Anthony Alberico
Narrator

Wayne Clark
Interviewers

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Anthony Alberico  AA
Wayne Clark  WC
Unknown  Unk

WC: Sir, for the record would you please state your full name, and date and place of birth?

WC: Did you attend school there?
AA: No. I was born there, but then I moved to Jackson Heights, where I started school. [I went through] Elementary School, then I graduated from there and went to a trade school in Long Island City. I took up electrical and radio.

WC: What year did you graduate from High School?
AA: Thirty-eight.

WC: That’s when you went to a trade school?
AA: Well I ended up quitting trade school after two years of schooling. Then I went to work. That was in thirty-eight

WC: Where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor?
AA: I must have been working with my uncle. Thirty-eight...yes...

WC: That happened December seventh 1941.
AA: Forty-one...right.

WC: Did you enlist or were you drafted?
AA: No. I go my greenings when I was twenty one. Then I left Flushing, the town where we were stationed, and went to...I have to think it was Atlantic City—Fort Dix, rather.

WC: Do you remember when that was? Was it in forty-two?
AA: Oh, yes. [turns to someone off camera] Was that in March? I think it was March...

WC: March of forty-two?
AA: Yes. I think that’s when I got in. I don’t have my discharge with me, but I think it was forty-two in March.

WC: So you were drafted into the army...
AA: I got my greenings, yes...I was drafted...Well I didn’t know what I was in, when I was drafted at Fort Dix. Then they sent us to Miami, and that’s when we found out we were going to be in the Army Air Corps.

WC: Were you happy about that?
AA: Well...first time in the Service I didn’t know what to expect. The first thing you learned is: “don’t volunteer for nothing”. Anyway, we were there for three weeks. The first thing you know, I took some kind of a test and I’m in [Goldsboro?], North Carolina. It was an airplane mechanics’ school.

WC: Did you have a basic training before you went to the mechanics’ school?
AA: Three weeks in Miami and that was it.

WC: What did they teach you down there?
AA: Calisthenics...marching in the streets. It wasn’t a camp. It was right in town. We were in a hotel right in town.

WC: Did you have uniforms at that point?
AA: Oh yes...the ‘ole G.I. issue there. Like I said, we went to Goldsboro, North Carolina—we were there for a while—and then the first thing I know, I finished that course...

WC: What did they teach you in that course?
AA: Airplane mechanics on an engine...on the airplane engine, a [regular?] engine.

WC: So you were going to be an engine mechanic?
AA: I thought so. Yes. That course was finished...the first thing I know I took another test, and I’m in gunnery school. [laughing]

WC: Where was your gunnery school? Was that in Kingman? I heard you mention Kingman, Arizona before.
AA: No...that was...we used to fly over water...I can’t...I can’t remember. I know we used to fly over water.

WC: Can you remember what State it was in?
AA: Was it Texas...

WC: It probably was.
AA: Well, it could have been. I don’t quite remember.
WC: Now your gunnery school, did they tow a... a sock behind the airplane, and you had to shoot at it?
AA: A sock...a big sock. [nooding] Yes, right, we had to—

WC: did you shoot from the ground at it?
AA: No, no. We were in another plane. That’s the first time I flew. [laughing] Sick...

WC: You got sick?
AA: Oh, god yes. I never flew before.

WC: What type of gun did you train on?
AA: A fifty-caliber. The plane pulling the sock was an AT-6 with maybe a two-hundred foot lead in the sock. We had a two-engine job, and they mounted a fifty-caliber in the side window. That’s what we shot at the target. Then I finished that course—

WC: Did you receive a set of wings when you completed that course? Gunnery wings?
AA: When did I receive my wings...I think that was when we finished gunnery school. Yes. It had to be. I got my wings... No stripes yet...

WC: So you were still a private.
AA: I was still a private.

WC: Where did you go next?
AA: From gunnery school we ended up at Douglas Aircraft out in California. They were making seventeens [B-17s] at the time there. I had no crew yet. When the seventeen was finished...I don’t even remember if there was a civilian pilot and co-pilot and me onboard, that’s it. We flew to some base in Spokane, Washington, and that’s where we formed a crew. There was a bulletin board and the crew was formed—the name of the base I don’t remember. It was in Spokane, Washington.

WC: So you were going to be a gunner on a B-17?
AA: Top-tier gunner, engineer gunner. [nooding]

WC: With that aircraft...did you go to school with any of the other gunners?
AA: When we formed a crew—I say Spokane, Washington, I don’t know the name of the base—but... we practiced flying with the crew at that base. I don’t recall how long we were there. I don’t know...let’s say a couple of months I guess.

WC: And you flew with the same crew all the time?
AA: We had [unclear] crew. Then we got word...I don’t know how long after...we were supposed to fly with a group to England....then they didn’t have enough planes—B-17s. So they sent us by boat to England.
WC: Did you get any kind of leave before you went to England? Did you get to go home at all?
AA: I think it was better than a year before I ever got home.

WC: So you went to England by ship.
AA: By ship. [nodding]

WC: Did the rest of the crew go with you on the same ship?
AA: Yes…the pilot, co-pilot, and the rest of the crew all were on board.

WC: How did you guys all get along as a crew? Were you all pretty friendly?
AA: Oh yes, we never saluted each other. [unclear] Well the bombardier, pilot, co-pilot, and navigator were officers...we never saluted...”Aye, Carry! Aye, Ross!”...or whatever their names were. They hung out to their lunch, and we—the enlisted men—hung out at lunch ourselves.

WC: So you went over to England by ship.
AA: By ship.

WC: Was it in a convoy, or single ship?
AA: No, we went all alone...all alone.

WC: Do you recall the name of the ship? I know a lot of guys went on the Queen Mary...Mauretania...
AA: I think that’s it! Yes, that may have been it. We went all on our own, every six minutes zig-zaggin’. Well we finally made it to Liverpool.

WC: Did you get sea sick at all?
AA: Oh yes. Oh yes...[both laugh]

WC: Now how was to food aboard the ship?
AA: I don’t think we ate to much. [laughing] No... I don’t think we ate too much. We were mostly on deck though, half of the time. Sea sick you know... It wasn’t that rough I didn’t think...but...we finally got to England okay.

WC: Ok so you landed in Liverpool...
AA: Liverpool... We were probably there a day or so. Than we ended up at the base at Podington England. That’s when we joined the group: the 327th of the 92nd bomber group.

WC: Now was that part of the Eighth Airforce?
AA: The Army Eighth Airforce. They were under the army regulations then. We started flying—
WC: Did you start with training missions first, or did you go right to combat?
AA: No. Right to combat. Well we practiced formation flying in the States—well not with as many planes as we did in England—but in the United States, the most we ever flew was with three planes. [unclear] one, two [gesturing to where the planes would be in the shape of a triangle] but then...when we got to England...right on a mission.

WC: According to the paperwork, I have your first mission was December thirtieth 1943?
AA: Yes.

WC: Do you remember much about that mission? Your first mission?
AA: Where did we go?

WC: It looks like it was... Ludwigshafen, Germany.
AA: Ludwigshafen, Germany... yes...

WC: What was that like? Being on your first mission?
AA: Well...you don't know what to expect. Thank God for the fighter escort they had. When we started flying the missions were... twenty-five. The fighters used to only come in with us so far. Then they left and then that's when you get hit with fighters...or flack...you’d get ‘em going in the coast. We used to call them the...[unclear] Boom Boys. They were pretty good. There wasn’t too many of them, but they were pretty accurate. They used to knock down a couple now and again...

WC: Now that first mission...did your aircraft take any hits at all?
AA: I read that this morning [gesturing to the papers] and I don’t...

WC: It doesn’t mention that you did so...
AA: Well I think there’s another page to that one...

WC: [flipping pages]
[long pause]
AA: I don’t recall.

WC: Do you remember approximately how long that was? Were you on the airplane several hours?
AA: Aw that should be on there. [gesturing to the papers] On the second page maybe...

WC: Ok you hit the target about 12:30... you took off at 18:00...
AA: Alright, I don’t remember.

WC: Alright, so you guys dropped your bomb load, and then headed home...What was it like when you landed? Were you really relieved?
AA: Oh yes. I don’t know if it was that mission or not but it may have been that mission. When we were in the States we never flew high-altitude. [laughing]

WC: It says you flew at 21,500 feet and the air temperature was forty-two degrees below zero.
AA: Oh it’s cold. At that time we used to have woolen suits—the thick woolen suits—boots, pants, jacket.

WC: Were they the electric suits?
AA: No they came out after, thank God. You had men with a parachute harness on top of that. You could hardly move. I couldn’t wear a seat parachute because I was in the turret, so I had a chest pack, which I had to leave on the floor right by the turret. If you went into a dive or something and that thing moved...you’re a dead duck you know... you can’t find it...but anyway...

WC: So you landed and you had completed your first mission.
AA: Aw yeah...that was a relief. Yes.

WC: Normally how long was it between each mission?
AA: I think we’d fly three days and off two.

WC: Three days and off two?
AA: Yes.

WC: What did you do with your off time?
AA: Oh get some sack time or...hit the first pub right off the base... pubs [all around?] you know...

WC: How did you get along with the civilian population?
AA: Oh fine. I mean...to learn their money, you’d take out a pound note and add [unclear]... If they gave you the right change or not I don’t know. [both laughing]

WC: Alright. Without going through the whole book here, when was the first time that your aircraft had received damage...or taken fire.
AA: I think the second mission there... we got hit... first thing you know...either the...I’m sure it was from the flack...must’ve made holes in the engine. Oil all over the place...what you’ve got to do....otherwise the motor will keep running and it could cause a fire. My biggest fear was fire all the time. We had to feather the prop, and then the other one conked out. Number two and three engine conked out.

WC: Did you continue the mission or turn around?
AA: No, you got to drop out of formation. We called for...whatever the code of the day was the pilot knew. First thing you know we got an escort, a P-47, along side of us. In the mean time we dropped the ball turret. I think it was that mission anyways...I think it was that mission...Like I said you can’t keep up with formation you got to drop down.
WC: So what did you do with the bombs aboard the—
AA: Dropped them.

WC: You just dropped them.
AA: Dropped them. Wait a minute...[I had it messed up?]...One time...we brought ‘em back. We couldn’t bomb the target. I don’t know...maybe it was that time. We used to bring ‘em back, but then...we ran off the runway...because with the bomb load...I don’t know, takin’ off...coming back your only doing...ninety to a hundred miles an hour landing. So we ran off the runway and then eventually we just dropped them. Dropped them... in a [shallow?] or [fjord?] of Germany we just let them go. But in France, we wouldn’t drop them, we’d drop them in the Channel.

WC: Do you remember any one particular mission...over others was particularly bad for you?
AA: Well the English were bombing at night. They used to bomb [unclear] and all of that, but at night. They’d just bomb...they couldn’t see their targets, so they just bombed. Hopefully they hit their target...but the worst one was when we started pulling the raids to Berlin. We were the first group that went to Berlin during the day. I think the first mission was an overcast. We went to another target...because they give you a secondary target. We bombed whatever target that was. The flack at Berlin was terrible. I don’t know how many guns they had there, but the sky was black. And...we made it...we came back...we never bombed Berlin. We went to the secondary target, then I think the next day we went again. I think we went three days in a row to Berlin. Maybe we missed one day. That was a rough time. That was a rough time.

WC: Was anyone on your aircraft injured or wounded at all...on any of the raids?
AA: Yes...besides holes in the wing and stuff from flack or...fighter bullets...the bombardier got hit. It came right through the nose of the plane and hit him in the arm. He got enough of a wound to get the Purple Heart. I forget what mission that was... but we all came back.

WC: Was he the only one that was wounded on any of your missions?
AA: Yes. Yes. I got to tell you this one. My biggest fear on board was fire, because what are you going to do...you know, you’re on fire. He put an oxygen mask on...I smelled smoke. I [unclear] we’re on fire. So I ducked down to see the pilot. There’s the pilot—this is before we got to the mission—a cigarette in one hand and the oxygen in the other. I said “you scared the shit out of me.”[both laughing] You know, I smelled smoke. “Oh my God, we’re on fire some how.”

WC: Now did you always fly in the same airplane most of the time?
AA: most of the time, Jonny Walker the Second. Yes.

WC: What was the name of your airplane?
**AA:** Jonny Walker the Second.

**WC:** Jonny Walker the Second.

**AA:** I don’t know whatever happened to it. Then we got...I don’t know why we switched one time. They used to be gray. Then...this was later on...in the...I don’t know how many missions we had. We got a new one. It was silver, silver—wasn’t even painted then. At the end they didn’t even bother to paint them anymore.

**WC:** Did that have a name?

**AA:** I don’t think so. I don’t think so. I know it was a new one, because you could smell the new airplane.

**WC:** The jacket you wore, was that painted with any kind of painting on it or anything?

**AA:** I didn’t have painting on it. The only thing I had was the insignia sewed on...of [unclear] dropping the bomb. That was the only thing I had on. But...the waist gunner had a seventeen dropping bombs on his. There’s always somebody that paints the insignias on...but I didn’t bother.

**WC:** What did you think of the B-17?

**AA:** Terrific. Terrific airplane. I’ve heard of twenty-fours, B-24s. There was a few in England, but most of them were out of Italy. We used to call them...”Flying Boxcar” or whatever. I never flew in one...

**WC:** Your last mission...I see here by looking through your book here...you flew more than twenty five missions.

**AA:** Yes, they upped it to thirty. When I got there it was twenty five. I don’t know—I had ten or twelve missions there or something—but they upped it to thirty, because they were getting a little... easier. The Luftwaffe... we didn’t see too many...I guess they were running out of gas or whatever the reason they couldn’t make the planes, because we were bombing all of their factories. See, we used to bomb certain factories and stuff, where the English at night just bombed whatever. If they hit it, they hit it. If they didn’t, they didn’t. But we had specific targets.

**WC:** Were they refineries you were bombing or factories?

**AA:** Factories mostly, railyards. We bombed the [V2?] sites on the coast of France a couple times. They [unclear] because they were right on the coast...hit and run you know. We went to Schweinfurt. That was a ball bearing factory. Berlin had all kinds of factories going in Berlin. [Stuttgart?]...what was [Stuttgart?]... [Stuttgart?] had something there... Anyway, they were all factories or where they made planes or tanks or whatever they made. That’s what our targets were.

**WC:** Your thirtieth mission...Were you nervous because you knew that was the last one?
AA: Oh phew [wipes his brow]... the sweat. I figured: “Hey, one more to go I might make it.” Well they said if you made your thirteenth mission you had it made, but...that’s just a saying you know.

WC: What was it like when you landed after the thirtieth mission? Was there a lot of celebration?
AA: [clasps his hands in thanks] Not really. I finished with another crew. Well the ball turret fell behind—he got a foot infection and he was in the hospital for about a month—he lost missions with our crew. I don’t know what mission it was... I flew with a cold, not to lose a mission with my regular crew. At that time, we didn’t have radar. When you come in... it’s always cloudy or foggy in England, so when you come in, you come in on a radio beam, and once you hit that beam you got to come in. You can’t go around again or something. So we came in and...my head couldn’t depressurize or whatever happened there... My head felt twice the size, and I had to go through a pressure chamber, and then they brought me down gradually. But I was in the hospital three or four days, and I lost missions with the rest of the crew. Then you make it up with another crew, and that’s when you really sweat.

WC: So after you thirtieth mission, what happened next? Did you get shipped home right away or did you stay on the ground?
AA: No... I had met my wife there. I married an English girl. The waist gunner married an English girl, [laughing] and the ball turret man married an English girl. They got married over there. I didn’t. I kept in touch with my wife and I got her over here. It took me a year to get her over. So, to stay there, they started pulling raids from England to whatever they were bombing, and go to Italy. From Italy they would bomb whatever and go to Russia. From Russia they would bomb whatever and come back to England. What we were doing is... we didn’t have the bombs. We had a big monster radio in the bomb bay. We’d just fly up along the Channel—about twenty-five thousand feet or twenty thousand, whatever it was—we would pick up the messages and relay them back to base. I did that for about three months.

WC: Did the rest of your crew stay and do that too, or did they go back?
AA: I think the waist gunner, the tail gunner... I think the bombardier and the navigator came home. Then we formed another crew. We formed another crew with our balance of our crew—the couple of them left—and we formed another ten guys to fly on this relay ship.

WC: Did you stay with the same unit?
AA: Oh yes. [92nd infantry 27th bomber group?]
WC: Did you stay in England ‘till the end of the war, or did you go back?
AA: No, no. I came home after I… I think we flew that relay ship about three months. Then I think they cut it out. Then we came home by boat.

WC: Do you remember when you came back approximately? Was that in forty-four?
AA: Late forty-four. Late forty-four. When did I say I went in? In March? [asks someone else off camera]

Unk: Forty-two.
AA: No. What month?

WC: You said you went in in March of forty-two.
AA: I think I came out in March.

WC: Yes that was normal. You’d come out the same month. Of course the year would be different.
AA: Ok. I guess… yes, yes.

WC: So you got out in March, probably of forty-five or forty-six.
AA: Well no, when I came back to the States, they asked me if I wanted to pull another tour down in the South Pacific. I said: “Heck no.” So I figured maybe I’d get sent close to home…Fort Dix, or Fort Totten or… someplace close by. They sent me to Laredo, Texas… on a gunnery range. That was a… terrible town, but...

WC: So you were an instructor?
AA: A gunnery instructor on a gunnery range, yes.

WC: What was that like? Did you work a regular schedule Monday through Friday?
AA: Oh yes. Yes. I had it made. I had a skeet range... shotgun... doing that... That was fun.

WC: So you were like a shotgun instructor.
AA: Right. Well the idea is you got to lead the target, you know. So... that worked out. Then I had my points and I thought of getting out.

WC: When you brought your wife over, were you still in the service or were you a civilian then?
AA: No, no, I was a civilian then. I got my discharge from Laredo, Texas.

WC: Did the war end when you were discharged, or did it end after?
AA: I was home on furlough when the Germans gave up.

WC: Ok, so that was April of forty-five.
AA: Yes, I was home on furlough. [unclear, trying to remember something] That’s a long time ago.
WC: Do you remember what your reaction was when you heard about the death of President Roosevelt?
AA: Oh, yes. You know what I found out just the other day? [turns to talk to someone off camera] What was that, Thursday? Wednesday?
Unk: How we got to Casablanca.
AA: [turns back to WC] How he got to Casablanca, do you know? To meet with Winston Churchill. Do you know how he got there? I didn’t even know he went there, but he had a meeting with Winston Churchill. We just went to a meeting in Poughkeepsie, and they had a talk there about World War II and the guy was telling us how secretly it was done.

WC: He usually traveled by ship, I think.
AA: Ah, no... well this is going to change the story, but I didn’t know that myself. He was in Hyde Park, well from Washington rather, but he had a place in Hyde Park. From Washington he came north, turned the train around, went south to Florida, they put him on two [unclear] boats and they sent him to wherever he met Winston Churchill. But anyway...

WC: Do you remember where you were when you heard about the dropping of the atomic bomb? Were you out of the service at that point, or were you still in, when the war with Japan ended?
AA: When did they drop that bomb? I forget.

WC: It was August of forty-five.
AA: I think I was out. I was out. Because...that’s when the B-29’s—the seventeens petered out—they come out with the B-29’s, so I’m sure I was out then.

WC: When you got out of the service, did you make use of the G.I. bill at all?
AA: Back at home I bought a house for eight grand. [laughing]

WC: So you used the G.I. bill to buy the house?
AA: Yes.

WC: Did you go on to school at all?

Unk: Fifty.
AA: ...fifty years, she finally got me my diploma from the high school, from the trade school. [both laughing]

WC: Did you join any veteran’s organizations?
AA: I joined the American Legion.
WC: Do you belong to the Eight Airforce Association?
AA: In Savannah, Georgia. Yes.

WC: Have you attended any reunions at all?
AA: Yes. [unclear] they had a reunion...ninety-second, in Savannah, at the Eighth Airforce Museum down there.

WC: Did you keep in contact with anyone you served in the service with?
AA: Well...There’s a couple of stories about that. I said—I had my points—“so long guys”. Well time goes on... Well I kept in touch with one of the waist gunners—he was in Minnesota—and the ball turret came from Rochester, New York, and I kept in touch with them two. And...forty years later, they had the dedication of the Memphis Belle, the first B-17 that made its twenty-five missions. They were dedicating it in [unclear] Memphis, Tennessee. And our radio man came from Olive Branch, Mississippi, which is right on the border. Whatever my daughter did... she got in touch... I said try to get in touch for me, he comes from Olive Branch, Mississippi. She made some phone calls and she got in touch with his cousin or somebody. They called her back and said “Oh, he moved to Gulf Port, Mississippi.” So, whatever my daughter did, she got in touch with him, and I spoke to him—Flynn, I call him by his last name, Flynn, his name is Clarence Flynn—I said I’m coming down to see the dedication of the Memphis Belle, I said “You want to meet me there?” He said “Ok.” I said “I never was there, so I don’t know where to meet you.” So I said “The best thing to do... hang around the pilots’ area”—you know, they must have a room where the pilots hang out. Well the wife and I go down there. And I go there and...nobody’s there. I walk around—they had an air show there at the same time—I’m walking around and I said: “Ah, that bum never showed up.” So I meet this cop patrolling there, and I said: “I’m looking for a guy from Mississippi.” He said—well they had a loud speaker out in the field there—he said “Go down there and have them call him on the loudspeaker.” I did--“Clarence Flynn, somebody’s here looking for you.” Nobody showed up, I figured, “Ah, he didn’t show up.” I go back and look at the planes and I meet the same cop. He said, “you won’t believe this, there’s a guy from Mississippi, looking for a guy from New York, and there he is over there” and I met him, after forty years. [both laugh]

WC: Did he look the same or did he change?
AA: He got a little heavier like everybody else. [both laugh] Well the same thing happened to the pilot. Before we split up, the pilot had gotten the names and addresses of all the crew, and we all had a copy of these addresses, but back then they didn’t have any zip codes. This is before I met Flynn down in Memphis. So I wrote them all a letter, stating who I was and... I went to the post office, trying to get zip codes—in the meantime, they had zip codes. So I tried to get as many zip codes as I could from the addresses that I had without the zip codes. Well I got them all back except one, and that was the co-pilot. I guess his son must have got the letter, and said, “My father just passed away about a year ago.” Then it ended. I figure, “Who knows what happened,” you know? Then, later on... my daughter and her husband went to San Anton, Texas,
and I knew the pilot was down there someplace. He came from Fargo, North Dakota, but I knew he was down in Texas someplace. I said, “Pick a telephone book, call him from Texas, and we’ll get his name”. As sure as hell, she calls up Ken Carry—that’s the pilots name—“Oh, I know Tony!” We talk, I talk to him again, and... [turns to someone off camera] how later did we go down to see him?

**Unk**: 2003.

**AA**: How long after we called him?

**Unk**: About a year once [everything?] was arranged.

**AA**: Oh. Oh, yes. So, yes... that’s right. We got in touch with him, and then [turns to his wife] what were we coming back from Florida? How did we get to Savanah?

**Unk**: You flew down.

**AA**: No, I mean how did we find out about that place? Oh yes, my daughter’s got a house in South Carolina. She said, “Do you want to go to the Eight Airforce Museum in Savanah?” So we went down to Savanah, to the museum, and then the guards they’ve got—have you ever been there?

**WC**: No I haven’t.

**AA**: They’ve got a bunch of walls about twenty feet by eight feet high with a bunch of plaques of crews of B-17’s, twenty-fours, and it had their names and all that. So it dawned on me, maybe I’ll get in touch with a couple of the guys that I kept in touch with, and we’ll get a plaque made for the crew. Then I called up the pilot—he agreed—the son of the co-pilot agreed, I agreed, [unclear]’s son. Four of the crew’s sons agreed, and we got a plaque. The day of the dedication, we were down there, and the pilot, with his wife, flew to Savanah, and the co-pilot’s son flew in to Savanah, and we went to the dedication of the plaque that we chipped in to form for the crew.

It’s still there. We’ve been down there a couple of times since. [a short pause] I got to tell you this one—not to go back to the beginning—when we were formation flying—I don’t know where we were... anyway we were wherever we were. We were still in the States. This is before we went over seas. Like I said the pilot came from North Dakota. He said, “You want to see Mt. Rushmore? ”—we were formation flying right—“Yeah” [gestures that the pilot made the plane dive] I said, “You crazy bastard!”[laughing] So that’s how we saw Mt. Rushmore, then I had gone with the wife to see it. I took a five week vacation, and we went down to see it.

**WC**: Do you know how many guys are left from the crew?

**AA**: [holds up two fingers]

**WC**: Just two of you?

**AA**: Me and the pilot, and that poor guy’s going blind. He’s got that muscular degeneration or something. Can’t see too good. In fact I got a touch of it myself, I don’t know.

**WC**: I meant to ask you, when you were over seas did you live in those...they’re called Nissen or Quonset huts...

**AA**: Quonset huts. [unclear] That’s it. Yes, bout’ it.
WC: Ok. Were they pretty cold in the Winter?
AA: Well...I don’t know who took care of the stove but we had a stove...and they had either the maintenance man or—I don’t remember—putting coal in it.

WC: Did you ever see any USO shows or any celebrities?
AA: Oh yes. You had to fight your way in. They were always crowded, always crowded.

WC: How do you think your time in the service changed or affected your life?
AA: [long pause] I don’t know... Once in a while I think of it. I don’t think it changed that much. My other daughter in Pennsylvania, her kid goes to school and they had a talk about the war. She said, “Do you want to go and talk to the kids about it.” Well geeze I went there, and, Christ, I started balling, [laughing] telling them the story of my life in the service. I said, “That’s it.”

WC: Is there anything else you’d like to touch on that we might have missed, or anything you’d like to add?
AA: Well...Let’s see, what else... a couple of misses I guess. Well I finally got my wife over, got married, had four good kids, three girls and a boy, and they’re all doing good.

WC: Did you ever go back to England?
AA: We went back in... seventy I think it was. I said, “How the hell did I drink this beer?”[both laugh] Yor were going passed it so the first thing you do is grab a pub and drink a couple of beers. Over there I couldn’t drink. I went back to the wife, I said: “I can’t drink this stuff.” [unclear] I don’t know how I did it.

WC: Now did you go back to the area where your base was?
AA: No, I didn’t...It was my wife and my son—I took my son with me—and we saw the Winston Castle and all the jewels, and toured London. We went to see her sister. No, I didn’t even think of the base at that time. In fact we were in the same town—well her sister was in the same town as was what we used to hit before we used to come from base on pass, North Hampton. Podington was—I don’t know how far away—that’s the town we used to go to.

WC: Is there anything else you would like to mention?
Unk: I would like dad to mention the day of the birthday trip over to Normandy, France and Duxford. Your eightieth birthday trip.
AA: Oh! [unclear] When did you get Flynn up here, the seventieth?
Unk: That was the seventieth and then 2001—
AA: Yes they gave me a seventieth surprise birthday party, and they had Flynn, the radio man, come up. At that time you didn’t know Carry, right?
Unk: No.
AA: No. The ball turret had... Earl had passed away and the waist gunner had passed away so he was the only one I kept in touch with. He came up and we did a little
celebrating for my seventieth birthday. Then on my eightieth birthday, the kids treated me to a trip to Normandy. We spent a couple days in England, and then we went to France, and we toured the whole coast of France there, Normandy, and Omaha Beach, and... I don’t know... how those poor guys did it... terrible...

**WC:** And you got to lower the flag in the cemetery?

**AA:** Oh, yes. The instigator there...[pointing to someone off camera] Well she had gone previously with her husband. He got called to fold a flag at Normandy. And she saw the same manager or the [unclear] in charge, and she happened to have me...at sunset, “go and see if he’ll lower the flag” and sure as hell the guy came over and said, “Do you want to help me fold the flag.” Which was an honor. He said: “Did you ever fold a flag before?” I said, “No, this is it, the first time.”

[camera cut]

**AA:** This happened in the States. I think I saved a [unclear]. We were flying in three formations: Lead, Left Wing and Right Wing, and you’re supposed to go over like that. [showing how the right wing went over the middle to the left position and the left went underneath to the right position] ...switch places. Well I was up on that turret and there was that plane coming up, and that plane’s right above us. I hollered out, “Dive!” And he dove. At that time in the States they used to throw the wheel chucks in the plane. So they aren’t leaving them on the runway or [unclear] rather. The waist gunner got hit in the head with one. Split his head right open. [both laugh]

**WC:** Oh, boy.

**AA:** ...but we got back. You know Lieutenant or no Lieutenant, I said “What the hell you doing,” you know, “we’re in this plane.” The other time, wing to wing like this [showing how their wings were almost touching] I said, “What the hell. You crazy?” Trying to see how close...well they tell you’d form... in combat you’d get close—

[video cut]

**AA:** ...but we made it. I don’t mind, now that I made it. Things worked out.

**Unk:** And the tail gunner [unclear] fell asleep.

**AA:** Oh, that’s another. We’re pulling the [unclear] up to Denmark. Well you’re over water most of the time. We were flying maybe...ten thousand feet let’s say. Then at the target you’d go up to higher altitude. Well, I’m in the top turret, and I happen to turn around and there’s one lousy German plane right behind us. So I call the tail gunner up and I say, “Don’t you see that guy in the back of us?” he said, “I was asleep.” [both laugh, AA hits fist on table]

**WC:** Did he shoot him down?

**AA:** We shot at him and the guy pealed right off. He pealed right off... But you don’t expect it, you know? I don’t know what we were bombing up in Denmark, but...
**WC:** Alright, well thank you.
[end of interview]