

LETTERS TO PROGRESS IN PHYSICS

Corrections to the Biography of Frank Robert Tangherlini, Published in Progress in Physics, Vol. 1, 2009

Gregory B. Malykin

Inst. of Applied Physics, Russian Acad. of Sciences, Ulianova Str. 46, Nizhni Novgorod 603950, Russia

E-mail: malykin@ufp.appl.sci-nnov.ru

This short letter contains some additional information and actual corrections to the biography of Frank Robert Tangherlini, published by the author of the letter, Gregory B. Malykin, in *Progress in Physics*, v. 1, 2009.

Dear sir,

My recent publication [1] spent on the biography of Frank Robert Tangherlini (on the occasion of his 85th birthday) contained a minor lack of information in the field of mainly his family life, details of his military service during the World War II, and his private communications with some famous physicists of the 20th century. Due to the exceptional courtesy of Prof. Tangherlini who has read my recent paper [1], I would like to improve these, and also add several details, which could be interesting to a reader. Therefore I provide below some extractions from the comments made by Prof. Tangherlini himself on my topic in his private correspondence with me [2].

1. "...Thus: my maternal grandfather did not settle in New York, but in Chelsea, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston, and later moved to Philadelphia. ... My oldest son Arne died in 1998 at the age of 37. However, he left me a wonderful granddaughter who will turn 18 in August."

2. "...Actually, I was not "set free" of military service, but rather, as with so many other engineering students, I received a "draft deferment", that enables the student to complete his technical education subject to government wishes. However, the engineering program I was enrolled in at Boston College (although it is a Jesuit institution, its name is just Boston College, not Boston Jesuit College) closed down, and I volunteered to be drafted in July 1943. After processing at Fort Devens in Ayer, Massachusetts, I was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia, to receive Basic Training. But I did not stay there a year. I had been placed in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), and after completing my basic training, I along with others was sent to the University of Cincinnati, perhaps in early January of 1944. I completed two quarters of training there, and sometime in May, I arranged to be transferred to the regular ground forces that were preparing to be sent overseas. I received more infantry training in the summer of 1944 in Kentucky, and then volunteered to be sent to Fort Meade, Maryland to be shipped overseas. I was finally sent overseas on the Mauretania, perhaps in September 1944, and it was on board the ship that I met James Barlow and Joe Rhiley, who had been airforce cadets but were transferred to

the infantry. After we arrived in Liverpool, we volunteered to join the 101st Airborne Division (only volunteers were in the Airborne, no one was forced to become a paratrooper, even when jumping, if someone didn't want to jump, they were asked to step aside, and let the next man jump; they then had to leave the Airborne). I made five training jumps in Hungerford before being flown over to Mourmelon, France, where we stayed for several weeks, before being sent to Bastogne, Belgium in TRUCKS, because there was not enough time to arrange for a parachute jump. So I never parachuted into combat. If I had, I probably wouldn't be around today writing to you. The Germans had broken through in the Ardennes, and we were sent to halt their taking the key city of Bastogne, which we did. We eventually were surrounded, and the German commander asked our acting commander, Brig. Gen. MacAuliffe to surrender. He replied: nuts!* This became one of the famous stories from the Battle of the Bulge. At the end of the war, sometime late in August, I made another training jump, this time in France. It was part of our training for the so-called "Jump on Tokyo". The training jump took place even though the war had ended. It was the smoothest (and last!) parachute jump I ever made. I should also note that although I was a non-commissioned officer with the equivalent rank of a sergeant, the army designation of my rank was T-4 (i.e. technician 4th grade)."

3. "... I received a bronze medal in American history not world history. Incidentally, I still remember what the competition essay was about: It was about a comparison of Thomas Jefferson with Alexander Hamilton. ... Also, in colleges we do not speak of grade, so Robert F. Kennedy was in the same graduation class as myself, i.e., the class of 1948, but not "grade". I should emphasize that I never met him personally, and indeed only learned he was in my class many years later. I attended 60th reunion of the class of 1948 in June 2008. ... Skipping now to my post-doc training in Naples, I should mention that although Francis Halpern and Susum Okubo were there, Gell-Mann was not there. I think you may

*"Nuts" in the context MacAuliffe used it is not foul language, but rather an expression of contempt or derision as in "nuts to you", or "you must be crazy". It is also slang for testicles, but it was not being used in that sense.

have been confused by my reference to the Gell-Mann-Okubo elementary particle mass relations. . . . I did not discuss the superluminal problem with Hermann Weyl, but wrote to him sometime in 1951–1952, but did not save his reply. See a comment he made in the letter I am sending you. Also, I did not discuss the problem with Pauli, although I did attend two colloquia he gave on Heisenberg's theory of elementary particles, the first at Berkeley, and the second at Stanford where I managed to ask him a question about Heisenberg's theory. Earlier, in 1994, while I was at Convair-General Dynamics, I corresponded with Feynman about my theory. Although he was very helpful (regretfully I didn't save his letters to me), he, as with Wentzel and Weyl, did not agree with my superluminal theory, which I eventually put aside after receiving further negative comments while I was at Stanford. as described in the enclosed letter to Fröman. One might say the TT represents an attempt to understand more deeply special relativity and the Lorentz Transformation rather than to replace it. I believe the concept of external synchronization helps enormously in this regard."

4. "... I should emphasize my marathon runs were not in California but in Boston, and on one occasion in New Mexico. I am a very, very slow marathoner. My last Boston Marathon was in 2006, and it took me 8 hrs and 35 minutes. This was an improved statement over my 2001 Boston Marathon which took me 9 hrs and 15 minutes. My first marathon was in 1989 while on sabbatical leave at Harvard, I ran it to celebrate my 65th birthday. It took me 9 hrs and 45 minutes. My best run was in the year I retired, 1994; it took me 7 hrs and 35 minutes."

In conclusion, I thank Frank Robert Tangherlini for his useful corrections to my biographic topic [1], which were emphasized by him in his private letter to me [2] after the topic has been published. I also thank Dr. Dmitri Rabounski, the Editor-in-Chief, for his courtesy agreement to publish the corrections (seem valuable to me), and also Edward G. Malykin who helped me in the preparation of this letter. This work was partly supported by the Council on President's Grants of the Russian Federation for Leading Scientific Schools (project no. NSh. 1931.2008.2).

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References

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2. Tangherlini F.R. Private communication with the author, January 06, 2009.