

Code	311022
Subject	Paul O'Neil
Date	?
Interviewer	Scullion
Special Notes	Good stories throughout. Some parts are focused on Cleveland, while most is about WWII. Worked at Illuminating Co.

minutes:

- 0 where he was born, where parent were born.
Talks about mother. Had him when she was 18. Grandpa worked on the railroad. Too dangerous, so his wife convinced him to work at National Carbon, but he got killed in
- 1 explosion at National Carbon.
Lived with grandma on 177th street in double house when he was young. Moved to W.
- 2 58th. Father got laid off in depression, then worked in WPA.
Father left. Then moved back with grandparents. Whole family worked, all worked at National Carbon. Uncle Louis was a sheet metal worker, he always had a job, even in
- 3 depression.
Never felt the depression when he was with his family. National Carbon always worked,
- 4 gave family jobs. Everyready plant.
Could walk to work. Moved from St. Rose school to St. Coleman's. Talks about father
- 5 leaving.
6 Talks about father contacting him later.
- 7 Lived on 117th until after WWII.
- 8 Housing was hard to find after WWII.
Lived on West Boulevard, between Detroit and Baltic. These houses aren't there anymore, apartemnts now. Teenage years on 117th. Worked at St. Ignatius. Rode street
- 9 car for 25 cents a week if you were a student.
- 10 Ignatius for highschool.9-12th grade.
Trip to go downtown on the streetcar. Detroit-Superior bridge called "high level bridge".
Could see the river from street car on bridge. Could go down to Euclid Beach on street
- 11 car.
Took an hour to get to Euclid Beach. Pure(PierdaSP?) Springs Park on Westside. Had a
- 12 rollercoaster.
Euclid Beach had three rollercoasters, and other rides. Edgewater just a beach,
- 13 swimming, Euclid Beach had rides.
Making fun of "muscle guys" when he was a little kid. If they would keep Edgewater clean
- 14 it would be a real nice beach.
Almost every year some kid drowns at Edgewater. You have to watch your kids when
- 15 your down there, its not the lifegaurds responsibility.
- 16 WWII. Talks about swimming in WWII.
- 17 Saved his buddy from drowning.
Hustle and Bustle of Cleveland. May Co., Higbees, big, very nice stores. Took street car
- 18 downtown. Woolworths, other dime stores, could get lunch.
Higbees and May Co. had nice places to eat. Beautiful displays at Higbees and May Co.
- 19 in winter. Euclid was the main street.
Arcade was nice. Never went to see the Mansions, no reason to. Closest was to movies.
Then, movies came downtown. **Palace theatre, had movies and bigbands. Tommy**
- 20 **Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey.**
Palace theatre, had movies and bigbands. Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey. Sit in your
- 21 seat, no dancing or anything. Very popular.
never went to millionairs row. Interviewer talks about Mather mansion. St. Steven's
- 22 Church and wood carvings.

23 Hang outs. 117th street, there was a roller rink. His friends worked there. Tips were the
only wages.

24 Roller skates.
Perkins Park, went there more than Edgewater. Perkins on West Boulevard. Stanton
Mansion, they had their own beach. Used to go there because his friend was dating the
25 Stanton girl.
Talks about theatres. Homestead theatre and ballroom. Ignatius. Discuss the cost of
26 Ignatius.
Ignatius had school and gym. Played sports there. Wasn't a good student, but he made
27 it. Played sports, but didn't get along with the coach.
Coal bin in the basement. Each side had its own furnace. Coal truck would come and
28 load you up.
29 More coal. Depression. Comradery of WPA workers.
Would put on a show at Public Hall downtown. Father helped build roads with WPA.
30 Mother saved aluminum.
It was good aluminum, didn't wear out. People would come around asking for food. His
31 grandma would feed people sometimes.

32 Race relations. No African Americans on the westside. Never knew there was a problem.
Segregated army service. Didn't know there was a problem. Illuminating company was
33 always fairly employed, was fair to men, women, blacks and whites.
34 Housing shortages.
35 More on family. Brother and Sister. He was the oldest.
More on Depression. He helped out. Would help clean dining room furniture. Brothers
36 and sisters would help. Would whitewash.
Dec. 7th, 1945. Was a beautiful day. Was working at the roller rink. Heard about
Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor, thought, "where the hell is Pearl Harbor?" He and his
buddies all enlisted after they were out of school. Started a club called "Jokers Club", they
37 all enlisted.
Joker Club would meet at each others house. Just for fun. Bowling teams, basketball
38 team, baseball team. Would put on dances and skating parties.
39 not all of them went to Ignatius. Guys came from all over.
Some of the Jokers club went to Navy, Army and one guy might have gone to the air
force. A lot went to the marines together. Didn't go into the service until after high school.
40 They guys were all gung ho about going to WWII.
He wanted to go, all his buddies were gone anyways, there was nothing to do. Moved
41 from projects to a home, after housing shortage.
Bought a model home. They were worried they weren't going to get the house, but it all
42 worked out. Why were they gung ho about WWII.
Wanted to get back at the Japanese. Took a bike trip up to Canada with his buddy before
43 he went to WWII.
It was easy to bike along the highways then. Had a tent, but never had to use it. Slept in
44 tent with construction workers, slept in a concession stand porch.
Flunked from being a pilot because his eyes weren't good enough. Left for war from
45 terminal tower. [we have a picture of this type of thing]
Went to Port Clinton, it was cold. Then, they sent him to Miami beach. Lived in the Sans
46 Hotel. Florida wasn't as popular back then.

47 Chose airforce because he wasn't a ground person or a sailor. Wanted to be a fly boy.
48 talks about going with officers for briefing. Talks about bad targets.
49 discusses airforce terminology.
50 talks about going over Vienna, had to go over the target twice.

Mercy mission to alps. Smells like pine trees. Too much for him, wouldn't like pine smell
51 everyday.

Air force training. Started at Miami. Wanted to be an MP, that's where he learned
52 weapins training. Then he was stationed at Newark, NJ. Small base.

Newark was really nice back then. Had a OSU in downtown Newark, only went to New
53 York once. He saw Rocketts once, didn't know how famous they were at the time.

Would guard military barges. He would guard US prisoners, guys that went AWL. Would
54 take them on work duty.

Took army specialized training course, like an engineering course. Had to be tested to see
if he qualified. Got to go to college. Went to Syracuse University, but then the program
55 closed down.

56 Then, sent him to Greensborough, NC. Basic training.

Got duty at the rifel range because he and his buddies didn't like basic training. Needed
57 them to fill up pot holes. For doing it, they got "three day passes"

58 Army post office. Did favors to help get by in basic training. His buddies got shipped out.

He wanted to do something because his buddies had been shipped. The people from the
camp wanted to keep him around, so the classified him as "in jail". So, he eventually got
59 shipped.

went to radio school. Had a good time, there was a roller rink there. Always had to wear
60 uniform during war time. Built radios, did code work.

Sometimes, learning morse code was tough for people, although he was fine with it. Had
61 trouble with cursive.

62 People with typewriting kills were amazing. They could really go.

talks about learning to use guns in the army. Talks about bruises you would get if you
63 didn't hold the gun correctly.

64 talks more about weapons practice.

65 more descriptions of training, out in the Arizona desert. Talks about gunning for B17s

66 shooting cactus for practice.

67 talks about the heat. After Arizona, went to Lincoln Nebraska to get the crew together.

68 The crews did everything together.

Tells story about forgetting to put the gas cap on the plane during take off. No spark, so
69 they were alright, but the were lucky.

70 Had different bombadeer everytime, but the rest of the guys were the same.

71 talks about different gun turrets on the plane, different combat tasks.

72 combat tasks.

73 talks about Yank magazines, his mission was in there. More questions about gun turrets.

74 war buddies, war stories.

75 funny war stories.

describes inside of plane, bombs.

talks about mercy mission again. The war ended, they went to South Africa, then to
Puerto Rico, then to South Carolina. Flew all the way back themselves, plane was taken
away from them in South Carolina.

His crew were all sent somewhere, and he was sent to Florida. He was upset about it.
had a buddy cover for him so he could leave and go to clear water or St. Petersburg, he
had fun. Talked to his buddy girl friend that died.

War ended in Japan, and he went home. Last time he saw his crew was in Columbia SC.
Describes Italy during WWII.
saw Vatican City in the army. Had tough missions, especially Vienna.
Air corp, call air force now. Talks about medals, but everyone gets that.
talks about seeing planes come back from missions.
talks about crash landings.
more about flying in WWII, talks about fighter escorts.
Talks about Tuskegee airman.
Missions over Germany and Austria, mostly Austria. Started his missions in 43, 44.
Could tell planes by their silhouette.
Talks more about training, dog training.
you had to learn the duties that you were told. Overall feelings about participation in WWII. Very proud about it at the time, but then you try to forget about it. You have bad dreams, etc. But there was line up to join the reserve after the war.

Bad dreams, etc. start to fade away. But sometimes bad memories creep up on you. Ex. Crying when he heard a documentary that recounted a son's letter to his mother.
had a girl friend that he would write to. Talks about Rome.
Went to Rome Opera House. Good production.
Never saw an enemy plane in combat. Enemy air force was already crippled and guard planes were there.
more talk of bombing targets and combat.
life after WWII. Worked as an office boy before the war. Then, went to John Carroll under GI bill. Didn't get a degree though. Played basketball game once.
Went back to Midland Steele products, learned electrician work. Laid wires.
stories about work.
Quit his job because doctor said it was too much on his back.
Then, got a job at the Illuminating Co. Good pay, a lot of hours. But, too many hours, interfered with baseball
pause.
pause. Midland Steele Products to Illuminating Co. Worked office job in accounting at Illuminating Co. Made more money at Midland Steel
describes different jobs at Illuminating Co. Worked as a record analyst. Describes the job.
more job description. He doesn't know what people do now that copy machines have been invented.
Talks about Illuminating Co. moving from 75 to 55 Public Square.
Helped plan where new people would go in the new building.
The new building was less spacious than anticipated. Move took place in one weekend.
Had a rat problem.
New building had a rat problem. Rats in the desk drawers. Talks about downtown during this period.

Cleveland was still nice. "All Nations Festival", by the mall. Down Euclid Ave., was starting to get kind of seedy. Street cars. Had to be careful driving around street cars. riding the street car.
Talks about street cars being powered by wires. Meeting his wife. Met wife on a Friday night.
was going to go roller skating, but went to his friend's house to meet his friend's cousin instead. Used to go on double dates with his friends.

Dated for awhile, and then decided to get married. They got a long well, and she was attractive. Married in 1951, knew each other for a few years before they were married. Talks about learning plumbing. Talks about his buddy Johny Mueller.

Lakewood Tennis Courts were behind his Uncle's house. Talks about looking for girls. First lived on West Boulevard when he got married. Then moved to Louis Drive for a while. But he didn't get a long with the lady that owned it. Then he moved to Mentor, but it was terrible, just a shack without running water. Tried to get housing through Veteran's Administration. They found him a place in Berea. He really liked it. Worked at the Illuminating Co. at this time. Funny story about the Berea bus about a guy standing up sleeping. Woke up around 6 for work.

Wife was night person. He was an early bird, had his routine from being in the service. Would do all of his exercises in the morning. Had to be in shape for playing ball. Always had a part time job too. Examples: White sewing machines. Warehouse jobs, Warehouses for hardware stores. Worked at Sears. Sears had charge accounts. Worked at St. Rose Credit Union, for loans and such things. Stories from part time work. more about credit union. Loans were insured. Did cleaning jobs too. Cleaned in Berea in an office. Would only do it one night a week, then he didn't have to work at credit union and made more money and had more time with his family. Didn't like a lot of doctors. Many were cheap. But some were very nice people. Would always work a part time job after job at Illuminating Co. Sometimes, only a few nights a week, sometimes every night. Talks about bad language. He learned the bad language from his kids. Not just his kids, whole society used bad words then. Talked about bad words in the service. Funny story about swearing. The Arcade's between Euclid and Prospect weren't as nice as the others. Talks about how nice Jacobs field and Gund Arena are. Area around CSU used to be slums. Talks about Baily's and Higbees. Fred Harvey's restaurant in the Terminal. Other nice places to eat downtown. Sportsman's bar, had wonderful corned beef. Talks about Arcade. He would only walk through it. His buddy's uncle had a jewelry store there. But, he just liked to walk through it. Sandwich places on Prospect. Talks about ties. Would go down to Majestic Ties and get new ties, was down near the arcade. talks about children and grandchildren.