

Dom Errichiello

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Interviewed by Leah Cohen

Transcribed by Natalie Yaw

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- Cohen: Hello, my name is Leah Cohen, on the behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, I have the honor to interview Dom Errichiello, who was in the First Infantry Division on Normandy Beach, in particular, the fourth wave arriving at Omaha [Beach]. Thank you for being willing to be interviewed today. So, I wondered if we could start at the beginning.
- Errichiello: Whatever you want.
- Cohen: Where were you born and where did you grow up?
- Errichiello: Okay I grew up in Chicago, on the West Side, uh, I was born on Polk and May [0:00:45] in Chicago, on July 4th of 1925. That makes me ninety-two, I'll be ninety-three by the time this thing gets out, on the 4th of July. And then, from there we moved into the city, and my mom and dad and my sister... my mom and dad were ... he worked on the railroads, and he talked very little English. And my mother was a school teacher. He worked on the railroads. So, he didn't talk very good English. He talked, but, and he was trying to teach us himself how to talk Italian. And I would say, "Dad, you're in America, you've got to talk English," and he said, "You can talk English, but you've got to learn how to talk Italian."
- Cohen: Was your father born in Italy?
- Errichiello: Oh yeah, my mom and dad were born in Naples. But anyhow, to make a long story short, we were all born here, except for my oldest sister who was born in Italy. And my mom and dad, my mom and my sister - my dad sent them here - so he could make enough money in Italy for him could come here. So, he only had enough money to have my sister and my mother come here, to America. And he stayed in Italy for a year more. And then when he did finally come here, then we got five more sisters. [Laughs]
- Cohen: Are you the only boy?
- Errichiello: I had five sisters, and I'm the only boy.
- Cohen: And I think you said your mother was a school teacher?
- Errichiello: My mother was a school teacher in Italy. And my dad was a shoemaker in Italy.
- Cohen: And there here he was, here in the States he worked on the railroads. What was it like growing up in Chicago at the time?

Errichiello: Well, at the time, that was the day of the Al Capone days, and it was a pretty rough area where I was at. But we that lived in the area, we were never ever in trouble touched, because we were residents there, and they got to know us really well, you know, the mafia, so to speak. Otherwise, it was a pretty tough neighborhood. It was Halstead and ??? if you know Chicago, you know Halstead and Haywood??? was a pretty rough neighborhood

Cohen: So, did the Mafia leave your family--

Errichiello: It the, we'll call it the Al Capone days, you know, the stories. We'd need to have a couple of days to talk about it, to cover all that! That was a rough neighborhood, now from there we moved west to Melrose Park. I got into Lane? Tech High School, and all my sisters, all went to Mandalee and some of the schools in the area. We were on the, we lived on 3239 ??? in Chicago. And then from there, we moved into Melrose Park. Because, at the time, I got a job working at Motorola, and it was too hard, too far for me to go back and forth -I didn't have a car. So, we, my mom and dad, decided we should move further inland, and my sisters could get closer to school, so we did, and we moved into Harrison and Kedzie area. You probably don't know the area, but Harrison and Kedzie, it was kind of a rough neighborhood. But you know, if you lived there it was all right. But if you didn't live there, you know, you have to be careful who you were going to go see and what are you here for. They were pretty tough. But if you lived in the area, piece of cake.

Cohen: So, you never felt in danger?

Errichiello: Oh, no, no, never.

Cohen: Did your father or any other relatives serve in the military?

Errichiello: My dad was in the military, in Italy and got captured, in Italy. And, well, he came out of it alive, obviously. And then he came here and got a job on the railroad. And almost every immigrant that came to America, all wind up working on the railroad. Didn't have to have any schooling, I didn't need to be a scholar of any kind. You just needed a strong back and a weak mind.

Cohen: Did he have to travel a lot? Because there were long distances?

Errichiello: Uh, not really, it was mostly in the Chicagoland area. So if you know Chicago, it's pretty big! And most of the railroad yards were in the South Side, and of course, some on the West Side. Around, most of the railroads were around the Chicago and Kedzie and well, anyhow, all over. But it was on the east side of Chicago, the big one. But all of the stockyards, that's where all the real work was, so all of the stock yards were in that one area on the South Side, and all of the railroads were there. You know, to get the meat that was being cut and shipped out and whatever.

Cohen: So, when you were in the high school, I think it was the tech high school?

Errichiello: Lane Tech.

Cohen: Okay, Lane Tech. Were people aware of what was going on in Nazi Germany?

Errichiello: No, none whatsoever. We, you know, in school, we did, they would bring us up to date on what was going on in the war, during the days of the war. The war started in '41. Actually, the war started in '39. If you read that article, it was '39 when Hitler started to get dangerous and wanted the whole world we live in under him. But from '41 to '43 Hitler took over a lot of small countries, but then in '43 is when we got in the war. If you read my article, we were in WWI, and we lost so many GI's, that President Roosevelt said, "No more, no more war for Americans. We lost too many Americans." He said. So, when England got into the war against Germany, he asked President Roosevelt to send over some troops, and Roosevelt said, "No way. We lost 25,000 GI's and were not going to send any more men there. We'll send you all of the material that you want. But we will not send people there. We will not send GI's there, because the American people will not buy that." But I guess it turned out, we finally got in the war, full war, so we all got in the war against the Germans, and Italy, and Russia.

Cohen: Do you think that the attack on Pearl Harbor was a turning point, and where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Errichiello: I was in high school. I was in high school, what was that date, Pearl Harbor was in '41, right?

Cohen: December 6th [i.e. 7th] 1941. Yeah

Errichiello: I was in school, I was only fifteen years old.

Cohen: What did you do after you graduated from high school?

Errichiello: Where did I go? Right into the [United States] Army. I got into the Army August of '43.

Cohen: So how old were you in August of '43?

Errichiello: Nineteen, eighteen, nineteen.

Cohen: Were you expected to be drafted, or--

Errichiello: No. All my buddies joined the army. And I wanted to join. So, I did join. And my mother, when she heard about it, you know, we did it all without the mothers knowing about it. My mother grabbed me by my ears and dragged me over to the draft board and said, "Listen, my boy is not going into the Army. He's the only son I've got." I've got five sisters. She says, "He is not going into the Army."

So, she fought that draft board, and she got me out of the army! But then when I got the draft papers, then I had to go. And I was eighteen then.

Cohen: Where did you go after you were drafted?

Errichiello: We went to Camp Blanding, Florida

Cohen: Was that for basic training?

Errichiello: Basic, yeah. That was only a seventeen week basic [training], which is not very much. [0:10:33-0:10:50 CUT]

Cohen: So, what was it like, what did you learn to do at basic training?

Errichiello: All you learned in basic training was learn to how to use guns, how to use a gun, and...[thanks Seitz for water]

Cohen: So what type of guns did you learn to use? You're at basic training...

Errichiello: So, at basic training, we were in Camp Blanding, Florida, and the war ships were right on the shore there, got on, we got on the war ships. And they brought us to the English Channel, to South Hampton, England. And that's where we got off. Now we were only there a very, very short time because then... I'm trying to get this in order. The war ships that were in the water on the English Channel, the warships had LCI's, you know what those are, landing craft infantry, they were hanging on the sides of the warships, both sides of the warships. And when it was time to get ready to go to the invasion day, Eisenhower at the time did not settle on the date to go, the weather was very bad, waves were about twenty feet high. They couldn't afford to have the boats get caught in the weather. It was one of the worst times of the year, June 6th, 1944. But when the orders were finally coming through that we were going to invade on the 5th of June, we were all ready to go on the 5th of June, but the weather was so bad, and all the admirals got together with Eisenhower and said, "We cannot do it on the 5th."

Cohen: So, when you were waiting--

Errichiello: We were waiting in the war ship. And then when the word came out that we were finally going to go, we had three or four dry runs, just exercises. But we never really knew what day was going to be the invasion.

Cohen: Can you describe what it was like when you did a dry run, like what did everybody do?

Errichiello: Well, first of all, a dry run was when we would get out of the warship, and we would go into the LCI's that was hanging on the side. And then they'd blow the whistle, "Come back out". Okay, and then we'd do it again. By that time, you're moving over 300,000 GI's

Cohen: How many were on the warship that you were on, approximately?

Errichiello: I would say, on the ship I was on, we had, probably, maybe about over 2,000. But if you read my article I think I call that out. Did you read my article?

Cohen: Yes, I read this one over here?

Errichiello: Yeah, that the copy. There's a lot of information on there that you're going to be asking me about but it's all there.

Cohen: There is, but, at the same time, for the oral history, it's good to have it all in one place [0:14:38]

Errichiello: Oh, then that's okay, I don't mind to talk at all. I don't mind the interview. But I'm being redundant. I'm not sure what I'm telling you - you're going to read about it anyhow, one way or another.

Cohen: I did have a chance to read, but I hope it's okay that we're covering some of the same stuff?

Errichiello: No problem, ask me anything you want. I'll give you the honest opinion, you know, the honest answers to whatever I can remember. But I'm noticing... this is probably going to be my last interview. Because I've given so many interviews, I've talked to so many newspapers, I've been on TV six times already. I'm getting tired of it. And what's happening now, is I'm starting to forget all of these details! So, that's why I wrote them down, because a year from now I won't be able to tell you what you want to know. I won't remember! I'll be ninety-four years old, that's been a long time

Cohen: So, we know you gave the interviews before with the details and all that... Were you with your buddies when you were on this ship, the destroyer ship?

Errichiello: We played cards, you played dice, you know, just to take up some time, you know. And then we'd get the whistle and go, "It's time to go". We'd all get all dressed up again, or we were already dressed, we put the pack on your back that's got all your material- your dress material, your C-rations, your K-rations or whatever. You carry twenty-six and a half pounds on your back. So, when you jumped in that water, you had a twenty-six pound pack on your back. And with ??? the rifles, holding the rifles up in the air, so they don't get in the water, like I just told you, and we had the pack on our back.

Cohen: Would you like to explain, just for the purposes of the interview, what you told me earlier, about the mud getting into the guns and that problem?

Errichiello: Well when we got on the warships, we got in the warships in South Hampton, Florida [i.e. England] [0:17:07]. We got on the warship, and then we were on the warships for maybe three or four days. And we were going in the water, in the

water with the warships, and there must have been about 1500 warships, you know, the invasion was on its way, but we didn't know the exact date. And it was dependent on the weather. Very very bad weather. I mean, those waves were twelve-fifteen feet high, above our heads. And we'd would say, "There's no way we could make the beaches" there were five beaches to be invaded at one time.

Cohen: So, was your group assigned, in advance, to Omaha Beach?

Errichiello: Right. Well, all the beaches were hit at the same time. You know, I'm trying to remember all of the names. There was a Gold, Utah, Omaha... we were in the middle of the five. And I'm looking at the picture right there, it reminds me of the, see the five beaches there? The blue one, the third one. That's the beaches. There were those beaches- that one right there. There's the five beaches. See here's the five. Now these beaches were occupied and were given the names of the groups that were going to the beaches. Well we were Omaha, we were right in the middle.

Cohen: Right in the middle. So, do you want to describe what happened after that?

Errichiello: Well, after we got on the, after the warships got as close to the beach as possible, you know, those ships are so big, and it's too shallow for the water, they would be stuck in the water. So, they stayed right there- you see in that picture right there- they would get as close as possible with the warship, and then the warship would drop the LCI's that we were in already. And we knew we hit the water. You see right there- I could be any one of those guys right there, I was just where he was. Ah boy, oh well.

Cohen: When you hit the water, what did you do with your rifle?

Errichiello: Hold it up in the air, like this, keep it out of the water. I don't know if I was that smart, but I'd seen all of the other guys raising their rifles up above their heads, I did the same thing. I'm only eighteen or nineteen years old, so I don't know what the hell is going on.

Cohen: Was there a lot of bombing and shelling from--

Errichiello: Oh, there was no end to that. We were getting dropped by, like flies, just killed, one after the other. We lost 2300 in a matter of a few hours. Because, see they were way up above on the cliff, up above, and we were down below in the water, obviously. So, we had no protection, at all. They were just popping us off one by one. While we were in the water--

Cohen: How did you manage to avoid--?

Errichiello: Well, there were so many dead bodies floating that myself and lieutenant Sikes [0:20:40], that was our leader at the time, we, both of us, we pushed all of the

dead bodies together, and we hid underneath them, while they were shooting and all the shells were flying and all hell broke loose. And we came out of it alive.

Cohen: When were you able to approach the shore? Like you're in the water under the bodies and then?

Errichiello: We had to wait for the...the shelling was continuous, there was no end, shells were flying like crazy, so we were safe staying as close to the shore or in the water, then we were on the beach. So, I said, you know, it slowed down a little bit, the shooting and the artillery, we were able to get out of the water and get up on the beach a little bit, on the ground, where you sit in the water

Cohen: Did Lieutenant Sikes give orders? Did the Lieutenant Sikes give orders, like, "Okay men, go here, go there!"

Errichiello: No, no, he was giving orders like all of the other commanders were, of where to go, and by and by our reconnaissance, our Intelligence told our leaders where to bring our soldiers, you know, should we go to the left, should we go to the right of the beach, you know. You don't want to go too far, because then you're in the beach of the other battalion, the other-- what do you call them-- commanders. So, each commander had his particular area and stayed within that. And otherwise we'd be shooting each other, you know, so we pretty much kept within the area that was designated for us: Omaha Beach. And that just happened to be the worst of the five. There's no question about that.

Cohen: Right in the center. You mentioned also that the US Air Force [i.e. US Army Air Corps]-

Errichiello: Well, we were getting up into the beach, and there were so many Germans up there, waiting for us to come up on the beach that as we came up, that we were getting shot at and killed. And the air force would notify that we need some help, **now**. So, we got the air force to come out and bomb the cliffs that were facing the GI's down below. And in their bombing, they got as close as they could to get the German positions and not get us shot. Well, we lost, I don't know a bloody number, you'll never know, at least I don't know, it's been seventy-four years and I've never heard of how many we lost of our own people shooting at us. But it was that way. We had to get some protection from the air. And we did, we got a lot of protection from the air force, but in so doing they got too close, and also killed some of our own guys. And that's a known fact.

Cohen: The distances were so close before the two...

Errichiello: Right, we were on the beach trying to get on land, and right up above was the Germans shooting down at us. And shoot, we couldn't see them but they could see us, wide open. As I talking with you I'm remembering some of these things too.

Cohen: Once you got to the beach, did you dig yourself into a foxhole? What happened?

Errichiello: There were no foxholes. There was too much water there, you couldn't dig a hole anyhow, it'd be full of water, you know?

Cohen: Yes, I see.

Errichiello: It's like if you've ever been to a beach and you dig a hole, and you play with a sand well, it's full of water. And you can never dig a hole, at least four feet, to be able to get out from underneath the forest?. But anyhow we got to hard ground, then the guys were starting to dig in a little deeper, a little harder. But a lot of the shoreline there, there where all the -- lot of these German, what do you call those, the barricades. You know, with the sharp points of the beach, what the hell do you call that? Caught me off guard.

Cohen: Some kinds of barricades that the Germans used?

Errichiello: You know, that the beach had all of these ribbons of German-made poles with sharp corners, shaped like this, you know. And we had to get past them to get through of the beach, to get up to the hard ground. So, we lost a lot of guys that way. So, our commanders would say, "Hey, we've got to get out of this situation here. And we've got to get past those barricades" and you know, whether we liked it or not, we had to get past those things. Otherwise we're getting shot at constantly. Constantly. Constantly. Constantly.

Cohen: So how did you personally manage to get past the barricades?

Errichiello: Well, after the air force they hit those beaches, not only ours, the whole blue line of these positions, beach position. Our beach position was the Omaha and then they had the other four of the five. So, we got a lot of support from the air force, we did, but we also got hit pretty hard too personally. But anyhow, they finally, the bombing finally broke these barriers of wood and wire and stuff, you know. Pillboxes, bunkers as we call them and we got very, very close to where we were on solid ground there for a while. And we were told we had to get those pillboxes up on the top, shooting down on us

Cohen: Were the pillboxes up on the hill?

Errichiello: Oh yeah, up on top, yeah. And there were a lot of bunkers up there, pillboxes. And Lieutenant Sikes? and myself, we climbed up the side of the cliffs, up on the top of the cliffs to get to the pillboxes. And the only way we got up there was in the bombings, the bombings dismembered or exposed a lot of the heavy roots of the big trees up there. So, we would climb up those tree roots, the trunks. And we would climb up on those things to get to the top. Anyhow, myself and Lieutenant Sikes were told to go up there and get some of those pillboxes out of there, so we did get up there. And we climbed up alongside the pillboxes. So, if this is a pillbox, you could climb up the side, and all the slits for shooting were

here, so they couldn't see us. So, we climbed up, got up on top of them, pulled the vents off of the top of the pill boxes, and we dropped grenades in there. Killed them all. And we killed a lot of them that way.

Cohen: Did the other Germans in the pillboxes try to then--

Errichiello: They tried to get out, but they couldn't get out. By that time our guys were getting up there and surrounding the pillboxes, and if they tried to get out, they got killed, anyhow. But in the pillboxes, unfortunately, we didn't know, we couldn't see what was in there, we killed a lot of, we killed a lot of kids. There were a lot of kids in those bunkers. The Germans had trained these kids, fifteen, sixteen years old. And hell, they were shooting at us, they were killing us more than we were killing them. We didn't know, you know, they're in these pillboxes and there are these slits- we call them slits- like two feet long, and they're slits. And they would put their rifles down in there and shoot down to the beach. And that's how we got killed. And when we did drop the bombs, the grenades, we killed a lot of them that were in there with grenades, and when we finally got in there, they were all dead. And they were kids, in there. What the hell, how did we know? And besides, if we did know, we had to bomb it. They were killing us like crazy.

Cohen: You didn't have a choice.

Errichiello: No, we did not. It's all coming back to me now.

Cohen: How long was it, that you--

Errichiello: This took a couple of days, back and forth. We'd go down and get some supplies, then we'd go back up again.

Cohen: Oh, so you'd go back to the beach?

Errichiello: To the beach, or some guys, some veterans, some GI's were delegated to bring food, the supplies, you know, we ran out of guns and ammunition, so they would bring them up to us. [0:30:48]

Cohen: I see, and you were up on top?

Errichiello: At the top, yeah.

Cohen: Were there any Germans that were gathered as prisoners?

Errichiello: At that time, they thought they were winning the war. So, they weren't giving up at all. Towards the end of the war, then they started to give up in groves. Groups of guys would come up with their hands in the air. And a lot of them got killed, Germans. And GI's. And we found a lot of, we found some of the, this goes on for a couple of weeks, every day. We found a lot of Germans with our uniforms on them. So, when they killed a GI- an Allied GI, we could tell by their uniforms.

They would take their uniform and put them on. And we never knew if we were talking to a German or a US trooper. So, what happened there was they would get behind the lines, and they did a lot of damage when they got behind there and they had a uniform on. We didn't know who they were. We finally realized what was happening -- they were taking our uniforms after they killed them, putting them on, and then, the word got out, "If there's any dead Germans, you don't cover them." If there's a US soldier on the ground, which there was, then we would get a jacket or something, a blanket to cover them, so we would cover the bodies if they were American bodies.

Cohen: So that they wouldn't know to take them?

Errichiello: Yeah, so we killed a lot of Germans and we left them on the road, on both sides of the road, just like the Americans were, on both sides. You know, the public, the American people, they didn't have to see all this stuff. They didn't even read about it, you know. It was too hard to take. The American people wouldn't like that. It was not all peaches and cream, let me tell you.

Cohen: No. No. What happened next? [33:11]

Errichiello: Well, after we finally, a couple weeks maybe, we were bringing more and more supplies up there, we were getting more and more support for the Army from the air force. And as the air force hit the ground in front of us, we were able to take more ground and attack. You know, so they helped us push ahead, but we were still running, still walking on the ground, the infantry really got the worst of it. The American GIs got hit pretty bad. We lost, I dunno, I think 300,000 or 4000,000 something. And these were all, you know, your sisters, brothers, boyfriends, husbands. It was a tough battle. And then we went from, once we got on solid ground, in France, we're still on French soil, and then as we go forward, every little town we would take, and occupy it and get rid of the Germans, we would have to flush out all the German soldiers that were in these little towns. We'd find them underneath the cabinets, you know, in closets. We had to weed them out. So, we got, that way we got some prisoners

Cohen: You had to go house to house?

Errichiello: Oh, we went house to house, yeah. And every time we took over a town - that was a battle. And then that little star? Three little stars? When you see the ribbons, right there, right here. See these little stars?

Cohen: Yes.

Errichiello: Each one of these represents a battle, and I mean, a battle. So, a lot of guys, you'll see a lot of GIs with ribbons like that. That just means they were in that part of the country, maybe in Germany or Belgium or Holland. But when they got

these little stars, then you know these guys were in the war, they were really in the war.

Cohen: I see you have a lot of stars; do you want to explain--?

Errichiello: I can explain one and they're all the same, you know. One was, St. Lô, [Sainte] Mère Église?, Cherbourg, Cologne, these were all big cities, you know, and we took them all one at a time, one by one. So, we got into each one of these little counties, what are they called, they have a name for them, for us, it's suburbs. So, we'd take over these little suburbs, and each had their own little station of GI's, German GI's, and we had to weed them out of there, and push them back towards Germany. And some we did, and some we didn't. At that time, they were still... they weren't winning the war, but they weren't gaining either. They were pushing hard with the air force.

Cohen: So, you're in France, you've been in all of these various villages after the landing, and what happens after that?

Errichiello: Well, within a year and a half, maybe about a year and a half, every city, we would take- we [0:36:58 phone ringing 0:38:00]

Cohen: So, after France--

Errichiello: We went into France, we went into Belgium, Liège, which is a big city in Belgium. We had a lot of problems there, we lost a lot of guys there. But we went from France into Belgium, Liège, Belgium, then we went a little bit into Holland. We went back into Germany, and then we got into some of the big battles, which was the Ardennese forest. And you can't imagine how dark the forests are at night, you know. We didn't know we were fighting them or us. It was too dark. I can't believe, even when I think about it, it was just pitch black! And we're trying to go forward, in pitch black weather, oh, when I think of the weather, oh my god- we walked in the snow. This was in September and October, we walked into snow, rain, heavy, heavy. It's just bad weather. We hit it at a bad time, but anyhow...

Cohen: So, in the summary that you wrote up, you wrote that you and nine, eh eight others had been captured as prisoners, do you want to talk about that?

Errichiello: We're getting to that, so anyhow, we're in France, fighting our way through these little towns, that's what these little stars are, each one of these stars represents a town. And it just, it doesn't take a day to clean them out, they've been there for years. So, we're out there, we're fighting Germans while we're in these homes, we're going through their closets, going through their cabinets. We found them in the basements. But we had a hell of a time weeding them all out. But when we finally got the word that we'd cleaned them all out, by that time it was a couple of weeks. But then, when we got the word that they town was

cleaned up pretty good, we'd go to the next one. So, we'd go from town to town to town to town. Now we did that, but then so did all of the other groups, so we were tried to go together, and not get one too far out. If you got too far ahead, then they come behind us and trap us. So, we tried to go together, each of these groups was talking to each other, obviously. So, they'd say, and they've all got maps, they'd say, "Okay, we're this far out on our map, okay so slow down there, we'll catch up." So, you want to get the line of fire together, moving together.

Cohen: I see what you're saying, because otherwise--

Errichiello: Otherwise, you get too far ahead and they'd come behind us, then you're trapped, and by the time you try to go back, well, by that time...anyhow, we went through town to town. France was, oh maybe, ten-fifteen towns. And of course, the other guys are doing the same thing, we're kind of keeping abreast of each other, of how far they're going. But anyhow, we finally got out of Belgium, and then we decided to go to Holland, and then we got into Germany. We got into Germany. Now in Germany, we had a hell of a time in Germany. There's a town called Aachen, A-A-C-H-E-N, Aachen. Aachen was known as the playground of Hitler. Now what that means is, Hitler instructed all of the SS troopers, which is elite, he had all the SS troopers to go into these towns, and look for blond girls, beautiful blonde girls, and they were beautiful, and they brought them back into Aachen, Germany. And in Aachen, Germany there was as series of cabins, and the would bring these SS troopers and the women and put them together in cabins, and the wanted to create a super race with the SS troopers and these beautiful girls. And they were beautiful. But that didn't go to well because we were getting closer and closer to that place, and the Germans were getting away from there. But they were there in Aachen for a long time, I would say a good year or so. You know, we didn't gotten to that area yet, we were still fighting at the beach, we were fighting at all of these little towns on the beach: Caen, Kilgoy?, Cherbourg, oh gosh, there are so many of those little towns, but anyhow I don't have all of their names.

Cohen: Okay, so after, so you're in Aachen, and when did you go to the Ardennes forest? Was that afterward, that you went to Ardennes?

Errichiello: The Ardennese were the last line of defense for these Germans. That was, you know, you were getting near to Berlin now, and when you were getting pretty close to Berlin you were getting to the end for them, you know. But by that time, when we got into Germany, the German soldiers realized that they were losing, and that they were getting killed when they were caught, instead of being prisoners, they were getting killed. So, they all gave up in big groups of Germans, Wehrmacht, they called them Wehrmacht, the German Wehrmacht which was similar to the US Army. They would, it's so goddam vivid in my mind, right now, I can see all of their faces... but anyhow, we were getting close and closer to Aachen, Germany there they had all kinds of, all hell broke loose, because that

was his playground, he wanted to make sure that they got the best support possible. But it was just a matter of time before they go, and they still don't if he got killed, if he and his girlfriend got killed or they gave up or what but I think they got killed. But anyhow, we got into Germany, and even though they had lost the war but we were still fighting it, the Germans soldiers, in their homes and in their cabins, hiding in their closets. We had a hell of a time getting those guys out of there. And then when we did get them, sometimes we'd find them with American uniforms. They got them off of these dead GI's, they put the uniforms on.

Cohen: Do you want to talk now about the part of the Battle of the Bulge, where you and a few others were--

Errichiello: Yeah, okay. I'm getting towards there.

Cohen: Oh sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Errichiello: It's okay. So, we didn't have a straight line; we went here, we'd go there, we'd go there, it wasn't a straight line. We got, every time we got a little town, then some of our GIs stayed there to hold it, you know. And then we'd continue and continue, and we finally got to near Herzchen?, which is where the Battle of the Bulge was there at... And, let's see one of those flyers, let's see. It was at Buchenwald, that's Buchenwald up top there?

Cohen: Uh, here it is, the Battle of the Bulge.

Errichiello: That's it, yeah. Now, the Battle of the Bulge, that's getting pretty heavy. The Battle of the Bulge, we, uh, people, you know, in a war like we had, there's not a line you could draw- on this side, there's you, on that side, there's me. That's not the way it was. So, Battle of the Bulge, right around Christmas time, right before we got to the Battle of the Bulge, around Christmas time, 1944, we would be eating along the way, whenever we had a chance we would stop and take c-rations or t-rations, and we'd unwrap them, they were wrapped up in wax paper so they would stay forever. That wax paper, K-rations or C-rations today they still have, they're wrapped up in wax so you never got any mold or stuff like that. But anyhow, we would take our helmets, take the liner out of the helmets, scrape the snow on the ground and make a little fire, heat up the helmet with the liner out of it, with the snow inside of it, we'd heat up the helmet and melt it and that's how we got the water. Now every time a guy, every time a guy, a GI would write to his home, like my home, we would tell them, "Send packages in cardboard boxes, send them in boxes not plastic bags, cardboard boxes." And the reason was, when we'd get these packages, if and when we'd get them, we would take the cardboard boxes, break them into pieces, and wrap our feet around them. We had 83,000 GI's with...

Cohen: Frostbite?

Errichiello: With frostbite, yeah. A lot of guys lost their toes, there was a lot of damage there. You ever heard of **Stars and Stripes**?

Cohen: Yeah, the military newspaper.

Errichiello: **Stars and Stripes** was a GI paper that came out once a month, and they would pass it around for the GI's to read, when you could read them, if you had time to read them. But we would fight, we would argue and fight, argue, with each other to get a copy of those **Stars and Stripes**. Not to read them, we wanted to wrap our goddamn feet around them! We had holes in our shoes, you couldn't get another pair of shoes. We found more GI's dead with no shoes, because people would, guys were taking the shoes. Boy, that's so goddamn easy for me to talk about it now, but now that I think about it, it that was not easy

Cohen: Did you get frostbite?

Errichiello: Your feet, yeah. Not me! I tried to watch myself- when we'd sleep, if you call it sleep, we'd sleep in the snow. Where else can you sleep? We'd just lay down in the snow... but anyhow. So, when we got into the Ardennese forest, oh my God, was that terrible. They beat you there in the snow and the rain, oh terrible. We had a bad time. Word got out, it was near Christmas time, that we were going to have a steak sandwich, steak dinner around Christmas time. We were going to try to get everybody on the line to get a steak dinner. And when the steaks were ready to eat, two or three would go on the line would go back, then three. We'd rotate them. We kept the area that we fought for, we kept it, so we'd leave a lot of the GI's in place and hold it while two or three would leave and get their steak dinner. So, after Christmas, when everybody had gotten their steak- and that was fantastic, a nice hot meal for a change- so the warriors say, "Well, what kind of meat was that?" well, they said, "That was horse meat." I'll tell you, everybody was just, bleh! There's nothing wrong with horsemeat, they serve it downtown, and they had horsemeat. But by that time, we had gotten rid of it anyhow. But we had horsemeat. That was quite an experience. The meat was sweet, and stringy. That's how horsemeat is, I guess, I don't know. But we had it, and anyhow that was a hot meal.

Cohen: Finally, one hot meal.

Errichiello: Yeah. We'd get the hot meal, we'd go back and eat it, and then go back to the line.

Seitz, Bill: But you got that after the Bulge, right, after the Battle?

Errichiello: Yeah, oh yeah, after. This is near Christmas time

Seitz: So, what happened with the Battle of the Bulge? What happened with that?
[0:52:38]

Errichiello: Well, the Battle of the Bulge. There was a lot of fighting at that time, around the Bulge. Well what is the Bulge? The Bulge is nothing more, it's a line of defense, or offense if you want to call it that, and then there were so many GI Americans getting killed there, so we were given, our commanders were given more help for us to go to this battle. And the Battle of the Bulge is nothing more than, it's a line of GI's, and there were so many more Germans at that point that they pushed us, as they pushed us, they would form a belly.

Cohen: That's why it's called the Bulge?

Errichiello: People say Bulge. It's really the line of defense that got pushed back, and it formed a bulge. And what was the Bulge? Well, when the Air Force bombs an area it leaves a big hole. A big crater. And one of the craters, when the Germans were pushing us back, they captured a bunch, a bunch got captured and a bunch got killed, they wouldn't take prisoners anymore than we would take them. But when we got cornered in one of those battles down there, by one of those craters. So, there was, nine of us, nine GI's including me, and if you're an Italian and talk, I can understand you. One of our nine guys that were captured- they shove us into the crater, it's a great big hole, with bayonets they jab us, they keep us within close of each other. And what happens is, the seven Germans were keeping the nine of us intact, keeping us together, they don't want us to roam around in this great big hole. So, they kept us pretty much intact with each other. And then, what happened then? Then one of the GI's, one of our nine guys, as I said, if you talk Italian I would understand. So this one guy of our group was of German descent, and he heard them talking, the GI heard the German soldier talking, "When it gets a little lighter out," this is like 1 or 2 in the morning, it's pitch black, "When it's a little lighter out, we'll take them and bring them to the apple orchard" which is further in where they're at, "and get rid of them there." Well, get rid of them means, they don't keep prisoners, just shooting them. So, this one guy in our group understood Germans. Boy, it comes very clear to me now. Well he said, when we were huddled all together, he said, "When I holler go, we're gonna run out of this hole" you know, crater. It's not a hole, well it is, but like that, and it's a crater. And he said, "When I holler, 'Go' we're gonna all run out of here. If there's nine of us, and there's seven of them, how can they catch us? Somebody's got to get away." Well, myself and Lt. Sikes got away. [0:56:15]

Cohen: Did everybody run in different directions?

Errichiello: All ran in different directions, we don't know, we don't think anybody got out alive, just me and Lieutenant Sikes. Because if there were more of us, more of those nine guys, we would have seen them at the headquarters. But there wasn't. There was just the two of us alive.

Cohen: It seems amazing that you a Lt. Sikes managed to be together and stay alive throughout both-

Errichiello: We ran different directions, I guess the guy upstairs was watching s and telling us which way to go- we ran right into a tank battalion, American. Of course, we didn't know they were American, we can't tell markers or--

Cohen: Just see tanks.

Errichiello: So, they would stop us and say, "Get them, shoot them, get rid of them" one guy, one of the commanders said, "Well, wait, let's question them, see were the rest of these Germans are." Well, we weren't the Germans. We were the Americans. So, they forced us, well, we didn't have our rifles, all of our rifles were gone, so these American tank guys were saying, "Where's your rifles at?" Well we've just come out of a hole where we were captured- "Well who captured you? Where were you captured at?" then they'd ask, one guy asked us, "Who's Abraham Lincoln?"

Cohen: He really wanted to make sure.

Errichiello: They wanted to get some information that you really were American. And one guy said, "Who's Joe DiMaggio?"

Seitz: You knew that, being Italian.

Errichiello: Yeah, of course. Well, you know, they're asking questions that, as an American, if you ask me, "Who's Joe Madden?" right now. He's the club manager, right? Okay. Well at that time, they said, whoever it was, "Who's Joe DiMaggio?" New York Yankees' outfielder. Okay. "What does he do?" "He's a ball player." They're stupid questions, but they're not too. They wanted to know if you really were an American, you'd know all that. We finally talked our way into that, of course they brought us back to headquarters, checked our dog tags, I still got 'em. Checked our dog tags, and they'd ask, "Where are you from?" and of course, they had copies of your of you, anyhow, and if they didn't have it they would call back the ?? they had phones, they would call back to headquarters and ask "Name is so-and-so, is there such a guy?" and they'd say, "Oh sure, he's with the US 1st Division." So, we had to convince them to tell them that we were Americans. So, they finally called our commander at the 1st Division, and they sent a couple of guys from the headquarters that were in the back of the line, back further into the, headquarters and they would have them confirm that we were who we were. If they didn't, they'd just shoot us right there. They weren't taking prisoners at that time. So anyhow, one of the guys, one or two of the guys from 1st Division was sent over, to confirm, to see if, "Who's this guy? You know who he is?" "Yeah, it's Dom" or whatever. So, they had to confirm that these guys were Americans. Because at that time we were finding more Germans in American uniforms. And once they got in behind the lines, they would bomb

munitions dumps, you know, where we kept dumps for headquarters. Headquarters would then pile weapons, and then, all of a sudden, they would be bombed up, because the Germans behind there that were wearing American uniforms. We lost a lot of ammunition like that. But who do you stop? Everybody with an American uniform? I mean, we were in the American camp now! But all of these guys walking around, they're all Americans? We didn't know.

Cohen: So, after people from the 1st Infantry Division confirmed who you were, did you get more ammunition, did you have to go back to the battle?

Errichiello: Well, there was a continuous line of supplies coming from the beach, always on trucks or wagons or jeeps, whatever mostly trucks. They would load up the trucks, from the warship, from the warship to the beach, they would put all the supplies on the beach, and then the trucks would get loaded and bring them up to where we were at, waiting for supplies. We asked for support, shoes, couldn't get shoes. We asked for newspapers, you know, to wrap our feet with. And we would, and we would ...the best insulation was the c-rations and the k-rations. You would take the wrappers, which were wax, and we would put them around our feet, in the shoes. So, you would never find scraps of c-rations or k-rations, wrapped up cardboard or in wax paper, because they would be used right away, the GI's would put them in their shoes. You know, everybody had a pair of shoes with holes anywhere from the size of a quarter and bigger. You didn't go to a shoemaker to have them fixed, you know.

Cohen: Where were you at the end of the war, the victory in Europe, where were you at that time? [1:02:50]

Errichiello: At that time, we were just outside of, we were just outside of Berlin. Berlin. We were outside of Berlin, and as the war was starting to end, you know, we still had pockets of Germans, die-hards, and they never really gave up, they're still fighting now, in Germany right now! They say they find groups of GIs, GI-Germans, fighting in pockets, well, they never gave up! So, but anyhow

Seitz: Russia claimed Berlin, so you guys were on the outside, right?

Errichiello: Right, a little bit. The Germans wanted to get captured, but not by the Russians. The Russians were, they were tough sons of bitches, let me tell you, man. They were tough guys. Let me tell you something else. Here's something else you've never heard: when a German soldier got killed, they would throw him in a corner or whatever. Then they would take him, whack him in the mouth with the butt of the rifle, and when they cracked him, they'd open his mouth, they'd loosen up all of the teeth in the mouth, and then they'd take the teeth, and all of the teeth have got gold in them, it's unbelievable. I guess in Germany, I guess it was cheaper to fix their teeth with gold than whatever is regular for teeth, or whatever. I'm sure, you guys must have heard about this before, right?

Cohen: Um, yeah, I guess-

Errichiello: How do you think they got the gold out of their teeth? They didn't go to the dentist! They used the butt of their rifle. Anyhow, as we got nearer to the end of the war, we were being called by name, because they knew how long you were in, they wanted to get you out of the line before too long. We were there for a bout a year and a half, two years. Constant fighting. Every one of those fucking little stars, was a battle galore?

Cohen: Did you ever have a break? Like they'd say, "Okay, you can go away from the battle for a weekend?"

Errichiello: Oh, no. do you think I would go to Las Vegas? No. If there were any women laying around, you know, some guys were nuts, crazy, or whatever you want to call them, crazy. But no fraternizing at the time. You couldn't fraternize with a woman. Oh man, if you got caught fraternizing? You got, you'd almost get thrown in jail, from the Americans. But that all changed, after a while

Cohen: Did you write letters back home?

Errichiello: Yeah, they're called V-letters. You know what a V-letter is?

Cohen: No, what's a V-letter? [1:05:57]

Errichiello: Ah Jesus, it's a...it's about, let's see, this is my uniform, a V-letter was something like this, as a matter of fact, it was something like this. It was about this size right there, right there. Okay, that's a v-letter. And you open it up, and write what you want, and then on the other side you put the address of where you want it to go.

Cohen: Yeah, I used to use them when I lived in Israel, we used to call them aerograms.

Errichiello: What did you call them?

Cohen: We used to call them aerograms.

Errichiello: Well, they've got your own name, but it's the same idea. We called them v-letters. Then you'd get copies, empties, blanks, of these v-letters. And you'd put them together, you lick the sticky part, you seal them, and then the other side, I [put] the address where you want them to go. So that's how we got information back to home. Yep.

Cohen: Did you tell your parents what was going on?

Errichiello: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. All letters that went back home were scrutinized. They were scrutinized that we didn't give information or where we were at, how many were there, your rank, and all that. You could just say, "Hello, how are you, how are the kids?" but you could never tell them where you're at, how many were there, what group you were with. A letter would tell them, if a German were

ever to get one of those letters, it would tell them where the groups of GIs were at. Where the strengths were at. But anyhow, that's how we got information. And it wasn't you know, you don't write long letters, you know. These weren't love letters! They were just, "Hi how are you, I'm doing fine, we could sure use some shoes, oh by the way when you send stuff here, send it in cardboard boxes, we use the cardboard to wrap our feet." Little things like that. But for us, it was pretty big stuff. We lost 83,000 GIs with frostbite. You know, frostbite, you'll lose a toe.

Cohen: I remember I once interviewed a man who was a medic at the Battle of the Bulge, and that's what he said.

Errichiello: He told you about that?

Cohen: He said that was the most common problem, I think, was one of the most common problems, with the feet.

Errichiello: Right! He probably tried to give some help to the guys with the frostbite, but you know, what do you do with frostbite? It's frozen. You know, with frostbite, actually, you can actually take the toe and snap it. It just snaps off! Like a carrot.

Cohen: Did you like the men with whom you served? Did you think you were with reliable, you know, soldiers? Did you like them?

Errichiello: Did I like the soldiers?

Cohen: Yeah, that you were with?

Errichiello: Well, you know, they were there like you were there. They were doing what you were doing. I can't be talking about the World Series when there's a war going on, and vice versa. We pretty much kept, this was in the wintertime, and we were more or less fighting the elements of the weather- oh jeeze. Snow, ice. Oh fuck, I tell you, man, it was... we would fight the elements more than anything. Towards the end of the war, we were fighting the cold and the ice, the Ardennese forest. You've heard of Cantigny, right? You ever been there?

Cohen: No.

Errichiello: You've never been to Cantigny? Well, anyhow, Cantigny is a- oh he knows! - Cantigny is an area at the Cantigny in Winfield, they have replicas of parts of the war, how GI's lived and how they fought, and you know, there's just, Bill could tell you that, right Bill? And they've got parts of wars that they've built for support, the kind of terrain that they were fighting in, whatever, I don't remember, Bill can certainly [tell you]. If anybody was ever interested in WWII, that is the place to go.

Cohen: I'd like to go, I'm a relative newcomer to the Chicago area; I've been here a year and a half, so I guess I would like to go.

Errichiello: If you do get a chance to go, they've got a big beautiful restaurant, right Bill? A beautiful restaurant, whatever you want to eat. And then there's these halls or hallways that you go through,

Seitz: And then they've got this, which is the transport.

Cohen: Ah, the LCI.

Errichiello: There's the LCI, see it?

Seitz: There's only a few of them left, and they've got one in Cantigny.

Errichiello: In Cantigny, I tell you, unbelievable, it's hard to believe, Cantigny, the US government gave the 1st Division, which is Cantigny, gave them an LCI for the viewing, and what do you think it was? Number 18....And, there's only twenty-five of these things built. And when I went to visit with my kids - that was the one that the government says here for them to see at Cantigny. Son of a bitch, that's the exact one that I was in!

Cohen: Oh, my goodness!

Errichiello: Unbelievable!

Cohen: That is unbelievable!

Errichiello: And the reason I know is eighteen, there is only one number per unit, and I was the number eighteen- one. They made only twenty-four of them. So, my kids said, "Dad, get up in there." So, they got me in there and they took pictures. And that's one of them. And I had goosebumps going in there. It's unbelievable. I said, when I saw that number 18, I said, "Oh my God. I've got to get a picture of this." So, my kids took these pictures, put them in the frame. Number 18, unbelievable. Seventy years later. And it was all, of course, they took all the bumps out of it, there were little dings here and there, you know. Just like an old car, it was a little rusty, so we fixed it all up, dress it all up, and sent it to Cantigny.

Cohen: So, what did you do after you came back?

Errichiello: Came back. Well, now you're getting into my personal life.

Cohen: Oh-

Errichiello: No, no, I don't mind! After I came back, I got home, naturally, hugs and kisses and all that stuff. And then, my dad says, "You want to go looking for a job, one of these days?" I said, "No, Dad, I want to go to school." "You do?" "Hey," I said,

"Dad, I want to go to college." He says, "How are you going to go to college, I don't have any money for college, you've got five sisters! And I work on the railway, I can't possibly have that kind of money to send you to college." Okay. So, buddy of mine said, "Dom, why don't you go to the Veteran's Administration on Roosevelt Road and they've got all kinds of programs you can get into." He said, "You've got it coming. Especially with your record, you've got it coming." He said, "Why don't you go there?" I said, "Nah! " "Go there! You got it coming." So I went there, with another friend of mine, the guy who recommended I go. I got in one of the rooms there, there must have been a million guys just sitting there, waiting for help. So, when they finally called my name up, I went up in this little office about the size of this kitchen right in here. They said, "Hey, what are you here for?" I said, "I want to get an application for school." "Well, how far did you go to school?" So, I told him. He wanted all my records. I said, "But I want to go to college. My dad, he can't afford it." And he said, "Well, that's okay, we can handle that." So anyhow, to make a long story short, the sent me to Chicago, I went to Chicago Tech[nical] College?, 2000 South Michigan. And they said, "What are you looking for?" And I said, "I'm very mechanically inclined. I like to design stuff." Well okay. So, they sent me to school at Chicago Tech[nical] College?. I went there for three and a half years, and I got a bachelor's degree. And then they said, "Well, you know, this program you're in, we could give you different places to go for a job. Where would you like to go?" I said, "Hell, I don't know any big companies! I went right from high school into the Army, I don't know what companies are available." "Well, we've got a list of companies that are looking for people, GI's." Okay. He said, "Hey, how about we send you one with think you'd fit well" I said, "What's that?" he said, "Motorola." I said, "What's Motorola?" you know. I said, "Motorola, what's Motorola?" Well, "Motorola, they design a lot of Army supplies. They design new two-way radios. They came out with the first portable radio." So, I got- Bill, would you be so kind as to get that, you see where it says on the left-hand genius? Over here.

Seitz: Yeah.

Errichiello: That package there, yeah right there. Open that up. Open that up and you'll see, I went there, I went to Motorola and I went there for forty-nine years. I was a chief engineer for a long time out there. And look at the back of that thing, they gave me that for- you see what that says there?

Cohen: Over fifty patents?

Errichiello: Are you familiar with patents?

Cohen: Yeah!

Errichiello: Oh, you are! I got fifty-five. I got fifty-five patents with Motorola. I don't get a penny, but that's all right.

Cohen: Wow!

Errichiello: See that, Bill, on the back of it? And Mr. Galvin, the owner, gave me that.

Cohen: When did you meet you wife--

Errichiello: My kids tell me, "Dad, you're going to sit down one of these days with all of us, and we're going to have you write your memoirs and write a book. You go right through your infantry, your personal life," you know, your five sisters, seven but two died, well now they're all dead except for two. But to write about your family life, you know. Like, I never had a bed until I got married. I had five sisters, and we had a rented three bedroom home. You know, apartment. And my dad couldn't buy a house, he didn't have any money to buy a house. So, my mother and dad had one bedroom. My two sisters had one bedroom, and the other three sisters had one bedroom. And that was it. Three bedrooms. And where was I at? I was sleeping on the porch in a cot and every night at about 8, 9, 10 o'clock, we didn't have TV at the time, they would roll into this bed, roll it in the kitchen across, the porch, and I would sleep in the kitchen with blankets. And then in the morning, they would wake me up, whether I wanted to get up or not, because they needed the kitchen to cook and stuff, and they would roll me out into the porch again. By that time, it was 7 o'clock in the morning or 6 o'clock. but anyhow, that was my bedroom. But, and they these were very joyful, lovely days. Lot of fun. That was the pride of my life. I've, I played a lot of softball. I've played a lot of softball.

Cohen: And you still are a Cub's fan?

Errichiello: Want me to touch on that? I played a lot of softball. When I'd come home at night, 7, 8, 9 o'clock at night, playing all day playing softball, I'd come home filthy dirty. So, I would sneak in the back door, because that was how I got into my bed, my cot, I'd come in the back door. And they'd have a dish waiting for me on the table, to eat, because they knew I was going to be hungry. So, I would eat, change clothes, and go into the bed. Well, I never got to the bed. My sisters were all waiting for me. They no sooner saw me try to get into the cot to go to bed that I was knocked out from playing, they grabbed me, and they'd forced me into the tub. And they'd undressed me, and they would not let me go into the bed, because my sheets were all clean, they said, "You are not going into the bed with those filthy feet!" so they undressed me.

Cohen: They were determined.

Errichiello: That was, I would fight that, really easy though I would fight. They'd throw me into the tub and my mother would just watch, and my father he just went somewhere else. Went into another room, they'd throw me in there and they washed me from top to bottom with soapy water, then they'd give me dry clothes for sleeping.

Cohen: So, you were clean?

Errichiello: Then they would let me go to bed. They had all these white sheets, they were white, and every night they'd have to wash them again because I'd come home with dirty feet, oh god. But it was a lot of fun. Sometimes I would sneak in underneath the bed, under the bed, and I wanted to get to my bed, but they wouldn't let me get to my bed, they wanted to wash me up first. So, I'd sneak in underneath one of my sisters' beds. And they'd get brooms, two brooms, one on either side of the bed, and they'd poke me on the bottom to get me out from underneath, there. They'd poke me, I'd go from one side of the bed to the other, underneath, and they'd finally, they would finally be getting to me, so I got out of there, and they'd wash me again.

Cohen: It sounds like you had fun.

Errichiello: Oh yeah, man, I had a lot of fun. Never had a problem in my life. Never had a problem, with my five sisters, I never had a problem. Never.

Cohen: And you said you have five of your own children?

Errichiello: What's that?

Cohen: How many children do you have, now?

Errichiello: How many memories?

Cohen: How many children? How many kids?

Errichiello: Oh, my kids, I've got five, four girls and a boy.

Cohen: So similar!

Errichiello: I manage to put a handle on one!

Cohen: Where did you meet your wife?

Errichiello: and I was one boy and five sisters, and now I've got one boy and four daughters. Only one per, what do you call it, not generation.... a lot of fun.

Cohen: What message would you like future generations to learn from your experience?

Errichiello: My experience would be: go to school, get a good education, and all my kids today, I forced them to go to school. Not that I had to, but they went, anyhow. I would not have let them not go to school, and they all went to school, three and a half out of five got a degree. Three and half out of five got a degree. And what else... [1:24:08 PHONE RINGING, CUT]

Cohen: Is there anything you would like to talk about that I didn't cover?

Errichiello: Well, you asked me that question, let me finish that one. That's very important and that's education. Get the best education- when you call me, if I don't answer the phone, it goes to my daughter in Anihawk. And then she calls me and goes, "Dad, why didn't you answer the phone?" But, anyhow [1:24:35] I did it with my kids, I told my kids, I forced them to go to school, not that I had to, all of their friends went to college, right from high school to college and they all joined together, you know. One went to U of I, one went to Northern, two went to Elmhurst College and got degrees. One is a RN, registered dietician. Yeah. My advice to the kids? Stay at school. Get as much schooling as you can. If you can get your bachelors, fine. If you can get your masters, which I did, it makes a difference of anywhere from 15 to 30,000 dollars a year for salary. If you get a good grade in bachelors first followed by a masters. Yeah. So, when I went to school from the Army, I got the bachelors from Willowbrook High School, which was the school for the GI's that were going to school, and that was in Chicago Tech College, it's in Lombard. and then when I went to Motorola, I was at Motorola for, maybe I was there three and a half or four years, when they called me into the office one day and they said, "Dom-" and I thought, "Oh shit, here comes the yellow slip" they called me in the office, you know, my two big bosses, and they said, "Dom, you know, you've got a bachelor's degree, and you're very creative, and you've got a bunch- what six or eight patents," I almost got one a year, and he said, "But, you know, we'd like to make you a manager. But you can't be a manager." The golden rule at Motorola was that you had to have a master's degree to be a manager. Well, I said, "Well, I'm not going to school because I can't afford it." They said, "Well, we're gonna take care of that. But you have to go to school on your time and on Motorola's time." I said, "I don't care, I'll do it!" So, I went to school from Chicago Tech College, I went there and they sent me to Willowbrook High School in Lombard. Yeah, I went to Willowbrook High School in Lombard. I went there for three and a half years, I would leave Motorola at 3 o'clock thru 6:30 they'd give me half an hour to get there. So, I went to school from 4 o'clock to 7, three hours, Monday Wednesday and Friday, for three hours Monday Wednesday and Friday, for three years. Yeah. About three and a half years. I got my masters. Then four years later, four more years later they called me in and said, "Dom, we're going to make you the chief engineer." And I was chief engineer for a long time. I was at Motorola, I wound up being there for forty-nine years, forty-nine and a half years, and then another year and a half for consulting. That's a sharp way to save money. They give you, they retire you, you retire, and then the next day- I got retired December 31st, Jesus Christ what year was it?[indecipherable] I've forgotten already...then I went to school again... but they wanted me to get a management position, just a warm up, I don't know, whatever they call it. But anyhow, they made me chief engineer and I was there for a good twelve, fifteen years as chief engineer. Then they put me as manager of engineering - mechanical. All mechanical. And I went to, they made me chief engineer, and chief designer. And

that's pretty good. And they sent me to school, otherwise I couldn't have done it.

Cohen: You really lived by your word. On behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, I'd really like to thank you for giving the interview today, for your time, and of course, [for] your service.