

**Anthony Giammalvo  
Narrator**

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

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**Anthony Giammalvo: AG  
Mike Russert: MR  
Wayne Clarke: WC**

**WC:** Can you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth please?

**AG:** My name is Anthony Giammalvo. My place of birth was in Brooklyn, New York in 1925.

**WC:** Thank you. What was your educational background prior to entering service?

**AG:** Well, I was a high school drop out because I was too anxious to get into the navy. You know? I took a course on my ship, but I never got a diploma. So I am a high school dropout really, which I'm sorry to say.

**WC:** Do you remember where you were and what your reaction was to Pearl Harbor?

**AG:** Well, I remember I was at a wedding...my cousin's wedding. In 1941, which was December 7<sup>th</sup> on a Sunday. I'll never forget that, and the whole wedding was disturbed because it was interrupted by an announcement that Pearl Harbor was bombed. I was about sixteen years old, I think I was about that age. I'll never forget that day. Everybody changed. All the young guys who wanted to go...they couldn't wait to go in.

**WC:** So you said you left school to join the navy?

**AG:** Well no, I didn't join the navy. I'll be honest with you my father and mother didn't want me to because my one brother was already injured. Wait till they called you, they said. They called me as soon as I signed up for the draft at eighteen, they got me in three months.

**WC:** What branch of service were you in?

**AG:** I was in the United States Navy. Proud, proud to be in the Navy.

**WC:** You went in July of forty three?

**AG:** Right.

**WC:** Where did you go for your basic training?

**AG:** Sampson, New York. Upstate New York. I stayed up there 2 months about or whatever it was... two months and a half. Then they shipped me to Brooklyn Navy yard. I was on hold. There was a beautiful ship that I had no knowledge about at all called the U.S.S Euryale. The U.S.S Euryale was not a very big ship. She was a 9000 something hundred ton ship, but it was built to be a submarine tender. I'm very proud of her, she had over twelve or thirteen citations. I was on the safest ship to be on, but I was very close to all of the hostilities because this ship had to be as close as possible to all the submarines that we serviced. It was sub tender with a relief crew and everything it needed.

**WC:** A relief crew for submarines?

**AG:** Right.

**WC:** So you kept a relief crew live aboard?

**AG:** Oh yes. We had a ship company of maybe if I can remember right of about 1300 including the submarine relief crew. I was all over the pacific. When a sub came along side of us in the pacific they would come along side with 6 or 7 subs right there also. They would stay alongside of them about a week or two or about ten days depending on the condition of the submarine and by that time it was redone and serviced. New crew, refreshed crew. Fueled up. Fresh new torpedoes and ready to go out for another month or month and a half. That's how long it took for them to fulfill a run.

**WC:** What kind of things did you do to a submarine to re-service it?

**AG:** Well, A submarine after two months... let's say a month and a half out on service needed everything. It needed a general overhaul, which it got. The torpedoes if there were any left were taken out re-drained and refilled and put back in. Overhauled the submarine completely. Changed the crew captain and everything. That was a horrible duty for a month and a half two months to be on a submarine. They had the best food in the world to eat but it was a pretty dangerous assignment being a submarine crewman.

**WC:** Did your sub tender also have food for them too?

**AG:** Oh yes, we supplied them with food. Supplied them with cooks if they needed. We had everything for them. We entertained them. That was what I used to do. I was in the navy's ship band. I played music. I still do and I was also the bugler. I woke everybody up every morning.

**WC:** You were probably the best loved man on the ship!

**AG:** I was, but I got along with everybody. I really enjoyed my duty very much and I'm proud to say that. My ship was the type of ship that every time it hit a strange different part of the pacific we would anchor there. Then the first thing to do is get the band off and put them on a couple of wale boats. We entertained all the troops that were ashore marines, army, and everything like

that. I have a picture of the band and it was a great thing to do. It made them happy and all that. Yeah that's one of pictures.

**WC:** When was that taken?

**AG:** It was taken in Australia. Perth or Fremantle that's southwest Australia. I'm up over here.

**MR:** Where about are you again?

**AG:** I'm up over here, right here. It was beautiful orchestra, you can see it. We entertained everybody, every time we went some place. Course that was in Fremantle, but we used to do it with [unclear] out in the jungles for the marines, the army, and for the navy sea bees. I was so busy that the war just flew right by so fast.

**MR:** Did you play music for any USO shows?

**AG:** Oh yes. There was one time I just missed Joey Bragg by a day. That was before your time maybe. Don Cannel, Bob Hope, and Joe Stafford. All those beautiful stars. They were always busy. Bob Hope deserves a lot of credit and also Joey Bragg and the rest of great... Jerry Colona and those guys. The Red Cross naturally is great too.

**WC:** How long were you at sea?

**AG:** At sea?

**WC:** Yes

**AG:** About 24- 26 months I don't remember. Over two years I know.

**WC:** On this from you filled out you said "you thought your ship was one of the worst enemies Japan ever had". Why was that?

**AG:** Oh yeah. Why because of all the submarines attached to my ship. There were two sub tenders called the [unclear] and Fulton and us. My sub tender was smaller than the other ones. Somehow they used to make us get closer to the enemy, so my subs wouldn't have to travel too far. And what was the question again I lost my ....

**WC:** Why did you think it was the worst enemy the Japanese had seen?

**AG:** Because my subs, not my sub tender, did a lot damage. They were responsible for a great battleship in Tokyo Harbor that got hit badly. She won citations. I'm not sure what the name of them were. I don't remember that. I was very proud of those guys when they came in. They came in all banged up and busted up. We lost a lot of submarines to, but if they came back they were really people to salute too believe me. That was a horrible life on that boat, especially when damaged.

**WC:** If a submarine was badly damaged would they come to you?

**AG:** No, if they were badly damaged... At that time there were these sea planes called Catalina PBV's and there were no helicopters at that time. They were the only support they might get or maybe a destroyer or most likely a destroyer escort too get near them and they rescued a lot of them they really did. They helped a lot and saved a lot of guys, but some of them were unable to be saved. Stories I heard.

**WC:** You said one of usual duties you performed was sounding taps for services?

**AG:** Yes, wherever my ship was either in New Guinea, Mililani bay, Guam, Eniwetok. We went to all these islands, I'm proud of that. There was battles before we got there and if they needed an armed guard: I would sound taps. I've done that especially in Okinawa and that was my duty I was there if they needed me. I was told to go but before that I was on my ship all the time sounding all kinds of calls: Beverly, Turn to, [unclear]call, Boat calls, emergency calls. The first thing they had to do was know the bugle calls. If anything ever happened to the electrical power they needed to know the bugle calls. That's what the executive officer told me "you make sure you play those chords right"!

**WC:** You ended up in occupied Japan?

**AG:** Yes. Sasebo, Japan.

**WC:** Can you tell us about it?

**AG:** We ended up in Sasebo because Sasebo was known to be one of their biggest if not the biggest submarine places the Japanese had there. We were there my crew. I wasn't a mechanic. I was a musician. They would dismantle all of the subs they had over there. The Japanese had the biggest submarines and the smallest submarines. They had two submarines that came to surrender to us during the war. They used to hold two kamikaze airplanes in a tube.

**WC:** Two submarines were surrendered to you?

**AG:** They were found. They were looking to give up. They had no fuel, they'd run out of it. We had a sea going tug attached to my ship if you know what I'm talking about. Sea going tugs they go out and pick up damaged ships if they're still floating. They'll tow them to the nearest place that they can get help. My ship was a tender. If they couldn't find a better place then they brought them my ship. They brought these two big subs next to us. I had pictures. I should have brought them too. They were the clumpiest. They weren't too famous for the Japanese and the other ones they couldn't stay without getting sea sick. Those smaller ones they had too weren't that great.

**WC:** Did you actually get to go to Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

**AG:** Yeah we were there, we occupied all that place. What I saw, I just didn't believe. I saw devastation. I can't just explain it to you. Just dried out people. There was skulls with hair,

hands, and bones all over that place. I'm surprised they let us go there to look at that. That I'll never forget as long as I live. I was so convinced after that experience there would never be another war. Not what that bomb did. Look at all the wars we had right after that. That was the most terrifying experience I've had.

**WC:** Do you think we were justified dropping those bombs?

**AG:** Oh yeah, if we didn't... even though we were killing more than they were... more of them than us, but still we were losing a lot of men every day. I'm sorry to say because you know I believe in forgiveness for people. I met Japanese people over there. I talked to them. I was surprised, they were prepared to take this world over you know. They spoke English better than I did. I came from Brooklyn you know. They killing us like anything over there. They were all cruel. The Japanese army or navy or whatever they are were cruel to our prisoners. They were, maybe they're not anymore now. I hope not, but we were too good to them. They were no good to us.

**WC:** How long did you stay in Japan after the [unclear] occupation?

**AG:** About two months.

**WC:** Then you came back to the states over here?

**AG:** Then finally... they told them to put the homeward bound [unclear] on your ship to take off but then all of a sudden my ship became a troop transport. Everybody was overloaded with points. The ship had I don't know how many people on it. The mess hall was open twenty four hours a day. There was no such thing as waiting a couple of hours. You had about 4000 guys on that ship. That was something. I didn't even have to sound chow call or anything like that because the war was over. I was relieved anyways but thank god.

**WC:** When were you discharged?

**AG:** I'll tell you how I got discharged. The ship made it to San Francisco. I was in Pearl Harbor a couple of times. She made it to San Francisco and then from there we got off the ship. We got on a cattle car. I was headed home to New York. Many of times we could have got out of that cattle car and we could have ran faster than that train was moving. It was about a mile and a half long. It had engines pulling us and it had engines in the back pushing us. It was full of soldiers, sailors, and marines. It took us about a week to get there, to get home.

**WC:** There were mattresses in it on the sides? Bunks?

**AG:** I had a sea bag and that was all. We had to make room. I'll tell you the truth it was very uncomfortable, but that wasn't on our mind we were getting home you know what I mean. We made the best of it. A lot of us slept during the day instead of the night

**WC:** Where were you discharged?

**AG:** Lito Beach, Long Island. That's near long beach if you know where that is. It was a beautiful hotel one time, but they made a navy place out of it. That was in 1946.

**WC:** Do you ever know what happened to your ship?

**AG:** My ship, yes. I got all kinds of reports on her. She stayed in San Francisco. She was [unclear]. She was never recalled back to duty until about seventy six or seventy eight if I can remember correctly. She was called for something, but they never got it to do anything. Now she's got old and she's finished. She's dead. There was a submarine tender called the Fulton she was a much bigger sub tender than ours and the O'Brian. I remember them they were great subs. We were the ones if it was going to be sunk it was ours. [Unclear] Thank god we all got home safe. I was near the action but I was never in the action. I was near it all but never confronted any action.

**WC:** Did you make use of the GI Bill at all?

**AG:** No because my father, mother, and brother had a business. It was a dairy business. Small business and I got involved with that [unclear] in 1946. I had an army ambulance believe it or not that was titled to me. I paid for it, but for not as much. I just put dairy products in that truck, but there was no red cross on it. I took that off. And I built up a route because in 1946 everything was open. Progress was very good. Stores couldn't wait to get rid of the crump that was serving them during the war. So I built up a dairy route in no time. I did very well. I ended up serving supermarkets after a while. Waldbaums supermarket in Brooklyn, one store on [unclear] avenue, Hills markets. A&P's, [unclear] I used to serve them all. Became pretty big. You ever hear of [unclear] or [unclear]. Yeah that was me.

**WC:** Have you joined a veteran's organization?

**AG:** Oh yeah, the American Legion. I don't know how many years. I started in 1946.

**WC:** You're obviously very active!

**AG:** Well sure because you know I've always liked places like that for veterans. I started in Brooklyn and then Valley stream. I lived there for thirty five years which I miss very much. Well established. Had a very big post there. Now I'm sorry to say our posts are all dying no matter where they are because the old timers are gone. The Vietnam guys don't seem like they want to get in it. Maybe they are disgusted. I don't know what it is. Korean War forget about it. It's only World War II active in these things.

**WC:** You are still active as a bugler?

**AG:** Oh yeah, I'm a bugler across America I have my award there if you look. They gave me that medal. Somebody told them about me and they wrote me about it. I gained some information. I'm available even up to today. Only thing about being available is that they can't tell me a week in time. They only can tell me the day before, but if I'm available...I've done so many of them in Calvington, Pine Lawn, private cemeteries, and all over.

**WC:** Did you ever stay in contact with anyone that you served with?

**AG:** Oh yeah, we have reunions. Now there dying out now. I'm one of the youngest ones there. We have reunions. I always bring my horn with me. I'm the only musician left in that band. The other ones just don't show up or passed away. We always make a point to the band we hire over there for three days to make room for me to play. I still jam you know. I'm a jazz man. I sit in and have a good time. Old timers. Brings out a lot of things to remember. So how many years I still see these guys. What's left of us there's thirteen of us maybe left. When we first started there a hundred and twenty five of us. That's it. We've been all over the country. No matter where it's nice.

**WC:** How do you think your time in service changed or affected your life?

**AG:** Well I was a young kid then you know. When I got back I was talking about it a couple years after that. Then I met a nice girl, I married her. It didn't affect me not so ever. It didn't because I wasn't the only one. Most of the guys were in the service then. I remember the big party they had in Brooklyn for all the service men. They had that party in the end of forty six. There were thousands of us over there. The streets were like the big Brooklyn festivals they have. It was really nice. I enjoyed every part of it and I appreciate it. I was proud and a lot of guys had seen more than I ever did. Especially the prisoners of war. I've seen a couple prisoners of war that came aboard our ship. Oh boy, oh boy. That's why I'm telling you the Japanese... the Germans weren't as bad as the Japanese.

**WC:** Thank you for your interview.