

Rulon Larry Brough
Cedar City Veterans' History Project
Interviewed by: Unknown
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Q: Ok. Can we get your full name and will you spell it for us?

A: My full name is Rulon Larry Brough. R-U-L-O-N. Larry is L-A-R-R-Y and Brough B-R-O-U-G-H. It's like rough with a B in front of it. Rhymes with rough tough and mean.

Q: Alright. Where do you currently live?

A: I live in Enoch, Utah.

Q: Is this the same place where you were drafted?

A: Yes I was living in Cedar City when I was actually drafted or commissioned...both.

Q: So you enlisted and drafted?

A: Well I was...I had returned home from an LDS mission and was enrolled in the ROTC program at Southern Utah State College and within three days after my enrollment I received a draft notice. But I had a deferment because I was in ROTC. So even though I was drafted I really wasn't, so I completed my ROTC and received a commission through the Air Force ROTC program at Southern Utah State College in 1974.

Q: Nice. Where were you stationed for most of your service?

A: I've been stationed...I've spent almost twenty-five years on active duty in the Air Force so I've been stationed all over the United States and all over the World. Some of the places in the United States I've been stationed are, I've been stationed in Alabama twice, Idaho three times, New Mexico, over seas I've been stationed in England twice, in Belgium, Italy, and Saudi Arabia.

Q: What years did you serve?

A: I served from 1974 to 1999.

Q: And what was your highest rank?

A: I retired as a Full Colonel in the United States Air Force of America.

Q: What was your favorite decoration?

A: I think the one that means the most to me is probably a Distinguished Flying Cross which I was awarded for a mission that I flew in the Gulf War in January of 1991.

Q: So you flew a lot in combat situations?

A: I had in the first Gulf War I flew twenty-three combat missions and then I went back two years later to Saudi Arabia and flew another...oh thirty-six combat missions in the enforcement of the Iraqi no flying zone, the southern no fly zone in Southern Iraq.

Q: So are there any memories that you have vividly of your time there?

A: I have many, many memories, vivid memories of the combat operations in Iraq. Some of them were humorous; some of them were pretty scary. Every time we crossed the border into Iraq we were shot at. I think one of the most vivid memories, the most frightening memories was the second mission that I flew into Iraq where I was engaged by an Iraqi air craft it had a air-to-air missile shot at me but luckily it missed.

Q: Were there any religious or spiritual experiences that you had during your service?

A: I've had lots of spiritual and religious experiences during my service. Being LDS, you know, the church and Heavenly Father is a very important part of my life and I prayed a lot. I still pray a lot, but during war time you pray a lot and I've had even in peace time experiences where I feel like the hand of the Lord has watched over me and protected me. So, I probably wouldn't share anything in specific with you, but I can tell you that there's been many, many times where the Hand of Providence has watched over and protected me and that's why I am sitting here today and not in a grave.

Q: So how was your family life while you were in the service?

A: Well I thought it was great. I am sure my wife will give you a different story about that and my children, but it was the twenty-five years that we spent as a family in the military, was a great adventure. I think my children enjoyed the adventures of moving around and the places that we lived and being able to see a lot of the world as well as the United States. I think that was one of the very positive experiences of being in the military was the travel. Of course the most difficult time for my family was during deployments and especially during the Gulf War when you know you get eight hours notice and you are gone and your wife is left with four children, young children, trying to take care of everything, pay all of the bills, and keep on top of everything while you are ten or twelve thousand miles away for seven months.

Q: How do you feel about the support that your country gave you or what did you think about that while you were...?

A: I had the unique opportunity of experiencing the support during the Vietnam War although I did not participate in the Vietnam War, I was a Vietnam Era Veteran. And so the Vietnam War was going on while I was in ROTC and when I was in pilot training and

by the time I completed my training and my pilot training and the training afterwards it was pretty much ended. But there was a great difference between the support that the citizens of this country gave the soldiers and the military people of Vietnam versus the Gulf War. And Vietnam we saw very little support at the end of it. The citizens, many of the citizens were very adamant that they didn't like the military and it took a long time for that to change. And it really started to change in President Reagan's administration. It was completely opposite during the Gulf War. There was tremendous support for the military during the Gulf War. It was very interesting to see that difference. And I think everybody learned lessons not only in the military from the Vietnam War, but our country from that as well. And there was actually tremendous, tremendous support during the Gulf War. I remember the time between Thanksgiving and New Years in 1990 that the support of the American people for the service men in Saudi Arabia and in that area and south west Asia was tremendous. I remember the mail that we got was astounding. We would go get pick up loads, five or six pick up loads of mail for our squadron and distribute it to the members of our squadron and everything from thank you cards and Christmas cards to walk men and electronic games and stuff like that. It was pretty fantastic.

Q: Did you ever have any physical conditions like the weather, any stories on that, that can interest us?

A: I had lots of weather conditions. There was an experience that I had during one of the last missions I flew during the Gulf War. It was very interesting that we had weather problems all the time during that particular war which was very unusual. It was just unusual that the thunderstorms and stuff because they usually just don't have that kind of stuff in that part of the world or in that part of a time frame. I remember one mission that were in and out of thunder storms and we were in a two-ship and we were trying to air refuel and we were going in and out of clouds and we kept losing visual contact with the tanker that we had on the radar and I remember getting really, really close where it was so close that it dropped off the radar which means you were within 100 feet or so, probably a couple hundred feet, of the tanker and didn't know what to do because we had now lost visual of the tanker and we can not rejoin on it. And I remember breaking out the crowns and I was all underneath the tanker in perfect position for them to start refueling me. So anyways there was lots of weather incidents throughout my entire career, but that was just one.

Q: Do you have any regrets?

A: No. As I look back on that twenty-five years it was as I mentioned earlier, it was quite an adventure. If I had to live my life all over again I would probably do exactly the same thing as far as joining the military and being in the Air Force it was very enjoyable. As I got more rank it became less enjoyable. While I was flying that was a great, enjoyable thing to do to fly air planes. I flew F111's and EF111's. The last five years I was in the Air Force I didn't fly at all. Every once in awhile I got to jump in the back seat of an F15E and do some flying but that was the far and few between. So I was in staff positions and leadership positions and command positions that take a lot of stress and

responsibility. So that wasn't quite as enjoyable as when I was younger when all I had to do is fly airplanes.

Q: If you could give advice to the service men and women of today, what would you say?

A: Be honest, have integrity, work hard, and be proud of what you are doing.

Q: So how do you feel about the conflict in Iraq?

A: Well, I have mixed emotions about it. I think personally that it was the right thing to do. I think any time that we can help a country become democratic then that is worth the effort to do so. I am a little bit disappointed in the politicians today and the fact that they want to pull out. I don't think they really understand what is going when they make those kinds of statements because you can't just go in a country and decide to set a date to pull out. There's certain things that you need to be...certain things that you need to assure are in place so that country can survive. That was one of the problems we had in Vietnam, we set a date and we said we are pulling out. We left the Vietnamese people there on their own. I think the same thing will happen in Iraq. I think that that country can have peace but it will take the military presence for several years for allies to be there to buoy them up and support them and get them on their own. I think the time can come when we can pull out, but to set a specific date to pull out is, I think is, real stupidity.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to say before we close?

A: No, I did enjoy the time I spent in the military. I am proud of that service. I think my family is proud of it. There were ups and downs in it, but it was something that I enjoyed doing and don't regret anything that I did during that time. I would encourage our young people to consider going into the military to get that experience. It's a great experience; it's a character building experience for our young people so I certainly encourage our young people to consider that. It's not for everybody. Some people will go in there and absolutely hate it and other people will enjoy it very much, but it was a great career for me and I think it was the right thing for me to do.

Q: Alright thank you.