

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW J. CIAMPA

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Neal Hammerschlag: This begins an interview with Andrew J. Ciampa on April 16, 2001 in Bishop House, Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Neal Hammerschlag and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

NH: Also present is Mr. Ciampa's daughter, Nancy Ciampa. Mr. Ciampa, I was wondering if you would run through your family history and your experiences growing up with your family.

SH: Begin by telling us about your father, what his name was, and where he was from.

Andrew Ciampa: My father's name was Nick Ciampa, and my mother's name was Carmela, and they had ten children. I was number seven, and I grew up a normal life. Of course, we always had plenty of things to do. We lived in Plainfield, no less, and ...

SH: Where were you born? Were you born in Plainfield?

AC: I was born in Plainfield, believe it or not, close by, and I went to Rutgers here, because of that close proximity ...

SH: What did your father do? What was his employment?

AC: He was in a trucking business, and my mother, of course, was very loving and liked all of her children and took care of them very nicely, and I was number seven, as I said.

SH: Was your family originally from Plainfield? Was that where your grandparents were from?

AC: No. I'm first generation. They both came from the other side [Italy], and they settled, I think, in Brooklyn, first, and then they moved to Plainfield.

SH: Had your parents met in Italy before they came here?

AC: Had they met before they came here? I think so, yes. I don't really know much about that, except that my father came first and got settled, and then they, in those days, they would send for their wives after, and then the family started here, I guess ...

NH: So they were married in Italy.

AC: Yes.

SH: Can you tell me about your high school and college experiences during the Depression?

AC: I went to high school at Plainfield High School, and I knew from my early days in high school, maybe when I was a sophomore, that I would want to become a teacher.

SH: Did you?

AC: Yeah. ... I knew somebody who went to Montclair State, and that's where I went to school, Montclair State Teachers College, for my undergraduate work. Then I came here for my graduate work in the School of Education, and I graduated from there in 1949, this institution.

NH: Was it tough on your father at all, with the bad economic times, having ten children?

AC: Well, yes, but I worked my way, mostly, through college. My father and mother decided they would pay for the tuition, and I would take care of the rest. So I worked my way through college. I had a job where all my meals were given to me, and then I had to just pay for the room, and [it cost] maybe three dollars a week. What a difference. One time I had a room that, during the summer session, was a dollar-fifty a week, believe it or not. It was on the third floor, about like this, and that's how much things have changed. The tuition was very little, maybe around one hundred and seventeen dollars. That probably included the student council fee. So that's quite a while ago.

NH: Did the majority of your siblings go to college also?

AC: ... No. Believe it or not, I was the only one of the [ten]. I guess, that's the way it worked out, but I was really interested in going.

SH: Can you tell me how the Depression affected your family, what the discussions were about that?

AC: Not too much. I can't tell you too much about that, but it did affect the family. The Depression was quite a thing, and I'm not prepared to tell you too much about it, except that my mother was always the type that took care of her family, no matter what, and my father did, too. But the Depression was a factor.

SH: How far down the line were you?

AC: I was number seven.

SH: You were the seventh of ten children.

AC: I was number seven. I have a brother younger than me, as you know, and I have a sister younger than me, two sisters younger than me. ... She [Nancy] wants me to bring out the fact that we lived on a, what she called, a small farm, and that's a good name for it. It was a pretty big lot, I thought, actually, five lots, so it was pretty big, and that's what kept me busy during my boyhood days. We always had enough food. Sometimes people who were hard-up would come to the backdoor for food or a meal. My father was a great gardener, and I'm a gardener still. I'm going to get to that project, after this, my garden. I'm still a gardener.

NH: It says that you graduated from Montclair in 1940. Is that correct?

AC: Nineteen hundred and forty is correct, yeah.

NH: What did you do from 1940 until you enlisted in 1942?

AC: Until 1942? Oh, well, I got right into working somehow. My first year I spent as a chemist in American Cyanamid Company in Bound Brook, and then I decided on going into teaching. Well, I guess it was hard to get a teaching job, so I finally got a teaching job, after about a year or so, and then I went right into teaching. The years are hard to recall, but I'll think about it, to get it down, to pinpoint it ...

SH: You wanted to be a teacher. What did you want to teach? Was there a specific subject, or certain age group?

AC: No. My answer to that, I guess, I wanted to teach children. That's it, the stock answer for the School of Education. You know, you ask a teacher, "What do you teach?" and usually secondary teachers will say the subject and elementary teachers will say, "Children." So I went into elementary after a while. I taught secondary for a while nearby here, and then I went into elementary principalship, so then, of course, we focused on the children more.

NH: Do you remember where you were in December of 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

AC: Yes, I was still home. My sister Marion called us and told us what had happened. That brings in the chronology, and I was still home, and it was a Sunday, and I remember the next day we declared war on Japan. I went to work. That was December 8. ... I was teaching, my first job before the war, in Plainfield, Emerson School, seventh and eighth grade, before I went to my secondary job after the war. I went to Dunellen after that. That's where I was.

NH: What were your thoughts concerning the matter?

AC: Oh, my thought concerning the matter is that as soon as Pearl Harbor happened, I knew that I would be involved. ... I was already in Class 1-A, and the principal there did give me a job, but he knew I wouldn't last too long. So I only lasted to about February, until they took me into the Army.

SH: As a teacher, how did you talk to your students about what had happened at Pearl Harbor?

AC: As a teacher? Well, I don't think [I did]. See, I was a science teacher. I don't think we discussed that too much, but most of the boys and girls that I came in contact with in my first high school job, they had been through, they knew quite a bit about the news and the war that had happened, so I don't recall that we really discussed it too much.

NH: Can you run through your pre-war experiences, like your enlistment? I read that you enlisted at Fort Dix and your basic training was in South Carolina.

AC: Yeah. Well, I don't recall too much, except when we got to South Carolina, we did spend basic training there. We used to go out every day on a hike, and we'd have to go through a lot of maneuvers, like obstacle courses, to teach us about battle conditions. ... Most of the time, they would not use live ammunition for obstacle courses, but, at one point, we did that, and you could

see the bullets going over your head as you crawled along. You had to learn how to crawl ... whenever they were shooting over your head. Like in Normandy, that was very important, to crawl.

SH: Why did you go into the infantry? Did you ever think of joining the Navy, or any of the other services?

AC: No, I was a draftee. From there on, they took care of it. They assigned me.

SH: What about OCS? Did you have a chance to go to OCS, as a college graduate?

AC: No, because by the time I got around to thinking about OCS, our division was ready to go overseas. What I did want to try was the Air Force, and I tried to think about that for a while, but at that time, they told ... me that our division was ready to go over. ... I think it was a ninety-day period, so they could not take men out to go to OCS, at that time. In other words, I think they put the draftees that were drafted with me, and my brother was drafted the same day, into the infantry, because that's where they had the greatest need. ... During wartime, that's what they have to think about, the greatest need, and so we were put into the infantry. They did change me to the medics after a while.

SH: How did they do that?

AC: Well, they looked at my record, and I had on there [first aid training]. See, when I was a young teacher, I always thought, "Try to do the best you can in whatever you're doing." So they told me, "It's a good idea to have first aid. In case any of your children get hurt in your class, you'd know something about it." So then I took the advanced course in first aid, too, the Red Cross, and I had that on my record, so they thought I would be a good candidate for the medics, on that basis.

NH: Were you happy with that, or did you want to stay in the infantry?

AC: Yes, I liked that idea. We did a lot of training in garrison, you know, how to tie the figure-eight bandages and take care of all the problems. ... I went to take a course in the medical work, and I went to Lawson General Hospital for three months, as a special course, before we went overseas.

SH: Where was that?

AC: That was in Atlanta, Georgia. There was a school there, an Army school, and I took that course at Lawson General Hospital. It'll come back to me.

NH: What other kinds of things did you do for medical training?

AC: Well, we went [through] the whole gamut in medical training at Lawson General Hospital. They had several majors there, surgical, medical, x-ray, and maybe a few others, but I took the medical technician course, and we had to know everything there, how to administer medicines,

how to give shots, subcutaneously. We would give them to each other to learn about that, that's one thing. ... Any type of injury we were supposed to know about. We learned how to make bandages, use splints. ... Of course, when you consider all the background they'd give you, too, it's quite a course, and it was very intense, six hours a day for three months.

SH: When did you and your brother have to split up? You said you enlisted ...

AC: Oh, we split up before basic training, actually. I went to Fort Jackson. He went to Camp Croft, South Carolina, then somewhere else, in Manteo, North Carolina. But I went overseas. I got into the Thirtieth Division, and they went to Fort Jackson, and then for a while we were at Fort Benning. For ninety days, they gave us what they called detached service. That was just my Regiment, 117th Regiment. We went to Fort Benning, and we served as the visual aids for the OCS classes, which you just mentioned. The class would come in, sit on the bleachers, and they'd have their lecture, and then, at one point, they showed the candidates what type of service the medical detachment would give them when they became infantry officers. ... I was in the medical detachment, and we put on the demonstrations with the litters, how to put up an aid station, and so forth, very interesting.

NH: When did your unit go to Europe?

AC: The ETO. Well, we left sometime in February [and] we got to England. It's on the list there, but that's okay, we don't have to be too technical here. That was February 1944, I guess. ... We arrived at Liverpool, February '44. Then we stayed in England for a little while. It turned into a lot more training, and, of course, we got over to Normandy in June, about June, [D] plus six or seven, about June 17, we went to Normandy. My unit went all the way up to the Elbe River in Germany. I never got hit. I stayed with the infantry. That's the term we used, "never got hit," by shrapnel.

SH: I wanted to ask a couple of questions before we talk about Europe. You probably hadn't done much traveling, as a young man from Plainfield. What did you think of what you saw in the South?

AC: ... Are you from the South?

SH: No, sir. I just would like your reactions to the South, from somebody who was originally a Northerner ...

AC: Well, I thought it was a very interesting experience for me, and at first, they seemed to have different colloquialisms and talked differently, but when you'd meet the very educated Southerner, they talked just like the Northerners, and so forth. They were very nice people. They were very cordial to all of us from the North, because we had a lot of boys from New Jersey and New York, and so forth, [who had] gone into this unit, which was a southern unit. The Thirtieth Division was originally a National Guard division, mainly up from Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina, and then they brought in all these draftees. ... They were very nice to us, all the people, and it was a very good experience. Of course, our units were segregated ...

SH: Did you have any conversations about the North versus South?

AC: Oh, of course. [laughter] We used to kid each other about the language, but it was all in fun, “Y’all.”

NH: So you got along pretty well with the gentlemen from the southern states.

AC: Yeah, there was no problem, no problem, as far as I could see with our group. We had to get used to some of their hillbilly songs. Now they call it country music, but we used to call it hillbilly [music], Tennessee especially. “Take that last train to Memphis,” you know.

SH: What did you do for entertainment, while you were still training down in the South?

AC: Well, they had service clubs and USOs, and I would frequent those quite a bit. I used to like to go dancing, and so forth, for the evening, you know, and that’s about it. I’d go to town, maybe have something to eat, to get away from the camp. They always had a bus that you could take downtown for the evening, and that was a good pastime. As you moved around, you [would] always see different places. You moved from Fort Jackson, which was in Columbia, and we went to Fort Benning, which is in Columbus, Georgia, and you’d see the stores and visit different places. That was the entertainment, and the service clubs and the USOs once in a while. I saw Betty Grable close up and Dinah Shore.

SH: When you traveled from the South to Europe, where was your embarkation port? Where did you leave?

AC: Oh, Fort Myles Standish, I think it was called.

SH: In Boston?

AC: Camp Myles Standish at Boston, Taunton, Massachusetts.

SH: How did you go over? Did you go in a convoy?

AC: We went over in a convoy. I forgot the name of the ship going over. We came home on the *Queen Mary*, but going up was a smaller ship. ... It was all convoyed.

SH: Can you tell us a little bit about that trip over? How were your sea legs?

AC: The trip over was uneventful, as far as I recall. There was one fellow who was very unhappy. He threw his whole barracks bag back into the ocean. I don’t know how he came out with that, but I remember that. He didn’t want to go overseas. [laughter] You know, we traveled with barracks bags with all our possessions.

NH: For the most part, were the servicemen generally nervous?

AC: No. That was an isolated incident. I'm trying to think of the name of the ship, and I can't think of it. It was the *Kungsholm*, I think.

NH: Was there any discussion of what was going to happen when you got off the ship, like what you'd run into, what kinds of things you'd see in Europe? Did anybody discuss that, or was that just in the back of your minds?

AC: When we get off this ship that was taking us over there, you want to know what happened?

NH: I want to know what was going through your mind on the ship.

AC: Sorry, I can't remember that ...

SH: Do you remember what you did for entertainment on the ship? How many days did it take you to get across the Atlantic?

AC: ... I don't remember how long. I'd say about a week or ten days.

SH: Did you play cards? Did you gamble?

AC: I don't gamble. I don't believe in gambling. It doesn't pay. But a lot of fellows did. We had on the boat, on the deck, a lot of money on the floor, but that's not for me, unfortunately.

SH: Did you stand any watches? Did you have any duty at all, while you were going over? As a medic, did you have any special duties on the ship?

AC: Not on the boat, no, not until we got over there, Petworth.

SH: You landed in Liverpool. How long did they leave you in Liverpool, before you got down to Petworth in Sussex?

AC: Well, they put you right on trucks, and then we went to Petworth.

SH: What did you think of England?

AC: England is a very nice country, I thought, and the people there, too, were very nice to the American GIs. ... They were very accustomed to us, by the time I got there, because units like the Eighth Air Force were there before, and they'd been there quite a while. But the English people were very, very nice to the American GIs. In Hemel Hempstead, one older lady grabbed my arm and said, "Oh, you Americans are all so strong."

SH: Did you get any leaves and go into London at all?

AC: Oh, yes. I went into London. I used to like London. We weren't too far from London. There was a train that ran over there, and I visited London. I went to the theater. I saw *Jill*

Darling, Blithe Spirit, and My Sister Eileen. In fact, I was in London, one time, when there was an air raid warning, and all the people would run to the shelters, and it was pretty hectic that way.

SH: Did you continue to train as a medic in England, in Petworth?

AC: Yes, yes.

SH: What did your training consist of?

AC: The same thing. We'd go through the same thing that we learned in Fort Jackson. You know, you'd have to keep the men busy and review everything, so you learned how to put splints on and the bandages and how to carry litters, you know.

SH: How many men were in the Medical Corps of the Thirtieth Division? What would the numbers be? Do you remember?

AC: I'd say a couple hundred. There's a booklet we could refer to on that, but that was only one of the companies, the medical detachment. They had, you know, it was broken up into groups, like the aid men. I was an aid man. That's why I stayed with the infantry. They would assign me to a company. I was with C Company most of the time, as their aid man, overseas. But, anyway, in garrison, they would have a section on aid men, litter bearers, and you'd have to learn how to do each phase of the work and be ready for the big time, you know. I stayed with the troops. When they got hurt, I would take care of them. They invariably called you, "Doc," and you had to take care of them.

NH: Did you come into contact with British or French troops while you were in England?

AC: Oh, yes.

NH: How did they react to the American GIs?

AC: Well, I met a lot of the English fellows, when I was in England, and they welcomed us again, because we were there to help them.

NH: Were they resentful at all?

AC: No, I didn't feel any resentment. They welcomed us, if anything. That's what I felt.

SH: Did you get to do any dancing in England?

AC: Oh, yeah, the Dip. [laughter] I could just see the band, and they used to do the Hokey Pokey quite a bit. Guys used to laugh at me, because I used to go to dances so much. "What do you get out of it?" I had a friend, Vince Daddino, and he danced with a nice-looking girl. I used to kid him about his wife at home, but he was faithful.

NH: Normandy was where you first went over.

AC: In Normandy, yeah, St. Lo, just before St. Lo. Well, it was Point du Hoc. That was a tough point, where a lot of men lost their lives, because it was a hard thing to get into. The tides were high, and so forth, but I didn't go in the first wave, but that was the area ... On the day that we took St. Lo, I had to dig four foxholes, because we kept moving. Every time you'd get the order that, "We're going to be here awhile," you'd start digging your foxhole. ... There's a lot of digging to that, because we used two-man foxholes in Europe, and they were pretty big, because you'd put something over the top, and you'd sleep in there, hoping no artillery shells hit you. In the Ardennes, when we got there, we had this large foxhole, and we'd put some branches over the top from the trees that were around, and then we'd put some twigs, and the next morning, it was all [covered with] snow, all over the top. The only opening was where we'd get in and out. We'd cover that with our raincoats, and that was covered with snow one morning, because when we were there, it snowed. But, anyway, those big foxholes took a lot of digging. So, at St. Lo, we moved so much, which was good, because we were going forward, so there were four diggings. We were pretty tired that day.

SH: When you got off the ship on Normandy, what did you see of the battle that had preceded you?

AC: By the time I got there, things were pretty good. They had put up a bridge for the tanks to go over. When we got into ships, we went into some PT boats, and that's the way I got onto the French coast. The boys before that had to wade through water probably, but by the time I got there, we were using the PT boats, and that got us right onto the land. They had moved several miles inland. They put us in trucks and moved us inland. There was a lot of talk, as soon as I came. One of our units ... had landed before us, from the 117th Infantry, and some of the men that I knew had already been killed, you know, after three or four days. ... One fellow told me, "There's a German lieutenant buried over there who was killed on the St.," and, "So-and-So is not here any longer," and, "So-and-So is gone." That was tough, Normandy, but we started moving, and that was good. You've got to keep moving. If you don't keep moving, the enemy can pin you down and you're sunk. That's what happened. So that's why they always taught us to keep moving, in the infantry especially, and spread out, "Don't get close together, because one shell will get you all." They always taught us to spread out, as we walked through a field, or something like that.

SH: When you started going into combat, how well do you think you and the men in your infantry unit had been prepared?

AC: The first wound I treated was a big, gaping shrapnel wound in a shoulder. I put on sulfanilamide and a bandage and called the litter bearers. We were all very well prepared for combat, and in my estimation, of course, I was just still the aid man, but when the artillery started falling, it didn't care who it hit, and I was right in there with the rest of them. I'd say the men were very well prepared. They knew what to do. Some mistakes were made, though, of course.

SH: How well were you supplied?

AC: Very well in the beginning. The only time we had poor supplies was when General Patton moved fast across France, and there weren't too many supplies then. He moved too fast, but in the first part, we had good supplies. Every night, you know, after the battle, the supplies would come in, and they'd have, the next morning, plenty of food. It was normal for the unit to attack around four or five o'clock in the morning, and we'd get the planes overhead, the Piper Cubs, for observation. They would observe the enemy artillery and then give the signal to our artillery to decimate those guns. So we were pretty well prepared, I think, but mistakes were made, in the hedgerows especially. I remember one mistake, if you want to hear about it. He was a captain. I can't remember his name ... You see, the hedgerows were like hedges and rocks, and so forth, between the different properties, and they acted as defiles for our troops, as they were trying to get to the enemy. But, anyway, between hedgerows, there might be an opening, like that, maybe four to six feet, and when you'd have the enemy fire coming at you overhead, they might clip the hedges on top, and you'd have to keep down low. Well, this one fellow forgot to keep down low, as he crossed this opening, and he got hit right in his wallet, here. His wallet was right over his heart. It was a mistake. He should have crawled across there, but I remember that in Normandy as plain as day. ... He was a captain. But they taught us to crawl, and that was a good thing to do.

SH: As a medic, how often were you called from a relatively safe position into a much more dangerous situation to give aid to injured soldiers?

AC: Well, I went right up with them, and as they got hurt, they'd holler, "Medic," and I'd go over there and take care of it the best I could. ... Then if he was hurt very badly, we called the litter bearers, and the litter bearers would then put him on a litter and take him back. ... If the situation was moving, the front units would keep on moving, [and] I'd have to move with them. If it wasn't moving, you'd find a place that looked safe, and you'd take care of the situation. What we used mostly would be, on these wounds, was this white sulfanilamide powder. They gave us that, and we even carried morphine for pain. We were able to administer that as aid men.

SH: Were the aid men singular, or did you travel in units of two? Were you in a buddy system?

AC: The aid men? We were with the platoon, one aid man with each platoon. A rifle company would, I think, have three platoons, or four, and each one had an aid man in battle, because a platoon covered quite a bit of territory.

SH: How much did you have to carry? I mean, you had to have your own personal tents and things like that, but how many medical supplies did you have to carry?

AC: Oh, we'd carry tourniquets, sulfanilamide. You're talking about weight, how much weight? I'd say maybe twenty pounds of medical supplies we'd carry in our pouches. We didn't have a gun to carry, of course. The average infantryman would carry about, I think, ninety pounds of equipment on a hike. I did that, too. One time, we had to hike twenty-two miles a day, that's when we were following General Patton, three days in a row. Everybody got blisters, because with the load, you know, it's pretty heavy.

NH: I read that a lot of medics took the red crosses off their helmets and arms because it made them targets.

AC: On the arm we had it.

NH: I read that medics felt uncomfortable with that, because it made them targets. Did you feel that at all?

AC: Well, it's a hard thing to say whether that was a target or not. You mean some medics have told you that by putting this ...

NH: They removed all the red crosses from their uniforms, because the Germans would purposely try to hit them.

AC: You know, if he removed them, he could be more of a target, because then you were not protected by the Geneva Conference, so I left mine on there. But one day, something happened, which I wonder how the German soldiers took that. I was on the side of a cliff, two fellows, myself and this other fellow, and there was a sniper about 500 feet away, and he was shooting at us. But I didn't know any shooting was taking place, until this man got it through the head. He got shot right through the head. I don't remember until this day, whether I was in a supine position at the moment, or whether I was sitting up, and whether he was sitting up, or in a supine position, but we were in this foxhole, and the ... sniper shot him. Now, I don't know. He could have been aiming for me and my red cross, but I always think that the German mind that was up in that sniper was observing the Geneva Convention and was shooting at the soldier and not at me. I don't know. But, anyway, that was a fellow by the name of Rosenberg.

NH: Did you feel that the Germans wouldn't shoot at you because of the Geneva Convention? ... When you'd help people on the field, did you feel more at ease because of the Geneva Convention?

AC: I never thought much about the Geneva Conference, but that's the law they quote about ... not using gas and observing the medical designation, so I don't know. I believe that, by and large, it was respected.

NH: Do you want to pick up from after Normandy? You talked about the Ardennes a little bit. Do you want to run us through where your unit advanced?

AC: What's the question?

NH: Can you give me a chronology of where your unit moved through Europe?

AC: Where I went through Europe?

NH: Yes.

AC: From Normandy, I mentioned St. Lo. That was the breakthrough, and then we kept moving. Oh, I was at Mortain [and] Avranches. That was a big battle, Avranches. The German forces were trying to divide the American forces in two, and they didn't succeed, and the name of the place is called Mortain. ... That's where we had our battalion surrounded, and we had to call additional help to get these tanks that were trying to come at us. Our lieutenant colonel was from Missoula, Montana, and he called the English to help us with their planes, and he called them, I think they were called the Spitfires. ... They were able to get right down on the tanks, and I could see them, the way they swooped down on the tanks and decimated them, so we could break free from there. That was Mortain, and that's where we got this Presidential Citation for that, because I was with that unit. I wasn't doing the fighting, but President Truman gave us that medal.

SH: What you were doing at Mortain? What was your personal involvement at Mortain?

AC: Well, I was, again, still an aid man, and if anybody got hurt, I would fix them, fix their wounds. We would get the "screaming meemies" in there. That's the name for the *Nebelwerfers*. A *Nebelwerfer* was an armament, [which] had six or seven barrels. They'd shoot them all at once. They called it the *Nebelwerfer*, the Germans, and we called them the "screaming meemies." They came over our heads quite a bit at Mortain. But, as far as I recall, what I did was to take care of my job and take care of anybody who got hurt from the shrapnel. We had foxholes, and we were dug in pretty well. We were in an apple orchard in Normandy, at that time, Mortain. Then we kept moving. Of course, we went into Germany, and, I guess, I have to recall where we went. We went towards St. Lo, and that's where General McNair got killed by our own fire ... Well, we went to a lot of small places. We crossed Barenton. It's all in here ... [We went to] a lot of small places, but, generally, we were heading for the German border, and we, it tells here where we crossed. Now, here were the long foot marches following Patton.

SH: Can you tell us a little bit about your experiences following Patton?

AC: Well, as I recall, they were short of food supply, so that's the one time our superiors said that, "You could go to the countryside and beg all the food you want." So some of the boys had bags and would ask some of the farm people if they had any food that we could use.

NH: Did you get chickens and eggs?

AC: Yeah, anything they had.

SH: Were you fluent in any other languages? Were you able to speak languages other than English?

AC: Well, I could speak French, and then I found myself getting pretty good in German ... In fact, I had one lieutenant pick me out to go with him on the forward section, when they went forward, to interpret for them in German, and I really didn't know any German when I got there, but you pick it up. French, I knew pretty well. I took five years of that. So I liked to talk

French, but German, I'd like to learn more about that language, because that's a very interesting language.

SH: Were you able to use your French from St. Lo across France?

AC: Oh, yes.

SH: Tell us about some of the incidents that you used French.

AC: One time this got me in trouble, being able to speak French, because, as you know, the infantry moves ahead. They'd sometimes have air support, and we had air support that day. I forgot which one it was. Either the P-47 [Thunderbolt] or the P-51 [Mustang] was going ahead of us and bombing. ... As the infantry approached with me, and I was the aid man with the infantry company, this one lady started talking to me in French and [said], "*Parler vous francais?*" and pretty soon, she says, "Why did you do that? Why did you bomb my house?" One of the bombs had gone right through her house, and she was blaming me, and I was not even in the Air Force. But, anyway, it was an error. I'm sure the pilot did not want to put that through the house, but the thing was completely demolished, a French woman. Because I could speak French, I was the scapegoat, in that particular situation. When I was in Paris on a three-day pass, I was with Sergeant Darnold. He liked to drink. We were drinking Calvados chased with beer, and I taught a Frenchman a French drinking song.

SH: Did you use your French in any other way, such as helping to get food?

AC: Oh, yeah. Invariably, I would use it.

SH: Did you ever use it to locate a good place to stay for the night?

AC: Of course, yes. Even in German, I remember using the language ability to get a deal, you know. What the boys liked a lot, when we went to the farmhouses in Germany, was eggs, so I learned to say, "*Eier? Haben sie eier?*" ... If they'd give you some, you'd accept them and give them to the boys, and they'd cook them somehow. *Eier* [means] eggs. So I learned a new word, but the French I used quite a bit. It's hard for me to recall every single instance.

SH: I wanted to ask you about the German with the boots on.

-----END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE-----

NH: This continues an interview with Andrew J. Ciampa. This is tape one, side two. You had started to tell us the story about the boots, the German with the boots on.

AC: That incident had to do with my work as an aid man. As you know, we took care of anybody that got hurt, not only our own troops. ... In this case, I came across a captain, who had been hit with our shrapnel in the leg, and he was bleeding quite profusely. ... I was trying to get at his wound by pulling on his, taking his boot off, and it was very hard to get off. It was one of those leather boots. He was a captain, and you know how you hear about this superior race of

Germans. He was really a good example of a well-built man, as a captain. So, anyway, I was trying to get his boot off, and I could see that the man was wincing, hurting a little bit, and I hesitated and pulled. He said, "Go ahead. Pull it off, pull it off." He didn't care how much it hurt. So I finally got the boot off, and we took care of the bleeding leg. That was about it. He was very tough. He wanted to accept my help, which was the enemy for him, in this case, helping him with his wound. Now, the other case is about a, oh, yes, I remember that. We were going through Germany, moving at a pretty good pace by walking, and there was no enemy resistance. So, of course, when you do that, going through these German cities as a frontline, which I was with, even though I was an aid man, you have to check every cellar, every house. ... These soldiers from the infantry, I forgot who they were exactly, but my friend, we were walking together, at this point, and they went in one cellar and found these German soldiers herded together, trying to keep safe, and they said, "*Kommen sie heraus.*" So they all came out, about six of them, and it was there that one of the soldiers said to me, "Why don't you take these prisoners?" I said, "I'm a medic. What am I going to do with them?" But he said, "You can tell your grandchildren about it." So I took the prisoners, you know, led them by the hand, walked them to where they were supposed to go, and that was tantamount, taking prisoners, even though I was a medic.

NH: So they gave you a gun.

AC: Just to hold for a few minutes, yeah, but I couldn't use it really.

SH: Can you tell us how many German prisoners you encountered, and did you have to treat them often?

AC: If they were injured, yeah. That was not a big phase of my work. There may have been a few, but not too many German prisoners were hurt that came across my arena or my area. But if there were any, we would take of them.

SH: You talked about the long march, as you followed Patton very quickly, and you had to walk miles and miles. How often were you able to hitch a ride in a jeep or truck?

AC: They didn't have enough, at that point. At that point, where he moved so fast, we didn't have trucks available. You know, it takes a lot of time to move equipment from point A to point B, if there's a big distance, and I guess they weren't ready yet, because the tanks were moving pretty fast, at that point. That was across France.

SH: How long would you go without being able to actually take a break? Was it just constant movement, except at night to rest?

AC: Yeah. Most of the time, at night, we would stop the fighting, and everybody would pull up, get settled, and then we'd get supplies in, and you'd eat and be ready for the next morning. The next morning, you didn't have much breakfast. They just gave you a couple of dry sandwiches, [and] you'd put them in your mess kit holder and you'd eat them when you could for breakfast, because you'd start at four or five o'clock, you know, on our regular attack period. Like in

Germany, we did it that way. But at night, we could get our rations. If you were in the field, it would be K Rations.

SH: You talked about the snow and the cold in the Ardennes. How were you able to keep warm, or did you have to treat frostbite often?

AC: There were a lot of cases of frostbite. I think they called one trench foot. ... What they did, a lot of boys took newspapers and put newspapers in their boots to get some insulation. But there were a lot of problems there, to keep warm. The best thing was to start walking. Once you walked about fifteen minutes, your feet would start to warm up.

NH: You mentioned that you had to treat German soldiers once they were taken prisoner, and you also mentioned that you were picking up a little German. What kinds of things were the German soldiers talking about?

AC: What kinds of things did the German prisoners say? Well, some of them would try to scare you, you know, and say they were going to win the war, but we never listened to that. In fact, when I was crossing the, I think it was the, Rhine River, sometime in April ...

SH: You jumped ahead here.

AC: Well, anyway, after we crossed one of the rivers, we were having no resistance. We were taking prisoners, and this one prisoner told me that President Roosevelt died. That's the first time I'd heard about it, and I didn't believe him. We never believed those prisoners, but he was right. I think that was in April sometime.

NH: Can you tell me what you carried with you, other than your medical supplies? In your own personal bag, what kinds of things did you have on you?

AC: Medical supplies mostly. We had our medical kit. That was it.

NH: Other than your medical supplies, what did you carry with you? Did you have any personal items, things of that nature?

AC: No. I sometimes carried a paperback. I left a copy of *Jane Eyre* in a foxhole in Normandy. I used to make hot chocolate from my chocolate bar and water. I once traded a chocolate bar for a penknife from a farmer in Normandy. He wanted my shoes first, but I said, "No, I need them."

SH: Did you carry a prayer book?

AC: My *Reader's Digest*. I would carry that in my mess kit, and when we'd get a ten-minute break, I might read it, read one of those articles. But I didn't carry too much, as I recall, other than what was in my pocket, wallet, and so forth.

SH: Were you able to get mail from home? Did family members and friends write to you?

AC: Yes. We always got mail at mail call. When you were fighting, of course, you'd have to wait until you stopped. But we always got mail, and we sent mail out, too. Whenever we had a break, we'd write a letter.

NH: As a medic, did you see any kinds of mental collapses among the troops? There are stories of self-inflicted wounds, and a lot of times soldiers would just freeze from fear.

AC: Yeah, I saw some of those, but I can't recall too many that I could talk about. Self-inflicted wounds were a major thing. I remember this one fellow was carrying a pistol, and the pistol went off. He said he didn't do it on purpose, but that's a wound, so we had to send him back. But that was self-inflicted. He was carrying a pistol. Mental collapses, I've seen a couple of cases, as I said, of men that had to go back, because they couldn't take the artillery. You know, they'd send them back to the hospital area. They'd shake. We'd give them a blue pill to calm the nerves. They had to give me one, one day. I took it and fell asleep. I didn't know where I was. I had been in battle somewhere in France for a long time. I was okay after I got up.

SH: You talked about being part of the Battle of the Bulge. Can you tell us about that, your involvement in the Bulge?

AC: Well, at Stavelot, the frontline was a row of houses across from the Ambleve River there, and different troops were in different houses, until they were needed to fight. So I read recently that one of those German soldiers decided that he was going to check those houses, and he found one with a lot of people in there, American soldiers, and he threw a hand grenade in there, and a lot of them got killed. I was in one of those houses, but he didn't happen to pick that one I was in. But the cellars, for example, were a good way to shelter from the artillery that was falling now and then, and so you wouldn't get hit. So that was the frontline. I have a story about the fellow who bombed the bridge there. ... He went in one of those houses and looked at the bridge from a distance. I suppose he had binoculars. This is a story that my division editor sent me recently. ... He decided the bridge was going to be blown, so he carried, he and his men, carried the ammunition, not the ammunition, the explosives all the way to the bridge, fifty pounds per man, and they put it all together, and then they blew the bridge up that night. So then he checked the fissures to see how big it was and ... a tank couldn't get across anymore. But that was from Stavelot. Stavelot was a small place, but very important. That's where we ran into the First SS [Panzer] Division.

SH: Can you tell us what your activities were? What were you doing during this time?

AC: Well, as I said, we were in the cellars, trying to hold off the enemy, but the infantry would go out, and they told us about the SS soldiers. When they couldn't use the bridge anymore, they were trying to walk across the water, and our troops picked them right off. So that took care of that.

NH: You mentioned before we started the interview that you had seen Buchenwald.

AC: Yeah, General Eisenhower made it possible for some of our troops to see some of these places, after the fighting stopped, and on June 4, I got a pass to go to Buchenwald, and I saw that prison camp. They filled up a truck full of guys who wanted to go.

NH: What was going on?

AC: Well, it was after, nothing was going on then, but you could see all the bodies in the gas chambers. They had a lot of bad stuff. ... There was a pile of bodies. That was only one of them, Buchenwald, but I just happened to see that one. I saved a little thing on it, but I don't think it's in here. I have it in another spot.

SH: When you were going into Germany and following fast on Patton's heels, what were the conditions that you saw in Germany, as opposed to what you had seen in Normandy and in France?

AC: Conditions in Germany as we moved? Well, sometimes there was no resistance, of course, so there was no need for any artillery to be falling on the areas, so that was intact. But if you had a tough battle in a city, like Aachen, for example, was a very tough battle, and Magdeburg, there you'd see a lot of destruction, piles of bricks in the streets, you know. At Magdeburg, there was a trolley right in the middle of the street, I recall. That was our last stopping point, Magdeburg. But, anyway, that's the type of scenery you would see. ... Of course, invariably, in France, when you liberated a town, you would see streams of wagons, horses and supplies coming back to where they lived, people, civilians. That was a common sight. Then, after the war, of course, a common sight would be to see the prisoners of war going back and forth, you know, the slave labor that was used, and they were all liberated as we came along. You know, we would come across all of these places, and they'd be sent back to where they were supposed to be.

SH: As a medic, did you ever have to treat any of these people that had been held in any of these camps?

AC: No. There were too many there, at that point, and I had to move with my unit. ... I do recall, at one time, when the unit was stopped, into the aid station came a French civilian, and he had been hit by a shell, and his chest was exposed. You could almost see his heart beating, and he came in for help in the aid station. He actually walked in. You know, they were tough. So we helped people like that, too, civilians naturally. If we would help the enemy, we'd help civilians. Here I have five battle stars and a Bronze Star. Well, the Bronze Star was because, at one point, I had to go in behind the enemy lines. Four of us went with a litter to pick up an injured man. I didn't even know it was behind the enemy lines, but somebody got hurt, so I went there, and it was behind the lines, and we had to take care of a couple of cases of people that got hurt.

NH: Where was that?

AC: That was in France, somewhere in Normandy, but I can't tell you the exact location.

SH: When you went behind enemy lines, you were treating US soldiers, infantrymen?

AC: Yeah, US infantrymen. They were our frontlines. C Company, First Battalion, 117th Infantry is what we're talking about. They had some tough times. One time, they got pinned down by a machine gun, you know, what we called pinned down, when you can't move forward, and what the Germans used to do, they tried to put a machine gun on your company and pin you down so you can't move, and if you don't knock that machine gun out and move forward, you're in bad trouble. They'd gotten into that once. Then they'd put the artillery on you and cut you off. So they had a bad time of that.

NH: And the five battle stars?

AC: Well, that was with these different battles I've been talking about, but I got five of them. I'd have to look at the papers to see where they drew the line for each battle, but I can't recall that.

NH: Do you want to discuss occupational duty in Germany?

AC: Well, after the shooting stopped, they had what they called the I&E, Information and Education [Division] schooling, and some of the units set up different schools, classrooms, for the boys to busy themselves a little bit. That was in Germany, occupational duty. I was not in the occupation army at all, no. When we got to Magdeburg, that was the end. We just joined up with the Russians, and that's all the fighting we had to do.

SH: Tell us about joining up with the Russians. What was that like for you?

AC: Well, all I remember is General Zhukov walking up and down the streets of Magdeburg. That was in Magdeburg, where we joined up on the Elbe River, and they came the other way, of course. We knew that we had made contact, that is, my unit, but the big picture, I didn't know. ... I did see General Zhukov one day, and I think there were a couple of Russian soldiers lying down on the ground. They had been drinking poisoned liquor, no less, so I said, "What are we going to do with them?" He said, "Throw them in the river." That's what he thought about that, because he knew what they were up to.

NH: You also started to talk about a massacre.

AC: Oh, Malmedy. Malmedy, they used to call it. Yeah, that was bad. That was part of the Battle of the Bulge. I think the German commander was trying to keep that road open because their anticipation was to get to Antwerp, but they never made it, because we stopped them there. The Thirtieth Division stopped this SS division. ... The guy's name was Peiper. I think he was a colonel, but he was very brutal, and he took Hitler's advice. Hitler said that preceding this Battle of the Bulge, he expected a lot of terror. He wanted his men to inflict a lot of terror on the enemy, because that's the only way he was going to win, he thought. It was his last chance. But, anyway, this fellow took his advice, so he shot up a lot of our men.

SH: So you actually visited the site of the massacre.

AC: Yeah, I just took a ride on a jeep, because one of the fellows said, "Let's go see Malmedy." We [saw] bodies in the snow. I forgot how many they were, but it's written up. I did read that a lot of these Germans, a couple of them, not a lot, were brought up to Nuremberg, and ... some of them got away with it, because of the legal angle.

SH: Tell us what it was like to hear the Eighth Air Force and the RAF flying over you, as they flew missions into Germany.

AC: What was it like? It was good to see that air force, especially on D-Day, not only the RAF, but our own. They did a lot of bombing ahead of time, and that helped.

SH: Tell us about the sounds and the smells that you remember.

AC: Well, the sound was, unless you were right where the bombs were falling, you didn't hear much sound of the bombs, but the sound of the airplane motors, you did hear that, as they went overhead. The smell of the bombs, yeah, I don't know how to describe that, but it wasn't so nice. I remember ... when we were in Mortain, they came very close, some of the explosives, and you could smell the powder, but that smelled like gunpowder and smoke.

SH: When do you think you were most in danger, personally? What were some of the incidences that you remember?

AC: Most in danger? Well, I'd say at Mortain in that apple orchard, when those "screaming meemies" came over, because one of my buddies got it right on, a little piece of shrapnel, on the head, and that was real close. The shell fell about five feet away from me. I was in a foxhole, but it killed the guy next to me. His name was Beta. ... The other one was when I was sitting on that cliff with my armband, and the fellow got shot next to me. I never knew whether they were trying to get me or get him.

SH: Was there any one man in your unit or platoon that made it clear through with you, from beginning to end?

AC: There probably were, but I can't recall any that I could cite right here.

SH: Did you keep up any friendships that you made with anyone during that time?

AC: Yes, some of the fellows came from around Burlington County. I kept up with some of them, but not anymore. A couple of them passed away, yeah.

SH: Tell us what it was like to be in Europe on V-E Day. What did you call it?

AC: May 8. [laughter] That was a beautiful day. There was one captain. He was a young captain, Captain Easlick. He was so happy and shot his gun right through the ceiling. But, anyway, everybody was happy on that day.

SH: How did they announce it to you?

AC: We heard it on the radio. We had radios. Well, everybody was waiting for Hitler to give up, and so that was a very happy day, May 8. Everybody was happy. There was some drinking, of course, to celebrate, [but] not me. I don't drink too much, didn't drink ...

NH: What kind of news did you receive from the Pacific?

AC: We kept up with the news. We had the *Stars and Stripes*.

NH: Was it accurate, or did they censor a lot of the information?

AC: I think the big picture was accurate. Andy Rooney worked for *Stars and Stripes*, you know, and we used to get that, invariably, to get our news. ... We knew about the Pacific, because we were headed for the Pacific. My division, after they finished in Germany, they gave us a furlough, and then we were supposed to go to the Pacific, and then that war ended.

NH: Did that scare you at all, going to the Pacific?

AC: We didn't like it, but it didn't scare us, because it was the same thing, same thing that we were going through.

NH: What did you think about Truman's decision to drop the bomb?

AC: I think it was a good decision, because of the lives it saved in the end, American lives. It's unfortunate, though, but I think he did a lot of thinking about it.

NH: What about the point system?

AC: I didn't get involved in that too much ...

NH: I heard that a lot of people had issues about how the point system worked.

AC: Yeah, I didn't really get into that, because we were headed for Japan, and I didn't think I was going to get home.

SH: You said they gave you a furlough. What did you do on your furlough? Where were you?

AC: I was in Plainfield. I just tried to have a good time. I'd stop in and have a drink somewhere.

SH: Tell us about how you were shipped back from Europe. On May 8, the war was over in Europe. What happened with you?

AC: I don't remember these dates. May 8, we were finished fighting, and then we got back on the *Queen Mary* ... They had four-tier bunks and they were smelly. A guy named Duffy said

they had farts in there from World War I. He was very funny. He got so hungry he went to the hold of the ship to get raw potatoes to eat.

SH: Did they send you to one of the camps, like Lucky Strike?

AC: Camp Kilmer.

SH: In Europe, how did they take your regiment and send you back? Did they send you back by boat from that part of Germany, or did you go by truck to France?

AC: Well, we always moved by six-by-six trucks to where we were going, and then we got on the boat.

SH: Do you know how much time passed between May 8 and when you came back?

AC: No, I'd have to look at the record, but it seems to me that I was on furlough on August 15, so I think by that time, it must have been the month of August, and then they stopped the fighting, and I went to Fort Dix, and they discharged us then. October 18 was the discharge date. I remember that, and August 15 was the end of the Japanese war, so sometime before that, we got here.

SH: Did your brother come back at the same time that you were on furlough, or did he come back before you?

AC: I don't know. I don't know that.

SH: Wasn't there a wedding, a family wedding, that you needed to get back to?

AC: A wedding in the family? We had a lot of weddings in our family.

SH: I somehow remember a story you told, before the tape began, that one of your sisters was getting married, and somehow both you and your brother made it back for the wedding. Wasn't there a story there?

AC: Yeah, I had seven sisters. I don't remember which one that was. Let's see, that could have been Gerry. She passed away. Sorry, I don't have all that chronology.

SH: You have to check with your brother Tony about this wedding. I want you to tell me a little bit more about the mail, your mail situation. How many girls were you writing to back here in the States? I suppose you were also writing to the girls in England.

AC: At that time, there were three, or four, or five, and I also met this lady in Myrtle Beach. She was a lady, and she was in the library. I used to go around to the library, instead of gambling. So I met this lady, and she wanted my address. She was older than I was. She wanted to write to me, so she started writing to me from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and I

wrote to her a couple of times. So she was on my list, too, even though she was older. I would write letters ...

SH: Tell us about this list. How did this work?

AC: The list? Well, all I did was keep track on the chart, and the subjects were over here, so I'd check it off if I covered this subject with this particular girl.

SH: Were these girls in the same town?

AC: No, they were from all over. One [was] maybe from the Fort Benning area, because we were at Fort Benning for three months, and one maybe from the South Carolina area, because we were there for more than three months, and so forth.

SH: Was there anybody in Plainfield or Dunellen that you were writing to?

AC: None at that time, no. I was studying sociology. [laughter] I wanted to get the different points of view of the different parts of the country. You never had an interview like this. [laughter]

SH: Did you ever write to any of the women that you met from England?

AC: From England? There was a girl from England whom I wrote to. Her name was Gwendolyn. Yeah, her husband got killed in one of the air battles. I think he was in the RAF, so I wrote to her a couple of times, but then it stopped.

NH: What about letters from home? Would you include everything that was going on?

AC: Yeah, I would write letters home, and I included whatever was hot at the moment, but it had to pass the censors. Every letter was censored you know. They had a special group reading the letters and cutting out what you're not supposed to put in, because they don't want the location to be divulged. There was one fellow, who tried to get away with something, and he said something about Flanders Fields. You know the poem about Flanders Fields, [*In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae]? He was up in northern France, [and] they cut that out. I remember that case.

SH: Who wrote to you the most often?

AC: I think my sister Marion, probably.

SH: Did you ever hear from your brother? Did you just have one brother in the service?

AC: Yeah. I'd hear from him once in a while, yeah. We exchanged letters, as I recall. Some of this, I don't recall all of it, but I think we exchanged letters.

SH: Where did he serve?

AC: Most of his time was in North Carolina, Manteo, Andy Griffith's hometown. He was there.

SH: Now that we've finished the war, Neal has some more questions.

NH: I just want to jump back quickly. You mentioned also a story about General Montgomery, before the interview. I was just wondering if you could repeat that.

AC: I didn't come across him. I'm reading about him now, because I'm interested in World War II a little bit, as you can tell from my talking here. ... General Montgomery was a special type of person. They say he wouldn't go into a battle until he knew he had the advantage, and he had a lot fewer losses than we had. That was very interesting, but he was pretty slow in taking Caen. They expected him to take it in a lot less time, but he took his time before he captured that city in Normandy. What did you want to know about Montgomery?

NH: You had mentioned the story about, I think, Omar Bradley.

AC: Oh, yeah. I got that from his book. ... That was interesting, I thought, that Bradley didn't quite get along with Montgomery. Montgomery was difficult. Bradley and Eisenhower may have had opposing ideas on Montgomery, I think.

SH: In your travels, did you see Patton personally, or did you see any of those generals?

AC: No. They were far away from the frontlines. I spent ten months up in the frontlines. I didn't see many generals, except our own, General Hodges from Massachusetts. He was the Thirtieth Division commander.

SH: Does the name TK Robinson sound familiar at all?

AC: TK Robinson?

SH: TK, Theodore, Teddy?

AC: No. Who was he?

SH: He's a man that we interviewed that also served under General Hodges.

AC: He was in the Thirtieth then. Do you know what outfit he was in?

[tape paused]

NH: Can you talk about the type of entertainment that you saw?

AC: Well, every once in a while, they would put on a USO show and get all the men into one area, and they'd put on a little show. I remember one of the singers I heard was Jane Froman. Then another time, I think we heard Mickey Rooney. He made up a joke, you know. He was, I

guess, not in the Army yet ... They used to have a joke about cigarettes, "LSMFT," [which meant], "Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco." So he said to us, we were all listening to Mickey Rooney, so he said, "LSMFT," and he'd say, "TSPOE." What he meant [was], "(Tough Sledding?) Port of Embarkation." [laughter] I guess that must have been before we got into the boat. That was one of the entertainments, but the Army would bring in entertainment every so often. I saw quite a few of them, because I spent a lot of time [on the frontlines], and every once in a while, we'd go into reserve and we'd go to the rear, and that's where the entertainment would be.

SH: How often did you rotate to the rear for a little rest and relaxation?

AC: Well, it depended upon the situation. The Army, of course, always had two divisions fighting and one in reserve. So that's what we called the rear, when you're reserve. Now, they might keep those two divisions up there for a couple of weeks, and then one of those would be pulled out, and you'd take their place, so they'd rotate. ... That was the same all the way down. A company would have two platoons fighting and one in reserve. They knew how to work it.

SH: What do you remember about your time away from the front?

AC: Well, at one point, we, when we were around the Netherlands, there was a church in a place called Kerkrade, and it was a religious establishment, and we would go there to a rest area quite a bit, Kerkrade. ... Of course, the trucks would bring you over there, and you'd stay there for a couple of days to rest up.

NH: Your daughter mentioned that you received a letter from the French Underground.

AC: Yeah. That was not necessarily the Underground, but it was one of the civilians that I encountered as we were moving through, and it was actually their newspaper. They didn't have any facilities in that particular area to produce a newspaper, so this man wrote this letter. I can't find it right now. [He wrote it] on regular paper, and he presented this to me. Here it is, right here. It's all in French, of course. This was their newspaper, so he gave it to me, and I remember he was very excited, this gentleman, and he said, "Oh, boy, you guys are doing fine," because we were liberating a lot of places. ... He drew a picture of us on the ground, like this, "*Oh, magnifique.*" He was drawing a double fuselage of a P-38 Lightning. You know, we used those planes a lot ahead of us. P-38, that was quite a plane.

SH: What was he telling you in this article? I don't expect you to translate the whole thing, but just briefly tell us what it's about.

AC: Well, all he, I don't know whether I can translate it, but he indicated that we had a lot of great material, and that's where our strength lay. He was being sarcastic, but he said, "You've got a lot of good material," and that's listed here somewhere, but I didn't translate this whole thing, because we were moving. I just put it in my belongings and took it home. It gives you the date, too.

SH: I don't know French very well, but the 19th of whatever, in 1944.

AC: He's got a section on Russia. You understand French? Here's something, "In the south, the advance continues." *Sud* means south. But, anyway, he was telling how great it was that we were advancing across the country. Here, he says, "In the interior, confusion was certain, I hope, among the German army." He used the word confusion. Let's see how this starts, "The battle of Normandy is over, and the Allies are coming along well. Ten divisions of Germans who remained near the Seine ..." Well, it's a picture of our superiority, at that point.

SH: Okay, thank you.

NH: I just want to go through a little bit of your postwar experiences.

AC: A little bit of what?

NH: Postwar experiences.

AC: Let's see. After I got back ...

NH: You took advantage of your GI benefits, correct?

AC: GI benefits, yeah. I came to Rutgers on that.

NH: For the Graduate School of Education.

AC: I graduated in '49 [and] got my Master's degree in Administration and Supervision. I got both my elementary and secondary certificates. Then I took a job as an elementary principal, and I was at McGuire for twenty years, and then I retired from there. First, I was teaching, when I came back. If you want the sequence, I went to Dunellen High School in about two weeks, and I started teaching. I just took a little time off to establish enough, because I was ready to get back to the classrooms.

NH: So you didn't have any trouble readjusting to civilian life.

AC: No, it worked out pretty well.

NH: I was wondering if the war entered your classroom at all, when you were teaching. Did any of your experiences from the war affect the way you presented certain materials, or anything like that?

AC: You mean did I use any of the war experiences in teaching?

NH: Yeah, I mean, did it affect the style of ...

AC: Yeah. One time, one day, I was teaching electricity. I taught a course on electricity to juniors in high school. I told them the story about the time we came into this German town, and the unit that was with me, at that time, I think it was C Company still. ... Some of the boys had

radios, and when they plugged them in, they wouldn't work in this German town. So I used that as an example of voltage. The voltage was wrong. Instead of being 110, it may have been something like 220 voltage in that particular town. That's quite a difference for the radio, so they didn't work. Everything was *caput*. That's the word they used in Germany a lot, *caput*. "*Gans und gar caput*." Things were bad when they said that.

NH: I want to ask you also a little bit about teaching during the Cold War. How did students react during like the Cuban missile crisis, and things of that nature?

AC: Cuban missile crisis, what year was that?

NH: That was in '62. What kinds of reactions did you receive from, let's say, the superintendent or maybe from state officials about how to practice for nuclear attacks?

-----END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE-----

NH: This continues an interview with Andrew J. Ciampa.

SH: We want to ask you about your postwar experiences. When you left as a teacher in Dunellen in 1942 ...

AC: Plainfield.

SH: See, now, I got the wrong town again. As a teacher in 1942 and as a teacher in 1945, what differences did you notice?

AC: Well, I don't know of any big differences. Obviously, I was older, and I was more mature probably. ... I just got right back into things, and I started my teaching, and I didn't feel any effects that would throw me for a loop, so to speak. But there was a period of adjustment, however, within the classroom, and I think I must have coped with that pretty well, because I didn't really feel a big difference ...

SH: Did you stay in the Reserves?

AC: No. When I got discharged, that was the end of the military.

SH: Were you tempted at all to stay in the military?

AC: No. I looked at it as a job to do, and it got done, so I was ready to come back home.

SH: What did you think of Korea? How surprised or unsurprised were you?

AC: Yeah, I was surprised that we had another war so quickly after I got back. That was 1945, and then the war came to us in Korea, and I think it was a tough war, as was Vietnam, compared to World War II. But they were all tough in different ways, you know. World War II was broad,

but we had a line that was defined. But in Vietnam, they didn't have those lines. Korea was a tough war, too, and I was glad when that was over.

NH: In the late '60s, you were still teaching in high school, correct?

AC: No.

NH: You were a principal by the late '60s already.

AC: Yeah, in the late '50s.

NH: What kinds of veteran's associations are you involved with now?

AC: I didn't get into the veteran's [associations] as much as my brother did. I belong to my division association and pay my dues ... They have a convention every year, and I don't go to that. ... [There are] 15,000 men, you know. There are a very few that I know from my medical detachment that would be there, and so I just don't go all over the country for those. They have it in Cape May this year, our Thirtieth Division. But other than that, I stay away from the veteran's associations.

NH: Any particular reason why?

AC: I just think my job was done.

SH: I have to ask one question. How did you meet Mrs. Ciampa?

AC: I was on furlough in New York. I went to New York, 100 Park Avenue. They would give the veterans free tickets, soldiers, and you could go anyplace you wanted, like a Broadway play, or something like that, so I picked a dance. She was at the dance. It was at the Carroll Club. That's where we met.

SH: What year was this?

AC: This has to be December 1944. I was on furlough in December.

AC: What year was that?

Nancy Ciampa: Tell us the whole story.

NH: She wants you to tell the whole story.

AC: What story?

NC: Tripping. How you ...

AC: Oh, that's Kay's story. That's my wife's story. She claims that I tripped over her feet.

SH: Were you dancing with her at that time?

AC: No. They were sitting on a sofa, she and her girlfriend, and I kind of took a misstep. She calls it tripping. She exaggerates a lot of things.

SH: Was this on purpose, to get her attention?

AC: No, no, no. It was a mishap of sorts, but I didn't fall over. I didn't fall on my face. I just kind of missed my step, because somebody's feet were sticking out, either her's or her friend's. I don't remember. Then we danced.

SH: Where was she from?

AC: She was from North Jersey. She commuted from Cliffside Park to New York and worked in New York on Wall Street, where ... she was a legal secretary, at that time. Then that night, she must have stayed there for the dance that night.

SH: Well, tell me, was this before you went overseas?

AC: That was before I went overseas.

SH: Was she on this list of whom you were writing to?

AC: After that, yeah. After that, she got on that list, but the others were before that. We've got to keep that straight. I don't know; you may be dangerous. [laughter]

NH: Can you describe for me Rutgers life when you were here?

AC: Rutgers? Well, I commuted with some of the boys from Plainfield. ... We worked hard on our courses and we did what we had to do, and it was very interesting. I enjoyed the studying for my Master's degree, and I took a lot of courses in advance of my Master's degree, almost up to a doctorate degree, but I didn't go for the qualifying exam. It was a very interesting part of my life. I worked hard, wrote a lot term papers ...

SH: Were you teaching and going to school?

AC: Yeah, yes.

SH: Who were you commuting with?

AC: Vic Podesta. He was the one, in fact, who got me to come here. He became superintendent in Plainfield. Jake Kinney, he was a teacher in Plainfield, and there was another teacher. I don't recall his name, but there were various people from the school. We started out in Emerson School, Jake Kinney and Vic Podesta, and they were coming to school here. Vic said, "Let's all go take these courses." So that's how I ended up here.

SH: Were they veterans like you?

AC: Yeah, they were veterans. Vic was in the Navy. He was both in the Army and Navy, believe it or not, unusual. Jake Kinney was in the Navy. ... Then we took advantage of the GI Bill.

SH: So you were coming here to school at night.

AC: Saturdays, mostly. Some at night, yeah.

SH: When did you marry Mrs. Ciampa?

AC: After the war, 1946.

SH: Do you have any children other than Nancy?

AC: Yeah, we have another girl, who's taken off for the Virgin Islands this morning. She has two children. She's married. Nancy didn't get married ...

SH: When did your children come along?

AC: She was born in 1948, and Kathy was born in 1952.

SH: How many grandchildren? You said two.

AC: Just two grandchildren from my younger daughter.

SH: Is there anything that we forgot to ask you about today?

AC: There are a lot of things that I didn't cover, but, you know, I don't recall all of it. There were a lot of things. I don't even remember what we covered. [laughter]

SH: Well, Neal and I thank you very much for taking the time and thank your daughter very much.

AC: Well, you can thank Nancy. She engineered the whole thing for us, and she was good enough to drive me up here. She's very good that way. She's the one to thank.

SH: Great.

NH: All right, well, thank you very much, and thank you also.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi 7/25/02

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 8/1/02
Reviewed by Andrew Ciampa 8/20/02
Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi 8/29/02