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Q: Could you tell us when and how you joined the military?

SN: Actually, a week or so before I got abducted, we went to Albany, and a buddy of mine to join the navy. He got to accept and I failed because they said I had flat feet. I was out there I got a call home, my mother said: “you have to come home dear, we got your abduction papers”. And that was the day before my 19th birthday, January 25, 1943. So, I come home, and I reported to the [unclear] and they gave me all the information I needed and I left February first, of that same year. We went to Fort Dix, New Jersey for abduction, then from there, we went to Miami Beach for basic training. After basic training [unclear] shipped to [unclear] Mississippi, for aircraft mechanic school. We were there for 18 weeks, went through all the phases of the aircraft, I think there’s 12 different phases of the aircraft and we went through them all. After completing that, they shipped me Schoenfeld Illinois to go to aircraft instrument school. We were there 8 weeks approximately, the course was 8 weeks, from thereafter we graduated from aircraft instrument school, they promoted us to corporals, which at that time was a non-commission officer. Then they sent us to Frederick California which was an overseas replacement center. We hung around there until we got our orders and shipped us to Yuma Arizona, an air force base. They needed two instrument technicians to complete the squadron, they called it the 514-fighter squadron and the squad consisted of every phase of the aircraft and a trailer as a shop, you worked on that trailer for repairs. So that completed the squadron and while we waited for being shipped overseas as we started working on aircraft. At that time, they were training gunners for B17s, with I think 6 different positions. But the main thing was to keep the airplane flying, so they could teach these fellas all the phases of gunnery. After that it took quite a while, they started training bombers, from gunners to bombers. Before you know it orders come through from the big chief of the air force I guess, we were doing such a good job that we were going to become a permanent party here, and take care of all the flying, keep these airplanes flying and to teach these gunners and bombers. So, we were there for 2 approximately years until I got discharged. From there we went to a discharge center, I was shipped back to [unclear] field, from there to Fort Dix, New Jersey,

where I get discharged from there, and that was approximately 3 years and 17 days total.

Q: Can you go over what you went through for training, and what you were trained to do.

SN: As far as aircraft mechanics we started working on every phase of the aircraft [shows documents with the phases of the aircraft]. Every phase was allowed a certain amount of time. They picked us to go to aircraft instruments I guess they felt we were well qualified to go into the aircraft instrument repair and they shipped us to [unclear] field, Illinois.

It was very interesting, just the wiring on an airplane, there are miles and miles of wiring, and they had a colored book for wiring, and I said: "how the heck am I going to remember all this color book for wiring". But they had a saying "[unclear]". All your wires are marked that way, whether it goes to the generator, or the pressure admit, rpm gage or whatever, that way you know what you're doing that way if you have a broken wire or something that isn't working you don't have to troubleshoot the whole instrument panel...

So then once we were through all the other phases as far as props, tires, fuel, wings, all your controls on your flaps and runners and all that stuff. Once through every phase, we actually had a cross-section of every part of the airplane that worked. When we went into aircraft instruments, that was another story. You definitely worked on instruments alone, and there were different phases of instruments, there's air pressure, PO tubs for airspeed, flaps were up, flaps were down, rudders were left or right, gas gages, power gages, oil pressure gages. In itself, there are quite a few different instruments but we usually worked on all of them, whatever they said was bad it was send into the shop and repair and get it back to the aircraft. That is the extent of the work on most of that, it was repetitious, it was what you did for two years. It was really interesting, so much different from civilian life, in fact, today is the anniversary of D-day, June 6, 1944, the invasion of Normandy, that's where they really pushed the heck out of Hitler, which really ended the war... Of course, we knew it was D-day but we kept on working, your aircraft had to maintained, we didn't know it was going to end the war at that time. But all in all, it was very interesting to get in on all this stuff, something you would never do in civilian life unless you wanted to work on aircraft or you were interested in flying and stuff like that. Meanwhile, you would work 8 or 10 hours a day, depending on what you had to do, then you had your time off, and weekend and 3 day/weekend pass where you can go off base and everything else. It was general living, but the main thing was focused on everything we had to do as far as the job was concerned.

Q: You mentioned you worked during the time of D-day, while all that was going on could you tell us about your feelings about the war and what was going on, how you personally felt?

SN: We knew that it was very important, and when they came up with this D-day, we knew it was quite a big operation. I guess we lost quite a few people, killed on the beaches of Normandy and going into France and everything else. Naturally, we felt sorry for these fellas that were out there, and we just plunged away harder and helped train these troops and give them support in the air, where these guys were on the ground. But that's really what it came down to, as regards what they considered wasn't a holiday, but we celebrate it, it is a special date that happened which the beginning of the German was surrendering to us. Which made us happy to get to the point where it might end. But we were there to do a job and we did it, no choice of ours, somebody had to do it, we had to do it to support the guys who did go overseas. We were fortunate in a way that we didn't go overseas, in fact, a lot of us volunteered to go overseas, they said: "no you're doing a good job here, we need you here". So, it was all that we could do, keep those planes flying so the mission could be complete and support all the ground troops that were going into the actual fighting. But that's the story as far as that part goes.

Q: If it's possible could you run through the duration of a typical workday in Yuma.

SN: We get up for your regular workday, then also you had your physical time and exercises as far as keeping you build up and everything else, that was besides getting out of work. Now I was stationed in Yuma, we were right in a control ledge when you're working on instruments everything heats and humidity control because of sweat and formed and got into instrument parts that affect the operation of the instruments. So, there was humidity control, dust control and everything else. We did work with a bunch of civilians, in conjunction with the military, was actually more military working and always a few civilians, and depending on what came up, what kind of instrument had to be work on or whatever, that's what we worked on... more important to repair and what was needed, what was the top priority of those particular instruments. That was our day really, it actually like working a regular civilian job, 8 hours a day, plus after that, you would have your military duties, training, KP, guard duties, and everything like that, you worked that with conjunction what you regularly work was. So, it wasn't just you worked 8 hours in the shop, and then after that you were free, you went through the whole military situation.

Q: Can you tell me, you said KP, what does that mean.

SN: Kitchen police, we all frowned on that, no one like that, because they would take you off from work for helping in the kitchen, peel potatoes, help the cooks, made salads, whatever the cooks in charge wanted you to do. China clipper is what we called the dishwasher, where you would clean off all the trays that we ate on. So, they go through this big commercial type dishwasher. Or you sat in the corner and peel potatoes all day, cutting or slicing or dicing or whatever they called for. But that was really fun in a way in away. When it was a long day and

we used to frown on that. Because you would get there by 6 o'clock and be there way after supper, after the last meal you have to clean up the whole mess hall, that was interesting too. Then you had guard duty once a while, you'll have guard duty around a vehicle compound, you just patrol certain areas, otherwise looking for anyone sealing equipment and whatever. Then they had different patrols for different areas, like when we were in Miami, as part of the training we used to walk up and down the seashore. You probably walk a half a mile, you were in charge of that area, then another guy got the next area, and more or less just patrolling the area. Keep us secure, that nothing came in that wasn't supposed to come in. That was another part of the training, but like I say I left I was in the air force for over 3 years counting school time and everything else. It was very interesting that taught me a lot in life, how to get along with a lot of people you meet from all walks of life, and all parts of the country. It was very interesting to meet a lot of very nice people and a lot of very nice situations that you encounter while in service.

Q: Is there anyone, person or people in particular that stick out in your memory, that had a big impact on you that you were friends with during training.

SN: I made so many friends, my wife couldn't get over it, when this came about and I started talking all about my service. She said "How come you got all these pictures" and I said "well these are all friends of mine" In the general life of the three years that I meet, while I was in training, while I was working and everything else. She couldn't believe that the magnitude of the number of friends I really had. Then the people from Rome that I went to school with, every time someone go abducted, or enlisted in the air force or enlisted in the army or whatever, they naturally had their picture in the paper, and my mom would send me all the pictures up of all my friends that got in the service. And I ended up with almost over 200 pictures of different people that I knew that go in different branches of the service, and something if anyone got killed in action, or wounded in action or anything else. She would keep me up on the information, whatever came out on the local papers she sent me. So, I massed quite a few pictures. It was very interesting to see how many and who went here and who went there then I'd ask for address and we'd write back and forth to each other, seeing what they're doing, what their job tale and everything else like that.

Q: Likewise, are there any specific events that changed your attitude or your life?

SN: Just in general idea, the people you met and the work you did, and places you see, that you probably never would have before, no so close to home, you know if you weren't abducted in the service. You learn so much of life meeting different people from different walks of life that normally you wouldn't have met, it was quite interesting. I don't think there was anyone particular person that made a great impact in my life. I say more in generality through the three years I cross different people. To see how people really get along that you would have

never known, or met in regular life, and it was very interesting, people from all over the country.

Q: How did your time in service, once you went through everything, did it change your perspective on the war?

SN: I felt there was something that had to be done, somebody had to do it, we were there for a purpose, especially for when the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, of course, that was when I was 16, 17 when that happened, and you couldn't go in the service. But the group I went with, the biggest group from Rome. When I became 18 and 19, before they wouldn't abduct anyone unless they were 21 years old, and then they lowered the age limit, and started abducting anybody from 18 years old and up. We were the first group that left Rome of 18/19-year-olds, I think there were about 200 or 300 people all from Rome, in that age category, and uh I think that was the first time they lowered it, the age group requirements, then a lot of kids hide their age, some guys got away with when they were 16 or 17 depending on their structure, you know how you look, they got away with joining the army or air force or navy even though they weren't 18. Because of their physical looks, they looked older...

Q: Do you have any final comments or story you would like to share?

SN: Before I started meeting different people when I was stationed in Yuma, we went to LA, we went to Hollywood and met different people, I danced with [unclear], she was an actress. I got a postcard with her. We met quite a few interesting people...Bob [unclear]... Harry James, I can't even remember all of them. These are all people that I would have never met in regular life. I would only have seen them in movies or on TV instead of actual life. In general, the whole idea of the three years, I think it was a phase in my life that I won't miss for all the money in the world, because it was very interesting, so very educational, and all phases in my life. We met a lot of people, we are still friends, still here, and everything worked out really well. You didn't want to be there but you were there and you made the best of it.

Q: Do you want to go over some of the stuff you brought?

SN: [showing personal documents] Here's my certificate for aircraft mechanics...I don't have one for [unclear]...I misplaced that, and my honorable discharge papers, separation qualification, this is my last [unclear] testament... If anything, happen you had that too. Here's another interesting thing of the second war, you want to read that, this was for all the 18-year-olds that were drafted from the second war from where I lived at the time.

This is one of my weekend passes, this was October 27, Illinois Michigan at the rose bowl, in Vidal California. These three guys, we were together, we got separated, he went to one went to [unclear] center and I went to discharge center to get phased out of service. After school, he went to someone place else. He and I went to [unclear] field.

This is a newspaper of the Japanese's Surrender... This was our newspaper on base, we were very happy to hear about. Like I saw these things are 50, 60 years old. I came home on [unclear], everyone was getting married so I set up a wedding, pictures of our crew together, different friends. You mass all this stuff, you go back and look at all this stuff, and it bringing back a lot of memories of your service...

Q: Thank you very much for your time, it great to talk to you, Thank you.

SN: It was my pleasure, it was very interesting, and being in service and something I would have never done if we haven't gone to war. Meet a lot of people, learned a lot of things, everything like that. All in all, it was a good three years and very informative.