

**Interview with Francesco Genovese
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Oakmont, PA
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[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

JZ: When did you come to America?

FG: I arrived in New York on October 28, 1937. We sailed from Naples on the twenty-first of October. In seven days we were in New York.

JZ: Where is your family from in Italy?

FG: We're from Calabria.

JZ: What's the name of the village?

FG: Maritimo. It's a little town. I guess it's a pretty big town but at that time there were maybe 4,000 people.

JZ: So your father came here first?

FG: My father came here. My father left Europe when he was fifteen years old. In 1903, he came to New York, from New York to Pittsburgh in 1903. He was a single boy. Then he came home in 1911 and he married my mother.

JZ: What did he do in New York?

FG: He came to New York in a ship. In the ship they used to carry animals, so he worked there and got free passes. He was a little young boy then. But when he came here he had different jobs. He worked for the city, state, Pittsburgh railway and in the greenhouse. He was good in the greenhouse.

JZ: Would he send money back home?

FG: Oh yeah, he was the oldest in the home. He had three sisters and one brother. My grandfather died when he was a young man so he practically raised the family. That's why he got married when he was thirty-five, thirty-six. That's late but he had to raise his family.

JZ: What do you remember about your childhood in Italy?

FG: Well I'll tell you it was a depressing time. In my little town you could make a living doing odd jobs. I learned to be a tailor when I was nine years old. I tailored and barbered at the same time. When I was twelve years old I had my own customers. I used to go out to the farms and would take care of those farmer boys and girls. I made a living out of that. No money but they used to give me food, that's all I wanted. My family and the man that taught me how to become a barber just wanted to eat. No money involved. When I was fifteen I used to make suits but at that time they wouldn't pay me, they would pay the master. I started to play in the band.

JZ: What instrument?

FG: Saxophone. Oh I liked that. I still like that. Ask me anything you want about music and I will give you a good answer.

JZ: How old were you when your father left Italy?

FG: When my father left for the last time... I didn't know my father until I came to this country because I was only five years old. I forgot. What can you remember when you're five years old? I didn't see my father for ten years. It was depressing times. He would send so much money a month.

JZ: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

FG: I have two sisters and two brothers but one died. The two sisters, then they had me, I'm the third one. Then Vince, the fourth one, is dead and Tony the baby is in a wheelchair.

JZ: I'm curious. Did your father serve in the Italian Army?

FG: No, he was underage. He left when he was only fifteen years old. I was the only one that was in the army and my kid brother too.

JZ: When you were growing up at this time, Mussolini was in power. Can you tell me [about him]?

FG: The beginning Mussolini was a gentleman. He was a good one. My home town had no electricity, no water, and the streets were all dirt. When Mussolini came into power he got electricity, sewers and the streets paved. Before, everyone was illiterate. But Mussolini came in and said, "You send your son and daughter school or else." Then everyone started to learn. But then when I was fifteen they drafted me. We used to go up in the mountain for one month for training in the summertime. When I got in the army here, I knew how to shoot the gun better than some of the sergeants because we were taught as young kids. They taught how to shoot the machine gun, how to go up in the mountain and read the compass.

JZ: Did you go to school too and learn to be trained?

FG: I went to school then to be a priest. As a matter of fact in my mother's family, there were four priests. My mother was a very religious woman. My mother said, "Son, we got to pay the bills." I said to her, "Let me get my pencil." And she asked me, "What the Hell do you need a pencil for?" Back then it was fourteen dollars. She had a good memory. Finally we taught her to write her own name. She was extremely intelligent. My father was a hard worker.

JZ: Why did you decide to come to the United States? To be with your father?

FG: No, for a better life. See, I came first. The second year my father said that he had to go back to the old country. I said to him, "What the Hell for? Everybody here or everybody

there? Make up your mind.” What I did was go to immigrations downtown to a young woman working there and I asked her to help me. She wrote everything down for me and told me get it translated because I couldn’t speak good English. Not even two months I got the letter back telling me that all I needed was a birth certificate and certificate of marriage. My father didn’t believe me that it was that easy to bring everyone to America because I was young.

JZ: How was it at Ellis Island?

FG: I didn’t go. I was an American born abroad. I was an American citizen since I was born. I’ll tell you what happened. My father became a citizen in 1914 or 1915. The law was that when your first child was born they would ask you if you wanted them to be an American citizen. But he never told them that he had a daughter. So my sister never came here because she wasn’t an American citizen like we were. The law changed in 1922 or 1923 that no matter how many children you have they became an American citizen with you. When I was in the Army here they asked me if I was an American citizen. I said that I wasn’t. They had to find out. Oh a week or so later they called me a damn liar. I came to the Army with an Italian passport. I didn’t know.

JZ: Oh, because your father was American, you were American. Did your father have to give up his Italian citizenship?

FG: No.

JZ: But he went back to Italy?

FG: For the last time. He went back, after that no more because the whole family came. He died here.

JZ: What was your father doing here in Pittsburgh?

FG: He was working.

JZ: Where at? What did he do?

FG: The best job that he liked, he was working in the greenhouse. He loved that. He also worked at the steel mill and with the Pittsburgh Street Car Company.

JZ: What did you do when you came?

FG: I was a tailor.

JZ: Oh, so you were tailoring?

FG: Yeah all my life.

JZ: Where did you find work? In East Liberty?

FG: Believe it or not I worked for a dollar a day, nine hours a day for six months. Here in East Liberty. Do you know where the railroad station was? It was all shops there on the second floor. They had a big tailor shop there. They put me as an apprentice because they didn't want to pay me the full price. But I knew how to do it on a different system. Big deal. But you got to make a living. What happened to me, the guy with the shop got sick and almost died. From there, I went to work at the William Penn Hotel downtown. I went from seven dollars a week to fifteen dollars a week. What's the difference between the two places? One place was a union and the other wasn't with a union. I was supposed to make eighteen dollars a week but got fifteen because of the union. In those days that was great money. We had a good season and a bad season. You were lucky if you worked nine months out of the year because of the Depression. They liked me over there. I was good to them. When you're good and give respect to them, they like it. At the end of the week I would make about five or six dollars extra from tips.

JZ: Did your dad own a house?

FG: No. We bought a house after the war. We bought four houses. The whole building, all four units.

JZ: When you were here during the Depression did you miss Italy?

FG: Yes and no. You kind of forget it. But either way I liked my little town.

JZ: In Italy did they ever tell you bad things about the United States or any propaganda?

FG: What they taught us was to be a good, respectful person and obey the laws and no one would bother you. Most of all respect the people. That was a Mussolini idea.

JZ: Did you have any difficulty with the government, the Fascist government?

FG: No, not really. They would treat us nice. When we would play in the band at school we used to sing the Morning Prayer.

JZ: By the time the war started in 1941, were you still a tailor?

FG: Yeah, all the time.

JZ: And you played in a band too here?

FG: No, not in a band. See in 1941 I missed the draft. Then in 1942 they got me in the end. In 1943 I went into the Army and came out in 1946. I had a little bit of a hard time when I went over there because my English wasn't that good. I learned a lot.

JZ: Did you ever take classes?

FG: Well I learned to speak English at the Kingsley House. I can understand a little bit of French. They put me in school with the black students. There were about ten of them. They were all middle aged and they would look at me like I was one of them. I started to like them. Then again, I learned it good when I went into the Army.

JZ: When Pearl Harbor happened and Italy declared war against the United States what did you think?

FG: I didn't believe it. It was Sunday morning and I was still in bed when I heard it on the radio. When Mussolini declared war against the United States people started to turn against him. Not just me but everyone in my same position. When you declare war against the United States, what chance do you have? Let me tell you about when you went into the Army. This you're going to like. Take a guess where they send me? I started in York at a camp to learn the Italian language. There was a young boy from Philadelphia there and he taught me English and I taught him Italian. I was supposed to go to Italy for a G-5 to deal with the civilians. I went into the infantry.

JZ: In 1943 you were drafted and right afterwards you went to York.

FG: They kept me there for fourteen days. There were two Italians and one German.

JZ: Did you face any discrimination because you were Italian?

FG: Oh, here they treated me very well. They respected me. I didn't understand the way they spoke to me because they spoke differently than we did. When I went to war overseas, in England I had a nurse. She was American from North Carolina. My doctor was from Pennsylvania. So I said to the doctor that I didn't feel like getting up because I had got hurt in war and suffered from a concussion. The doctor told me, "You don't have to get up. Tell the nurse." So like gentleman I tell her. And she tells me, "Get up you dirty dago." Now my buddy told me that I shouldn't take that. I pretended that I didn't hear it. But the second time she said, "Get up you dirty dago wop." I had one of those cups and I threw it and she ducked and it went out the window. It was put on my record. I was supposed to come to Philadelphia Hospital to recuperate. Father Black, he was a Lutheran preacher that helped me out a lot. They had to punish me. Instead of sending me to the Philadelphia hospital they sent me to Paris. So I was in France for a second time.

JZ: So you were in England at this time?

FG: Yeah I was in England. And they sent me to Paris. I couldn't stand doing nothing. I needed to do something. So they put me in MP duty.

JZ: After you got your Italian degree, like you really needed it, they trained you to be a machine gunner?

FG: I went to infantry camp.

JZ: Where was this camp?

FG: South Carolina. I liked the camp. We used to go to one town by it.

JZ: I'm just going to backtrack here. When you got drafted, you questioned it because you didn't know you were an American citizen. You went to the draft office.

FG: No, when we went to camp. I got drafted here in Pittsburgh. They sent you camp at Fort Meade. From Fort Meade they separate you to whatever they need. That's when they sent me to outside of Harrisburg to learn Italian. The war was over in Italy at this point. They didn't need any more interpreters. So they sent me to the infantry. I was an interpreter for French as well when we were in France.

JZ: You found out in the Army that you were an American citizen. The officer called you liar. He apologized. So in South Carolina, what division were you in?

FG: It wasn't a division, it was a training camp. Then once you trained there for seventeen weeks they sent me to the Fourth Infantry Division. The Fourth Infantry Division was destroyed completely.

JZ: You weren't a replacement were you?

FG: No.

JZ: What kind of gun were you training on in South Carolina?

FG: Whatever kind you want. Machine gun, mortar, .30 caliber and .50 caliber. Then we had the tripod rifle with the three bullets at the same time. It was a good training camp. Head-to-head combat. For the little man that I was, I was tough.

JZ: On your first day of this training camp, what were your emotions?

FG: I knew some people from the Old Country. The only thing was that they speak different down south and I couldn't understand them. You would focus day to day. I wasn't scared. As a matter of fact, I was never scared. The only time I got scared was when General McNair and General Roosevelt and the Eighth Air Force came from England.

JZ: After your training for seventeen weeks in South Carolina you were shipped to England?

FG: We went to Boston. We spent three weeks there. I was training to be an MP there. From here went into the boat and landed in Liverpool, England. From Liverpool we stayed three more days aboard a train and went to Scotland. Then from Scotland we went to South Hampton and stayed there for a little while. Across the Channel we were told they could kill us so we practiced. We lost one boat with forty soldiers on it because a submarine got it.

JZ: So you landed on D-Day.

FG: No, I landed on D-Day plus ten. I don't know if you read this but I was in the 22nd. The 8th and the 15th went first and then a storm came so we couldn't go.

JZ: So you're the man that carried the tripod?

FG: Yeah.

JZ: What other weapons did you carry on you?

FG: I had a pistol.

JZ: When did you landed in Liverpool? What month?

FG: It early, it was before Easter. We took another train to Scotland. I loved Scotland. Beautiful.

JZ: You were trained and as soon as you landed you went?

FG: Yeah. They would give you the little guns and shots.

JZ: For what?

FG: I don't know. Shots.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

FG: When we were in England, me and my buddy went to eat at a little restaurant. They spoke two languages there. So the waiter asked me what I wanted to eat. I didn't know what to say. I said, "Make me something to eat, it doesn't matter what." Take a guess of what he brought me? A big bowl of escargot with the hot peppers and the French bread and a glass wine. Oh, boy I loved it. It was three o'clock in the morning and I ate the whole damn thing by myself. The guy told me, "I knew you were probably Italian and I knew you would like a big meal." He spoke Italian better than me, he wasn't Italian. He just studied two or three languages.

JZ: That was in Paris? Getting back to England when you were in South Hampton. Were you in South Hampton when D-Day happened?

FG: I was in England aboard a ship on the Channel but the storm held us back.

JZ: Did you want to go to England? Would you have preferred to go to Italy?

FG: Well I was going to but then it was changed. But at the beginning I was going. When I was sick in the hospital I would have liked to go. The first time we were supposed to go to Italy we were going to leave on Sunday night and on Friday morning it was changed. That was canceled. The second time I was supposed to go through the north but that was changed. So then they asked us to go see Holland, and Norway. They gave me a fifteen

days pass. With the money I had and my clothes I went. It was cold but it was beautiful. It was the best vacation I have ever had.

JZ: Getting back, you landed on June 10th or June 6th? Or was D-Day the 16th? When you landed on the beach what did it look like?

FG: The beaches had bodies all over the place. I remember when we landed, they were still fighting. They had a machine gun and a long distance cannon they would shoot from the wall. When we landed a lieutenant lost his leg and went back to the boat. They would tell us, "Whenever you get there, do like what Napoleon would do. Bend down and grab a handful of sand and squeeze it in your hand until it would come out all over. That would mean that God would help you.

JZ: How did you get onto the beach?

FG: In a barge. You would get close to the land and walk a little through the water. The water would be up to here on me. Brave or not you had to walk through it, 6'1", 6'2". Here I am 5'5". I think I was 5'6" and 137 pounds. Now I'm 5'3". I shrunk three inches. I was fit as a ram.

JZ: How did you go inland? Were you in a jeep?

FG: Oh, yeah. In the tanks, even. See we were spearhead division. Do you know what that is?

JZ: No.

FG: You're supposed to pick up and we rode the tanks until we got there. When we got there we would wait until the units would come out. You would hold the place. In other words, you would have to help them before they could help you. That's why it was called the spearhead division. When we got there, there was danger. And that's what I told you about the night patrol. We had a Mexican man, he was good at night. God damned German dogs were barking like Hell. That's no good because the enemy would know you were. If they knew you were here they would bombard you with the cannon. We killed the dogs at night with a knife. That's mean.

JZ: When you went to Saint Lo right?

FG: The Battle of Saint Lo? Yeah.

JZ: Tell me about that.

FG: OK. Five o'clock in the morning we got to Saint Lo. Six o'clock in the evening we had to come back. So finally one morning at like three o'clock, the 8th and the 9th Air Force from England came in and surrounded it in two. That's when we lost a lot of people from our own fire. General Roosevelt and General McNair got hit that day.

JZ: Oh, that's how they got killed.

FG: Yeah, that's how they got killed. They say no but I know they got killed. You're supposed to shut up too. But what I saw there, young man, was incredible. You saw men split in two. You lose your cool. They would give us a shot to help us. Sometimes it wouldn't help. A lot of people went nuts.

JZ: They would give you a shot?

FG: They would give us shots all over the place.

JZ: When you were in combat? To calm you down?

FG: Oh yeah. Sometimes they would give us drinks, lemonade or coffee with something in it.

JZ: You know what it was called?

FG: I don't know what it was called. You finish the cup and you wouldn't give a damn about the war.

JZ: When you first experienced combat what did you think?

FG: At first I thought it was joke. I didn't see anyone. When people would start to fall in front of you then you would think about it. When you're young, they would tell you "Be alert, take cover." That's what we did. But then what got me shook up was that I killed a German. I know I did. It was him and I. I was a little bit faster than him and I shot him. Oh, I went to a priest. You kill a man for Christ's sake. How much can you take?

JZ: So during the Battle of Saint Lo you were with the machine gun?

FG: Oh yeah, definitely. Big deal after the catastrophe you would get three days off to recuperate. You needed those three days off. The last combat was the Battle of the Bulge. When we got done we would come home and rest. It was a small European village. The Germans were a little fanatic because they knew they lost. When we cross from Belgium to Germany there was a quick divider. The first thing they did was try to take our bags. I wouldn't give it to them. I didn't. I had a lot of stuff in there. I had Chanel Number Five in there that I stole. Oh we stole a lot of stuff. And when we come back before going home I would take more. It was a beautiful town that you could see on a Christmas card. Now, if you put the white flag up, it would mean that you surrendered. The Germans were inside the church. The major was a smart man, he was from the south. The three groups divided into three groups. The men in the middle got a little hurt, seven soldiers were killed. What the major did was call back the units. He used white fosters and burned the town. When you put a white flag you would surrender and live but they didn't.

JZ: Tell me about the German soldiers, you said they were fanatics.

FG: The Germans soldiers didn't care. The special troops were fanatics and would walk alone. The little soldiers, the G.I. soldier, didn't give a damn. I liked one. I even worked in a gas station in Antwerp, Belgium. He came up and said to me something and I paid no attention. I guess he was telling me there was danger in the station but I couldn't understand. Up came smoke. We took care of him good. This you're going to like. There was man, a captain, from the Canadian troops who would send food to the troops. He came off the highway for gas. He looked at me and said, "You're Italian?" "Yes." He said, "Do you speak Italian?" "Yeah I come from there, sure." He tells me, "I need fifty gallons of gasoline." I said, "Captain, you want me to go to jail?" He said, "No you don't

go to jail. I will sign for it properly but I have no reparation.” I said to myself that if I don’t give it to him, but I gave it to him. He told me you would be back next week. And next week he came back. You got to believe me, a station wagon full of food. He told me, “It’s yours.” I said, “Captain, I helped you, you help me.” The house that we rented was an old man and an old woman. And this old man spoke pretty good English. He said, “We don’t have a place to keep it all.”

JZ: You were in Antwerp for a while?

FG: Oh yeah. Antwerp was a nice town. I liked it.

JZ: Tell me about the march. You had to march all across France didn’t you?

FG: Yeah. We marched until we got to Paris. We took Paris at about four o’clock in the morning and we camped there. Two God damned German soldiers were shooting like Hell. What can you do? We had an Army and they had two soldiers. Fanatics. On the fourth day the 28th Division from Pennsylvania marched in the parade in Paris. The 4th Division had to stand guard on the other side. How do you like that? We were taken care of too. General Patton was there. He made a speech. The point was seventeen. He said “What will be the best to pick up seventeen in twenty-four hours or to spend four days and lose the same about of men?” Initially the sooner the better. If you die you die. And that’s what he did, he gave the order. Oh hey, they took seventeen in less than twenty-four hours.

JZ: What’s seventeen?

FG: The number. They used numbers. You would report by numbers.

JZ: Did you see General Patton?

FG: Oh yeah I saw Patton, maybe he was twenty-five feet ahead of me. I saw Eisenhower. All of the Generals. One British guy, I hate him. He was a fanatic.

JZ: What did you think of Patton?

FG: Yeah I liked General Patton. You know he was a little bit of a fanatic but he studied history and that's how he became a great general. He studied Alexander the Great and that's how he became a good general. I know. He studied at West Point. You know who was Alexander the Great? He was twenty-five years old when he died. He was the most power, more powerful than Napoleon. He was a powerful man. His father was a king. I had good teachers. I know these things.

JZ: After Paris where did you go?

FG: Close to Belgium. From Antwerp we came back. We went to New York. That's when we came home.

JZ: You were wounded?

FG: Oh, yeah. I spent three months in England. Two and a half months in the hospital.

JZ: How were you wounded?

FG: I got a spinal concussion. It was railroad cannon that those German used to use. We were in a fox hole. Seven of us were in there, machine gunners. Three of us survived, the rest died. From there they put us on the airplane to England to the hospital.

JZ: So you were in a fox hole in Belgium? Was this during the Bulge? They had a huge a railroad gun?

FG: Yeah. Yeah.

JZ: Were you unconscious?

FG: No, I think my brains were good. I was almost paralyzed. They put me in the stretcher. The one think I don't like was the Red Cross. I hate them. They would see a soldier on the ground almost dying. They save an officer? Yes. A soldier? No. What's the matter with them? Why? I was told when we got discharged in Fort Dix, they asked, "You want

the Red Cross?" I said, "No, the last thing I want is the Red Cross. No offense against you." I like the Salvation Army but not the Red Cross. The Salvation Army helped me but the Red Cross didn't.

JZ: After they took England, you were in the hospital for how long?

FG: For almost three months. That's when I hit the nurse.

JZ: Explain that again. You were in the hospital?

FG: They would put you in the whirlpool for over an hour to relax your muscles. In the morning you were supposed to get up and fix your bed and call in. The captain told me to fix my bed and call him again. I wanted to tell him to go to hell but as a gentleman I didn't.

JZ: Then the nurse came over.

FG: She came over and called me a dirty dago and I pretended I didn't hear it. But the second time she called me a dirty dago wop and that's when I couldn't take it. And I didn't.

JZ: What did you do?

FG: I threw the cup and hit the window. If I would have hit her, I would have killed her.

JZ: Was she Army nurse?

FG: She was an American nurse of the 1st and ten. The English would treat you good.

JZ: Afterwards, what immediately happened?

FG: The MP put me in a cold shower. They thought I was nuts. To cool me off. I was Section Eight for five days. They thought I was crazy. When my captain came up I told him what happened and why I hit her. I never saw that woman again.

JZ: They never reprimanded her?

FG: No. Instead of sending me to Philadelphia they sent me to Paris.

JZ: This is the spring of 1945?

FG: Yeah. I liked Paris people.

JZ: They court-marshaled you in Paris?

FG: They court-marshaled me in England. I was supposed to go to Philadelphia but they sent me to Paris instead to punish me.

JZ: So you had a trial in England?

FG: Yeah. I had an advocate, that preacher. He helped me a lot. He said to the court, "How would you like someone to call you that after you come back from battle?" They didn't answer. They had to do something because I tried to assault an officer and instead of doing anything on a permanent basis I was discharged to Europe instead of the United States. You're not supposed to assault an officer no matter what.

JZ: How did you serve your sentence?

FG: In the hospital again. When I was in the hospital I was getting sick doing nothing, I was going crazy. That's when I asked if I could have a job. He sent me to MP duty at night. They bent the rules a lot because of the situation but they told me never to strike an officer no matter what.

JZ: Were you feeling better when you got to Paris? You could walk?

FG: Oh yeah. I just wasn't exactly strong enough.

JZ: You came home in 1946 from Paris?

FG: Actually we came back from Antwerp. I went in with a big convoy and came back with a big convoy. You know a funny thing? When we were at high sea, my brother sent a telegram that he was going to Germany when I was coming home.

JZ: You were coming home and he was going to Germany. Do you remember hearing about the atomic bomb?

FG: No, we never heard about that.

JZ: What was it like on VE Day when the Germans surrendered? You were in Paris then.

FG: People were ringing the bells. It was a holiday that the war was over here. Not in Japan.

JZ: What was your rank? Still a Private First Class?

FG: When I was in Paris they gave me two or three jobs there. They had to make me a sergeant to be in charge of fixing the uniforms because otherwise I couldn't have the job. I was the only tailor there. I got tired of it though. I didn't like it. I told someone to go somewhere.

JZ: What was it like when you came home?

FG: I tried to drive a racing car. I couldn't. Then I drove a station wagon, big trucks. I come home. I got to get on that course. In 1939 I almost got killed here from an accident on Washington Boulevard. After that I never would drive. And I didn't.

JZ: When you came home was there any parades?

FG: The first they did, not even four or five months, I got a letter to be on jury trial. I went to see someone in charge. I told them "Go ahead put me in jail. I just came home from the war, you think I going to do this?" He said, "You just came home?" They never called me again. When we got off the boat, this one guy carried a dog. It was a beautiful dog. He thought that no matter what he was going to keep that dog.

JZ: Did the war change you at all?

FG: Yes and no. It gave me more experience and I became more of a man then I was before. I became good to people. I didn't resent or fight anymore. Before I had such a temper. I learned to be milder.

JZ: Did you feel more American?

FG: Well, I didn't like what they did in the beginning. You get more mature because you went through hell and you get more affectionate with people.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

JZ: So when you got home you went back to be a tailor?

FG: When I came home I was going to sign up to fifty-two twenty. For fifty-two weeks they're supposed to give you twenty dollars a week. One time I got home at five o'clock in the morning my mother came down and gave me more lunch and told me, "You go to work or don't come here no more." I didn't even go to bed. I didn't even change my clothes. I caught the six o'clock bus and went downtown and started working at seven. My mother was a tough woman.

JZ: This fifty-two weeks twenty-dollars is part of the G.I. bill?

FG: Yeah.

JZ: You didn't have any problems even though you were dishonorably discharged?

FG: No, I was honorably discharged. Nobody calls you dirty dago wop and you do nothing.

JZ: You think after the war, the way that the Italian Americans fought, do you think it changed people's perceptions at the time?

FG: I don't know. I couldn't tell you, young man. I couldn't tell. Maybe in certain ways but to me, no. Personally, no. I could tell you one thing. There was a generous family bar on the corner where we would go grab a beer. We were at the bar and two men wearing white ties come in from New York and were looking for Frank Genovese. That's me. They asked to talk to me privately. I said, "Yeah." Who do you think it was? They were from the generous family from Hoboken, New Jersey. I am interested in that life. They knew the whole God damned history about me. Where I was born, how long I was in the United States, how long I was in the army, that I was a tailor. Surprising. They wanted to put a business in Hoboken, New Jersey or put a business here and put a tailor shop. I said, "I don't know. Come back later and maybe I'll give you an answer." I told him no and that in three months I was getting married. I settled down. I came home in 1946 and I got married in 1947. It didn't take me long. In 1949 my daughter was born. I could have been dead. They do you a favor and they expect a favor from you. I have no record against me. You can go to the courthouse and find out.

JZ: Any final thoughts?

FG: Well, you ask me the question. The beginning you don't like it. I didn't want to go into the Army during war time. You make the best of it and become a good soldier. Civilian life is civilian life unless you make a career out of it. Which maybe I made a mistake. I don't think so, but maybe. I don't know how many points I had. During the war they wanted to send me to Japan and I said no. One thing I learned was don't volunteer for nothing. Because if something happens and you volunteered, you have to go. I did once. I came off a thirty day pass from England and I signed up. One guy says to me in Italian, "You did wrong. You know what Airborne is? You're going into the gliders." The next couple days they took me and said that this boy didn't understand what he did. They took me off.

JZ: Did you feel like you had more of a right to be in this country after you fought in this war?

FG: Well yeah. You compare the Italian and the American Army. My friend of mine, we compare. He served in the Italian Army. When you reach twenty years old there you have to serve in the Italian Army regardless.

JZ: During World War II?

FG: No, this is before World War II. It was the Spanish and Ethiopian War. I like to tease him about it.

JZ: Thank you.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[End of interview]