

INTERVIEW ON WORLD WAR II
WITH FCC COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO
(Questions by Michelle Steiman)

May 21, 1996

Q. Did you volunteer for service or were you drafted? If you volunteered, why?

A. I had a reserve second Lieutenant commission from Michigan State University and I was called up in the fall of 1940. It was apparent at that time that the United States would eventually be forced into the war against Hitler's Germany. I was glad to undergo intensive early training in preparation for possible eventual conflict.

Q. How old were you?

A. I was 26 years old.

Q. What was your rank? How long did you serve?

A. My initial rank was second lieutenant. I served the Army for five years with thirty-two months overseas in Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. I was discharged with the rank of Lt. Colonel. Marines were assigned to the Pacific theatre of war so amphibious infantry divisions made all the assault landings in Africa, Sicily,

Italy, France and Germany. I was assigned to the 9th Infantry division in Africa and Sicily and the 45th Infantry division in France and Germany. I was an infantry battalion commander with the 180th Infantry, 45th division in France and Germany. Along with landing in southern France (St. Tropez) on "D" day, my battalion also made assault crossings of the Rhine and Danube rivers in Germany.

Q. Where did you see action?

A. I was involved in combat operations in all countries except for a 10-month assignment as G-2 air in Army headquarters in Italy. While serving at Army headquarters, I was called by my former regimental commander in the 9th division and asked "What is a good doughboy (infantryman) doing in Army headquarters? We need battalion commanders in the 45th division." I was transferred from the 5th Army to 7th Army and then to the 45th Infantry division.

Q. Were you injured?

A. Only minor injuries like flying glass when a German 88 (artillery) hit a building we had just occupied. I was lucky in never being directly hit by a bullet or a mortar fragment.

Q. What commendations did you receive?

A. I received eight campaign ribbons, the Infantry Combat Badge, the Bronze Star with Cluster and the French Croix de Guerre. Our unit also received the distinguished service commendation.

Q. What was your most vivid memory of the war?

A. I had too many vivid memories to relate here. I'm writing a book of highlights of my war recollections followed by my 22-year service at the FCC. I'm giving you a few press clippings of some of the more notable events. Briefly, most vivid recollections were: (1) The initial landing in North Africa -- in our case Casablanca which represented the first use of U.S. offensive forces in World War II. (2) General Patton's forceful, profane fight talks to troops. (3) Landings at Salerno and later, Anzio, Italy. (4) Taking the German SS college in Munich. (5) The intense house-to-house fighting in Nuremberg with Mayor Karl Holtz desperately urging "We must fight to the end with all our resources against British arrogance, Russian savagery and American irresponsibility. I commented "That bastard has us figured out." (6) Liberating the Dachau concentration camp and seeing (before it was placed off limits) stacks of emaciated dead bodies awaiting cremation and actually seeing the bones and ashes in the ovens. (7) Cheering the Statue

of Liberty in New York harbor upon returning home after 32 months overseas. (8) Seeing my second son who was 33 months old for the first time. He was born 1 week after I left for Africa.

Q. Do you think serving in the war made you a better person?

A. It made me more resourceful and able to cope with hardship and opposition. It instilled a strong sense of responsibility at an early age. It also made me more patriotic and appreciative of our way of government.

Q. What do you think were some of the positive and negative results of the war?

A. The positive results were that freedom, decency and democracy triumphed over dictatorship, aggression and brutality. On a personal basis, the transition from 32 months of combat to family civilian life was a difficult adjustment. I was initially too tough minded and insensitive to daily civilian problems. I also believe I had an over-developed hard work ethic without negotiations and compromise. I eventually learned that frequently in civilian business life, "You don't get what you deserve, but what you negotiate." The authoritarian Army is not an ideal training ground for personal negotiations. I eventually also became more open-minded, tolerant and socially congenial.