

**Angelo Bernard DeMicco
Veteran**

**Mike Russett
Wayne Clarke
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on
Angelo DeMicco's Home
Mechanicville, New York
May 21, 2003**

Q: this is an interview with Angelo DeMicco in his home in Mechanicsville New York. the 21st of May 2003, 10:00 am; the interviewers are Mike Russett and Wayne Clark. Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth, please?

AD: Yeah, my full name is Angelo Bernard DeMicco, place of birth, Mechanicsville and I was born of the first month, 29th date, 1925.

Q: Thank you, where did you go to school and what was your school background for entering military service?

AD: I went to Saint Comens for ten years. Now I had three years of high school at the hillside school, then I came here to Mechanicsville, and they backtracked [me] a year. Then I had one year at Mechanicsville then I went to try to get work. I quit three years of high school.

Q: Where were you and what was your reaction when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

AD: I heard about Pearl Harbor when I was out of a job looking for a job, but when I heard about it, I right away asked a buddy of mine if they were going to start drafting or if you could volunteer. So, me and my buddy Johnny whose dead today, Johnny Zulu, went down and volunteered when we heard about that

Q: So, you were 17 years old when drafted.

AD: We were 17 years old when we tried to get in December 42, but they wouldn't take me, but they only took Johnny because I had to wait one more month before I turned 18.

Q: Why'd you pick the army instead of another branch of service?

AD: Just wanted to serve in the army. My brother Tony first tried the Marines, but they wouldn't take him because he had slant eyes and they thought he (Tony) was Japanese. Honest to God it's the truth and after that, he went to the army, but they didn't take him in the army. Then finally took him in the Navy where he spent 40 years and became a master of arms and everything there including when he went into the army for 26 years out of when he was a 40-year professional fighter.

Q: Now where did you go for your induction and your basic training.

AD: I went for the induction in Camp Shanks in New York and then for basic training I went down to North Carolina, lightning division 78

Q: So, you were with the 78th division...

AD: ...78th division Of North Carolina

Q: What kind of training did you receive? Any specialized training?

AD: No infantry training mostly or learning how to shoot the guns. Then we had what they call dig your foxhole and we'll have a TD (tank destroyer) going over you while you're in there to see how strong it was. Well at that time I had mine at the end and everybody else built it, but they all ran into the woods. I didn't know, so I'm down there like this hanging underneath there so the tank destroyer came around on all the things (foxholes) there and there was nobody in them they came on mine and spun around and everything came down on top of me. I was buried alive, so I got my helmet on some way or another and got my head up yelling for help and everybody who was in the woods came and I said "Did you guys get in the foxhole? (they said) Oh no, we ran into the woods. So, I got two days off for possible sickness or harm.

Q: After your training in North Carolina, did you go anywhere else?

AD: Well we transferred out of the 78th division and I was transferred into the fourth division. And I became a rifleman and (part of the) second squad company.

Q: Okay, did you go to any additional training or did you head over to Europe from there.

AD: The only training we had was in Alabama, but then we went up to Camp Shanks right away and we were shipped overseas.

Q: How did you go overseas?

AD: By a small merchant ship. Our whole company went over on a merchant ship. Why, I don't know but we went to England. It was a convoy of merchant ships with destroyers protecting.

Q: So, you went to England. When did you arrive in England?

AD: I was there before D-day and in there in 1943. Spent six months up in Hull, Scotland, then I came back down towards South Hampton towards impartation areas.

Q: Did you receive any specialized training while you were in England at all?

AD: No. just some infantry[unclear] training and rifle shooting and going under machine gun fire and underneath the wires and stuff like that.

Q: Where you met with the English people at all

AD: Oh yeah, I jumped around with them and everything

Q: And how did you get along with the English population?

AD: Not too hot, not too hot. I don't know, they were sorta bitter, the people were. The soldiers were good, but the people were bitter.

Q: Were you ever there during any of the air raids?

AD: No not in that area because we were north of it.

Q: Where you involved in the Normandy Invasion?

AD: Oh yeah, yeah, my whole division was

Q: Could you tell us about that?

AD: Well we went in on the first wave on Utah beach. I went in with about seventy men going in. As we went in there, we only lost one or two guys, but we went in with probably no resistance at all because we landed five miles down too far. When we got there our division commander Teddy Roosevelt jr. the one that died said we'll start from here and go inland from this beach into Monterey and Malone and all the other cities along the coast. We relieved the 82nd airborne at Saint Mary Elise and got them together and then they came along with us towards the fighting at Sherborne, the biggest place we hit. We knocked out all the other places and then we hit Sherborne and released we had to do house to house fighting with stiff resistance. Then we captured the island of St. Malo, an island right off the coast of Sherborne. It was loaded with thousands of Germans, but they surrendered after some bombardment. When we went in, we found a

cave full of whiskey, cognac, and wine. Everybody could have had 20 cases in the whole division if they wanted to drink it. We had a few bottles to celebrate capturing Sherborne. I think we captured over 20,000 Germans in that one island because they surrendered.

Q: Do you remember if you were able to see the invasion fleet?

AD: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You'd see the ones going one way toward Utah beach, while the other went to Omaha. I'm glad we didn't go to Omaha because those guys got slaughtered. The fleet was tremendous, and I don't know where all the ships came from. I didn't believe we had that many. They assigned us Utah, so we went in in Utah.

Q: Did you ever get to see Roosevelt himself?

AD: Oh yeah Teddy came right on the beach with us.

Q: What did you think of him as a commander?

AD: Very intelligent and smart but he had a bad heart. I don't think he even made it off the beach, I think he died around two or three weeks after the invasion. Could have been England, but I'm pretty sure it was Normandy because he had a bad heart, but he went up against all law and came in even though they wanted him to stay home. He was a good man.

Q: Could you describe your combat experiences?

AD: Oh yeah. I went into Sherborne and stuff like that and I never got hit that way, but when we were coming down to the [piers and the swamps and what they called the more tense[unclear]] and take a little area. They took the area but then had to stay there. Overnight the Germans pulled a big counterattack and they had to hold the area, which they did, Machine gun (fire) hit the back of my right leg almost getting it shot off. They were able to do this attack partially because they were dressed in American uniforms, so we thought they were Americans and when they saw an opening, they fired on us and hit my leg. In fact, there is a bullet wound where it went through my leg and now it hurts all the time along with the whole leg. This happened over 50 years ago.

Q: After you were wounded, where did you go?

AD: They put me on a jeep while the counterattack was still going on and went out of range. As I'm going down, the Germans are shooting at this jeep with all kinds of guns like machine guns and I can feel things going left and right, like the sound of whip crack. I finally made it back to an aid station near the evacuation

station near Sherborne where Doctor Cornel came and operated on my leg. I was unconscious so when I woke up, I met three people from Mechanicsville. They brought me back doughnuts, cakes, and coffee.

Q: When were you wounded?

AD: A month and a half after the invasion.

Q: So, there were Germans in American uniforms at that time?

AD: It's amazing. I couldn't figure out what was going on, so I opened my rifle and shot about three of them.

Q: Did they take you back to England?

AD: Yes, I went back to England for rehabilitation for a week or two in hospitals until I finally came back to my outfit. That's when Patton made the breakthrough at Saint-Lo and I wound up in what they call the Prum area, that's the town. We started fighting and busted through. A concussion bomb lifted me out of my foxhole and blew me up against a tree giving me bleeding all over my nose. I now had two wounds which I turned into the Veterans Administration. I left for one to two weeks and then came back to the front lines again. They sent me back to rehabilitation after another month of combat while they went on to Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Q: Where you in the Ardennes?

AD: Yes, we made the Ardennes with the fourth division, and I think that's where Prum was heading, the Ardennes. We were with Patton and the tanks coming in and at the Battle of Bastogne relieved the troops at Bastogne.

Q: Did you ever see Paton?

AD: Oh yeah. How could you miss him?

Q: What did you think of Patton

AD: He was a good general who believed in keeping on going, rather than sitting and digging a hole. We teamed up with Patton after coming from the hospital. He's good and smart, no question about it.

Q: Now when you went into the Ardennes, did you have winter equipment?

AD: Yes. I wore the regular combat boots because the troops with the goulashes kept freezing their feet. Putting a rubber boot over the regular combat boots was good enough.

Q: Did you have an overcoat?

AD: Oh yeah. OD coat. I also had another coat that one of the quartermasters gave me, a big fur lined coat which I wore for the rest of the campaign.

Q: Did you guys have sleeping bags to sleep in

AD: One blanket and my buddy and me. Each person got their own blanket, and we alternated watch while two people slept. There were also make-shift covers for the foxholes. That's when another guy got frozen feet from the goulashes, so I took his shoes off and warmed his frostbite feet until feeling returned. That was after they pushed through to Bastogne, which was 20 degrees below zero. Nothing moved because it was so cold and foggy you couldn't move.

Q: So, you pushed into the Rhineland and into Germany before you were sent...

AD: I went as far as the best of Z freeline and that's as far as I went. Then I went back.

Q: How long were you in combat from D-day until when

AD: I'd say about six months because we had 199 days of contact with the fort and then we went to what they called Luxemburg. We went down for the first rest since D-day, and I was with the outfit then for a week. We had just got there when the Germans pushed through with the Battle of the Bulge. We had little rest at all because of conflict again down in Luxembourg. We had to go outside Luxemburg and protect around there. That's when we got Patton down with us.

Q: Now this article you sent us, your unit captured Crossroad unit 148. Where was that and why was that so important?

AD: One-Forty-Eight was just outside of 54 where the Germans were dough into a hole, so we surrounded them and killed the snipers protecting the area for the Germans they stopped ped fighting, so we went down into the hole and started capturing, but they surrendered, and we lost nobody.

Q: Okay shortly after you were going through the Siegfried line you were sent back to the rear. What did they do with you there?

AD: Well, they were rehabilitating me because I started to hear things in my head and started wobbling and stuff like that, so I was sent back to camp Phillip Morris.

Q: Where did you go from there?

AD: Well after that we started going back to the United States because the war was over, but I was still in one of the rehabilitation camps in France.

Q: Where were you and what was your reaction when you heard about the death of President Roosevelt?

AD: The man suffered too much with his paralysis and stuff like that, and I felt bad. I also felt bitter towards him because we had to go into combat and stuff like that.

Q: Where were you and how did you feel when you heard about the surrender of the Germans?

AD: Oh, I smoked about four packs of cigarettes that day. I felt so happy, and I wasn't in any combat, but rather I was in Camp Philip Morris. At that time, they were giving out points for being wounded totaling, (his totaling)30 points

Q: How did you go back to the states?

AD:By a big boat, possibly the Queen Marry. I had a few souvenirs but ended up giving them away.

Q: When were you discharged?

AD: Camp Shanks around March 14th was the original date, but they kept me another month because of illness. I met up with my oldest brother there and we were getting discharged together.

Q: What Branch of service was he in?

AD: He was in the Airforce, stationed around Alaska. Tony was in the Navy in England

Q: When you returned home, did you ever make use of the GI bill.

AD: Yes. I went to purchase vocational school in Troy. I became a body and fender man. And after two years there and getting my diploma, I went to work for Harry Clements for two years of training and then I went to regular work. So, he got a job with Jack Troy and asked for a raise, and he wanted to fight about it, so I came back home and worked odds and ends on body work until the state made me give it up.

Q: Did you ever make use of the 5220 cloth?

AD: Yes. I used it for one year and worked odd jobs.

Q: Did you join any veterans' organizations?

AD: The DAV and the VFW.

Q: You still belong to them?

AD: Oh yeah. I'm a lifetime member of the DAV and I pay annually for the VFW

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

AD: No I never got their names half the time and they come in and go. Only one guy I know from my service who lives in Oregon, but forgot his name

Q: How do you think your service affected or changed your life in any way? You think it did?

AD: Well, I think it did change my life when it comes to working on the railroad, that they won't take service men with disabilities. And I would have had 45 years up there because I worked in the roundhouse at the time that I worked for the railroad and I had an argument with all the big shots up there and then I got turned in about my disability and then lost my job,

Q: Could you hold this in front of you and tell us when and where this was taken.

AD: (picture) 1944 in a bar

Q: how about these two photographs

AD: this is my brother Armand[unclear], and this is my brother Tony, the professional fighter.

(Pictures of his siblings with some explanations)

Medals for Good Conduct and European Theater of Operations along with Army of Occupation medal, conspicuous service medal, purple heart, bronze star,