

Interviewer: Could you please state your name and when you were born please?

Ferracio: My name is Francisco Ferracio and I was born on January 1, 1922.

Interviewer: And where were you born?

Ferracio: I was born in a small town in north western Pennsylvania called DuBois.

Interviewer: Your parents let's talk about your parents just a minute. What did your parents do?

Ferracio: My parents emigrated from Italy about two years before I was born. My father was a craftsman both in wood and metal. His family in Italy operated a carriage making factory where they made fancy carriages and the reason for his craftsmanship being so high. And he came here to go to work for the Pullman Car Company which made very fancy railroad cars in those days and some of his friends from his hometown were here in American. And do he followed them and came here that's what brought him here.

Interviewer: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Ferracio: I'm the fifth of five boys and two girls followed me seven children in all.

Interviewer: Seven in all. What did your mom do?

Ferracio: Oh my mother was a house keeper plain and simple it was fair in a sense she raised children took care of all of the household chores some of the finances for the home simply home keeper old fashioned home keeper.

Interviewer: We've talked to you one time before you came in and spoke to the class and you mentioned that education was very important to your family as far as your father was concerned. How far along did you go in school?

Ferracio: Oh I went through undergraduate, graduate and post graduate.

Interviewer: And before before you joined the army how far along had you gotten in college?

Ferracio: I had been in college about three semesters about three semesters when I enlisted in the air force cadet program.

Interviewer: When you were growing up do you have any memories of the great depression or any of those events that took place in and around that time period?

Ferracio: Very vivid impressions of the depression very vivid. I do remember it.

Interviewer: What were some of the things that took place that stick out in your mind the most?

Ferracio: The things that stood out mostly in my mind about the depression is the depravity that practically everyone was living in. Depravity of home life, of work, economics and I can recall men coming to our house door for food asking for food. And my mother would fix the dish of some kind of

food that she was preparing for the day for them. And I remember seeing the long lines in this small town the long lines of people waiting for food being distributed by the government.

Interviewer: You said your father worked for Pullman Car Company was he out of a job during the depression as well or was he able to maintain his job?

Ferracio: He was furloughed I think it was in 1931 he was furloughed in 1931. And was fortunate enough to rent a gas station in this little small town and that's what kept us above water economically so to speak.

Interviewer: While you were in school after you graduated and went off to college did you have a job before you went into the army?

Ferracio: Oh I helped my father at the gas station.

Interviewer: And that was I mean did you get paid a salary for that or was it just

Ferracio: Oh no

Interviewer: It was just

Ferracio: I was

Interviewer: That was your way of paying him back huh

Ferracio: That was family responsibility.

Interviewer: What on December 7, 1941 do you remember what you were doing that day? And if you do how did you hear about the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor?

Ferracio: I was on a college campus at the time and the news spread very fast. So everybody ran to the nearest radio whoever had a radio and we heard of the incident that way.

Interviewer: Is that one of the deciding factors for you to join the air core cadet program?

Ferracio: Well by February of 1942 which was just several months after the December 7 attack a number of us in my fraternity who were well we were anticipating being drafted but instead of waiting we decided to enlist in the air force cadet program. And it was our hope to become pilots.

Interviewer: Where did you enlist at?

Ferracio: In Pittsburg.

Interviewer: In Pittsburg.

Ferracio: Pittsburg

Interviewer: Where were you attending college?

Ferracio: A small Liberal Arts College in Meadville Pennsylvania Allegany College.

Interviewer: Okay so you went to Pittsburg enlisted to the air force cadet training program. To get into this program did you have to take any special tests where there any other requirements other than just raising your hand and saying I do?

Ferracio: Oh no no no no. A very through physical first and I mean through.

Interviewer: Where did this take place?

Ferracio: In Pittsburg in Pittsburg at the recruiting quarters of the so called army air core in those days it was army air core. Complete physical if you passed the physical then you went on to take a number of written examinations beginning with an IQ exam and various other examinations as to the level of our knowledge and that was it.

Interviewer: Once you made it through your physical your IQ test and everything like that where did you go for basic training?

Ferracio: For basic training they sent all cadet program enrollees to Miami Beach believe it or not. The war department had taken over most all of the hotels on Miami Beach and housed us there in hotels. And then we used the open fields available for drill instruction and various other basic training education.

Interviewer: When you went through basic training was it were you with soldiers who were getting ready to ship straight combat theatres in WWII or were you just with your

Ferracio: No we were all air cadets.

Interviewer: All air cadets.

Ferracio: All air cadets.

Interviewer: Once you finished your basic training where did you get sent to?

Ferracio: Then all of us were sent to another center in Nashville Tennessee where they put us through some more rigorous tests in terms of physical ability. Tested coordination, depth perception, eye sight, various physical requirements that it took to become a pilot. And then additional written tests that would end up classifying you either as a pilot, as a navigator, or as a bombagator. And if you failed all three of these divided tests then they would send you to gunnery school and you would become a gunner an airplane bomber airplane gunner.

Interviewer: You mentioned that they sent all of you do you have any idea or do you remember how large of a class you started with when you first went to Miami Beach?

Ferracio: Hundreds

Interviewer: Hundreds

Ferracio: Hundreds

Interviewer: What was the do you have any idea what the attrition rate was for your class?

Ferracio: The attrition rate in Nashville after we went through the critical phases of our rigorous training I would say was about twenty-five percent. Twenty-five percent that's my estimation.

Interviewer: So after you you've taken all of your test they selected you to be a what?

Ferracio: A pilot

Interviewer: Just a pilot.

Ferracio: I was classified as a pilot.

Interviewer: Was that the highest classification that you could get or?

Ferracio: That's right

Interviewer: That was the highest one?

Ferracio: Highest classification.

Interviewer: Okay after they classified you as a pilot were you broken down into the pilot, the navigator and the bombardier groups and sent to separate training areas?

Ferracio: Exactly

Interviewer: Where did they send the pilot trainees?

Ferracio: The pilots were first at least in my case in my instance and those around me my friends around me were sent to Clinton South Carolina to a very small college there. And we spent I think it was two months there in college reviewing physics, math, some more drill instruction and we began elementary flying. They had some Cessna airplanes there that they would take us up and began to introduce us to the airplanes to flying so on and so forth.

Interviewer: How long did that last?

Ferracio: About two months from there if you would like me to go on.

Interviewer: Please

Ferracio: From there then we were sent to what was called primary training and that was in Camden South Carolina. This was a primary training school where we learned to fly and to solo that's where we began out true pilot experience. I soloed flew and soloed in an airplane called primary trainer 17 made by Steerman PT17. And I soloed that November of 42 it was that November in 42. And then once we soloed then on our own then we could take the airplane up and practice the aerobatics that we were taught by the instructors. And all of the other requirements the maneuverability of the airplane and

routinely we would be tested and we'd go through test test runs. And once we finished with primary then we went to what was called basic training where we flew a bigger plane a more powerful plain the BT9. And that was in that was in Augusta Georgia in Augusta Georgia. And we spent two months there doing more acrobatics in a larger plane with more power. From there then we went to what was called advanced training and that was in Valdosta Georgia. While in advanced training they began to determine what kind of airplane you could best fly. And so they would they would separate you into we got separated into for example if they felt that we were qualified as single engine pilots or twin engine multi engine pilots we'd go to different schools. But I stayed at Valdosta I wanted a twin engine and I had my hopes set on being able to fly a B25 and so we trained then in the twin engine airplane. And that took another couple of months and that was at that time then that we were commissioned and given wings pilots wings to wear. And then from there I went to a B25 training school in Columbia South Carolina and spent a month there learning to fly the B25. You want me to go on from there?

Interviewer: Well I have just a couple of questions for you between here. You started off in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania and then you went to Miami Beach then to Nashville then you moved around other locations in the south. Was this the furthest you'd ever been away from home when you went to Pennsylvania to Miami Beach?

Ferracio: Yes of course.

Interviewer: And so you didn't have much outside of that huh?

Ferracio: Yeah

Interviewer: As soon as you made it through and you started your cadet training what was the time from the cadet training starts until you were pinned with wings and commissioned. About how long did you spend in different phases of training?

Ferracio: Well I mentioned the time we spent in each of the school.

Interviewer: A year about a little over a year?

Ferracio: And I got my wings commissioned in I think it was in May of 43 yeah.

Interviewer: Once you another question for you I'm sorry. You said the instructors would classify you based on what they thought you could best fly a single engine or a multiengine plane. Did you as the cadet or the new commissioned officer did you have any say so in what category they sent you to or was it solei based on their decision?

Ferracio: On their decision.

Interviewer: On their decision. Once you went to Columbia for your B25 training where did you go after that?

Ferracio: Well given the trend that the war was taking and to touch on the point you just made did I have any decision, none of us had any decisions to make they were all made for us. After I trained in the B25 I was transferred to an airbase in Sedalia Missouri where in turn I was trained to fly a C47 twin engine primarily transport airplane. And spent a couple of months there.

Interviewer: After you learned to fly the cargo planes did they send you to any other training courses or anything?

Ferracio: No no at that point then we were all ready to be shipped out to war. And we all had the feeling that and of course those were the days of paratroopers and we all pretty much had the feeling strong feeling that we would be going to Europe to help drop paratroopers when the time came or drop cargo. But instead instead a group of us were sent to the China Burma India Theatre war and that took us to first stop was Karachi India. Having traveled across the Atlantic and across North Africa and across the eastern area of Asia we ended up in Karachi India. Which was the staging area for the China Burma India Theater so far as the army air core was concerned. When I got to Karachi India we discovered that they were short of single engine pilot airplane pilots. So again another training session and they sent up to sent a group of us up to an airbase north of Karachi where we learned to fly the P40 fighter plane. And from there then once we had put that under our belts we went to the eastern end of India to the Province of Assam to a place Chemwa in upper Assam. And at that time that was the primary base for the campaign in at least to my knowledge at that time that was the primary base for the campaign that was to be fought in Burma because the Japanese had already invaded Burma and occupied almost all of Burma all the way up to the borders of India.

Interviewer: The training you got in Assam India was that training as say extensive as say the training you received in the states or was it just a quick down and dirty course compared or considering where you were?

Ferracio: Well no let me back you up the training occurred in Karachi.

Interviewer: Karachi I'm sorry and then you went to Assam I'm sorry.

Ferracio: And that was just long enough for us to learn how to fly that airplane. And once we learned how to fly the airplane which just took weeks just a few weeks and then across India to the as I said to the northern Assam airfield in Chemwa. And it was from there then that we began to fly combat missions into Burma.

Interviewer: And on these combat missions you flew into Burma what was the primary mission since obviously they made you a P40 pilot since they were shorthanded? What were your primary missions?

Ferracio: The primary mission at that time with the planes we had was to support some of the military operations on the ground. Because our forces were beginning to move south in Burma. You may or may not have heard of Merrill's Marauders.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Ferracio: They were par dropped almost in the middle of Burma where they had stationed where they had fought an occupied an area. And so we began to give them air cover so to speak anytime they were being faced with an imbardment by Japanese bombers. So we'd go up try to meet the bombers.

Interviewer: Before you flew your first combat mission did you have any preconceived notions of what it was like to be a combat pilot.

Ferracio: No preconceived notions at all. We just took instructions on where to go, what to look for, how to find our objective these bombers and the Japanese fighter planes also. And do whatever damage we could to protect the men on the ground and then come back to base. And no I had no preconceived notions.

Interviewer: After you flew your first combat mission what was your after thoughts or your reaction to what you had just gone up and done?

Ferracio: Well to use the familiar word that the young kids use today it was a cool experience. It was a cool experience and an exciting experience of course. Adrenaline was high and it took me after that first mission it took me considerable time to go to sleep that night.

Interviewer: What when you guys got ready for your missions what type of equipment did you have in the plane with you? Obviously you had a parachute and a side arm, were there any other provisions in the cockpit or that you carried on yourself in case of being shot down or having to bail out?

Ferracio: Well we wore a vest which was supposed to be our savior in the event that we had to bail out. And the vest was filled with all kinds of equipment food, a compass, knives, and of course we always wore a pistol shoulder harness pistol at all times. And that was about that was about all we had things were very simple in those days.

Interviewer: How long after you were sent after the P40 School and you began flying the P40s how long did you fly those? Did you fly those the rest of the tour

Ferracio: No no

Interviewer: You got sent to another aircraft?

Ferracio: Yeah I finally got my B25. By the time the Japanese had been pushed down oh as far as Michener in Burma and Bomu which was these two places were I would say about 100 miles north of the capital of Burma, doesn't come to mind right now. But anyway by that time then the Japanese fighters and bombers had pretty much disappeared they were pulling them evidently pulling them out of Burma to concentrate in Thailand and in China. So what we did then with the B25s was to do as much bombing in advance of their retreat what was behind them. Bridges, railroads as much damage as we can do to prevent them from retreating. So that was our primary mission in the B25s.

Interviewer: You spoke to our class before like I had mentioned earlier and you told us that they taught you how to do skip bombing.

Ferracio: Skip bombing yes.

Interviewer: Will you tell us about that again please?

Ferracio: Well skip bombing was a development I don't know where it came from but it worked very well. Where we had and you have to remember that Burma is just thick with jungle. But where we had opening and knew that we had enemy or perhaps even a railroad bridge go through going through the thick of the jungle we could skip bomb in other words drop the bomb at an angle with the airplane

about 45 degree angle. Drop that bomb so that when it dropped it took an arch and instead of hitting squarely it would skip in other words it would shoot into the objective.

Interviewer: When you before you started flying and doing your bombing missions did you receive any type of refresher training on the B25 since you had just come from a P40?

Ferracio: I'd already been checked out.

Interviewer: So you didn't need anything. After you went on your runs your bombing missions did you skip bombing to try to block their retreat what were some of the next campaigns missions that you might have been involved with?

Ferracio: Well by the time we backed up the Japanese all the way down into Thailand it was disappearing quickly except for some strong holds that they were holding. There was no more need for bombing or fighter action of any kind and so they took practically all of us except for a few they took us all and put us into the C47 cargo plane to since we now had a multiple number of troops on the ground there in Burma. As they advanced we had to keep them supplied and so we started with these cargo planes the C47 to drop them supplies. And we'd go as far as we could almost into various areas in northern Thailand especially where we knew we had OSS men doing advanced work and so we spent most of our time then moving cargo and dropping by parachute into openings where we knew we had ground troops. And then also there was a division of Chinese soldiers in Burma and so we moved them from the front back to northern Burma to prepare to move them into China.

Interviewer: The resupply mission that you were just talking about was that the airlift over the hump missions?

Ferracio: Well that's when we then I was then shipped out in a new cargo plane called the C46. Which is that time was the largest airplane in the world including the B17s it was a huge airplane with two huge motors that Wright had built. And with the C46 they were the end of flying into China over the hump. And our first mission was to move all of those Chinese troops into China back into China.

Interviewer: You were flying these missions and you mentioned the terrain in Burma being pretty jungle dense jungle area I'm sure the other terrain for say China and India and other areas like that flying over the hump I'm sure those were mountainous type of terrain that you were flying through. What type of conditions did you normally have when you flew were they clear did you have mostly cloudy storm conditions or what was the, what were your conditions like?

Ferracio: I'm glad you asked that question because there wasn't a more in all of this world there wasn't a more severe weather wise a more severe sky to fly in except for the hump flying over the Emalia's. Burma was pretty much flat except for a few small ranges and it was all jungle. But once we hit the Emalia's we were flying at altitudes anywhere from 15 to 25,000 feet totally in clouds in clouds. In all of the time I flew over the hump only on two occasions was the sky clear enough for me to see those mountains Emalia's mountains. But in all other times it was just terrible weather and the weather as I say nowhere in the world is there more severe weather for flying except over the hump. Because it's all thunderstorms they're just not puffy little white clouds they're all thunderstorms because the air coming off of that heated jungle in an easterly direction hitting those mountains would just form a line of thunderstorms constantly. Then we were flying through thunderstorms constantly. Every once in a while we've hit an opening but it wouldn't last very long.



Interviewer: You're flying through these thunderstorms and obviously you can't see where you're going what type of radar or guidance systems did you have in the aircraft to assist you in this?

Ferracio: We didn't have any sophisticated radar in those days. We flew primarily by following the army engineers had succeeded well the battle was going on in Burma had succeeded in going into those mountains and establishing radio output stations in various places. And so we would fly by those radio stations by those radio signals not stations. And each station would be a different signal using the Morse Code. And our airplanes were equipped with what we call radio compasses so that we could pick up those signals and the compass then would lead us to each of these points as we crossed these mountains. Naturally there were located to clear the lowest mountains going across because some of them went to an altitude of 25,000 feet so we had to avoid those. So we flew mostly by radio compass.

Interviewer: How many missions did you have to fly before say you got a break from mission or did you get a break from your missions or were you flying constantly?

Ferracio: When we first went over there we were told that we would be able to come back home for a rest after every 50 missions. However because they were short of pilots we called that area the forgotten war the China Burma war was called the forgotten war. We were short of pilots and instead of sending us back home here for a rest they'd send us to a British Officers rest camp in Gargiland in upper India not far from Mount Everest. And we'd spend a couple of three weeks up there just relaxing and trying to lower our adrenaline a little bit recuperate and then go back and fly another 50. I flew 107 missions by the time the atom bombs were dropped as a matter of fact I was in the rest camp after my second 50 missions I was in Gargiland at the rest camp when we first heard of the atom bomb being dropped on Hiroshima.

Interviewer: You say that you referred to China Burma India Campaign as the forgotten war. What can you elaborate on what you mean by you guys were the forgotten war?

Ferracio: Well as you can imagine if you read much of WWII history the primary objectives were Europe and the Pacific. And most of all that what was most of all of the efforts towards fighting the war including airplanes, tanks, food supplies, you name it the logistics of fighting those two theatres came first. They had first priority on anything that was made that was built or food or whatever it was. Those two theatres had first priority we had third priority other than we were difficult to reach because of the distance. Our supplies came from the west across India as opposed to coming from the east through China because China was well occupied by Japan by that time in the war. So long supply route for us and we were third on the list of priority in terms of theatres in war. That's what we meant by forgotten war.

Interviewer: When you weren't flying your mission you know when you were not at the rest area but during your 50 missions that you were flying did you have any free time say on the ground? Was there anything special that you did during that time or was it just kind of write letters home and take a nap or?

Ferracio: That's right

Interviewer: That was about it?

Ferracio: That's right that's right well if we were fortunate enough we would get a softball and a bat and we'd play softball or volleyball or something like that sure. But that's the only way we spent our time and then writing home.

Interviewer: While you were at your airbases during your missions was it just a concentration of army pilots and army crews that were there or did you have contact with navy or possibly navy or marine pilots?

Ferracio: No we no navy or marine because they were all needed in the Pacific war.

Interviewer: In the Pacific Theatre.

Ferracio: In the Pacific war especially the marine pilots. That was their area and then the navy pilots onboard carriers. No it was all U.S. army air core pilots.

Interviewer: When you guys were set up in your bases was it a big tent city to use that term or did you have permanent establishments built for anything?

Ferracio: No indeed we lived in tents constantly. We lived in tents constantly.

Interviewer: Did you guys have to jump your area much or was it pretty much a secure you were there to stay in that one location?

Ferracio: Well once they established an airstrip when the engineers had finished and then you know the infantry had moved on then they developed a small base and the air strips were always leveled and then covered with steel mesh. So that we had a smooth a smooth surface to land on and then tents were built all around for pilots and maintenance crews and that sort of thing. And we felt secure to the extent that the infantry was not far away from us in the event you know something. We did have to be careful of course if the area had been occupied by Japanese we did have to be careful on our way from the tent to the latrine. Several of our men were unfortunate to have hit a line between two trees where we walked the path a line between two trees with grenades on each end. And that would get you but otherwise we were fairly safe on the ground that is.

Interviewer: On the ground in the air

Ferracio: In the air that was a different story.

Interviewer: How did you get promoted while you were

Ferracio: No no

Interviewer: You didn't get you never got promoted?

Ferracio: No no and I you know I wasn't interested really because my objective was to get finished and hopefully live through it and get back to college.

Interviewer: How many enemy planes did you shoot down?

Ferracio: I shot one down and then I had half of another one a fellow pilot. But we did a lot of destruction in terms of especially the B25 we did a lot of destruction on the ground of Japanese airplanes.

Interviewer: You made a reference a minute ago to the maintenance crews that were on the ground and the infantry crews or the infantry's platoons and all that were not far from you. What as pilots what was the attitude that you guys had towards say your maintenance crews or the infantry soldiers when they happened to be in your location or around your airfields? A good attitude or was it like you see in the movies where the pilots are against somebody and

Ferracio: No no in my case I don't know about anybody else but in my case throughout my experience we were all one team and we were all equals had no problem. There were no turfs you know there were no turf wars between us of any kind because we had to depend on each other to survive. And so we were all on one team.

Interviewer: You said you had one enemy plane that you shot down and half of another. What was your impression on the Japanese pilots that you had to go against or say when you made your runs in the B25 and you started dropping bombs. What was your impression of the Japanese air force?

Ferracio: Well the exposure the primary exposure that I had to the Japanese air force was of course when I was flying the P40. Because in the B25 we had the air pretty much to ourselves very seldom very seldom did you hear that there was enemy aircraft in the area where we were going. But in terms of in terms of the P40 experience we weren't sure that they were very well trained pilots number one. Number two we knew they had a more maneuverable airplane the Zero was a much more maneuverable airplane than the P40 they could turn much more closely than we could. So we had to rely on speed and tactics that would overcome their maneuverability.

Interviewer: So let me go back just a minute here you said on your after your second 50 missions you were in Dargle India

Ferracio: Yes

Interviewer: When you heard that the bomb was dropped.

Ferracio: That's right

Interviewer: Obviously that's about summer 1945

Ferracio: That's right

Interviewer: That you are there. What took place after you guys got the news? Did you finish your rest out or did you immediately get back in planes and go back to your bases?

Ferracio: No we were pretty much rounded up and took back to our bases because we didn't know then what was going to happen whether this meant the end or whether this meant increased activity. And so everybody was pretty much sent back to their own base and by the time we got back to our own bases the second bomb had been dropped.

Interviewer: Once the British had or I'm sorry the Japanese had surrendered and officially the war had ended how long before that was it until you returned to the United States from India?

Ferracio: After they had surrendered we moved everything we had in Burma and in India into China everything was moved airbases infantry everything was moved into China. And in my case I ended up in Shanghai my squadron was and we were still flying C46s. My squadron ended up in Shanghai we went from Burma to Guinean which was the primary base for supplying war in China. And then from Guinean to Shanghai and in Shanghai we moved an entire regiment of Chinese troops from south China up to Peking. And we'd fly these troops up to Peking and then back and so we spend from September to the end of November moving troops moving supplies that sort of thing.

Interviewer: And when did you get your discharge from the military?

Ferracio: I came back home on ship after the war but I came back home on ship on a cruiser U.S. cruiser out of Shanghai. And it took us about two weeks to get back and by that time by the time we hit into Seattle Washington it had taken about two weeks. And we were oh about the middle of December or later but anyway we were all stationed at Fort Lewis which was an infantry base at the time fort. And from there then we were out on trains and taken to Kansas City for discharging. And we spent Christmas of that year on the trains going across the country.

Interviewer: Once you got your discharge did you return back to Pennsylvania or did you stick around for a little while? I'm trying to get to the story that you told us earlier that your you know what you had done. Could you go ahead and tell that story for us again?

Ferracio: Well yeah the scuttlebutt as we were being discharged there at Fort Leavenworth the scuttlebutt was that TWA being headquartered in Kansas City was looking for pilots. And so I think there were a half a dozen of us decided when we were discharged we would check with TWA and surely if they wanted pilots especially of our kind because we had been flying heavy aircraft and so we all signed up. But in the meantime they allowed us since we hadn't been home yet they allowed us to go home. And I did go home and I told my parents that I hadn't been discharged yet that I was going to have to go back to Kansas City and I'd only be home about two or three weeks and go back. And I went back and flew for TWA I flew a route between Washington D.C. and Roswell New Mexico which was the staging area for the wee-tok atom bomb experiments that they were conducting out there. But at one point in talking with my oldest brother I mentioned to him that I was flying for TWA I was really out of the service he was surprised to hear that. Happened to mention to my father and my father told him to get to Kansas City and to tell me that he wanted me to go back to Allegany College or else I could forget the name Ferracio. So I dutifully did the same thing and went back to college I left TWA and went back to Allegany.

Interviewer: And you finished up your undergrad at Allegany?

Ferracio: At Allegany.

Interviewer: After you finished that up did you go straight into your graduate?

Ferracio: I took an extended course there took a master degree in economics and then went to the George Washington University in Washington D.C. because the one of the economics professors there at Allegany I was destined to want to be a doctor as I had a brother a doctor and another one in training. So we had sort of a tradition there but Dr. McLean talked me into going into medical administration because in those days the argument on Capitol Hill was socialized medicine and he felt that that was going to happen and that it would be best to be on the administrative side. And so I switched to

economics and went to George Washington Medical Center they had just opened a brand new hospital. And so I got my second degree there in medical administration and MBA actually in medical administration yeah that's how I ended up in Washington D.C.

Interviewer: Just a couple of more questions and we'll be done. Thinking back to the time you spend in the China Burma India Theatre you had some college so you were a very educated person going into this thing. Did you have a sense of the big picture as far as the total WWII idea of Europe the Pacific and then you guys? Or were you just so focused that you just knew the theater that you belonged to?

Ferracio: We were pretty well focused with the Theatre that we were in because we were kept busy night and day planes were flying night and day over the hump. Regardless of the hour of day or night we were pretty much focused. But what kept us in touch with the rest of the world was the Stars and Stripes newspaper. And that gave us an idea what was going on in Europe and in the Pacific.

Interviewer: And while you were there you already mentioned that you didn't get promoted were there any special medals or citations that you received while you were there?

Ferracio: I was awarded a I'm not sure I want to talk about this but

Interviewer: That's sure if you don't

Ferracio: No no I got two air medals two air medals and then the highest award the Distinguished Flying Cross. And that has a story all of its own that was awarded for a mission I took to rescue a couple of pilots that had been stranded after parachuting in the middle of the hump. And they happened fortunately they happened to land close to an old air strip that was used by the Japanese and I had the assignment in going in there with a C47 a smaller of the cargo planes because that was the only one the kind of plane we could use. Went into rescue them and got them out safely and all but the fact that we still had to do some shooting at some Japanese that were still lingering in the area. But those were my awards and all of the medals for the Theatre I don't remember them all. I don't remember them all but those were my more gratifying rewards.

Interviewer: Do you the people that you met while you were in your cadet training when you got into your squadron and things like that do you still keep in contact with some of these individuals that might still be living? Or once you left was it all ties were ceased?

Ferracio: Oh no after we got back well I should back up and say that out of the original squadron I was in when we first went over only six of us made it back only six of us made it back. And we stayed in touch until today as I sit here as far as I know I'm the only one still alive of that six that made it back. And this was the core group friendship that we had developed.

Interviewer: Looking back last question for you looking back on your experiences is there anything that you know of the might have done different. Or is joining the air core cadet program would you still take the same and make the same choices that you made over again?

Ferracio: Yes I would. Yes I would because as a young kid I had a deep desire to be a pilot and to fly airplanes yeah I spent a lot of time at the local airport in my little town of Dubois I spent a lot of time up there. A couple of the men who had airplanes up there would take us up for rides and yeah I always had

a desire to become a pilot. And that was one reason why I opted to get into the air cadet program and I'd make the same decision today I don't think it would be any different.

Interviewer: Well I have no further questions for you if there is anything that you can think of that you would like to elaborate on or anything else that you might like to add.

Ferracio: Gee you covered it very well I can't think of anything else I can add to it in terms of my experience.

Interviewer: Okay well again I'd like to thank you for the interview

Ferracio: My pleasure

Interviewer: And letting me have an hour of your time.

Ferracio: My pleasure and you're welcome.