

Anthony "Tony" J. Dina
U.S. Army Air Corps, Corporal
World War II, Europe

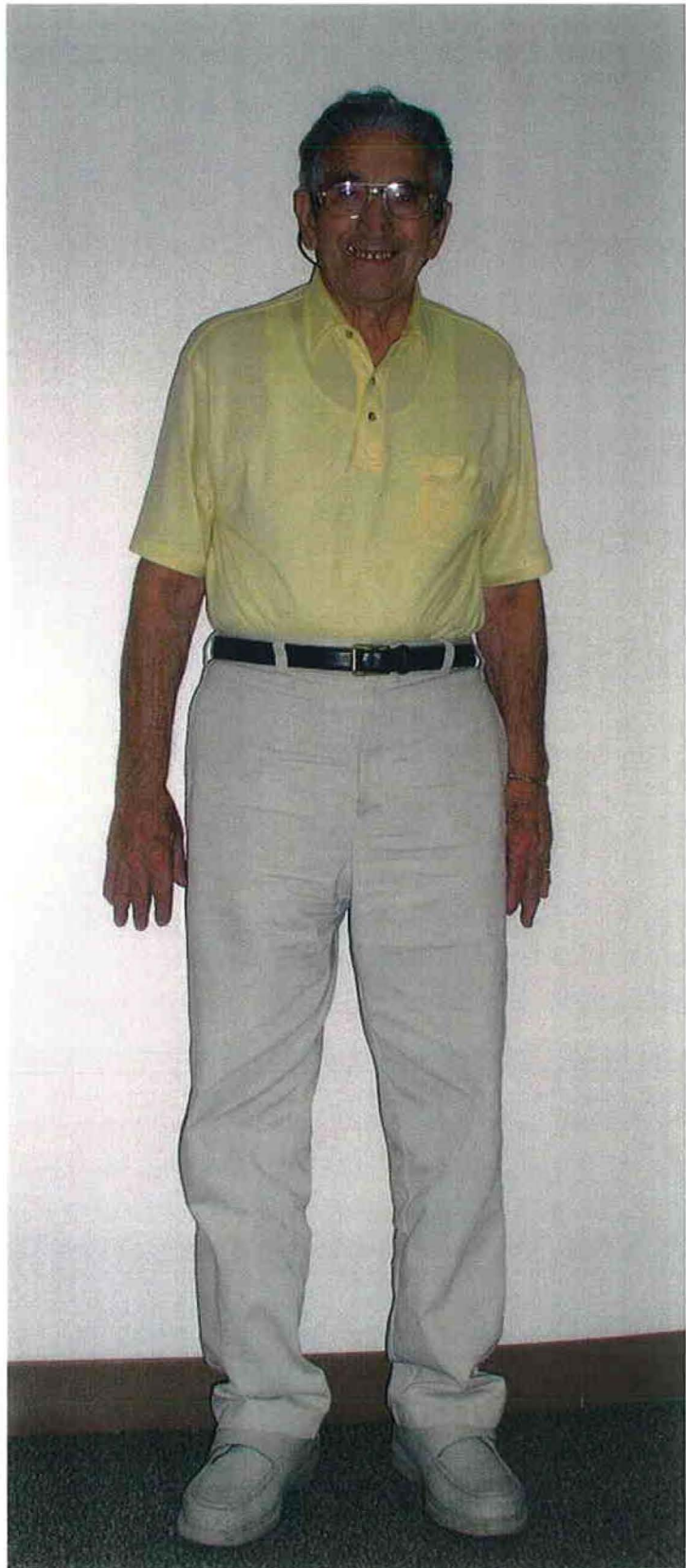


Anthony J. Dina

Veterans
History
Project
Transcript

**Interview conducted
June 14, 2005**

Niles Public Library
Niles Public Library District
Niles, Illinois



Niles Public Library District
Veteran's History Project Transcript

Veteran: Anthony J. Dina

Rank: Corporal

Branch of Service: U.S. Army Air Corps

Theater: Europe

Interview Date: June 14, 2005

Place: Niles Public Library, Computer Room

Equipment: Panasonic Standard Cassette Transcriber

Interviewer: Neil O'Shea

Transcribers: Ann Testa and Cindy Olive

This Veterans History Project interview is being conducted on Tuesday, June 14, 2005, at the Niles Public Library in Niles, IL. Today is appropriately Flag Day and a most apt date on which to interview a veteran of World War II. My name is Neil O'Shea and I am speaking with Anthony Dina. Mr. Dina is going to be assisted during this interview by his wife Phyllis, and Anthony and Phyllis have prepared a statement for the Veterans History Project which Mr. Dina is now going to read into the record. Over to you, Tony.

Anthony: It's time for the beginning? Okay. My name is Anthony J. Dina and I live at 7450 Waukegan Rd., Niles, Illinois. Previously I lived in the Logan Square area in Chicago. Prior to that, I lived at 2217 N. Seminary Ave., Chicago, Illinois. My wife is assisting me with this report.

Before joining the service, I worked for the Chicago Mailers Union. I was living on Seminary Avenue in Chicago with my parents as most of us did in those days.

17 - Enlisting in the Army Air Corps

I enlisted in the Army Air Corps in January, 1942, after a sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. I chose Air Corps because that was my preference. My father told me I had a high draft number, I should wait to be drafted. But I chose to enlist.

I will never forget the day of my induction. My father came with me to the induction center in Chicago and didn't want to go home until I said, "Pa, you have to go home now." I was sent to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri and after one week my father and 14-year old sister came to visit me. They found me peeling a mountain of potatoes. Lucky me, I got out of that detail.

From Jefferson Barracks I went to Kentucky, Jackson, Mississippi, and then Columbia, South Carolina for one year. In 1943, we sailed from Camp Kilmer, NJ. We didn't know where we were going, but we knew we were dodging German boats. We finally arrived in Casablanca, Africa and found we were in the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign.

28 - Serving in North Africa and Europe

I was an Armorer on the B-25 bomber. We invaded Casablanca, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Rome, Arno, North Apennines, Po Valley, & Southern France. I was lucky to have lived through all that. There were many casualties. At one time, I heard explosions and started

running, hit the ground & covered my neck, but before I knew it, I had received shrapnel in my buttocks.

We slept on the ground in tents outdoors. The food was not like “mamma used to make.” There were times we traded cigarettes & candy for eggs. One family in Sicily made a few of us soldiers a spaghetti dinner after we bought the food. (I could talk Italian to them.)

38 – Bob Hope and Axis Sally

We enjoyed Bob Hope’s Christmas Shows and other entertainers...listened to the radio and ‘Axis Sally’. Axis Sally, she was an American, and we called her Axis Sally. We played some softball when everything was quiet. Holidays were sad. I was fortunate to visit my Italian grandparents during the invasion of Sicily. When we reached Rome, many of us soldiers went to the Vatican and received a blessing from Pope Pius. I wrote to my parents regularly and received v-mail sporadically.

War was over with Germany in March 1945. In August 1945, we were on a ship coming home to America when we heard Japan had surrendered. If Japan hadn’t surrendered, we would have been sent to the South Pacific.

49 - Civilian life and marriage

I was discharged September 23, 1945 and soon met my lifelong partner, Phyllis. We have been married 58 years and are blessed to have four devoted children and nine grandchildren. We have attended many 57th Bomb Wing Reunions with many of my army buddies who I still correspond with at Christmas. Many of my friends have passed away. So I belong to the VFW Post #3579 in Park Ridge, Illinois, but I am no longer active due to Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease which slows me down. That’s all.

Phyllis: We missed a lot of words and things. I don’t know if it’s... is it acceptable?

61 – Armorer’s duties

Oh, I think so. I think that was a very concise statement. You were an Armorer on a B-25 bomber. What does the Armorer do?

Anthony: I was loading the bombs.

You load the bombs. So did your, so your unit, your air unit had to support the advance of the infantry on the ground kind of?

Phyllis: So, did your planes support the infantry that was on the ground?

Anthony: I was assigned to that...

Phyllis: I mean your planes. Where did your planes go? In front of the infantry, is that what you mean?

Anthony: Yeah.

Phyllis: Where were your planes headed? When they were loaded, they took off, where did they go?

Anthony: Well, we didn't know. We didn't know where we were going. We didn't know where we were going to land. We landed at the Pacific.

Phyllis: You didn't know where the planes were going when they took off from the air bases over there in Africa.

Anthony: Yeah, we weren't told. But when we got there, then we knew.

Phyllis: But I'm talking about when you loaded the planes, once you were there. You loaded the planes. Where did the planes go when they took off? Were they with the infantry?

Anthony: No, we would catch up with them. They... we don't know where they went. We loaded the planes and we took off...we had to be there in the area there.

So they would assign targets to the group and then you'd hit them and then--You were assigned bombing targets probably, or something.

Phyllis: The planes were assigned bombing targets. The captains'--

Anthony: Yeah. Oh, Yeah.

Phyllis: He always says how the formation would be so pretty taking off, but coming back, there was always maybe two or one missing, you know how they go in threes.

I think I was reading recently that the fighting in Italy was very, very difficult and that maybe it hasn't gotten as much coverage as it should because it was hard going. And Monte Cassino was some famous battle and ...

Phyllis: Well, yeah, Tony talks about some battles. What was it that you said....

Anthony: Kasserine Pass that was the beginning.

Phyllis: That was the beginning 'cause if they hadn't held the line... we'd

Anthony: We'd all be back in the ocean.

Kasserine Pass, was that in Sicily?

Anthony: Kasserine Pass.

Phyllis: Was that in Africa or Sicily?

Anthony: North Africa. We didn't get to Sicily... that was afterwards. Invaded Sicily. When we were in Sicily, my grandpa said, "So this is my grandson, got his uniform on."

My goodness.

Anthony: And my cousins...

Phyllis: And Italy hadn't capitulated yet.

Anthony: My cousins were prisoners of war. And I told my aunt and uncle, we treat them good, the door was open for them, but I still had to go on. But we treated them good, the soldiers. Fact, I think we had some of them on the payroll.

Do you know what town that was in Sicily? The grandparents'--?

Phyllis: It was Palermo.

Oh, Palermo.

Anthony: We invaded Palermo and then we went to...I made my way to where my grandparents lived.

Phyllis: They were in a village right outside of Palermo.

I wonder what your dad said, or your mom. That was really quite a story.

Anthony: I told my father he had to go home now.

Phyllis: This was when you were in the States, he wasn't in Sicily. But he knew the captain, was it? And, so, how all the letters all had to be censored. Well, this captain didn't censor his mail that was going to your folks, wasn't that it? That captain, I forgot what his name was, he didn't censor your mail that went to your folks. You got to send things to your folks.

Anthony: Yeah. I don't want them to be looking at my mail.

Phyllis: Well, I mean--

Anthony: I know, but I ...they didn't.

Phyllis: I forget who that captain was that you were friends with. That you could write letters to your folks, and they didn't cut out a lot of the stuff.

Anthony: No, they didn't cut out nothing. No.

Phyllis: But they should have, maybe.

I think they were particular about people writing home and telling them where the troops were and where they were going next. So, Tony, you got a lot of medals over there, right?

112 - Tony's medals

Anthony: I forget.

Phyllis: Well, you know what you got, don't you remember? Well, I mean all those.

Is that a Silver Star?

Phyllis: Uh-huh.

That's pretty good, isn't it?

Phyllis: I think so. You should have worn your campaign hat so he could have seen. Yeah, he's got quite a few ribbons. You know, some of them, I guess, were considered smaller battles. There's a few.

Maybe you can read these into the record.

Phyllis: The European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with one Silver and two Bronze Battle Stars. One service stripe, a good conduct medal, five overseas service bars; battles were Tunisia, Sicily, Naples, Foggia, Rome, Arno, North Appenines, Po Valley, and Southern France.

Wow.

Phyllis: Yeah, so they really covered a lot of territory.

Anthony: A lot of people fell and we kept walking....

Did you make a complete recovery from the shrapnel injury?

Phyllis: Did you make a complete recovery from the shrapnel?

Anthony: Yeah. I had a lot of visitors and pretty nurses.

Phyllis: And when he was in the hospital, he says all the captains, and everybody, came to see the nurses. They came to see him, but it was really the nurses.

Anthony: They came to see the nurses.

Was that in Italy or...

Phyllis: Where were you for the hospital, was that in Sicily or Italy?

Anthony: Sicily, Palermo, It's all the same.

Phyllis: The hospital was in Sicily?

Anthony: We went to the GI hospital. My grandpa. He's an Italian. He says, "This is my grandson."

Phyllis: And his grandma said, "First you come and bomb me, and now you come and visit me."

Tough lady! Did you go back and visit her after the war?

Phyllis: She was gone, but we did go back.... On our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. A lot of his cousins, and everything, they were very happy to see him. They had been just little guys when he was over there.

So--

Anthony: Well, you couldn't understand Italian, so my Uncle Mike says, "Why don't you teach her how to speak Italian?" But they took care of my wife, I tell you. Everybody said, "That's Tony's wife."

Phyllis: We went Sweden first on our twenty-fifth.

Anthony: But we got there.

Phyllis: Yeah. So, in the Danes--Swedish and Danish. My mother came from Sweden. My father was born in this country, but his parents came from Denmark.

Anthony: We went into France, and we got into Sicily, too, and Germany.

Phyllis: Yeah, I mean, those countries are so close there. I didn't realize that.

Oh, right.

Phyllis: France almost butted up against Italy, or something, there. I thought Spain was there right below France, but I mean--

Anthony: I used to call them frogs. Didn't like that -- "Me no frog!" Ah, poor guys.

My cousins were prisoners. We were fighting against my cousins-- Italian Army. I said, well, if we got them as prisoners we'd treat them good, but if the English get them or if the others get them, we're not responsible, but we treated them good. The war was over--

Yeah. So, you must have been glad to get back home to Chicago.

Anthony: Oh, my father was glad. He came with me to Fort Dix and I says, "Pa, you've got to go home, now." You know, he didn't want

Phyllis: He didn't go to Fort Dix.

Anthony: No. No.

Phyllis: No. Were you glad when you got home to Chicago after the war was over?

Anthony: Oh, after the war.

Phyllis: Yeah.

Anthony: Yeah, well, sure, I was glad.

Phyllis: Yeah.

But you had been away for three years.

Phyllis: Yeah. He was in a long time.

Anthony: My grandpa, my grandfather in Italy, we had a welcome with them. I had an American uniform on and he's saying in Italian, "This is my grandson, my grandson," and my cousins were prisoners of war. I was fighting against my cousins.

Yeah.

Anthony: And then I told them the war was over. We treated them good.

Phyllis: Ok. You said that already.

Anthony: Yeah. Yeah.

165 - Adjusting to civilian life

So did you have any difficulty adjusting to life back in peacetime in Chicago? Was it hard to get used to not being in the army? Were you just so happy to get home?

Phyllis: When you came back from after the war, was it hard to get back in the swing of things or did you get a job right away, or what?

Anthony: No, I didn't. I just went along with the flow, you know. I knew how to get a job. My father he wanted me to --I don't know what he wanted me to do. I says--

Phyllis: Your uncle wanted you to join the police force.

Anthony: Yeah.

Phyllis: Your father didn't want that. He wanted him to take the exam for the post office. So he retired from the Postal Service in 1972. He had fifty-five years of service.

Wow.

Phyllis: With his service, was it fifty-five years? It wasn't fifty-five years of service. Let's see. You went in in '45, but what was it? Twenty-five years of service when you retired from the post office in 1955, how long had you worked for the post office?

Anthony: About thirty years.

Phyllis: Oh.

Anthony: Easy. Yeah, that was the only job. I didn't want nothing else.

Phyllis: Yeah, that's right. That—Yes, it would have been 1942 because he got credit for his years in Service because he retired in '72.

So did you ever see Tony in uniform? Did--

Phyllis: No.

Did it make a good impression upon you?

Phyllis: No. No.

No.

Phyllis: Just in pictures.

Yeah.

Phyllis: And we met right after he came out of Service. September, he was out, discharged in September, and we met in September of '45.

Anthony: My father and mother-- my father and my uncle, they said, "Watch her!" They said, "Watch her."

Phyllis: Well, I took Catechism in the Catholic Church and his uncle-- the church that I was going to was in the old neighborhood, the old Italian neighborhood, I don't know if you

Taylor

Phyllis: Around Cabrini-Green.

Oh, yes. Yes.

Phyllis: Yeah. So his aunt and uncle lived there, and the uncle would take me to and from, and get me on the streetcar, because, like I told you, I'm from Iowa, you know, and I didn't know much about the city, but they were-- how come you've got so many computers in here?

That's another interview.

Phyllis: Oh.

Well, this interview is taking place in our computer room

Phyllis: Oh

and it's always it took me awhile to figure out where to have the interviews, because we had them in one room, but everybody could see in, and it was kind of noisy. And then I had it in a bigger room, but there was too much competition with other departments for the use of the room. And then the lady that's on the team here, on the Veterans History Project team, Kate Wolicki, Kate said, "Neil, you should use the computer room because it's quieter in there, and it's near the front door, and you can see the people when they come in." So, this is the nicest space that we have that's usually available, and it has a good wall for taking pictures. I'm glad you asked that, because I should have mentioned that at the beginning of the interview. They like you to say where the interview is taking place. Thanks. Good thing you're here, Phyllis.

Phyllis: I just realized-- I mean, look at all these computers!

Yeah, and, of course, all of this computer technology is going to help us with this history project because that picture that I took can be digitized and shown on a computer. And then we can send that to the Library of Congress in Washington. And then, theoretically, it's supposed to work out that everybody-- they've got maybe thousands upon thousands of interviews --but they're all going to wind up on the Internet so people can, you know, have like a living memory on the Internet. It's all because of, you know, computers and technologies. That's one nice thing about the computers.

Phyllis: Sure. Sure.

So, it's sort of appropriate that we're using this as an interview room today.

Phyllis: Yeah, I tell you, computers are something.

Changing the world. Yeah.

Phyllis: Yeah. Yeah.

Well I think we've --Tony, when you were—I'm just trying to think if we've got all the important points covered for the interview. What was the highest rank you attained in the

222 – Promotions difficult

Anthony: Corporal

You were Corporal--

Anthony: Yeah.

in the Army Air Corps.

Phyllis: He always kind of resented that.

Anthony: Yeah, because a lot of these guys came from the States and they already had rank, see, in for the war.

Phyllis: And there was no room for him to move up because they already had sergeants and so forth.

Yeah, I was interviewing one vet and he said he was really lucky because he was only a private first class, but they wanted him because he could type. And then the master sergeant would be sent home. Then he'd have to move up to tech sergeant, then some other sergeant, and he got a couple of promotions that way.

Phyllis: Oh, really?

Completely different situation from Tony, maybe.

Phyllis: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. But, I mean, most all the guys that went over, I mean, they went over right-- they were some of the first ones to land in Africa. And, in fact, his outfit is the 379th. From then on, there was the 380th, the 429th, the 489th, but they were all groups that would come afterward. But here these guys that were coming had already attained --

stateside rank.

Phyllis: Yeah. Yeah. Sergeant and so forth, and they didn't move these other guys, the old-timers.

235 - reunions

The 57th Bomb Wing Reunions, are they in Chicago, or?

Phyllis: No, they're all over. Different—we've been to Orlando, we've been to Boston, we've been to Philadelphia. We've been to, oh, South Carolina. We've been to Colorado. They've had them in Phoenix. We've missed some, you know. We've been missing some the last few years. But we might go this year, because it's in Saint Louis.

Not too far.

Phyllis: Yeah, and there were about twelve guys that he palled around with when he was in Service. They and their wives, we all used to have such a good time when we'd go to these reunions. We'd be together, and, now, like I said, a lot of them are gone, and a lot of them just don't —can't make it anymore, because they're like Tony.

Eighty-seven, Tony is eighty-seven.

That's wonderful.

Phyllis: Yeah, and

Anthony: Did Grippo die?

Phyllis: Yes and his best buddy passed away.

Anthony: Grippo.

Phyllis: Grippo.

Neil: Was he Italian?

Phyllis: Yes, a little bit.

Anthony: Yeah.

Phyllis: Emil. Nicest guy you'd ever want to meet. Tony ran into him, where was it? In the toilet in-- was it in the States, or was it?

Anthony: In the States.

Phyllis: In the States.

Anthony: Yeah. He said, "Where you from?" I said, "Where you from?" He was South Side. I was North Side.

Phyllis: And then they

Anthony: We met after the war.

Phyllis: And Tony stood up for his wedding. And Tony stood up for a couple of guys in the Service.

So was Tony an Armorer, also, in the

Phyllis: Emil, you mean.

Emil. Sorry, yes.

Phyllis: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Yeah.

Phyllis: Yeah....

Was there one Armorer per plane or?

Phyllis: How did that work? Was there one Armorer per plane or were there a few Armorers putting the bombs on?

Anthony: No, there were two of us. I think there were two. Well, we had bombers, and then we had other guys on the-- take part of the other plane. We took care of the B-25s, see, but there were

Phyllis: Well, they were all B-25s, weren't they?

Anthony: No. No.

Phyllis: Oh, no?

Anthony: No, they had big

Phyllis: B-24s.

Anthony: Yeah.

Phyllis: I thought they were all in England.

Anthony: Oh, England had a different-- they call them the Limeys.

Phyllis: Yeah, but I know. Herb Martin came out of England. He was based in England.

Anthony: Oh, Martin? Martin?

Phyllis: Herb Martin.

Anthony: No, he--

Phyllis: His base was in England. He was a pilot.

Anthony: Yeah, but he wasn't in the Army Air Corps.

Phyllis: He wasn't in the Air Corps--

Anthony: He --you're talking about-- who are you talking about now?

Phyllis: Herb

Anthony: Martin.

Phyllis: Yeah.

Anthony: Yeah. He was in the Pacific.

Phyllis: No, he wasn't. He was over the Ploesti Raids ?

Anthony: Yeah, that's in the north. That's where we were.

Phyllis: I know. But he came out of England. His plane, wasn't it--

Anthony: Yeah. But we weren't together all the time.

Phyllis: No, I know that. That's what I'm trying to say. He flew a B-24. Did you have B-24s and B-25s on your base?

Anthony: No, we did not. No.

Phyllis: What did you have?

Anthony: B-19s, B

Phyllis: 25s.

Anthony: B-25s. Yeah, B-25s.

Phyllis: Yeah, he gets a little confused.

Anthony: I was an Armorer on a B-25.

Phyllis: Yeah. How many guys were there on one plane to load bombs, was it just one or was it-

Anthony: No, two of us.

Phyllis: Ok.

Anthony: And then had people on the front of the outfit.

How long would it take to load a plane?

Phyllis: How long would it take to load a plane?

Anthony: Oh, I never figured it out. I'd just get it loaded, you know. It didn't take long. They-- we had stuff to lift them up. We used to lift them up by--

Yeah

Anthony: get them by the nose and pick them up like that.

Would there be like fifty bombs a plane?

Anthony: Well it was a big bomb. In the B-17s, they were bigger bombs. Now, the bombs we had, it was easy for, you know, two guys. We had stuff to roll them up. We did it by hand the easy way.

Strong man, huh?

Phyllis: In those days.

Anthony: Well, we came out of a neighborhood in Chicago. You had to fight your way to school and fight your way back

Phyllis: He always says he would fight with one guy, and then his brother would be waiting for him on the way back, but that was kind of

Anthony: We paid a price

Phyllis: a rough area, that Italian neighborhood.

Anthony: I wasn't born with these marks. But they paid a price. They got their share, too. You know, my father, he came with me to Saint Louis. I says, "Pa, you gotta go home now."

Phyllis: No, he came to visit you in Saint Louis.

Anthony: Yeah, but I says he

Phyllis: but he was with you in Chicago.

Anthony: Yeah, I know that, but

Phyllis: when you were inducted.

Anthony: And I told Pop, "You gotta go home now."

Phyllis: Yeah.

Anthony: He didn't want to send me, and my brother went in--

What branch of Service did your brother?

Anthony: and my brother went in the Air Force. He went in the

Phyllis: the Navy.

Anthony: the Navy, yeah.

Phyllis: Wasn't he in the Merchant Marine?

Anthony: I told him—"Why did you enlist?" He said, "Why did you?" So, that ended it.

No we were different....

Phyllis: He was in the Merchant Marine, wasn't it?

Anthony: Yeah.

Phyllis: Yeah, that

North Atlantic or?

Phyllis: I think it was North Atlantic. Wasn't he North Atlantic and?

Anthony: No. We all came out of the same place. We go in different outfits.

Phyllis: Did he go to the Pacific, too, your brother?

Anthony: I don't remember. I don't remember now. Frank--

Phyllis: They thought maybe they would meet sometime in Italy, but they never did, because Frank did some landing, or something, but, somehow, they didn't get there at the same time.

Did -Frank, was he discharged about the same time?

Phyllis: I think so. Frank was discharged about the same time?

Anthony: Yeah.

Phyllis: Yeah, when the war was over, you know, and then because, at that time, you know, then Japan surrendered and it was all over.

Those were the days.

Phyllis: Yeah.

Anthony: I said, "Why did you enlist?" He said, "Why did you?"

Phyllis: Yeah.

Anthony: That ended that conversation.

Phyllis: Yeah, well, that's about it, I guess. I don't know.

The-- is there anything else you want to say for the record, Tony?

Phyllis: Is there anything else you want to say for the record?

Anthony: Well, I don't-- what I said so far.

Oh, you said a lot. We've--

Phyllis: Anything that stands out in your mind that you would like to tell about your Army life?

Anthony: Well, women.

Phyllis: No, you don't need to say that.

Anthony: No. When-- I got to my cousins that were in the Italian army and I told them if we got them as prisoners, we'd treat them good. But if they were picked up by the Germans-- or the French, you know, we're together but they're treated differently. But we had, I think, we had people in the payroll when I was out there.

Phyllis: Well, you told him that already. I'm wondering if there is anything else that you can remember about your days in the Army.

Anthony: Well, the only-- I think I can remember is when I was at my grandparents, and I was at my grandparents--

Yeah. That sticks out in your mind.

Phyllis: Yeah, that's probably the biggest thing, you know.

That's actually kind of amazing to think that the—you're going back to the home country

Phyllis: I know. But, you know, a lot of the German boys too--

The same thing. They were all fighting as Americans.

Phyllis: Yes, right.

Amazing.

Phyllis: Yes, right, and, so, they were fighting against probably some of their relatives too. It's not like Iraq. I mean, they're not very many

No.

Phyllis: Iraqis, probably, in the U.S. Army, you know.

Not yet.

Phyllis: No. They're not being drafted. So, it's an all-, you might say, volunteer army, and I'm sure they're happy, if they are here, to be here and not over there fighting for Iraq.

Yeah. Yeah.

Anthony: I tell you, when we had Italian prisoners, we treated them good, though. We didn't abuse them, but the Germans--

363 – American POW experience in Italy

Phyllis: This one fellow, I don't know if this is on or not. I don't care if it is on, but he was at one of the reunions. And he had been shot. He was a pilot. His plane was shot down and so he and his crew, I guess, bailed out. And, in fact, a lot of the people at the reunion didn't even know that he was saved. I mean, they hadn't heard from him. They didn't know if he was alive or dead. Well, anyway, he had been picked up by Italians. I don't know if it was the police or the Army, or what. But he said, the first night, they gave them a nice dinner. They were prisoners, American prisoners. These Italians gave them a nice dinner and, then, the next night, I don't know if it was another dinner, or not, but they even gave them some wine. And then when this guy was leading them into the cell or wherever they were going to be kept, he says, "I used to live in America," and, "Be careful because their room is bugged." And this guy read, I forget how many volumes of books. I think he had said something like two thousand. And he was a Rhodes Scholar when he came out of the Service. Wasn't that something?

That is something.

Phyllis: Yeah.

Yeah. Thank you for sharing that.

Phyllis: Yeah.

Yeah.

Phyllis: Yeah, that was—I'll never forget that. I thought that was really so—They, I guess, the Italians didn't treat them too badly.

Anthony: Huh?

Phyllis: I say, I guess the Italian Army didn't treat their prisoners too badly either, because this one guy had said he had read so many books while he was prisoner. I don't know how he even had access to books.

Anthony: Well, the American veterans, they took care of-- they didn't

Phyllis: Yeah, I know.

Anthony: The English, I don't think the English treated them good, though.

Phyllis: Oh, well, I don't know.

Anthony: We didn't treat the English good either.

Phyllis: Well, yeah, you were alright with the English. They were your allies.

Anthony: Well, I said, "Limey," and the guy said, "I'm no Limey. I'm no Limey, Yank!"

Phyllis: Well.

Well, that might be a nice point with which to conclude the interview. That's a nice story about the Italians looking after the

Phyllis: Uh-huh.

American flyer who was shot down.

Phyllis: Yes. Uh-huh.

So, thank you. Thanks, Tony. Thanks, Phyllis, and if we think of anything more that we want to add to the record, we can do that. We can just turn on the tape recorder because we still have room on the tape.

Phyllis: I see. Uh-huh.

But thank you for coming in and testifying, as it were, to your place in history.

Phyllis: Okay.

Thank you very much.

Phyllis: Alright, sure.

~ ~ ~

Note: Tony's typed statement which served as a basis for the interview is appended on the following pages. He and his wife, Phyllis, prepared it for the interview.

My name is Anthony J. Dina and I live at 7450 Waukegan Rd., Niles, Illinois. Previously I lived in the Logan Square area in Chicago. Prior to that I lived at 2217 N. Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. My wife is assisting me with this report.

Before joining the service, I worked for the Chicago Mailers Union. I was living on Seminary Avenue in Chicago with my parents as most of us did in those days.

I enlisted in the Army Air Corps in January, 1942 after the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. I chose the Air Corps because that was my preference. My father told me that I had a high draft number and I should wait to be drafted. But I chose to enlist.

I will never forget the day of my induction. My father came with me to the induction center in Chicago and didn't want to go home until I said "Pa, you have to go home now". I was sent to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri and after one week my father and 14-year old sister came to visit me. They found me peeling a mountain of potatoes. Lucky for me, I got out of that detail.

From Jefferson Barracks I went to Kentucky, Jackson, Mississippi and then Columbia, S.Car. for one year. In Jan. 1943 we sailed from Camp Kilmor, NJ overseas. We didn't know where we were going but we knew we were dodging German U-boats. We finally arrived in Casablanca, Africa and found we were in the European-African Middle Eastern Campaign.

I was an Armorer on the B-25 bomber. We invaded Casablanca, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Rome, Arno, No. Appenines, Po Valley & Southern France. I was lucky to live through all of that. There were many casualties. At one time, I heard explosions and I started running, hit the ground & covered my neck but before I knew it, I had received shrapnel in my buttocks.

We slept on the ground in tents outdoors. The food was not like 'mamma used to make'. There were times we traded cigarettes & candy for eggs. One family in Sicily made a few of us soldiers a spaghetti dinner after we bought the food. (I could talk Italian to them.)

We enjoyed Bob Hope's Christmas Shows and other entertainers.....listened to the radio and 'Axis Sally'. We played some softball when everything was quiet. Holidays were sad. I was fortunate to visit my Italian Grandparents during the invasion of Sicily. When we reached Rome, many of us soldiers went to the Vatican and received a blessing from Pope Pius. I wrote to my parents regularly and received v-mail sporadically.

War was over with Germany in March 1945. In August 1945 we were on a ship coming to America when we heard Japan had surrendered. If Japan hadn't surrendered, we would have been sent to the South Pacific.

I was discharged September 23, 1945 and soon met my lifelong partner, Phyllis. We have been married 58 years and are blessed to have four devoted children and nine grandchildren. We have attended many 57th Bomb Wing Reunions with many of my

army buddies who I still correspond with at Christmas. Many of my friends have passed on. I belong to the VFW Post #3579 in Park Ridge, Illinois but I am no longer active due to Alzheimers & Parkinsons which slows me down.