

Jerry Daniel Deluca
Veteran

Interviewed by
Hoosick Falls Historical Society

Interviewed on February 8, 2000

Q: Would you please state your name?

JD: Jerry Deluca

Q: Where do you live Jerry?

JD: I live on 95 High St in Hoosick Falls, NY

Q: Are you a native of Hoosick Falls?

JD: Yes, I was born here. I never left except for going to service and school

Q: What did you do before you went to the service?

JD: Well I graduated in June of 1943, and I went into service the August of 1943.

Q: So you went right into service after graduating?

JD: Right after

Q: Were you drafted or enlisted?

JD: No, I was drafted and I was supposed to go in July, but they had enough [men] going for July. They took me in August, and by the way I went in with Harry Mitchell and George Scott. There are also a few others I can't remember.

Q: Where did you go to basic?

JD: I went to Camp Glancing in Jacksonville, Florida. Spent basic there, and after basic they set us home. From there I went over to New Britain. We were there for quite a while, a funny thing happened. The first day I was coming into camp, there was an explosion. We could hear it, and it turns out that one of the fellows from our area had stepped on land mine. Then we knew we were close to something. So, we stayed there in New Britain for quite a bit.

Q: What were you assigned to?

JD: Anti-Tank outfit

Q: In Harry Mitchell's interview he said he left you on some island? A Goodenough island is where you separated?

JD: That's right. We separated. He went to New Guinea; I went to New Britain. We were in the Anti-Tank Company. We had three Anti-Tank platoons, and one infantry platoon. We stayed there, and we didn't have too much danger there.

Things were pretty well cleaned up there. From there, we went to the Philippine islands. We went to one of the islands of Negros, and then we settled where the battle was.

Q: How long of a period were you in the battle zone?

JD: We never had straight battle because we were Anti-Tank, but we did have places where we had our tank guns. We would fire out Anti-Tank guns and we didn't know where were firing them. We just fired where they told us to. The fighting was up ahead. We were very fortunate that we weren't in the infantry part of it.

Q: Would you tell us what the Anti-Tank unit does?

JD: The Anti-Tank gun usually is a thirty- five millimeter gun, and a heavier millimeter. I think it's a fifty-five or sixty. Normally they shoot at the tanks. They're for tank weapons. Also sometimes they were fired into the infantry fighting. We would fire above them and hit shells that would explode and do damage to the troops.

Q: If there was a tank coming, they would call on you guys to get up front and get after the tanks?

JD: Yes, that's what happened. As luck would have it, they didn't have too many tanks the places we were. We didn't have to battle too much with any of our tank guns. I don't think we used them more than five time when I was there for maybe a year and a half.

Q: You told us about the Anti-Tank. I read, I have a clip here, two clippings, one talks about the bronze star. Could you tell us a little about that incident?

JD: What happened was that we were sitting in our camp area and one of the Filipinos came running into our camp area and said, 'there's four unarmed japs up in our (b?) up there and they're pestering our people, the people were afraid and they asked us to come up there.' Well little did we know that it was a trap, and they set us up. So we went, and I grabbed this machine gun thinking it was all fun and play not realizing that there could be danger there. We went to the area, and as we started through where we thought these four unarmed japs were, the Japanese would pop up. There was about ten of us, and they'd pop up. As luck would have it, we were able to fire at them and only one fellow got hit. He got hit right next to me, and he laid down in a rice pad where a mound of dirt was there. I laid down next to him trying to comfort him. We could actually feel the dirt [motioned upwards toward top of head] on our helmets. We were pinned down and we couldn't move. Someone got out and went back to the company area. They came back with two heavy duty trucks with fifty millimeter guns on them. They fired over our heads, and while they were firing over our heads, myself and two other fellows were able to give him a little first aid and bring him back out into the area. That was one of the scrummages we had. I thought it was nothing. Just

go out there and capture those four unarmed japs. In all the time in the service, I never realized the danger of it until I got home. I thought, you know it could have happened to me. You're going out in cops and robbers or something. I'm sure that when the infantry people went in they knew it was life or death.

Q: Well, okay, then you went up through the Philippines.

JD: We were there uh

Q: Leyte was the last place. (6:29)

JD: Yes, Leyte was the last place. Luzon, we had another scrimmage there where we [bid awaked?] in an area and they called it lucky thirteen I guess. What happened is that we [bid awaked] that night, and unbeknownst to us, it had previously been used by the Japanese.

It was their [bid awake] area and they knew the whole area. They were just waiting for us, and at night they came and they infiltrated into our area. Some in between because really weren't set up for anything. All night long they would throw hand grenades into our area. As luck would have it, we didn't lose anyone and nobody got wounded. The next day they did find some Japanese that were dead there.

Q: Well that was that clipping about Friday the thirteenth that I read?

JD: Yes

Q: Then you moved up into Luzon?

JD: Luzon, and from there into Leyte. Well we finished Luzon last, and there the war was just about over. They were doing some peaceful patrolling and making sure that, the uh. There were problems there after the Japanese left because there was a lot of hard feelings among the people. The people tried to single out and kill those that catered to the Japanese. We tried to work in as a buffer zone to help protect the people that were being sought out. We spent quite a bit of time there. The war was over. The time the war was over, there was the matter of getting us back home.

Q: Yes, that was in August of 1945 that the war was over.

JD: Yes, August of 1945. There was just the matter of that they went by points. Those that had the highest points left early. So after the sergeants and supply sergeants and all the people with stripes would usually have more point, so they would go home. Then they would ask you what you would like to be. For some reason I put down that I wanted to be a supply sergeant. Next thing you know I got to be a supply sergeant because they were trying to fill up the positions.

Q: At this time, you were in?

JD: Luzon. So that was about it.

Q: You something about that you went on from there to? Where did you go from Luzon?

JD: We went to South Korea. After the war was over and we went to South Korea there was nothing, no danger or fighting there. We just set up there, you know they took, the United States, we took over that. Then we got into a bigger mess afterwards. While I was in service, my brother Joe was in Caledonia. Worked in PX. He had quite a job there, and every two weeks he would send me a care package. He would always send me a care package. He would also send them to my brother Tony who was in Europe.

Q: Your brother Tony was in Europe? So, how many Deluca's were there?

JD: There were four of us acting. Albert went in last.

Q: Yes, Albert was in the Korean War. I have met him, I've interviewed him. So there were three of you in the WWII? Two in the pacific, and one in Europe?

JD: Yes. Joe is faithful. While in Luzon, I met [Mydle?] Huffman. He was assigned a PT boat and I just happened to run into him on the street there and he took me back to his PT boat. [A PT boat (short for *Patrol Torpedo boat*) was a torpedo-armed fast attack craft used by the United States Navy in World War II] He made me a frost, a chocolate frost which was something we had never had. He was telling me that they had everything that they needed to eat. Whatever they wanted, and that was quite a nice thing. Then we came back to camp, when we were I don't know, getting ahead.

Q: You left South Korea, and you came back to the states?

JD: Yes, came back to the states. When we came back to that states we came through Fort Lot in Washington. I ran into Joe Cullen, who was over there. Just by accident, looking around and there's Joe Cullen. I also ran into my brother Joe there because he was just two points ahead of me and he was in his way home.

Q: You were both getting discharged?

JD: We were both getting discharged.

Q: When did you get discharged?

JD: We got discharged in December, 1945. Just before Christmas. Do you remember the song they were playing, "I'll be home for Christmas?" I made it two days before.

Q: Alright so you came back to Hoosick Falls. What did you do for a living after you came back?

JD: Well, I went to Siena Knights. I just went there for a semester because I wasn't gaining anything. I was losing ground, and I felt that I couldn't stay there because it would be a loss at the time. So I went to Troy Business, and I took up

book keeping the county. I graduated from there. It was a two-and-a-half-year course. From there, I didn't find a job so I went over to Tannery. I worked over there for a few months. Then I went to go work for the Al Garage. Then I ended up taking the civil service test for the post office, and as luck would have it I was called in. I went to work for the post office. I worked there for forty years.

Q: You ended up the head man?

JD: Well, yes it was another lucky break. I was made postmaster and everything seemed to just fall pretty good for me.

Q: Well that was the story of your life. That gave us a good picture of it. Is there anything you would like to say about the service or about Hoosick Falls?

JD: No, but I tell you, Hoosick Falls to me is the place to be. I've lived here all my life, and enjoy the people and everything about it.

JD: Would you be interested in this? [motioning to object on floor]

Q: Yes, please talk about that.

JD: [picks up sheet of paper with advertisement on front with Asian writing on both sides.]

JD: This was dropped by the American pilots. [the sheet reads: "Attention American Soldiers! I Cease Resistance: This leaflet guarantees humane treatment to any Japanese desiring to cease resistance. Take him immediately to your nearest commissioned officer." – By Direction of the Commander in Chief] They were telling that we were there, and we were going to help them. If they wanted to surrender, all they had to do was hand it to one of us.

Q: Did you get people?

JD: No, we didn't but some of the others did. Quite a few of them [the Japanese] surrendered.