

**Samuel Rocco Dinova
Veteran**

**Michael Russert
Interviewer
Wayne Clarke
Videographer**

**Interviewed on January 7, 2003
Troy, New York**

MR: This is an interview with Samuel Dinova, a home interview, 186 North Lake Avenue, Troy, New York, January 7, 2003, approximately 11:20 A.M. The interviewers are Michael Russert and Wayne Clark. Could you tell me your full name, your date of birth and place of birth, please?

SRD: Samuel R. Dinova, 186 North Lake Avenue, February 18, 1922, Troy.

MR: What was your education prior to entering military service?

SRD: I went to the eighth grade and I stopped. I didn't graduate because I just didn't want to go to school. I went out to Idaho, I was fifteen years old. I went in the CC camp. You've heard of CC camps?

WC: Civilian conservation?

SRD: I was out in Idaho. I had to be seventeen, but I lied about my age.

MR: What kind of work did you do out there?

SRD: We chopped trees, built roads, fought forest fires.

MR: How long were you out there doing that?

SRD: I was out six months.

MR: Where were you and what do you remember about hearing the news of Pearl Harbor?

SRD: I was home. I was in the Army I went in the Army October 15, 1940. We left at Troy Armory. We walked all the way down to Federal Street, boarded the train at the Troy Depot. We lined up, the whole first battalion, we loaded on the train and we were headed for Fort McClellan, Alabama.

MR: Did you enlist?

SRD: I enlisted.

MR: Why did you select the Army?

SRD: Well, I had to be twenty-one. I wasn't quite eighteen. I had to be twenty-one to get drafted. My friends were going in the Army, and they were twenty-one. They were going to be twenty-one or they were twenty-one. So, they went up to the National Guards—the National Guards, before it was federalized. So, then when I joined it, October 5th, the government federalized it, and that's why I went in.

MR: So, you went to Alabama?

SRD: Right.

MR: Why don't you tell us about your basic training there?

SRD: When we first got there—our Captain said when we left the Troy Armory, “Bring your golf sticks, your swimming thing, we're going for a year's vacation.” We wound up there; we wound up way the hell out of the camp, up in—they call it the old area—it was up in the hills and we had to put tents up, the [unclear] tents. That's where we stayed—in there for, geez, how long was I in there—I was in there for almost a year. A year, then we went on maneuvers. We were there in the tents. We were doing our basic training, going out in the field and we had wooden sticks for mortars. We did have 1918 water-cooled machine guns. We did have them. We fired them; we fired them at a target being pulled by a truck on a sort of a rail; a big square target that was way out in the front, you know, he was pulling it and we were firing at the target. We went out and did our basic training. That was October. Then that summer of '41 we did our regular training—every day. Then, June of '41 we went to Tennessee maneuvers. We got back. Does that sound right?

MR: Yes. How long did those maneuvers last?

SRD: I was on maneuvers. Tennessee didn't last too long because I came home on a furlough that summer, but on the Tennessee maneuvers, I don't know if it was for a month or more. We came home and I went on a furlough, and after we got back we were on the Louisiana-Arkansas maneuvers—that lasted quite a while. When we got back in the fall, the fall of 1941, I think we got there after the maneuvers—it was the end of September '41, and they called me in the office, and they told me that I was going home. My year was up. Now what did we do on maneuvers—you know what they do on maneuvers, what can I tell you?

MR: Could you explain some of the training that you did on maneuvers—was it realistic using weapons?

SRD: Yes, they had—oh I forget, I got a pretty good memory—I remember the big artillery pulling the 175s, the 105s; the trucks were pulling the guns. I remember the tanks being out there. I don't know if it was Patton's outfit or what, but they had tanks out there. I remember I slept near the tank. At night, it was raining. I slept near the truck and tank. We got up and we had to fight. We were the Blue Army, and we fought the Red Army—that's the guys with the bands on their arms. We fought in Louisiana down around near Shreveport and Monroe. We fought the Red Army. They were the Texas 36th Division that we were fighting; as a matter of fact, one of the guys was kind of a wise guy. He shot that goddamn blanks, and it hit one of the guys—you know the flame came out—the guy hit him with the rifle, one of our guys hit him with the rifle, the butt of the rifle. I remember them telling me that. We stayed there and then some of the guys were captured, and they were sent to Lake Charles, Louisiana. They had a prisoner of war camp there, and they stayed there. But other than that, it was just moving on, what can I tell you?

MR: Then your year was up and you went home?

SRD: Oh, yes, after the maneuvers, we were moving one section. We were fighting the Red Army and then we'd stop. They'd give me a pass and you went into town, you know. We hit Greenville, Mississippi, Greenwood, Mississippi, Junction City, Tennessee,

Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Texarkana, Arkansas and Texas. We went all through those places.

MR: As New Yorkers, how were you accepted down there by Southerners?

SRD: The Southerners in Tennessee were nice. They came out and as a matter of fact, they invited us in for breakfast on a march. We gave them—they didn't want any—but we gave them money for the breakfast. But they were good. They saw that we had water in our canteens when we were hiking and all that. They were pretty good. Southerners in Alabama, no, they weren't too hot. Louisiana, I don't know too much. I don't know if I had anything to do too much with the civilians down there. But Tennessee was good. And we were on the maneuvers at least a couple of months; came back from the furlough, went on maneuvers July, August, September—yes, two or three months on maneuvers. On the maneuvers, when we came back, they called me in the office and they told me I was going home; my year was up. See I was not a National Guard. I was Army. There was Army United States, United States Army, National Guard and draftees. Well I was Army United States. I only signed for one year. So, when I got out, after a few days home, I went looking for a job. I put my time in the Army. I didn't think there was going to be any war or anything. I was looking for a job and my brother—he was only a young kid then—he picked up the mail. Well, when I was looking for a job—main day at Pearl Harbor.

MR: Can you tell us where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor and what was your reaction to that?

SRD: Where was I? I was coming out of the Lincoln Theater. Do you remember the Lincoln Theater? You don't know where that is? Aren't you from Troy?

MR: No, I'm from Schodack.

SRD: You remember where the old city hall was? Do you remember the old city hall? It got on fire. When was that? 1938, I think. Well, it was right across the street, right next door to Stanley's Department Store. The Lincoln Theater, I was coming out of there and I heard the kids running around with the paper, extras, they were selling extra—Pearl Harbor was hit. I knew I was going to go back in the service.

MR: So, you were a civilian at that point?

SRD: Yes, I was a civilian. But when they hit Pearl Harbor, I said, "Oh, what happened?" A couple of days later I got—that was on the 7th, December 7, 1941. A few days later I got a letter from Cluett Peabody to go to work. Here I am, I didn't know I was supposed to get a letter from them to go to work. And here I am, I got a letter from the War Department. I got a notice to come to work in Cluett Peabody. And in the meantime, I got called in from the government—they called me back. January 14th, I got the notice to report back to active duty. They gave me five days to be there by the 19th of January 1942. So now when I went in, I got the notice. We shipped out by rail out of Albany Depot down to Camp Upton, New York. I was down there—as soon as we got down there, they assigned us to the barracks, and the guys that were with me, they got out like a couple of my friends. No [unclear], they were in the National Guard. My cousin was one of them, he's dead now. He got out like me. He was a corporal, he was assigned. And a few of the other guys dead, too. There's two guys dead, Harry Fervadin and Vito Fercinitti. They're both dead. They were assigned, like me. They came back. They got out of the service after that one year. We were assigned to this barracks. The

guy comes up to me not realizing; he said, "What are you, a corporal?" I said, "No, PFC." My cousin was a corporal. Anybody was a corporal and up, they didn't have to go on KP. I wound up—they told me to put my towel on the end of the bed, so the guy during the night would know who to wake up in the morning. Four o'clock in the morning he woke me up. Was me and different guys, and on the way down to the latrine—I met different guys there the week or two I was there, you know, I got talking to guys, they were from all over New York State. Then the guy—he was with a tank outfit, and he got called back in the service and he was always clowning around—he wouldn't let me in the men's room. I had to wash up because I had to go on KP. I said, "Come on, will you, I have to get going." He said, "All right, come on in." I went to look into the latrine, there was a guy, he committed suicide. What he did—he grabbed the wastepaper basket and he got the rope from his barracks bag. The barracks bags used to have ropes on them; I don't know if you remember that. He got that there and he threw it over the rafter and he hooked it, and he kicked the barrel out and bang, he went down. He committed suicide.

I had to go on KP that day. I dipped out spuds, potatoes, about 2800 guys I had to do. They were from all over. While I was doing that, we had to clean up the mess hall and all that. I didn't get out of there until about nine-ten o'clock at night. The next day they had me on guard duty. The civilians were going to see their sons off going back in the Army. They had a lot of civilians up in Camp Upton. They wanted to see their sons before they shipped out. And I was there with a—did they give me a club? I forget now if they gave me a club or not, you know, a billy club. I had to stop the people from going into the mess hall and things like that. I did that. At night I was on guards, and it was awful cold out there in January so I used to go into—they had a little shack in there with cold furnaces, and Joe Louis the fighter was down there too. He was stationed there when I was there. They called us out one morning; they told us to fall out. They called the Sergeant to come out and he called you by your name and you went out onto the company street. And then they told us we were shipping out and we had to get ready and we had to go down to the—I don't remember now if we walked down or we were put on trucks to go down to the depot. I don't know how far the depot was from the camp. We went down to the camp and my cousin—I had two cousins in the National Guards, one was like me, Army United States, and the other one was National Guard. He was a big six-footer, big strappy kid, and they took him out of the line and they put him aside, and we shipped out. We went to California. We went down to Camp Haan, California, down near Riverside. We were there for a few days and they shipped us right to Fort Ord. We went over to Ford Ord, we stayed there and did training, going out in the field with the mortars, now we had regular mortars.

MR: Were you with the 27th Division at that point?

SRD: I was with them all the time. I stayed with them all the way out. We went to California. We were out regular drilling every day like we did down in Alabama, you know, close order drill, going out firing our guns and mortars and things like that, machine guns. I don't know if we were the rear echelon that shipped out to Hawaii. I think we sailed, I think it was March 10th, they said it was February. I thought it was March 10, 1942, but I got the thing there that must have been the guys that sailed first. They must have had a couple of outfits out of the whole Division. That one says February, but I think we left March 10, 1942. Hal Bright, he was our first Sergeant. On

the barracks bag, they had a code word marked “plump,” and we were supposed to be headed for the Philippine Islands. That’s what I was told, I don’t know how true that was. In the meantime, the Japs already took the Philippines, and we wound up going to Hawaii. We wound up in the Aloha Tower. We got off of that ship and we went on another ship called the USS Republic. It was a captured German ship in the first World War—the way I was told. I’m telling you everything that I know. So, from there on we went to the Big Island, Hilo. We went over to Hilo, and we trained over there. We wound up in this little town up from Hilo—I don’t know, maybe fourteen-sixteen miles—a little village, couple little stores, shacks, by the name of Ola. We stayed there in the schoolhouse; we stayed there a while, and we got set there. This is when we first went over. Then they shipped us out. From there we went down the road—I don’t know how many miles down by—near Pahoa. We stayed there in one of the big, big—it looked like a warehouse, we had these double wooden bunks—and we stayed there and we trained there. We did all our training there. Going out on the trucks, doing this. And then we went up after we stayed there, we went up towards near the Ranch, Parker Ranch. Parker had a big ranch up there. He had cows and everything. There is a mountain up there. They called it the Volcano House or something like that. We drove all around those islands. Then we did all our training there. And then we went to Oahu where Pearl Harbor is. We wound up going to Kent City—that’s by the Pali Pass, we were down the bottom, we were staying in tents. We went on thirty mile hikes. Then we took amphibious training. We did jungle training, amphibious training and I know one time we went out up in the mountains and we had mules bringing us food. A couple of them went down—they fell off the cliff, I was told. And we were on the edge—narrow passes there. And we stayed up there and we fired our mortars and we started a forest fire with the mortars. We had to go down and put it out. I remember that. All of that. And then one day they took us out. They took us over to Maui from Honolulu where we got on a ship. We went over to Maui and they had simulated landing. They had airplanes come by and throw down paper bags of flour, simulating that they were a bomb. And we landed on there. They had these—they came down with a ramp on the side, landing craft infantry, LCIs—you came down and ran up, you know, they got as close as they could in the water and we got off of them. It was the same thing you were doing there. Falling in the sand and all that, with your rifle and all that sh-- there. We took jungle training. I’ll never forget the day I burned my hand on the damn Browning Automatic, BAR. I don’t know what made me grab the goddamn thing—it was white and my hand got all blistered up. It was so white from the frost, from the heat. The BAR, that was a good gun. We fired them, we fired a Tommy gun, we fired a pistol and the mortars and everything like that. And they took us out to—what was the name of that little village—off of the shore to the ocean. They had like a lagoon. I saw that myself. And, as a matter of fact, I don’t know how the hell I did it. You had to swim with all your equipment on. A lot of guys were throwing it off—they were going down. You had to swim at least seventy-five yards with your equipment on. I’ll never forget the day a couple of guys went down, and they had these Navy divers go down after them, and they got them, all right. The other guy went down and he never came up. The Navy guy drowned down there. We did that and then they started trying us out with just the small haversack pack, a little bit at a time, with different equipment on. Then they had us go out to the ocean, out a little way, and they had a big square, like a wall, like that wall there [points across the room] —maybe higher, and they had the cargo nets and they had us go up on these cargo nets and down

on them. Then we went back—after the training we went back to the company and we used to go out to the fields every day, training. As a matter of fact, I was in the hospital there for a couple of weeks. I had an operation on my leg. And I got the orders to pull out. We were shipping out—where, we didn't know. One of the guys told me, and I told him to get the Lieutenant to get me out of there. I didn't want to stay up in the hospital; I wanted to go with my outfit. You want to know what happened on Saipan?

MR: Sure.

SRD: We got on the ship and the officer got me out. I was all pretty well all right. We left Schofield Barracks on the side, where nobody could see us in these little freight trains; they used to carry sugar cane with them. We got in there, so many in a cart, and they brought us all the way to the back of the island where nobody could see us. They brought us right into Pearl Harbor. We got on the ship in Pearl Harbor. I think it was June 1, 1944. We sailed out. I remember over the loud speaker—June the 6th, the invasion of Europe started—Normandy. They announced that over the speaker. Now when we were going up, I remember one night I was staying out on deck, sleeping on the deck, and I could see in the distance big flashes—must have been the Navy ships shooting at the shore because we were up near there. Then the next day, they got us, they assembled us on the deck of ship ready to go over the net. We started to go out and they called us back. They called us back. So, I watched from the—they had these big square cargo nets that went from the floor up to that ceiling [points to ceiling] —I was up on there and I could see the island, and the next thing I knew there was a flash. They had an ammunition dump and everything went up. Big balls of flame and all that stuff flying in the air. We pulled out of there. They put us on a cargo the next day. Wait, that was on the 15th—we went in on the 17th; two days later we went in. See we were supposed to be for reserves for Guam—that's what they said. We went in on the 17th of June 1944. So, as we got in, the Higgins boats, they made these circles, and they lined up going in. We got in so far; we couldn't go any further on account of the coral reef. So, they had these tanks, they went in the water—I don't know what the hell they called them. They got us out of the amphibia; we got in the tanks and we went in. And we had to jump off on a beach. The Higgins boats couldn't go in or they'd rip the bottom up. So, we got in there, and when I first got there I saw the jeep with the blood plasma giving it to Marines who were on the beach, and then I saw three Marines—they were dead. One guy had a tank on him, a flame thrower, and he was shooting it at that cave where the Japs were coming out, and you could see some of the Japs on the ground. They were dead, scorched.

As we moved in that morning, we went up so far, all of a sudden, we hit the ground. We got an air raid or something. You could hear the motor of the plane, and pieces of shrapnel were falling on the ground. They were shooting up at it. Then we moved out. As we moved out, we moved into this area and the airport was there—Asilito Airfield. So, we went in the airfield—I don't know who had it first, the Marines, or the Japs took it away from the Marines, but we went in, we got it. We got in there and I was digging a hole. They have bunkers. The Japs used to put their planes in there so they wouldn't be spotted by the air. They weren't on the field. I didn't want to get near where the plane was. There was no plane there, but I didn't want to get near there, because I figured if the Japs came in they could roll grenades. So, I dug in and the next thing I know we were fighting. We were moving in till we got close, then I remember... These aren't

uniform; I'm telling you different things. Then we go in--this kid who lived near me--it was me, and my one cousin, he's dead, and this other friend of mine is dead, that's two, and this kid that's a Sergeant. He lived on one side of the street where I lived. He lived on the north end and I lived on the south end. He was quite a while in the National Guard. He went in in 1938. He was a nice kid, too. He was a Sergeant. Of all the guys that came back--from that neighborhood, we all went in together--he was the only one from that neighborhood, on that street, that didn't come back. He got killed on a big banzai raid. Well anyway, while we were in there fighting up near the airport, the report came this guy got killed. A guy from Lansingburgh, Swede Johnson, they called him, he got killed. And then we pulled in, we dug our holes at night and this kid I was telling you about, Ciccarelli, he lived near me. I was near him when we hit this big cave. We were out there in front with our rifles and we got them out of there. There were women and kids--old, old lady, old man, carrying the kids on their shoulders, and there were some Japs--they had G-strings on them, nothing on them, you know, to cover their privates. And they were sent behind the lines. I'm telling you what I did. So, we pulled up that day, that evening; we pulled up to this area, so as we pulled up this area, they had the 165th, that was the fighting 69th, they already had the holes dug. One of the guys took a crap in the hole. So, we were supposed to take their holes at night. And this one guy that was in our outfit, he was a regular army guy, he came in from the Christmas Islands. They brought all these guys back. They brought him back from the Christmas Islands. He was a wise son of a bitch. He was from Arizona. He was made Sergeant in our company, and he was picking on all the guys. So, he happened to jump into the hole where all that sh-- was. Oh, was he mad as a [unclear], smelled like hell. He was hollering and screaming like hell. Why, I say we went back in the holes right away because there was a Jap Zero, fighting. I have some pictures of that Zero. Well, anyway, this Zero was fighting, dogfighting, with one of our planes. What happened--you could hear the chatter, the gun, he came down and started strafing us. I leaped and I hit my chest on the frigging coral they had, like shale. I scratched my chest; I'll never forget that day. And he lands, he lands down in the field there, and the guys opened up and they shot him. We had guys on there with 50 calibers down the field. And they opened up and they killed him. He got out of the plane and they shot him. I didn't see this; this is what I was told. But I know they were fighting in the air; I could see the planes.

Coming in from the beach, when I got off the tanks to come in and land, I said the guys were going to find out through the grave registration. I saw one of our airplanes, the tail was up in the air and the motor was in the ground, and the tail was up in the air, and a parachute was all unloose and was on top of the tail of the airplane. And I was right there, me and a few other guys, and I was fooling around with the cockpit. It was all scorched--the plane. I don't know if he got knocked down, shot down, or if he crashed or whatever happened. But it was into the ground, sticking in the air like that. So, I went to dig, I had that little pik-matic and I was digging near his head. I didn't see any head; it was just black ashes. When I went to look, I found just bone, skull, that's all I found there. I dug down a little bit and I pulled off his tag. His tag was near the skull and that was all black. The Navy has round tags. We got the flat one, they got the round one, and on that tag, it said Paul Danna, United States Navy Reserve. Now what happened--I got a stick. Don't tell me where we got the stick, pieces of wood. We made a cross on it, we tied it with shoelace tight as we could, piece of string or something, and we put the tag

on there so the grave registration could pick it up. Well, then when I was digging farther down, you could see it was all charred, it was all ashes. His whole torso was all black and everything, so we started to scrape that. We started digging a hole, and then we put what remains we could in there and then we put the stick there with the cross. So, this guy down in the Purple Heart Post, he found out about it—I told him about it. He said he has a friend in Washington and he's going to check on the grave registration and see if he comes up with that name. I said, "Gee I'd like to know if you did." He's going to let me know. As we were fighting, I said the airplane... We came down and we'd dig in for the night, and one night we dug in—oh yeah, before we dug in that night, we had this, like a Quonset hut, the Marines had them—they weren't that corrugated metal, these were concrete and the Japs had it. Matter of fact, I went in looking in there. I had to have my carbine outside, leaning against the thing, and the guys were scrounging around. They found rubbers. I found silk—I gave it to some guy about twenty-five years ago—a nice silk handkerchief. It was embroidered right on the handkerchief—a Jap having intercourse with this geisha girl. It was a nice piece of silk handkerchief. I didn't want to carry it around; I gave it to some guy, I forget who it was back home. And we found opium, rubbers, different things, guys were picking up. In the meantime, we heard a big explosion. We went out, I grabbed my carbine—it was right on the end of the door there. One of our outfits—it was the 165th—dropped a mortar shell short; it hit in our area. It killed a guy in my company—he was from Connecticut—Skeba. He was one of the guys that came in from the Islands. They replaced these guys in different companies. We got a few. This one guy, Skeba his name was, and he got killed, and then there were two or three guys from B company who got killed. There was a lot of confusion over that.

So now, that night, we dug in there and the next thing I heard while we were dug in—now it's dark, it's pitch black—I heard a noise, a flutter, and it hit down right near my hole. I'll never forget that day. I don't know what it was, I didn't look, I didn't get out of the hole, because you didn't know what they'd do, they might shoot you, your own men. It might have been a dud—whatever it was, I don't know. During the night—there was a roadway—I remember seeing the Japs, they were trying to get out. They had these trucks and they were trying to get out and our machine gunners opened up. You could hear them screaming. They opened up and they killed a bunch of them. They were leaning over the trucks and everything, and the next morning you could see them all, and then we pulled out of there. We went up in this area—that's where Mt. Tapochau was—where the banzai attack came, this is where they all came down. Now we pulled up into that area—I didn't know the name of the mountain or what—and we had these panel trucks with speakers on them telling the people to give up, we'd take care of them. There was a Jap general up there. He told his people that if they gave up, he would kill them. So, we pulled into that area; we dug in. I'll never forget the guy that lived in Troy down there—he's another guy that got killed. He lived down on 14th Street. He was a barber—Carmin Ciccarelli. Ciccarelli was one, he was the other one—Carmin D'Agostino. What happened to him—he was in machine gunners, and they made him a grave registration with this other guy from Albany, a little, short guy, they were walking up and I was digging. I said, "Come on over and stay with me, dig in with me," and I had two other guys. We dug a trench, a big square trench, and the three of us fit in it, but we

didn't go down too deep because we figured we were going to make a push the next morning. So, what happened. See, I'm getting ahead of my story. Can I go back?

MR: Sure.

SRD: We're coming up this trail, and we're down near Tanapag Harbor and this was before we got to the mountain, and there was a lagoon. I'll never forget—I saw a couple of soldiers, they had an old, old man. Why I say he was old, he had the goatee on him. He was a Jap from the navy—he might have been a naval officer or something, an admiral or whatever you call him, and they were on him with the gun, with the rifles. We took a break down near this road and I'll never forget that day. Tokyo Rose was on. We were listening to her. In the meantime, we were waiting to move up. We were supposed to move up to where the mountain was. We were in this area and Lieutenant Stark—he was from Ohio, he was a nice guy—he says, “Sam, I'm going to make you a runner.” I said, “No, no, I don't want to be a runner,” because the guys who got out of your hole at night, they'd think you might be a Jap and they'd shoot you. They killed a couple of guys like that. They killed a couple of guys in the signal corps outfit—they got killed like that—they were attached to us. He was going to make me a runner and I didn't want to do it. But I was a runner anyway, this was when we moved out. In the meantime, a jeep came down and Joe Mariano—you heard me mention his name—he was told up where the CP, where the officers were talking, you know they had their spot, he was told to tell Lieutenant Ryan to stay put, in other words, not to move. In the meantime, we were already starting to move out. And he told the Lieutenant, he says, “Captain Callan,” that was the name—Emmet Callan, he was the Captain, he used to be our company commander but they moved him up, and we got Lieutenant Ride who took over—so he said, “Tell Lieutenant Ride to stay put with the mortars.” Now if he did that, we would have been all right, but what happened—he said, “We're already moving out.” So, up we went. Down to the foot of the mountain where we were. So, I dug in—me and these two other guys, these two guys, we're going up to grave registration—Carmen D'Agostino and this other guy. Well, he says, “I can't, I'm grave registration with this guy.” So, I dug in, me and these two other guys, one guy was from California, the other guy was from New York. I knew the one guy, I didn't know the other guy too well. Up on the top of the hill I could see a big fire, just like they had a bonfire up there, and they were shooting down and you could hear the guns going off and they'd be peppering us every once in a while. During the night, I was called out to the CP. There was Emmet Callan, our company commander there, Lieutenant Tuger, Lieutenant King, Earl O'Brian, another officer, I don't know, there were four or five of them. I had to deliver the message. I came back to the company. In the meantime, when I got back, about four o'clock in the morning—I was in my foxhole about four o'clock in the morning, four, four-thirty, in that area—next thing you know there's... It looked like today, you see how sunny it is out there. The sky lit up.

[Break in tape]

SRD: Well anyway, that morning it was like daylight. It was like twelve o'clock in the afternoon at four-thirty in the morning, and you could see these kids, women, kids, soldiers. They had bamboo poles with bayonets on them, shovels, picks, pitchforks—they had everything. These were civilians, with soldiers too. What they did, they came down on us; our machine gunners were out. They started killing them. There

were so many of them. I was on the foot of the hill. I couldn't get out of my hole because the dirt was [unclear] in my hole. Me and these other two guys—where they went I don't know. I grabbed my carbine. Everybody was screaming and hollering. I don't know what the hell was going on, I can't explain it to you—kids hollering, women screaming, machine guns firing and rifles firing. I grabbed my carbine, ran back with the other guys and somebody hollered, "Let's stop and all form a line and fight them back." We did that and they overran us. Now, when they overran us, there were too many of them. They had these two kids in my outfit, one kid, one soldier was from—I know his name, he lived in this little town outside of Rochester called Lyons, New York. They cut his head off with a sabre. The other kid got hit—they were machine gunners—the other machine gunner got his head cut off. He was from Lexington, Kentucky. His name was Carneel. I forget his first name. When they did that, we formed a line, and we started to fight them. They still came at us; we had to push back. I ran down to the railroad track, the miniature railroad track, it carried the sugar cane to the factories or whatever they do. Oh yeah, it rained during the morning, that night, it rained. I forgot it rained. And then my carbine, the end of the thing had some mud in it. I threw a couple of shots, while I was in that... I just took a shot to clean it out. And that was down near the railroad tracks, near the bunker, I was looking up over. So, when I did that, they kept coming. I was shooting at them. I ran down by the ocean. I don't know where the hell—I could see different guys running and I saw one of the medical officers—he was with a guy from my company—he was on one side and he was running. Then I didn't see; everybody was for themselves, you couldn't help your brother if you had to. If your brother was there, you had to leave him. I saw the back of his shirt was all blood, he got hit in the back, the officer, and then I ran down by the ocean, down the shoreline. They had a big silver thing in the ground; it must have been a mine. I jumped over it and I got behind a coconut tree. This is after I left where the railroad tracks were. I went down by the beach there. I got behind a coconut tree and I met two guys from Pennsylvania. They were put in our outfit. They came up from one of the Islands. They were...

WC: Replacements?

SRD: Yeah. In other words, the Islands had these soldiers down there, and they broke it up. They broke the division. They put so many in D company, so many in B company, so many in... That's how we got these guys in our outfit. So anyway, these two guys were with me, and we stayed behind this coconut tree, and the guys were running out in the ocean, swimming out in the ocean to get away from the Japs. They were shooting all around. They circled around us—too many. There must have been at least 5,000 of them. And we were only two battalions, first and second battalion. So, what happened, these guys got up and they ran. I heard they got killed after. You know, they're making the count for the guys that were killed; who got wounded. In the meantime, I'm behind this coconut tree. I got up over the coconut tree, and I crawled out towards the Japs. They had big weeds—this grass, big tall grass. I met another guy there with my company. He was from Wichita, Kansas; his name was Gans. I don't know what happened to him. When I crawled out, I lost him. I crawled back. I wiggled back to the same position I was in before. Next thing, I don't remember anything. They let a barrage of mortar shells or artillery; whatever they threw at us. They hit the beach. I remember seeing the black dirt, sand, everything in the air. Next thing, I don't

remember anything. I got hit in the leg. When I got hit in the leg, I got knocked out. I'm telling you the way I... No bullsh--. I remember it was like I was reborn again. I remember music. I could see the sun. My whole life changed in front of me, and when I came to, there were guys all around me. They were still fighting. The Japs were down around where I was, but they were in a little way--like from here to my driveway. They were fighting them off. I was hit. I remember Lieutenant Stark--he was the medical officer--he put the sulfur drug on my leg, because my leg, when it was hit, you could see all of the flesh out of that hole where it had come out; all the guts from my leg, it was a mess. I laid there--I couldn't do anything. My leg wouldn't go, it was just dead. So, he put the sulfur drug on me and everything. One guy runs by me--he's dead now, he used to live near me, too. He died in Florida. He went down to Florida. As a matter of fact, his name was put in one of those little pocketbook Reader's Digest--when they had Baker propped up against the tree, he put a cigarette in Baker's mouth, lit it for him and took off. He went right by me, this Carlo, he's dead now. He came by me and I gave him my rifle. What the hell am I going to do with it, not realizing, you know, I've got to use it myself. I gave him my rifle. There were guys next to me, there were two brothers, one of them--I don't know where the other guy was--but the one brother was killed. He got shot, he was next to me, he was shot in the head. This is after I was wounded. See, I lay on the ground, they kept coming, the soldiers--the American soldiers. They were fighting them off--they were right near me. The Lieutenant, the medical officer--he was there, he's the one that put the sulfur drug. This kid that got killed, his name was Bernhardt, he was from Petersburg. His other brother made it all right and after the war, he went to California. We stayed there until it got dark, around seven or eight o'clock, whatever time it was. I lay there and Nick Rinaldi--there's a picture you can see there--he dragged me with somebody else, but he said, "No, it was another guy," that dragged me, but I didn't want to say something. He dragged me under a tree with all the wounded guys. Eddie Boudoin, he passed away, he died here about almost a year ago. He left here and he went to Florida to live and he used to come up here. We had him down on a couple of the interviews we had. He died down in Florida, I think. I was next to him, he had a plate in his head, shrapnel hit him in the head. Then there were other guys, I don't know, I was out of it. So that night after I was under this tree--oh yeah, this one soldier, he was in my company, he got killed. He went out. He was all right until he went down to a little ravine to get water for the guys. When he went down, a mortar shell hit him there. He got wounded and he got killed. He was from Gary, Indiana--Mike Sabo. As a matter of fact, my brother was in the Pacific, too. He was in the Navy and when he went to Hawaii after the war, he looked at the monument and he saw all the guys who were killed and wounded in the 27th, and I mentioned it to him about the guys in my outfit that got killed. He had the names and he took a picture of the names on the stone and he told me about it. My brother's dead now. He fell off of a roof. He was cleaning the roof of his house down in Florida. He lives down there, three doors down from me, right here. His wife still lives there, but she's in Florida. He's cleaning, and his wife says, "Don't do it, the guys are coming to clean." He was always a workaholic, always working, and his foot got caught in the rung of the ladder, tipped back and smashed his head on the driveway. He's the one took a picture of this Mike Sabo, this guy from Gary, Indiana that got killed getting the water.

What happened that night—it got to be around seven o'clock, eight o'clock. The tanks were coming up the edge of the ocean on the shoreline where the beach is. Guys were running out. The tanks didn't have any guns on them. They carried personnel. Amtraks, they called them. They didn't have any turrets on them or anything. And the guys were all jumping in and they're getting on that and they're getting in the thing, and I grabbed this one guy—he's dead now, too, he made it all right. I don't remember if he got wounded or what, I haven't seen him, but he's dead though. He and another guy in C company, they grabbed me. I told them, "Get me out of here," because if the Japs see me they would have killed me. You know, when they ran by. So, they dragged me and there was no room in the tank. They were all jammed in there to get out. So, they put me on—they got a motor about half as big as this room—on the tank, on the hood. The heat was bothering me, so a guy threw a field jacket on the hood of thing and I got under it. As we pulled out they were shooting at us. The next thing I know, we go down this big, big area, it looked like three football fields. I'm half out of it. And the guy, he came up with the jeep, and they took me off, they shot me with morphine, put me on a jeep, me and another guy. They strapped us up on a jeep and they took us to this big field, big open field. Christ, like I told you, the next morning I was out of it. Everything was blurry. I was hurt, but I didn't know how bad I was. That night, they were operating right out of a big, big truck. Two and half ton truck—they were operating right out of there with a light in there—emergency operations.

So, the next thing I know, I lay there all night long, and the next morning a guy came over to me. I never told you about him, should I tell you about him? When the Japs chased us down that morning—they pushed us—our tanks came up and they were [unclear] closed, they didn't have the hatch open, and he kept hitting his hand on the tank to tell them the Japs were all around us and to get up and start shooting them with the machine guns. When he was doing that—he went to get away from there—a Jap came out of the bushes, wherever he came from. He told me himself; he's dead too—Sal, Sal Farina. He was one of them. He looked like Wallace Beery, he was a rugged looking guy. A Jap came up—this is no make-up or anything, no bullsh--- a Jap came up and swung the sword like that at him. He didn't know it. He happened to see from the corner of his eye, he went down like that, and the sword went over his head. He told me that himself when he got discharged. He used to live down the city, I knew him well. He died with a heart attack. And he told me what happened when he swung the sword at him—he missed him, he let out a yell, "AGHHH," like that. He told me he did that himself, like a big scream. And it's a good thing, that scared the Jap. A navy officer was coming up, one of the naval officers—he told me all this himself, and it's no bullsh-- either—and they shot the Jap. And then, going back when I was on the ground there that morning, he came by me, the soldier, he was in the field there. He had a little, I think they took a little chunk out of his arm, a bullet. He was with one of these new guys that came from the Christmas Islands; nobody knew him from the Purple Heart Post. I knew him casually because we were shipping out and these guys were coming with us. Well, he was with us a couple of months. I got to know him a little bit in Schofield Barracks before we shipped out. He was a machine gunner. Well, that morning they broke through, and he starts shooting at them with the machine gun, the water cool. Sal was his Sergeant, the guy that the Jap tried to hit with the sword. He told them, "Get out of here," because they killed a lot of them, but the gun froze up on him, it warped from the

heat. So, Sal got of there. By the time the other guy got out, he got killed. How I knew that—those guys didn't know him. This one guy from Connecticut, this kid I'm talking about, this soldier, he was with the 43rd National Guard Division from Connecticut—they broke it up, and they put so many in each regiment. That how I got to know him. I didn't know him that well, but anyway, one of the nephews wrote to the 27th Division to say, "I wish I knew somebody that knew my uncle." His name was Frank Daglieri. He was from New Haven, Connecticut—the nephew was. I imagine the kid's sister lived there—that was his uncle. Nobody up in the post, they asked me, "You know this guy?" I said, "I knew him a little bit." Nobody knew him. They didn't know who he was. He was one of the new replacements. He was with us a couple of months and we shipped out. I knew other guys got hit and other replacements, but I didn't know him either. He got his whole shoulder—a mortar shell hit him and ripped his whole shoulder out. This guy here, he didn't get a chance to get out. When Sal got out of there—he and Sal were firing the machine guns on the Japs. Sal got out and he came out, and by the time he got out he got killed. Now Sal—I saw him. I was on the ground in a big field hospital where they operate in the big trucks. Oh, it was a big field, guys were dying there, wounded. He says to me, "Are you going to be all right?" So, I didn't see him anymore. The next thing I knew a couple of guys were picking me up. I thought they were Japs. They were Koreans, you know, we had Koreans on that island. The Japs had them do all the dirty work. So, anyway, they picked me up and they put me on a hospital ship, the USS Samaritan.

I was on that hospital ship and they were burying guys that died and they were throwing them off the ship after we left. I was on that ship and they took me to New Caledonia. I lay in New Caledonia—I got there the later part of July. As a matter of fact, we were right by the island of [unclear], where the Japs had that island. But they abandoned it, they didn't invade it. And when I got down, the Navy guy took me off, put me in the ambulance and took me to the 29th General Hospital in New Caledonia. I forgot to tell you about—I was pulling guard duty. There was an open pass, this was just before the big banzai raid came. This guy lay next to me. He was from the 106th infantry, and I was on guard. I was all dirty, needed a shave and everything—filthy. I said, "What's your name?" He said, "I'm from the 106th." He said, "My name is... Where are you from?" I said, "Troy, New York." He said, "I'm from Albany." I said, "No kidding." "I'm in the 106th," he said. "I got a brother-in-law named Joe Marola from Troy; used to be the bread man, used to make the Italian bread." I said, "Sh--, I've known him all my life." He was surprised. Then when I came out of the service, I was in West Virginia. When I got discharged I saw Joe Marola down in the neighborhood and I was telling him how I ran into his brother-in-law while we were fighting. I didn't know the guy from Adam.

That day we were watching for snipers and out of this what do you call it, a road, out came women and kids, they had religious people on that island. They called them [unclear]. These people were awful religious. We used to burn down the houses—they lived in shacks, the Japs took it over you know. And one of the guys in my outfit was grabbing the gold teeth out of the... with his bayonet. These people were awful religious—they had the blessed mother in their shacks—they were like saints. And the Japs were raping the women and all that. They did everything. There were a lot of things I overlooked probably, I can't remember. We saw them coming out, and kids

were bleeding, and they took them to the medics who were bandaging them up. Some got hit with mortar shells or whatever it was. And a lot of them were wounded and they took them—I don't know where they took them. When I first came in, I did see a big, big wire fence. It must have been barbed wire and they had had these Japs in there. Wiry, little—they were Jap soldiers, they were about my size, nice built guys. They had them in there—we took them prisoners. Then on the island there a while, we were looking down into the ocean. The Japs had—in the mountain—they had a door cut out of the mountain. I don't know if it was square or what, but they used to open it up, pull a gun down and shoot down into the ocean, shoot at the ships. And when they did find out, they knocked it out. At first, they didn't know where it was coming from, but they found out. I know that. Well, that morning Joe Mariano, he told me when he came home—I asked him, I said, "Joe, that morning when the Japs chased us..." He said, "I wasn't hit." He was unfortunate. They surrounded the medical department, they surrounded the headquarters, they completely surrounded, there were so many of them. It was hand-to-hand fighting. He said, "Sam I don't want to tell you—where I live here, you go up about a quarter of a mile, all on the ground were dead Americans and Japs, and a lot of the guys I saw the night before were there, dead." He said, "I wouldn't touch anything because I don't know what was boobytrapped or what. They were all dead on top of one another." I hope I'm getting some of my stories accurate. But it is the truth.

And the next thing I knew I was on a hospital ship. They operated on me, and I got to New Caledonia and I was convalescing. Then they put me on an airplane and I went to Espiritu Santo. I was only a few miles from where the guys were stationed—my outfit, the guys that didn't get killed. Then they brought in all new replacements. I didn't know who they were. I was completely out now. I was in a different—they have a new outfit, all new guys. Then they trained them and they went to Okinawa. Then from Okinawa they came home. They went to Japan and they came home on the point system. I was over there thirty-two months.

MR: What hospital were you sent to in the United States?

SRD: I was in the hospital for a few days in Hamilton Field, California. Then from there they shipped me to Lowry Field, Colorado. From there I was shipped to Washington. I wasn't in the hospital there. Two women picked me up, they were WACs. They had me down near Hagerstown, Maryland—that's outside of Washington. They put me in the ambulance and I went down to Martinsburg, West Virginia. That's where I was in Newton D. Baker General Hospital. I was in Hamilton Field, Lowry Field, Colorado, West Virginia. Then I went to Indiana. I went to Camp Atterbury, Indiana. I was there—they checked me over and they sent me home for three months. They said, "Go on home for three months. You're still in the service, though." They figured, "Why convalesce in the hospital what I could do at home." Then they said, "Come back in September." This was in the summer. I'd come back right after Labor Day. I went back. They said to me, "No, we can't let you out yet." They sent me home again—three more months. And I got out December 22, about three days before Christmas 1945. But it was a long stay in the different hospitals and then I was hopping around. They were giving me treatment, whirlpool, they couldn't do anything. I have a big scar on my leg, a big hole there.

MR: How do you think your military service changed or affected your life?

SRD: At first, I was so weak when I came home, I couldn't eat. I didn't want to be near anybody. My aunt used to get two raw eggs—she said, "I'll build him up,"—and a shot of vermouth, vermouth wine, and mix it and I drank it. It did build me up though. I only weighed ninety pounds. I was one hundred twenty-eight, but I was small. But I was wiry. I weighed one hundred twenty-eight, one hundred thirty pounds, but then when I was wounded I went down to about ninety pounds. My leg, that leg—this is the leg that got hit[left]—was big as that [circles thumb and forefinger], just the bone. All the flesh was up in here [motions to thigh]. That's an awful big scar. I'm lucky I didn't lose my leg. Then I can hardly walk now. I got a bullet here that didn't go through [motions to right lower leg]. I have a scar there. Then when I was crawling after I got hit—I was hit in the back. It's a good thing I got it in the back—I can show you, about the size of a nickel. The scar's there. As a matter of fact, when I went into St. Mary's Hospital quite a while ago, years ago, and they did an x-ray of my kidney, and they said, "You have a foreign body in there." They thought it was a tumor or something." I said, "No, oh no, I remember." Yes, it was a foreign body, it was a piece of the metal. That was twenty—twenty-five years ago. Two years ago, I was going a lot with my bladder, and I wanted to know what to do, so we had a cat scan and they found near my kidney—I thought it was the same thing, but that was on the left, but this was on the right, the shrapnel was on the left, but this was on the right. They did find a tumor on my kidney, and he said it was cancerous. I said, "Who cares at my age, how much more do I have to live?" So, when they operated on me, they said in the lab it wasn't cancerous, but it looked cancerous to them because he could tell. My daughter asked, "Why did you cut it out?" He said, "If I didn't cut it out, it might have turned to cancer." So, he cut it out, that little piece, and I didn't have to dig my kidney out. I have my kidney and he just cut that little piece out. I still have my kidney and I'm all right. Now where's this going? What do you do with the picture here?

MR: It's going to go in the Archives at the Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, and we'll also send you a copy. So, you'll be able to watch yourself.

WC: It will be available to anybody doing research.

SRD: I wanted to show you the medals. My son has them in a frame. [Holds up frame]

MR: Why don't you explain what this is? I know these are your medals, but maybe you could point some of them out.

SRD: There's a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, I can't see them.

WC: Hold it up here. Here's the Purple Heart, the one on the left is the Good Conduct Medal, I see you got the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, that's the Pacific Campaign Medal, the World War II, American Campaign, Marksmanship Medal and I see the Unit Crest.

SRD: Marksmanship, I couldn't even hit a... [Laughs]

MR: That's quite a grouping you've got there.

WC: Well, thank you so much.

MR: Thank you.

SRD: I took them down to my aunt's. My brothers, my sister, they didn't even think anything of it.

WC: Well you've got a lot to be proud of.

