Oral Memoirs

of

William Dippo

An Interview

Conducted by

Stephen M. Sloan

October 21, 2011

Collection: Special

Project: Texas Liberators of World War II Concentration Camps

Baylor University Institute for Oral History

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Memoir Procedure

1. Initial contact with the memoirist
2. Arrangements made for interview(s)
3. Recording of interview(s)
4. Transcribing of recording in the BUIOH office
5. Editing of transcript(s) by memoirist. As such, transcript(s) may not match audio recording(s) exactly.
6. Archiving and disseminating completed memoirs: one printed transcript for the memoirist and online access to the memoir via the digital collections portal of Baylor University. The finished transcript of the oral memoir follows the interviewee's stated wishes as reflected in his/her editing of the draft transcript(s), with only minor further editorial revisions by the editorial staff of BUIOH.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) with William Dippo is unrestricted. The deed of gift agreement was signed on October 21, 2011.

Interview History

The recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) were processed in the offices of the Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Interviewer: Stephen M. Sloan

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Project Detail

The Texas Liberators Project was an oral history project sponsored by the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission from August 2011 to December 2013. The project consisted of nineteen interviews with veterans of the Second World War currently living in Texas who liberated or witnessed Nazi concentration camps in the spring of 1945. Copies of the interviews were distributed to the veterans themselves, along with their children. Additionally, the interviews were deposited in the archives of the Holocaust museums in Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. The interviews were also deposited in the Library of Congress as part of the Veterans History Project initiative.

The Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission, coalesced by Senate Bill 482, was established to ensure that resources are available to students, educators, and the general public regarding the Holocaust and other genocides.

Stephen M. Sloan was associate professor of history at Baylor University and director of Baylor University Institute for Oral History (BUIOH).

Robert B. DeBoard was a graduate student in the Department of History at Baylor University and a graduate editor and videographer for BUIOH.

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William Dippo

Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Stephen M. Sloan
October 21, 2011
San Antonio, Texas
Also present: Robert DeBoard

Project: Texas Liberators of World War II Concentration Camps

SLOAN: This is Stephen Sloan. The date is October 21, 2011. I'm with Mr. William Dippo at his home [in] San Antonio, Texas. This is an interview for the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission's Texas Liberators Project. Mr. Dippo, thank you for sitting down with me today and doing this interview. Now, I told you I wanted to go slow, so I would like for you to tell me a little bit about the Dippo family going back. So we're going to begin around your birth, but give me a little bit of the family background, if you would.

DIPPO: I'll start with date of birth—the real date of birth—okay, June 15, 1925. That was a good year for grapes, I was told later on. Boy, we'll go from there—hey, wait a minute, me at a loss for words? (laughs) I have two sisters, both junior to me. My dad was born in 1900. And he wanted to enlist in the army during World War I, but his mother, my grandmother, was a tough old Irish lady. Killfoyle was her last name, and she boxed his ears a few times, and he realized he couldn't enlist. So when my war came, I had nobody to box my ears. I could do just about what I wanted, if it was not immoral or illegal. And I live by that credo to this day. My dad was a shirt-cutter, Arrow Shirts as a matter of fact. I always had plenty of shirts. I was the best-dressed kid in school—with shirts, that is. And though my pants were hand-me-downs, my shirts were the best to be had. We had a lot of gangsters around upstate New York, and they liked custom shirts, so Dad, sort of, helped me out in that respect. Mom was a stay-at-home mom. And there's not much to say. She had raised three children. And—oh, she did hit me with a coat hanger when I told her I enlisted in the army. That was in November, 1942. I have two sisters. Joan was born in '28, and Barbara was born in '32.

Knowing that I couldn't get in at seventeen, I had a couple of friends who made counterfeit coupons like the ones you had to have to buy sugar, gasoline, *et cetera*. They were counterfeiting those. So who do I go to fix my birth certificate? My two friends, who subsequently were in jail while I was in Bastogne. So anyway, I got in at seventeen. I enlisted, so I asked for the cavalry. I was a pretty good horse rider, as a matter of fact. I

could jump. I could curry the tail. I was used to that because of the National Guard. I used to go away with my dad, who was in the National Guard, right from—after World War I, because he couldn't go, so he became a National Guardsman, and an officer within the National Guard setup. And I would go when I was, like, thirteen—twelve, thirteen, fourteen, I would go away to summer camp when they were called to active duty for two weeks. And that's where I learned how to take care of a horse. When they weren't looking, I used to ride them bareback around in the corral. So anyway, I enlisted for the cavalry.

SLOAN: So why for the cavalry? Why'd you enlist in the cavalry?

DIPPO: Huh?

SLOAN: Why in the cavalry? Why did you enlist in the cavalry?

DIPPO: Because I could ride a horse. I didn't know any better. There was no cavalry. There were no cavalry, but I'm—I just said that. And—oh, there's something more I should say. When I went down to enlist, I went with my buddy. I can't remember his name really. He was a buddy all right, but I just—it's been so many, sixty some-odd years, I can't remember. And he didn't go to my school or my church, so I never knew him that well. And he had one of these elbows like Senator McCain has, but his was from being a prisoner. He was born this way, you know. It was some—I don't know what they call it. So I said, "Okay, I'll go navy." So we went down together. The navy took him, arm or no arm, but wouldn't take me. I couldn't see the wall, and I was too skinny. Too tall to be that skinny. He was skinny, but he was short. So I didn't bother to ask in the marines, and the army air force, I'm sure, wouldn't have taken me. But somebody stuck their head out of the door as I was going down the hall from the post office to go home. And I was feeling a little upset and unhappy that they wouldn't take me.

And then I heard, "Psst, psst." I turned around and there was this big fellow, with all sorts of stripes on his arm and medals. And he says, "Come here, son." So I went in. I told him—I said, "Okay. I want to enlist in the cavalry." "Okay. Are you eighteen?" Well, I got ahead of myself there on that eighteen thing. I says, "Yes, I'll bring in my birth certificate." He says, "You do that. So in the meantime, you eat a whole bunch of bananas, and we'll give you glasses. Don't worry about that." "And the cavalry?" "And the cavalry." So anyway, my grandfather was a policeman, and I told him exactly what I did. And he was all for it. In fact, he was in the Spanish-American War as a matter of fact, but he never got out of Florida. (Sloan laughs) Never got to Cuba, but he was there. He was a veteran of the Spanish-American War, so—and I thought I'd uphold the name.

SLOAN: What was his reaction when you told him that you were going?

DIPPO: Oh, he was happy as hell. He was happy as—oh, I shouldn't use these words. He was really happy that I was going. He knew I could do it, and he knew it might straighten me out a little more. I was bent somewhere. And he said, "That's good for you. This will be great." So okay—I went home for a month, and then they called me. I ate bananas.

SLOAN: So how much did you weigh before you started your banana eating?

DIPPO: Huh?

SLOAN: How much did you weigh when you—

DIPPO: One-thirty-five. Six foot one, and I weighed—well, I don't weigh that much. I do, a little more, but not much. And the navy didn't want me in there, like I said. But bananas, I weighed 138, so what the hell? I didn't put lead in my pockets or anything. I knew they'd take me. So anyway, Mom was okay on that, and Dad finally came around. Of course, Grandpa was pushing me in, because he's got a lot of stories from other policemen about me. But nothing was ever—I never was booked, as it were, because—"Oh, Dippo." "Yes." "Oh, Officer Dippo, Frank?" "Yeah, that's my grandpa." "Okay, go ahead." I'd have a shirt full of apples or pears or something. That kind of nonsense as kids would do, I guess.

And so anyway, I guess by this time—oh, they called me and said this and this and the ticket—train. And you're going to go to Dix, Fort Dix, New Jersey. I said, "That's—that's not cavalry." Oh, you have to be trained or inducted or some damn thing. Oh, they gave me the induction. I swore in. Well, anyway, I had to go through there, through Fort Dix. And that's down in New Jersey. And there they issue—oh, they issued your uniforms and things like that that you needed, gas masks, uniform, overcoat, clothes, *et cetera*, duffel bag. And then they slap you on another train, and this—with orders to go to Camp Polk, it was called, Camp Polk. Camp Polk, Louisiana. Y'all don't need to know about that. But—

SLOAN: That's a long way from Troy, New York.

DIPPO: Huh?

SLOAN: That's a long way from Troy, New York.

DIPPO: Yeah, it is, yes. That's where my mother comes in. Went to Camp Polk. When she found out where it was located, and Mother was—this little town outside was bad for her son. She actually called a senator or somebody—congressman. And she told her we can't go. I think she wrote a letter, finally, to the army, Fort Polk, and that said no names or anything. Somehow, I was never notified. I was told by my sisters that my mother had gone ape about me, thinking I was too young to be around that atmosphere outside of a post during the war.

So, anyway, I was satisfied there were no horses. I had a halftrack, though. I was sent to the—why I was sent to the engineers, I'll never know. Thank God it wasn't the infantry. I have a very high regard and a respect for anybody that has that blue badge, infantryman. Well, we got our share, of course, because the tanks couldn't move unless we took the mines up, or we blew up the—I'm getting ahead of myself. So that was in November '42. The unit was still filling up with enlistees and draftees coming into the army at that point in time. Eleventh Armored Division was in South Camp. Fort Polk had two camps—so big, North Camp and South Camp. And the Fourth Armored, they'd come—or Seventh Armored, I'm not—Seventh Armored was doing the same at North Camp, they were forming and training. And then this business of going to boot camp and then going—we

went right to our unit, right to our company, platoon, and squad. And they'd take it from there. But what takes place during—(laughs) it's a word I can't think of. What takes place when you first go in, and all the training you have to do was done actually in your own division, your own outfit.

SLOAN: Boot camp, kind of your boot camp experience? Your boot camp experience?

DIPPO: Boot camp, that's a navy term. Nobody used that. I don't like them anyway. (Sloan laughs) I get upset when I see one. So anyway, we went through that in Fort Polk. We went out on maneuvers. The first sergeant had a unique way of meting out disciplinary action. And once you crossed him—anybody that knows Louisiana, out in the swamps and the sand, you're handed a shovel and you have to dig a—well, it depends on how bad you were or what you—like not showing up for reveille or not reporting to the mess hall to work in the kitchen, he would put you to digging holes in the ground. That didn't make sense, but it was a lot of work. Two-by-twos or four-by-fours, depending on what you did.

And one of my buddies, who took all those pictures, Ray Buch, who's since passed—for example, on a bivouac one time, during the maneuvers, the unit camp put up their tents here where he told them. Well, Buch and I, we didn't like that. We went further off in the woods, where they couldn't find us. That was two more holes we had to dig when we got back. Or one time they caught us with balloons in our knapsack instead of all the stuff you're supposed to carry on the twenty-five mile hike. That was stupid, we thought, so we put balloons in the damned thing. Anything to make it look like I was—we got caught, and that was more digging in the dirt. Nothing so bad that you went to the stockade. We never were that bad; we were just pranksters, youngsters. No, he was—Ray is—if he'd lived he'd be about ninety-three or ninety-four. Because I failed to mention that I was probably—no, there were a couple boys in 1925, but they kind of kept it quiet. They were afraid. I got in more trouble; it didn't make any difference.

One that I have to tell you, it's funny as hell. I got to be—not Eagle Scout, but I got to be First Scout—First Class Scout. There's two, then there's Eagle. And I never made Eagle. I don't think I'd—running out of paper?

SLOAN: No, no, no we're fine. Go ahead.

DIPPO: Okay, I never made Eagle, but I did make First Class. And I'll go back to 1939.

SLOAN: Oh wait, wait, wait—

DIPPO: Okay, that was—you got that about the bivouac and we had to dig a four-by-four?

SLOAN: There's a lot of holes in Louisiana you're responsible for it sounds like.

DIPPO: (laughs) The two of us. Oh, I was talking about Ray and the pictures. Yes, most people in the unit were—I think there might have been two other guys. But a company is one hundred and fifty men approximately, an engineer company. And three platoons—

this comes into play later on—and three squads, or four, I think—I don't know. And in each squad were ten or eleven people, and Buch was a squad leader. He'd had a little time somewhere—not prison, I mean. He could have been, but he had a little time somewhere like—oh, the Boy Scouts. I got blood sack there, but it hasn't dissipated yet. See, that's all blood. I fell and that thing happened. It's supposed to go away but it didn't. Oh, Ray—okay. Holes, yes, of course. Push me.

SLOAN: Well, you were talking about Ray. You were telling me a story about Ray, who'd taken the pictures.

DIPPO: Yeah. Oh, the platoons and squads and so on and so forth. Okay, because that plays a part. Anyway, about this time, '41 or '42, General Patton was in North Africa with the First and Second Armored Divisions. Early on, of course, it was First and Second. And orders came down—no, not there, not at Polk. Okay, we trained in swamp areas and the sand and the swamp and the mosquitos. They're damned—mosquitos were so big they'd argue whether to eat us here or take us home. They were monsters. Oh, Huey Long's bridges we did. You know of—a lot of people won't, but he was a crook, gangster, and everything else. But he was—he did a lot for Louisiana. Anyway, all those were rotted out; we built them.

We learned how to do a Bailey bridge that the British—on the Sabine River. The Sabine River is between Louisiana and Texas. We were on the Louisiana side, of course. And we never make it across, but we were told—showed how to by British non-coms. Now, they were tough. And they'd go around with that thing, and bang-bang and oh, they're crazy, all this stuff. We didn't go for that. That's too much, too much. Anyway, they were there to teach us how to build a Bailey bridge and to shove it across. You build it, you shove it. You build it, you shove it. And we learned that, and we learned, of course, pontoon bridges. It's obvious. These big pontoons, monsters, with an inlay. And—oh, that's a good story about those, but by the time we get to Camp Cooke. They taught us how to do the Bailey; we knew how to do the other. In all these trainings, the guys were specializing, and I thought I'd like to dynamite—demolitions. So mine was me and another fellow.

SLOAN: That doesn't really surprise me.

DIPPO: Huh?

SLOAN: That doesn't surprise me that you went into demo—the prankster that you are went into demolition.

DIPPO: (laughs) What you could do with nitrous charge—probably now it's entirely different, I'm sure. But they were little blocks of nitrous charge, just a little bitty one. And I'll tell you what we used to do with those, too. They weren't for—a personal reason. Anyway, we all specialized in something, and mine was in the primer cord, and nitrous charge, and boom-boom, and electric wires, and all that. And what the hell was that cord that goes, it's instantaneous? Primer cord, or whatever. Anyway, you learned the whole thing so you don't blow yourself up or anybody else in the company at that

time. That's Louisiana time. Maneuvers, each in their specialty, the tanks and—this plays a part too, later on. It had a cavalry, Forty-First Cavalry. And it shows in my magazines. They're the ones that actually got there before anybody else.

So a division is comprised of—the reason why the triangles—cavalry, infantry, tanks, armored engineers, ordnance, I think. We might have had an ordnance company, medical company—excuse me—another company, medical—two, because this is talking about our company and a medical platoon. Okay, because during the actual battle there's Combat Command A, B, and Reserve. And you don't see your fellow man if he's not in one of these—I mean, if you're not with him in that command. And Reserve doesn't mean they're sitting on their bottom. They're called into action, too, sometimes. Not sometimes, quite often, because we're not supposed to back up, so they send up more to help you out. I'm glad you can edit this.

SLOAN: You're doing great.

DIPPO: Fort Polk was about two years, '42, '43, about—no, I guess it wasn't. We'll say a year and a half. Then they sent us to Barkley, that's your Texas here. Somewhere out there. I didn't know what the hell it was all about. Oh, I forgot. While we're on maneuvers in Louisiana, I thought something was up with the old man—the boss, the captain, the company commander, Captain Blackburn. He stepped on a Schu-mine, lost one leg, and tore up another one. Where was I? What was I recounting?

SLOAN: Something that was happening—something that happened on maneuvers when you were in Louisiana.

DIPPO: No, that wasn't it.

SLOAN: You wanted to catch it before—(both talking)

DIPPO: Okay, we did all the swamp stuff and the desert stuff and the mosquitos and all that crap, and learned how to function in that particular environment. Then—oh, now I got it. Here I am again. I hear the first sergeant talking to the captain. The first sergeant said, "Which one should we—who do we pick out?" And he said, "Well, we'll ask for volunteers." Well, anything to get off the Louisiana maneuvers, so when he want—somebody called the company to attention, I think our platoon leaders. The platoon leaders were second—first lieutenants and second lieutenants, and they were told to call the company to attention. This is before we went to Barkley. I wondered why I didn't remember Barkley. And the first sergeant came out, put his clipboard up, put us at ease, and I already had my hand going up. "Who wants to go to Fort Knox?" I was already up there.

"Oh, Dippo's got his hand up. Okay."
"Where am I going?" (laughs)
"Fort Knox, Kentucky."
"Oh, that sounds like an excitement. Good, what for?"
"Well, it's an armored school, briefing on armored tactics and stuff."
"Oh, you sure me? I'm a demolition guy."

"I don't care."

So I went. And that lasted for six weeks, about a month. And in that time, they moved to Barkley, and I wasn't in that particular move. And then they didn't stay there very long. The division didn't stay there very long, apparently, because then they were—the next time Buch called me, he said, "We're going to the Mojave Desert." Oh, that's exciting. Hell like that, I'd never been there. And so I left there after about—three or four days later, and they paid my way to Camp Cooke.

They had already left Barkley and gone to Camp Cooke. And Camp Cooke is right on the Pacific Ocean, about—almost 200 miles north of Los Angeles, because I don't know of any other point to get the distance. And we were right on the Pacific. And mostly the artillery was doing their thing. And the poor guy pulling the—the plane pulling the thing you shoot at, they were playing with that. It was four .50-calibers on a stand, and they're firing at that. (imitates sounds of firing) And the field artillery is firing at nothing, just out in the water. Ah-ha, I said nothing, didn't I? Well, every day at a certain time, there's a train called the Super Chief. And it starts—well, were we north of San Francisco? No, San Francisco—well, whatever was north of where we were, Camp Cooke. And it made its way to Los Angeles and then to Chicago, and all that sort of stuff.

So we had three artillery battalions. Everything is in threes. We had three artillery battalions. And they're tank-tracked, but they're open on top and have what they call a priest thing, and that one was their big weapon. I'm not sure what it was, seventy-five maybe. Our tanks had seventy-fives, and they had eighty-eights, but anyway, that's another story. Seventy-fives were—there's a howitzer, and there's a long gun. The French had the howitzer in World War I—seventy-five, I think, a howitzer. Anyway, whatever, it was a pretty good-sized shell. And they were firing one day, and the Super Chief was going by when they didn't see it because it wasn't in sight. And they didn't think they saw it. And it went right through the dining car, armor piercing. Nobody on it, nobody in the dining car. Thank God nobody was in the dining car. But then the newspaper—the closest place was Lompoc or some little—*Kleinerstaat*, very small, small place. That's where I learned vodka; I never had it before but in this little town at Lompoc. Anyway, paper, "Eleventh Armored Division Artillery"—it was well phrased—"Artillery Knocked Down"—or whatever—"the Dining Car, No One Hurt." (laughs) So that was there. Okay, that was the artillery.

We were working on minefields. They would bury them, but they would say there was nothing in them, thank God. And we were taught how to properly do it, which you see in every movie now, a cowboy—I mean World War II movie. You use your bayonet to—this thing, and you're finding—you call somebody, "What do I do now?" And this is how we learned to do that. And then the Bangalore torpedo came in. They were very active on D-Day. You build your torpedo like you build a Bailey bridge, hmm, push, hmm, push, loaded with explosives, all the time, each time. And then, down, push, push. They used them once they got a foothold on D-Day. They were able to blow the fences—the whatever was in their way, by pushing the Bangalore torpedoes up there and then igniting it at this end. Well, we did so well that General Bradley came out. I didn't know what his position was then, army chief of staff probably.

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: General Bradley, we were all introduced to him. And he went to everybody's unit, the infantry's, the artillery's, the engineer's. And he came out and saw us on the Bangalore. And they put a light charge in them just to excite the old man, I guess. And we blew one up, an imaginary fence. And he says, You guys are ready. Now, here we are, Polk, Barkley—oh no, that's Cooke. Where went the sand, the—what's it called? Mojave Desert, back up here. After Barkley, I met them and I told you.

SLOAN: Yeah, went to the Mojave Desert, you met them there.

DIPPO: I met them at Mojave. And that was tent living. And the big thrill there was, well, live ammunition, even for us riflemen. It was live, all live because there's nothing out there but—what do you call those things? Tarantulas and whoop-whoop?

SLOAN: Scorpions.

DIPPO: Yeah. Who said that?

SLOAN: I said it.

DIPPO: You did, I thought it was somebody back there. Well, we used to put them in a fight. We'd catch them and put them in a fight. And another thing that was kind of different out there, there was a five-gallon receptacle outside of each tent of eight, ten men. Well, you know what the hell that was. The last one out had to empty it, and about ten yards up to the latrine, and slop, slip, slop, and everything else. I told most people, Just a tent, come on, we don't want—they're crazy. He's nuts. Let them do what they want, they're crazy. If we just—outside. If it ain't big enough, go outside, but don't do anything. I'm usually the last one out because I'm slow in the morning, and I just can't wake up. And let me see, what else out there? We had live ammunition, we had scorpion fights, we had pee cans, and TNT.

And then we went out to Cooke, and that's when we were told we were ready. (laughs) We were ready, all right. Two and a half years practically, training. Some guys go to boot or something for six weeks and they're off with the gun, bang. Well, we did run the army, and the army needed us. Oh, here's one where the pontoons came in. We had a program, the government did—the military did, called ASTP, Army Specialized Training Program. You're aware of this?

SLOAN: Yes, sir.

DIPPO: For the bright boys, and they sent them all to college. I'm still where I am. All mine came from what I learned, read, and absorbed. So they came in. After you'd been in Louisiana, Barkley again, I don't know, out in the desert, freezing at night and sweating in the morning, to have a bunch of pansies come in. Not necessary, there are two very—these young men coming in, all with the fingernail files and bathrobes, and they—oh, it was pathetic. And you could sense there was a division. These people were not welcome. It's almost like prison. The new guy, you know. We don't want nothing to do with you.

You're in our unit, this is what you do. I don't tell them that. I mean, they're put in charge and the platoon lieutenant. They were separated and moved out into each one of the platoons. So the old man, the one that later stepped on a Schu-box, Captain Blackburn, nice little fellow. Became a dentist after the war, and then he died here some time ago. I should never go side-tracking.

SLOAN: You were talking about pontoons.

DIPPO: Oh. So the old man sensed that. And the First Sergeant didn't really care one way or the other. He was the big cockaroo, so it didn't bother him. But the old man could sense that there was this, that we weren't a unit the way he wanted it. And going into combat, eventually, that would not be good. So what does he do? He sets—(laughs) We had a big generator and blew up those pontoons. And that goes with him to combat as well because somebody's got to (makes blowing gesture) blow them up. And I didn't hear this; he must have—this was after the fact. And he told Pinky to blow up a pontoon, right now. No, this was Friday. Okay, sometime Friday, Pinky had to go and blow up a pontoon and put it out in our space—area between the barracks. Okay, that was done. And he sent the First Sergeant into town with a credit card, and said, I want twenty-four cases of beer and all of the ice you can handle. Well, the answer is already in my mind. We all got drunk. Everybody became buddy. Everybody was their buddy's friend. Now, that was a smart man that thought of that. He's dead. And most of the guys that were with me in that platoon there are gone. I used to wonder—I had three Italian fellows. Did I tell you on the phone about the Italian fellows?

SLOAN: No.

DIPPO: Gaetano Giovanni Peregalli, Carmine Valentino, ho-ho Carmine Valentino, and he was only about five foot three or four—that nature of that blood. And Gaetano Giovanni Peregalli was something else. And one other one that I can't remember his name, also an Italian. Because my unit, the division, was about 30 percent First Service Command, which was from Maine down to Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, and New York. Lot of Italians in that area. In fact, Peregalli was from Philadelphia, born in Wharton. And they, kind of—maybe I ingratiated myself to them, or they felt this was something new, me. *Faccia gialla,* they used to—do you speak Italian?

SLOAN: I don't, no.

DIPPO: No. *Faccia gialla*, it means "pale face," *faccia gialla*. And they all carried a knife, oh, a nice knife. And they taught me—we'd go into town—oh, Mother, I forgot about her. But she did write a letter and it—My poor son is—close up all those institutes, those things and don't let him go to town, or some damn thing. Well, that's history. But we'd go to town. And in those days when we got dressed we had a long coat with a nice sand brown belt, so on and so forth. And they'd take the belt off and they'd find a table over there in the corner, of course, dragging me along with them. And I'd do the same, take it off. And then I see them wrap it around their fist, around their hand. Then they'd order their drinks.

First, they got the back—the wall on their back, and they got the thing wrapped around right there, and a knife in their pocket. Well, then we could have gone to a stockade, but I never got in trouble. I never got hurt, never got touched. If anybody began to come near me, you'd think I was the—you know, the golden goose. I wasn't, there was—we were all making twenty-two dollars a month. It didn't make any difference. But they thought because of my name that I might have had some Italian blood. So I let them think so. And I even went so far as to saying, "Really, our name is Dippolito." Now, look in the phone book of New York, you'll find Dippolito, Dippolito, Dippo. But the blonde hair and the blue eyes—northern Italy is abut Austria. Yeah, they must have came over. (Sloan laughs)

So anyway, as far as I was concerned, I was their number-one man—boy, because they were all older than I was. And I learned things from them that I'll never forget. Anyway, I was so protected. So now we're in Camp Cooke. We've been in the desert. That was terrible. And then, of course, my method of urinating was fine. My people liked it, because they didn't have to carry that damn thing. Again, not my people, I'm still a private. No, Private First Class by this time, Praying For Corporal, I guess that's the stupid thing. So Cooke, okay, and then we go to Dix again, or New Jersey somewhere, and board a ship. And this is September or October. D-Day was June. We were training for almost two years.

Oh, I told you about the ASTP. We all became buddies and friends. And in fact, there was one fellow, my idol. He had a bathrobe. He had slippers. He had a cuticle cutter, all that stuff in the barracks at Camp Cooke when he joined us. Anyway, he made a battlefield commission, as a matter of fact, second lieutenant. He's a lawyer. He's dead now. He was probably five or six years older than I was. Trying to think of his name. I've got it in there. I've got the whole company roster, and all the ones that are alive, but it's dated, obviously.

Anyway, anyway, so now we're on the ship, and we're going to Southampton. So it's October by now. And we did some training there. I guess they got more Brits with us again. And I'm trying to think of the town. Melksham, it was in Devizes. It's not far from Southampton, as a matter of fact. Okay, so we go aboard; we go across. And we were—I guess our orders were to go to Saint-Nazaire. Now, that was north of Paris. And our assignment was to contain the German soldiers that were left behind, that we—they bypassed them. And I think—I don't know who the hell was holding them in before we got there, unless they already got to the—or sent out somewhere. Anyway, it could have been the Ninetieth Infantry, but I'm not sure. Anyway, that was our assignment, the whole division, not just Easy A, not just Easy B or—the whole division was assigned to this one mission. Well, we had that for about three weeks. No, October boated across, November. Okay, we had that for about—early December.

So we had that mission for about three months, and then we got the orders to get our butt up to Bastogne as fast as we could go, without stopping. And so we did. I guess some of you—you practically—I think you know, we made it thirty-six hours or something. Something that made the papers, anyway.

SLOAN: Yeah, the forced march that you went on.

DIPPO: That was a day, night, and it meant nothing. Just keep going.

SLOAN: Yeah, what do you remember from that?

DIPPO: You remember that thing?

SLOAN: No. What do you remember from that march?

DIPPO: Uh, I don't, because in Saint-Nazaire—at the beginning of the Ardennes, there was a French town. God-forbid, I can't remember that. Right there, then the Ardennes forest, town. But anyway, we had stopped for some reason. Had mechanical whatever, somebody on the line, and up comes all these people with calvados. I never—I thought, vodka was—calvados? You're kidding. Well, we were loaded down with calvados by the time we got to outside of Bastogne, so I really don't quite remember too much about it. (Sloan laughs) I wasn't the driver. The driver was—I don't know who he was. I forget. He was a farmer from Arkansas or something. I don't know, one of the old-timers, anyway.

So it hadn't—it had started to snow. By this time it's December thirteen—twelve, thirteen, fourteen, something like that. And I think I told you, maybe I didn't, but started to think we couldn't leave where we were very far, because the tanks couldn't get us out of there. We stayed where we were, probably ten miles from Bastogne itself. And wasn't much we could do except—the Ardennes, we saw anything that moved and it wasn't one of ours, shoot him. And then that's where—because we got the warning that they had put on our uniforms, as Third Infantry. You see, this comes first, that happening had happened.

Then, when we were on guard duty one night, Buch, me, a couple of other guys—it was usually four or five at night. On a roadway coming past our particular place—you might have to cut this out, maybe not, but it's real, it's true, and it was meant in good faith. We heard the tank wheels. They make an awful lot of noise, as you know. And Buch put the light—no, Buch didn't put the light on them. He yelled at them. He had a big voice too, told them to halt, stop. And the motor stopped, and then he asked for the password. We didn't even know it really, but the guy has hesitation. And then we see a light and a flashlight and a man's head, shining on his face. He says, "You ain't seen any black Germans yet." It was a black unit. Segregation was still policy until '48, and we were a segregated army. Though the Red Ball Express, we couldn't have done anything without them. That's the ammunition and food and gas coming from the various ports that we had liberated all the way to Belgium. It was all the black troops. But when he said that, (laughs) we felt we could go through the whole night and not worry. But that's one little humorous part of this.

And then, while we were in—oh, I mentioned Carmine. Okay, we paired up. Remember, I'm six foot one and Carmine's about five foot four. And this foxhole business is only when you're maintaining a position, like they did when we were stuck behind—couldn't get out of the Rhine. Couldn't get across the Rhine, we would have foxholes. Otherwise

you have a slit trench. That's where the nitrous charge came in, (laughs) because there's noise going everywhere, tree bursts, and Screaming Mimis. And nobody would—so we'd pick a hole as best we could, and then set the square of nitro charge in there, and run like hell. And then I'd go (gestures) and then we got a start on. It didn't dig the hole, but it did break the hard, so we had to dig it. But the story—the crux of this story is when you lay out, I lay out six foot one. Carmine just five foot three, he stopped digging. He don't dig anymore. (laughs) "That's just crazy, Carmine." "Hey, it's all yours, Bubba." "It's not my fault." No, he didn't use the word *Bubba*, because that's strictly Texas. (laughs) And I thought that was funny. Because we had enough to keep really warm.

We froze our feet really, but we did—our bodies. We had the overcoats, nice big, heavy overcoats and jackets and shirts and shit—stuff you'd never change for weeks. And socks too, you never changed. Hardly, though they wanted you to change them as often as you could. It made sense, but it's pretty hard to kick off your boots in that kind of weather, so we didn't. Anyway, somebody else was—that was the 101st Airborne, The Battered Bastards of Bastogne. Everybody knows of them and what they did. And what McAuliffe said to the Germans, and everything that's in movies. That part is all true. You know where I was active. But the Eighty-Second Airborne, elements of it—they were still regiments. We were battalions. We used to be regiments, but it didn't work. So that's for the old British four square. Ours was strictly battalions. They have regiments. They still have them, I guess. And they came out of France with their short coat, their flashy boots, and their carbines, of course, the ones that fold. We got that big nine-pounder. I bet they'd like some overcoats and some galoshes.

I knew the supply sergeant quite well. In fact, I have a picture of him somewhere. We're both drinking together. He's gone. Mother wouldn't know. I had that picture too, just recently. Hennigan, a good old Irishman. Of course, he liked his (gestures); I didn't mind. I was learning all this. By this time, I'm—Bastogne, December, well, you figure it out. That was '44 from twenty-five, that's how old I was in the Bulge, at Bastogne. And it was slow going, obviously.

SLOAN: Well, now you were talking about this deal, you made a deal with the supply sergeant. With the British, y'all made a deal?

DIPPO: Oh, did I forget about that?

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: They gave us the galoshes and the overcoats. We lost people, we got overcoats. We lost people, we got galoshes. It's brutal saying, but really it isn't. Like I told you on the phone, that's war. The other is not war. And so I says, "I think I can get us some of those fancy carbines." I got Carmine mixed up with carbine. And he said, "Sure, go ahead. Do what you can do with them." Because he got tired of carrying that carbine—I mean that thing—nine-pound Garand. Wonderful rifle though, geez. Fired—and that's no automatic, semi-automatic. You'd go through a clip just like that, bam, another one. And we used to have a bandolier on, carried about—one, two, three, four, five, six—about six clips of six rounds or whatever the capacity was. So we didn't trade any of that stuff. But

we got about four of the paratroopers, they gave up their what-you-call-it to take our big rifle, if they could have that overcoat.

By this time, there's frost, and the snow is up to here. We were used to it now. And everyone got those, you know, beautiful boots and those little half coats, what do you call them—peacoat, the navy would call them—the navy, would call them peacoats, instead of little shorty. And I said, "Hey, you're going to need these, boy." And sure, it took awhile. Everybody didn't jump on it. But it took awhile, and we got four carbines. (both laugh) So that was—we didn't hurt our fellow man in any way. We gave them apparel, and he had a weapon. Of course, it was heavier than most of them. (laughs) No, that's another joke. But anyway, that's real. We made it to—we broke out. Oh, the reason we couldn't break out—we, everybody, Combat Command A. I don't know where B was. We were about, like I said, about ten miles this side on the road, or off the road of Bastogne itself, which was a mess, tore apart. That was our first aid station, you know, in Bastogne. A first aid station there, where you go if you're wounded. And we got out of Bastogne. Our mission was to link with the Brits coming down from Belgium. And we had an army coming up from the south, and us in the middle. So we're supposed to meet and make our solid front, then to go on to Europe to win the war.

Along the way, we lost a lot of people to tree bursts. They just didn't—the replacements, they were gung-ho and all that crap. But like I said, if you're in an area, they've already been there. This is after the Bulge, beyond the woods. They were pushing them back further, and further, and further. We're trying to get them back over the Rhine—Eisenhower and everybody over there. We finally linked up from the south—from the north, because they wanted Antwerp. If they could get Antwerp, they'd ruin our income of—every time we'd lose a tank, we'd get three more. You'd lose a man, we got five more coming in. I get excited. But that's the way it is. The damn fool was fighting on how many fronts? Enough to—that's a—I'm afraid we're going to get into—we have gotten in that position. And I'm not political in any way. I just don't see us doing what we're doing and why we're doing it. But anyway, that's something else. Where was I?

SLOAN: You'd finally linked up with the Brits. You'd linked up with the British Army.

DIPPO: Oh, the British, then us, and then the Seventh Army from the south. And then we started, everybody started on the Rhone, each army. Patton was my army. And there was something I wanted to say about the Rhine. Anyway, we never—oh, scuttlebutt had it that the general was holding court. And some new replacements came in or something. He was talking, or briefing, or doing and telling them, "Ever forward." And always pushing that to them, keep going. And some idiot asked him to go sideways. He stripped that kid right away. Probably a young second lieutenant, first lieutenant. What if we have to go—that makes sense though, but he took it wrong. He had a temper, and he was crazy. And he sent somebody out to defrock them. If they defrock soldiers; I know they do my priest. And so once we got across we had a lot of bridge work to do. And a lot of the Hungarians—oh, airplanes. The ceiling didn't lift. Remember now, we were watching their flashes. And then they'd be watching our flashes. I use our, but the tankers and the artillery. Of course, they were mobile, both the artillery and the—they could move. So I

think they finally got smart and did that. They'd shoot and move, shoot and move. And then look at their flash and be ready to shoot at that flash.

But then the ceiling lifted, and the Thunderbolts came out, P-47s. Heavy plane, not very maneuverable, well-armed, well-armored, and could really raise hell with a column. Had a little cannon, I think, even, a twenty millimeter or something, whatever. And they came out. And then we just, Katie bar the door. We all—Combat Command A went that way—oh, I know what we did. A and B took off for Luxembourg. A did, and B must have been behind them. There wasn't that much resistance in Luxembourg that I can put my finger on. They were well entrenched, but we lost a lot of people in Luxembourg. And if you've ever been to Hamm, that's where the cemetery—the biggest cemetery is. And there's one at Bastogne. I have been back, because we have a daughter, that one (gestures to picture), that little one on that side, that left side. The top one is 1950, that one's 1958, that one's 1962. I don't know their ages, but I know when they were born. Where was I going with that?

SLOAN: You were talking about going back, that you'd gone back.

DIPPO: Oh, going back. Going back when—the number two there has been over there since, well, twenty-two years. And before her husband was killed in an accident. They're both bikers. She had her own bike. It's tough for a woman to get a bike permit as it is. She also had a hunting permit. It took her awhile, but she took out of—her company sent her going all over the place. Her company sent her to Dublin for a meeting, from Germany. She works with the Japanese. It used to be the R. J. Reynolds cigarette business, tobacco. And the Europe and the Easterns smoke like chimneys. We're not. Don't come home; there's no money here.

And they sent her to Dublin for a meeting, and so on and so forth, she and some others. And one of them was to trap shoot. They didn't know that she's already had to qualify with a thirty-aught-six, which happens to be one of her weapons from her husband. So someone maybe might have hit a pigeon or something. She got nineteen out of twenty. With a twelve-gauge? I said, "You're crazy. Four-ten for a woman." "No, Dad, twelve-gauge. I had a bruise for a month." (laughs) But she's tough. She's alone now. He came out going pretty fast and met some idiot coming out, going pretty fast. And both were on a side of the hill. They come over the hill, bang. (claps) He was a big truck, and he was a motorcycle. Thirty foot in the air, down and broke his body all on the concrete. It's been about a year now. She's been home since.

SLOAN: I'm sorry.

DIPPO: Anyway, I don't know where we were.

SLOAN: Well, are you as good a shot? Were you as good a shot as she is? Were you as good a shot as she is?

DIPPO: (laughs) I could hardly lift that sucker. I did get sharpshooter. I did get that. And I did shoot at five—going one hundred, two hundred, five hundred. I did shoot at basic, you know. Not basic but my company teaching you all how to do it. Yes, I got

sharpshooter. It's in my book—it's on my DD-214, man. I don't know what score it was. But no, it wasn't like that, nineteen out of twenty. I didn't know how many bullets I got, but I got enough. Yeah, I did. You see, that's a sharpshooter, yes, no. I mean no, the next one up, no. There's three, this, this, and then that one, expert. It's called expert, then sharpshooter. This is whatever, the bottom of the line. No, that damn thing, I couldn't hardly hold the sucker. But put a bayonet on it, I fell over. Well, not really. That's a joke. (laughter)

Okay, so we're in Luxembourg, and I must have slept all through it. I can't remember too much work we had to do. Oh, we had to blow some—they would build—they would fell trees. That's one way to get in our way, to hold us up. But then they would build these fantastic—filled with dirt and stones and everything, out into the road far enough to where you couldn't get a tank through or a truck. You could get a horse through, maybe. But we had to blow those suckers up. And we didn't repair any bridges in Luxembourg. When the Germans finally started running out, they started doing the work I probably would have done, building up bridges that had already been—because they didn't want their bridges blown up for damn sure. But you can't go into Luxembourg.

I have a hat for Luxembourg. They gave me a medal, as a matter of fact. I have a picture of that. My one visit to my daughter, the one that lives there, and then the one that lives in Houston, Barbara, the number one daughter, and her husband. But we travelled to Europe, they always went with us. And between the two of them, Annie and her ability to speak fluent German—of course, Luxembourg doesn't much care for the Germans, but they do speak German. And they'll speak English too. The Dutch speak more English though, than Luxembourg. Anyway, so we went over, one of our visits. We used to space them out, we used to—now Kelly's closed up.

Then we started going—and then Mother and I just decided we can't fly anymore. I couldn't hear for a month. Not really, but a long time. Mama got sick, so, you know, she comes home. We take care of her and bring her home. It's much easier. But every time, when we used to go over—of course, that's when she lived in Cologne. And Frankfurt was in our hands. I mean, the airport, half of it was anyway. At one time all of it, but then we had to give it back, half of it at least. And we would land at Frankfurt, and we'd take the train down to Cologne. And she'd meet us, and so on and so forth. But now she lives closer to Trier, which is where the Japanese have their cigarette company. Fifteen hundred people in it. Anyway, it's a big outfit. I guess they manufacture and—well, whatever. And then they would meet us at the airport—I mean, at Cologne.

When we used to go in, space available, they'd meet us in Cologne. Then we started flying; we'd fly in to Luxembourg City, which is also Luxembourg, the city. And first time I went in, I see the—what the hell did I do, for God's sake? Speak up. You know, because everybody's patting everybody down. Oh, huggy-huggy, kissy-kissy, thank you, thank you. So on one of those trips, they got ahold of the museum curator—curator in Luxembourg, and said, We're going to bring Dad over. He wants to see the museum here. And he was—you know, who he was, and what he was, and so on and so forth. And I didn't know any of this at all. And so it's outside of a small town, just a museum. And people lined up to go through, and so on and so forth. So we got to the—what's that word

I want? Tableau. Tableau? Tableau, all set out with the cold and the wintertime and Bastogne and whatever.

And the guy that was taking us around—I have that picture, by the way. I can't find my medal. They had called him ahead of time and said, My dad is a member of the (unintelligible). He said, "Oh yeah, sure, we know them. They liberated us." So, okay, I didn't know any of this. And going through, talking, and I'm listening, and I'm asking questions. And we get to the tableau that shows—depicts winter, military action in the winter. And they stop and they talk. And then he says, "Is Mr. Dippo in the audience?" He didn't know me from Adam. They pointed me out. "My son-in-law's hiding over there; he was alive then." But he didn't care about the war. He was only a baby, I guess, when this was going on. No, but he's a lawyer—was. He was a good lawyer, too. And they pointed to me. And he started towards me, and I saw somebody open a box. And I saw him looking at me, and I saw him putting his hands in the box. And he pulls out this medal, and he comes towards me. Are you going to kiss me? That silent, I was that silent. I didn't dare use my voice. Are you going to—because, I mean, come on. No, I didn't know what he was going to do. He said no. He put the medal on me, shook my hand, and he asked me to say, of course, extemporaneously. Thank God, I knew something. I gave them a lot of BS that was nice.

And then, a fellow in uniform steps forward and was introduced as Colonel So-and-So, Luxembourg Army. And he pins a Luxembourg flag on my shirt, or whatever the hell I had on. And really, that made my day for a long time. I raised hell with the kids, but when I think about it, I didn't mind. I didn't get any Bronze Stars or anything, but I got a Medal of Honor. Not the kind we have, just "of Honor." Not—doesn't mean activities, you know. It could have been just being a nice guy, saving the Armored's ass, that's all. But it was quite an—I wish I—I've got the picture, but I don't have the medal. I can find all of that stuff. I've got an idea. I bought a whole sack—almost a whole sack, I ate quite a few of them—of eighteen count shrimp. You know what that is?

SLOAN: Oh yes. I know what a shrimp is.

DIPPO: You know what that means.

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: They're pretty good size. And we have extra special—my special cheese. What the hell's it called? Cheddar. It might be cheddar white, but I think it's cheddar red. And then whatever the hell they've got cooked up out there. Why don't we take a break and have some refreshments?

SLOAN: Would you like to take a break?

DIPPO: Sure.

SLOAN: Okay. All right.

DIPPO: I'm sure you guys—

pause in recording

SLOAN: All right, Mr. Dippo, when we left off you had us in Luxembourg. Can you pick up, kind of, your story from there?

DIPPO: Well, that thing that I told you was personal, I don't think is in there too, about the medal and all that?

SLOAN: Yes, sir, you told us that, yeah.

DIPPO: Well, when we got—during the war, when we liberated Luxembourg, I was not aware of it. There was Luxembourg, just another city, another town, another nation. Well, I guess I knew it was Luxembourg, but I didn't—anything particular stick in my mind. Stuck in my mind, never did stuck in my mind. But since I have a daughter—we have a daughter living in Germany, Trier—well, it's really outside of Trier, in Kleinerstaat, a small town outside of Trier. She commutes to work in Trier. And Trier to Luxembourg Airport, where she lived—I mean, from where she lives to Luxembourg Airport is about twenty-five kilometers, and so it was easy access, and so on and so forth. But we've been through Luxembourg Airport on a number of occasions when we visited our daughter in Germany. And every time, of course, I wear my hat wherever I go. I'm proud of it. And I'm sure you know what hat I mean?

SLOAN: Um-hm.

DIPPO: Okay. (laughs) And every time I land there—and it's been at least three occasions, years apart—I'd always have people staring at me, especially the people that are in charge of security. And it makes me feel uneasy, even today, to this day. But the people really recognize the fact that it was our Eleventh Armored Division and General Patton's army that liberated the city of Luxembourg and its environs, its other kind of towns around. We liberated the ones that the Germans had held. All of Luxembourg wasn't under a German shield, but the ones that were—the whole country treats us—us meaning anybody in the military, period, whether it was Eleventh Armored or not. But since it was our division that liberated them, they feel a closeness to us. And we, they. One of my visits, Mother and I—did you get that one? Did I?

SLOAN: I think you told us that, about getting the medal?

DIPPO: Yeah.

SLOAN: You told us about getting it.

DIPPO: I've already told you, didn't I?

SLOAN: Yes, sir.

DIPPO: Oh, I did?

SLOAN: You told us that story.

DIPPO: Good, erase all that other stuff. (laughter) Okay, where am I then?

SLOAN: Well, you can take us back to—

DIPPO: Oh, we haven't taken the war yet?

SLOAN: No, we're in the war, and we're in Luxembourg.

DIPPO: Oh, Luxembourg.

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: Okay, Luxembourg was a success. And we left there, left a lot of men, but that's war. And then we headed for—I really—I'm not sure what our aim was except to cross the Rhine. And then from there on, that was a struggle. The bridges, a lot of them were blown. A lot of bridges had to be repaired. And then pontoon bridges had to be made and set up so the tanks could get across. And they made it hell for us, but you just think afterwards, you're going to have to make it all over. So anyway, the next big operation really is Zella-Mehlis. Oh, that wasn't too bad. They made ammunition and pistols and what-have-you.

In other words, by the time we got a hundred miles—or sixty miles into Germany, there was hardly any resistance. And people had been told by the military government by phone, the phone lines were intact, if they were, they would call ahead and say, The division of So-and-So, Eleventh Armored Division, Combat Command A is headed your way. And by this time we had ninety millimeters, as opposed to seventy-five, but the war was winding down. If you hang out your sheets, white sheets, and—you'll not be bothered. We'll run right through your city, and keep going. And our object was to get to—General Patton's object was to get to Linz, Austria before the Russians. Because the Russians were told by political dealings that they could have all the way to the Danube, but not on the German side. How that got twisted, I don't know. Since we all know, they had—no, they had part of Berlin.

Okay, the Russians were a little bit late getting there, so we were ahead of our objective. Our mission that particular day that we took off was to liberate Mauthausen Concentration Camp. Prior to our leaving, a day before, I'll back up, on the sixth of May the Eleventh Armored Division, Combat Command A cavalry, armored cavalry, got there first. And I didn't think—I was of the opinion there wasn't anybody there, any Germans there. Well, in uniform anyway, or armed. That's the way I was told, anyway. But the war still hadn't ended, but the cavalry sent out help—asking for medical help immediately. And, of course, the purification would be our job, which we didn't get until the next day, on the seventh of May.

Seventh of May we, the rest of the Combat Command A, arrived at Mauthausen Concentration Camp. And what we beheld—what we saw—and I'm sure I speak for my comrades—was worse, the condition of the people and what had transpired prior to our arrival was worse than the battlefield. They were terrible. They were covered with sores. They weighed seventy pounds. They were—if they were alive at all, they didn't go over

seventy pounds. And they were all sick and had lice, and—and it was terrible. But the medicals got in there that afternoon in force. They set up a tent to triage, but they didn't have to triage. Everybody was the same, practically. But they took care of the women and children first. And they gave them first aid and gave them shots and operated on them and sent them back—further back into a more stationed hospital—a station hospital, a MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] unit, more or less. And then, from there, they could go on, if they were still alive.

But we did—the engineers, we dug—we had a trench dug by our dozers. And I recall, it was at least fifteen yards long and over six feet deep and at least five yards wide. And all the bodies had been stacked already, mostly on flatbeds, but some on the ground. And our commanders, our military commanders—military government commanders made it known to the *bürgermeister* of the adjoining village that they were to show up at such-and-such a time. And then really, they only made them on the eighth of May, the next day, because all our work was done all day long. Also, we set up a water purification. But we didn't do the delousing; it was done by the medics.

And so the government—a colonel from the military government people, like I said, ordered the *bürgermeister* of that little village, I forget the name, to attend the burial of the deceased. And they were to wear their finest clothes. And no gloves. And they were to take each skeleton, each body down into the hole. Boy, you could hear them, We didn't know. We didn't know. Still, of course, in my ear, that they didn't know what transpired. The stench of the ovens would have—should have given it away, but it was—didn't even need that. It was obvious what was going on in that enclosed area, Mauthausen. It would go down in infamy as man's worst inhumanity to man.

SLOAN: Yeah, you had said it was worse than a battlefield. What made it worse than the battlefield, because you had seen—you had seen many battlefields, so what made this worse?

DIPPO: I had mentioned earlier that the scene that we beheld when we went in to Mauthausen was really the living dead. And in that sense, battle casualties, especially in winter, they freeze. And it doesn't get to you as badly as it does when you see a human walking like he's dead. Especially in the wintertime the—your wound heals—or not heals, but the blood is coagulated very fast, and if the medics get there fast enough you won't freeze. But most of the young men in my outfit that were hurt like that, were injured, were wounded, thanked God that they had the cold weather to help them with their wounds. To help them—it coagulated better, faster than it did. But to see these human beings walking, shuffling, and mumbling, and they don't know what to do, and what's going on. They—they—it was terrible. It was pretty hard to take for most of us. That's it.

SLOAN: I know for a lot of veterans, you know, these are images that have stayed with you.

DIPPO: It really doesn't stay with me, but if I mention it or even think about it, I get emotional. It's—I can't help it. Because it's there, it'll never go away. But—and then you

see it in the museums, and you see it on television even. Well, you don't get a close look, but I have seen Mauthausen on television as well. But now it's all dolled up, and, of course, they can't go back and show those pictures on television, of course. But it is something that should never, never, never happen again. I don't care what we have to do to stop it. I'd be the first to go if they'd take me.

SLOAN: So you were there for the ceremony that you had on the eighth to bury the—

DIPPO: Oh, I forgot. I—I—I—my mind is wandering. I'm sorry. After the—like I told you, the *bürgermeister* was—had brought his people up. And they were in their, what they would call, Sunday clothes. And they did not have gloves. And they kept—like I kept saying—like I say, they kept saying, We didn't know. We didn't know this existed. But we all know they knew. Then the burial. We had a chaplain from every religion say—after our dozers covered them. It was our dozers that covered them over. Then we had the—not we, again, the commanding general had all the chaplains of all the faiths that was represented—represented in our division. It couldn't—I'm sure there weren't any religions that weren't represented here. And a mass was said, the Qur'an was read—or not the Qur'an, it's what the Jewish have.

SLOAN: Torah. The Torah.

DIPPO: The Torah was read from. And all—everybody, all the chaplains and the people of the city—town had to stay right with us. And believe it or not, some of them knelt while this was going on. Because Europe, if you go way back, before the other religions came, was always the Catholic religion. And they were kneeling, and crying, and moaning that they didn't know. And that's when we were reassigned to our real jobs that we should do.

I had a lucky job. I had to defuse the Adolf Hitler Bridge which separated Austria from Germany. A German town, I think was called Schwanenstadt. And sure enough, it was there. There were dynamite sticks; it wasn't any other explosives that I didn't understand. It was dynamite sticks, and all set to be activated, but, of course, it wasn't. And then I—we were ordered north again in German territory to blow up a minefield because civilians had been injured. So they knew that it was in our territory, our Combat Command A territory, so we did that. We lost a sergeant there. We had them piled up to blow. And a rabbit or a rat or something tripped a wire that exploded a mine that we hadn't gotten—we hadn't found. And he blew up the whole stack of mines, Teller mines that were—I call them Teller mines, Bouncing Betties or whatever. We gave them all sorts of names. And Sergeant Braccaglione, another Italian from Brooklyn, I guess. And even—that was—the war was over then. And the Russians came in and we got out. Patton wasn't too happy about that, as you all know. He wanted to go to Berlin, but that would have been suicide. It couldn't have happened. It wouldn't have worked at all.

SLOAN: Did you have any interaction with the Russians? Did you have any interactions—

DIPPO: Interactions, yeah, watches. (laughs) We'd meet on the bridge. Oh, we would get across, or they could get across. But politically we were supposed to be out of Austria and in Germany; we'd do what we damn well pleased. But no, they were crazy for watches. And a lot of them would say—they'd show you how many watches they had, or anything mechanical. Remember, a lot of those were farm boys way back—I mean, uneducated, but they fought like tigers. I sure as hell would like to have them on my side in any kind of a battle. But that's up to the powers to be to handle that situation. And one job that was—that was a real job, the bridge and the mines.

But the next assignment (laughs), believe this or not, the officers had taken over a recreation hotel for the German officers. You might as well cut this out later, but this is funny. It was in the Ebensee—but that was in Austria, though. How the hell did they get away with it? But it was close to the German border, anyway. And we had to repair it, get the plumbing back, and the electric back, and so on and so forth. And then we had to guard it. (laughs) But that didn't last too long until general—a new general took over our division and he saw what was going on. He couldn't—I guess he could've do like Patton did, fire them right away. He'd just chastise them, and yelled at them, and put them to work somewhere where they could be used. But that gave us a little rest, though. That was our rest area for about two or three weeks.

And then we got a job of taking care of returning inmates—misplaced persons. People that had to go back to Poland, to Yugoslavia, Italy, whatever. Not Italy, but all these other countries that Germany had overrun and made misplaced—what the—we had a word for them—persons—misplaced persons or something like that.

DeBOARD: Displaced.

SLOAN: Displaced. Displaced.

DIPPO: Yeah, something, you know. We had to take—get trains lined up and coordinate the return of these people to their homeland. And one of my friends, Boris Rougies, a real Yugoslav—he got on one train, on a car that went to Yugoslavia. And they tried to keep him. We had to send the marines in. No, we didn't send the marines in, but somebody got on the hot line and yelled at somebody. But they wanted—he spoke fluent Yugoslav, whatever—or Slavic language, and they tried to keep him. But didn't nobody try to keep me. But I didn't care about whether they kept me or not. I wanted to get home.

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: But I did—on the way home I got stuck. Now, my friend, Boris Rougies, and another friend, Buch of course—but Rougies was just a friend after the war. And on the way home we had to go through processing out, as you processed in. They were called cigarette camps, Chesterfield, whatever, Lucky Strike, and so on and so forth. And there you were graded by the number of months overseas, how many medals you had, how many children you had. So Boris and I were at the bottom of the list. So we had a lot of freedom while we were in the cigarette camp.

And one night, we got our hands on a couple of number ten cans of tomatoes. We hadn't had a tomato of any kind in God knows how long. And we started gobbling tomatoes, juice and all. We shared them, of course, but we ate the most of them. Two cans, number ten, think of that. And the next morning I'm covered with hives. Now, that's okay. That sounds good. It sounds easy. You go to the medics, which I did. But I said, "Boris, I have six pistols in my duffel bag. I don't think I ought to take them into the hospital. I put them in a separate bag, and I'll give them to you now to hold them until I come back." Well, Boris and the pistols are in San Pedro, California, because I was kept too long because I was fair, I guess. I had so many hives on me, I couldn't even—they had to cover me with powder. But you can eliminate all this stuff. (Sloan laughs) But no, I'm tempted to get a hold of Boris. He's still alive. I have my company roster.

SLOAN: He still has your pistols?

DIPPO: No, he's still got my pistols.

SLOAN: He's still got your pistols.

DIPPO: But I've got his address, but nobody can tell me on the other end that we don't have any Boris Rougies here. But the roster's whole. It's sixty years old. And I just started calling now, and they can't find him. But I had two German Lugers, 1918. I had a Walther, because we took Zella-Mehlis. I had a—I guess Zella-Mehlis made Walthers. Double O Seven, isn't that what he carries?

SLOAN: Um-hm.

DIPPO: A Walther pistol, I have one of those. I had a little .25 caliber. I had a P-38, that's what they gave it a name. It wasn't as classy as a Luger. That's a classy gun, beautiful, nine millimeter. Anyway, I had six of them. And I did send home a rifle, which was okay. And I did liberate a typewriter or two, and that's okay. (laughter) I only took one home. I had all kinds of marks from the twenties, a million mark, a two-thousand mark. Remember, they went through all that where they had to have a wheel-barrow just to get a loaf of bread. That's what made him so mad. That's what made him crazy. He had to get his—that's real. The marks, they were deflated. And there was so much inflation that you would need a wheelbarrow to buy a loaf of bread. That was 1920s, and so on and so forth, right after the war, their war. And that's what drove the idiot crazy, I guess. So, okay, no, I don't have—(phone rings)

SLOAN: I think she'll get it.

DIPPO: You know, I can hear that, but I can't hear—sounds, you see. (Sloan laughs) Sounds. Mother can't get that. Mother.

SLOAN: She's got it.

DIPPO: Oh, about sounds versus voices. I can get any kind of sound. But unless you're looking at me and not talking to the wall or talking walking away, I don't care how expensive they are, ain't going to work.

SLOAN: Mr. Dippo, let me ask you another question about—

DIPPO: Ask me questions.

SLOAN: I want to ask you another question about Mauthausen. Interactions that you had with the people that were there?

DIPPO: No, I'm glad you brought that up. Even after they were deloused, we were not allowed to have—in fact, we weren't to fraternize. Yours is a better term, but Patton loved that word, *fraternize*. We were told we could not fraternize with the *fräuleins*. Well, you know, that wasn't—no. The hell with that, General. Well, too bad. But no, we knew why we were—they—even—after they'd been deloused, we weren't. But they were shipped out almost as soon as they were deloused.

And I tell you the truth, I never saw those ladies that's in the other book I can't find, but there were women, obviously. And there was one of them that had gave—like I said, had gave birth three weeks before we arrived at the thing—at the camp. The donor, we don't know. I use the word *donor*, but we don't know. Could have been pregnant before she was put in the—nobody brings that up at all. But that's the picture I showed you, the mother—oh, ninety some-odd thing—the daughter that was covered with sores and everything, and now her daughter. And then, of course, Tibor. There was a lot of good stuff, and there's a lot of authors, too, that—German ladies especially.

At the last hurrah, which was 2010, up at Louisville, where else? Fort Knox. You know something that's strange though? Where's his hat, I've got to cover up his ears. The armored school is no longer there at Fort Knox. It's at Fort Benning, an infantry post. From the day one it's been an infantry post, but it has the territory where it can work that way. That's become—non-combat troops doing paperwork and things like that. Like (unintelligible) are used now, all the paperwork people. And every once in a while I'll see a Screaming Eagle, and I'll say, "Oh, I didn't see you at Bastogne." "Well, I wasn't there. I wasn't even born." "Oh, did you go to Fort Campbell?" "Yes." I said, "I've been there." And we did. On the way home from Fort Knox, back home again, my son-in-law driving the rig—I don't know it was my rig that time or his rig. We took turns. He had diesel, I had gasoline. We had three more, though, and went through them, one of them 79,000 miles. And then the old one I got rid of after—this one only had less than 20,000 miles on it. I got almost what I wanted for it. But anyway, that wasn't where I was. I forgot where I was. Where was I?

SLOAN: Well, I'd like for you to tell us the story about Tibor, if you would.

DIPPO: About who, Tibor?

SLOAN: Tibor, yeah.

DIPPO: Ah, I wish I could read the citation. One of the lads that—I did not actually fraternize with him, but I was aware of his existence. We had, kind of like, a draw the line in the sand, Alamo thing. Let the medicals go in there. They could do it. All the military government people could do—what the hell they were doing, I don't know. But

the medical people had to do it. Of course, they wore masks, and they took shots, too. But apparently, I was told, or he was—he talked well. He started coming to our—I wish I knew his last name.

SLOAN: Rubin.

DIPPO: Huh?

SLOAN: Rubin.

DIPPO: Oh, Rubin, that was his last name.

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: Oh, Tibor Rubin. Okay, well, I did not know him too personally at the time he was an inmate at Mauthausen—or prisoner, whatever you want to say. But I know his history, post-Mauthausen. He always wanted to be a GI Joe, and that was—it's his words. And so somehow, being as young as he was, he was able to get sponsorship somehow into the States. So he came to the United States—again, I'm not—don't know what age-frame we are about now, but let's see. That would be nineteen—prior to nineteen—Korean War, to fifty—

SLOAN: Three.

DIPPO: Three. Okay, prior to 1950, he arrived at the—he found his way to the United States and made his wish come true. He joined the army and became a GI Joe. He was shipped to Korea, an infantry unit. He was an infantryman. He—I don't know the division he was in, but he was all the way up to the Yalu River. I think I'm aware of that. And this is where the Chinese were overpowering everything and everybody, because there's billions of Chinese. And anyway, he was left behind by his first sergeant, he and a couple of other people, to man the ground. They were at a hill, and they had a good view of the approach. And so they were supposed to—like in Audie Murphy, they were supposed to take over and protect their back while they got out, while they retreated. So the people—I think there was a corporal or a sergeant in that group, said, This is stupid. We'll do our best, but we're going to (gestures) and save our lives.

So he was overrun by the Chinese and put in a Chinese camp, in China, along with his *compadres*. And because of him having the past that he had, and the way he had to scramble for food, and to steal and do whatever he could to get food, he brought this to his prison camp, his ability to sneak out at night and gather, a gleaner. He was out there picking up whatever that could be eaten. In the morning, he'd bring it back. He'd make food for them, mix it with whatever he had there and keep his people—his comrades alive. And doing that—prior to doing that—well, even while he was doing this, the Chinese didn't know, of course, or they would have shot him. But they did offer him his freedom, because he was not an American citizen but a Hungarian Jew. So they thought—I'm sure they wanted to use him for propaganda purposes, but he would not. He would not leave his comrades.

And it was because of him, the youngest man in the group—he couldn't have been much older than (counting) sixteen, seventeen, twenty, twenty-one, at least. That would be his age, about, at that time. He kept their spirit up. He chastised them for moaning and groaning and giving up. And he made them work and eat and pray, whatever, to keep them going. And sure enough, the bunch that he was captured with survived. And, of course, he was exchanged at Big Switch or Little Switch, I'm not sure which, in '53.

Then, when he gets to the States and makes a life for himself, and marries, has his family. Oh, I don't know if he's married or has a family. I assume he's married, but she never showed—oh, maybe she did, or some lady did. Anyway, you can cut this out. He—the Korean War's over. Then, somehow, he found out about the Eleventh—he made some inquiries, probably on the computer or whatever, about the Eleventh Armored Division. He knew full well that it was members of the Eleventh Armored Division that liberated him and his companions at the Mauthausen concentration camp. So when he found out, then he made contact with our unit organization and started coming even before he got these—his Congressional Medal of Honor. Oh, I jumped ahead.

Anyway, he started coming to our meetings when he could, financially and otherwise. We took up collections for him on many occasions because we wanted to see—he's a wonderful fellow and we liked to see him. And he likes to talk. So that was okay. We had money in the treasury. And then, he had performed, even during battle, over and above what was expected of a rifleman, and plus what he did for his comrades in captivity. Somebody who was a member of that group that was a prisoner wrote, probably, to some congressman and told them all about Tibor's activities, what he did for his unit and for the men when they were captured. And it was brought to the chief of staff, I guess—maybe not the chief, but some big, old mucky-muck in the hierarchy at the Pentagon. And they discovered all of this, all he did. He was put in for a Congressional Medal of Honor, and was so honored with that Congressional Medal of Honor by President Bush Jr. What year, I forgot.

SLOAN: It was 2005, I think.

DIPPO: Two thousand five. Boy, I'm glad you can edit. (laughs)

SLOAN: (laughs) Well, I want to go back. We were at the—World War II has ended. You said you were anxious to get back to the United States. When did you get back home?

DIPPO: Oh, after I lost all of my pistols?

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: After my hives went away? I'm laying in bed one day in the hospital and boop-boop, knock on my door—well, not boop-boop but—Is Dippo in there? Yeah, he's in here. And it was my scoutmaster from my days when I was a scout. In fact, he saved my life, kind of, I guess, before. Can I digress to 1939?

SLOAN: Sure, sure.

DIPPO: Because this reminded me of my scout days. So in 1939, I'd be fourteen. And we went down to the World's Fair. We saved up money and so on and so forth. We had bake-offs and cooked whatever. And we got enough money to hire a bus, and the whole troop, Troop Twenty-one—that's right. I was—I had no merit badges. (laughs) I got that mixed up with something else while we were talking about the war. No, I was just a boy scout of Troop Twenty-One from Troy, New York. And so we got down there, and we got—he was able to get us into the—

SLOAN: World's Fair?

DIPPO: No, well, we got in. The place where we lived.

SLOAN: Dormitory or hotel?

DIPPO: They have them for women; they have them for men.

SLOAN: Dormitory?

DIPPO: Well, anyway—no, I should know what it was called. Mother? Never mind. So something to do with youth.

SLOAN: Hostel?

DIPPO: Huh?

SLOAN: Youth hostel?

DIPPO: Like a hostel, but it's not. Okay, we got ensconced in this nice place in Brooklyn or somewhere. And somehow, I got in a room I didn't want. And there was about a three foot ledge outside my window. Goes around the corner to the room I want to be in, with the people I wanted to be with. And he caught me as I was stepped out on the ledge. I would have walked around, I wouldn't have—at fourteen, what do you know. You're not—you can put this out somewhere, but that's what—we got to the World's Fair. And I had my mother's box camera with a broken lens, and I shot three perfect rolls. And in those days they gave you an eight-by-ten of your choice when you had it developed. I got the changing of the guard, and God knows what the other two were. But yes, that was one of my sojourns. I forgot about it.

Being a boy scout almost got me in trouble. It did get me in trouble. One morning, early in my training in Company A, First Platoon, this first sergeant called the company to attention and yelled out this command I'd never heard before. "Dress right, *dress*." And I went like this (gestures). He meant like this (gestures differently). This is called close interval dress right dress. And then he walked over to me. I didn't know. I'm looking this way, everybody else is like that, whatever, on the other side, and I'm like this. He's walking straight at me. He didn't yell like they do in the movies or anything like that, but he got in my face. He said, "Private, what are you doing?"

"Well, you said, 'Dress right, dress.'"

"What do you think that is?"
"I'm a boy scout."
"Oh? (laughs) Here's a shovel, and there's some dirt. Go to work."
I said, "What'd I do?"
"Did I say close interval dress right, dress?"
"No, you said, 'Dress right, dress.'"
"Well, you're doing what we call in the army close interval, dress right dress."
"Oh shit."

That was my beginning with my first sergeant. (laughs) I knew everything. You know that, I'm a cocky SOB. Oh no, I'm driving with a neighbor who's eight years older than I am. And this is maybe—see, I had ten more years enlisted. I went from sergeant major to major in ten years. Think about that. It's not usually done in ten years. But I had this time behind me. We were driving somewhere sometime, and I said something. He came into the army as a second lieutenant, and it took him twenty-two years. Still a major when he retired. I just say that not to be big, but what I say next. He turned to me one day, he says, "You know, Dippo, you're an arrogant son of a bitch." I says, "You know, I know that, but look where I got in such a short time." I shouldn't have said that, but I'm proud of what I did. I was able to do it. And the best thing about being a second lieutenant once you've been a sergeant major is that they can't pull the wool over your eyes. Of course, you had to carry a clipboard and a pen for a while. But these sergeants, bull chargers, tried to do—I said, "Don't try it. You look at this buster, don't look at this. You've had it. Stand there until I come back." Then I realized that I had power, and if I knew what to do with it, it'd take care of me. And it did because they called me from the career branch.

We got home. And remember now, it's less than—almost less than ten years. I made it in '62. Fifty-three to '62, that's nine and something years from second lieutenant to major. And then I—that was already—but then a year and a half in grade. I'm sent back from Germany with this gang and assigned to Fifth Army—Fourth Army then, not Fifth, it was Fourth Army at Fort Sam. Now remember, this is '63, and it was June when I got back. Five kids, the youngest being that one that was here. Oldest is now sixty-three, about the same age, it was nine months, don't worry about it. They're all the same. She—her family were counting. Don't put that in there.

SLOAN: I wasn't doing the math.

DIPPO: But don't you do nothing there. So where was I?

SLOAN: You were talking about in '63 when you got out of the military.

DIPPO: Oh, '63 in June. Help me. Tell them to turn the—

FRANCO: No, it's okay.

DIPPO: No, you're warm. Take your shirt off. (DeBoard and Sloan laugh) I don't care. I've been there before. Remember, I was in the communal shower, and we didn't have gays. I don't remember hearing that word even in a hundred and fifty men.

Where was I? Oh, in '63, came back in June. Five kids, okay, I got quarters on post, brick quarters, the good ones. I don't know how I did that but somebody was looking after me. I had brick quarters, five kids. And I'm home having lunch, because I could walk then from the quadrangle to my quarters. And I get a call. I never answer the phone. I never emptied the ashtray. I had a WAC do that. If they were going to put them in the army, work them. I didn't want—I don't like female workers or anybody in the uniform, female. So I gave them jobs. One was just make sure I didn't lose my cigarette lighter and make sure my ashtray was empty. So, anyway, I come back—you call me what you will, but I'm not that way anymore. Because they're doing a job they shouldn't be doing in the first place, out there where they are, terrible. "So Mister—Major Dippo, this is—the Pentagon wants to talk to you." I said, "Talk to them." "No, he wants you." "Okay. No. No. Vietnam? You mean French-Indochina?" "No, I mean Vietnam." Some kid. Boop. I didn't harass him after that, because he didn't know.

> I said, "Fine. Get me my—tell them—you got your record—my record in front of you?"
> "Yes."
> "Turn the pages. How much time do I got?"
> "Twenty-two years, two months, two days. I have an idea you're going to retire."
> "I am. Thank you."

Boop. So I didn't go to Vietnam because I had enough time to retire. I don't feel bad, but I always, when I see a Vietnam hat, which I see quite a few—commissary here and there and everywhere else—I get to them before they get to me, and I shake their hand. I saved up for twenty-two years (unintelligible). Then I have to explain it, I guess—well, I do a couple of times. But yes, he said, You're an arrogant son of a bitch. (laughs) So I was. I'm not going to deny it, but I knew. If you're going to be one of them, you better know what the hell you're talking about. Do it this way. We don't know. That way, that's the way it's done. Now, do it. And you better be right. But to this day, the poor fellow can't hear any better than I can. And he's still alive. He's eight years older. Do you know that, eighty-six plus eight?

SLOAN: Wow.

DIPPO: He's only crashed one plane. I mean, that could have been one reason. And his job was flying the Hump, Burma, to bring the stuff in to the Flying Tigers. Oh, and I knew Tex Hill. He was from the Flying Tigers, and I had him as a customer. I've been in his home. And he died, of course. He was a lot older. He was a National Guardsman, went in, became regular, went back to the National Guard, made brigadier general, and then died.

Because they got me at the airport one day going somewhere, and—oh, I love to show them my badges about here, the implants and shit. I said, No, you can't touch me. Don't you dare touch me. Uh-huh, you don't touch me. And the guy looking, No, you can't touch me. I have fun in the airports, but I believe in it. I wouldn't mind being screened. I could care less. Now, where was I? Oh, so we were going to Vegas, I think. No, we were

going to San Diego to catch a boat to Hawaii. We took a fifteen day to Hawaii and—where was I?

SLOAN: You were taking your cruise to Hawaii.

DIPPO: Yeah, but why? Where did that come up?

SLOAN: I don't know.

DIPPO: (unintelligible) You do what you do.

SLOAN: You were going to tell me a story about somebody that you knew or you met.

DIPPO: Well, there is a story about that cruise. Oh well, you know we won the prize and took the mic off the MC.

SLOAN: That's right. You showed me the newlywed game. You won the newlywed game, yeah.

DIPPO: Yeah, of course, it was simple. We knew the answers, obviously. Which would you rather have, the hooker or the whatever? It was easy. I knew all the answers. (Sloan laughs) I think we missed two. And that's not why I was—where I was headed. Damn it. I forgot. It must have been a good story, but I forgot it.

SLOAN: Well, I've got one more question I want to ask you.

DIPPO: Sure.

SLOAN: What has it been like for you to know that you participated—we talked about Mauthausen, and that's one of the focuses of this interview. What has it been like for you to know that you helped liberate and free those people?

DIPPO: It makes me puff up like a rooster. I feel so proud that we could do that. So proud when I see Tibor or when I see the ladies that come and sell their books, anything. It makes me so proud that we had a chance not to shoot Germans all the time. I always tell, I'm so thin I used to walk sideways and they couldn't hit me. That's not true, but—I never—whatever. And Buch, he should have a medal. A lot of things that—I'm puffed up about a lot of things I know of people and the things they have done and accomplishments, but I'm pumped up on myself that I was able to do something. I couldn't hug or kiss, but I could do something. I could watch those German citizens and growl at them. Keep moving, anything to tease them for being—telling me, or telling the world they don't know what was going on here. You know that's a lie. But after talking to you guys now, I'm going to try to get a hold of the kids that want to know about their uncle.

SLOAN: Yeah.

DIPPO: I was this far away from him. I saw them both go. But they should have—they know better. Because they're going to fire on you when they know where you are. And they knew where we were. Obviously, they knew. You know, look how much intelligence we have. We know where people are, before we had all that stuff up there. We know where you are. People call us on the phone even, with the phone system. The Eleventh Armored is over there, so on and so forth. They knew where we were. But getting back to that, I mean that sincerely. I wouldn't be afraid to touch a body out in the snow, to help if he was still alive. If the MP—you can't get a medic every time you need one, and we knew enough. Oh, I've got to admit, my canteen wasn't full of water, and I was hoping their canteen might—because they were supposed to take those pills that are in the packet. And I have the packet open, and then I realize I don't have the proper liquid. I could have, I guess. It would have been something to fight the disease or infection, and so on and so forth. But I, in my arrogance, it's not going to happen to me. I won't need it. I'd rather drink what's in the thing. But even our water tanks, shit, our water—what's it called, one of them was anyway, in my half-track. (laughs)

Oh, I was so young that I guess it was funny, but it really wasn't. But it didn't get me down. And it's been—what I could do in the military, I took that to the civilian life. In fact, here's how I got with Sears. We got home—I mean, I retired on May 31, 1964, with the five kids and a small place. The girls were—the boys were stacked, and the girls—little one was only eighteen months or twenty months, in the crib, and the other two were in a queen-sized bed, I guess. Yeah, that was a queen, and the crib was over on the side. Where was I?

SLOAN: You were talking about retiring?

DIPPO: Oh yeah. That's for real. I get off on a tangent. And which one was it? One of them got a sore throat, and we took her to (unintelligible). It was wooden-framed buildings or something. Okay, keep her separated from the rest of the kids, your children. I said, "Fine." So I went down to Sears. Medication was taken care of. She was being taken care of medically. But she had to stay there. And she didn't want a radio; she wanted a television. So I went down to buy a television. I'd seen advertising. And, a black and white, I think, even. Yeah, I guess it was. Of course, it was color then too, but I think this was black and white. Just to put in the room. And the person—well, I stood for ten minutes waiting for somebody to come to me. And there's this guy sitting over there on top of a television, this kind. They were big consoles. Smoking a cigarette, with his tie askew—like we wear them now, but it wasn't then. That was supposed to be tied, smoking a cigarette. Okay, I waited. The same one. I'm not hiding. I'm there. He's in conversation with somebody, I don't know. Not a customer, employee.

Got on the elevator, went upstairs. I figured the officer would be upstairs. I said, "Where's the manager's office? I want to speak to him. Very important, urgent." "Well, he's not here, but the superintendent is." I said, "Fine, let me see the superintendent. This is Major Dippo." I used my rank. I never do, but I did then. "I'd like to speak to him. I think it's very important." And, what the hell was his name, now? I made a joke of it, something that rhymed with something. Anyway, I got to see him. And I told him what I

thought of his people, and why they allowed such insubordination, "Because I'm sure you've given them rules to live by, to represent Sears."

We talked, and we talked some more. And then he comes up with this line: "Could you do any better?" I said, "With my hands tied behind my back, but I don't need a job right now. I've got pay stocked up for a month." I said, "Call me when you've got room for me. I'll check it out." Never begging, being cocky and arrogant as it were. Well, about two weeks later I get a call. "Mr. Dippo, could you come and see us?" (laughs) Oh, I stayed with them twenty-two years. (Sloan laughs) And every time somebody had a complaint upstairs the girls would say, Not our Mr. Dippo, no. No, that must have been somebody else then. No, it was that tall blonde. No, that's not him. He wouldn't do that or say that. But I didn't take any shit from customers. Why should I? But anyway, I stayed with them for twenty-two years. I had my own department.

And I'll tell you one thing, there was somebody more crafty than me. He was a warrant officer, retired. And I don't know what his job was or whatever. And this was when we carried rifles—weapons. Sears had rifles. We didn't have pistols. We had rifles, rifles and ammunition. And so he sold a rifle and ammunition to somebody, and about two weeks later, some lady comes in to the customer service and wants to return the rifle. And she said, "Go downstairs to the sporting goods department." What the hell is his name? I forgot it. Jim—I didn't like him anyway. Jim something, he wasn't my type. But he was in this instance. But he didn't say it, that's the point. He came down and he said, "Well, what's wrong? It looks good. It's been fired once. What's this? You want your money back? Why?" "Well, he shot himself with it." And he started to say, "Well, it did what he wanted. Why should I take it back?" He didn't say it though, but that was on the tip of his lips. I think I might have stepped over, because she was a bitch, yelling and screaming about him, shot himself with your gun. And then, he wanted to say, "Well, it did its job." (Sloan laughs) What else you got for me?

SLOAN: Well, you've been real generous with your time.

DIPPO: I've got more time than money.

SLOAN: Well, David, Robert and I want to thank you for your service to the country. Thank you for your service.

DIPPO: Thank you, thank you, and thank you.

SLOAN: And also being generous with your time this afternoon.

DIPPO: Tell Mother, the cook.

SLOAN: (laughs) We will. We will.

DIPPO: (laughs) I wish you'd take the rest of the stuff there.

end of interview