

**Ignacius N. Quartararo
Veteran**

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

**Interviewed on August 10, 2006
Westbury Library, NY**

Q: Full name and date of birth, please?

IQ: My name is Ignacius Quartararo. My birthday is July 26, 1926. I was born in New York City.

Q: What was your educational background prior to entering the service?

IQ: I was first year of college.

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

IQ: Yes, I was visiting family in southern New Jersey. I hear it on the radio that morning.

Q: What was your reaction?

IQ: I think like everyone else it was a combination of fright and anger, and bewilderment. Didn't know what was going on what was going to happen next.

Q: Did you enlist or drafted?

IQ: I enlisted in a special program that was for people who were not old enough to be drafter. There was a special training program ASTC and ASCRP which allowed. You had to sign up before. You were 17. So prior to being draft bait, if you were anxious enough, which is what I did and I was sent to Cornell University. I had been at NYU.

Q: Was that January 1944?

IQ: I graduated high school in 1944. I enlisted January 28, 1944. I wrote that down to remember.

Q: Did you go from high school to enlist?

IQ: No, I went high school to NYU, then this program.

Q: What kinds of courses did you take at Cornell?

IQ: General Arts and Sciences. History, English, Geography, and journalism. Geology classes were more broken up at college. I was interested in them. We were there in cadet uniforms. ROTC uniforms. It was a strong ROTC program at Cornell. Umm, my previous experience I had as a student was different. Lived in dorms. We had an Army captain and a couple of old sergeant that ran us around like being in the Army.

Q: How long were you there?

IQ: I went on active duty on the 20th of September. Spent spring and summer semester, did a year of work. I had a year credit when I went back to NYU.

Q: Did the program end?

IQ: No, no...back up a little to 1944, I was 18 in July so I went to Camp_____. In Orlando, Florida.

Q: They needed people?

IQ: Yes, this was a change for me from Cornell. We lived and ate in the sand. We slept in the sand. Everything was sand and wild pigs.

Q: How long was your basics?

IQ: 3 months. At the end of that people started to move out. I was transferred to Fort Bragg. I went through training. I was a college student so I could read a ruler and slide ruler so I was fire control. From there we shipped out after that basic was over. My continental service was 1 year, 1 month and 10 days. My foreign service was 5 months and 18 days. You can do the math. I arrived in Europe. We left New York from Drum New York, I believe. By train and got aboard Queen Elizabeth ship. There were 17,999 other GIs. We slept 6 high in pull down canvas bed frames. All the art work and word work was covered up with plywood. So it would not get damaged. We had meals, breakfast then get in line again for lunch. We ate British mutton. Queen Elizabeth could go across the Atlantic unescorted. It would zig-zag, and every 6 minutes. This was hard to detect like a sub.

Many men were sick. It was a fascinating trip. We got to Scotland and went by train. Came across channel boat rocked like hell. And slept in hammocks. 2 nights, got. On a train went through bombed out cities in Germany. In Germany, General Patten's third army. 20th core area. The first impression was we were in muddy farmland. Roads were mud. There was a Kentucky National Guard unit there. I joined up with them. A sergeant with a big red handle-bar moustache, he was a character. I pushed shells, loaded cartridges, standing up to my buttocks in mud. Umm...we were in the back, not front lines so we had food prepared for us. It was made in large pails with portable stoves. We shaved and washed in our helmets. Then on May 8th, the war ended.

Q: How were you accepted by the unit?

IQ: By then it was mixed. They had plenty of replacements. It was not a high casualty unit. It was far enough back. I. had no problems. I met and mingled. With others who went to college. We had our group. I enjoyed the experience. I had no previous experience with southern and south western cultures. You learn a lot in the Army. I learned a "butt cam" (laughing). That went well (laughing again). We wound up May 8th or 9th, war ended, we ended on Germany's border. From there we moved back concerned about Russia troops.

Q: Was there a lot of celebration in Germany when the war ended?

IQ: Yes, nothing like the pictures you saw from Time Square. We knew some had to go to the other side. They moved us to an old Mill that was still working. To protect it so people could still get food. That mill had an Inn and restaurant. They people who ran it

realized we were there to help them, so they allowed us to stay in the Inn. It was nice. Fresh eggs and chicken to eat and the cleaned and pressed our uniforms for us every day. They laid them out for us each morning. It was a good experience. I had a chance to go back years later, still there, the Inn and some of the people. 50 years later, it didn't change a lot.

Q: Did you ever encounter Russians at all?

IQ: Yes, they were around, wandering, acting like they did not know what they were doing. Not a threat at all. A line was drawn and followed. We moved further west. Joined the 45th division, Texas. Got on a boat headed for Japan. End of May or early June. Got there August 10th or 11th. The surrender was on the 15th. First

Bomb 10th second the 11th, then we celebrated.

Q: How did you feel when you heard about the bombs?

IQ: The 45th division was earmarked to go in. They had experience.

Q: Did they send you home from Europe for a long leave or anything?

IQ: No, we didn't go to the Pacific. We were sent to Camp Swift in Texas. We moved onto an. Indian Patch, war was over. Ended up in Houston for separation in Texas, April 13th, 1946.

Q: Where you aware of the concentration camps?

IQ: We saw them.

Q: What was your reaction?

IQ: By then there were photographs, the hate was there, and you were fighting Germany. It was hell. It couldn't get worse. More than that was seeing the dead bodies on the streets and the refugees pushing carts with all they own. Piled high with stuff. This was the saddest part. Including kids. They were just running away from the Russians. We lived in an M-1. A truck bigger than a hummer. It was like a mobile home. We'd be rolling down the road and thousands of people running to get away. It was so sad to see thousands on the road like that. They were going someplace. I am reading a book by Tony Judt (?), teaches at NYU, called "History of Europe After 1945", He touches on a lot of these displaced people and. What happened to the governments and the role the United States played in this. All the money poured in to help these people. We lived out in a field and met some people. I studied German, so I was the interpreter. We went to towns and talked to the mayors. One mayor spoke Italian and so did I so spoke Italian to each other. It was an odd-ball thing. These people were frightened so we assured them that we were there to help not hurt them. The war was over, things were settled down. We were treated nicely. No bad memories. Mostly farmer were around us.

Q: The form you filled out said memorable experience in Paris

IQ: Yes, well, we had a pass to Paris. Paris was a GI city then. All American soldiers. Umm..., we tried to get into this fancy French show, but couldn't so we went to a second

rated show. The French ladies could only tell us to sit and ask us to sit here and ask us for tips. We were treated well. Went back many years later, it looked the same.

Q: Did you see a USO Show?

IQ: No, must have been other than Paris. Never saw like a Bob Hope show or anything, doesn't ring a bell.

Q: After you left the service did you make use of the GI Bill?

IQ: YES! Greatest thing. I went back to NYU. On to graduate school. Set up my office with a loan from it. Veteran exemptions, all successful for me.

Q: Did you ever use the 52-20?

IQ: Absolutely

Q: Did you max it out?

IQ: No, separation in April, back to school in summer, summer classes. I think I got \$75.00 a month as a student. My father was happy (laughing).

Q: Did you join a veteran organization?

IQ: Not yet, too young.

Q: Did you stay on contact with anyone?

IQ: I did for a couple of years, we all were spread out 736 outfit was mixed up. Kind of hard because all over the country. Teacher in California to immigrant workers in Mexico.

Q: How do you think your time in the service affected your life?

IQ: The biggest advantage is the people I met. I met so many people in this amount of time. I think it contributed to a better sense of what this country is about. We laughed a lot at the Mickey Mouse that went on with the Texans and the southern drawls from the southern boys, but blessed to be exposed to it all. It was a learning process. Good for the country.

Q: Thank you for the interview, one last thing, hold this picture up and tell me where and when this was.

IQ: I don't know, no, I do know. This is at Cornell, yeah, at the dorm.