

**Thomas Battista
Veteran**

**Interviewed by
NYS Senator Patty Ritchie Office**

**Interviewed on November 11th, 2013
Oswego, New York**

Senator Patty Ritchie: PR

Interviewer: INT

Thomas Battista: TB

PR: They're called the greatest generation. Men, and women, from all walks of life who grew up in the Great Depression led our nation to victory in World War II and help make America a beacon of freedom and democracy for all the world; and do they have some stories to tell. I'm pleased to be partnering with the New York State Museum Veterans Research Center to preserve the words and memories of many of our World War II veterans. These stories will be entered into the state's archives where they will be accessible to researchers, academics, and future generations. Our veterans have given so much to help build a brighter future for all Americans, this tribute is just one small way of saying "thank you".

INT: Normandy Invasion

TB: Yes

INT: Can you tell me a little bit?

TB: Yeah, it was tough,- [Background laughter] We got held up in, uh, the Bulge because we had the landing... there was all wired fenced and we had to wait for the men to get that out of the way before we could go in. Once it got [unclear] then we went in, but we still had [unclear, stuff to bolts?] and stuff that had to get over there. We spent the night on the bank, big high bank, they had a big gun up on top shooting at us; done a good job of it, I tell ya [unclear] [poodle are men?] The next day we got goin' and we were alright. So, we get out of there and go down. down to the hedge row in France and down there we chased them all over one gunner to jump over and they chased us back. It went back and forth and one of the guys, the gunner of the B.A.R., got killed, so I picked up the B.A.R. and took over. And then they got a tank in there to break down the hedge rows and they put these spears on the front of the tank, they hit the bank to break the bank so it wouldn't be so high to get up on them. When they done it that way we were riding pretty good. So

then we get out of there and we went to different ones that house and house, we ended up in the Hurtgen Forest in Germany and we. I got hit there and I got out of [unclear]...they went on to the forest and to battle the Bolts and place. So I missed that. But before that we went house to house and I picked up a rifle or a revolver in one of the buildings that they left behind when they ran and then I ... I went into the... I gotta put my thinking cap on [laughter]. I don't know, I got hit in the knee and I had to get out of there, I couldn't do anything 'cause I got hit and I went back to the hospital so I had been in the hospital just waiting awhile and hardly I got my [unclear] to come back to the States, so I came back to the States. I get back here and I went up and got ... I got out of the train going to California, I had no telling I was doing that. So I get out at California and they said "what're you doing out here, you're up for a discharge". So they discharge me from California and they sent me home, with the discharge. I get back to Syracuse, midnight, we couldn't get a ride into the city of Oswego. So a friend of mine drove [unclear], we walked from Syracuse to Oswego by foot, [laughter] we walked home. And then things quieted down.