

Murdock, Donald

Navy: 1946-1948

This interview was held on December 28, 2005. The questions were asked by Bryce Goodwin and Shelly Goodwin

Q: Well, if you'll begin by stating and spelling your full name.

A: It's Donald Wallace Murdock- D-O-N-A-L-D W-A-L-L-A-C-E M-U-R-D-O-C-K.

Q: Where do you currently live? Just the city and the state.

A: Cedar City, UT. Do you got to have the address?

Q: No. Is this the same area where you like resided when you were drafted? A: No.

Q: It's not? Where did you live when you were drafted?

A: I lived in Beaver. Beaver City, UT.

Q: Did you enlist or were you...

A: ... And I wasn't drafted. I enlisted.

Q: Oh really, you enlisted? In which branch of the service did you serve in?

A: Navy.

Q: Did you serve full-time or in a guard or reserve unit?

A: No, full-time.

Q: Where was your headquarters when you were stationed?

A: On the USS Pasadena CL65. It's a light cruiser.

Q: Really? That's cool.

A: Laughs. That threw ya, ' didn't it?

Q: Yeah. What years was it when you served?

A: Well, I enlisted in June 1946 and I got out in the fall of 1948; about August I believe it was.

Q: What was the highest rank you achieved while you were serving?

A: Fireman First Class.

Q: Were you decorated for your services?

A: No.

Q: Did you serve in combat or non-combat positions?

A: Well it was a combat ship, but we didn't get into any combat.

Q: Why?

A: Well, nothing happened in front of us. We was there to stop it, but nothing happened. When you're on a ship, you just go where it is and if there's a battle there, you get into it. But there was nothing.

Q: So you're in the navy?

A: In the navy, yep.

Q: Were there any people that were kind of famous that were historic figures that you might've come in contact with while you were serving?

A: Don't know of any.

Q: Like, when you, when you're reflecting back on your military experience, what do you think was the most memorable experience you ever had, like frightening, humorous... what do you think was the most memorable experience?

A: Well, one I really remember. I went through boot camp with a lot of guys that went into the Seabees. And when I got over to Guam, their whole camp was there so I went up to visit with them. And I left there... it was dark and we had to go through the jungle and there was still a lot of snipers around. And I had about a mile and a half to get back down to the docks, so I run all the way – a mile and a half from the Seabee base clear back to the docks.

Q: Because there was snipers?

A: There was snipers in the jungle, but they didn't see me and I didn't see them.

Q: Whoa. Was that scary?

A: Laughs. Scary? You ever run through a deep, old, dark jungle? It was dark.

Q: That would be scary! Was there like religious or spiritual experiences?

A: Any what?

Q: Spiritual experiences that might have stood out.

A: No.

Q: What about your family; what was that like while you were serving, your family life?

A: Well, they all stayed in Beaver and that's...

Q: Did you have a wife?

A: Oh no, I wasn't married, I was single. I enlisted right out of high school. I graduated on the 24th of July and I was down in boot camp on June 16.

Q: What were some things that were like happy that you might want to tell your grandchildren about while you were serving?

A: No, can't think of anything. Just where I was and what I was aboard.

Q: Is there anything that was kind of sad that you might want to forget about?

A: No.

Q: What was your feelings of support from your home? Like family, country, and congressional, and political?

A: Well they supported me in everything I wanted to do- even go into the navy even though they didn't want me to go in.

Q: They didn't want you to go in?

A: No, my dad had a farm and he needed me on the farm.

Q: But you decided to go in?

A: Yeah.

Q: (Other interviewer) Speaking as a mother, I wouldn't like that. I wouldn't like that. Don't go.

A: No. (Talking to boy interviewer) Hey, remember what she just said, will you?

Q: Yeah, I won't go.

A: You follow that, you follow her advice.

Q: What was the environment like? Like the terrain when you were serving?

A: Well, the Pacific Ocean. Pretty big environment. How we got on Guam, Saipan, and Quajaline. Their little islands there's little trees.

Q: Was there any regrets about your service?

A: No. I enjoyed it.

Q: What would you say was the single most positive experience that you had during your service?

A: I don't know if I could think of any single positive.

Q: You can tell a lot of them if you want.

A: I don't want to tell a lot of them.

Q: How has your service colored current political, social, or religious views?

A: Well, I think that it taught me a great deal by being in there, but that's about all I could say. There wasn't any LDS aboard the ship with me, so...

Q: You were the only LDS?

A: Uh huh.

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

A: Well, I'd say most the time that if you have to go, you got to go and to do it with a happiness in your heart. But if you don't have to go, don't go.

Q: (Other interviewer) I'd like you to describe your ship and how it was for a little boy from Beaver seeing the world like that?

A: Well, I'll tell you, it was quite frightening when you first go in. Especially going to boot camp. And in boot camp, I spent about a week marching on the grinder and then they transferred me right into motor mach school. And I got aboard there and when I went aboard the ship, they says well you're qualified to be a radioman, a quartermaster, or a signalman. And I says, well, can I take my choice? And they said yes. I said I'll take a signalman it's still outside, I won't be closed in.

Q: And what does a signalman do?

A: Well, you seen these guys with their flags? And waving them around? And the lights? Well, that's what was clear up on the top on the captain's place and everything. And we would watch for signals that would come in from other ships. And we'd watch up there and send messages back and forth with flags and lights.

Q: Like Morse Code or something like that?

A: Yeah, Morse Code.

Q: So, did you have aircraft on your ship?

A: No. We was... what most of our job was was... we was with a aircraft carrier and we'd watch...cruise along side of them and behind them and when they'd take off or land, we'd have to watch them. If they'd happen to miss the ship and land in the water, then we'd call for the destroyer to come and pick them up. So we was kind of protectors.

Q: And so where did you go to Beaver right to where?

A: San Diego.

Q: Had you ever been anywhere like that?

A: No, just a little small town boy going into the big country and big world.

Q: It was pretty big I bet.

A: Well, for somebody to come out of a litte town of about five or six hundred people, why it is big.

Q: I can't imagine me doing it from Cedar right now.

A: Well, you know the minute you leave, you start fitting in. I fit in down here with the Navy. There was an awful lot of guys from around here. Four or five from Salt Lake and me from Beaver and there was a bunch come in from Texas. We had quite a group that came in. All brand new young boys. None of them was old. Well, there was a couple that was our commanders and everything that was older but not much.

Q: So how old were you when you did that?

A: Just barely turned 18. Turned 18 on the 24^h and graduated from high school and signed up in the navy and went right on out.

Q: How do you feel about the current conflict in Iraq?

A: Well, it's something I think we've got to stop them before they come over here. But I think we've done enough of that now. I think they could send them home. I think they should be coming.

Q: Because you know what they're going through.

A: Oh yes, I sure do. We was out here the day that the 222nd flew out. I felt sorry for them. Because I knew what they were going to get.

Q: And we don't.

A: You don't unless you've been over and seen what the other side looks like. But they'll be coming home.

Q: Probable makes you grateful to be an American.

A: Sure does.

Q: Do you have any last words before we stop it?

A: Nope. Just follow your instincts and do what's right all the time and you'll be okay. That doesn't matter whether you're in the service or whether you're doing things in civilian life too.

Q: You say you joined the National Guard. Tell use about the truck you built.

A: Yeah, when I got out of the Navy, I went back to Beaver. And The National Guard... I think they were getting ready to go to Korea. Anyway they asked me if I couldn't come and join the Guard so I could drive a truck. I was one of the few that was old enough to have a license to drive on of the big trucks. And I drove it most of the winter hauling hay to the sheep when the sheep was snowed in during that winter.

Q: And The National Guard was driving for the sheep?

A: Yeah, they furnished the trucks. The National Guard furnished the trucks and they needed drivers. And I made oh... five or six trips with loads of hay clear up to the sheep out on the hills and up wherever they were to unload the hay for the sheep. And while I was hauling, I seen a guy... they was pushing hay out onto the planes, you know. And they're about as high as this building. And the one guy pushed the bail out and he come right on out with it. He was on top of a cedar tree or a pine tree and...never heard him. And he got up and waved and off he went.

Q: So they were helping the community because the sheep were snowed in?

A: Uh huh.

Q: Anything else about the Guard? Have you been in the Guard all these years?

A: Well I got out when I went to work for the phone company. And I worked for the phone company after that for 35 years.

Q: How long have you been retired?

A: I don't know. I worked for the sheriffs department after that for seventeen years. And I've been retires from that for about five or six.

Q: Well thanks.

A: You got quite a history on me there, guy.

Q: Well, it really is a neat idea. See, you're gonna be... this is the rare book room so the public isn't allowed in here. All the books in here don't get checked out and it's just rare books that the public has donated. You can thumb through them. And I don't know if you remember, but KSUB use to do a radio show and all their shows

are in here and books that have been donated to the library. So this'll be part of the library's rare book collection. It will be in the rare book room. There'll be some that the public can copy and then all this history; this digital history will be saved and will be catalogued here in the rare book room and it'll be saved.

A: Those things are rare up there, those uniforms aren't they?

Q: They're donated. Someone donated them. We'll be buying glass cases like this for the uniforms that are donated and we'll display those like around Veterans Day.

A: You know what's funny? I don't know where any of my uniforms ever went to. I think my sister's gotten away with them all.

Q: Well, they're probably lucky to have them. That's neat. That's where they belong is with your family.

A: Yep. In fact, all those little white sailor caps...they all disappeared too. Daughters and grand-daughters or somebody.

Q: That's neat. That's who should have them. That's where they should be.

A: It should be... yep.