

**Arthur Eugene Hammer
Veteran**

**Mike Russert
Wayne Clarke
New York State Military Museum
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on April 20, 2005, 11:15 A.M.
Elderwood Senior Center
Hamburg, New York**

Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth please?

AH: My name is Arthur Eugene Hammer. I was born in South Buffalo, New York on January 17th, 1916.

Q: What was your education prior to entering the military service?

AH: Before I that I went to grammar school, and went to St Joseph's Collegiate High School for a year and a half. Then I enlisted in the Army Air Force.

Q: Do you remember where you were and how you heard about Pearl Harbor?

AH: I was at home--I think it was December 7th, I'm not sure--with my wife and my young baby son. We were getting ready to go out on a picnic in Delaware Park. I remember that because my oldest son--he was a little over two years old--he ran away and I had to chase him in Delaware Park. He wanted to catch the birds--there were a lot of those seagulls over there at the park lake, and he wanted to catch them. And I had to catch him before we went on a walk!

Q: Why did you enlist in the Air Force?

AH: Well, I heard it was the easiest outfit to be trained in, and they had quite a big doughboy [beginner] outfit that had to be trained. I kinda liked that.

Q: When did you enlist?

AH: It was after I came out of high school. I think around 1938.

Q: Where did you go for your training?

AH: Homestead, Florida.

Q: How long were you there for basic training?

AH: I was there for six months for basic training. Then I met my wife down there--she was a nurse. We got acquainted, and the chaplain married us. After that we made our

home down in Homestead for the first two or three years. Then she wanted to go back home, so we came back up to Buffalo.

Q: What kind of Basic Training did you have? Any flying training?

AH: No, all ground work. First it was just basic training. Then mechanical training on the motors of the three jet planes sitting in the bay. Then I helped train some of the doughboys.

Q: Did you get to do any flying at all?

AH: No. I did do some flying but not in the Air Force. I flew in commercial planes, stuff like that.

Q: Were you a pilot?

AH: No, just a regular passenger.

Q: What kind of planes did you repair?

AH: Well it was the beginning of the jet propelled planes. I worked on the motors so they had the power to take off. Mostly on jet planes.

Q: Did you stay in Florida for most of the war or did you go somewhere else?

AH: We stayed in Florida for most of World War II. I didn't go overseas. They wouldn't take me overseas--I lost two brothers. My brother Dick and my brother Paul were both killed in World War II.

Q: What branch of service were they in?

AH: Paul was taken captive by the Japanese after December 7th, and he died in the death march of Bataan. My brother Dick was in the Battle of the Bulge over in the European theatre. That's why I never got to go overseas, because Roosevelt said that two boys from one family is enough. So I never got any further than the Army Air Force.

Q: You said you met your wife, she was a nurse?

AH: Yes, a nurse down in Homestead Florida.

Q: Was she in the military?

AH: Yes, she was in the military.

Q: Were you able to live together on the base?

AH: Yes. I got to be an altar boy for the chaplain. He introduced us, and then he married us.

Q: Was she an officer?

AH: Yes, she was.

Q: Was there a problem with her marrying an enlisted man?

AH: [Smiles] Yes, but we went through the chaplain--he got the OK and it was all set. The chaplain straighten it all out.

Q: Now, did she continue to stay in the Army after she got married?

AH: After we got married we were both in there for about a year and three months. Then we were both honorably discharged.

Q: Do you remember when you were discharged?

AH: I remember being discharged but I don't remember the date, because that was when our oldest son was born. We were married approximately a year and a half when we had our first child.

Q: So after you got discharged you came back to Buffalo?

AH: Yes, my relatives had a brewery--Stein's Brewery, I don't know if you've heard of it.

Q: Yes, I've heard of it.

AH: Well that was my Uncle George, so I went to go work in the brewery. Later on I didn't like sloppin' around water and beer all day. So I got a job as a tractor-trailer driver.

Q: Did you ever use the G.I. Bill at all?

AH: Not really, no.

Q: How about the 52-20 club?

AH: No, I wasn't in that.

Q: Did you ever join any veteran's organizations?

AH: Yes, I joined the American Legion through my wife. She insisted that I joined an American Legion. So I was in the American Legion and the VFW--Veterans in Foreign Wars.

Q: Do you think your time in the service change or affect your life in any way?

AH: Well, I learned to take orders.

Q: Well, you met your wife in the service too.

AH: Yes, I met my wife in the service...She gave orders! [Laughs]

Q: [Laughs] You took them right?

AH: Right!

Q: Thank you very much for your interview Arthur!

AH: You're entirely welcome, it was my pleasure.