

Dino Anthony Brugioni

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Abstract

Dino Anthony Brugioni was born December 16, 1921 in Bedier, MO. His grandfather was a stonemason and brick mason and Dino worked with him and still loves to work with bricks, mortar and stone. He lived on a farm and everyone had to do chores. Dino took care of the garden, fed the cows and pigs and brought in coal for the stove. As a sophomore in high school, Dino became interested in photography and as a senior, he bought a camera and a light meter which he used to take pictures around his school. He attended Jefferson City Junior College for two years and wanted to become a diplomat. After Pearl Harbor, Dino wanted to be a flyer and signed up. He received basic and advanced training and specialized in radar and jamming. Then he trained with a B25 Bomber Crew in South Carolina and was sent to Casablanca in '42. They traveled in box cars from Casablanca to Algiers to Constantine. After they won the battle in Africa, they were shipped to a small town south of Naples. He was a radio operator and performed aerial photography. He knew Italian so conversed with some of the Italians. Dino tells of finding the parents of an Italian prisoner to inform them he is well. Another story is of viewing a massacre of Italians, including a little girl, in a cave by the Germans in revenge. After 25 bombings, they could go home and he was sent home after 66 bombings. Dino knew that the Jews were used as slave laborers during the war but did not know about the concentration camps until after the war. He was sent to Santa Monica where he met actors and was in a training accident. Dino was reclassified to go to the Pacific as they needed an overwater Navigator. He completed basic training and was in advance training in August '45 when the war ended. Dino asked permission to attend George Washington University and got permission as he received 14 medals. At GWU he took courses in international economics as he wanted to become a diplomat. Dino entered OSS which became the CIA. Dino was in charge of briefing boards for all the Presidents up to President Reagan and met them all. Auschwitz was photographed when the US was trying to determine if Germany had a synthetic fuel. Photographs of Auschwitz were taken when they were trying to bomb the IG Farbin Plant but bombed Auschwitz by accident. Dino became interested in the photographs 30 years after they were taken. When Dino showed the photographs, some people would break down crying, others said they were fake or that he was a Zionist and survivors were happy as they were proof of Auschwitz. There were many photographs of Auschwitz but no one had heard of them or had ever looked at them. Dino's proudest moment was showing the photos to the survivors of Auschwitz.

Summary

00:00 Dino Anthony Brugioni was born December 16, 1921 in Bedier, MO to Frances and John Brugioni. His grandfather came from Italy with Dino's father in 1908 and his mother

came in 1904 with her mother and sister. They all came from Modena, Italy and settled in Bedier, a coal-mining town where there was plenty of work which paid well. His grandmother wanted them to speak Italian at her home and they spoke English at all other times. During World War II, Dino flew over Italy but did not see his town. He had two brothers: Delmo and John Wildo and two sisters: Arlene and Elfia who was the eldest. Dino was the next eldest, making him the oldest boy in the family. He was always lectured that he must be an example to his brothers who acted up. His father believed in educating his boys. Dino was studious and tried to please his teachers and do well. He completed public school, high school and two years college before entering the service. He attended Jefferson City Junior College and wanted to become a diplomat.

05:00 He looked at different universities and centered on George Washington University in Washington, DC. All the siblings had chores to do which they must do well. Dino idolized his parents and grandparents. His grandfather was a stonemason and brick mason. Dino worked with him and still loves to work with bricks, mortar and stone. His grandfather always joked while working. He was particular in mixing mortar as it must be just right—not too wet or too dry. Everything must be correct with masonry. His father was a coal miner and later worked for the State Supreme Court where he got exams ready each year for the new lawyers. He thought the boy he handed the exam would become president. His father did not attend college but was intelligent. His family did well. His father was part owner in a mine. During the depression, his father lost the mine along with water rights, lost money in the bank and his mother lost money for a house. His father took a job shoveling coal in a power plant for Jefferson City. All the siblings worked. Dino got ten cents an hour for welding for the State. At a young age, Dino learned to respect elders. His father did not want to hear any bad words and people in the town would report it. Dino was known as “John’s boy” or Brugioni’s boy.” They lived on a farm and Dino took care of the garden which was an acre. His mother canned and they had chickens and a cow and everyone did chores.

10:00 Dino fed the cows and pigs and brought in coal for the stove. They did their jobs automatically. His mother was an expert in crocheting so made extra money for them to go to the movies. He saw the Marx Brothers. As a sophomore in high school, Dino became interested in photography. In those days they had a box camera or a bell camera where all was set. As a senior, Dino wanted a camera and bought a light American Leica and paid \$2 for a light meter which he used to take pictures around his school. They were silly things, such as of couples. He knew someone who could develop film so gave him his film to develop. His brother liked electronics and welding and worked in a welding shop. During the war, Dino worked part-time in a photo lab. He attended Jefferson City College from 1940 to 1941. He was at the movies when Pearl Harbor was attacked and he came home and his mother said, “Pearl Harbor was hit” and he asked her where it was. Dino wanted to be a flyer and signed up. He received basic and advanced

training and specialized in radar and jamming. He started out in California and Arizona and then was sent to the South where the weather was nice. He trained with a B25 Bomber Crew in South Carolina and was sent to Casablanca in '42. Upon arrival he looked for Ed Brick's place from the movie, "Casablanca." Dino hired a donkey and went to Medina where he learned about Arab hospitality.

15:00 The Arabs were angry and did not want the Americans around. After Casablanca was taken, Dino was shipped to Algiers where they all were found to have lice and had to be deloused. They traveled in box cars from Casablanca to Algiers to Constantine. After they won the battle in Africa, they were shipped to a small town south of Naples as could not go to Vesuvius which had erupted. He was a radio operator. His best friend, Phil, said that he would call at 9 and when he did not, Dino called him and learned that his friend's plane had crashed. He called the base and his friend was there. He was burned so bad that he only recognized his class ring. He and his friends paid for a casket to be made. The crash was due to a training accident. They used a tomato patch for a runway. They were stationed near Peaston, a Roman town prettier than the Parthenon. He would take books his mother sent and read them on the temple's altar which was decorated with small roses between the stones. They fought a battle at Salerno nearby.

20:00 The area was under control of the allies in '43. He was a radio operator. A Colonel from West Point felt the pictures taken by the camera were terrible. Stops had not been set on the camera so used his \$2 light meter and got good results. The Colonel did not want them to bomb their own troops. After 25 bombings, you were permitted to go home. Then it was changed to 50 bombings but after he completed 50, Dino volunteered for more and did 65 bombings. He was told that he could go to Rome or Paris. He was given two weeks to go to Corsica or could go home which he accepted. Then he would be sent to the Pacific. Dino was doing photography besides being a radio operator. Anzio was slaughtered and the Americans were pinned down. Montecasino was used for cover and they bombed there. There were Polish, Indian, Pakistani and French troops. Sergeant Cobbs was his best buddy. He was like Billy Graham as he would quote from the Bible. Before a flight, they would take a walk and he would take a rosary and his friend a bible. His plane was hit and Dino took a photo. All the propellers stopped and the plane crashed and his friend was killed. His friend was from Covington, Kentucky.

25:00 Since Dino knew Italian, he could converse with the native Italians. In Africa the Italian troops (prisoners) did the mess (cooking). He said good-bye to one of the prisoners (Bartolome?) who told him to let his family know that he is alive if Dino should get to his town. It was Easter and they were not flying so Dino hitch-hiked five miles and went to the church where they said mass and asked for Bartolome's parents. The parents thought it a miracle and he came and that their son is alive. Dino flew 66 missions – to Italy, Bremer Pass, Paris, Yugoslavia and France. He photographed the French fleet taken over by the Germans and was afraid that the American Navy would fight. Every night he saw

the type of bombs being used and in the morning he got briefed. He was told the target was battleships and cruisers and they went in five waves. The third and fourth got smattered and 26 planes either got hit or the flyers got wounded. Dino received a presidential citation for that.

30:00 When Dino arrived in Italy, the Germans occupied Rome and were gathered in an area where someone threw a grenade and killed thirty Germans. They demanded a ransom in people to pay for the crime. He saw them place civilians in a cave and machine-gun them. There was a little girl and after she was shot, her white dress looked like florals. He felt it was such brutality to kill a little girl. The Germans took the Italians as prisoners. The Americans arrived summer '44 and opened the caves. As the Germans left Rome, the Americans bombed their convoys. Dino drove past their convoys of dead soldiers and smelled the stench of burned flesh that he can still smell it. One vehicle after another was burned. One night he bombed an airfield and came in with machine guns. He saw a man running who either got hit or dove into a ditch. Dino meant to kill him and called him a bastard. The German Army bought supplies for the Pass to Udine, a little town. It was a Sunday in May. The rail lines merged and there were lots of boxcars full of ammunition. Dino let go the bombs and tertiary explosives. He called the Colonel who told him to photograph the explosions a second time. He returned to his squadron and said, "Got the bastards." He thought he performed a good deed but 2,000 slave laborers were killed. Dino looked for glory but did not get it.

35:00 He knew what happened to little children. They came to his camp begging for food. At that time he did not know what was happening to the Jews. The troops either got pancakes or powdered eggs so he got extra pancakes and syrup and gave it to the children. One boy lost his right hand and got beaten up by his friends. Dino's buddy, Red, took him to the machine shop and made him an artificial arm which he used to beat up the children. Dino knew that the Germans used slave labor as he saw Jews wearing a star working on the roads. It was dirty stuff. After the war, Dino heard about Auschwitz and death camps. After his 66th mission, he was sent to Santa Monica where he met actors including Jeanette McDonald and her husband, Lou Costello and Robert Mitchum. One time he dated June Allyson. Dino toured the MGM Studio where they had filmed "Gone with the Wind." He was a guest of the Masters Club. Dino was in a training accident at the Naval Base which resulted in being hit in his face and broke some teeth which he had fixed in Santa Monica. Jeanette McDonald was small and had strawberry blond hair.

40:00 He was flying and could not get the wheels down so he should either parachute or crash land. He had faith in his pilot so decided to crash land. They were doing 100 miles an hour and there was the screeching sound of metal. Fifty pounds of ammunition hit him in the face. He took the basic position with his hands behind his neck. He enjoyed a month he spent in Hollywood. Dino was reclassified to go to the Pacific as they needed

an overwater Navigator so he got signed up. He completed basic training and was in advance training in August '45 when the war ended. Dino asked permission to attend George Washington University. He received 14 medals, 9 awards, Purple Heart and a distinguished unit citation. He put in for release for time spent serving and for receiving the medals which was accepted. The only time he was in Germany was in the Brenner Pass. In Yugoslavia he fought against the Germans. At GWU he took courses in international economics as he wanted to become a diplomat. Ted Acheson, Dean Acheson's brother was his friend. He was dating his future wife when he got offers to go into banking and the FBI. Ted recommended he enter OSS which was being formed into CIA. Dino did so and became expert in Soviet Industries and in '54 he joined the CIG (Central Intelligence Group) which became the CIA. The CIA watched him as an upcoming person.

45:00 Dino met the head of the Navy Interpretation Unit. He went into their dark room and learned about the development of the U2 and became Chief of Information. Dino took courses in photo interpretation which he easily passed. Major Chip Carp was the Director and told him to make briefing boards for him to brief Eisenhower. Dino was put in charge of briefing boards and notes for Eisenhower. He received 12 clearances on nuclear, bacteriological, covert intelligence and covert photography. Dino was in charge of briefing boards for all the Presidents up to President Reagan and met them all. Eisenhower was his favorite as he was knowledgeable about photography. Dino assured that his boss had all the answers so wrote notes for everything. He wrote a briefing board for the early U2 and then for other higher technical ones. Some were on commercial carriers or fake airplanes. To get photographs, sometimes they used foreigners. He gave them cameras and they returned with photos. They paid foreign seamen and gave them a camera and they climbed a pole and took photos of Alexandria, Egypt and other ports to see what was going in and out. The US wanted to know Soviet activities.

50:00 They would allow foreigners to go into the PX. They had a secret program in South Africa. A big question was the bomber gap and the US wanted to know how many planes the Soviets had. There were five missions in 1956 and found the Russians had no gaps. There was the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Suez War. There was an eight-year Eisenhower Report from the war as we watched everything. We had aerial photography in World War II. Dino heard about the Holocaust after the war. There was a Holocaust program on TV in the 70s for five or six nights. Auschwitz was photographed when the US was trying to determine if Germany had a synthetic fuel program. The photographs from World War II are at the Air Force in Vent Hill, Virginia. We had problems with Iran so had to be careful when he made briefing boards for President Carter and his Press Agent Jodi Powell. Michael Birnbaum from the Holocaust Museum heard there were photographs from the war. Dino liked Michael and told him more photographs were available. There were plenty of photographs of Auschwitz and no one had heard of them.

They took photographs of Auschwitz when they were trying to bomb the IG Farbin Plant. No one had ever looked at these photographs.

- 55:00 Dino looked at them alone as he was the senior officer. He knew they had mission processing at Wiesbaden to the Azores and to Dover. He would have six hours to wait for work so looked at the photos during his spare time. He produced a document. Seymour Bolton and Jodi Powell told him to speak to President Carter and Eli Wiesel. Wiesel was asked to lead the Holocaust Museum but he did not feel he could raise money. Eli did not believe in violence as his nine-year-old sister was lost in the Holocaust so he did not like Israel using violence. Eli recalls seeing his sister holding his mother's hand and turning back at him.
- 60:00 Michael Birnbaum had tremendous opposition from both liberal and conservative Jews. The Conservatives wanted it to be like Yad Vashem in Israel. Birnbaum wanted it to be educational and emphasized the liberal view. Dino found the photographs and his boss, Stanfield Turner, a classmate of President Carter, told him to brief people in Skokie. Dino had relatives in Highland Park near Chicago. He got in touch with Michael Birnbaum and learned there were 70 to 80 Auschwitz survivors in Illinois. When Dino showed the photographs, people would break down crying. He found the people at Skokie easy to speak to. He asked them to point out things he missed in the photographs. They showed boxcars and explained how people died at night and how. There was a coffee break and Dino asked them how they survived the cold as it was the same climate as the Canadian/US border. They used cereal bags made of paper and tar and made thermal underwear out of them. Dino asked if the women got in line first for the food and they replied that the middle of the line was best. You would just get water in the beginning but you got potato peelings in the middle of the line. Dino's aerial photos were the first real proof of the Holocaust so no one cried as they were thankful for them. Dino returned to DC and spoke to Dr. Birnbaum and said something should be done but there was no money for such a project. Steven Spielberg had money for it. The survivors showed their tattoos. The men were about 5 feet 5 inches and the women were shorter. One woman said she wanted to become an American citizen as she was filthy when the Americans liberated her. They had her shower in privacy in a tent and the soldiers did not harass the women.
- 65:00 The survivors told of falsifying personnel records. Everyone wanted to share their stories with him. Dino was close to a classmate named "Cohen" who attended all his family funerals. Dino had Jewish friends in high school as an Italian he was a minority and the Jews were a minority. Most of his Jewish friends lost relatives in the Holocaust. Dino was called to the National Archives to brief the press and they asked, "How much do the Jews pay you?" Are you a Zionist? A doctor in Rhode Island gave him a hard time and a guy in Canada said the photographs were fake. One photo looked like there was a zipper as the people stood in line with the sun shining over them. When an Englishman said the

Holocaust did not exist, he said the originals are still available. Whenever he shows the photos, there are denials. He was called by the District Attorney of Chicago three times to testify against the people who saw nothing at an Auschwitz tower. He agreed and their argument was removed.

70:00 The first troops who freed the prisoners at Ebensee were the 80th Division, Dino's father's Division. There are not many photographs from the Concentration Camps. Dino showed his photos to six Temples. A survivor from Ebensee said they were punished by being sprayed with water so prisoners would freeze to death. The photo interpreters who originally took the photos of IG Farbin were inexperienced. Thirty years after they were taken, Dino became interested in them. Historians did not use aerial photography but can interpret them. Intelligence was a male domain and women were only hired as clerks in the 60s. He wanted to hire them and others did not as thought they would get married and leave or fall in love and not work much. They started hiring women and now 50% of the photo interpreters are women and some became supervisors. When he hired them, he warned them not to cry and do not take crap. No one had viewed the photos after they were taken. They had parties and drank wine in the 8th Forest. .

75:00 The 15th was in Italy but it was not as good as the English as there was snobbery in the Air Force. The bombing of the IG Farbin Plant was due by the 15th. No one copied the photos to the English. The English had photos of Dachau which appeared like a prison or a modified vacation hotel. One always looks at transportation when viewing a photo but no one questioned all those trains and boxcars. No one asked to perform this task as there was no requirement to do so. The interpreters had minimal training. There was aerial photography during World War I. He would like to see the albums of all the photos.

80:00 He told the survivors of Ebensee that usually there is a place that makes food and a place for toilets but he only found crematoriums by looking at the shadows. There was no cordwood for a fire. There should have been a hospital in the photos. There were few people from Ebensee that indicated it was harsh and cold. There is one photo of Russians with children. Dino has a Jewish grandson, Ben, and thinks he could have been a victim. Now his grandson is an Army surgeon. They are close and he asked who the grandson worked on when he served in Afghanistan and he replied that he saved a Taliban's arm which had been shot. There were also Italian and German troops there. Dino is keeping one photo book and will give it to the Holocaust Museum when he passes on. Dino is asked, "What are you most proud of?" He replies that at Skokie he expected the survivors to cry but they were happy to see proof of the Holocaust. His cousin was in the audience and was surprised how much the photos meant to them.

85:00 There were few photos of Auschwitz and now there is proof. A debate was started among historians whether crematoriums and gas chambers could have been bombed. The photos were not discovered until the 70s. At the time they were taken, there was not sufficient

intelligence to point out the location. Auschwitz was bombed when an attempt was made to bomb the IG Farbin Plant. McCoy made the order for the bombing as his outfit specialized in pinpoint bombing. They knocked out bridges, and hit battleships and cruisers. Medium bombers were more accurate than heavy ones. B25s were medium and could have done it. Dino said that he would have done it. It would have taken about six weeks to reconstruct. They used gas as killing with rifles upset the killers (Germans). Dino felt that his outfit was a good one to do the bombing. Heavy bombers were in the area. His outfit had gone to France by then.

90:00 Bombs are released linearly. It is hard to bomb one area at a time as when they are released, the airflow may fish bed or tumble. The fins are light sheet metal. Probably, the bombs go hit and tumbled and hit the barracks of Birkenau instead of IG Farbin. It was bombed by accident. Bombs were over the #1 and #2 killing complexes. They used the wrong bombers and did not know how to interpret the photos. The report did not go to the 15th. The invasion was about to occur. They used resources on B1 and B2 sites, synthetic fuel plants, which was the goal, but they did not look. No one asked the purpose of the boxcars, especially that there were so many in wartime. They could have been counted. (Audience lady indicates a mural in the Holocaust Museum shows about 40 boxcars.) They could have measured the size and divide by the number of boxcars. There were vehicles next to the boxcars, the so-called "Red Cross" buses.