

Fort Hunt Oral History
P.O. Box 1142
Interview with Dominick Marletto by Vincent Santucci
April 5, 2007

VINCENT SANTUCCI: Okay. Good morning.

DOMINICK MARLETTO: Good morning.

VS: Today is April 5, 2007. It's Thursday morning. I'm here with Mr. and Mrs. Dominick Marletto, who live in Hermitage, Pennsylvania. Mr. Marletto was a veteran of P.O. Box 1142 and worked at Fort Hunt during the Second World War. My name is Vince Santucci. I'm the chief ranger at the George Washington Memorial Parkway. This interview is part of the ongoing oral history project involving the World War II history of Fort Hunt Park, part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Really appreciate your courtesy in allowing us to meet with you this morning and be able to talk [01:00] about some very important times during the Second World War. The first question I had is, if you could just provide a little bit of background information in terms of your family, where you were born, your schooling, whether you were drafted or volunteered in the Army, any sort of military training.

DM: Well, I was born and raised in Sharon, Pennsylvania, and been here all my life. I went to Sharon schools. I was drafted. The time came and I was rejected the first time, I think about my eyes, but on second thought, they took me in. After orientation and all that, they sent us to Fort Hunt [01:55]. Well, it was P.O. Box 1142 [02:00]. Of course, you know, we were asked not to tell anyone of our address. They'd ask you where you're from, we'd say P.O. Box 1142 [02:11]. They said, "Where's that?" "We can't tell you. Secret post." So this place was, you probably know or have heard, is between Washington and Mount Vernon.

It's actually in Alexandria, Virginia. Of course, no one was supposed to know it was there. That's as far as I know, as far as getting there. I don't know how much more you want than that. What do you want?

VS: When you were drafted, did you go to basic training? Do you know where you went? And did you have any other kinds of training? What was your specialty and rank in the military?

DM: We were trained in [03:00] Pennsylvania. I can't think of the town. It was an Army camp, and we were there a few days. Then we were sent directly to P.O. Box 1142 [03:19], and as for our training, that's where we went. Right off the bat, they put me in the kitchen, working in the kitchen. I would help the cooks and then I was head KP, which I would see that the tables were set and everything in order. At times they were short of a guard, they'd have me pull guard duty. I don't know if you want to know about the prison that we had there. It was a [04:00] bunker or whatever you would call it, half in the ground and half aboveground. The kitchen had about -- let's see. We had about eight or 10 tables, eight at each table. I made sure that everything was served right. Then, like I said, we went ahead and pulled guard duty whenever they needed us. Every once in a while they'd pull me off of KP to pull guard duty. So then I was there several months, I believe, when they decided to send me overseas, and that's when I left P.O. Box 1142 [04:52]. While I was in 1142, we had three or four from my [05:00] same town, and I knew all of them, of course, but gradually we separated. Some were sent somewhere else. Of the original crew that went there, there might have been 10 of us left at P.O. Box 1142 [5:20]. When we were

there, we pulled guard duty and carried a pistol, of course, to the house, go back and forth in the house, make sure that everything was okay. The prisoners were kept in a cell where you couldn't see them. They couldn't see you; you couldn't see them. Our main job was to make sure they didn't get out. Now, at times they would exercise them. This was [06:00] told to me, I didn't see it, but it was all over the camp, everybody knew what was happening, that this one prisoner tried to escape. Do you want me to repeat what was on this paper?

VS: Sure. Please.

DM: So this one German prisoner, I don't know how he got out, but he went over the first fence, he was ready to go over the second fence when one of the guards shot him. So I don't know what their procedure was after that, because I was told that they took the soldier in and they said, "Because you killed a man, you have to stand trial." He said, "Okay." So he stood trial and they said, "Well, we find you" -- I don't know the expression they used, but they fined him like 2 or \$3. In turn [07:00], they gave him a carton of cigarettes to make up for the money. Then there was another occasion -- well, this is when I was on my own. We'd get passes to go to Washington [D.C.]. This one day we were going to Washington. I was supposed to be in the camp, you know. I wasn't supposed to leave for some reason; I don't recall, but they said, "You just stay in camp." We had this one fellow and he was a -- what do you call it when they leave the camp? Sometimes the words fail me.

VS: AWOL [Absent without leave]?

DM: Yes. He was AWOL several times. In the meantime, I brought my car down

there. They said I was allowed to have my car. So he found out and he said, "How about [08:00] we go out down in Washington?" I said, "Well, I don't think we should." I said, "I'm grounded for tonight." He said, "Well, I'll tell you. You get in the back. I'll put a blanket over you and I'll take the car and we'll go." Well, to me, dummy like I am, "Okay." [laughs] So I got in the back, he threw a blanket over me. We were passing the guard. He stopped. The guard looks in, didn't see anything. "Go ahead." We went to Washington. [laughs] Then when I found out he was AWOL several times, I felt, gee, I'd better watch myself, you know. I didn't want to follow in his footsteps. So after we got back to camp, I kind of stayed away from him. Well, shortly after that, I decided I didn't want the car down there anymore, so I got a leave of absence, took the car back, and I went back to Fort Hunt, to P.O. Box 1142 [09:00]. We'd have a leave. They'd give us a leave for several hours. We'd go down to Washington. They said, "You can do what you want, but be back at this mess a certain time." We had to be back or we'd be AWOL. So all we'd do is go around. If we had time, we'd stop at a restaurant maybe and have something to eat, just pass time and look at the girls, of course [laughs]. Then we'd go back to camp. They'd have retreat, everybody in bed, and that was it. Then after that, shortly after that, I was sent to Camp Shelby [Mississippi] [09:49], where I was trained as a technician in -- what do you call it?

VS: Medical [10:00].

DM: Medical, yes, the Medical Service. From there I went overseas.

VS: You went to the Pacific?

DM: I went to the Pacific, yes. It took us seven days and seven nights to get to Saipan.

Well, first we landed in -- what's before Saipan? Tinian. That little island before Saipan. It's on the tip of my tongue, but I can't think of it.

VS: Guam?

DM: No, it wasn't Guam.

VS: Hawaii?

DM: No, it was past Hawaii. What was it? I know it so well.

VS: Let's go back. Do you remember the month, year when you were drafted and when you were serving at Fort Hunt [10:58]?

DM: Well, I was [11:00] -- right after I was drafted and after my medical training-- regular training, I didn't get my medical until later, but right after that, I was sent to P.O. Box 1142 [11:16] right away, right off the bat.

VS: Was that in 1942?

DM: Might have been '44. No, '42. No, it wasn't '42. Let me think. It's been so long, I've forgotten half of this stuff.

VS: I wonder if it's in the paper here.

DM: Yes, it might be in there.

VS: It says November of 1942 you were drafted to the U.S. Army.

DM: That's right.

VS: Okay. So you think that's accurate?

DM: Yes, that's correct. But, see, I didn't get to the post for maybe a year later just with all the [12:00] practice we'd had and all the training we had and all that.

VS: Okay. So perhaps you didn't get to P.O. Box 1142 [12:09] until sometime in

1943.

DM: Forty-four, I believe. Forty-three or '44, yes.

VS: Do you know what your rank was during that time?

DM: Well, I was a private up until I went overseas. I was a T5. I made T5.

VS: So at Fort Hunt [12:33] you were a private.

DM: Yes.

VS: You worked with the MPs [Military Police] [12:39]?

DM: Yes, more or less.

VS: You weren't an MP per se.

DM: No, no. We weren't attached to the MPs at all, but we had them there occasionally. Not all the time.

VS: Do you happen to know what regiment or group, service group that you worked with when you were at Fort Hunt [13:00]?

DM: Not really. I don't know. All I knew was P.O. Box 1142 [13:07].

VS: You didn't have a patch or anything like that that you wore on your uniform?

DM: Not that I know, except our rank, that's all. Just our rank.

VS: Do you have an estimate of how many MPs [13:20] may have worked at Fort Hunt [13:22]?

DM: I'd say about 30 -- 30, 40.

VS: Do you remember who your commanding officer was or who your superior was?

DM: I'm not sure. It was on one of these letters, I know, but I can't recall right off.

Omar [N.] Bradley [13:50].

VS: Okay. Those that worked with you, you said you eventually became the lead

[14:00] cook, how many men worked with you or under you?

DM: Well, it was about 10 tables with eight at each table, yes. I'd have an assistant who'd help me.

VS: Did you cook for both the United States Army that worked there, plus the prisoners?

DM: No, I didn't do any cooking. All I took care was the kitchen and made sure everybody got fed, made sure the tables were clean, and I had an assistant that, after they'd done eating, the assistant would clean the tables. I made sure it was clean. They had a sewer pit that they had to clean once in a while and stuff like that.

VS: Did you take care of the kitchen for the prisoners as well as the [15:00] United States Army?

DM: Not the prisoners.

VS: Just the United States Army.

DM: Right. No, we never saw the prisoners. They were fed in their cages, in their whatever.

VS: Any thoughts about how the food was? Was the food pretty good? Did the men like the food?

DM: It was all right. A lot of them didn't like it. I remember one incident, and I forgot to tell you, that this one German, I didn't know how, they let him out for some reason and they put him doing something. He was doing a service for our country, but I can't recall. And he was so glad that he was in America and he was trying to stay here. He wanted to know if he could stay here. They told him, "No,

- you're a prisoner. You can stay here and do what you have to, but we can't let you stay here." That's all [16:00] I remember of him. He was in the kitchen, and I couldn't figure out why he was there or how long he was there.
- VS: Do you think he was helping with cooking at all?
- DM: No.
- VS: Was he helping with cleaning?
- DM: I don't know. I just know he was there and they were talking to him, because I had my duties to do and I didn't stay around listening to them.
- VS: In the kitchen building, did that building have a name or was it referred to in any way?
- DM: Just the kitchen. No, I don't know what else would you --
- VS: I don't know. Sometimes they had names for buildings, like the Creamery or the officers' quarters or mess hall.
- DM: Not that I know. They never had a name.
- VS: Was it close to where the prisoners were held or was it further away from --
- DM: It was further away, a little bit. Not that far away. I would say, oh [17:00], five or 10 yards or so away from the prisoners. You could see them. You could see where they were, the prisoners, you know. You could see half of the ground, half up and half underground.
- VS: Did you ever see the prisoners?
- DM: No.
- VS: Other than the one who came in the kitchen.
- DM: That's all. I didn't even see the one that got shot. I didn't see him.

VS: So you never really saw any of the prisoners, other than the one that worked in the kitchen.

DM: Right. Right.

VS: Did you know if there were any other kinds of prisoners, Japanese or Italian or any other kind of prisoners?

DM: No. I know definitely there were just Germans, just German prisoners. They were more or less off limits even to us. They kept it strict. I understand that they would give them whatever they want, just to get them to talk. They'd furnish liquor. They did give them women if they want [18:00]. They treat them real good to try to get their information.

VS: So they brought alcohol, they brought women into Fort Hunt [18:08]?

DM: Oh, yeah. I was told this. I'm not sure. But I've seen people around there, so I'm assuming it was true.

VS: You saw women on the camp?

DM: I heard they were there. I didn't see them. But I understood that they would do anything to try to get information from them. If they succeeded, I don't know.

VS: Do you have any recollections of what the camp looked like, like the prisoner compound or the perimeter wall or fencing?

DM: In my mind I have a picture of it, of the place itself and inside the halls. I was inside the halls of the prison. But other than that, they were off -- even for us, [19:00] off limits, to be off limits, you know.

VS: So you actually came inside the building? You said you came into the walls of the prison.

DM: Yes.

VS: Was that to take food or --

DM: Just to guard. Somebody else would take care of the food and all that. You'd just walk so far, like maybe from here to there so many yards.

VS: Was that aboveground or underground?

DM: Well, like I said, half was underground and have above. Now, our barracks were away from there. We had regular -- you know how barracks is, regular bunkbeds and all. Then we'd get outside and get exercise. They'd have us exercise once in a while.

VS: Do you remember anything about a swimming pool?

DM: I've never seen a swimming pool [20:00]. [laughs] Not there.

VS: Okay. You had mentioned that there were two fences. There was an inner fence and an outer fence?

DM: Yes. Wire fences.

VS: So they had barbed wire at the top?

DM: Yes, on both of them. I don't know how he ever got over the first one. But they managed.

VS: Were there guard towers, spotlights, anything like that that you recall?

DM: They didn't have any spotlights. They had guards, guard stations. That's about it.

VS: What is a guard station? Can you describe that?

DM: Well, the one I saw was on stilts, you know, so high, with a little cabin or whatever you want to call it. You've seen them. They're closed in. That's it.

VS: Okay. You said that you carried a pistol. Did the guards have any other kinds of

weapons, rifles, machineguns?

DM: No, not that I know [21:00]. They probably did, but not that I know of, because I was given a pistol while I was on guard, and then they would take it back. After I was done with guard duty, they'd take it back. It wasn't that much, maybe half a dozen times is all they asked me to.

VS: Do you know what kind of pistol it was? Was it a Colt or --

DM: Looked like a Colt. I'd say yes.

VS: Okay. Did you do shifts during the day, during the evening, during the night?

DM: During the day is when I would take over.

VS: Do you know of any other attempts at escapes by prisoners other than the one gentleman that was shot?

DM: No, I don't. I don't think there was. I'd have known if there was. No.

VS: Any more details about [22:00] the person that was shot? Does the name Werner Henke [22:03] sound familiar?

DM: It's been so long. It could be. It could be.

VS: We know about a story of a German U-boat captain by the name of Werner Henke [22:16], who was shot, and it sounds like it was probably the same circumstances.

DM: It could have been.

VS: You don't know the individual who shot --

DM: No, I don't. They kept it quiet.

VS: So when you talked about how he was fined and then he received cigarettes, did you learn of that from other men at the post?

DM: Yes, it was told to us. In fact, he told us about it.

VS: The person who was fined?

DM: Yes.

VS: So you actually met the person who did this?

DM: Oh, yes, but I don't remember his name.

VS: Okay. Do you remember anything else about him?

DM: No, I don't.

VS: Was he an MP [22:59] or was he somebody who just [23:00] --

DM: He was just a regular guard, regular guard.

VS: So the difference between an MP [23:06] and a regular guard, was there a difference?

DM: The guards had like a rifle. It wasn't a rifle; it was a gun. It wasn't a short gun. It was actually -- what is a rifle?

VS: Carbine?

DM: Something like that.

VS: Okay. All right. And let's see. Since you really didn't see the prisoners, you might not know this, but we were wondering if you knew how the prisoners were dressed. Was there something that distinguished them?

DM: Just their own clothes, as far as I know. That's my opinion. They had their own clothes, of course.

VS: Do you know, in terms of the camp, did they ever use guard dogs?

DM: No, no guard dogs [24:00]. I never seen one.

VS: Any sort of alarms or anything around the perimeter?

DM: If they did, I don't know.

VS: Any sort of sirens or anything?

DM: All I know is they had guards all over that place, around where the wire fence was, all around the wire fence.

VS: Do you remember anything about the entrance gate? Was there just one gate or was there more than one gate?

DM: I know there was different doors. Maybe there was every six or eight feet was a door, and then six or eight feet a door. A long line of doors.

VS: On the prisoner compound?

DM: [affirmative]

VS: How about the whole camp itself, outside of it, say where the barracks were?

DM: Outside, no, all they had was guards on duty. That's it [25:00].

VS: MPs?

DM: Well, just regular guards at camp. And if you wanted to sneak around, you could have, but you were taking a chance, because you never know if one of the guards sees you, goodbye Jack.

[laughter]

VS: Were you afraid of the MPs [25:20]?

DM: Not really.

VS: Did you have any knowledge about what was going on, other than you were guarding prisoners?

DM: At that camp?

VS: Yes.

DM: Well, we knew if a fellow went AWOL or if he was assigned for something or something like that, you know, a place like that, you're all crowded in. The word gets around. What goes on, you hear about it.

VS: There were two top-secret programs that were held and conducted at Fort Hunt [25:58]. One was called the MIS-X [26:00] Program and one was called the MIS-Y. Have you ever heard of those terms?

DM: Not while I was there.

VS: Okay. One had to do with secret escape devices that were being created so that they would mail them to American prisoners of war over in Germany to aid in their escape. So that was one very secret program. The MIS-Y Program was the program where they were interrogating the German prisoners of war. One thing that's extremely interesting about Fort Hunt [26:35] is that they weren't just interrogating enlisted men, enlisted Germans; actually they were interrogating high-level Germans.

DM: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. They had these -- they weren't just any old Germans. They had the high prisoners.

VS: Officers. Did you know that they had German scientists there?

DM: I'm pretty sure they did. Oh, yeah, they were all high-class Germans [27:00].

VS: Okay. How did you know this? Just second-hand information?

DM: Well, I knew them.

VS: Hi, how are you?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Am I interrupting? [unintelligible]

VS: Oh, that's okay. We're going to probably need to take a break in a few minutes

and change the tape if -- my name's Vince.

FS: Hi, I'm Maria.

VS: Nice to meet you.

FS: Nice to meet you.

DM: That's my granddaughter.

VS: Pleasure meeting you. So you didn't know the name MIS-X or MIS-Y Programs.

DM: I had heard of them, but, you know, you never paid attention. I didn't anyway, didn't pay attention.

VS: Did you know anything else about the type of prisoners that were there? Did you know that there were U-boat officers, there were Luftwaffe, there were scientists? Did you know anything about those?

DM: No. I tell you, they kept that even quiet with us. We were stationed there and still [28:00] that was a lot of secrets going on there. So we didn't get to know half of what really went on.

VS: Did you ever know or meet any of the interrogators, the Americans who were interrogating?

DM: If I did, I didn't know them. They kept it quiet.

VS: You had mentioned that you stayed in barracks. When you stayed in barracks, I assume that you didn't stay in areas where the interrogators stayed.

DM: Oh, no. That's separate.

VS: Stayed separate, okay. Any other description regarding the barracks, what they looked like?

DM: Well, it's a straight building with so many beds in it, you know, and they

- furnished the blankets and the sheets, and once a week they'd take up the blankets to clean them, tried to clean them. I don't know where they sent them out, somewhere [29:00]. Well, that's what they went wherever I went. All the camps, they did the same thing [unintelligible] oh yeah.
- VS: In terms of the rest of the camp, we're trying to relocate where the original flagpole was, because we want to restore and put a new flagpole up, and that's where we want to put a marker to the men who had worked there during World War II. Do you have any --
- DM: You know what? I don't think we had a flag up there. They didn't want -- I think -- it was secret. They didn't want no identification of any kind there. I don't recall a flag being there.
- VS: Did they have morning bugle calls, evening bugle calls?
- DM: Oh, yes. We had reveille, taps at night. Oh, yeah. We had to be in bed at a certain time [30:00]. They had roll call in the morning, make sure we were there.
- VS: Do you recall the parade grounds?
- DM: Parade grounds? Oh, you mean where we were called for reveille?
- VS: Yes.
- DM: Oh, yeah [affirmative]. It was away from the --
- VS: Do you remember there being trees that lined Officers Row?
- DM: Yes, there was a lot of trees there.
- VS: In the newspaper article, there's a photo showing the compound. Do you remember seeing that? Does that look familiar?
- DM: Yes, it does.

VS: Can you tell me about that photo?

DM: Well, this is where the prisoners were kept [31:00], and we were like so far away from the camp itself, so we were actually away from the prisoners. The only ones who went there were the guards. Whenever they moved a prisoner out or brought them in, we don't know, and they kept that all secret, even for us, all secret.

VS: When you were assigned guard duty, did you go inside that compound?

DM: Yes, I was inside.

VS: So you were in there. Can you describe anything you remember about the inside of that prisoner compound?

DM: Well, just like I said, every so far there was a door. I'm assuming there were prisoners in each one of those doors. Might have been, I don't know, eight or five, five or eight doors that they were bringing them in and questioning them. So other than that, I don't know, because we weren't allowed near there, even for us [32:00].

VS: But when you were on guard duty, you were actually inside the fenced area?

DM: Yes. They would let us in, yes. They had a fence there. I don't know if you can see the fence in here or not. No, you can't hardly tell but there's a fence --

(End of Tape 1A)

(Beginning of Tape 1B)

VS: Okay. This is tape two. It is Thursday the 5th of April 2007, and we're here in Hermitage, Pennsylvania, interviewing Private Dominick Marletto, who was a veteran of P.O. Box 1142 during World War II. We had left off our discussions of the prisoner compound. Mr. Marletto, do you remember any details about the

prisoner compound that you'd like to share? You had mentioned some underground bunkers.

DM: Yes. Well, they were half underground and half aboveground. That's what I remember. Now, by this picture, I can't tell too well. It seems like this is all aboveground here, but maybe you don't see the lower part [01:00] that's underground. It must have been much higher. You know what I mean?

VS: Yes.

DM: That's the only thing I can remember.

VS: Did you ever go underground? Did you ever go into these underground facilities?

DM: No, I didn't.

VS: So you don't know what the entrance was to them?

DM: I don't.

VS: How did you know about them? From other --

DM: From other sources. They'd talk about it. When you left camp, you weren't allowed to say anything, but we would talk among ourselves, you know, discuss different things.

VS: So what did they tell you about not talking about this, about the secrecy? Were you given an order that you cannot talk? Did you have to sign anything?

DM: I don't recall if we did, but I know the order was made and we had to keep it. That's all [02:00] I know.

VS: But you said despite that, you still had the opportunity to talk to other men and share some information.

DM: Oh, yes. In a barracks, you know, several barracks, we'd get together and we'd

talk, like anything else. But once you went out of grounds, then you'd watch what you'd say, you know.

VS: Do you recall any of those behind-doors discussions of things that went on?

DM: I don't know. It's been so long.

VS: Sure.

DM: I don't remember.

VS: When you finally left P.O. Box 1142 [02:45], do you recall that day and your departure?

DM: Yes. They told me, "Get your stuff. You're going out." I said, "Where to?" He says, "You'll find out." There were three or [03:00] four of us that they wanted to send on. So we got all our bags and whatever and took off. That's when we went to Camp Shelby [03:13] and took up medical training. From there, I don't know how long we were there, and then we went overseas.

VS: Do you remember names of any other veterans that worked at Fort Hunt [03:31]?

DM: One or two or three. I know one of them was -- oh, what's his name? Paul Darlington [03:46]. He's one of them. Another was Pat Bakarol [03:54]. The other one is gone now. There was somebody else [04:00]. I can't think of -- I can't think of who it was.

VS: Did you know them before going into the military? How did you come to know them?

DM: Pat Bakarol [04:11], I knew him from a long time. This Darlington [04:15], I knew of his brother, but I didn't know him until I went in the service.

VS: Was he from the area?

DM: Yes.

VS: From Hermitage?

DM: Well, the Shenango Valley, you could say. Shenango Valley covers Sharon, Hermitage, Farrell.

VS: Did you have any opportunity to keep in contact with these individuals after the war?

DM: I did it for a while, and eventually it dropped off, you know, it's been so long.

VS: Were they active or were you active in any sort of veterans' [05:00] groups locally?

DM: Well, I was -- you mean like the American Legion and all that?

VS: Yes.

DM: Well, I belonged to two or three organizations much after that, quite a bit after. I joined the VFW, which eventually I dropped it, but then I also belonged to the Catholic War Veterans and the other one was Italian American War Veterans. Don't know if you've heard of them, Italian American.

VS: Yes.

DM: That's about the only ones I know.

VS: Are you familiar with the OSS [Office of Strategic Services]?

DM: I've heard of it. I'm not sure what that is.

VS: Does this name mean anything to you, Collingwood [05:56]?

DM: That's the name of a town [06:00], isn't it? Collingwood.

VS: Yes.

DM: It seems like I was there one time, but it's so long ago.

VS: There's an area called Collingwood [06:09] that is between Alexandria and Fort Hunt [06:14]. There used to be a little tea room and restaurant, things there. I was wondering if you ever had the opportunity to go there for tea or lunch or anything like that.

DM: No. Whenever we had a chance to go somewhere, we'd go either to Washington or Mount Vernon, in or around there. I don't know any little stores to speak of. At that time, there was nothing there.

VS: Did you know that the Parkway was managed by the National Park Service?

DM: No, I did not.

VS: Did you ever hear of the name George Washington Memorial Parkway?

DM: Oh, yeah, I've heard of it. Sure. In fact, I think I saw it [07:00] one time. Was that the one that's in the center of Washington?

VS: It's actually that road between Mount Vernon and Arlington Cemetery. You probably drove on it.

DM: Yes.

VS: So once you left P.O. Box 1142 [07:21], can you briefly just tell me what you did? You went to Fort Shelby [07:25].

DM: Camp Shelby, that's where I got my medical training. We took, you know, how to repair broken bones or cuts, poison, whatever, as far as how to treat it.

VS: So you were a corpsman or a medic?

DM: A medic.

VS: So then you said you had taken a seven-day boat ride over to Saipan.

DM: Yeah. We went to Saipan, yes. Fortunately, we bypassed a small [08:00] island.

I can't think of the name. Then from there we went to Tinian -- Saipan and then to Tinian.

VS: Were you involved in any sort of combat?

DM: No, except cleanup. Did a lot of cleanup. They had already taken over Saipan and Tinian when we got there, so we ended up doing the cleanup.

VS: Okay. Did you actually treat wounded?

DM: There weren't too many there when we got there. Most of them were taken care of before. We kind of had it easy, more or less.

VS: Good. Do you remember any involvement with the Navy at Fort Hunt [08:54]?

DM: Not really. They had Navy people there, but [09:00] they was different from us [laughs].

VS: Did they stay in separate barracks?

DM: I don't even recall them staying there at all. Just on the ships. I'd see them on the ships, that's all. Ships would come and go, you know.

VS: I mean at Fort Hunt [09:16].

DM: Oh, Fort Hunt. Oh. What was the question?

VS: Do you remember any sort of Navy involvement at Fort Hunt?

DM: Oh, no. No Navy. Strictly Army.

VS: Okay. Today at Fort Hunt [09:32], when you go down to the Potomac River, which is very close, there's some remnants of a boat dock. Do you remember anything about a boat dock in the Potomac River at Fort Hunt?

DM: Not really, because we didn't get out that much. The Potomac, that was away from where we were.

VS: Do you remember [10:00] the old Spanish American War gun emplacements at Fort Hunt [10:07]?

DM: I don't recall.

VS: Did you ever see some of the buses that they used to bring the prisoners in and out?

DM: We saw our own buses, that's all. Those buses, I think they came at night.

VS: Windowless?

DM: It was all done secret, even with us. They even kept us apart, you know, tried to keep it as secret as they could.

VS: Did you ever hear anything about Camp Pine Grove Forest?

DM: Never heard of it.

VS: Fort Ritchie?

DM: Fort Ritchie sounds familiar.

FS: That's -- we live there. We live near there. That's why -- that's where he remembers the name.

VS: Okay.

DM: Yes. I don't recall [11:00].

VS: Fort Meade?

DM: Fort Meade. I've heard of Fort Meade.

VS: Fort Belvoir?

DM: Heard of that.

FS: That's where Chris works [laughs].

DM: I visited somebody at Fort Belvoir at one time.

VS: After the war?

DM: No, this was during the war, before I went to P.O. Box.

VS: Was it for training or just a one-day visit?

DM: Just a one-day visit, yes.

VS: Okay. Anything else that you can recall that we haven't talked about, that you thought was worth mentioning?

DM: This is off the record, as far as I know. Doesn't have much to do with this here, but she said she found one of my -- what do you call it?

FS: Autograph books.

DM: Yeah, an autograph book [12:00]. When we were being discharged, they said, "Okay, everything out of the bag. All you can keep is this one thing." I don't recall what it was. You know we had Eisenhower jackets. I liked it a lot, you know. I had this book that I had everybody sign it, everyone in our organization. I had them sign. Well, anyway, when we were discharged, they said, "Everything out except one" -- they told us what it was. Well, anyway, I didn't want to part with that jacket. That autograph book, I cherished that, you know. I said I want to keep that. So to keep it from getting out of the bag, I grabbed the bottom of the bag and held onto the jacket and the book and I kept it. [unintelligible], it was still there. When I got home, I had the jacket but [13:00] no autograph book.

VS: Oh, boy.

DM: I was so heartbroken. Gee, all those guys I knew, I had all their addresses and things.

FS: I called Mom. You know where it was?

DM: No.

FS: It was in Grandma's cedar chest.

DM: Well, how did it get there?

FS: I don't know. That's where she -- that's where she found it.

DM: You must be talking about something else, then.

FS: It's a little red autograph book, 1937, from camp.

DM: Well, that must be it.

FS: It said "camp."

DM: If I recognize it --

FS: I don't know, but I'll bring it to you in three weeks.

DM: Okay. I just wondered. I've often thought about that.

VS: So if it's dated '37, though, that's pre-World War II in terms of the United States.

DM: Yeah, that would be. That would be before.

VS: Would that be a CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] [13:43] camp?

DM: No, wait a minute. That could have been CCC, yeah.

VS: Were you in CCC [13:49]?

DM: Oh, yeah.

VS: You were?

DM: Oh, yeah.

VS: Well, that's interesting unto itself.

DM: Oh, yeah, I was in the CCC.

VS: Where were you stationed during CCC [13:58]?

DM: In [14:00] -- where was it? I know it so well.

VS: Was it in Pennsylvania?

DM: I must have it somewhere. Fort Union. There was a college there too that I remember.

VS: Do you know where that's located?

DM: Fort Union, Virginia.

VS: It's in Virginia, okay. All right. There was a CCC [14:56] camp at Fort Hunt [14:58] before World War II. A lot of [15:00] those buildings were actually CCC buildings that you stayed in. Well, that's very interesting.

DM: Yes, I was there about a year. I was there nine months. At that time your parents had to be almost destitute or whatever you want to call it. Everything was high, sky high. You couldn't buy nothing. It was like right after the Depression, more or less. Anyway, jobs were scarce, so they said if the parents needed help, they had a son, he could go to CCC. Well, that's how I got in. So I went in for nine months, and after nine months, I was going to sign up for another years, because they said you could sign up. So I wrote home and told them that I was going to sign up, and they wrote back and said, "Don't sign up because work is picking up," and I think my dad [16:00] started working at Westinghouse then. He said, "I could get you a job at Westinghouse." So I said, "Okay." So that's when I left the CCC [16:09] and come home. I think one or two months later I had a job.

VS: Great.

DM: Work was picking. That's how me got me a job. We made trails, fire trails at the CCCs [16:26], and it was easy work, just the idea that you were there. You'd get a monthly check. We'd end up with \$5 and the family would get 10 or \$15. At

that time, that was good money then.

VS: Oh, absolutely. That was a very important program.

DM: Oh, yeah. We even had a radio stack played [unintelligible], you know [17:00].

This one friend of mine, Earl Lidle [spelled phonetically] [17:05] -- I still remember his name, Lidle -- said, "We're going to organize a band. You play violin?" I said, "Yeah." "I play the piano and we have somebody who plays guitar," whoever it was. So I said, "Okay." So we went on the radio station down there.

VS: Did you really?

DM: For a few months, yes.

VS: Wow. Do you still play the violin?

DM: No. I played before I went in the service. Plus, I went in the service, I was gone three or four years. I come back and the gang that I went with were all split, so never got together again, never played again.

VS: Very good. I think that's all I have, unless there's anything else you feel --

DM: No. I wish I could remember more, but a lot of it I forgot, you know. It's been how many years.

VS: And [18:00] you're 90 this year?

DM: I was 90 in February.

VS: Ninety in February. Well, that's incredible that you've remembered this much detail.

DM: Oh, yeah. I could give you a lot more if I was younger.

[laughter]

VS: I think you gave us quite a bit. Thank you very much.

DM: All right.

VS: I'm going to go ahead and turn all of this off.

DM: Okay.

[end of transcript]

Index

Bakarol, Pat [Tape 1B] 03:54, 04:11

Bradley, Omar [Tape 1A] 13:50

Camp Shelby, [Tape 1A] 09:49
[Tape 1B] 03:13, 07:25

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), [Tape 1B] 13:43, 13:49, 13:58, 14:56, 16:09, 16:26

Collingwood, Virginia, [Tape 1B] 05:56, 06:09

Darlington, Paul [Tape 1B] 03:46, 04:15

Fort Hunt, [Tape 1A] 01:55, 10:58, 12:33, 13:00, 13:22, 18:08, 25:58, 26:35
[Tape 1B] 03:31, 06:14, 08:54, 09:16, 09:32, 10:07, 14:58

Henke, Werner [Tape 1A] 22:03, 22:16

Lidle, Earl [Tape 1B] 17:05

MP, [Tape 1A] 12:39, 13:20, 23:06, 25:20

P.O. Box 1142, [Tape 1A] 02:00, 02:11, 03:19, 04:52, 09:00, 11:16, 12:09, 13:07
[Tape 1B] 02:45, 07:21