Oral History Interview of Michael L. Linquata

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**Interviewer:** Julia Collins, Courtney Barth, and Laura Muller, Suffolk University

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**Interview Summary**

In this interview, Michael L. Linquata, a 1950 graduate of Suffolk University, reflects upon his experiences during World War II as well as his experiences as a student and trustee of Suffolk University. In the first part of the interview, Mr. Linquata discusses his early life in Gloucester, Massachusetts and his military service during WWII as a combat medic in Europe and later as a prisoner of war after his capture by the German Army. The second part of the interview focuses on his post-WWII experiences back in the United States, including his time as an undergraduate at Suffolk University during the 1950s, his accomplishments as a Suffolk University trustee, and how Suffolk University prepared him to take on leadership roles in his community.

**Subject Headings**

Battleground Europe. Battle of the Bulge
Linquata, Michael L.
Prisoner of war
Suffolk University
Suffolk University. Business School
Suffolk University—History
Suffolk University—Mascot—Hiram the Ram
World War II

Table of Contents

Part One of Interview, Recording One
Introduction and early life in Gloucester p. 3 (00:05)
Entering the Armed Services in 1944 p. 4 (04:50)
On the front lines in France p. 10 (19:32)
Capture by the German Army p. 20 (49:30)
Liberation from German prisoner of war camp p. 31 (1:23:30)
Conclusion of war-time experience p. 38 (1:47:45)

Part Two of Interview, Recording Two
Introduction and admission into Suffolk p. 38 (00:02)
Suffolk faculty members, classmates, and campus culture p. 43 (13:42)
Suffolk’s mascot -- Hiram the Ram mascot p. 49 (30:50)
Academic and social activities p. 52 (38:25)
Role and accomplishments as a trustee p. 61 (1:03:44)

Interview transcript begins on next page
The first part of this interview took place on December 11, 2008.

**Interview Transcript**

**LAURA MULLER:** Today is Thursday, December 11, 2008. We are here at the Gloucester House Restaurant with Mr. Michael Linquata, Suffolk University class of 1950. I am Laura Muller. I’m here with Julia Collins from the Suffolk University Archives and Courtney Barth from the University Advancement Office. Mr. Linquata, can you just start by introducing yourself and telling us a little bit about yourself?

**MICHAEL LINQUATA:** Yes. I was born and brought up in Gloucester. As a matter of fact, you can almost see where I was born. I was right down here on the other side of the harbor. It was in 1925, July fifth. When I was born, it was five o’clock in the morning. And my father, to celebrate, he saw fireworks out the window. My mother just got through labor. I guess she was upset a little bit. But anyhow, that is five o’clock in the morning, five hours after Fourth of July. And anyhow, that’s when I was born. Unfortunately for my mother, I was born thirteen pounds.

**MULLER, JULIA COLLINS, AND COURTNEY BARTH:** Oh!

**LINQUATA:** And I was the first born. And I was wondering why she was always upset with me. I ended up with a broken arm coming out as a little baby. There wasn’t enough room. So, anyhow, that’s what happened. So I was much larger than a normal baby as an infant. But, anyhow, I developed I think physically very well. And I didn’t have any big, big problems physically, or mentally. So I was, somehow or other, more or less normal.

I went to Gloucester public schools for the most part. Actually, I don't know if you want to hear that part of it. When I went to school, grammar school, I started at parochial school. I had a problem. I didn’t know it, and I don’t think my folks were really aware of it at the time. But I was color blind, which I still am. Not wholly, but partially, and nearsighted. And those days the nuns, I guess, were not really attuned to what they are now. And they thought I was a little bit on
the dumb side, I think. But, of course, I can understand it, when you color a Christmas tree brown instead of green. (laughter) What the hell did I know? I thought it was all the same. So, you do those things. So I repeated that grade and my mother pulled me out of school. I’m glad she did, and put me into public school. And, of course, I did okay there. I was never a great student but I was a, I guess, a very normal student. But I wasn’t ever real great. While I was in high school, I did study the trumpet. And I was in the high school band. We had a great band here at Gloucester for many, many years. I was in that band. And that sort of carried me through the school system. I was an average student. I wasn’t a great student. But, anyhow, I got in the service. I fudged the fact that I was color blind. I had a friend of mine call the numbers out and I repeated the numbers. I guess they didn’t care. I mean the sergeant who was in charge of that desk, I guess he wasn’t really overly concerned about it. And he wanted to get people in; that was his main purpose. It was something I wanted to be in so they took me. Being nearsighted, I couldn’t fudge that. A good thing for the service—

(interruption)

Okay. I will ramble on and you girls just interrupt me.

COLLINS: So we were just talking about how you had gone through an accelerated high school program. How did that work?

LINQUATA: Well, the local school, high school, had an accelerated high school program for young men that were going to go into the service. And there were probably about forty or so. I don't know the exact count, maybe forty, forty-five, I don't know. And all of us that went through that program and graduated early January 1944, all together. They had a ceremony, a small ceremony, in the school auditorium. I guess they called all the students in, I don’t remember the exact details. But it was sort of an informal ceremony but we were all up there. We all received
the diploma. And that was early January ’44. By that time we had already had our physical to go
in the service, which I wrote in the little story.¹ Do you want me to repeat that part of it?

COLLINS:  Sure.

LINQUATA:  Well, we went through about a month before that. And all of us went to Boston.
And in Boston, the government had hired some large garage, very big, from one of the
automobile companies, you know. They built a garage in Boston, somewhere near BU [Boston
University] or in that general area. But we had to go through the physical. And the physical was
something I’ve never seen before and I’ll probably never see again. It’s rather unusual, at least I
thought. We, about two thousand of us, I guess. [It was] huge, a lot of people in there, all young
men. And they had several different stations for examinations. And some were sergeants,
military, and some people were doctors at the various stations. Each of us was given a clipboard
with about a dozen sheets of paper on them to be filled out, one for each station that we
approached. And, of course, the first thing we did before we even got the clipboard, we had to
strip all the way down. And the only thing we had left on was our shoes and stockings. That’s all
we had. And you’ve got to figure about two thousand young men. And, of course, we were in all
shapes. Some were tall. Some were short. Some were fat, you know what I mean. But, of course,
we all had some common—

COLLINS:  Features, yes. (laughs)

LINQUATA:  Items. But, anyhow, we were all shapes. So we went through each station. And I
got through all of them except two I had difficulty with. One was the nearsighted. I really
couldn’t fudge that very well. So they put it down, which in a way was good for the Army. It
may be good for me, too. And then, also, I went through the color blind test, which I couldn’t
fudge. But I had a good friend of mine, this high school classmate. And he was just after me in
line. And I told him, again, that word I use quite often. I says, “Oh, shit!” Jack, Curly, he says,
“What’s the matter, buddy?” I said, “I have a problem.” “What is it?” I said, “I can’t see the

¹ Mr. Linquata is referring to his memoir of his military service, which can be found online at:
http://coulthart.com/134/linquata%20history.htm. A more detailed version of his account is available in the
University Archives.
numbers.” He said, “I’ll help you.” And he did. And he looked over my shoulder. And the
sergeant on the other side of the desk had this big book with pages, color blind with the dots. The
various color dots. And you get the various numbers. A lot of those I couldn’t see. So Jack is
right behind me and he whispers in my ear. You know, and I repeat the number. He tells me,
“Twenty-one.” “Twenty-one.” “Six.” “Six.” And so on. So I repeated the numbers and I got
through. They didn’t know I was color blind. And then, when I got through, because I was
nearsighted as far as they knew, they didn’t know I was color blind. As far as they knew, I didn’t
qualify for the Navy because in those days you had to have perfect eyesight for the Navy. Today
I think they relax that quite a bit, but those days you had to have perfect eyesight. So, I didn’t
qualify for that. So that meant I was going to go into the Army. I ended up going through the
Army process, which was later. I also, in a sense, I didn’t qualify for the infantry because I was
nearsighted; and just as well. So I never, ever learned how to shoot a rifle. So I never shot a rifle
or a gun or anything of that nature. But they automatically put me into the medics because they
figured that would be an area that I didn’t have to worry about being nearsighted. So, anyhow, I
went in the medics. They put me in what’s called limited service.² Limited service meant that I
would be somewhere, working in a hospital or maybe even a field station or whatever, but not on
the frontlines. Anyways, you know, limited service. So I would be somewhere behind the lines
but not near the lines at all. Well, anyhow, I went to basic camp—basic training camp [at], Camp
Grant, Illinois, which was about ninety miles to the west of Rockford, Illinois, not too far from it.
So I went there for training. We were there five months.

COLLINS: And which unit were you attached to?

LINQUATA: No, just general—

COLLINS: Oh, it was just everybody was mixed.

LINQUATA: Yeah. No units at this point, just general—we had to learn hospital work. We
were trained in that. We were trained in emergency work, you know, in case someone like
frontlines—

² Limited service refers to non-combat military personnel.
COLLINS: First aid?

LINQUATA: First aid; had to learn that. We had to learn a little bit about sanitation, which was all part of that. And another part of, which we weren’t involved in, was what they called the graves registration, which is when the soldiers die and they have to bury them. That is also part of the medical part of it. Which I wasn’t—I had no training in that. But sanitation and the other stuff, we had a general education on that. And we had all the education that the infantry has except we knew nothing or learned nothing about firearms. But we learned—our training was in the medical part of it. And that’s what we learned. But, anyhow, training was over about July. And when it was over, by that time in Europe they had a tremendous amount of casualties on D-Day. And they were certain there were going to be a lot more. So they had a re-examination, so we had to go to the physical again. They wanted to see if there was anybody they missed that they could put in the frontlines. So the sergeant, another sergeant at the end, he interviewed me. And he says, “You know, you’re limited service.” I said, “I know it.” He said, “Do you want to go to general service?” I said, “Can I?” He said, “Yeah.” “Good.” So I went to general service, just like that. But general service, I knew what it meant. And, of course, the sergeant knew as well as I did that I would probably go to the frontlines. But if you think about the tempo of the times, the way we were at that time—for one thing we were extremely patriotic. And being young, I didn’t want to go through the war and say I missed something. I got to see it. Let’s see it and do it. So I really did want to go to the frontlines, and I did. So, I went into general service. General service, by the time I got on the ship, because I had gone to two camps, one was Camp Reynolds in Pennsylvania and the other was—one in New York City, just outside New York City, New Jersey, but, anyhow—

COLLINS: Oh, I think it was Camp Kilmore you were at.

3 D-Day marked the Allied invasion of Europe during World War II. The operation was the largest amphibious invasion in history and took place along a fifty mile stretch of the northern French coast. Over 175,000 American, British, and Canadian soldiers crossed the English Channel and landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. Another 195,700 naval and merchant navy personnel and 5,000 ships were also involved in the invasion.
LINQUATA: Kilmore; that was the second camp I went to. And then from there I went to the—we went onto the Queen Mary.\(^4\) I don't know if I have that in the book\(^5\) or not.

COLLINS: Yes, you did. So you were heading to be part of the European campaign?

LINQUATA: Yes. Right. So, the Queen Mary. And I think I told you Churchill\(^6\) was on that vessel.

COLLINS: Um-hm.

LINQUATA: Yeah. All right.

COLLINS: So Winston Churchill and a bunch of—it was a big troop ship going back over—

LINQUATA: Yes, there were thirteen thousand of us; thirteen thousand of us on one ship. And the ship was so crowded that we had only two meals a day because that’s all they could cook. There were so many people; they just didn’t have the facilities. And one of the things that happened aboard the boat, and I should have known better coming from Gloucester but I didn’t know it at the time—I wanted to take a shower and I did. And you girls ever take a shower with salt water? Have you?

COLLINS: No.

LINQUATA: Any of you?

BARTH AND MULLER: No.

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\(^4\) The Queen Mary, a British luxury ocean liner, was used as a troopship during WWII.

\(^5\) Mr. Linquata is referring again to his memoir: available at [http://coulthart.com/134/linquata%20history.htm](http://coulthart.com/134/linquata%20history.htm), or in the University Archives.

\(^6\) Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965) served as British Prime Minister during World War II from 1940-1945.
LINQUATA: Well, let me tell you, if you are going to do it, you better bring salt water soap with you. (laughter) They’ve got a special soap for that. I didn’t know. And I went in and took my shower with regular soap. And, of course, I put it, washing my hair. I put it in my hair and all of that. And I come out, there was a glob of grease up there. (laughter) Grease. What the hell happened? I couldn’t imagine. And I had to go to the ship’s commissary to get some salt water soap. You learn sometimes, you know. But coming from Gloucester you would think, well, you should know that, but I didn’t. So, anyhow, I got through that little problem. But then we went to—landed in Firth of Forth, they call it. Which is like a fjord, very similar to a fjord in Norway. And the Queen Mary was right up into the Firth of Forth. So in the meantime, it took five and a half days to get across, which is pretty fast. And the Queen Mary zigzagged all the way. No escort, and the submarines were still out there. But there was no escort.

COLLINS: Because your ship would have been very vulnerable because it was full of troops.

LINQUATA: Yeah.

COLLINS: So that would have been a good target?

LINQUATA: The Germans would have loved to knock us out. Yeah, they would have loved that. They didn’t get the chance because the boat was fast and also it zigzagged. And the problem with the—of course, the submarines with their torpedoes, they have to zero in and aim the torpedo. When boats are moving, it makes it harder for them to do that. So, anyhow, we managed to get across; and no bad incident, thank God. And we ended up Firth of Forth. And that is not too far from Glasgow in England. And from there we went to South Hampton. South Hampton is the area where they got Stonehenge. Now, of course, I knew nothing about Stonehenge at the time. But if I did, I think I would have done a little side trip and try to see it, but I didn’t know about it. So then it was on Thanksgiving Day—just before Thanksgiving we were put aboard another English ship to go across the [English] Channel. And I don't know how many there was but certainly a lot less than thirteen thousand. And we went on the signal ship, a

7 The Firth of Forth is a fjord and estuary of the River Forth in Scotland. It flows into the North Sea, off the east coast of Scotland.
8 Glasgow is in Scotland.
bunch of troops. And we ended up in Le Havre, I think it was. France. But that was my
Thanksgiving dinner aboard that vessel. I don't know if I put that on there. In order to get that
dinner that I wanted—actually what I had was a can of sardines in tomato sauce. And I had to
buy it. There was no mess hall, so there was no place to eat. I had to go to the ship’s commissary.
That was my Thanksgiving dinner. But, anyhow, I had that.

I was in Le Havre maybe a few days, whatever it was, and from there we got transported to the
frontlines. No, I guess before we got transported, we were assigned to the different units. I was
assigned to the 35th Infantry Division. It was in the 134th regiment. And the infantry divisions in
that time, I don't know what they are composed of today. Those things have probably changed.
But the division had three regiments. I was in the 134th, was one of the three regiments that the
division had. And, of course, they had other support troops doing other things. But that was the
main body of the division. So we went in and I was assigned to the battalion aid station. And that
was the first battalion of the 134th. Each regiment had three battalions. Three battalions made one
regiment. Three regiments made one division.

COLLINS: So there were nine?

LINQUATA: So that is how they broke it up at that time. And I was in the first battalion.
Anyhow, battalion aid station. And we were in the—the first assignment was—they called it the
Lorraine area of France, where Joan of Arc was. And that’s where I first went. And we fought
into Germany. And across the border and into Germany, Hambrücken was the city, town in
Germany. So we went across there. The outfit I was in, and I don’t think I was entitled to it, but
the outfit I was in got what was called Presidential Unit Citation for that particular battle. It was
Company C and D or something like that. But I was battalion aid station, so I don’t think I was
entitled to it. I don’t know. But anyhow, they got that because they did outstanding work in the
fight, in the battle.
COLLINS: Actually, can you tell us a little bit about the battalion aid station,\(^9\) how it was sort of set up? Was it typical? Were they set up similarly? Was it like a temporary—

LINQUATA: Oh, yeah. Battalion aid stations were generally set up in some home or barn or whatever within maybe a mile or two miles of the frontline, usually one mile. Certainly within the German artillery range because we had artillery coming right in where the battalion aid station was. Artillery at that time only went three miles. So you know the German artillery is only three miles away. Whoever is within three miles of that, between us and the German artillery, was our frontlines and the German frontlines. So you can see we were fairly close. As a matter of fact, while I was there, one of the German shells hit—across the street there was a great big barn there. I don't know what they used the barn for but a great big building, a barn-shaped building, a big one. They had this slate roof on it. You've seen it around here; we still have them in some places. But a slate roof of shingles, slate roof shingles all the way across. And the artillery shell apparently hit it. Boom! You know, a great big explosion. And, of course, the artillery shell had a lot of power and just picked up all the shingles and then you could hear an avalanche of shingles (makes noise). Tremendous noise, you know. And thank God nobody was under it because they would have come out in pieces. I can imagine all the shingles coming out. But, anyhow, nobody got injured on that one. I was in the battalion aid station maybe a couple of weeks, whatever it was and then—of course, I mentioned in that little story about that poor fellow, I think it was shell shock, went crazy. Do you want me to repeat that one?

COLLINS: Sure.

LINQUATA: It’s up to you.

COLLINS: No. That’s good. I think people would be interested, so you can repeat it.

LINQUATA: Well, anyhow, we had one man that came in. He was brought into the aid station for treatment. I guess he wasn’t badly wounded, but his feet were a great big, big mess. Frozen

\(^9\) The Battalion Aid Station is a medical section within a battalion's support company in the military of the United States, specifically, the Army and Marine Corps. It is the forward-most medically-staffed treatment location and as such collects the sick and wounded from the battalion and stabilizes the patients' condition.
and probably hadn’t changed his shoes or stockings for maybe a week or two weeks. Mud and lot of dirt and all of that. So he could hardly walk. He was very, very bad. Feet were in very bad condition when they brought him in. I was talking to him. I had a few minutes to talk to him and I did. Apparently—well, apparently, it was quite obvious—he was out of his mind. Because I was talking to him and he was telling me a story, which I believed. I believed it then. I believe it now. He was going from the American foxholes that he was in. He would crawl in through no man’s land into the German’s side, into the German foxhole. And he had his big knife with him. And he would slit the German’s throat and then he would take off an ear as a souvenir, trademark, whatever you want to call it, the fact that he was there. And then he would go back to the American lines. The fellow had to be nuts to do it. I mean no sane person would ever do that. But, he said he did it, and quite frankly, I believed him. So we got all kinds of injuries of victims in the aid station. I mean those still alive. And so that was one of them. Anyhow, while I was there, the Battle of the Bulge\(^{10}\) broke out when the Germans came in and crossed the line in the forest up in the Ardennes area of Belgium. And as the story goes, of course I wasn’t there, but [General] Eisenhower\(^{11}\) asked [General George] Patton\(^{12}\) if he could get the troops, his whole Army up there. And Patton said, “Yeah. I’ll get them up there in two days or three days.” That was an enormous task to get all those men up there. There were maybe, I don't know, ten or fifteen divisions of men. And each one you got to figure ten, twelve, thirteen thousand men. And he had all of those men under his command and he is going to get them up there in about two or three days, two or three hundred thousand men, I think, somewhere around there. So he said he

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\(^{10}\) The Battle of the Bulge was a major World War II battle that took place between December 16, 1944 and January 25, 1945 in the densely wooded Ardennes Forest region of Belgium. France fell into Allied hands and Paris was liberated from German control in August 1944; in response, the German Army launched a massive counteroffensive intended to turn the tide of the war in the Third Reich’s favor. Soldiers of the German Army advanced fifty miles into the Allies’ defenses, creating a “bulge” in the front lines. After weeks of brutal fighting, Adolf Hitler withdrew his forces from the Ardennes and the Allies regained the territory. The Battle of the Bulge was the last large-scale German offensive in the West. In terms of participation and losses, historians regard the Battle of the Bulge as the greatest battle in American military history.

\(^{11}\) General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969) served as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II and President of the United States between 1953 and 1961. Eisenhower was a five-star general during the war, and he planned and supervised the invasions of France and Germany between 1944 and 1945.

\(^{12}\) General George S. Patton (1909-1945) was a United States Army officer who commanded corps and armies in World War II’s North African and European theater campaigns. Following the Allied landings in Normandy and subsequent invasion of Europe, Patton took command of the U.S. Third Army. In December 1944, Patton utilized his tactical skills to disengage the Third Army from the front line in order to relieve besieged U.S. troops surrounded by the German Army in Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge. Military historians consider this complicated and successful maneuver Patton’s greatest achievement during World War II.
would do it and he did it. And we stopped at Metz, a city in northeastern France. The city became an important defensive position for the German Army following the Allied invasion of Europe in June 1944. The United States Third Army led by General George S. Patton attacked the heavily fortified city in September 1944. The Battle of Metz lasted several weeks, and the Allies captured the city by the end of November. Mass casualties were suffered on both sides.

13 Metz is located in northeastern France. The city became an important defensive position for the German Army following the Allied invasion of Europe in June 1944. The United States Third Army led by General George S. Patton attacked the heavily fortified city in September 1944. The Battle of Metz lasted several weeks, and the Allies captured the city by the end of November. Mass casualties were suffered on both sides.
children. I think one was maybe eight or something like that, the other maybe six, a boy and a girl. And it was those four and about six of us, whatever it was. And they invited us to their house. We went up to their house. And they had some homemade schnapps and we had a drink apiece. And we had loads of candy in our pockets. We always carried candy. So we gave the children all the candy. That’s the only thing.

**COLLINS:** Because food and luxury things like that were so very scarce. It was hard to get?

**LINQUATA:** They must have been hurting during the war. And anyhow, I don’t think the kids really had much, or the families, as far as that is concerned. So we gave them candy. No big deal for us, but it was nice for the children. And that’s all we had to give away. What could we give them? And most of us didn’t have any money to speak of because money was of no value to us. You know, what are you going to do? You can’t spend money on the frontlines. So we had no money to speak of, you know what I mean? And I think that candy was probably more appreciated. They appreciated that more than anything else. So we gave them the candy. But, anyhow, that night in the army barracks, it started to get cold. And they had great big canvas bags of fresh water in the hallways for the troops if you want to fill up your canteen or something. By morning, those were frozen solid, ice. We couldn’t get a drink of water early in the morning. It was frozen solid. I think we managed somehow afterwards, but we couldn’t tap those at all. That’s how cold it was.

Anyhow, the next morning, I think I put it there, too, the next morning they had all the troops assembled in the parade ground. They had a parade ground there, the equivalent of maybe one of our football fields, a little bit bigger. Everybody lined up. We lined up with everybody else of that company. And I’m the new man there. I’m the medic. And some way or other the medics were sort of favored, or let’s say, [well] looked upon. So, anyhow, I’m the medic. All of a sudden, we looked around and there are no noncoms, no non-commissioned officers with us, all privates, including me and the others. And we are looking around. And then they had—I don't know what they call it exactly. But anyhow, they are checking all the troops. And the major or the general, whoever was in charge, would call out the name of the outfit, “Company A.” And somebody from Company A would report, “All present, all accounted for,” meaning everybody
is here. Company B, the same thing. No, I think it was Company A and then it was first platoon, second platoon, third platoon. Then Company B, first platoon, second platoon, third platoon. It went down the line like that. And the answer was, “All present, all accounted for.” And that meant everybody is supposed to be there.

So they came to our outfit, which was second—I was in Company D, second platoon—and nobody there, no non-commissioned officers to answer the roll call. So one of them asked me to—no, more than one, they asked me—Doc, that’s my name at that time. Doc, I’m the medic. Doc. Answer. Answer. I said, “What am I going to say? Nobody is here.” “Answer. Hurry up and answer.” “All right.” So my answer was, “All presents are present.” What the hell could I tell them? And they are pissed. They didn’t say anything. They didn’t say anything because they knew more than I do. They knew a lot more than I did. And what it was in that situation, the noncoms, the sergeants and so on in the outfit, the second platoon, somehow or other they were selected to do the scouting in the frontlines. So the day before they all went on a jeep and they went up towards the frontlines to see where the Germans were because we were only around twenty miles away or something like that. So they had to drive up there, see where the strength was, where we should be bringing the division. And somehow or other they assigned to the noncoms of the outfit I was in. So that’s what happened and that is that part of it.

COLLINS: And they hadn’t reported back yet?

LINQUATA: No. The officers knew all about it. But I was kind of frightened, What the hell are they going to do to us now? What the hell could they do, really? If they threw us in jail, they would be doing us a favor because we wouldn’t be going to the frontlines. So they weren’t going to throw us in jail. So that’s for sure. Anyhow, of course now I can see things in a different way. But, anyhow, they were going up to the frontlines towards the Battle of the Bulge, towards Bastogne. And we are about maybe halfway up there. I don't know where we were, maybe twenty miles closer. We were maybe halfway up there. So, anyway, we are up there and the jeep that I was in—there were probably five or six of us on it, maybe more, maybe seven. But anyhow, the jeep got a flat tire. And it was bitter cold, bitter, bitter cold. It was—I think it was around zero. And on top of that there was a wind chill factor and driving in an open jeep with all
the—and you are going forty, fifty miles an hour. I’m sure we were going that. And you can imagine the intense cold we had. And I was freezing. Everybody else was, too. And we got a flat tire. And I offered to help, but being a favored person, “No. No, Doc. Don’t touch it. You go inside.” And we ended up right alongside of a farmhouse.

So we went into the farmhouse. And maybe we should have but we didn’t—we didn’t knock at the door or anything. We just opened the door. We walked in. We were freezing. And we just happened to catch the family eating, having dinner, midday dinner. So they were having dinner. And, of course, we intimidated the poor family. They must have been frightened to death. But we meant no harm. Just beyond the dinner table in the next room, there is a roaring fire in the fireplace. And so we said, That is good. So we went there and we just huddled around that to warm up a little bit. So after fifteen minutes, whatever it was, half an hour—it wasn’t a half hour, maybe fifteen minutes—the farmer realized we meant no harm. And so he started asking us questions in French. And, again, none of us spoke French. And what the hell is he talking about? We understood a few words, like “Deutsch” meant German and maybe a couple of other words. But there wasn’t very much we understood. And we hadn’t been in France that long, at least I hadn’t. And when we were, the others, when they were in France, they were among American troops. We didn’t have that much interaction with the French. So, anyhow, we didn’t fully understand what he was saying. But, anyhow, you opened the door and on the door, hanging up, like we hang calendars, [there was] a map, a map of the area. So when he had the map of the area, he opened up and he started in sign language, he started telling us what was happening. We didn’t know. We had no ideas of the Battle of the Bulge or anything. Because they never, ever told the infantry what happened. We knew nothing. We were as dumb as can be. And I mean that. I mean it. Let’s say ignorant, in that respect.

**COLLINS:** Why do you think they didn’t tell you? What was the reason for that, that there had been a battle? Because of the losses or—

**LINQUATA:** I don’t know. But they never told us anything. Why, I never understood it. But they never told us anything. So, anyhow, we are there and the farmer started telling us about the Germans breaking through and this and that, you know what I mean. And here I am, a nineteen-
year-old kid. No problem. No problem. He is looking at me, you know. And then I said—because he said the Germans went this way—I says, “General Patton.” I think I said General Patton. I said, “We are going to go up there, cut the Germans in half. The Germans kaput, fini!” “Kaput” is German. “Fini,” French. So that is what I told them.

As it was, after the war was over and I started reading a little bit of history and years go by, that is what General Patton wanted to do, what I said. But that is not what General Eisenhower said. General Eisenhower chose the other strategy, which basically pushes the Germans back. They come in and pushing them back, back to the German border rather than cut them in half and trying to capture the troops. So anyhow, that strategy was one, Eisenhower was another one. And, of course, they followed Eisenhower’s strategy. Anyhow, that is what happened in that incident. And then we went up to the frontlines. And, of course, that is when I was a medic with the infantry, the second platoon in the heavy weapons, they called the heavy weapons. The first platoon, second platoon was the machine guns, heavy machine guns. And the third platoon was the mortars. That is how they broke it up. And what they generally did when they went to battle is one of the platoons would probably support one of the rifle companies, usually one of the machine gun platoons. And that’s how they did it.

COLLINS: And was this probably about 1945?

LINQUATA: ’44.

COLLINS: Still ’44.

LINQUATA: Yeah. It was ’44 to ’45. It was that winter. So, I got in the battle—well, you know, right after Thanksgiving in ’44, I got captured. I think it was the sixth or something, the sixth of January ’45. So I was in there about a month, or close to it, the battle. But anyhow, I was there. So I went on a volunteer, I guess, patrol, what they call a patrol. And that was one of the things—we had to scout out the enemy to see where they were. So they picked up the sergeant, who says to the men, “I need a patrol and I want you, you,” whatever. And all these men say, We are not going to go without the medic.—“Okay. I’ll go.” And we were really lucky because we
went on the patrol. We were there maybe, covered maybe four or five miles that day.. And we didn’t see anything. And then, of course, the Germans didn’t see us either. So we didn’t have any bad incidents. If they had seen us, we would have been all dead. There was no chance you had of surviving. The only good thing for the American Army was the fact that they would have known we got killed or captured and they would have known that the Germans were there. I mean that’s the only thing—and chances are we wouldn’t have gotten back to report because we were pretty exposed. We were walking out in the open and the Germans were all, if they were there, they would have been in the woods looking out. So, anyhow, that happened without any bad incidents. We had another incident, a couple of other incidents, too. Do you want to hear this part of it?

COLLINS: Maybe let’s go ahead to the part where you were captured. Do you want—

LINQUATA: All right. Because we had a lot of things happen. I’ll go back a little bit, anyhow.

COLLINS: Okay.

LINQUATA: All right. When we got in there, there was a little town called Marvie, M-a-r-v-i-e, in Belgium. And we got in there and we saw chickens in the road and they are pecking at something. And what it was was some German’s body. The tanks had gone over him; he was flat as the table. It was horrible. That’s what the chickens were eating. And just before, as we arrived before that, we arrived in the sound. And everybody was thirsty. We got our canteen cups. The canteens were all empty. And some of the men went to get water at the town well. The Germans had their mortars all set, and some of the men got killed or were wounded and killed as they were getting water. Of course, I had to rush over being medic and patch them up. That was my job. I had to do that. And then, another time we had this fellow, an American, who wandered on the street of this small town at night time. And we had a guard at the door. And we all had guards. And he called out for the password. And the fellow didn’t know the password. And so a lot of us were new and I think the guard was new, too. So he hollered in, “What should I do? He doesn’t know the password.” And stupidly, we all said the same thing, Shoot him. So the sergeant was there, thank God. “No. No. No. Don’t shoot. Don’t shoot.” That was the only thing that saved his
life was the sergeant that saved him. And the poor guy didn’t know the password. Then he was subject to being shot. And he would have been shot.

COLLINS: Was he from a different unit?

LINQUATA: Yeah.

COLLINS: And was separated.

LINQUATA: Yeah. Yeah. For some reason. So, anyhow, he was lucky. He didn’t know how close he came to dying that day. And that was one of them. Then there was a fellow, I think I put in the story, too, he had to do his duty. And he wasn’t going to do it where we were living, you know what I mean. So we told him, Go outside. So he went outside. He is doing his duty. His pants are down, doing his duty. Everything is quiet. All of a sudden, the German shells come in. And they hit him. Good luck. He got a tiny piece of shrapnel in his butt. (laughter) And then he came crawling in, into where we were inside, “I’m hit. I’m hit. I’m hit.” “Well, what’s the matter? What happened?” It was sort of a strange case, you know what I mean. I mean crawling in, all fours, with his pants down. “What the hell happened? What happened?” “I got hit. I got hit.” “Where did you get hit?” Point to whatever, you know. And we all burst out laughing. It was really funny. It was funny for a couple of reasons. One of the reasons, not only the way he looked, funny or not, but here he was, with what we called the “million-dollar wound,” which meant that he was going to go back to the hospital. They were going to remove the piece of shrapnel, patch him up, and he would probably be in there maybe a week and then go back to the frontlines. But actually, he missed some of the worst fighting there was. So he was probably blessed with what we call a million-dollar wound. And then on top of that, he gets a purple heart for getting shot in the rear end.

MULLER: (laughter) For a pretty superficial wound.

LINQUATA: Yeah. So I don't know what he told his family afterwards or told his friends, how heroic he was. But that is not exactly what I called heroism. (laughter) But that is one of the
things that happened. Anyhow, the last day—do you want that part of it or do you want me to skip that, too?

**COLLINS:** Well because we still want to talk a little bit about Suffolk, so maybe if you can talk a little bit about when you were captured and what it was like.

**LINQUATA:** Well, what happened, we had a fierce battle. And it was really fierce. There was Company C and second platoon Company D supporting them. We got ambushed. We were on the frontlines. Before that we lost—that week we lost one or two men a day before the battle. And I’m talking about like twenty-five men, twenty men. We lost around five or ten of them every single day. Not every day, I mean one or two a day up until that point. So starting with maybe twenty-five, we ended up with fifteen or sixteen men in our platoon supporting the other Company C. And we got ambushed. And in the ambush, I was the last man. The medics are always the last men in line. And we had to be five yards apart wherever we went. So in case the shells came in they wouldn’t kill more than one or two. So for safety sake, so the whole group wouldn’t be annihilated, we stayed five yards apart, fifteen feet apart. And like I said fifteen of us, whatever, and of course I was the fifteenth man up. About half of the men got in the woods. Company C was already in the woods before us. And then the Germans opened up. And I ran. I carried less weight than the others because I was the medic. And I passed a lot of the men. But the one man stayed out because he was too frightened to come in and he was behind a log. And I had to go out. I went out again and I picked him up. Being a medic, probably that’s what saved his life because the Germans respected, at least at that time—that particular day they did, anyhow. And those particular Germans, they respected it, and they didn’t shoot me or shoot him. I went out and I picked him up. He was about thirty years old. We thought he was old, very old. And he came from Boston. And the poor fellow, he had about four or five children, five children I think he told us. And he was about thirty years old. I think he was in the shipyard, building ships in Boston. He was Irish. I don’t mean that in—

**MULLER:** It’s just a statement of fact.
LINQUATA: I didn’t mean that in a bad way. But, I mean he is Irish, and probably very union minded, I think. And I think he was causing some ripples in the shipyard. And they shanghaied him out of a good, safe job that he should have been in. And being a family man, they never should have done it. But they took him and they put him in the infantry to get him the hell out of there because they wanted to build ships and they didn’t want anybody, any union to get involved. So they shipped him out. The poor guy ended up with us. And he is the one that got frozen. So I had to bring him in. But, anyhow, we had a fierce battle. And after about maybe a couple of hours fighting, I don't know how long it was, and I never saw any of the battle. I was in it, right in the middle of it, but I didn’t see anything. Because I was running from wounded to wounded, different people. And whoever is wounded, they call out, Medic, and I went there and patched them up. And before I got practically through with that somebody else would be wounded. I had to go back and forth, back and forth. So I did that.

COLLINS: And how many people would you be covering? How many medics would be there per—

LINQUATA: One company—actually, it should have been maybe—I think it should have been more than two. There were two of us that I know about. Probably should have been more. But anyhow, there were two of us.

COLLINS: And it was whatever supplies you had in that bag with you?

LINQUATA: Oh, yeah. Well, the way it was during that time, every man had a packet that was on his belt. And in the packet there was a little sulfur powder packet and there was a syringe of morphine and there was also a bandage in every man’s packet. And if somebody got wounded, we used that first to patch him up. And, of course, if he didn’t have enough, if that didn’t do the job, we had to use our own stock, what we had. So the medics—one of the tools that I had, which I thought was great, a pair of shears, big scissors, cut through anything. Boots, jackets, coats, anything, like [it was] nothing. And, of course, often times it had to be boots which were leather. So whatever they had we had to cut through there, which we did. And that had to expose the wound before they patched it up. So that’s what we did. And I had the misfortune of being
alongside of one of the men that was shooting at a German somewhere near—I don't know. But anyhow, I was there. And he was shooting, and I was too close to him. I wasn’t looking at him, I was looking at the wounded I was patching up. And he shot the rifle and blew out my ear, my right ear drum. And I thought I was hit. I thought I was wounded. I didn’t know. And there was snow on the ground, about a foot of snow. And I rolled around in the snow because that is what we were trained to do. So I stopped rolling and I looked and my feet were still there. That’s good. My hands are there and that is good. So I went back to work. So I went back to patching people up. I was still in condition to do it and I did.

Anyhow, the battle lasted awhile. And then it started quieting down. The shelling stopped. The captain said, well he is there to pull out. He had to pull out. He was going to take the able-bodied men with him. And he left me and the other medic behind. Is this the point you want to hear? I don't know. Anyhow, he left me and the other medic behind. And we stayed behind. And the other medic, I asked—you know, we had a conference afterwards, after we had a talk about it. And the captain had been gone a half an hour or whatever it was. Before he left he said, “Don’t worry. I will have an ambulance back here, and I will pick you fellows up.” Well, there is a foot of snow, and there are no roads, and the Germans all around. It is very unlikely any ambulance is going to come and pick us up. And the Germans know where we were and we were afraid that mortars were going to come in and pick us up. And the Germans know where we were and we were afraid that mortars were going to come in. And the mortars were sometimes worse than the shells because they come in and they land without any warning. You don’t hear a whistle or nothing. Pop! Boom! That’s it. And, of course, it causes an awful lot of damage, like the shell would. So we were deathly afraid of that and also afraid that the Germans might, an infantry might come in, too. So we were in a very hazardous situation. We had no guns left with us. The captain took everything. And no food, and nothing.

COLLINS: And did you have wounded people with you?

LINQUATA: Yeah. Twenty. And the other fellow, the other medic didn’t want to surrender the men. So I said, “Well I guess I’ve got to do it.” So I did it. And I went up and I had to do it the way we used to do it then, I don’t know if they do it today. And I clasped my two hands together over my head. And I was walking up. And I knew where the Germans were—by that time I had
been in battle for awhile and I was pretty battle-wise, let me put it that way. So I knew what the training was. I knew what I was doing, and I knew where we were, what the hazards were and everything else. So I knew the Germans were up on the hill. I knew that. And I knew where the hill was. But as I was leaving the place I looked roughly at the area where the Germans were, the dead, the German dead. And I estimated at that time maybe about a hundred Germans were lying around, dead, that we had killed. And that is probably why they stopped attacking us because they took a big loss. Then I—within an hour that somebody died, they are frozen stiff like a log, it was so cold. Just like a piece of wood. So that’s how, stiff and frozen solid. And there was this, all the grotesque shapes the way they died, arms, legs. But that is the way they were. And so then I had to go and surrender to the Germans.

So I went up. And I was going up the hill. And as I was going up the hill, I had an out of body experience. I actually saw my body walking up the hill. I saw myself walking up the hill. And my spirit was somewhere maybe fifty feet away looking at me. But I had to do it. So I kept on going and then I hear the rumbling of tanks on the top. I mean halfway up, a little flat area there, the two German tanks. And when I got within sight of them I saw that they had two big cannons both pointed at me. Of course, that is rather intimidating. And they tried to interrogate me, the Germans, and I couldn’t speak German. They couldn’t speak English. So I had to talk in sign language. And I went like ten, twenty Americans, wounded. And then I pointed to the red cross and all. And I don't know whether I got my message across or not. But they says, Go further back, in sign language. So I went further back. And then there was an infantry, German infantry all dug in on top of the hill. And the German sergeant, infantry sergeant tried to interrogate me again. And again, a language problem. He couldn’t speak English. I couldn’t speak German. And I had to use sign language again, the same type of sign language, ten, twenty, you know, red cross, wounded. And so what did he do? He brought me down from that location, down the hill, up another hill. There was a big wooden door on the side of the hill. And so what did he do? The sergeant knocked on the door. Then a German officer, full uniform, dress uniform answered the door. They are talking in German. Then he tried to interrogate me and the same problem again. Couldn’t speak English, couldn’t speak German. So anyhow, I guess he got the message. So they sent him up. We went back up to the sergeant. They picked up a squad of German soldiers, and I led them down to the location. We went down to the location. And by that time I told the men
that I left, I said, “If you hear anything at all, any noise at all, start hollering out, ‘Comrade. Comrade.’ And maybe they will understand that you are not armed and you are going to shoot them. So yell out.” And they did. They heard us approaching and they started hollering. So they did.

Now, the Germans probably did the same thing we would have done. But I made a big issue of it. They started trying to take all the wristwatches and rings from the men, all the wounded men. And I started jumping up and down like a monkey. And I said, “Nichts. Nichts. Nichts!”¹⁴ I said, “Geneva Convention. Geneva Convention,” and they got the message and they didn’t take anything. Which was good because these men, afterwards went to prison camp and they had no food. And we used to exchange rings and wristwatches and whatever for a piece of cheese or a loaf of bread or something. That is the only thing you can get sometimes by exchange, barter with the guards. So at least they got one extra helping of food or something because they kept their regular watches. But anyway, that is what happened there.

**COLLINS:** They took you all. Did they take you to a place in Belgium? Was that where you ended up?

**LINQUATA:** No, that night it got dark early. They are further north than we are in latitude and it gets dark even earlier. It got dark there about three o’clock. So about three o’clock it got dark. They brought us to a big barn in this small village. We went into that barn and who was there? The captain that left us. He got caught. So he is there and I guess some other men were there. I don't know. And so, anyhow, he is there. And we were there probably one day or something like that then we got transferred out. But anyhow, that is what happened there.

**COLLINS:** And so then you were in their custody for quite a while? How did you finally get out?

**LINQUATA:** With the Germans?

¹⁴ *Nichts* is the German word for “nothing.”
COLLINS: Yeah.

LINQUATA: Oh, yeah, I was a prisoner for three months from the sixth of January to the second of April.

COLLINS: Did they keep you all together? Or did they split you up?

LINQUATA: No. No. No. The Germans are—the wounded were separated and so on. I was with six of the wounded for a while. Maybe seven, I don't know, but I think it was six, for a while. And I took care of them. When I took care of them I had one man who was bleeding excessively. He had a very bad gash in the leg. So we were in this farmhouse. While we were there, I kept on bandaging him up and trying to arrest the wound. I was partially successful, but not wholly. He kept on bleeding too much. Of course, I kept on going into the sheets because this was a house. So I went into the sheets and I kept on tearing them up and making bandages out of them and patching this fellow up. But then it got too bad and I got worried about him and I prevailed [on] the two guards—we had two guards, German guards. And I prevailed on them. I guess they—again, a language barrier but they understood what I said.

And one day, maybe our second or third or fourth day, whatever it was, they got a—an SS [Schutzstaffel paramilitary soldier] young man came down, in full uniform, again. He looked sharp, a young, handsome guy, maybe eighteen or twenty years old. He was about my age. And we had a sled and we put the wounded man with the bad leg gash onto the sled and we brought him into the next village. As we were going into the next village, the Americans were shelling the town, the artillery coming in, including incendiary bombs. And they were coming in. And as they were coming in, the two of us, the German and I ducked in behind the building or whatever else, until the barrage was over. Another barrage would come in and we ducked in again. We did that several times before we got to the next village.

We got to the next village, the aid station, the German aid station was in a cellar. So I brought him in there. The guard and I brought him in there. And I started talking to the doctors there. These are German doctors and they are full of themselves, at least I think they were. And I tried
to talk to them. And I couldn’t and they couldn’t speak English. I couldn’t speak German. And they wanted to know if I speak any other language. I speak a little bit of Italian. And the truth is, I don’t. I speak what they call Sicilian, which is a dialect, not really the Italian they speak in Rome. It’s very much different. And even there I’m not very good at that, at least I wasn’t at the time. I’m much better at it now than I was then. But I wasn’t very good at it then. And these doctors started making fun of me. I was a cocky little guy, I guess. And I wasn’t going to take any baloney from them and I didn’t. And I started having words with them and so on. The next thing I know they pulled out their guns and they pointed at me and I ran like hell. And I got out of there in time. I left the wounded there, obviously, and their German guard and I left. And we went back to where we come from and left the wounded. About two or three weeks later, I saw this wounded fellow and he was standing on his feet. So I saw him in the prison camp standing on his feet. So at least I was partially successful. So he made it, at least up to that point.

Then, let’s see? What else. Oh. And then another week or two later, whatever it was, I don't know, they put me with a bunch of other Americans. This time they separated me from the wounded. And I was up there in the attic of a monastery, so the attic of a monastery. And they put us to work, somewhat. Matter of fact they tried to put everybody to work. A lot of the men had to go out and repair the railroads because American bombers were bombing their railroads, the stations and the tracks and all of that. So they call American prisoners out in the night time to repair the roads, the railroads. I never got called for that. Matter of fact they tried to call me one time. I don't know. There was an Austrian, a German [soldier], but an Austrian. He was an officer. And the Austrians are a little bit softer people than the Germans. You know, they’re halfway between the Italians and the Germans. And they are not quite as bad as the Germans. And I gave the poor guy some lip, “Yeah, okay. Don’t worry about it,” and he let me go. You know, I told him I worked so hard and this and that and he accepted my excuse and let me go. That was okay.

Then they called for a “sani.” That’s what the Germans call it. A sani is German for medic, which I didn’t know at the time. But I figured out. So I had to go down one floor. This is on the third floor of the attic. That’s where we were stationed, the prisoners were. I went down one

15 Sanitäter is the German word for a combat medic.
floor to the German wounded were in there. So the German wounded were in there. I was helping. I was working around. They had a German cop or whatever he was. And he was telling me what he wanted and this and that. So I was helping him out. I got a real good meal there, a nice, hot meal. So I did that. But anyhow, I didn’t end the day well because he told me to fold the blanket. And I’ve never been very big on folding blankets. I never have been. I’m still not. I fold the blanket. I fold it up. I mean I don’t care if it goes this way or that way. What end meets what end as long as it looks half decent, I put it down. And that’s the way I felt then, too. I feel that way now. And apparently I didn’t fold it by German way of folding a blanket. So he started hollering at me. And he started insulting me. And then he started saying some German swear words, which I didn’t know what he was talking about. And, I don't know, maybe I was kind of foolish or stupid, I don't know. I repeated the same swear words. I said, “Nichts. Nichts.” And I said, “Deutsch,” which means German. And I repeated the same swear words to him. Well, apparently, that was a big insult. He didn’t like that when I said it. And he took out his gun. And he aimed it at me, a pistol. He was going to shoot me. So I looked at him. I put my hands behind my back. I said, “Shoot, you son of a bitch. Go ahead.” He didn’t. He didn’t understand English.

**COLLINS:** (laughter) He probably thought you were saying something like, “Please don’t shoot me.”

**LINQUATA:** Yeah. I don't know what he thought I said, but I swore at him in English, which was the only language I knew. But anyhow, he didn’t shoot. So I got out twice without being shot, two close encounters. In the railroad part of the trip to the camps, one camp to another, we were in railroad boxcars. Ninety of us in a railroad car smaller than ours. Their boxcars are smaller than ours. And they are really designed for about forty men or eight horses. They used to call them “forty and eights.” Forty hommes and eight chevaux, forty and eights in French. And so they had ninety of us in there. We were there two or three days, and all we had was a little piece of cheese they gave us for rations. Not even a big piece, and that was all we had for rations. And we were jammed in that. And one time we stopped and the Americas were bombing the place while we were in it. And we were cheering the American bombers. We weren’t too bright either because the bombs could have hit us, we would have been gone. But anyhow, we were cheering the American bombers. They were shot [at] one time. I don't know why, but we shot
them. And the ground was a lot of puddles and so on. And the men hadn’t urinated for a long time so they urinated. We had no water, so we were drinking out of the puddles. And we had no taste buds. Who knows that we were drinking, whether it was water or mud. But, anyhow, that’s how bad it was. It’s amazing how thirsty one can be, and we were. So, anyhow, that was sort of the railroad experience. And we got fed only one hot meal on the way. One time, [by] something equivalent to the Boy Scouts, the American Boy Scouts. Maybe they were German Boy Scouts, I don't know. But anyhow, one or two young kids, they were all thirteen years old, twelve years old. They met us. They met the German guards when we were going up. And when they met us, they led us, the boys, the little boys, to this place and there was some woman there. They had a great big mess of hot food and soup of some sort. And that was really a blessing. We really enjoyed that, and that was really the only food we got in all that time. So, what else?

**COLLINS:** So what was your last part of the war? Were you guys liberated?

**LINQUATA:** The last prison camp I was in?

**COLLINS:** Yeah. Because after that you went home to America, right?

**LINQUATA:** Let me tell you about the last prison camp I was in.

**COLLINS:** Okay.

**LINQUATA:** It was really in a resort area of Bavaria. And they called it Bad Orb, B-a-d O-r-b, two words, Bad Orb.16 That is the name of the town. It is really a spa, really a resort. It was before, and it is now. Of course, we weren’t in the resort. We were in the mountains right off of that. And they had the prison camp there. And we were one of the last groups in there in that prison camp, maybe about one hundred or so or no, it had to be more. Maybe one hundred and fifty, or so.

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16 Bad Orb is a town in the German state of Hesse; during World War II, it was the site of a POW camp called Stalag IX-B.
COLLINS: Do you remember what month this was?

LINQUATA: Hmm?

COLLINS: Do you remember what month this was?

LINQUATA: I was there—

MULLER: Was it March?

COLLINS: March of ’45?

LINQUATA: I was up there maybe in April, the middle of April, something like that. But this is up in the mountains, and it’s cold. And the barracks they put us in had no beds. And we slept on the floor. It was so crowded we had to sleep on our sides. We couldn’t even lay on our backs. They had I think it was one hundred and fifty men on each side. It was two, divided. Yeah. And the latrine, the toilet, was right dead center. And all it was was a hole in the floor. And, of course, no toilet facilities, no toilet paper, no seats, no nothing. And we all had dysentery very, very bad. And so we were up and down all during the night. And there was no lights, no heat. And, of course, we couldn’t even see one another it was so dark. And sometimes somebody would be trying to get some sleep and invariably the person going to the toilet stepped on him or kicked him or something or other. Then all kinds of noises would erupt. That fellow was very upset. Nobody was happy. It was very noisy and disquieting, whichever way you want to put it.

So, anyhow, that was part of the problem. We had no food to speak of. They gave us like one thousand or twelve hundred calories a day, which is normal, I think three or four thousand we should get, the average person a day. And they gave us maybe one-third or one-fourth of what the normal ration was, I mean what they should get. We were getting the very same ration that the people in the concentration camps were getting, the very same amount of food, and the same

17 Mr. Linquata was transferred to Stalag IX-B in February 1945, where he remained until the camp was liberated by American troops on April 2, 1945.
type of food, too. So we were being starved, slow starvation. I put a memo in the story there. We lost about one man—about three thousand Americans in our section of the camp. There were other foreigners in the other sections, about three thousand in ours. And the three thousand the first week, about one every other day died. The second week, one a day. Third week, two a day. I saw funeral processions go by with four or five people before I got out.

(Interruption)

COLLINS: Those were pretty terrible conditions.

LINQUATA: So terrible, terrible conditions. They had no heat. They would take one man, American from each side of the barracks. We had one pot belly stove in there. They take one man from each side, and they would let him go out with a German guard. And they went to the woods and they could carry one armload of wood for the stove. And that lasted about two hours. And [if] the poor guy carried more and overloaded his arms, the Germans would shoot him and kill him. So you had no choice but to do exactly what the Germans said.

(Interruption)

So, conditions are horrible. Even worse than that, or just as bad as that, we had lice. And the lice were like little ladybugs, you know the size of a ladybug, the size of a small ladybug. And they were very hard shelled and you couldn’t kill them. There was no way we could kill them. You had to grab them one by one. And we had hundreds of them on our body. They were biting us day and night, keeping us awake, uncomfortable. And they were all over our body, our hair, everywhere including our private parts and every place else, under our arms, everywhere. And they are blood suckers, that’s what they are. So they were constantly biting us for their own nourishment. They do it to animals, too, bugs, too. And we would grab one, off our clothes, whatever, and we only killed them by putting them between our thumbnails and squeeze them like that, the only way you could kill them. And it was a horrible thing. It was a little sport, a little diversion I guess you might call it. But, it was not what we call it—real good. And our clothing was all soiled sometimes because of dysentery. But certainly, we had no showers or
baths, no change of clothing, no hot meals in all that time. And we were on a starvation diet. And finally the Americans came in, the 7th Cavalry they called them, which is basically American light tanks. There were armored tanks that were very light, smaller than the others and they were very fast, reconnaissance. And that’s what they called them, 7th Cavalry. They are the ones that came in and opened the doors so we could get out. About the day before they came, of course, the Germans knew that, and all the German guards disappeared or they weren’t around because they didn’t want to get caught. Because if they got caught, they might have got killed. The way they treated us, they should have got killed. But, anyhow, they disappeared.

Oh, and prior to us getting out, for about a week or two weeks before, the barracks I was in, we could see out. Everything was barred. We couldn’t get out, but you could see out of the windows. And we could see quite a distance, maybe ten miles away because we were up in the mountains. And we started seeing these little flashes in the distance at nighttime. And we figured, well, at that time—we were hoping it was Americans. But we felt like it was too much to hope for. So we said, Well, it must be thunder down there. Maybe they are having a thunderstorm down there. We started to make excuses in our own minds. But it was coming closer and closer every night and we finally got out.

And one of the other things that happened in POW [prisoner of war] camp is we had a so-called recreation room. It was a recreation room but there was nothing in there. It was a bare room, nothing in there. No radio. No newspapers. No seats. No tables. It was just a bare room, but it was a gathering place. So we dropped in there every day, and they had a bulletin board and the news, every day’s news. And an American, one of our American boys that could speak fluent German, read and write German, was assigned to listen to the German radio. And he was allowed to write exactly what he heard and nothing else. So he wrote down the story every day, and every day there was a new story of course, the news, the German news coming in, German propaganda coming in. And one day it might be, say it would be, the victorious Nazi Army, victorious such-and-such Nazi Army in a fierce battle with the American Army and the Germans victorious, the Nazis, whatever, captured so many Americans. And destroyed twenty American tanks and captured six American artillery pieces and this and that, all the good things the Germans did.
**COLLINS:** Were they trying to keep up the morale of German troops because things weren’t going well at that point?

**LINQUATA:** Yeah. Yeah. Right, the German people. And this happened like thirty kilometers west of, let’s say, Cologne. Well, the next day another propaganda would come over. So the next day, the news was—now remember I said thirty kilometers. So the next day, victorious German Army had this great big battle that they won again and that was fifteen kilometers west of Cologne, not thirty kilometers. The next day they didn’t mention Cologne. And a day or two later they mentioned ten kilometers east of Cologne. And then the next day it would be more miles east of Cologne. In other words, they are coming closer and closer. And, of course, we were cheering that the German armies keep on advancing like that because we knew we would get out. You know, all the propaganda, you know what I mean? But we could see right through it. That’s the way they presented it to the German people, to try to keep up the German morale. But I could see an intelligent German would know the difference. And anyhow, that’s the only news we got. It was a Palm Sunday or an Easter Sunday, I don't know. You were supposed to stand up in church for the sermon and be standing there for ten, fifteen minutes or something. Are either of you Catholics?

**MULLER AND BARTH:** No.

**COLLINS:** I am, but that doesn’t sound— (simultaneous conversation) I’m not sure.

**LINQUATA:** Anyhow we were supposed to—we had a Mass. And the priest was there. He told us, he said, “Look, sit down.” We were in no condition to stand up. We were weak. Anyhow, now we got freed of the camp. So the cavalry came in. We got out. We were there—it took around three or four days to get everybody out. And they took us out in groups because they couldn’t take us out—Americans didn’t have facilities to take us out all at once. And they are bringing in these truckloads of what we call C-rations, canned food, into the camp. And a lot of these men were starving, were crazy for food, going crazy. And we were even going on these trucks, stealing our own food, the Americans, going on the trucks, pulling cases off. Of course,
the American truck drivers weren’t going to bother us. But that’s what they were doing. I mean that’s how bad it was. They were given orders, “Don’t eat too much because it could kill you.” Because our stomachs, our bodies weren’t used to it. You were supposed to go into the food very gradually. We never listened to that. And a lot of us, we had the food. We made pigs of ourselves. And some people died for that reason because they over indulged or their systems are too weak. And most of us—I was typical. I was under one hundred pounds when I was released. I was about ninety, ninety-five pounds. And this is rather typical.

 COLLINS: And what was your weight before?

 LINQUATA: About one hundred fifty-five. But I was typical. I wasn’t unusual. Anyhow, after about—I was there one night and the next day I think I was in the group that they took home. They brought us to a big, huge tent that the American Army set up maybe twenty miles away from the prison camp, something like that, I don't know, twenty, thirty miles, near Frankfurt, Germany. And as a matter of fact it was on the outskirts of Frankfurt. And we went there. Everything was field, I guess, called field conditions. And hot water was made by—the Army, the way they did it, they had lube oil, you know heavy lube oil? They had it rigged up. It dripped out and it was like a heavy, metal plate. The lube oil dripped down the plate. A fire going under it and make it real hot and that would ignite. The oil on top would ignite and then they would have the great, big hot water on top of that and that boiled. (Simultaneous conversation) So we went in there. And again, another case, we had to strip all the way down. And personally, we were very happy to do so. Get rid of all the filthy clothes we had, bug infested clothes. And they had a big bucket of either kerosene or gasoline, I don't know what, but close, petroleum oil. And with rags in there and so on. And they told us, Get the rags and cover yourself up, all your hair and all your body with the oil, and cover yourself up. We did. And it was very, very effective in killing the lice, extremely effective. Now the Germans should have done something, but they never did. They always claimed they didn’t have oil, and maybe they didn’t. But even so, they should have taken care of us. We are humans. They didn’t treat us as humans.

So we did. We did that and a hot shower. It was a blessing; we thought we were in heaven. And then after that they issued nice, clean clothing. There was—it was not new, but it was nice and
clean Army clothing. It was a blessing. We were very happy to have that. And now we had clothing. Well, anyhow, I kept on picking some bugs off for another two or three or four days, but they were all practically dead so I would just pick them off. Anyhow, they didn’t proliferate. That was it. Anyhow, we went to this—we went to this air base. It had apparently been a German air base before the Americans took it over. And they had a transport plane there, American, one of the big planes, bombers or something. I think we only stayed there a few hours. We weren’t there overnight. And we prevailed on the personnel down there to give us some food. By that time we had had some food, I’ll be honest with you. The brain, you know, the body, you know what I mean? I had a buddy and the two of us prevailed on—anything at all. We don’t care what it was. But they said, We don’t have any food. And we ended up with some bread and butter or something or other and we were tickled to death to have it. So it wasn’t anything elaborate but it was something. We were very happy to have it. That night we went on the plane. And I guess my stomach wasn’t very strong. I upchucked on the plane. I made a mess. I don’t know who the poor guy was that had to clean it. But, anyhow, I made a mess. And we end up in Le Havre, again, where I started from. In those days the Army had three large camps around that general area. One was Camp Lucky Strike. One was Camp Chesterfield, and the other one was Camp Camel, I guess it was called. (laughter) And we were Camp Lucky Strike, named after the cigarettes, obviously. So we were there. Now, again, we were given the same orders, “Don’t overindulge and don’t eat all that—pace yourselves. Eat very moderately.” “Okay.”

And we went to breakfast the next morning and we had a full breakfast. And then we went to another breakfast and we had a full breakfast. And then for lunch we did the same and we did the same for supper. We had six meals a day. We were supposed to eat three very moderately. But we ate six. But, anyhow, it didn’t affect us badly. Except I had one strange, to me it was strange—I couldn’t understand what it was. The roof of my mouth had a terrific ache, a very strong pain, the whole roof on the inside. I don't know what that was. I went to the doctor and he told me—he said, “Well, that is part of the malnutrition.” Then I assumed it was something like old sailors used to get when they went on the sailor ships and they got beriberi, or whatever they called it. And that is what that problem was, I think. But I had that for maybe a week or two and then it went away. So it wasn’t anything permanent, but I do remember it very well. And we were in that camp two or three weeks or whatever. And then we went on a ship to the States. In
the States—I think within a day or two I was home. They gave us—I think it was two months off. I think I had two months. I think it was sixty days, which is unprecedented for an enlisted man in the Army. Probably the officers get that maybe once in a while, but certainly enlisted men never have got that. But, anyhow, I got two months. All the POWs got two months. So I was home for two months—January, March—June, and May and June I was home, here in Gloucester for two months.

**COLLINS:** And victory in Europe had already happened? VE Day had already happened at this point?  

**LINQUATA:** No. VE Day?

**COLLINS:** Yeah.

**LINQUATA:** It happened in—

**COLLINS:** May.

**LINQUATA:** May.

**COLLINS:** But the war was still—

**LINQUATA:** In Japan, still fighting. So there I was, and I got home for two months. Then I went to Lake Placid. It was like an R and R, you know rest and recreation, whatever you call it. So we were there. I was up there. And that was for the men who lived around New England and New York. So I went. I was one of them. And we were there two weeks. And when we were there, that’s when I had my twentieth birthday. That was July. And I had another physical. Now you got to remember, I was twenty. And the doctor says, “Do you have any problems?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “What is it?” I said, “I’m combing my hair and great big clumps of hair are

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18 VE Day or Victory in Europe Day was celebrated on May 8, 1945 with the World War II allies acceptance of the surrender of the armed forces of Nazi Germany.
coming out all the time.” To tell you the truth, I was probably vain. Twenty years old, who wants to be bald? And I think I’m going to be bald. I don’t know why I was worried about that. Because when I told the doctor he laughed like hell. He thought it was the funniest thing he ever heard. And I looked at him and at first I was upset with him. Then I started thinking, The guy is right. Of all the things that could have happened to me, being bald is not such a big deal. It could have been many, many things worse than that, from being permanently crippled or whatever else. Many things could have been worse. And that was the least of anybody’s problems. And he sort of woke me up to reality. And he was right. But, anyhow, the story goes on and on, okay. And I put—one of the last incidents I thought—well, two of them, I guess. One was the Thanksgiving. I was sort of the new man. I was working at the Lovel General Hospital they called it at Fort Devens [located in Ayer, MA].

COLLINS: Oh, so you were still active in the service the whole time?

LINQUATA: Oh, yeah, they put me to work. They put me in charge of a ward, forty-four beds. I worked at night. I was the only one there at night. I didn’t have any doctors or nurses there. I was alone, which is okay with me. And the men were not sick. They were all wounded or injured, the men I was taking care of. So I didn’t have to worry about somebody being sick. And I used to take care of the kitchen, one of the things I did. They had a little kitchen in there about half as big as this room, stove, sink, refrigerator, the basics, and a little bit of food. And every night—I wasn’t supposed to, but I did—I’d cook up something for the men, whoever wanted a sandwich, ham and eggs or whatever, something simple. So everybody, whoever wanted to, got something to eat. So I did that. Nobody called me on it, so I got away with it. But I had one—obviously I was the new man on the block, so to speak. You know, there was a cadre of people there before me. And they all knew one another pretty well. Most of them hadn’t been overseas like I had. And I don’t think any of them had missed Thanksgiving like I did. So I tried to get Thanksgiving Day off and I couldn’t. They wouldn’t give it to me off. And so they gave me the day before Thanksgiving, the twenty-fourth instead of the twenty-fifth. And I said, “All right. I will take what I get.” I went home and my mother had a great, big spread. Everything was cooking, the pies, everything. So she said, “What are you going to do, Mike?” I said, “What do you mean?” “You’re going to have Thanksgiving with us tomorrow, aren’t you?” I said, “No. I
can’t. I got to go back.” “So what are you going back for?” I said, “They want me back. I’m supposed to be back.” “They will never miss you.” “Ma, you’re right.” I took it off.

Well at that time they had given me one promotion. They made me a PFC [Private First Class], which meant I got four dollars more a month. It didn’t really mean anything. By that time I should have been a sergeant, if they had gone through the normal process, but they didn’t. So I was a PFC. So I had no rank. So I got back a day late. I had to report to the captain. He says, “PFC Linquata.” “Yes, sir.” “You are now Private.” “Yes, sir.” And that ended that. One month later I got discharged. So I lost four dollars. And the discharge process, they separated us, a bunch of us. And the way we got out, I got discharged early, really. Normally, if I hadn’t been overseas or been a POW and all of that, I would have been in the service maybe another six months or something like that. But I got out early because I was in combat, I was a POW and so on. So, there was a bunch of us. I don't know how many of the others there were. There may have been fifty or one hundred of us being discharged about the same time, right there in Fort Devens.

So going through the chow line for your food and who was behind the line was the German prisoners. And all of these men had somewhat similar experiences that I did, not necessarily POWs but they had been in combat, you know, maybe longer than I or whatever, you know what I mean, or wounded and so on. They all got points for these various things. And I got to say one thing, they had no love for the Germans, let me put it that way. So, one fellow is going through the line. He is right behind me, about two or three men behind me. And the German KP, kitchen police, he put a piece of meat on the fellow’s plate. And the fellow says, “Put another piece on.” The American said, “Put another piece on.” “Nein! Nein! Nein!”19 He says, “You son of a bitch. I said, ‘Put another piece on.’” “Nein! Nein! Nein!” So the American grabs him by the collar. He says, “You son of a bitch, do I kill you right here or do you give me another piece of meat?” “Ja! Ja! Ja!”20 and he loaded up his plate. The fact is he would have got killed. He would have got killed. The American would have killed him right then and there. And also, none of us, certainly not me, would ever testify against the American because we had that much—

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19 Nein is the German word for “no.”
20 Ja is the German word for “yes.”
COLLINS: Yes. After what you had gone through.

LINQUATA: Everything we had gone through. The others had gone through a lot, too, like I did but, I mean, different experiences but a lot. So we had no love. And that guy was lucky. He came very close to dying. I don't know if he knew that. I think maybe he did know. He came very close to dying right there, that German. But, anyhow, that was—so I got out—when did I get out? I think it was December. But, anyhow, I got out. I served twenty-two months in the service. Yeah. So I served twenty-two months in the service. So there was sort of a run down. Maybe I bored you, or maybe I did too much. But—

COLLINS: No. I think it was quite interesting. Maybe I would suggest we will do another interview if you would like to talk about after the war, maybe at another time. But this is probably a good stopping point.

LINQUATA: It is probably late and you girls have got to go.

COLLINS: Yes. So we will end it right here. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW, PART I

The second part of this interview took place on December 23, 2008.

LAURA MULLER: Today is Tuesday, December twenty-third. I’m Laura Muller. I’m here at the Gloucester House Restaurant interviewing Mr. Michael Linquata, Suffolk University class of 1950. I’m here with Julia Collins and Courtney Barth. And this is part two of our interview with Mr. Linquata. In our last interview we discussed his World War II service in Europe. So today we are going to talk about his time at Suffolk.
So you were discharged from the military in 1945 after twenty-two months of service. And you attended Suffolk University and graduated in 1950. So how did you come to attend Suffolk University?

**LINQUATA:** Well, what happened, I got out of the service in the wintertime, in January. And I was in no mood to go directly into college at the time. I just got out of the service. It was a very traumatic experience no matter how you look at it and it certainly was for me during that time because I went through an awful lot. And I was at the Battle of the Bulge, I was a combat medic, I was a POW, and I was I guess just too traumatized, if you will, to start college immediately. So I did not start applying for college until the spring, about two or three months later. And when I started applying, I tried two or three colleges in Boston, and I think one was Babson, Babson College. And they had a verbal test and my verbal skills are poor. I wasn’t able to pass that test. I applied to Northeastern [University], but I wasn’t impressed with the college. I could have got in, but I didn’t want to go in. I also applied for BC [Boston College] and BC would have accepted me except I would have had to been in the evening program and I didn’t feel like I wanted to do that. So then I tried BU [Boston University] and I passed the exam there. I had no problem. I got a B plus on the exam they had. And the problem was there were so many veterans that applied the very same time. I guess a B plus wasn’t quite high enough. So I didn’t get in there. And then I found Suffolk University and they were accepting applicants. And I applied and I was accepted. I started I guess in September.

**COLLINS:** And this was September of 194—

**LINQUATA:** ’45.

**COLLINS:** ’45.

**LINQUATA:** And September of ’45 we had about two thousand students that applied and were accepted, two thousand. God knows how many were not accepted. So we had two thousand right there. And, needless to say, the facilities were certainly strained. They didn’t have really enough room for all the veterans and we were about 98 percent, 99 percent veterans at the time. We
started classes at eight in the morning. I don’t mean all of us, but I mean some classes started at
eight in the morning. And some classes started as late as eight at night, and six days a week.
Now, of course, there is a normal fifteen hours like it has been, at least when I was in college,
fifteen hours a week of class work. But the only problem is the fifteen hours sometimes would
spread right through the week, sometimes early morning and late at night and so on—sometimes
during the week and Saturdays or whatever. So the first year or two, while there is still a big, big
overflow of students in Suffolk, we had stairwells, everything was crowded and we were
jammed. All the classes were filled up. And sometimes we went to an early class, sometimes one
in the afternoon, sometimes one at night. It just depended what class we were taking. And so,
anyhow, it was the first couple of years and then the student body starting getting less and less. I
think they eliminated the Saturday classes about the third year. And about the fourth year the
evening classes were eliminated. And we had, a class, my class—oh, and out of the two thousand
about two hundred and fifty of those graduated in 1949 because they took summer classes. And
so they jumped ahead of us one year. And some us, the rest of us, did not do that. And that was
another two hundred and fifty, and we graduated in 1950. Now, of course, the ones that were
able to go during the summer time, apparently they had no pressures, family pressures or—

**COLLINS:** Financial issues.

**LINQUATA:** Right. And they didn’t have to worry about it so they were able to do it. And
some of us, most of us, had to work or do something else to make a little bit of money or maybe
fulfill family obligations. And so we had to do that in order to finish our college.

**COLLINS:** And what were you doing at the time? Were you working during the school year or
just working in the summers?

**LINQUATA:** During the summertime I was working for my father. My father had a fish
business and they were very busy producing fish here in Gloucester, and he needed all the help
he could get. And so I worked with my father during those summers. And so that’s why I did it.
There might have been a few that just wanted summers off. And a lot of the others had
obligations like I did, family obligations. So they had to do what they did. So anyhow, that’s why
it sort of broke down. Now the other fifteen hundred students that went in on the first day, for different reasons they dropped out. Some because they already were married and they had families they had to support. You know, they just couldn’t take on that much load. Some, because they just couldn’t take the school work, it was just too much for them. Some, for other reasons, whatever they may have been—but for one reason or another, a lot of them, one thousand five hundred, just did not graduate. And they fell by the wayside so to speak. So they just weren’t able to do it. So that’s sort of the summation of what happened during that time.

**COLLINS:** You said that most of that incoming class in 1945 was veterans. Were there also other people, like women and other—

**LINQUATA:** We were about—I would estimate about 98, 99 percent veterans coming in. We were certainly a very unique situation, I guess in the annals of college life, if you will. Some of us were as old as the professors. And that couldn’t be helped because some of the veterans were as much as thirty, thirty-five-years-old. I won’t say thirty-five, but certainly thirties. And some of our professors were kind of young. So they were pretty close to the same age. And we certainly were—because we were veterans, a good part of us, maybe most of us had served overseas. Not all of us. I don't know what the percentage was but I would guess certainly more than half, maybe two-thirds had been served overseas. Who was in the Navy? Who was in the Army overseas, Seabees, infantry? In my case, I was a combat medic and I was a POW. But there were others that had very traumatic experiences as well as myself, in the service. So there was a lot a maturity, let me put it that way, that was in our classes. We were very world experienced and worldly. And we took college serious and yet we had fun. We enjoyed it.

**COLLINS:** And were you able to go to college partly (simultaneous conversation)

**LINQUATA:** Add this here, too. You are in that generation, not only in Suffolk University but throughout the country, because there were so many veterans that went in the college at the time. The standards in the colleges were raised tremendously at the time because everybody was so serious. What was normally a passing grade before, was certainly a failing grade now, when we were in the college, because the standards just went way up. And that remained there for awhile
until finally, I guess, the veterans were out and maybe the standards had to be loosened up again. But they were very, very high for maybe a five or ten year period while the veterans were fresh out of the service and into college. Yes?

**COLLINS:** And were you able to use the GI Bill\(^{21}\) to fund part of your education?

**LINQUATA:** Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. The Uncle Sam—and I say Uncle Sam, Congressmen and Senators and so on—I guess just before we got out of the service, about the time the war was ended, they passed a bill. They call it the GI Bill. And they were very generous to the veterans. Of course, we had done a lot for our country. But they showed a lot of appreciation, too. Because in my case I was a disabled veteran and I got one hundred and sixty dollars. I think the others that were not disabled they got seventy-five or something like that. But Uncle Sam paid the tuition. In Suffolk it was very low at the time, three hundred dollars a year. And if it had been higher, Uncle Sam would have paid it. As a matter of fact, they interviewed me, maybe because I was a disabled veteran. And they had taken us to Harvard to be interviewed. And I went down there and they did ask me, and I have to admit, how far I wanted to go in college, if I wanted to go to a master’s, if I wanted to go for a doctorate. And I guess I had an opportunity to do so at the time. But I had no intention of doing so. I just told them I wanted a bachelor’s. I should have told them I wanted a doctorate.

**COLLINS:** Yeah. (laughter)

**LINQUATA:** They would have paid the whole way. Imagine that! And I guess my life would have been a lot different than it is now. But for the good or the bad, who knows. I mean it would have been different. But, anyhow, I chose to get a bachelor’s and that’s what I did.

**COLLINS:** And you majored—did you start off in the business school or—

**LINQUATA:** Hmm?

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\(^{21}\) The GI Bill of Rights, officially called the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, provided, among other benefits, government compensation for the educational costs of returning World War II veterans.
**COLLINS:** Did you start off in the business school?

**LINQUATA:** Yes, I did. Yeah. But, anyhow, let me add to that. On the—oh, and the government also, one of the perks they had, they helped veterans go into business. I think they gave a two thousand dollar loan or grant or whatever it was to go into business. And they also helped them buy a house. They gave a low cost mortgage. So the government—that was a very generous program. And it was well used and well appreciated. Go ahead.

**COLLINS:** So I guess maybe if you could talk a little bit about maybe some of your classmates or some or the faculty that you remember or the administrators that were at Suffolk.

**LINQUATA:** Well, yeah. I’ll tell you an incident that happened. I think I was a sophomore or a junior at the time. And a friend of mind, Fiore Masse, by name, he and I went to the South Boston Army Base and we applied for a commission because he was a disabled veteran. He had been wounded at the Battle of the Bulge. I had been POW, infantry. And we figured we were well qualified, the college and also our experience to get a commission. So we applied for a commission and it was denied because at the time Suffolk wasn’t fully accredited. And that was the basis that they denied us. And it was about a few months later, maybe a year, less than a year that the Korean War broke out. And if we had been reserve officers, I’m sure we would have been drafted right back into the Army and into the Korean War. And so, in a way, it was a blessing that they didn’t accept us because that was no fun for those poor fellows either. Now, because Joe Strain,22 one of our professors at the time, he had been a combat aviator, I don't know for the Army whatever it was, but a combat, a fighter pilot in World War II. And I guess he was in the reserves. They called him back to the Korean War. So they pulled him out of college because at that time he was a professor. They pulled him out of college, and he had to go back into combat in Korea. And he later became the dean of the night students at Suffolk. So that’s Joe Strain. He was a very mild-mannered man, spoke very softly. You would never believe

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22 Joe Strain was a 1943 Suffolk University graduate who began his forty year career at Suffolk as an English instructor in 1946. During his tenure, Strain served as director of summer sessions and associate dean of the evening division. In addition, Strain chaired the Presidential Search Committee in 1979-1980 that led to the selection of Suffolk’s seventh president, Daniel H. Perlman. For his long-time service to Suffolk, Strain was recognized by Perlman at the 1986 Deans’ Reception.
that he was that type of person to be up in an airplane as a combat pilot. But, anyhow, that’s what he did. Anything else on that?

**COLLINS:** I think you had mentioned before that Dottie Mac, Dottie McNamara—

**LINQUATA:** Oh, yeah.

**COLLINS:** Can you tell us a little bit about her?

**LINQUATA:** Yeah, sure. Well, we went in. And, of course, she was everybody’s—she was the students’ friend. And she loved all of us and we loved her. We had a mutual love relationship going. And quite often most of us became short of money. We needed an extra five dollar or ten dollar bill because what we had it just didn’t go quite far enough. And she was there and she helped us. I don't know if she broke the rules or not, the administration’s rules or not. Whatever she did, she did it. And she gave us a five dollar bill or a ten dollar bill. We had to sign for it. And we always came back and we always paid her back. And I don’t believe she lost any money, I don’t think the school lost any money when she did that. And it was certainly a big, big help for us. And we certainly appreciated it. And she knew everybody by name, everybody, all the students. It was one thing for us to know her. When you think about one thousand or two thousand students knowing them all by name, and she only saw them as we passed by and dealt with her. So that was quite a feat in itself. I think her sister was working in the office, in the administration office.

**MULLER:** Her name was Evelyn, Evelyn Reilly.

**COLLINS:** Oh, okay. And she was at Suffolk a very long time as well.

**LINQUATA:** She was there for a long time. I think at the end, I mean her end, Evelyn’s end, she was the secretary in the president’s office. And the new president was Fulham, yeah,

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23 Dorothy M. McNamara (1910-2003) was employed by Suffolk University from 1927 to 1974, serving as bursar for twenty-five of those years before becoming alumni secretary.
Fulham, and he wanted his own girl. He wanted somebody else in there. So he transferred her out and she was upset about it because she had been there so long. And I guess she left and Dorothy left with her and it was too bad.

**COLLINS:** Do you remember what classes you were taking at the time? Does anything stick out in your memory in the business [major]?

**LINQUATA:** No. I took all the normal courses and I don’t remember which. The only elective I took I think was the Italian. And, quite frankly, I had a big problem with that. I know a little bit of Sicilian, the language, which is actually not quite the same as Italian. And I used to get them mixed up and I have a terrible time with the Italian language. But I was the president of the Italian Club. I don't know why, but they made me president. And we did have some Italian exchange students in Boston at the time. We entertained them one time, a couple of times, brought them down to the North End, gave them some food. But, anyhow—and that was sort of fun. I belonged to a social club or two or three of the other clubs too, at Suffolk at the time.

**COLLINS:** Because that was, I think, around the time that you started school, that’s when some of the more social activities and clubs and other organizations started growing at Suffolk. Because Suffolk had been more of a—people worked during the day and went at night.

**LINQUATA:** That’s right. That’s right.

**COLLINS:** So there wasn’t much time for—

**LINQUATA:** Social activities.

**COLLINS:** Yes, but with your class, I think—

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24 Thomas A. Fulham (1915-1995) served as president of Suffolk University from 1970 to 1980. Except for Suffolk founder Gleason L. Archer, Fulham held the longest presidential tenure of any of his predecessors. Prior to his presidency, Fulham served on the board of trustees for nine years and continued to serve until his death in 1995.
LINQUATA: Yeah, our class started getting into that. That’s right. And it probably wasn’t there before. I’m pretty sure you are right. But I guess we had the various types of clubs like the German Club, Spanish Club, the Social Club and two or three of the others. And after we got out, we didn’t have it when I was there, they had the Newman Club afterwards. That was in the fifties they started that. And I guess they had other clubs too that they started afterwards. But that was the beginning. You’re right, when we were in there.

COLLINS: And where were you living at the time?

LINQUATA: Well, I was sort of a vagabond, I guess. Every year I had new quarters. At one time, I guess in freshman year, I was on Hancock Street. And it was like back-to-back to the school, almost. Behind us, behind where I was, there was the church that was later torn down for the law school, back-to-back to that on Hancock Street to Derne Street. So that was torn down, and that was the first place I lived in. And then another time I lived, I think on the same street. That was when I was a senior, down near the bottom of the hill across the street towards the West End. And that was when I was a senior. I think when I was a sophomore, I was in what we call the Sawyer Building 25 now, which was then the Boston City Club. And at that time the university took one floor for dormitories. And, of course, were all men at the time. But being members of the Boston City Club now because we had rooms there, we were members. And Boston City Club was very generous and they had entertainment for all their members every Thursday night. And Thursday night they would have a dance band or a stage show or something or other and it was good. We enjoyed it. It got us away from our school work and school activities. Perhaps we shouldn’t have but we did. And I will tell you a little story that happened to my friend, Fiore Masse. He lived in the North End. That’s where his family lived. And he was there, supposedly doing some studying with me on Thursday, which really didn’t work very well. And so it was approaching entertainment time. And I said, “Well, Fiore, are you going to join me?” “No, no,” he said, “I can’t. I got to go home.” He said, “Besides, I have nothing to wear.” So he is a little bit bigger than I so I gave him my jacket. It was way up, about halfway up

25 Suffolk University’s Frank Sawyer Building is located at 8 Ashburton Place.
his arm, the sleeve. And I gave him a tie. And I got him suitably dressed, not really in fashion but I mean he had a jacket and a tie, anyhow.

**COLLINS:** Was there a dress code?

**LINQUATA:** Yes, there was. So we had a ball. We enjoyed ourselves very much. And there was a young lady there by the name of Fannie Schwartz. Fannie—Fiore danced with her quite a bit. And it just so happened Fiore was, I think he was engaged, about to be engaged at the time to his wife of many, many years. He’s been married many, many years. But he was engaged at the time. He was walking down Tremont Street and who did he meet the next day, Fannie Schwartz. And Fannie Schwartz blurted out, “Gee, Fiore, we had a hell of a time last night, didn’t we?” And Fiore could have died. (laughter) Of all times to say that. A simple hello would have been great. (laughter) But I guess he had to answer that one. He had a problem afterwards. Not too bad, but his wife was forgiving, thank God she was. He was in a mess for awhile. But, anyhow, that was one of the little things that happened. But that was the Sawyer Club. Then another time I was down on Dartmouth Street all the way down in the Back Bay, I guess you call it. So that was my, maybe my junior year. So I was in about four different places when I was living in Boston because we had to find our own accommodations. But that wasn’t so bad, I didn’t really mind it. It gave us a lot of independence. And we weren’t the typical college student today. You know, we weren’t nineteen or twenty years old. We were all twenty-one and up. And that’s where I was when I started.

**COLLINS:** Do you remember meeting Gleason Archer,26 the president of the university?

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26 Gleason L. Archer (1880-1966) was founder and president of Suffolk University. After graduating from Boston University Law School and passing the bar examination in 1906, Archer founded Suffolk University Law School. The school expanded its mission during the 1930s to include undergraduate education with the formation of the College of Liberal Studies (1934) and the School of Business Administration (1937). In 1937 Archer became the president of the newly incorporated Suffolk University. Archer remained at Suffolk University until his retirement in 1948. In addition, Archer published fourteen law textbooks and also became a popular radio broadcaster for NBC in the late 1920s and early 1930s. An amateur historian, Archer wrote many articles for various journals and was especially interested in colonial New England history and specifically his ancestry as a Mayflower descendant. Gleason Archer’s personal papers, MS108, are housed in the Suffolk University Archives.
LINQUATA: Let’s say I wasn’t formally introduced, but I do remember him very well. Very often he would be in the corridors and greeting the students everyday and wishing them good morning and so on. He was very friendly and very I guess you’d say outgoing. I had a lot of respect for him, an awful lot. Knowing, of course, the more I know about him, the more I respect him. But even at that time I had a lot of respect for him. I mentioned in my notes somewhere that we were charged three hundred dollars a year. And he kept the tuition very low. And he should not have done that. He was really at heart an educator, but he wasn’t a business person. And he really wanted to give everybody an education regardless of their economic circumstances. And that’s why he kept it so low. But when the GI Bill came in he should have boosted the tuition. If he had kept it up a little higher, he would not have had a problem. But apparently the tuition wasn’t high enough and the school couldn’t meet expenses and so the bank took over. And they appointed a bank—well anyhow, someone that the bank wanted, what was his name—I can’t think of it right now, but it started with a “B.” It was from Brown, Burse, Burse—could it have been Burse?27 I think it was Burse, but anyhow he was the new president. And I guess he lasted, I don't know, three to five years, whatever it was. And then Munce28 took over. And Munce wasn’t in the office—I mean he wasn’t affiliated with the school when I was there. I’m talking about as a student. He was in there shortly after I graduated, as a dean. And then he was promoted to president by the trustees. And I guess by that time they started getting free of the bank. But they had a problem with the bank and that’s what happened. I didn’t have a problem even though I was in the school and even though I was a class president and so on. And quite frankly, one of the times we did have a dance. And as you can see, we only charge five dollars for dinner—I don't know if it was a dinner, but it was a dance, anyhow, and with a good orchestra, Sammy Eisen and so on. And we didn’t make ends meet. And before we had the affair, I guess the president at the time, he told us, he says, “If you have a problem, you’re stuck with it. You make your own—don’t bring me any bills or anything.” He says, “It’s your affair. Don’t bring me any bills.” Well, we went in the hole and I gave him the bill. And I says, “It’s yours. Take it or leave it. But it’s yours. I’m not taking it.” And I left it on his desk and I walked

27 Walter M. Burse (1898-1970) served as president of Suffolk University from 1948 to 1954.
28 Robert J. Munce (1895-1975) served as president of Suffolk University from 1954 to 1960. Munce began his career at Suffolk as director of the evening session and lecturer in social studies in 1948. He was appointed dean of the college of liberal arts in 1950, chancellor of Suffolk University in 1960, and chancellor emeritus in 1970.
out. And I didn’t hear any more from it so I guess he paid it. (laughter) It was probably about one hundred and fifty dollars at that time. At that time it was pretty high. And, anyhow, he paid it. So, anyhow, we got away with it.

COLLINS: Can you talk a little bit more about the other social activities that you were involved in?

LINQUATA: Well, basically, we had, like I told you, the Italian Club. We had the—well, let me tell you about the Ram. Would you want to hear about the Ram?

COLLINS: Yes, please.

LINQUATA: Okay. The Ram—at that point I was a senior in the school. And near the beginning of the school year, I think it was, the student body had a vote of what to name the team. The question was—the choice was either calling them the Senators, because we have the school directly behind the State House, you know, or call them the Rams, R-a-m-s. And so the student body had to vote on it and the vote was to call them the Rams. So the vote was Rams. Now they are going to be called Rams. But then they gave us the inspiration, Well, maybe they need a mascot. They have a Ram. The Ram is going to be the name, they should have a mascot. Well, we looked and looked for maybe a couple of weeks, whatever it was, all around Boston. And there were people, gentlemen farmers if you want to call it that, that had these estates and had maybe a half a dozen or a dozen sheep. But nobody wanted to part with a ram. We just couldn’t talk anybody out of it. Well, finally, we found that there was a farm down in Attleboro. Now you have to remember that was 1949 or so. And that was before Eisenhower became president. And Eisenhower was the man, or the president, that initiated the interstate highway system that we have in this country. So that was before that. And all we had was secondary roads going down to Attleboro. Attleboro is almost on the Rhode Island line. It must have taken us at least two hours to get down there. So what do we have to do? We had to stop—oh, I borrowed my landlord’s pick-up truck. He had a panel truck. So we borrowed that. He was a handyman and carpenter by trade. So we borrowed his panel truck. And about four of us went down to Attleboro. And we had to get up about five in the morning to do this. We left Boston about five.
We got down to Attleboro about seven or so. We found the farm and the ram. And the ram was in the pen. It is the dirtiest, filthiest animal you ever saw. (laughter) It was horrible. He stunk. We didn’t want to get near him. He was a sight to behold, believe me. He needed a bath in the worst way, a grooming and everything else. And I think it would have taken somebody, some expert, maybe hours to do it. He was that bad. I guess he was on the farm only for one purpose and that’s it.

MULLER: It wasn’t looking pretty.

LINQUATA: Huh?

MULLER: His purpose was not to look pretty.

LINQUATA: Right. And it was not to look pretty. And I guess the sheep didn’t mind, I don't know. Anyhow, he was an awful mess. So we got him. We tied a rope around his neck, two ropes so that we could hold him in each direction. And we got him on the panel truck and we headed back to Boston. We got there just about in time. Because at that time, the assembly, it was a student assembly, and the president and the trustees were giving out awards, and I knew that I was going to get something and I did. I had a little loving cup that I still have at home. It was little. And so, when my name was called to accept this cup, I had my friends in the back of the auditorium, all the way back in the lobby. And they had the ram out there. They unloaded him from the truck, of course, and they had him tied up and they are holding him. And the ram was very uncomfortable and very unhappy and was trying to get loose. (laughter) And these two men were trying to hold him as best they could, and they managed somehow but with a lot of struggle. And so, anyhow, my name was called. And when I got up, I says, “And I have an award for the university.” So that was the cue. And when I said that, they came down, my friends came down with the ram and holding him as best they could. The ram was struggling all the way down the aisle. And the place was in an uproar. I had a photograph, I don't know what happened to it. But everybody was having belly laughs. (laughter)
They couldn’t contain themselves seeing the ram come down. It was really hilarious. And, anyhow, [they] brought him up. Oh, and before that we had called The Boston Globe and The Boston Record, a newspaper at the time, and The Herald. There were three or four newspapers, and we called them. They were all down there in the front row with their cameras. In those days, the old fashioned cameras that you never see today, except in an antique shop. The cameras, the great big ones, you know, with the flashbulbs and all of that. And they were in the front row. They were waiting for something. They didn’t know what. And the administration was looking at them. They knew something was going to happen. And they didn’t know. (laughter) On the cue, they found out. So we brought him down and that’s where the photograph. There is the photograph here, the one in the newspaper [See Attachment A].

COLLINS: Right.

LINQUATA: All right. And so Suffolk made all the papers that day, I mean the next day.

COLLINS: And was the Ram—I see that it was called Hiram.

LINQUATA: Oh, yeah.

COLLINS: Was that named after—

LINQUATA: Yeah. Yeah. It was a take off on Hiram Archer,29 the trustee. But he took it in good humor. (laughter) Thank God he did. Because he could have been insulted, I don't know.

MULLER: Was this in the auditorium in the Archer building? Is that where there was an auditorium?

LINQUATA: Yeah. Yeah.

29 Hiram Archer (1878-1966), brother of Suffolk University founder Gleason L. Archer, was the first full-time faculty member at Suffolk. In 1930, he became a trustee, serving the university until his death in 1966.
COLLINS: Because at this point, the school was still one building, just the Archer Building?30

LINQUATA: Yeah, that was before they tore down the church.

COLLINS: And built the addition.

LINQUATA: Right. Right.

COLLINS: Wow, and so this was the first—was this sort of to commemorate the first sports teams at Suffolk? Was that partly why?

LINQUATA: That’s right. That’s right. And I think Coach Law31 is in that picture, isn’t he?

COLLINS: Yes. That’s great. So interesting. So it was very well received all around, right?

LINQUATA: Yeah.

COLLINS: That’s great.

LINQUATA: It was. Yeah. And Coach Law was, I guess he was happy he had a mascot.

COLLINS: Yes. (laughter)

LINQUATA: Anyhow, everybody was pleased and it didn’t cause any problems. I’m glad that happened that way because I was—I did have a certain amount of apprehension at the time, to say the least. Because they could have, I guess the word is, “taken umbrage.” They could have been upset. But they weren’t. Everybody was happy. Everybody was pleased that it worked out well. So, anyhow, that is one of the things that happened. The year before, yeah, I think I was a junior at the time. I was running again for president. I wasn’t elected the junior year. And we had

30 Suffolk University’s Gleason L. and Hiram J. Archer Building, named after the university’s founder and his brother, is located at 20 Derne Street in Boston, across from the back entrance to the Massachusetts State House.

31 Charles Law served as Suffolk University’s athletic director from 1946 to 1978.
seen this organ grinder, one of these big organs that they turn by hand. But it was a big one, almost like a console. And the favorite song, I think that is the one he used the most was the “Marseille,”32 the French revolutionary song, which got a lot of, a very strong type of song. So we put a big sign on it. We put signs on the building, too. We hung them out the windows and everything, “Don’t be a monkey. Vote for Mike Linquata.” (laughter) And we got away with it. The school didn’t complain about it. So, anyhow, so that was my junior year. So I did run twice, junior and then senior year. So, anyhow, that was part of it. Let’s see what else.

COLLINS: But you had a successful run your second time. Do you want to tell us more about that?

LINQUATA: Yeah. I got about half, maybe half of the total votes cast. So I did very well. And I guess I was a little bit of a ham, too. We had—I guess Suffolk still has it. We had a parking problem. And, of course, we still have it. Doesn’t Boston always have a parking problem? And some of the contenders for the office, the junior office, I think it was junior year that year, I’m not sure. But, anyhow, they got up—some of my opponents got up and they were going to do something about parking for the students. I don't know how they were going to do it and they talked about all the things they had done. And I guess I was a cynic. I guess that is the best way to put it. And, anyhow, they were talking about things they had done and what they were going to do, et cetera, a little political talk, like politicians do even today. And I got up and I looked at the audience and I said about two sentences. I said, “I haven’t done a God damn thing.” That was the first sentence. And then the second sentence was, “And neither have they.” And everybody was laughing like hell. That ended that. That was the end of my speech. (laughter) But it was—I guess it was as frank as could be and it was to the point. But it was almost an impossibility, as you know, to create parking in Boston, for students especially. It was very, very difficult. Let’s see what else. Oh, of course I screwed up my diction class, I guess that’s what it was. I don't know if they still have them today or not.

COLLINS: No.

32 “La Marseillaise” was composed in 1792 and became the rallying call of the French Revolution. It is now the national anthem of France.
LINQUATA: A class in diction. And they had all these symbols stood for different sounds. And it was my junior year, and my friend Fiore, the day before he says, “Have you got it all down?” “Yeah.” He says, “You have?” “Yeah.” I said, “What the hell is to get down?” I said, “Sure it is down. I know what to do.” He said, “You know what (makes sound) means and what (makes sound) that means and what (makes sound) that means?” “Yeah, don’t worry about it. I got it.” So I went into the class and everybody is giving their interpretation of what all the symbols were. And I guess most of them were right. And I got up and I screwed that up so bad. It wasn’t even—I mean it was funny. I won’t say it wasn’t funny. I had everybody again rolling on the floor because I was so wrong in everything I say. (laughter) And they passed me anyhow. So I got a seventy on it. I don't know why they passed me because I didn’t deserve that. But I guess they had such a good time that I got a seventy.

Oh, another time at school, Professor Burns his name was, was asking the class what they did when they weren’t in school. And different students answered. And I told them I was working on fish. “Oh,” he says, “what do you do there?” I said, “Oh, we had a lot of red fish.” “You what?” I said, “Red fish.” He says, “There is no such thing.” “Yeah,” I said, “there is such a thing as a red fish because we handle them all the time.” He said, “There is no such thing.” “It is sometimes known as ocean perch, but it is red fish.” He said, “I don’t believe it.” I said, “I’ll bring it in sometime.” (laughter) “All right, bring it in,” he says, “because I don’t believe there is such a thing.” So, anyhow, the following week, that weekend I went home and I caught one. I got a red fish. It was a fairly big one and I put it in a shoe box. And it was nice and really red, fresh. Real new. And when they are new they are very red. As they get old, they lose their color. But, anyhow, it was very red. So I brought it in and unfortunately I had a Tuesday class with him. So I got this fish on Saturday, I think, Friday or Saturday. So I brought it to school. I brought it down to Beacon Chambers they called it. I don't know if the place is—it’s on—well, the school is on Derne Street, right. And it goes into the next street. What is the next street?

MULLER: Myrtle?

33 Diction is the art of speaking clearly, also called enunciation. In its original meaning, diction refers to the word choice or vocabulary of a speaker or writer.
LINQUATA: It goes into it, changing the name.

MULLER: Oh, is it Myrtle Street?

LINQUATA: Huh?

MULLER: Myrtle Street?

LINQUATA: No. Oh, Myrtle, Myrtle. Myrtle Street, right? And then you go down about two or three buildings on the right hand side there is a place called Beacon Chambers. There is a Roman House (?), a little restaurant down below. We used to go there for coffee quite often. And I knew the waitresses. I asked her if she would put it in the refrigerator. Well, she did. But apparently, the refrigerator wasn’t cold enough. So then by the time the school started on Tuesday morning and I retrieved it and I brought it to school. By that time it smelled. (laughter) But it was red. It was still red, though, but it smelled. So I brought it and I showed. I passed it around the whole class and everybody saw the red fish. And Burns saw that and he was satisfied. Okay, there is such a thing as a red fish. So I had to bring it in to show him. I guess the children do that in grammar school, don’t they show and tell?

COLLINS: Yes.

LINQUATA: So in a sense I did that, too, in grammar school. But anyhow, it worked out. Everybody was happy. And professor was satisfied it was a red fish. But anyhow, again, because of our age and our maturity, we didn’t really have any inhibitions. We weren’t intimidated by the professors. We could almost treat them, not exactly, but we treated them essentially as equals. And in a sense we were. And so we also had another professor. His name was—Hutchinson I think his name was. And he was a very nice person. But, unfortunately, we were too much for him as students. And he had the worse class possible because they had us—I guess it must have been sophomore year. And the whole auditorium was his class. There must have been—it was half full. So there must have been maybe four hundred, five hundred students in there. And he
made a mistake. And I guess we made a mistake too because he passed the paper around. He said, “If anyone has any problems, physical problems, just write it down on the paper.” And his intentions were very good. What he wanted to do was, if we had problems like hearing or seeing or something like that, I guess he meant, he was going to put us in the front row so we could hear him and see him better. And what did we do? We were a bunch of wise guys, I guess, we were. And who had flat feet, we put it down. Who had dandruff, we put that down, and all of the other silly things that we had. So here we put all these silly things down. And as it was, we all ended up in the front row, with all the dandruff and the flat feet. (laughter) We were the victims of our own folly, whatever you want to call it. And poor Professor Hutchinson, he couldn’t spell very well. And he was teaching us rocks—

COLLINS: Geology?

LINQUATA: Rocks, galaxies. It was a science course, general science course, freshman, freshman or sophomore, whatever it was. I think it was freshman. And so he was trying to teach us that. And he would misspell a lot on the big chalk board. We would have to tell him, You misspelled it. He would erase it, do it again. And he would always wear a dark suit, blue suit. By the time he was through it was all white with chalk. But, anyhow, he was a very nice person but he couldn’t teach very well. So we happened to have that. So we went into Dr. Friedman’s class. I think that was his name. And he is the one that started the laboratory up in Maine.

COLLINS: Um-hm. Cobscook Bay.34

LINQUATA: Yeah. And he was a very good teacher. We would go to the class we had to go to and then we would voluntarily go to his class. So a bunch of us would go in there and sit in on the back, not as students, but as observers. And he was very nice about it. He didn’t throw us out. And he let us listen. And that’s how we passed our courses, by taking advantage of his teaching. So we had to improvise in that respect and do what we could do to get through, which we did. And it was good, it worked out very well. And do you want to know more about the students?

34 The R.S. Friedman Field Station on Cobscook Bay in Edmunds, Maine was founded in 1968. Operated by Suffolk University’s biology department, the forty-acre station has living, teaching, and research facilities for the hands-on study of marine life.
COLLINS: Sure.

LINQUATA: Or beyond that—?

COLLINS: Well, you mentioned one of the restaurants that you would hang out at. Were there other hangout spots that you would go to?

LINQUATA: Oh, yeah. There was the one—there was a hotel. I don’t remember the name. There’s a government building there now. It was at the end of Derne Street. Was that Myrtle Street again? No, Derne Street is college—Temple Street. So was Derne Street, facing Derne Street on what is that street going up and down?

MULLER: Bowdoin Street?

LINQUATA: Maybe Bowdoin, the government building there, a big one now.

COLLINS: Yes.

LINQUATA: Right. Right there, that was the site of a hotel. And that was a third rate hotel. During our spare time, oftentimes we would go there for coffee or just shoot the baloney and waste an hour or two hours there just doing nothing. And who would go to the same hotel were the burlesque girls from the casino, the old Burlesque House and the old Howard, another burlesque house. So they would go in there. And also, the stage manager of the Burlesque House, he would go in there. His name was Jake. So we would go in and we would have our coffee. We got to know Jake and Jake knew us. And he knew me as Mike the lawyer, that’s what he called me because I went to Suffolk, not because I was in law school. But he knew me as a lawyer because I went to Suffolk. So that was my acquaintance with Jake. And we would waste sometimes an hour, two hours there, just chatting, shooting the baloney, whatever. And we wasted some time between classes. Because as I told you sometimes classes would spread three or four of five hours of space, maybe even more. So that’s what we did. Well, anyhow, one time,
Fiore, a friend of mine, and myself decided, Well, we got a lot of time, four or five hours at the time, between classes, why don’t we go to the Burlesque House? So we decided we would go. And on the way some classmates saw us, Where are you going? Oh, we thought we would go down to the Burlesque House. Well, do you mind if we go with you? No. Come along. So, anyhow, from two we ended up with about fifteen or twenty of us, the whole entourage, decided to go to the Burlesque House. So we went down. And I think it was—it might have been The Casino at the time. I’m not sure. But we went in.

And we went to the ticket booth and one of my friends who lived in Connecticut at the time, Jack Conway, his name was Conway, he said, “I know the”—I don't know who in the hell he knew. He knew somebody or other. He said, “I’ll get some good seats.” We said, Fine. So he tried. And he says, “I know so-and-so. Can we get some good seats?” And the ticket girl says, “Who? What? Gee, I can’t do that. I don't know who.” So anyhow, nothing happened. So then I stepped forward. I said, “Is Jake there?” She says, “Jake who?” I said, “Jake, the stage manager.” “Oh, yeah, he’s back here.” I said, “Can you tell him that Mike the lawyer is here, you know, with a bunch of friends?” “Sure.” So she did. The intercom. And she did. And so they got us to pay for the tickets. The usher escorted us all the way down to the bald headed row. We were so embarrassed, the whole bunch of us. We were still young. We were early twenties. And we were sitting down with the men sixty and eighty years old. (laughter) And so, that was sort of an embarrassment. But, anyhow, we were down there. So, anyhow, what else happened? Oh, let me tell you something that happened after school, a long time after school, after we graduated.

COLLINS: Um-hm.

LINQUATA: Dr. West, Arthur West, you probably know of him. Dr. West and I were very close friends. And I helped him get his doctorate. And if you read his thesis, on the front cover, on the inside front cover he put, he acknowledged that I helped him an awful lot getting his, passing his doctorate. And what had happened, all right—I knew him before that, of course. And he called me and I was working for my father at the time on fish. And he said, “Mike, can you help me?” And I said, “Sure. What is it?” And he told me he needed the entrails of the codfish and the pollock. I said, “Are you sure you need that?” He said, “Yeah. I’m studying the life cycle
of a parasite that inhabits those two fish.” “Okay, if you say so.” And so he said, “When you get a bucketful, call me up. I’ll be at the university, and I’ll come right down.” I said, “Okay. But you have to come down right away because it is kind of hard for me to collect it and keep it. I don't know what can happen to them. And I don’t want you to come down and waste a trip. So you got to come right away.” “Yep,” he says, “Soon as you call me, I get in the car and I’ll come right down.” “Okay.” So that was the arrangement we had. And two or three, four times, whatever, that happened like clockwork, no problem. I would ask one of my uncles who—and all my uncles are fishing captains at the time and they own their own fishing boats. And they used to do a lot of business with my father. So it was easy for me to tell my uncles that I wanted a bucketful and they would put it aside for me. So I would have it. I would call Arthur and the arrangement was easy. So I would do that.

Well, anyhow, one time, near the end, one of my uncles called me because he was taking fish out—actually, there is a wharf next to us where we are now. It is no longer there. And he called from there, my Uncle Tony who is my father’s brother. And my Uncle Tony called and he said, “Mike, I got a bucket of entrails for you,” called the guts. He said, “I got a bucket of guts.” And I said, “Okay, fine.” He said, “Come right down and pick them up. I got them in the cooler.” Over here, McDruggers(??), that was the name of the company. “Okay.” I called Arthur right away and Arthur came down right away. And so an hour later passed, an hour and a half, whatever it was from the time I called Arthur and he came down to pick them up. So we came down. And I came down by car. And as I was coming down the road by car, down here, my mother’s brother, or my Uncle Leo, who was also a fisher-captain on his own right, he had his own boat. He was walking out with my bucket of guts in his hand. I said, “Uncle Leo.” He said, “What is it Mike?” I said, “Those are mine.” He says, “No, they’re not. They are mine.” Then we had a tug of war. He says, “What are you going to do with them?” I said, “I need them.” He says, “You don’t eat these.” He says, “I eat them. You can’t have them.” I said, “What the hell are they?” He said, “We cut them up like tripe. We clean them and we cook them.” He said, “They’re mine.” I said, “You’re not going to get them.” I said, “They’re mine. They’re Arthur’s. I promised them to him.” And we had a tug of war. I finally prevailed. And I got them for Arthur so he didn’t have to go home, or back, empty handed.
And that is how he did his thesis on this parasite. And that’s how he passed. That is what he did. And he acknowledged me, which is very gracious of him to do so. And I tried to get Suffolk, through him, to set up a laboratory here in Gloucester before they set it up in Maine. But I just couldn’t get the local people in Gloucester interested, local officials in Gloucester interested, to their detriment. They lost out. Suffolk ended up with a good laboratory up in northern Maine. There also would have been a good one here in Gloucester, too. Anyhow, Gloucester lost out on that one. And Dr. Friedman, I guess, put up a lot of money and he put up the laboratory up there for Suffolk. That was after Dr. West, Arthur West did his doctorate. I’ve gone up there. I saw the laboratory, very well done.

**COLLINS:** Yes, I think they use it as a field station now for biology students.

**LINQUATA:** Right. Right.

**COLLINS:** That’s great. Do you remember anything about your graduation?

**LINQUATA:** Yeah, a little bit. It wasn’t good. They played a song there, whatever it is.

**MULLER:** “Pomp and Circumstance”?

**LINQUATA:** Yeah. “Pomp and Circumstance.” And the law school was in one aisle and we were in the other aisle. And I was supposed to lead our group because I was the president of the class. And I don't know, the president of the law school [class] was on the other aisle, I don't know, Masterson I think it was.

**MULLER:** Masterman? Ed Masterman?

**LINQUATA:** Yeah, Ed Masterman. Right. And he was being a wise guy because he is the president of the law school. Law school was, you know, more important. So before the song even started, he was five or ten steps ahead of me going down. The only way I could have caught up was by running and I chose not to do so. (laughter) But, anyhow, he wanted to take the glory
because he was the law school and he was the president of—okay, let it go at that. So that was unfortunate. It wasn’t done well. He should have had a little bit more class, let me put it that way.

**COLLINS:** And where was that held?

**LINQUATA:** I don't know. (simultaneous conversation)

**COLLINS:** Yes, we have the program.\(^{35}\) I’ll look it up.

**LINQUATA:** Anyhow, that is what happened there. When I got the degree, it just so happened that same day—do you want to hear the story on that one?

**COLLINS:** Sure.

**LINQUATA:** That was a story in itself.

**MULLER:** This is your honorary?

**LINQUATA:** Honorary degree. Well, they started with the degree and getting the appointment to the Board of Trustees.

**COLLINS:** And when did—yes, so talk a little bit first about your activities with Suffolk and then—because you were very active throughout, after you graduated in 1950 you continued your connections.

**LINQUATA:** Okay. I was down here in the restaurant. And when I was here some of the people from your office, the office you have now, came down and approached me. And they asked me if I would head up the first alumni, first fundraiser for the alumni, and if I would lend my name to it and if I would do it. And I said, “Yeah, sure, if you want.” And I guess—I don’t remember the

\(^{35}\) The program from Suffolk University’s 1950 commencement is available in the University Archives.
year. You people probably know better than I. But it was probably about ten, fifteen years after I graduated from college. It had to be about ten, fifteen anyhow. And so it had to be fifteen, maybe late sixties or early seventies when that took place. And that’s the first fundraiser that the university had, and I solicited money from the alumni. And it was really a wake-up call in a sense for both the university, the trustees, and to the alumni, sort of giving us the message that now the alumni was important and to be welcomed into the activities of the school. And that was sort of the wake-up call like we had later on in ping-pong diplomacy with China. The Nixon, you know. That’s how we started our relationship with China. It was a little thing like ping-pong.

Well, this is a little thing that happened, I think, sort of the beginning of the wake-up call that we had with the alumni and the marriage, if you want to call it that, association, affiliation, whatever, with the alumni and the trustees. That is the beginning. And from then on the alumni became more active in the fundraising. We had one every year and I was more or less involved for awhile. And that’s what happened and that’s how we got going. And, of course, the alumni got going because the graduates in my class and the following classes and the one prior to mine, too, we wanted to form an alumni association and we lobbied for it and the trustees would not recognize it. And the alumni went to the State House and they finally got it passed, recognized by the state as having an alumni association despite the opposition of the trustees of the time. We were accepted by the state. And we became alumni, Suffolk University Alumni, unofficial as far as the trustees were concerned at the time. But we became the alumni, and gradually they got closer. Well, they were very apprehensive, no question about it and that’s all right. They wanted control, they didn’t want to lose it. But, anyhow, that’s what happened there.

Then the years passed and not too many, again. Because when you are my age everything is sort of new. But when you are young, it’s a long time. So it might have been another five, ten years, whatever happened. Finally, we got recognized as a group. We got officially sanctioned by the trustees and we started working within the school afterwards. And the university, the trustees decided they were going to have alumni representative on the board and they were going to put three, one elected each year for a three year term and it would rotate. And there was already one in there. But then I decided I wanted to run and I did. And there were one or two others that
wanted the same position. But we got interviewed by the trustees afterwards and they accepted me, and I became a trustee. But, anyhow, I became a trustee.

And now I got to tell you a little family story. And you have to understand my father had a sixth grade education. My mother went up to fourth or fifth grade, and that is as far as they went. And so all of this business about college was completely new to her. And I remember going up to my mother and telling her I was elected as trustee at the university. And she said, “Oh, that’s nice.” She said, “And how are the children?” And I said, “Ma. Did you hear me? I’m a trustee.” “Oh, that’s good. Your eyes don’t look too good.” (laughter) She had no concept what I was talking about. And I said, “That’s sort of an important job.” And she said, “Well, what do you do if it is so important?” I said, “Do? The trustees, they do everything. They are the ones that make all the decisions in the university. They hire the deans. They are in charge of all the buildings. They do everything.” “Oh, that’s nice.” (laughter) She had no idea what I did. Anyhow, I did that for the three years. And, of course, while I was in there, about the Sawyer Building—do you want to hear that story?

COLLINS: Yes.

LINQUATA: All right. The Sawyer Building, the building I had been as a student as one of my dorm rooms. Sawyer Building, when I just went in as a trustee, one of the first subjects that was discussed was the purchase of the building. They had already purchased the building. And the reason was to turn it into a business school. That was the purpose of purchasing the building. So, of course, the question was—they had eight and a half million dollars allocated for the renovations. They didn’t know at that time, they hadn’t made a decision yet, whether to tear the building down and build a new building there or to renovate the present building as it is. So that was the discussion at the time. And they had put me on several different committees, which at that time and I don't know what they do today, at that time, each of the trustees was on three or four different committees. And one of them that I was on was a building committee. I was just a member of the building committee. And so, as a member, I was interested in what they were doing. They had hired an engineer from MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] as a
consultant, which was to their credit. They did the right thing. And then they finally decided that maybe they would renovate the building. They thought that was the prudent thing to do.

And at that point the president, Tom Fulham, I asked him. I said, “Well, Tom, what is the architect going to charge? Do we have an architect?” “Oh, yes, we have an architect.” I said, “Well, what does he charge?” “He is going to charge seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the architectural work.” I misspoke, I guess. I said, “Tom, you crazy?” You shouldn’t talk to the president like that. He said, “What’s the matter Mike?” I said, “Well, I think it is too much money.” He said, “You think so?” “Absolutely. Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars for an architectural fee on an eight and a half million dollar job? I think it’s much too much.” He said, “Do you think you could do any better?” “I think so.” And, of course, I had no idea I could. (laughter) But I stuck my neck out. So I came back to Gloucester. And I called a lawyer friend of mine who had been, a Boston lawyer, who had been doing a lot of work for me and also was well-connected in Boston. And I called him. I said, “Charlie. I got a problem.” He said, “What is it Mike?” I said, “Well,” excuse my language again, I said, “I’m in deep shit.” He says, “You are?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “Why?” I said, “Well, because I spoke up. And maybe I misspoke. I don’t know.” And I told him the story. He says, “Well, what do you want?” I said, “Charlie, I need some phone numbers and names of good architectural firms that can do this job.” And I gave him the rough scope of the work—which Charlie did. He called me back and he gave me about half a dozen. And I got these names and I started calling. And I called, I guess the first three. And I told them what the work was, what the scope of the work was, the building, et cetera. And they were very familiar with the building. And they gave me prices that were way, way lower than seven hundred and fifty thousand. They were in the vicinity of three hundred, three hundred fifty, four hundred thousand in that ball park for the same job. So I said, “Good. Thanks a lot.” Of course I took the notes.

And I went back and another two or three meetings went by. The trustees—and the subject didn’t come up. And finally, I guess, the third or fourth meeting Tom Fulham says, “Mike, did you find out anything?” I said, “Yep, I did.” “What?” I said, “It can be done for a lot less money by very good firms.” He said, “They can?” I said, “Yes, they can.” So another meeting or two went by and then Tom says, “Would you mind sitting in on the negotiating committee?” “If you want
me,” I said, “All right.” So I sat down on the negotiating committee. The negotiating committee, we had the architectural firm that wanted seven hundred and fifty thousand and two or three of the trustees were sitting down and there were about three or four of us. And we started going back and forth. Well anyhow they went down to five hundred thousand. And it was Linnehan, one of the trustees, he capitulated too fast and he gave in at five hundred thousand. I was hoping to go down to four hundred and even three hundred. But he capitulated and once he gave in, we all capitulated, we all gave in. And so we ended up with five hundred thousand. And so we did save two hundred and fifty thousand on the job, which I thought was a considerable amount of money. This was like 1980, which was quite a while ago. So when you think about inflation and all of that, that’s a lot of money. But anyhow, now it ended up I was on the committee.

I was part of the architectural committee, the building committee. Now, the fellow that is on the committee was a well respected person. I don’t remember his name. But he was getting old and he was having his physical problems. He was losing his eyesight and having difficulty walking. And I don't know whether he bowed out or whether they pushed him out, the poor guy, but he was a very nice person. But Tom asked me if I would assume the chairmanship of the committee. And I said, “I’m not qualified.” I said, “I’m not a builder. I know something about fish. I know a lot about fish.” And I said, “I know quite a bit about a restaurant. I can help you there, too.” I said, “But buildings, I’m really not qualified.” He said, “Mike, we want you as the chairman of this committee.” He says, “We want you.” So I said, “All right. If you really want me.” “We want you,” he says. “We want you to be chairman.” “Okay. Thank you. I’ll accept it, you know, you understand.” He said, “Okay. Don’t worry.” So I became chairman.

Soon after that, the same year, I guess maybe two or three months later, we had a meeting with the architect. The chairman of the board was Vince Fulmer, he was a secretary of something at MIT at the time, secretary to the trustees or something, I don't know. Anyhow, he had a good position up at MIT and he was the chairman of our Suffolk board. And Vince Fulmer and myself and we had a meeting with the architects in the architects’ office, which is on Beacon Street. So we went down. And the discussion was, What do we do if the sub-contractors come in and they

36 James F. Linnehan, Sr. (1921-2009) graduated from Suffolk Law School in 1956 and was a life member of Suffolk University’s board of trustees. OH-065 in the Moakley Oral History Project is an interview with Mr. Linnehan.
do the job under cost, will we get the difference? Will we get the profit? I said, “No.” They said, What do you mean, no? I said, “That’s not fair.” “What do you think we should do?” “Well,” I said, “In all fairness, if they come in with a bid and they do the job and they do the job up to specs and they do a good job and they save, let’s say, one hundred thousand dollars or whatever it may be, they should keep half the money and the school keeps the other half.” They said, You think we should do it that way? I said, “Absolutely.” I said, “They should have a reward for saving money for doing a good job and we get the balance.” They said, If you really think so. And anyhow, my thought prevailed and we did it that way. And it ended up we got the school in under cost and on time, which was—because by that time I wasn’t a trustee anymore. But anyhow, I was invited to the ceremonies and I helped cut the ribbon and all of that, which they gave me that honor and that privilege of doing that. So, anyhow, it’s a beautiful school, at least at the time. I think it still is. And we did a good job of it. So I was very pleased with that, that I was able to do that. So that school came in good. So, now, two or three more years passed after I was out of the trustees. So, I don't know what year it was. I got it up there somewhere, when I got the degree.


LINQUATA: Huh?

COLLINS: The honorary degree?

LINQUATA: Yeah.


LINQUATA: Okay. So anyhow, the building went up about 1981 or 1982. But anyhow, again, Frank Sablone his name is, who replaced me as the trustee representing the business school and so on, the colleges. He called me by telephone. And I was busy at the restaurant at the time. And he said, “Mike,” he said, on the phone, “Mike,” he said, “The school wants to know if you would accept an honorary degree.” And, again, my favorite word, “Stop shitting me, would you
please?" I said, “I’m much too busy, Frank. I really don’t have the time to joke.” “No, no,” he said, “I’m serious.” I said, “Frank. I don’t believe it. I think you are joking.” “No, no,” he says, “I’m serious.” “Frank.” Well he said, “Well, what do you want me to do?” “Well, if I got a letter from Tom Fulham on university stationery asking me if I’ll accept it, then I’ll believe it.” I said, “Otherwise I’m not going to believe it so don’t bother sending it.” So he did. He sent a letter. Now come along, my mother again. She comes into the picture. So now it is all confirmed. They wanted me to accept it and so on, all agreed. And now they told me, the university told me, We’ll give you all the tickets you want and be in the front row of the auditorium. I said, “Well, that’s nice. I’ll accept it.” That was all arranged.

Now, my mother, well, unfortunately for her, she suffered with Parkinson’s disease at the time. That is very debilitating disease as you people know. And that’s when you lose control of your muscles. You are apt to collapse or fall down or whatever. But you can’t really control your motion as much as you like. And she was on the stages of that. And so I told her, I said, “Ma. I’m going to be receiving an honorary doctorate degree.” “Oh, that’s nice.” (laughter) I said, “Well, really. And I’ve got tickets.” “That’s nice.” “And for you, too. And I want you and dad to come down with the family.” “Oh, I don't know if I can do it.” I said, “What do you mean, you can’t do it? I’m going to get an honorary doctorate degree and you don’t know if you can come down to see me get it?” “I don't know if I can.” I said, “You’re going to be down there.” “Oh, I don't know.” “You’re going to be down there.” I said, “I don’t care how you feel. If we have to carry you down, we will carry you down the whole way. You are going to be down there and you are going to see me do it.” She bitched and she complained and she was in a very, very bad temper let me put it that way. The whole day, all day, even going down the aisle and all the way to her seat and all of that. She was in a very bad temper all the time until she saw Cardinal Law on the stage. Then he was Archbishop. Then she knew it had to be very, very important. (laughter) Until then it couldn’t be very important. It was only her son. (laughter) Anyhow—but I guess that is life. It doesn’t matter who you are, to your mother, you are always the child. And that’s the way it is. But anyhow, that is the way she recognized that maybe it might be important. She saw Cardinal Law up there. So that’s what happened there. What other stories do you want to hear?
COLLINS: Should we talk a little bit about the genesis of the World War II fund that you are involved with?

LINQUATA: Well, that really started, and I’ve go to give a lot of credit—well I deserve some of it, but a lot of credit also has to go to Jack McCarthy. And the two of us were really the instigators and we had support from our classmates of course. And what had happened, we had—they had, class of ’49 had their reunion and they held it in Boston, I think the Swiss Hotel, they called it. I don't know if it still exists under that name. But it is on Tremont Street. I think Tremont Street. But anyhow, that is where they held it, the ’49 class reunion. And I went to that one and some of my friends in my class went to that one too, even though it wasn’t our class. But we went because we knew a lot of them. And we started talking about that time. And then the following year we had, I had a joint class of ’49 and ’50 reunion here at the Gloucester House. And we had a clambake, we had Dorothy McNamara here. And we had Joe Strain, he came. His wife at that time was suffering with Alzheimer’s, but he brought her. And she passed on not too long, about a year after that. And so we had a very well attended group here. And some of the other—I don’t remember who but there were other members of the board here. I don’t remember who, but so anyhow we had a good time. And I brought them out, those that wanted to, I think we brought them out on the schooner at that time. So they went out on the schooner. And so we had a good time. We all got reacquainted, and we had a clambake. I formed a line, a little bit unusual I guess. It was one great, big line and everybody, it was like a round robin going around it. So everybody was in line and everybody greeted everybody else at one time or another. So that’s the way we did it. So nobody got missed. So everybody got recognized. And it was a very well attended affair.

But I think that time was when Jack and I started seriously about this here, alumni veterans’ fundraiser. And so we did that. We got it started then. And I think it’s been very well thought out. The only regret I have is that we didn’t initiate this maybe ten years sooner or even twenty years sooner. But if we had done it sooner, it would have been much bigger now. But anyhow, we did it and it got started. And so hopefully in the future it will keep on going. But it’s something that should have been when we were much younger and we were more attuned to the
university and to alumni and to fundraisers and all of that. I think it would have better then, if we had done it twenty years sooner. But anyhow we did it, late, but we did it.

MULLER: Thank you for it.

COLLINS: Well, maybe, can you tell us—well, obviously, you got your business degree from the university, which you used because you are a businessman now and you’ve been quite successful. What else did Suffolk prepare you for in life? Or is there anything you want to say, like what Suffolk means to you?

LINQUATA: Well, what I’ve done all my life—I’ve looked at all the things I’ve done and I take pride in all of them. However, I don’t think my wife takes as much pride in them as I do. And one reason is, let’s see—(shuffles papers) Yeah. I’ve got a whole page of things I’ve done. I got to read off some of the things I’ve done. I want you to notice that I never got paid for any one of them. Everything was voluntary. I was the president of the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Rotary Club of Gloucester, president of North of Boston tourist event, Convention and Tourist Bureau. I was on the Gloucester Harbor Improvement Commission. I served as Commander of the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] Gloucester, Suffolk Board of Trustees. I ran my father’s fish plant. Of course, I got paid for that. Yeah, and now I’ve been chairman of the World War II Memorial Committee of Gloucester. We built a beautiful memorial. But, anyhow, I’ve done a half a dozen things that I think I take pride in. But none of them that I was offered or accepted any money in any of them. So I did them because I wanted to do them and because I took pride in doing them. And I think that is one of the things that Suffolk taught me, to be community orientated and be involved. So I have been involved and, again, I’ve taken when I could—I took a leadership position in just about everything I could. Because I’m more comfortable that way, (laughter) and I like to have things done right. I’m afraid that sometimes if you take a secondary or third position, things don’t go the way you want. And if you can lead the charge, sometimes you take the heat but at least you get it done the way you want. And that’s what I’ve been doing. And I’d rather do it that way, anyhow. But, anyhow, I’ve taken several positions and I’ve taken them with pride. But I’ve, of course, no money. I think my wife would have liked it if some money coming in but she wonders where the hell I’m going to
go next and do what. But I enjoy doing these things, too. And I don’t believe we should—as individuals I think we should do these things, get involved in our communities, whether it’s school community or local or the VFW or whether it’s the city, the town or city you live in. I think we should all be involved one way or the other, YMCAs [Young Men’s Christian Association] or whatever. And people should do that and I’m an advocate of that. And I think it is good. I have no regrets. Let me put it that way.

**COLLINS:** Well, Suffolk is better for having you attend it and been such an active alumni. We thank you very much.

**LINQUATA:** I thank you. And I thank you girls for doing what you are doing. And I have no regrets on anything I’ve done for Suffolk through the years today. Or even if I’m called on tomorrow to do something, if I can, I will. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW, PART II and RECORDING TWO
SOH-035 List of Attachments

The following documents were referenced during the interview

by William Ennis