

Carmelo Farfaglia
Veteran

Grandson of veteran
Interviewer

New York State Military Museum
Saratoga Springs, New York
January 2, 2001

Q: What is your name?

CF: Carmelo Farfaglia.

Q: And what's today's date?

CF: January 2, 2001?

Q: How come no middle name? Why is that?

CF: I have no idea.

Q: It wasn't a common thing?

CF: It was not a common thing. Italians never had a middle name that I'm aware of. It's very unusual. If they did have middle names, I didn't know it. Okay?

Q: And how old are you?

CF: Seventy-eight, I guess.

Q: Well, you're not sure?

CF: [laughs] I'm trying to hold back the calendar. I can't do it.

Q: [laughs] Okay. What can you tell me about your parents?

CF: What I can tell you about them, they're typical old Italians, raised straight from the old country, Sicily. They were immigrants. My father became quite Americanized after being here a while. My mother never quite did. They both spoke Italian. So when I went to school Italian was the only language I understood. So the only thing I can remember from my childhood, as far as schooling is concerned, is that I left kindergarten, ran down the street and teachers chased me down the street. Apparently I didn't know at that time what was going on, so I went home. English was foreign to me. So I spent another year

in kindergarten. That's all I remember about first going to public school. That's about it.

Q: Now, they're both from the same village in Sicily?

CF: Yes. They were neighbors. They never discussed that very much. I picked up a little bit here and there. I guess they were neighbors. When I went to Sicily, we looked up where they lived. We saw their home. It's not really a home; it was a cluster of buildings and one door was where they lived. If you can imagine one straight big building with a bunch of doors on it. This Italian kid, one of the Farfaglias, Barbagallo [?], is related to the Farfaglias. His mother was a Farfaglia, the one that took us down and showed us that place where he was born and where they lived. Okay, then what? [Laughs]

Q: All right, so my next question here was how did they meet? But obviously they were neighbors.

CF: They were neighbors. That's right. That's the answer for that one.

Q: Your father came here for the first time in what year?

CF: That is a good question. I really don't know for sure. But it was before World War I. The only thing I can remember him talking about was that he was a water boy on the lower bridge when they were building the Erie Canal. They were building the branch going to Oswego. He worked on the lower docks.

Q: I did not know that.

CF: That's the only thing I can remember about that time.

Q: So he came over here. And that's the first thing he did, was work on the Erie Canal?

CF: Right. And I think what he did, I think he was staying with his sister, Angelino Marino's wife was my father's sister.

Q: And her name was Carmella?

CF: Her name was Carmella, right.

Q: What made the family settle in Fulton, of all places?

CF: I have no idea. I never did hear. It was a cluster of Italians on the Flats. Flats were everything below Erie Street. They used to call that the Italian village down there. All the Italians came to Fulton and settled down there.

Q: And that's where you grew up?

CF: That's where I was born, down there on the Flats. The house is no longer there. Zaia was the guy that was over here first. And he more or less interpreted for these Italian people who lived in this little Italian section down in Fulton, down below Erie Street.

Q: And they all spoke Italian?

CF: They all spoke Italian down there, as far as I know. That's where Dr. Sancata [?] came from, and all the rest of them. And Zaia was the interpreter. He had a grocery store down there, and that's where that kind of people got their macaroni and stuff. That's about it, I think.

Q: Now, he went back to Sicily and fought for Italy in World War I. Back then it was called the Great War. What made him decide to do that?

CF: He never told me. I don't have the faintest idea why he went back. He was a young, single man, so I assumed that he felt he had to go back and fight for his own country, I guess. That's what he did. I think he was still a teenager, but I'm not sure. Not sure.

Q: Now, when he went back, did he bring your mother back here?

CF: After he came out of the service, he married my mother, and then he came over here.

Q: Where did they get married? In Sicily or here?

CF: No, they got married in Sicily. They didn't get married here. They were married over there.

Q: How long did he know her before they got married?

CF: I have no idea. They were neighbors.

Q: I know, but did they correspond with letters when he was here? Then when he went back over to fight in Italy?

CF: I doubt that. It was a different time, different era. At that time, most of the wives were fixed marriages. You had to go ask the father for the daughter. In fact, my Godmother, in Canastota. My father was interested in her before he decided to marry my mother and her father turned my father down. She was a young teenager at the time and so was he. I didn't know that story until she told me that, my Godmother. She was married to a Farfaglia too. So that's the only two loves of

his life that I know about. One that I wasn't aware of until she told me about it, that he was interested in her. But those days were fixed marriages, frankly.

Q: So your mother was basically fixed with your father?

CF: No, I had very, very few details. My mother, I know hardly nothing about her. I do remember she said she had a brother. Her parents must have died real young. She never talked about her parents, so I know very little about my mother's side. That's a shame. I can't discuss it because they never discussed it with me or ever said anything. So I don't know. It's a sad situation, really. Actually, her name is more or less Greek. She was named Torrea, and that's a Greek name from what I found out later. So apparently, of course, the Greeks did occupy that island for quite a while. Island of Sicily. They had a very turbulent history, Sicily. Okay. Next. [Laughs]

Q: [laughs] How long did it take your parents, you think, to learn English?

CF: I thought I just said that. My father was Americanized. He caught on fast, and my mother never really caught on. By the time my father became middle aged, he was reading Drew Pearson, who was a columnist that wrote articles in the paper. That was his favorite columnist that he wanted to read all the time. And he wrote in English. He had a sharp mind. You wouldn't know that he came from the old country if you talked to him. He had no accent or nothing.

Q: Your mother had an accent?

CF: Oh, yes. She never got rid of it.

Q: Did she know how to read in English?

CF: No, she could not read English or nothing? She had a difficult time getting the citizenship papers. I can remember when she got them.

Q: How old was she when she got her citizenship papers?

CF: I have no idea. I got it in there somewhere.

Q: Were you born by then?

CF: It was in the service.

Q: So you were a teenager then?

CF: When she got her citizenship papers. Oh, no. She got her citizenship papers in the thirties, I think, if I remember correctly. I'm not sure about that.

Q: But you said you remember it?

CF: Yeah, I remember her getting the citizenship papers because they had a little blowout over at the Phillips Street School. The principal from the school was there and they had a little band, and they celebrated the fact that they became American citizens. And it was not only her, my mother, but a bunch of other people. Funny, I don't remember my father doing it when he got his. He must have gotten his right away and I wasn't even aware of it. She had to learn who the first president was, so on and so forth. These little stupid questions they ask you. I guess she made it all right because they gave her the citizen papers.

Q: Well, that's good. So do you think your father was a citizen when he went to fight for Italy?

CF: No, he was not. All this stuff happened afterwards. After they came over here. They immigrated back over here.

Q: Did he ever talk about his World War I experiences with you?

CF: The only thing he ever said about World War I was that he used to ride the mules over there and they kept throwing him off and hitting him, and he'd fall on the ground. In fact, years later, when he was sick, like I am, with emphysema, some reason or other, he took an x-ray of his head or something like that, and they found out he had a number of bangs on him, and that was from the donkey throwing him on the ground. I remember him telling me about that. He did get raised to the rank of corporal. Outside that he was up on the Austrian border somewhere, as far as he got. Very few details, never talked about it.

Q: My dad once told me that he got gassed.

CF: Well, we thought that was a problem. That's why he had emphysema. Now I'm not so sure that he did, because his medical records or his discharge papers did not indicate that he was gassed in World War I. Because your medical history is on your discharge papers. If he'd have been gassed, I think it would have appeared on his papers. I think that was an industrial thing because when he worked over as a beater man in North End Paper Mill. He dumped chlorine to bleach the paper to make the paper perfectly white. That is a strong chemical. I suspect that he may have wounded his lungs there. But I can't prove it because I've got the same thing. I never worked around bleach. So apparently it's a hereditary problem, I guess. But for years and years, like you say, we thought that he was gassed in World War I, and he wasn't. And he never poo pooed it. In other words, he accepted it. Okay.

Q: Your parents lost a baby before you were born.

CF: I have no details on that whatsoever. I don't know why she lost it. It was the first born, I was the second born. Why she lost it...

Q: Was it a boy or a girl?

CF: I don't even know that, and I don't think it was even carried to term. Very little details on that. Practically nothing.

Q: Your brother Conchetto, who drowned when he was four. What memory do you have of him?

CF: Well, that's very sad. Very sad. One day while I was playing with my brother, a guy named Pickford came by. And for some reason I talked to him and I asked him where he was going. He said he was going fishing. And I said I would go with him. So my brother started following us. I told him "Hey, go home. Don't follow us." And this Pickford said to me, if I remember the conversation, "Oh, let him come." All of a sudden, this Pickford, whatever his name was, disappeared. You won't believe this. When we went under the bridge, we walked the girders on the lower bridge all the way across the river. Nothing happened. We came down out of it on the far side where Granby is. We were going across the bridge on the left at the end of the bridge down what they call the raceway. Used to be a little factory down there, a paper factory. He sat on the ledge looking at the water. And I was going up the bank, and I said to him, "Let's go home." [He said] "No, let's wait a while." [I said] "Come on, let's go home." "Next thing I knew, he was in the water. I looked down at him. His eyes were about that big. [Gestures a big circle around his eyes] His mouth was wide open and he was reaching for me. I never forgot that. It haunts me even today. Anyway, then my father hired a diver to go down and try to find him. In those days, fifty dollars a day was a lot of money! Back in the 1930s.

Q: That was in the 1920s, I believe.

CF: Would it be the 1920s?

Q: Late twenties?

CF: Yeah, it'd be real late 1920s, almost 1930. Because in 1923 I was five or six years old and that would be 1929? So it could have been 1929 or 1930. But he never found the body. Some guy was fishing down in Minetto, and he came over to Dam down there. A guy saw him. From then on, everything is fuzzy. I don't even know what happened. That's one of the sad things in our life. My mother

turned; she was very strict. We couldn't go across the road, down to the corner. [We had to] stay in the yard. One day she turned her back, and we were gone. Why it all happened that way, to this day, there's no explanation. I don't know why he died and I didn't. It's one of those things, you know.

Q: What kind of relationship did you have with your Uncle Sil, Aunt Virginia and Aunt Jean while you were growing up?

CF: It's a very strange family in a lot of ways. I was the oldest one. I was a meanie. I don't know why. It was tough times; it was hard to keep warm. But as time went on, things got better and better and better. And then I think we were happy in our teens until the war broke out. Then everything changed. Then outside of that, there's no big event that I'm aware of.

Q: You said earlier that you spent two years in kindergarten learning English. So as you got older, was English spoken less and less in your house and in your neighborhood, or was it a combination?

CF: My mother and my aunts always spoke Italian, never spoke English. My father would speak Italian when he was with Italians and he'd speak English when he was with English people. My mother understood English. You couldn't kid her, but she had difficulty speaking it. She tried a few times, but it never really caught on.

Q: In the past, you mentioned how difficult it was to be Italian growing up during the time period when you were a kid. Just a couple of days ago, someone told me that Italians back then were looked upon at the same level as African Americans and blacks. Do you want to share any of your experiences?

CF: That's true. They took menial jobs. What else can I tell you? But still had great opportunities coming over here. It was hard to call yourself...I myself always felt that I was not an American until I came back from the service. I believe there that I earned the right to become an American. Up to that point, I always had some doubts because I can remember going to [unclear] 21.53 and applying for a job, and they asked me what my nationality was, and I put down American. And this personnel manager looked at that and looked at me and looked at my name. But I always had that feeling that I didn't belong here. And I felt after I went into the service, I earned the right to be here, and I earned the right for my family to be here. And now I've done my duty.

Q: You mentioned to me how you went on a date with some girl, maybe from [unclear] 22.29 and her father really didn't like you.

CF: Who told you that story?

Q: I thought you told me that story. I did, yeah. This guy, Dick Bennett down here, his father did that to me.

Q: What did he do? Just give you a dirty look?

CF: He ignored me while I was in the house? He wouldn't speak to me and all that stuff. And I got the message. When I came back from the service I met her downtown. She tried to come over to me, and I spoke to her. She stopped and wanted to talk to me. I kept right on going. It made such an impression on me. But after years, I traded down there. Finally one day, he said to me, did you come to my house once? I said, yeah, that was me. That was the end of that conversation. But I got along great with his son, but he [the father] treated me like dirt. I felt it. I felt it. It was a different time, a different era. Italians were looked on. They all forgot that their parents were immigrants. I mean, there's nobody really American, right? But after they get here, after a while, they kind of think that everybody else is a foreigner. They forget that they were foreigners. I think that's what makes this country so great. But go ahead.

Q: Grandpa, talk all you want. There is no time limit here. The more the better, like I said before. Did some Italians change their names to try and escape from that type of treatment?

CF: Yes. There's two people I know of that changed their name. One who worked at a bank, his name was Guglielmo. He changed it to Williams. And one guy, his family, was called Bianca. He changed his name to White, which means Bianca means White.

Q: Did anybody in your family think about doing that?

CF: No. Nobody in the family. Everybody stuck with their name in the family.

Q: But your father's name was Isidoro.

CF: Right.

Q: But on the gravestone it says Theodore.

CF: You're right. He did change his name from Isidoro to Theodore, and I don't remember why. That's nothing wrong with Isidoro, but apparently he wanted to change it to Theodore. That's all I can tell you. Just like your grandmother. [Laughs] I didn't see anything wrong with Isidoro, but he knew that in America it

was Theodore. So maybe that's another way for him to become Americanized a little bit. Okay.

Q: How well did your parents do financially, compared to other families in this area?

CF: They just kept their head above the water. They always paid their bills. Their savings were not great. They only had a few thousand dollars. That really didn't amount to anything. But the fact that he owned a home, owned an automobile, and he knew that if he was in Italy or Sicily, he would never have owned a home, never owned an automobile. And when I asked him to go back to his hometown, he refused. He said, "I know what's over there and I got more here than I would have over there."

Q: When you asked him to go back to his hometown, did you mean to live there permanently or just for a visit?

CF: Visit.

Q: And he didn't want to go back there?

CF: He wasn't interested. He said "I know what's there. I'm happy right here where I am. If I was over there, I wouldn't own a home. I wouldn't own a car or nothing. I'd be up working on a farm." His living here was a hell of a lot better here than it was over there. Even though they struggled, just barely kept their heads above water, he did have more material things than he would have if he had stayed over there.

Q: You said before he worked at the Erie Canal.

CF: And then when he came back, I think he did a stint at the Woolen Mill first, and then he went to North End Paper Mill. Then he spent the rest of his life working there. [He] retired from North End Paper Mill. And that paper mill is still there. Right over there on Hannibal Street.

Q: You were six or seven years old when the Great Depression started. You were telling me a few minutes ago that your family just barely kept their head above water when it hit, was there any difference? Did you notice any difference, for you and your family?

CF: I don't know what you mean. Difference in what area?

Q: Well, let's see. You said that your family kept their head right above water, right. But then the Great Depression hit all through the 30s. Was your family...

CF: Oh, during the Depression, that was tough.

Q: I mean, was there a difference, like, from before and after, is what I'm asking?

CF: Oh, sure. During the Depression, those years were tough. He was fortunate one way. He worked one day, two days a week. Oh, there's a story there, too. That's when radios were popular. My father went down to Montgomery Wards and bought an Airline radio. Dollar down, dollar a week. He missed a couple payments because he was only going to work a couple of days a week. So instead of paying for the radio, you gotta put food on the table, right? So they came down to take the radio back. Montgomery Ward did. Somehow he convinced them that he would pay it up, and so they let it go, and he did pay it up. It was an old Airline radio. That was during the height of the Depression. And I can remember a truck stopping in front of the lawn and throwing some cabbage on our lawn. Apparently there was some surplus cabbage around, and apparently we qualified for some food. Because a lot of people weren't working at all. But he was fortunate. He got a couple of days a week.

Q: And that was better than nothing?

CF: That was better than nothing. That's right. Yeah. That paper mill ran during the Depression, but only a couple of days a week. Oh, by the way, that mill treated my father great. Every time he was desperate and needed money, they loaned my father money. When my brother drowned, they loaned my father the money to pay a diver to go down and look for my brother. They took it back out of his pay, a dollar or two a week until he paid it back. And one other time, he borrowed money from them. And I don't remember what the hell the incident was for. I don't remember. I remember that one incident. Then he had another incident where he was desperate and he borrowed some money, and they came through. They treated him well. They did. They treated my father well over there and he never missed a day. Worked every day,

Q: Even when he was sick?

CF: Even when he was sick; he never took a day off. Never took a day off. Well, that's it on that.

Q: What were considered luxuries during the late 1920s and 1930s? I mean, obviously there was no television in those days. So did your family listen to the radio?

CF: Radio was a big thing.

Q: Do you remember what kind of programs you listened to?

CF: Yeah, we used to hear Fibber McGee and Molly.

Q: What were they?

CF: They were a team, a husband and wife.

Q: Are they a comedy?

CF: Yes, a comedy. I remember Cab Calloway playing the trumpet. For some reason that stuck in my mind, it came over the radio real sharp. Who else was it that time? Oh, one of those scary stories. What the hell was it? The only thing I can think of was Inner Sanctum, but I don't think it was that. But you'd be surprised what they did on the radio. You people never heard it, but they did so well that you could visualize horses running, doors slamming, tables being set with dishes and stuff. They had it right down pat. I mean, that radio was almost like TV without the vision. They had experts in every field and if they were running a story about horses and stuff like that or whatever, mules, cows, they could do it. And I don't know, Jack Benny was on there, Bob Hope and all those people. I listened to them on the radio then. I saw them overseas. Radio was a big thing. The big star. Oh, Ed Wynn, the Fire Chief, he had a program.

Q: What about the Lone Ranger?

CF: Yes, the Lone Ranger was on the radio, too. I remember that. Hi-yo Silver, right? Yeah, that was quite an era. Radio was a big thing.

Q: Do you remember the famous War of the World radio program?

CF: Never heard that one. Apparently, I didn't have the radio on that day or something, but I read about it. Everybody was talking about it in the papers the next day, but we missed it. We missed that big event. But the world's coming to an end with Orson Wells. Yeah, we missed that. Well, you got to remember, how would we know what's going to be on the radio? I don't think we read the newspapers to find out what the hell is on the radio and things like that. Those days were different. Like today, you pick a paper, you know what's on, right?

Q: When the radio wasn't on, what did the family do when everybody came home from work and school?

CF: There wasn't that much to do, to be honest with you, if it wasn't the radio. I don't know, just hanging around. We did a lot of hanging around. We used to hang around the corner down there on Fourth and Erie. Used to be a grocery store on the corner, which was [unclear]. Us kids used to hang before we were in

the service. There was a whole gang of us from that area that hung around there. A lot of those guys were in the service, and a lot of them didn't come back.

Q: You said before that your father had an automobile. How did he pay for that?

CF: I don't remember how he bought that. It was an old model A. And I remember he took his test here in Fulton and he failed. So they scheduled for the next test. The next test was in Pulaski. So on the way to Pulaski, a tire blew and the thing rolled over.

Q: Oh, no.

CF: And me and my cousin were in the back seat.

Q: Jimmy Marino?

CF: No, it was Jimmy Spiciali [?] from Corning. My father. He was in a detention home up in Syracuse. My father went up and got him and brought him to our place.

Q: Did he live with you for a while?

CF: He lived for us for quite a while. And when my father died, he didn't show up. I haven't had anything to do with that man since. And he's dead and gone now, too. But what my father and mother did for him and he didn't show up for either one of them. He was my first cousin on my mother's side. That was the end of him. Okay, next.

Q: Talk all you want. Like I said before, okay. Now, you didn't finish high school, but you went to work to help the family out.

CF: Yes. Did I go to Wool Mill first or down to the Shingle plant down on the flats? [ponders] I went to the Wool Mill first. I worked there for a little while and they put me on nights and I asked for a day job and I didn't show up. And I decided I would probably go back to school. Instead of going back to school, I went to work at the Shingle plant down on the flats. They used to make roofing shingles. And that's where I worked until I went into service.

Q: Your paycheck went to your parents when you got it?

CF: I don't know why that's vague. I just don't remember. Seems so. They wanted me to pay board; show some responsibility. And I must have paid board. The wages weren't that big in those days. Ten bucks or some stupid thing for a week's work? Something like that? It was twenty cents or thirty five cents an hour. Forty hours. It was only ten to twelve bucks a week. But you could buy a pound of

macaroni for two cents, things like that. So I don't have any details. I don't remember.

Q: You were ten years old when Franklin Roosevelt became president. What did you and your family think of him, your opinions of him during that time?

CF: Well, I don't know if we really even discussed Roosevelt in the family. I don't think that subject was ever brought up politically. See, my father really didn't get into it until after the service. He really read Drew Pearson and all those people. Before then, Roosevelt wasn't discussed. In fact, everybody in the neighborhood wouldn't even have Roosevelt's picture up. They had Hoover's picture up every place you were.

Q: Why? Why is that?

CF: Hoover? Because he's a republican. Most of the people in the neighborhood were Republicans. So you didn't see any Roosevelt pictures, but you saw all Hoover [pictures].

Q: Did you ever listen to his Fireside chat on the radio?

CF: Not that I'm aware of. I don't remember any of them. To get most of their news, they went to the radio or went to the movies. Used to have Movietone.

Q: Movietone news.

CF: Yeah, Movietone News. And they would show what happened. They would show Roosevelt making his speech to Congress and all that stuff.

Q: What was going to the movies like back then?

CF: Cheap.

Q: But I was told that it was an all day event. That you would go there to watch the news, then a couple of comedy shorts, a cartoon, and then the main feature.

CF: Yes, they gave you a lot for your money. It was a good couple of hours. That was a big entertainment. Outside of the radio, movies were a big thing. That's where everybody went Saturdays and Sundays. That was a night out, going to the movies. On New Year's Eve, everybody used to go to the movies. That's funny. It's a different time. The difference between today and then is like a difference between night and day. It's a different world, a really different world. It's hard to convey if you didn't live it. It's hard to tell somebody else what it was like.

Q: World War II broke out and you got drafted?

CF: I did get drafted.

Q: And then last week you were telling me about how you and Jimmy Marino were deciding between the Army and the Navy. So you got drafted, but you got to choose which branch you went into?

CF: That's right. Because we were physically fit. We were in good shape. I had three years of high school. I think he graduated or did he? I don't remember. Anyway, we went to Syracuse to take our physical for the service. After we got through with our physical they told us we were physically fit and we could go pick any branch of service that we'd like. We were going to go in the Navy. I asked him what he had against the Army? [He said] Okay, let's go in the Army. That's the way we did it. Not knowing.

Q: How were you notified? Did you get something in the mail or did you get a phone call?

CF: Phone? We didn't have a phone in those days. [Laughs]

Q: You didn't have a phone? Okay. I didn't know that. That changes everything there.

CF: Yeah, we didn't have a phone. After I came out of the service, I think we got a phone. We used to have to go across the street and use Old Lady [unclear] 43.02 phone. If we had an emergency or had to call somebody. Where was I?

Q: How were you notified that you got drafted? You got something in the mail?

CF: Good question. Must have got it in the mail. Must have got mail to report, and I don't know how I reported. Oh, yeah, they sent us home and told us the reporting date. Went downtown, got a bus, went to Syracuse, got on a train and went to Fort Niagara, Buffalo, New York. That's where we got our shots and our clothes. And you'd be surprised, we walked down through the line, they shot us; inoculating us. Some of these guys would keel right over from the inoculation.

Q: Was that the first time you were ever on a train?

CF: No. I had been on a train before because we used to go down to see my mother's sister down in Corning. We used to go down by train. In Buffalo, they gave us our clothes, and this guy gave me a couple outfits that fit me. Then he gave me one outfit that was about that big around [motions giant circle with his arms] and the legs were about that short [motions about two feet]. That story comes up later on in the service.

Q: Had you ever left New York State up until that point?

CF: Never left New York State up until that point.

Q: Jimmy Marino, did he go to basic training with you?

CF: Yes, we went together to Camp Howze, Texas, and went through basic training down there. And he was assigned to one battalion, and I was assigned to another battalion. He was pretty smart. He had an IQ a little bit higher, quite higher than mine. And they offered to train him for something. He wasn't at school, and he flunked out. He came back to the outfit, and they turned around and they sent him overseas and shipped him out. He went to Italy and joined an outfit over there.

Q: That's interesting that you bring that up, because I thought I heard before that they sent you to fight the Japanese because they thought that an Italian couldn't fight another Italian.

CF: Oh, that question was asked at recruiting time. [They asked] "Is there any reason why you wouldn't fight against Italians", or some question along that line? And I said "No, no problem." I mean, in other words, if I had to go to Italy, I would not object. In other words, perfectly okay. I didn't have any attachments to Italy. I mean, as far as my parents were Italian, yeah, but I had no attachment to the country. That took care of that. That's how that happened.

Q: You mentioned before that you got in trouble down in basic training because...

CF: Yeah, after we left Camp Howze, Texas, we finished our basic training, and then we went into maneuvers. We went to Louisiana for our maneuvers, and after the maneuvers, we ended up in Camp Livingston, and there we continued our training. So we had our pass. We could go to Alexandria.

Q: Alexandria, Virginia?

CF: No. Alexandria, Louisiana. They had an eleven 'o'clock curfew. I got tied up with a girl there.

Q: What does that mean?

CF: It was beyond eleven 'o'clock. So the MPs came along, picked me up, and threw me in a goddamn brig. And there were guys in there that were sick, vomiting. I can remember this one. I was grabbed on the bars and hollered "Get me the hell out of here! These people are sick. They're urinating in the corner and they're vomiting." So finally they came in, gave me a clean cell. So the next

morning they shipped me back to camp. Well, they sent the report to the regimental commander that I was picked up for breaking curfew. He wanted to know what they were going to do about it. There was a notation on the order that I was picked up and they wanted to know what disciplinary measures were going to be taken against me. We had a bulletin board. It told you what was going on. I went down there one day, looked at it. My name was on there. POE. Port of Embarkation.

Q: What does that mean?

CF: Shipping out? Port of Embarkation. And there were a whole bunch of us who got shipped out then. From there I went to Fort Ord, California. I went down to the day room. I never did see him, but everybody told me that Mickey Rooney was down there playing the piano and all these GIs were around him. I couldn't see him. We didn't stay there very long. They put us on the ship. They don't tell you anything. They just herded you together and pushed you on the ship. Now, that's the first time I have ever been on a ship. And we went under the Golden Gate Bridge. We were in a chow line. And I remember this one. Boy, I got a whiff of that kitchen and I got sick. I didn't eat. Needless to say I didn't eat. I rushed back to my bunk, and the bunk was two, three high down in a hole, sleeping on a canvas. [Motions the bed swaying back and forth] But after about two or three days, I kind of snapped out of it and I got kind of used to it. Your father got a big kick out of this. That's when I read my first novel, *Forever Amber*. [I read it] aboard that ship.

Q: What was that about?

CF: It took place in England during The Plague. I can remember that ship rolling like this. Then a couple of days of roll go up like this and down like this. [Gestures side to side and up and down] One day I looked up. They had a chart up there and they showed zigzag lines as the ship was going. I asked somebody why the zigzag? What's that all about? He said we were in hostile waters and they thought there were Japanese submarines around here. This is a troop ship. So we spent so many seconds heading one direction then we had so many seconds heading in the other direction. That way the submarine can't get a bead on us because we don't stay one direction all the time. We're zigzagging. When we'd be going this way for a while, you might have a look at us and all of a sudden we turn and go the other way. So they got to readjust their telescope. So that's what they did when they went toward hostile waters.

We landed in New Caledonia, which is a French island not very far from Australia. There I met the 25th division. We had just come back from New Zealand. They threw them out of New Zealand because they were marrying all the women there and causing a lot of problems. Because they went from Guadalcanal to get rested, R and R. They put them in New Zealand. But it was back to easy living again. So they turned around, yanked them out of there, put them in New Caledonia and they got re-outfitted. And I went there as a replacement. That's where it all started. I still remember our company commander's name, Captain Lamenzo. Very good officer. There we did some more training, field training. Another incident we had there. Every once in a while we had what they called an alert. They wanted to see how fast you can pack your things and be out in the company street ready to move. In one tent, there was a kid in there and they kept...apparently the guys in there were picking on him or kept telling them this is a real thing. This is a real thing. So one time when he had one of these alerts we were all out in the company street and we heard the shot. A rifle went off. So they went in and looked in the tent. This kid had committed suicide to avoid going into combat. Apparently, they made an awful impression on him. Committed suicide. That happened right in our company street. Right in our company.

We used to go to the movies every night or every weekend. I forgot what it was. We had movies set up there and we used to watch these stupid movies. And they always used to play a song before they started the movies. Are you ready? The first few times we went there, we never heard it. Never heard anything. Nobody said anything after that. After a while we started saying, yes, we're ready. We started answering. Then we had another bad situation. These poor people would volunteer to come overseas to entertain us. They made a mistake to bring in an opera outfit.

Q: A what?

CF: An opera. People would sing opera. These poor people got up on the stage and they started singing opera. And you could hear the rumble right through all the guys sitting there. Very discourteous. Eighteen, nineteen, twenty year olds don't want to hear that.

So the officer got up there and he explained that these people came over to entertain. They ought to be courteous enough to listen and applaud and so on and so forth. So one of the singers said he knew what these boys wanted out here. He said, I'm going to sing it for him. *Stout Hearted Men*. He sang that with his big bass voice. Oh, he got the biggest hand you ever heard in your life. But then Bob Hope came over. We were on the airstrip to watch him and the whole division

was down there, which was 10,000 people. I never was up in front. Then Jack Benny came and entertained us. So both those guys stopped and entertained us. They took some awful chances, too. They put their lives on the line a couple times just to entertain us. World War II, this country was a total commitment. Everybody, everybody was committed. There might have been a few slackers here and there, but ninety, ninety-nine percent of the country was committed to winning this war. Everybody was doing whatever was necessary to win it.

CF: You mentioned something before about how drill sergeants or company commanders would try to pronounce your last name...

Q: That was a lot of fun. Yeah, they had roll calls every morning or every evening, I forgot what it was. Every time they got to my name, the guy would hesitate, the sergeant would hesitate, and I would always say, here, everybody got a chuckle out of that. That brings me back to that. So at night they had Retreat when they lowered the flag and all this stuff, when they blew the bugle and all that military stuff. You have to be dressed for Retreat. So, I came out with those fancy pants that they gave me in Fort Niagara that were that big around [motions giant circle with hands] and about this short and put them on. The first sergeant came out, looked and he saw me. [Laughs] So he got me up in front of the company, looked me over. He said "Hey, good looking soldier. How about you and the supply sergeant get together. See if there is something we can do about that outfit you're wearing?" So that's how I got rid of those pants. I had to do it that way, otherwise they wouldn't have paid any attention to me.

Q: Where did you go after the Bob Hope event?

CF: We're in New Caledonia now, right?

Q: Yeah.

CF: Let's see what other event? That's about it in New Caledonia. Just mostly it was training. Oh. We had one guy there. His name was Wilhelm. I never forgot his name. German. That's a German name. Wilhelm. He was a veteran from Guadalcanal.

Q: What was Guadalcanal all about?

CF: That was the first offensive action that the United States took. What went in there first with the Marines, then after that, the 25th Division went in and relieved them and finished cleaning up the island. And that time, the colonel's name was Lawton Collins. He developed a strategy. The Japanese would have a line of defense. What he would do was penetrate the line here, penetrate it here,

[motions two separate points] have the American troops meet and surround that area. Then he would drop leaflets in there and tell them to surrender because they are surrounded. But they never surrendered. We had to go in and literally get them out of their holes. But it was a strategy that he had developed where instead of hitting them frontally he tried to bang the whole line and cut it off into pieces, and he would surround them with American troops and then tell them to surrender. You're surrounded, there's no way for you to get out. But they would never surrender. In fact, that general ended up commanding an army in Europe. And after he left, General Mullins took over. He took over for the rest of the years of the rest of the war. In fact, he's the one that pinned the Silver Star on me.

Q: I bought that picture with me.

CF: Did you?

Q: Yeah.

CF: I'll tell you about Wilhelm. Carmen says, we're not going to make it. And he pounded on us day in and day out. That's all I heard from him. Anyone talk about Carmen? I ain't going to make it. I know I'm going to die. I might as well shoot myself right now. There's no need to even stay here. I'm going to die. And he kept it up till I got irritated. So I picked up the rifle one day. I pointed right at him, right down next to his head while he was laying on a bunk.

Q: So this is after weeks and weeks of him saying that you got...

CF: After weeks and weeks. I mean, it wasn't just a couple of times. It was a constant thing with him. I said "Now you want to die?" He said "Yeah, go ahead, pull that goddamn trigger!" He was just nuts. After I pulled away, he said "You know what? I wish somebody would have bumped into you and you had an accident and that thing went off and killed me. I know I ain't going to make it."

Q: Oh, my God.

CF: So, after we were all through in New Caledonia, they ordered us aboard ship. They didn't tell us where we're going. We almost got there. That was the Philippines. I learned this afterwards. On our way there, there was a big typhoon. And for a couple of days, all we did was just circle, go around in circles until the typhoon left the area. Next thing we knew...

Q: How far are you here from when you started? Where are we at? Like six months?

CF: Oh, longer than that.

Q: Eight months, a year?

CF: Over six months. Dates are not...seventeen, eighteen, nineteen years old, I didn't keep track of time and dates, stuff like that. Basic training was, I don't know, twelve to sixteen weeks, something like that. Then we had maneuvers. Then I went to New Caledonia where we trained some more. Another three, four or five months there. So I would say it was a year before I saw combat.

Q: Okay. I didn't mean to interrupt. I was kind of curious about the timeline here.

CF: Yeah, I see. I had no idea. I just didn't pay any attention to the timeline. So to finish the story of Wilhelm. We landed in the Philippines. I don't know which division hit the beach first, but [we had] little resistance. And we were held in a strategic reserve because there was an armored division north of the beach. And what we were supposed to do is, if they threatened the beach, we were supposed to go in and cut them off. That never developed. They didn't threaten the beach, so we went to shore. So when the landing craft dropped the ramp and the Lieutenant said, come hit it. And I looked at that water and something told me not to do it. But he told me again, "Hit it." So I jumped off, I never touched the bottom. And good thing I knew how to swim. I lost my rifle. I treaded water for a few minutes and he reached down, picked me up, put me back in the boat. He went to another spot, and then we landed.

Q: Right there is a map of the Philippines. Where did you land?

CF: Lingayen Golf.

Q: Where?

CF: Lingayen Golf.

Q: Point it out there.

CF: I need to find it first. There's Luzon. The island of Luzon. There's San Fernando. They don't show the Lingayen Golf.

Q: Do you know approximately where it was?

CF: Well, I think it'd be up by San Fernando. Up in that area.

Q: Point it out.

CF: Just above up in this area here. [Points to area on map]

Q: Okay.

CF: They don't show Lingayen Golf. Yeah, I got that stuff in there somewhere. On that beach, the thing I remember from there was a Japanese plane coming over, and everybody on the beach was shooting at it, and they brought it down. The battalion shooting. Well, they brought that plane down anyway, and I'm the only one sitting on the beach. I couldn't shoot because I didn't have a rifle. And the officer walked over to me and told me I wouldn't have had to pay for the rifle because it was lost in combat.

Q: People had to pay for a rifle if they were...

CF: Apparently he was under the impression that I had to pay for that rifle because I lost it, but it was under combat condition, so I didn't have to pay for it. Then we went in, took the town of San Marie. We moved inland. We took control of this town of Saint Marie that night, stupid Filipino didn't know enough to stay in his goddamn house, or whatever you called them. I forgot what they called them over there.

Q: Well, back then, the Philippines was American territory.

CF: Pardon?

Q: Back then, the Philippines was American territory. They're trying to get back.

CF: We were taking it back. He got killed. One of the guys shot him.

Q: Who? Wilhelm?

CF: No. Yeah, Wilhelm finally gets it. But let me tell you the story of how. But that night, a Filipino got killed because he was moving at night. Usually anything that moved at night was the enemy. That was our philosophy. So when we woke up the next morning, it was a Filipino. He had no business moving. So we left San Marie, and there were some bunkers beyond that, and we stormed them. This Wilhelm was with me. He got hit. [He said], "Oh, I'm going home, I'm going home. I got hit and I'm going home. Holy shit. I'm going home." [I said] "Well, since you are going home? Give me your cigarettes. I ain't got goddamn cigarettes." [He said] "Here. Here, take my goddamn cigarettes. I'm going home. I'm wounded." So he gets on a jeep and they head back to battalion headquarters. What does the guy do? Took the wrong turn. He runs into a battalion of Japanese.

Q: Oh, no.

CF: He couldn't run. Couldn't get away from them. The other guy got away. They all used his body for bayonet practice.

Q: What practice?

CF: Bayonet. Bayonet. Japanese. [Motions stabbing]

Q: Oh, my Lord.

CF: So this same outfit, the same Japanese. That night we were in this little village called Pemienta. We had defenses set up in there because we were going to attack the town of Umingan the next morning. And this Japanese column was coming down the road to reinforce this Umingan, this town we were going to take. We caught them. We had the M6s with us, and they fired it down the road, and it stopped that column. It was nighttime. They got out, and the Japanese started shooting at us while we were dug in our holes. And they had artillery shells. They lowered them right straight down. And I had to literally hug the ground because they were whistling over my head, probably five or six inches. Terrible, terrible sound. The guy two holes from me was sitting up like this with his rifle waiting. A shell went right through his head. So the Japanese started hollering banzai, banzai. When they hollered Benzai, this Captain LoMenzo was telling you about, he went to the heavy weapons platoon and told the guys, "Now!" Then we shot mortars at them. He told them the range and so on and so forth. And every time we shot the mortars at them, they would stop the banzai. That banzai means they're attacking. They kept it up properly the whole night. They fired at us, point blank, they fired at us. We woke up the next morning. They had a Studebaker car, tanks, artillery and things. We wiped them right out. So I looked out in the field in front of me, in the rice paddy a Japanese was running. So I picked my rifle up and I was following him. About the time I got the bead on him, he hit the ground. So what they said was, you run ten paces and hit the ground, you can't get a bead on them. Can't shoot them. So when he was laying down in a foxhole there behind a rice paddy, I put a rifle grenade on my rifle and fired that. I missed him. So he ran again. Finally, he goes in behind...the homes over there are built on stilts. He came up behind it and he was observing. I'm ahead of myself. The reason I started shooting at him was because he shot the guy next to me.

Q: He's the one that the bullet went through his head?

CF: No, this was another one. In fact, I was opening up a can. He had a can opener. I couldn't find mine, and I threw it to him. And he reached out the hole to go get it. When he did, the guy shot him right through the arm, right through the shoulder. Probably was aiming for his heart, but shot him through there. So that's how I noticed he was out there. I got ahead of myself. So when he came up behind

that home, all I could see was that star on his helmet. I took my rifle, laid it right down on that star and fired. Didn't see him anymore. They sent out a scouting outfit and he was there. I got him.

Q: Was that the first Japanese you shot?

CF: Yeah, he was Japanese. But you know what? Those Japanese had pictures of their family, their kids and everything. But to us, they weren't human. We took that attitude for some reason or another. I don't know if it was instilled or what, but I felt nothing. So the next morning we went and took that town over. Town of Umingan.

Q: You're still in the Philippines here?

CF: Yes, still in the Philippines. I haven't left. You're going to be in the Philippines for 160 days. So our company went up and followed the creek into the town. The first battalion went on a frontal assault and we were in the creek. The guys with the frontal assault were dropping. The priest was out there blessing them as they got hit. Irony. Irony. He got shot through the hand. This priest was out there giving these guys last rites and stuff. Apparently some Japanese put a bead on him and shot him right through the hand. He was evacuated. After spending all day long in that creek, we finally got into the town and we took it over. Next thing, all hell broke loose. Tracers coming out. I was behind a tree about that big around. [Makes a big circle with both arms] Come to find out the 1st Battalion went this way and the 3rd Battalion came the other way. And when they saw movement in the city in this town, which was us, we were already there. They didn't know it. They thought it was Japanese they saw running around and they fired at us. But good thing our radio man knew what their call was on our radio. And he called and told him we were already in the city. Don't shoot any more. Our own men were there. That's that picture of me. Did you see where down in the big hole? That was that town Umingan. That was me down in there. This guy snapped my picture. After we took that town over, General Brown came in, who was the assistant division commander, and told them to not go across that bridge because they hadn't checked it. We didn't know if it's wired to explode. They checked it over and it was alright. There were no charges set against them. So after that battle, we went back to Clark. Took us back to Clark field. We set up camp there. And the army commander made a decision on who was going to go to Manila and who was going to have to go up in the mountains to chase Yamashita. That's the man we were after. He was the commander of the Philippines. They decided the 1st Cavalry was going to go up and the 25th Division was going to Manila. Somehow they changed their mind. Instead of us

going to Manila, we had to go up in the mountains. So that's where we started off. We left Clark's field after we camped there for a while, rested and so on and so forth. We had to head up into the mountains. And that's where we spent quite a few days, up in there. That's where things really got touchy. Our first encounter was when we were going up this mountain. All of a sudden, artillery shells came over our heads. We all hit the ground. They called up an artillery officer. He came in and he took out his glasses, checked it over, and he called for our artillery. And they put a smoke shell, and sent a smoke shell down first to mark the target. What these Japanese did was come out of that mountain, fire at us, then go back in. So after they fired the smoke shell, the target was marked. They had zeroed in all the battalion division guns right on that spot, and they all fired at the same time. You've never heard such a thing in your life. Whistling sound and they all ran on that target. We went over afterwards. They sent us over there to check it out, see if there's anything left. There was nothing left. They had literally blown that side of that mountain right off. We couldn't find an artillery shell, no human beings, nothing. So that was my first encounter with artillery. I don't know. We're getting in the deep stuff now. I don't know.

Q: Do you want to take a break?

CF: Yes, I will take a break?

Q: Okay. But don't forget where you are, where you left off. Okay?

CF: Yeah. We left off cleaning up that mountain, remember?

Q: Yeah. We'll take a break.

CF: Okay. We probably should backtrack and talk a little bit about the outfit we're talking about, which is the 25th division. Now, this division originated in Hawaii. They were there December 7, when the Japanese attacked. But what that was, it was what they call the Old Square Division, which had four regiments. In World War II, they cut them down to three regiments. So they took the 24th Division, they called one the 24th, and they got a regiment from somewhere. I don't know the history of the 24th, but the 25th, their regiment came from the State of Washington and the 161st, which made it a Triangle Division. Three Regiments. That was they broke up the four regiment deal for...the words escape me right now. Anyway, that's a guava leaf. A guava leaf with a streak of lightning through it. [Shows the cover of the book with the guava & lightning logo] This leaf here is familiar in Hawaii. The 24th Division does not have the streak of lightning through it. That's a sister division. The stuff that we've been talking about, Luzon,

near the landing, here's a picture of the landing. [Holds up book and shows several photos]

Q: The island of Luzon?

CF: Right? Landing on the beach. Right here are parades and stuff that I participated in.

[Turning pages on book]

Q: Grandpa.

CF: This was a Halloween party.

Q: Grandpa, hold it up. Okay, good.

CF: I have to explain them.

Q: All right, go ahead.

CF: I got to look at them. [Continues showing photos from book] This parade down here, I was in that. That's how they sold us. See this general here? What's his name? [William Frederick] "Bull" Halsey, [Jr.] was there. He was a Navy man. We paraded for him. And this other general here, Wilfred A. Harmon [?], I guess his name is. This is General Mullins. After this parade is when we got ready to go to the Philippines. We went to a parade... this shows some training we went through to get ready to go to the Philippines.

Q: Okay.

CF: This is all dress rehearsal here. [Continues showing photos from book] We made a practice landing there. We stormed the beaches and stuff. This is all still a training period. This is still all trading. This is New Caledonia. This is how we got the stuff to shore when they unloaded the ships. We got in a column like that and passed the goods down soldier to soldier until they got to the beach when they couldn't land on the beach. There's a map of central Luzon. I may have to look at it myself to refresh my memory. That's the central plains. I'm still looking here at this stuff. [Pages through book]

Q: Okay, take your time. No rush, no hurry.

CF: Yeah, I mean, most of this stuff shows...see, I'm trying to look...this is 164th. This is the one that came from the States to make the 3rd Regiment for division. That's the word I was looking for a little while ago. Couldn't say division. [Continues showing photos from book] Here the general is looking at a captured Japanese Samurai sword right there. I'm trying to get you to that battle of

Pemienta and Umingan. Here we go. That's Umingan there. That's me down in there. [Points to himself in a photo] This is part of the town. That's a bomb crater. That is where I told you I told the general not to cross that bridge. I don't think they got a picture of the bridge here. I'm looking for the destruction of Pemienta is what I'm looking for. They got the 35th in here now. Road leading to Umingan. Here the road leads to Umingan. This is what I was telling you about a little while ago. That's the road that leads to it. That's what I was in, the 27th infantry. This is part of the destruction that we caused. I don't know if there's anything else here. I wanted to show you... remember I told you we started going up in the mountains? Here are the mountains right there. I can't pronounce that word. Caraballo Mountains. You said ahead from Manila. This is where we had to go.

Yeah. And that Highway Five. Gee, I forgot about that. Talked about highway five quite a bit which went from San Jose to the Balet Pass. I believe the pass was our objective. And then into Santa Fe to the southern entrance of the Cagayan Valley. That's what we were shooting for. [Reads an excerpt from the book] "Systematic defensive efforts. The Japanese pocket market quarters with compliance of large units waited in suicidal readiness for the 25th Division to begin to drive up the valley." See what I'm talking about?

Q: Yes.

CF: Suicide.

Q: The Kamikaze?

CF: No. They stayed right there to kill them. They would not retreat and they would not surrender. What they would do is, if you overran them, you didn't kill them. When you overran them, they'd jump out of their hole and kill an American. Shoot them in the back. And they figured they'd done their duty because they took an American life. That's how fanatical they were. See, this book jumps back and forth. [Pages through book] The 164th then goes to the 27th. I was in the 27th Regiment, and what I'm trying to do is give you them. I wonder. Something that I was very proud of was the 65th engineers here, they cut roads through those mountains that you wouldn't believe. They got supplies up to us and they brought back our dead. And they brought up supplies, and they'd have to cut a road, and they'd always cut a road below the crown so you could not observe it from the other side of the mountain. Follow me? They would go around the crown of it.

Q: Pick that up again.

CF: The engineers? [Shows photo of engineers digging a road]

Q: Yeah.

CF: Right there. I was very impressed with them, and I was impressed with them because they came...another battle we had up into the mountains, and I'm trying to remember the name of that mountain. It's all in here, but it's very difficult for me to bring it all back. There's an example of the highways they built. [Shows photo of steep mountain road] Look at that. They got up there with the jeep. Look how steep that is.

Q: Whoa. Yeah.

CF: Great outfit. Great outfit. I got one nice good sleep while I was up in the mountains. You know why? Because of those dogs. [Shows photo of dogs] One night, I was with that unit, and we were down by Highway Five, I just conked right out because I knew the dogs were going to protect me. This guy here is General Mullins, and General Dalton, a colonel at that time, he was a colorful figure. [Shows photo] He would carry pistols on his hips, and he had a red handkerchief around his neck. He was like a kind of a copy of Patton. He went up to a mountain where one of the regiments was pinned down, and they told him not to go up there because there was a sniper. [He said, he didn't] worry about those snipers. He went up there with his glasses. Next thing you know, a bullet went right through his head; got killed there. So this Balet Pass that they were supposed to capture, they renamed it Dalton Pass after this general. He got killed. I will give you the highlights here. A lot of it was 164th here. See, most of mine were the 27th. [Pages through book] See all these mountains. I'm going to show you. I don't have a map to call this, but it shows the mountain range. See what it says? Wolfhound. That's the 27th. They named that ridge after my outfit, the 27th Regiment. [Shows map of mountain range] Then all these are names here of those battles. Oak Tree Hill. Big battle.

Q: Where is that located on that map you just pointed out?

CF: This is in the Philippines.

Q: Is that the island of Luzon?

CF: Yes, still the island of Luzon. I never left the island of Luzon. These are the mountains of Luzon. I wasn't in all these battles, but these are some of the battles that were fought. When we fought for a battle, they would rename it like Lone Tree Hill, Grassy Saddle, the Pimple. The Pimple is where I got hurt. Then right next to it, the Ward.

Q: Okay, before I forget, you got hit at the pimple?

CF: At the pimple.

Q: Okay. Did you feel that you were going to die that day?

CF: No, of course, we're way ahead of our story on the Pimple. I'm just pointing that out to you. I'll get to that when we get to it.

Q: All right, no problem. I didn't want you to leave that out.

CF: I just want to pick up a couple of highlights for you, okay. So you get a feeling of what we're talking about.

Q: Is there anything in that other book?

CF: This one here was sent to me. This was an artist that instead of having a camera, he sketched all the battles. They were all sketched. See him? [Shows book of sketches]

Q: Yeah.

CF: Now you got a full book here. He sketched them all. He was a division artist. That gives you an idea of some of the battles. After the battle, he would go in, sketch it, or if he was in the battle, he would sketch it. No cameras. In fact, our battle for Pemienta is here somewhere. There you go. I turned right to the page. [Shows photo] So, the 27th. Remember, I was in the 27th. We set up a roadblock, near Pemienta and he sketched it. That's what I was telling you about. That's that first battle we went into, Pemienta. I didn't realize that the commander himself was in that sedan. He got burnt to death when my outfit fired at him coming down the road. I didn't see. Now, this refreshes my memory; I didn't remember that. [Reads excerpt] "The Japanese commander burned to death in this sedan while his artillery and armor piled up along the road behind him." He was leading and he took the first shot. But this guy [sketch artist] did an excellent job. He [sketch artist] got a lot of the 27th, and apparently he was with us quite a bit. Shows you some of the work, some of the things, each sketched of our battles. [Shows sketches] His name was William De Jarnette Rutheford. He was the sketcher... He was the division sketcher for all of them. All the things that happened.

Q: I didn't know they had sketchers up there, man. I'm learning something right now.

CF: I don't know if all the other outfits did. There it is, how he starts. *165 Days: A Story Of The 25th Division* on Luzon. Then his name again. [Shows inside cover of book]

We left the battle up in the mountains there, where we blew out that artillery shell. Right. The next attack we went into was a mountain position. They were dug in, and like I told you, we overran it, and the Japanese came out of the hole and shot one of our men in the back. Then all of us turned around and filled him full of lead. I'm trying to think of how eventful it was from then on. We did a lot of digging. There were a lot of miserable nights. There's something I'm trying to do. I'd like to be able to convey the feeling of being in combat to an individual who's never been in one. Starting off with your mouth becomes very dry. You got a rapid heartbeat. Your stomach is knotty, you can't hardly swallow. And it's a feeling. I can't describe it. I wish I could really do it. You have to experience it to know what I'm talking about. It's one of those things that you have to experience. You don't think you can explain a battle or the fear of dying. Every time you go into a battle, you think you're not going to come out. You think you're going to die. Now, I think subconsciously I never saw myself as being dead, but apparently the emotion was there, hidden. The fear was there. But I can honestly say that I never saw myself as being dead. Now we're up in the mountains, right?

Q: Yeah. If you want to elaborate more on that, go right ahead.

CF: I think the next big event for me was the Pimple. We were held up there for quite some time. The Japanese were up on this Pimple, or Wart, whatever you want to call it, and we were down here and they were dropping grenades on us all the time. We called artillery fire in, but we never stopped them. So a bunch of us one day, three, four or five of us standing there. All of a sudden, I heard a slap. I turned around and looked. It was a mortar shell. It was a dud. It hit the ground, but never exploded. If it had exploded, it would have gotten us all. Again, I can't explain it. It did not explode. So we all jumped and ran into our holes. We had them all built, our foxholes. We had logs and stuff. We had been there long enough to almost build a house. Artillery zeroed in on us. The mortar shell. When they saw us run, they knew they were on target, so they fired everything they had against us. That's the first time I was under a severe mortar attack. Dumb shells came in there exploding, and the whole earth shook. All of a sudden, my buddy, I forgot to tell you about my buddy. He said "Carm, I can't find my arm." I stuck my head out of the hole and I saw him. He got up and ran. We were under intense fire there. It seemed like forever, but probably was only ten or fifteen minutes. But it was very severe. They gave themselves away. Our division's artillery went

over. They knew where the shells were coming from. They poured artillery in there and silenced them.

So the next morning, they decided to go and attack this Pimple. He brought the 164th engineers up with a bulldozer. He kept cutting that top of that hill off. He would back up, cut it off until he got a slope. Then they brought a tank up. The tank came up and then we got behind the tank. We went up on this Pimple, what we called the Pimple. That's when I got hit and I was evacuated back to the battalion headquarters.

Q: Where did you get hit?

CF: Thigh. My leg.

Q: Right leg?

CF: Yeah. Burning sensation. I knew I was hit because I felt the burning sensation. It was an artillery shell or a mortar shell, a fragment from one of those shells. They hit me. I don't know if it was our own, or if it was Japanese or what it was. I don't know where it came from. Anyway, I got evacuated. I can see that doctor now. I said to the doctor, "Have I got a million dollar wound?"

Q: Explain what a million dollar wound is.

CF: He says, no. A million dollar wound, you'd have a hole right through a bone. They'd put you on the ship and send you home. He said, "All you got is a couple hundred dollar wound." He said I would have a couple of weeks or rest in a hospital. So that's when I went down to the hospital.

Q: You were there for two weeks?

CF: I was there longer than that. A guy down there liked me. For some reason he liked me. And every time the surgeon would come around, which was a colonel or major, he told me to take a walk. So I would. I cheated a little bit. Instead of a couple of weeks, I got more than that. I don't remember how much I got out of it. So finally I don't know if it was my conscience or I heard my division had been relieved and so on and so forth. The officers came down to see me and told me they needed all this bullshit. I ate it. I said to this guy, the sergeant, "I think I'll go back to my outfit." [He said] it was up to me. I could hang around a little bit longer. All I had to do was just take a walk when the major came in. [He said] Or I could call him and have him check you out. I said to call him. He came down, looked at my leg and said that it was healing well. He said I could go back to my outfit. When I got up there, I was sorry. Ooh, was I sorry. After that good living. In a hospital bed, good hot meals. Oh man, that's really living. Got back up there,

eating out of cans again, sleeping on the ground. So I tried to fake a sickness. [Laughs] I went to the battalion medical tent. There was a doctor there. I think he was a captain or something. I told him, I think I have yellow jaundice. I give him this long spiel. He never looked at me. Finally, gives me a little bag and he puts something in there and he hands it to me. He said to take these. You'll be alright. Go back to your outfit. I didn't get out of it. I had to stay with it. Then it was Easter Sunday.

Q: Easter Sunday. What year?

CF: That's a good question.

Q: 1944? 1945?

CF: 1944 or 1945. It'd be 1945 because we went to Japan that same year after we came back out of the mountains.

Q: Okay. So Easter Sunday, 1945.

CF: We were in our foxholes and his minister jumped in a foxhole and he said that "Today is Easter Sunday. I don't know what your faith is, but can I say a few words about Easter Sunday?" I said sure, go ahead. I forgot to tell you before we went up on the Pimple, my sergeant came over. His name is Spibulo[?]. He was from Nevada. He was Catholic. He said the priest is coming up to hear a confession before we go into the battle tomorrow. Do you want to go? I said no. He said I ought to. I said no. Then I got this pang of homesickness. Apparently, that's when I was going to take the rifle and I was going to shoot my foot. I couldn't do it. That was the end of that. After that, we went back to camp. Oh, I forgot a battle, didn't I?

Q: You did?

CF: Yeah. Where I got the Silver Star. Missed that one. Where was that? I forgot. It's on those papers. A citation. It tells you exactly where it was, doesn't it? That worn off piece of paper that's sixty years old. Is it folded up or is it in a piece of plastic? [Asks someone off camera] Somewhere in here.

[Reads the citation] "Awarded the Silver Star Medal by direction of the President, under the provision of the act of Congress, approved July 9, 1918." I wasn't even aware of that. "Bolton 43 WD, 1918. A Civil Star Medal awarded by the Commanding General of 25th Division for the following name, enlisted man, Technical Sergeant, then Sergeant Carmelo Farfaglia 32837605 Infantry, United States Army, for gallantry in action against the Japanese forces near DeLong." How about that?

“Luzon, Philippine Islands, May 18, 1945. When technical sergeant Farfaglia’s platoon sergeant was wounded during an attack on a strong, heavily fortified enemy position, he took over his duties and responsibilities. Completely disregarding his own personal safety, he stood erect amid the hail of fire from enemy rifles and machine guns to lead his men in a charge that overran the enemy’s positions.”

Boy, that's true there.

“Technical sergeant Farfaglia’s gallant and intrepid action was directly responsible for the reduction of a tediously defended enemy position, reflecting great credit upon himself and the military service. Home address, Miss Antonia Farfaglia. Mother.”

They got Syracuse, New York down here. How about that? How about that?

“[unclear] 1.53 Lieutenant Colonel Adjunct General Thomas A. Stark, Colonel Chief of Staff.”

That picture is right there. This is the Silver Star they awarded me for this so-called gallant action I took there. I wasn't even aware of where the heck it was. When the General gave me that [laughs], he said to me “Where did you earn this soldier?” And I couldn't think of anything, so I said, Benzai Hill. He said that was on the east side of the road. I said, Yep, the whole regiment was on the east side of the road here. It tells me it was DeLong. Right?

Q: It looked gold from here. Silver Star. It looked gold from here.

CF: Looks like gold?

Q: Yeah.

CF: That's a Silver Star. Our great governor is going to put up a memorial or something to Purple Heart.

[Camera zooms in on a photo]

Q: Yeah. Hey, you want to explain that picture there? Yeah. Like who's that general?

CF: Yeah, that's General Mullins putting the Silver Star on me.

Q: Do you know those guys next to you?

CF: [points to soldiers in the photo] He was from the other company. I used to know his name. I forgot. This guy here, I remember him. I remember all these people. But we are talking about sixty years ago, and we were all young snots. No one over twenty, twenty-one years of age.

[Reads a different citation] This is one for the Purple Heart, right? I think. Yeah. This is a Purple Heart. There's no date on it. April 13, 1945 it says. This is the Purple Heart. It says here "Staff Sergeant Carmelo Farfaglia [reads off numbers, unclear] Infantry, United States Army. [Camera zooms in on Purple Heart] Home address." They got it right. Fulton, New York. How about that? Oh, April 13, I got wounded. April 13, 1945. How about that? The thirteenth ain't a good day, is it?

Q: No, it ain't. And you still have that piece of metal in your leg to this day?

CF: I am still carrying it. That's why I get ten percent disability. There's a story that goes with that, too. After drawing on it for a couple years, they called us up to Syracuse to reevaluate people getting compensation from the United States government for services in World War II. So I had to go and see this doctor, bone doctor, whatever he was, and he started asking me questions. I told him the truth. He asks, any pain? [I said] No. [He said] Does it bother you? [I said] No. [He said] Have you lost any work? [I said] No. Most of the questions to me were no. So he looked up at me, kind of smiled, and he didn't say no more. My check kept on coming. So finally I went up to Syracuse. At that time, if you were a veteran, you could take an exam up there to see what you were qualified to do, education, wires, whatever. And I had my report from all my records, so I scanned through them. What did this doctor put down? He lied for me. "Patient has periodic pains. Lost some time working." [Laughs]

Q: Oh, boy.

CF: What I believe happened, when I saw that. He'd been hearing bullshit all day long, bull stories. Here's a guy who comes in, tells the truth, and it paid off. He could have just as well cut it off, cut my pension off. He continued, because I was honest with him. That's the story on that one. Honesty paid off in that situation.

Q: Okay, what about when MacArthur finally came back?

CF: MacArthur. Everybody saw him but me. They said he was on the island, on the island of Luzon. He was only interested in Manila. He wanted to go to Manila. That day that I was awarded the Silver Star, Sergeant Mahoney made the mistake of having a pistol on his hip, carrying a pistol. A .45. To the Japanese anybody carrying a pistol was an officer. So the Japanese sniper up on this hill that we took that following day shot him, killed him that day. Uncle Bob has that holster, that .45 holster. Whatever happened to the .45, to this day, I don't know. For some reason I got the holster, but I didn't get the .45. I don't know who got the .45. American .45 pistol. So there's a story about taking that hill, too. They make it sound like it was a big deal. But what it was, we were pinned down and I was

lead scout at the time. I wasn't even a sergeant. They got me down as a sergeant, but I wasn't even a sergeant at that time.

A guy came up, called the guy over. I said Munson [?] I said "take your BAR and put a bead of fire up in there for me." He put a BAR down, which is a semi-automatic rifle, pulled the trigger, done. Goddamn thing rusted. Couldn't fire a shot. And the officer kept saying, do something up there, Carmelo, do something. That's when I got up. His name was Lieutenant Green. That's how that went about. Then I just got up. Then we got to the top of the hill. By the time I had gotten to the top of the hill, I couldn't pull my bolt back on my rifle. I'd shot two bandoliers and all my grenades, dropped them in holes and everything. I got to the top of the hill. Now, there's a place! My emotions were so high that I cried. Tears were streaming out of my eyes. And I told the lieutenant, "Here's your goddamn hill. Take it! Now you can have it." He said, "Now, now, quiet down." Quiet down, Hell! I was so wrought, so intense. I didn't give a shit if he was an officer or what he was. I told him what I felt. I didn't quite put it in that kind of language. The language I used was a little bit rougher. It was army language.

Q: I have papers in front of me here that said that President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945. And I guess you were wounded, according to that paper, like the 13th. So how did you feel when you heard that President Roosevelt died? What was going through your mind then? As well as anybody around you?

CF: You keep forgetting we're only twenty years old. 1920. We don't give a shit. No.

Q: Yeah, but I thought that since he was president for twelve years, that he became like an American father figure to everybody.

CF: They were picking on Eleanor in the service all the time. Some reason, people didn't like Eleanor. But he kept winning elections back here.

Q: And you probably didn't even know who Harry Truman was.

CF: Never heard of him. We had another battle after that. We had to go up the Spanish Trail to clean out some stragglers up there. It was a short campaign. We went up there and cleaned them right out. No time at all. They shot some artillery shells at us, but didn't amount to anything. There was one incident there that I think of quite a bit now. A nice, strapping young man. The 2nd Platoon went into a tactical position. I was platoon sergeant at the time, and I was behind them. All of a sudden, this guy came back. I said, "Where are you going?" He said "Boys, I got a little scratch in my eye here. I'm going back to first aid." [I told him] "You

are all right? Go on back up there.” He went back up there and he got killed. And I never forgot that. Poor guy. And that's one of the memories that I have of that incident. Another one was, we had a Banzai attack one night, and this guy from Syracuse named Biganoski [?]. It was a Polish name. Anyway, he got us all in position. He was a Guadalcanal veteran, too. And he turned around to come back after putting everybody in position. Got shot in the back. A Japanese sniper got him. I was always going to see that family in Syracuse and tell him about it, but I never did. Never did. Never went up to see his family. But he was from Syracuse, and it was a Polish name. I never looked up the family. I don't know. I guess that's about it.

Q: The Battle of the Philippines was over, I take it?

CF: Well, the Battle of the Philippines was over shortly after that. He declared the Philippines safe a couple of days after we were there. But the battle went on for another one hundred sixty days. There was no way for them, the Japanese, to drive us off in there. And once we took Manila that was it. Well, I went down there for R and R for rest, once. Went to Manila, but it was a destroyed city. Destroyed. There are pictures of that somewhere, of that city being destroyed.

Q: When you heard of victory in Europe in May of 1945, did you feel that you were now going to get more help in the Pacific and that the Pacific War was going to end soon?

CF: Never thought of it. The only thing I know is a guy came up to me. I don't know where he's got his information. He said, “Carmen, we got a secret weapon.”

Q: Before we get to that. On May 25, 1945, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff approved Operation Olympic, the invasion of Japan scheduled for November 1 of that year.

CF: We were going to be one of the assault divisions.

Q: You were going to invade the island of Japan?

CF: That's right. They used the invasion plan for occupation. All they do is settle for invasion. They convert it to occupation. We were supposed to go to Nagoya.

Q: You said before that whenever there were fights with Japanese soldiers there were always a lot of casualties. Casualty rates were extremely high.

CF: It was.

Q: All over the Pacific. You mentioned some island before. About one million casualties on one island alone. And you thought that millions of Americans were going to die if they invaded the island of Japan.

CF: Oh, yeah, we figured. The reason I say that is because when we got there for occupation the job of our company was to go up in the mountains and to destroy the weapons up there that were aimed at the beach. And you wouldn't believe the weapons they had up there. And that's where I got scared. The guy was shooting the machine gun. He was shooting up all his excess shells of bullets and stuff they had around there. And I was getting rid of the arsenal. I said, Give me that machine gun. I sat down and I started firing that machine gun myself, playing around. The barrel exploded. The hell with you guys. I'm going home. I don't want any more of this stuff. So that was the end of my fooling around with Japanese equipment. I can remember that goddamn machine gun exploding. It could just as well have gotten me, but it didn't. That was a full shave there. In Japan, all we did was train for riot duty.

Q: Riot duty. Okay. When did you first hear about Japanese Americans being interned in camps out on the West Coast?

CF: Never heard of it.

Q: Not during the war?

CF: Wasn't even aware of it. He wasn't even aware of any stuff in Oswego. World. Like 1819, it was a different time. Communications. Today, if you turn on a tube and you can find out what's going on all over the world. Not in those days. Newspapers were extra. Anything happened, boys would go to pick up the papers and go downtown, holler extra and sell newspapers and tell people what's going on. You got a little bit of it on the radio but papers were still a big thing in those days. Newspapers.

Q: What did the soldier tell you about the secret weapon?

CF: I poo poeed it. What the hell are you talking about? What do you know about any secret weapon? [He said] "I tell you, Carmelo, with this secret weapon, this war is going to be over." I asked where he was getting his information from. What are you talking about? He said, "Trust me. This war is over." In no time at all, Truman gave the orders, and they dropped the atomic bomb. And right after that, they surrendered shortly after that, and that's when we went in for occupation. We used the invasion. MacArthur wanted to invade Japan. His heart was set on it.

Q: And Harry Truman took that away from him?

CF: That's right. He sure did. He kicked him out as a commanding officer, too. He thought he was God Almighty.

Q: That was like, seven years later when he was in Korea.

CF: Yep.

Q: So to this day, you still feel that that atomic bomb saved your life?

CF: Oh, yeah. No question about it. I wouldn't be here today. No way. The casualties on that beach, they figured over a million casualties. I don't know how many deaths, but it would have been worse than Normandy. I would have been worse than Normandy. They were defending their homeland. Then they really sacrificed. You couldn't get them out of the hole in stupid islands, which amounted to nothing. How the hell are you going to get them out of their homeland? Well, they were ready. They anticipated we were going to invade. We owned the whole Pacific. That's the reason we took Okinawa as a staging area. And we had all trained divisions, too, and a hell of an army in the Pacific. Then they figured on getting some help from Europe, too, I guess. Because Europe was over with. In fact, the old outfit that I was with, that I trained with, the 87th Blackhawk Division out in Texas, they diverted them from Europe and sent them to Japan and the Philippines because they were going to use them for an invasion. You're right. When I came home, those who had so many points, they let them stay home. They didn't ship them out. They put all new recruits in. I had enough points to come home right away.

Q: So did you write to your family at all when you were in the war?

CF: I wrote one letter once telling how long it took me to get to New Caledonia, what kind of life I was having there, and so on and so forth. And they censored it all. All mail was censored. An officer had to read it. He came over to me and said that it's not acceptable. From then on all I said was, I'm doing okay. I'll see you when I get home. That's all I said. Everything is alright.

Q: Did you get any mail from them?

CF: Yeah. Usually we would get what they called V-mail. How in the hell did they do that? It was very simple. It was on very flimsy paper.

Q: Like Western Union?

CF: No, it was called V-mail in those days, it was very lightweight. It cut down the amount of weight in shipment. I don't remember exactly what it was all about.

Q: Okay. Tell me about the fart that saved your life.

CF: Yeah, that night, actually. It's funny there, but it was a serious night because the sergeant I told you about who got killed on the Hill that I got the medal on.

Q: Right.

CF: He killed his best friend. We were dug in for the night on these hills. So his buddy, who was a platoon sergeant on heavy weapons, got out of his hole to make sure everybody was in position. So his friend sitting up here saw him crawling along the ground and he thought it was a Japanese. Killed him. Fired a shot at him and killed him. That same night, I was in a hole with the guy. I still remember him. Sergeant Saldana [?] from Texas. He had the runs. The way I cleaned my spoon was to wipe it off on my mouth and stick it in my backpack after eating my beans and stuff. And the only things I could eat were the beans and frankfurters or whatever you would call them, hot dogs. That was my main meal in the service. When I got out of the hole, he wouldn't let me stay in the hole. So I got out of the hole and I expelled some gas. And the guy told me the next morning if I hadn't expelled gas he would have shot me. Because he had a bead on me.

Q: He recognized the sound?

CF: He recognized me as one of us. That's why I say when anything that moved at night was the enemy, and sometimes it was not. It was our own men. We proved that. But you're hyper. You're anxious. You're on a state of alert all the time. And sometimes it affects your senses, your common sense, because there's fear. You're hyper. You're on alert. Like one night I was there. It was raining. I was cold, hungry, soaking wet. I swear there was somebody out there calling me by name. So I took my rifle and just started firing. I don't think there was anybody out there. It was up here. [Points to his head] But after I fired, I felt better.

Q: That's good. Now, you told me before about how soldiers would march and pass you. About some ceremony where they had to recognize all the things that you had accomplished. I don't know what the event was called, but, like towards the end of the war, soldiers march?

CF: Oh, wow. That's when I got the Silver Star. All these guys you see here, we all stood up by the general and they had the bands playing and they had the division

marching. And these soldiers paraded in front of us. When they got almost in line with us, the officer gave them the Eyes-right [command] and they all turned and looked at us as they went by, as a salute. And it was very uplifting to see all these people march by and eyes right. It's funny the way it goes. They waved like this, the line. But the minute they gave them the Eyes-right, they straightened right up and looked right at us. And the band played all this music and stuff, military music. And I always said after that, I could see why generals and colonels wanted parades. It was good for your ego. It's an ego builder. Yeah, that was quite a thing.

Q: Was it at that point that you then felt like an American?

CF: I don't know when I did. I think when I came home, I thought about it. I thought I was more American. That I had earned the right to be an American. A right to be in this country. Of course, Jim Marino lost a leg over there in Italy and he ended up quite high. He was a first sergeant, too, but he always had a different attitude than I did.

Q: Was your first vote for Harry Truman? The first time you ever voted?

CF: You know, I can't remember who was the first one I voted for. I don't remember voting for Harry Truman.

Q: Stevenson?

CF: Good question. You know, I don't think I was even interested for years. Took a while. Took a while because I had a family. My primary interest was to take care of my family. Working, trying to get ahead, trying to get a couple of bucks. Politically, I don't think I ever paid any attention. When I did, I can't remember when it was.

Q: When you got home, did you fly home when you got home from World War II?

CF: Oh, no. No, that's another thing. I left Japan. I was on a troop ship. They didn't have enough officers to fill up the officer quarters. So they put staff sergeants and sergeants in the officer's quarters. So every time I felt woozy, I'd go in and lay down. I never vomited or got sick. I had two Christmases crossing over. We crossed the International Date Line. Two Christmases or two New Year's, one or the other. I forgot which one it was. But we crossed the International Date Line on that ship. We landed in Tacoma, Washington. I had pictures of that, but I don't know where they went. First thing I did there was go to a restaurant, order an oyster dinner. They brought over an oyster you wouldn't believe. Apparently, they knew we were combat soldiers. They couldn't do enough for us. That was in

Tacoma. Then I got on a train and went to Camp Atterbury, Indiana. They asked me if I lived in western New York or eastern New York. They never said central. So I told them Western. So they stopped me in camp Atterbury, Indiana. I was going through the line there. There's another thing. Another guy did me a favor. He asked if I wanted to file a claim for that piece of shrapnel I had in my leg. I said no. He asked why I didn't want to file it. [I said] "I want to go home." He said he would file it for me. I said, "That's what you want to do. Go ahead, file it". So he filed it for me. So I got \$10 a month back then. Eleven? [Asks his wife Jane off camera]

JF: It kept going up each year.

CF: Yeah. Ten or eleven bucks back in 1946 or 1947.

JF: What's it now? One hundred?

CF: Yeah, ninety-nine dollars. Sixty years up to ninety-nine dollars. So he did me a favor there. Then I told you about this doctor up there that I told the truth to, so he was good to me. So I drew that all my life. They haven't questioned me since. They did take x-rays that day to prove that I had the shrapnel in there. That was the end of it. From then on, they always send me a check every month.

JF: Danny, he couldn't wait till we got that stupid eleven dollar check.

CF: [laughs] Things were tough in those days.

Q: So what was it like when you finally stepped foot back in Fulton? Did the town seem different to you?

CF: No, I don't think it made any impression on me at all. I was just glad to be home, in a way.

Q: I mean, did you get a good reception? Did people read about you in a paper and then pat you on the back out in the street and stuff?

JF: Not until he came to Oswego. That's the mistake he made.

Q: When he came to Oswego?

JF: That's when he met me. [Laughs]

Q: Oh.

CF: No, there was no parade or nothing or anything like that. You were accepted when you came home. And one of the things they insisted on was that you go down to Oswego and register your discharge papers. So I got a record down in

Oswego of my discharge papers. That was a service they provided. I went to get my hunting license. They wanted to teach me how to use a gun.

Q: Oh, boy.

CF: Please. [Laughs] I wrote to Albany and told them I was in the service and that I would like to have my license back. And he sent me my license.

Q: Your driver's license?

CF: Driver's license. It cost me nothing. I didn't have to take my test over for my driver's license. My father said that the income tax people sent him a letter and told him that I owed some taxes. My father said, "If you want the taxes, go over to the Philippines and get it." That was the end of that. That covers everything, Dan. I don't know what else. I hope I conveyed the feeling of combat. It's a hard thing to do. I mulled it over in my mind two or three times. How can I explain this and have you understand a sense of what it was all about? It ain't easy because you didn't experience it. I'm trying to give you an experience that you didn't experience. But a lot of people came home and would not talk about it. I always talked about it. I always felt that it was good for me to talk about it.

Unconsciously, I think it was good therapy instead of keeping it all inside. If somebody would ask me something, I would talk about it. In fact, I tried to get my cousin, Jimmy Marino, him and I to get together and write a story about our experiences in the service. He poo pooed it. He wouldn't do it. He didn't like the idea at all. He said there'd be millions of books like that. I said, but [it would be about] a couple Italian boys. You went to Italy and lost a leg. I went to the Philippines, got shot, and we had experiences over there. You had experiences. And give it from the perspective of an immigrant's son, in that area. Give a different perspective.

Q: You still can.

CF: He wouldn't do it.

Q: Why don't you write one yourself?

CF: It's hard to tell a story like that. Some people have a knack for telling. Explaining how you feel as a young Italian boy. Like I've just told you, I spent two years in kindergarten and not being able to speak English. And English was always my toughest subject all the way through school and stuff like that. They give you a sense of that era or that time of life.

JF: He [Jimmy] never wanted to be a war hero when he died.

CF: No. He wouldn't even use military service. I went to his son, I said, "Where's the military? If anybody deserves it, your father does." He looked at me and said that he is being buried according to his instructions. His father deserved military service because he gave a leg and he did his duty. He deserved a military funeral. But I see they don't give military funerals anymore. I don't think the VFW does anymore. I don't think they have a firing squad anymore.

Q: I did see one a couple years ago.

CF: They went out a couple years ago.

Q: Well, the local VFW conducted it themselves.

CF: Last I knew, they don't do it anymore.

Q: Well, this was like three years ago, so maybe they've changed since then.

CF: I'm a lifetime member of VFW, but I don't have any contact with the people out there, so I don't know.

JF: When he was over in Italy, didn't his aunt come out on the streets and holler, "Jimmy, Jimmy."

CF: Oh, I didn't tell him that story, did I? When American troops invaded Sicily, my grandmother would go out in the street as these soldiers were marching by and she would holler the names Farfaglia and Marino to see if she would get any response. She was looking for her grandchildren. So you people don't know how fortunate you are to know your grandparents.

Q: Did Jimmy meet his grandmother?

CF: Yes. His mother was my father's sister. It'd be his grandmother.

JF: She was looking for him as he was marching through, shouting Marino, Farfaglia.

CF: I never knew my grandfather. The only thing I can remember about grandfather, my father wore a black band on a suit. [Motions around upper arm] My grandfather died. There's no picture of my grandfather or my grandmother in any place that I know of. And I think about that every once in a while. There is a part of my life that I never experienced is gone. You guys are fortunate. You know who your grandparents are. You've had contact with them. So that's what happens when you emigrate from one country to another. But they gave us a better life. But you had to give up something for that better life.

Q: We're almost out of time here.

CF: My father got by, did halfway decent. He owned material things. I've done better than him. Your father's doing better than me. And you're probably going to do better than your father.

Q: I hope so. Okay, we're almost out of time here. Is there anything else you want to add or say?

CF: No, I just keep hyping back to the I hope I conveyed some sense of what it feels like to be in combat. I don't know if I did or not. That was my purpose.

Q: You did.

CF: Trying to give you some sense of what emotions and feelings that go through your whole body when you're in physical combat situations. Where guns are going off, firing. Artillery shells whistling over your head, and all this other stuff that goes with it. I can tell you what an impression it makes on you. When I got hit here in my leg. After the battalion, I walked down to another place. I don't know where. I was going there to see the doctor. Artillery shells went off. I literally hit the ground right there even though the combat was way away from me. But the minute I heard those artillery shouts, bang. I was laying on the ground. But it was our own firing, too. See what it does to you?

Q: Yeah.

CF: And when we went to the Spanish Trail, we went up there. If I was scared of anything, it was artillery. I don't know why. It scared the hell out of me. If I heard artillery shells, you want to see me dig? I dug a hole and got down there as fast as I could. Just as fast as I could. I tried to give you an idea.

Q: One last thing I want to ask you about that picture up there. Where was that taken?

CF: [camera zooms in on photo on the wall] That was taken in Fulton when I came home on leave from Texas. Right after I finished basic training, they let us come home, gave us a two week leave or three week leave. They had a studio downtown which is Goldberg's right now. There used to be a studio right next door to it. And I had my picture taken there. My mother took it and had it enlarged. My parents did that.

JF: Time's up.

Q: Time's up. Okay.

CF: [I want] to tie up some loose ends here.

Q: Okay.

CF: Combat Infantry Badge. Ten dollars more a month. Okay, you have to earn this. [holds up badge]

Q: Have to earn that. Okay.

CF: [holds up patches] Here is the insignia from the division. Guava leaf with a streak of lightning through it.

Technical Sergeant. Three stripes up, two down.

Three years of service.

27th Regiment insignia. Wolfhound. The story is that the regiment was in Russia and they walked twenty-five or twenty-seven miles overnight to attack the enemy.

And Russians gave them the name of Wolfhound. They moved like a wolf. So, they always carried that. These are campaign stars, Philippines.

The Spanish trail, so on and so forth. That's the ribbon there.

I believe that's a Silver Star.

Good question. I don't know, one of these is good conduct.

Purple Heart. That one is a Purple Heart.

I don't know what this one is. Can't remember. Now I think we covered all the loose ends.

Q: Okay.

CF: Good. But I don't know what the hell these things are. That's a VFW insignia. Nothing in this one.

Q: One other thing. The sword that's in my dad's gun cabinet right now?

CF: Oh, that sword?

JF: You got time for it, Danny.

CF: Where did I pick that up? In the Philippines someplace or Japan.

JF: You told me Japanese.

CF: I want to be honest, I think that when we took over that airfield...did I get that in Japan? You know, I can't be honest with you. I don't know where I got it. I'm not sure I got it in Japan and I'm not sure I got it in the Philippines.

Q: Did you get it off of a dead Japanese soldier or an officer?

CF: No, I didn't take it off any body. In one cave I walked into when we were on a search and destroy, I saw this little funnel sticking out of the ground. We dropped a smoke grenade down there and out came this Japanese soldier and he fired his rifle as he came out. They filled him full of lead. Another cave I went into, I walked in and I reached up, I was going to grab the pistol. I remember the pistol. But when I raised my hand up there to take that pistol, I heard the tonk tonk. And what that meant was that's how the Japanese set their primer off on their grenades. And I immediately ran out. And so we ran out. Then we threw grenades in there and everything and killed anything that was in that cave. That was a loose end. We took care of that too.

Q: Yes, we did. [camera man shows wedding photo]

CF: Why don't I remember where I got that? I got a Japanese flag. One day I took the Japanese flag off a body or something. I don't know where I got it. I washed it and hung it up in a tree. All of a sudden I was sitting there watching it, waiting for it to dry. And this airplane came down, zooming. It was one of our own. And all of a sudden it occurred to me that he thought maybe it was a Japanese camp or something. So I went up and pulled it down. I just got rid of it last year. Last year I took it to the dump and had it burned.

Q: Why?

CF: Because Japan is our friend now. They are not an enemy any longer and it does not serve any useful purpose to have that Japanese flag. So I got rid of it. The same year, I gave your father the sword and I gave Uncle Bob the pistol.

CF: Good enough.

Q: Good enough. Bye.