European theater. They would have big buildings of like just butter, or just coffee, one in each building. They had over fifty or sixty of them and they would be a block long. We didn't guard them, although we helped ourselves to whatever we wanted anyway.

WC: Did you have any problems with the SS?

MA: No, the SS men didn't. They were well disciplined. They would be marched out. We would be in the towers while they were marching out and they would sing their songs. They had a beautiful cadence and rhythm in marching. I heard the song for the

first time in a long time just a couple weeks ago. But that was part of the trial. We were allowed to go to the trial but we had to subject ourselves to a pat-down to make sure no crazy guy would shoot at any of them. I found it very interesting.

WC: Did you see all the ones that were on trial?

MA: Yes, I saw Goering and all of them. Von Ribbentrop and all the whole group. As a matter of fact I brought my field glasses with me and I zeroed in on Hermann Goering. He was the big shot, you could tell of them looked to him for answers, or would congregate around him. He saw me zeroing in and I could see him looking at me, and he's going like this [glares to his right side]. I probably was no further away from him than from here to maybe the other side of the street here. It was a great experience.

WC: How much time did you spend at the trials?

MA: I was there at least an hour, but I was in Nuremberg for maybe three months at the most. We had some baseball games there, and football games in the stadiums. They had two or three stadiums in the area. The big one where he would be there to speak was a huge, huge place. I remember, after the war, they had four or five diamonds in it that's how big it was.

WC: That was the stadium where Hitler gave his speeches?

MA: Yes. We were all present in all those buildings.

WC: When the war had ended, what were your provisions and living conditions like? You were in the German barracks?

MA: Yes, they were German built barracks.

WC: How was your food at that point?

MA: Pretty good. As a matter of fact, they had German cooks. We were in Würzburg, before I went there and Würzburg was completely burned out. It was the most burned out city in Germany. All that remained were the shells of the buildings. It was funny, you would walk on there and if you hollered you'd hear the echos. There was a town that we took, I remember, my friend and I wandered off when the action got a little slow, and as we were nearing the village itself some artillery shells. And I said 'I can't believe they would be wasting all that artillery on two guys.' We would jump in big holes from the bombs that were there. As we jumped from one hole to the other they still followed us until finally we got the heck out there because apparently we had been spotted. It was odd, there were a lot of incidents were I look back and it's hard to believe that you could live through it.

WC: While you were overseas did you get to see any USO shows at all?

MA: Oh yes, I saw Mickey Rooney once and Ingrid Bergman. Yes we did.

WC: How much time did you spend in Germany after the Nuremberg trials?

MA: I think I spent about fifteen months in Germany. A little less because I spent six months in France, and some time in Belgium and Holland.

WC: When did you get sent back to the States?

MA: In May of '46 I came back.

WC: You came back by boat?

MA: Yes. I can't remember the name of the boat, it was not as big as the *Île de France*.

WC: Where did you land?

MA: We landed in New York.

WC: Did you receive any kind of reception?

MA: Oh yes, there was a great reception. All the ships blew their horns at us and their fire hoses. It was just wonderful! It was a great reception I'll never forget it!

WC: You were discharged at that point?

MA: No I had to go to Camp Dix, and then I was discharged. It was a matter of a couple of days.

WC: When you were discharged did you go right home?

MA: Well I went to my relatives. I had relatives in New Jersey and I spent a night or two. Then I took a train home, where I was picked up.

WC: Back to Gloversville?

MA: Yes.

WC: Once you got back to Gloversville what did you do? Did you take some time off?

MA: I took some time off. It was a great time all the guys were home and it was like the old times in a way. But we all had changed we knew that.

WC: Did you make use of what they call the 52-20 club?

MA: Yes I did. I thought about working, but I knew I didn't want to work in the mills because I know how tough it was for my father and some of my brothers who worked in the mills, the leather mills that is. I knew that the glove business was rather sporadic. So I decided to go to college. As a matter of fact, I didn't decide to go to college on my own, my mother and father asked me what I had in mind, what did I intend to do? I told my mother that I intended to find a job somewhere, either in Gloversville or in Albany. And my mother said 'Why don't you go to school?' I said 'Oh mom I'm too old for that now.' She says 'Well I ought to have one son,' my mother and father had eleven children, 'I ought to have one son who'll go to college.' That kind of hit me hard.

WC: So you made use of the GI Bill?

MA: Yes, and I did it to please her. I thought I would go to please her for a few months or a year, and I got so I liked school. I did like it. I did pretty well in school considering. Most of the guys at that time in Siena were ex-veterans. I went on to law school at Fordham in New York City. After graduation I worked a year trying to sell insurance, but I'm no salesman. I found that out.

WC: So you became a lawyer?

MA: Yes.

WC: You're eighty-eight years old and you're still in practice.

MA: Yes. I was on the bench for ten years as county judge in surrogate in Fulton County and I've been assigned to the Supreme Court. I've served in ten different counties in the state as judge. That was for a period of ten years, and then I went back to practice. My son is with me now, Michael. He's really carrying the load now. I'm semi-retired, but that's a fallacy in the law. You just don't semi-retire. If you take anything out it's a fulltime job.

WC: Did you stay in contact with guys you were in the service with?

MA: Oh yes. This fellow Frank M., I used to go and see him quite a bit, and he would come to see us from time to time. He came to my wedding. I wrote a lot of the other fellas, and I'd go to all the reunions we had. Great times. But I don't think there are many left. I'm one of the few left as I understand it, in my outfit.

WC: How do you think your time in the service changed or affected your life?

MA: Well I think I matured a lot. Before I was rather carefree about anything as long as I had a job and could get out and play golf, go to ballgames, play ball, whatever. Let me put it this way, I remember going to Kroger Lake, that was a great dance place when I was a kid. I couldn't wait to get to Kroger Lake after the war. When I was discharged, the first thing we all did was went to Kroger Lake. I danced once, and when I got out on the dance floor I said "What am I doing here?" I realized I didn't get the same thrill that I

got before. Life was more serious then. I had to be serious, I suppose, about life. Call it maturity or whatever, I don't know what it was, but I just never went back and never danced after that.

WC: You brought some memorabilia with you today. Do you want to show us some of that?

MA: Well yeah, this is my helmet [shows helmet]. As you can see that's the Lorraine cross division hat. I carried it all through Europe. It was issued to me and that's the very hat. All that you see inside is my sweat. This is a liner, the steel goes on top of it.

WC: What else you got there?

MA: Well this is a map of the route of the 79th Infantry Division [shows map].

WC: This is all the places the Division went?

MA: Yes.

WC: That's a nice piece.

MA: I may have a copy of this that I can send you.

WC: I think we do have a copy of that in the collection. I seem to recall seeing one.

MA: I have some other stuff here. There's my shoulder emblem [shows patch], I don't know if you have that. This is my discharge paper by the way [shows discharge papers].

WC: Maybe if you don't mind we can make a copy of that for our records.

MA: Yeah, sure alright. This is what was in my hat, my helmet [shows broken strap]. The inside part of it that fell off. This is a picture of some of the fellas I was with [shows picture].

WC: Are you in that photo?

MA: Yes, I'm in the front way on your right on the end. I had hair then. Here's some of my friends that I served with, after the war on Germany [shows picture]. This is where I was in Nuremberg, with some other friends of mine that I went overseas with [shows picture]. Here's President Truman giving a Congressional Medal of Honor to some GI from the 42nd Division, who later we had to rescue in Hatten, the place I told you were some of my outfit was surrounded. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor [shows newspaper clipping]. I have some other pictures of guys in there. There's myself after the war on a Jeep in Germany [shows picture]. It's not a good picture but this shows the bombed out buildings in, I believe this was Würzburg or Nuremberg, I don't

recall where I took that picture or it was given to me [shows picture]. Of course Willie and Joe, you know they were the favorite characters.

WC: Cartoon characters?

MA: Yeah, I used to like to read them. I thought this was great and I kept some of them. And Ernie Pyle of course, he was killed while we were over.

WC: He was killed in the Pacific.

MA: He was primarily in the Mediterranean theater and European theater. Let me tell you an incident. On the day the atomic bomb was dropped we were in Hammelburg, getting ready to go to Suez Canal to go to Japan. General McAuliffe took over our division. General McAuliffe ran the outfit in Bastogne, if you remember, and he's the officer that said 'Nuts!' He came into our tent, and he indicated to us that we were on a mission to go to Japan and he just wanted to know how everybody felt about that. Nobody spoke up. But, I'm not one to not speak when I am asked to speak. I spoke up and said I wanted to know why it was that he, along with all the other officers, had thirty days in the United States before going to Japan and we weren't going to come home before going to Japan. He said, 'Well, I can't answer that' or words to that effect, 'You gotta ask the guys in Washington. But we're gonna go.' So that's the way we left it, I guess.

WC: Anything else?

MA: Here's some letters I wrote to my mother and father, they saved it.

WC: Maybe we can make some copies of that for your folder.

MA: I think that's about it.

WC: Thank you so much for your interview.