

Interview with DeLoyce McMurray

VR2-A-L-2009-016

Interview Date: May 15, 2009

Interviewer: Rozanne Flatt

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Flatt: This is the May 15, 2009. I'm Rozanne Flatt, a volunteer with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I'm in the home of DeLoyce McMurray in Alton, Illinois. DeLoyce was a Marine Corps veteran from World War II. DeLoyce, I'm delighted to be here today. And thank you for giving your time.¹ We always start, DeLoyce, with the basics, like when and where you were born.

McMurray: I was born in Edwardsville, Illinois, which is about nine miles from here.

Flatt: And your birth date?

McMurray: Was 1/22/26.

Flatt: Okay. And did you grow up in Edwardsville then?

McMurray: I grew up in Edwardsville 'til I was eighteen years old.

Flatt: Okay. So you went to high school in Edwardsville?

McMurray: Went to high school in Edwardsville, a segregated school.

Flatt: Segregated school.

¹ His daughter, Neyna Johnson from Springfield, is sitting in on the interview.

McMurray: Lincoln High School.

Flatt: That's ironic, isn't it? Lincoln's high school was segregated. Well, things are at least some better these days, and getting better all the time we hope. Tell me a little about your parents and your family.

McMurray: My father worked for one company all of his life. Was Buckles Transfer Company. Was transferring freight, really.

Flatt: Was it a trucking company?

McMurray: It was a trucking company.

Flatt: Is that Buckles, just like buckle my belt?

McMurray: Just like buckle. It had an S on it. Buckles.

Flatt: And did you have brothers and sisters?

McMurray: I had one sister and three brothers.

Flatt: And where were you in the birth order?

McMurray: I'm the youngest of the whole group.

Flatt: The youngest, the baby.

McMurray: I'm the baby.

Flatt: Did they always call you that?

McMurray: No.

Flatt: No, they wouldn't dare? Especially after you were a Marine.

McMurray: My father never treated us like there was young ones in the family.

Flatt: Well, you know how siblings are sometimes. They always say, "Oh, that's my baby brother."

McMurray: Well, yeah. I think they did, I'm sure they did.

Flatt: When you were out of earshot? Okay. Were you expected to do chores around the home? Or did you have any kind of job like in high school?

McMurray: Yes, I worked with my father a lot.

Flatt: Well, that's a good place to learn. What did you do? Did you drive with him?

McMurray: Oh yeah.

Flatt: What age did you start driving?

McMurray: I must have been thirteen or fourteen. You didn't have to have driver's license in those days. So it was no problem.

Flatt: Well, you learned at a young age. No problem?

McMurray: No problem.

Flatt: How long were the trips you took?

McMurray: Well, they were all in Edwardsville.

Flatt: Oh, just local, okay. Loading and unloading freight from the railroad?

McMurray: From the railroad, yes, and sometimes freight came in to us through Yellow Transit Trucking. We were a stopover for Yellow Transit Trucking. And they didn't do local freight, Yellow Transit didn't. They were long distance carriers. We did their local freight.

Flatt: So you did plenty of lifting and hauling physically, didn't you?

McMurray: I did what?

Flatt: Plenty of physical lifting and hauling?

McMurray: Oh, yeah.

Flatt: Loading and unloading your truck, okay. Well, so at Lincoln School what were your favorite subjects?

McMurray: Well, I think history was more interesting to me than anything, even though I did like chemistry because we had hands-on in chemistry.

Flatt: You liked that hands-on approach?

McMurray: Yeah, I liked hands-on approach.

Flatt: You're a doer.

McMurray: Yeah.

Flatt: Okay. Were those the subjects you did the best in?

McMurray: I probably did.

Flatt: I think we all tend to do best in what we like or do best at what we like. Okay. When did you graduate?

McMurray: 1944.

Flatt: 1944. Did you get all the way through school? The war was on by that time.

McMurray: All the way, all the way.

Flatt: Okay. So you were a youngster in high school then when Pearl Harbor happened.

McMurray: I was less than—let's see, '41, yeah, I guess I was just getting into high school. It was December of '41.

Flatt: December 7, 1941, right.

McMurray: I guess I must have been a freshman.

Flatt: Do you remember the event?

McMurray: Yes, I didn't know where it was; I didn't know where they were talking about for a good while.

Flatt: Most people didn't.

McMurray: No, they said Pearl Harbor, that didn't mean anything to me, no.

Flatt: And then I think even a lot of people weren't really much aware of where Hawaii was. Seems funny now, everybody wants to go to Hawaii.

McMurray: Yeah, it wasn't a bona fide state at that time.

Flatt: That's right, their statehood came much later, didn't it? How did your family react? Now your brothers were older.

McMurray: When I went in they were all in.

Flatt: In the service?

McMurray: In the service. I had two brothers in the Army and my next to the oldest brother, he went in the Marine Corps. And I followed him in the Marine Corps.

Flatt: Okay. So tell me then about getting into the service. You must have gone in right after high school.

McMurray: I got out of high school on June third, and I went into the service on June seventh.

Flatt: Could hardly wait? So you followed your brother. That's why you chose the Marines then?

McMurray: That's correct.

Flatt: What had he told you about the Marines that made you interested?

McMurray: Well, he didn't tell me much about it. He was still in the States. So he didn't tell me much about it. And if anything is to be told, he was married, so we didn't have a whole lot of contact.

Flatt: Okay. Well, was there any other reason besides following him why you chose the Marines?

McMurray: Well, I liked their uniforms and the fact that he was in. I think people don't usually say this, but he was a favorite brother.

Flatt: Okay. Well, that's all right. Nothing wrong with that. When you joined the Marines, what kind of assignment were you hoping for?

McMurray: I didn't know. We were new to the Marine Corps. I think the first ones went in in '42.

Flatt: Now when you say we, are you referring to...

McMurray: I'm talking about blacks.

Flatt: Black Marines.

McMurray: Yeah, there weren't any black Marines until World War II. So I didn't know what to expect really.

Flatt: Did they give you any choice of assignments or just say, "You're going wherever we put you"?

McMurray: No, we took a test when we were in boot camp, and from there they selected those they wanted to do certain chores. That was it.

Flatt: Okay. So they tried to find your capabilities?

McMurray: They tried to find them through testing.

Flatt: A man named Walter Dill Scott, who later became president of Northwestern University, was responsible for developing a lot of those tests.

McMurray: Is that right?

Flatt: That's just an interesting little sidelight. But that's when a lot of testing was done—that whole idea of testing for aptitudes was happening then. Okay. Where were you inducted?

McMurray: I was inducted in Saint Louis. But we were shipped to North Carolina.

Flatt: Right away?

McMurray: Right away.

Flatt: Well, the war was on, they needed people, so they shot you right off. Okay. So North Carolina and the Marine base there is?

McMurray: Well, I went to Chicago first and we caught a train out of Chicago, went out to Carolina. Oddly enough there was four of us going into the Marine Corps, and the only reservations we could get was the drawing room.

Flatt: That wasn't all bad.

McMurray: There were four of us in the drawing room, so you can imagine how crowded we were.

Flatt: Sure. How many beds were there in that drawing room?

McMurray: Wasn't but two.

Flatt: Two. Was a double-deck thing, wasn't it?

McMurray: Yeah, I think they were double-deckers.

Flatt: Did you do like the Navy guys do, trade off?

McMurray: Did we do what, trade off?

Flatt: Well, in the Navy they say one sleeps in the bed the first shift and then when he gets out another guy gets in the same bed, because they don't have a lot of room on ships.

McMurray: No, we didn't change shifts.

Flatt: Okay. But you seemed to get a kick out of that experience. How long did it take you to get from Chicago to North Carolina?

McMurray: I don't remember. I don't remember.

Flatt: Was that Camp Lejeune?

McMurray: Camp Lejeune. Montford Point was the base.

Flatt: Okay. Tell me a little bit about basic training.

McMurray: Other than being completely overwhelmed with the discipline in boot camp—well, we were never controlled to that extent, like we were in boot camp. You see, you're told when to get up, when to go to bed, when to go to the restroom, when to do everything. They told you everything.

Flatt: Did they make you square your meals?

McMurray: Make you do what?

Flatt: Square your meals? Eat like this?

McMurray: Oh no.

Flatt: No, didn't have to do that in the Marines. I think the West Pointers had to do that.

McMurray: No, we didn't have to do that. We had a certain time to eat your meal and be back though.

Flatt: Sure. And you better be there too. What were the disciplines that were put into place if you didn't do what you were supposed to do?

McMurray: What disciplines? Everything was disciplined.

Flatt: What I mean is if you didn't do something what did they do to you?

McMurray: Oh.

Flatt: That kind of discipline.

McMurray: Well, the main thing that happened to us when we would first go to bed, this was our first discipline, they called us all out, and we were still in our skivvies, that's your underclothes.

Flatt: Yeah, I know about skivvies.

McMurray: They made us stand at attention for an hour or more. And you couldn't slap those mosquitoes either. And they've got mosquitoes out there in North Carolina, right on the ocean.

Flatt: Yeah, it's swampy out there, isn't it?

McMurray: You can imagine what that's like. I didn't have to go through what some fellows went through, some that slapped the mosquitoes, that had to look for them. I didn't have to do that. But I felt for those who did.

Flatt: Any other disciplinary measures?

McMurray: It was all disciplinary. I think there was—well, duck walking. You could put your rifle over your head. That was a pretty rough one there.

Flatt: I haven't heard of duck walking. Can you describe it?

McMurray: Duck walking is walking squatted down with the rifle over your head. And you had to keep up. It's not like that they're just scattered all out walking, no, no, everybody stayed in ranks and walked with the rifles over your head.

Flatt: How long would you have to walk that way?

McMurray: It all depended how he felt—that was our DI, drill instructor—all depended on how he felt, how long you had to do that. And I felt for some of the fellows who were overweight. Some of them were older. Being eighteen years old it didn't bother me much—I could have walked all day. But the older fellows who were out in the world and smoked and drank—and I didn't smoke or drink when I first went in the Marine Corps—that changed rapidly after I got out of boot camp, however.

Flatt: Well, you have to keep up. Okay. You mentioned that you were tested while you were at boot camp. Was that right at the end?

McMurray: No, I don't think that was at the end. That was I guess a month after we were in boot camp.

Flatt: Okay. And how long was boot camp?

McMurray: Boot camp was three months.

Flatt: Three months, okay. So they were getting ready to decide what you were going to do.

McMurray: Well, it was actually thirteen weeks, but about a month after we were there.

Flatt: So what MOS did they give you? That's your military occupation specialty, right?

McMurray: I was a 405.

Flatt: Four-oh-five. And what does that stand for?

McMurray: That was clerical.

Flatt: Clerical, administrative and clerical? Okay. Did you have anything beside just the regular boot camp training there? Or was that after you went to the next place?

McMurray: You mean when I did the work, the actual work?

Flatt: Yeah, your MOS work.

McMurray: Not until after I was out of boot camp of course.

Flatt: Right, well, that's what I thought, in boot camp it's strictly the...

McMurray: Strictly training.

Flatt: Training, right, basic training, okay. So where did you go from boot camp after thirteen weeks?

McMurray: Well, I stayed there for about six months I guess, including the boot camp. And after six months we were shipped to California.

Flatt: Okay. So was that additional training at Camp Lejeune then?

McMurray: There was additional training after boot camp.

Flatt: Okay. And what was that?

McMurray: There was extended training. Well, your rifle training, and various obstacle courses and firing range and all of this. Even though we did have firing range in boot camp, it wasn't extensive as it was after boot camp.

Flatt: When did you know exactly what you would be doing in your MOS?

McMurray: When did I know? After I was assigned to a company. I was assigned to a company prior to leaving Camp Lejeune.

Flatt: Okay. And what was your company name?

McMurray: We were the Fortieth. I started out in the Fortieth, and I wound up in the Sixth.

Flatt: Sixth Company, okay. So from Camp Lejeune, then after six months there, where did you go next?

McMurray: Went to Camp Pendleton. Let's see, no, we didn't. We went to Treasure Island. We went to Treasure Island, that's where we went.

Flatt: Is that in California?

McMurray: Yeah, Treasure Island, right out of San Francisco, well, almost in San Francisco. It's an island under the Bay Bridge. It's a Navy base really.

Flatt: Well, Marines are part of the Navy, so I guess—and did you have more training there?

McMurray: Yeah, we weren't there long. We did a lot of duty in San Francisco and Oakland, California. We weren't doing much of anything there, waiting to be shipped to Camp Pendleton.

Flatt: Was this when you learned a little bit about the smoking and drinking?

McMurray: Yeah, we did a lot of that, got in a lot of trouble.

Flatt: Okay. Well, then, so after a short time you were sent to Pendleton.

McMurray: Sent to Camp Pendleton.

Flatt: And what happened there?

McMurray: Camp Pendleton, we were getting ready to go overseas. We did some training at Camp Pendleton. And from there we went overseas.

Flatt: Okay. What was the nature of the training?

McMurray: Well, my training was in 405, so I was doing most of the training in headquarters. I don't know what the rest of them did.

Flatt: Sure, okay. What were the duties then in headquarters that a 405 would do?

McMurray: Well, we had to do payroll, we had to do any furloughs, any leave, anything they had to do. Mostly payroll was the biggest thing we had to do.

Flatt: Personnel-oriented things.

McMurray: Personnel.

Flatt: Okay. Then how long were you at Pendleton roughly?

McMurray: Let's see. We got there in December. And in January we were leaving, going overseas. So we didn't spend much time there.

Flatt: Where did you ship from?

McMurray: Shipped from San Diego.

Flatt: San Diego. And do you remember the ship you were on?

McMurray: On Butte, B-u-t-t-e.

Flatt: Okay. What kind of ship was it, a troopship?

McMurray: Just a troopship, regular troopship. And from there we went to Hawaii. We spent a few days in Hawaii. Then we left there, and I went straight on—well, we went to a stop at Eniwetok. From Eniwetok went to Wake.

- Flatt: Okay. Were you at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii?
- McMurray: Just for a few days I imagine, yeah.
- Flatt: Few days? But you were at Pearl. I suppose that's where the ship would be.
- McMurray: We were not Pearl Harbor. We were in Honolulu.
- Flatt: Okay. I guess Pearl Harbor was probably still pretty well clogged up with derelict ships, wasn't it?²
- McMurray: Yeah, there were ships everywhere then, yeah.
- Flatt: Okay. All right. Well, you mentioned that when you left there—were you still on the same ship? Living on the ship while you were in Hawaii?
- McMurray: On the same ship until I got to Wake.
- Flatt: Okay. And you made a short stop at Eniwetok on the way to Wake Island.
- McMurray: Yeah. I guess more or less—what would you call it? I don't know what you would call that. We didn't do much there but drink beer, just to get off the ship.
- Flatt: Just to get off the ship and be able to walk around without rocking on the waves?
- McMurray: Took us almost thirty days to get to Wake.
- Flatt: Well, yeah, I guess that'd be true. How big was Wake Island?
- McMurray: It's a good size island. But I didn't see a whole lot of it. Here's Wake.
- Flatt: Here's a picture of Wake Island. Okay. And on the scale it looks like this is a mile. It might be two, three, four miles long roughly. Here's the bigger one. That helps. There's an air base there on the map. And where were you stationed on Wake Island.
- McMurray: At Peale Island.
- Flatt: That's this little island on the kind of southwest corner of it.
- McMurray: Peale is over here.
- Flatt: Oh, okay, I'm sorry, that's another one; it's on the northeast coast or northeast part of Wake I guess, okay. And what sort of facility was there?

² Many of the ships which were bombed in the infamous attack of December 7, 1941 were still there. The Arizona remains as a National Memorial and visitor site.

McMurray: Well, it was pretty rough.

Flatt: Yeah, what kind of buildings? Or what was it like there at Peale Island?

McMurray: Peale Island in '44 wasn't much. There were canvas type buildings. Large, huge building, all canvas. I understand they're probably Quonset hut now. But they weren't Quonset then.

Flatt: And what was in those buildings?

McMurray: All kinds of material, signal corps, all kinds of headquarters material, clothing.

Flatt: So you had inventory of things, you had inventory of clothing, inventory of supplies.

McMurray: Inventory, supplies.

Flatt: Ammunition?

McMurray: I was still in headquarters. Yeah.

Flatt: Was the ammo stored there? Or was it stored somewhere else?

McMurray: Ammo I think was on the other side of the island. We didn't have to fool with the ammo.

Flatt: Did you have to keep the records of it though?

McMurray: We didn't have to fool with ammo and food. We didn't deal with either one of those.

Flatt: Roughly how many people in your service headquarters battalion?

McMurray: Headquarters battalion, we only had about ten people.

Flatt: In that big tent?

McMurray: Yeah, about ten of us. And we had a staff sergeant who was in charge—I'm trying to think of what his name—Wright was his name.

Flatt: W-r-i-g-h-t?

McMurray: W-r-i-g-h-t. I was with him until we got to Saipan. I don't remember his first name, because everybody was called by their last name. But we were still doing our headquarters duty.

Flatt: Again the personnel-oriented things?

McMurray: Personnel duties, yeah. But the majority of the people were doing inventory of equipment, receiving equipment and shipping out equipment. That's what the majority of them were doing.

Flatt: What kind of equipment would this be?

McMurray: Signal corps and large equipment, equipment for amphibian—you probably don't know what a DUKW is.

Flatt: Yeah I do.

McMurray: You know what a DUKW is? Okay. We shipped out DUKWs to the Third Amtrac in Saipan. When they first got there, they didn't have any DUKWs. We shipped it out.

Flatt: Just so you won't think I'm lying, a DUKW is like an equipment and personnel carrier that's amphibious. It has wheels but it also goes through the water, is that correct?

McMurray: Doesn't have wheels, it has tracks.

Flatt: Tracks, okay.

McMurray: Tracks on the outside. The odd thing about a DUKW, if it stops running in the water it'll sink.

Flatt: Has to keep moving.

McMurray: Got to keep moving. Those tracks have to keep moving in the water.

Flatt: So they provided the propulsion?

McMurray: They provided the propulsion.

Flatt: Okay, well, I didn't know DUKWs as well as I thought I did.

McMurray: You know that now.

Flatt: See? I learned something new. Good. Did you have heavy equipment like bulldozers and that sort of thing too?

McMurray: No, that was Seabees handled. We didn't have any bulldozers, no. Seabees had plenty of them but we didn't have any.

Flatt: Well, they were the ones I guess doing that kind of work, weren't they?

McMurray: Seabees did most of the construction work.

Flatt: What went in the DUKWs? What was transported in them, people?

McMurray: No, just the DUKW.

Flatt: Well, it was used for something.

McMurray: It was what?

Flatt: A DUKW was used for something.

McMurray: Yeah, but it wasn't used for anything till it got to where it was going. But they used it as a personnel carrier to invade islands and so forth.

Flatt: Okay, take the troops to, that's what I was getting at, that's good, all right. I just wanted to be sure I understood. How long were you on Wake Island?

McMurray: On what?

Flatt: On Wake Island? Roughly?

McMurray: I'd say three months. I don't remember really. Flatt: Things run together, don't they? Time—one day is like another in war.

McMurray: Three months I guess.

Flatt: What was the terrain like there on Wake?

McMurray: Wake is pretty flat. It's a flat area.

Flatt: So it's not one of the volcanic islands then.

McMurray: No, no, it's not as hilly as Saipan. Saipan was pretty hilly.

Flatt: Now on the map I see an airstrip.

McMurray: Yeah, that's the airstrip over there.

Flatt: Did a lot of your stuff come in by air?

McMurray: That was all Army over there.

Flatt: Oh, okay. So you had Army. And were there Seabees somewhere in here too?

McMurray: I don't know where they were.

Flatt: So the Marines were on Peale Island.

McMurray: Well, I guess they had Marines other places, but this is where warehouses were, our warehouses. That would be different from the Army and the Navy and the other places.

Flatt: Well, now you were keeping the personnel records. Were these mostly combat troops? Of course, you'd have to keep your own service battalion's records.

McMurray: Our own company. Our own company. That's who I was doing it for.

Flatt: And what about the equipment and supplies and so forth? The same thing? Just the stuff that your company used?

McMurray: Yeah. Our company, well, that was different people, but it was our company.
Flatt: You said you had a staff sergeant, Sergeant Wright, as your superior officer there. Was he a good officer?

McMurray: Oh yeah.

Flatt: He was noncommissioned but he was a good officer?

McMurray: Oh yeah, noncommissioned, yeah.

Flatt: And how did your fellow Marines get along? Were they good team people?

McMurray: Get along?

Flatt: Well, were they good teamwork?

McMurray: Oh, yeah, absolutely. I didn't feel any dissension.

Flatt: You were all black, is that correct?

McMurray: Well, here's the thing about it. We were all a black company.

Flatt: That's what I mean.

McMurray: But there were whites also—you worked with whites but we didn't stay with whites, okay?

Flatt: Oh, all right, only so much integration was allowed?

McMurray: Yeah. We worked all day with—there was whites there, whites and blacks, they all worked out there, dealing with this equipment and getting it all out and what have you. But then we went back. We were over here and they were over there.

Flatt: So you slept in different quarters?

McMurray: I beg your pardon.

Flatt: You slept in different quarters?

McMurray: We slept in different quarters, yeah.

- Flatt: And did you eat in different quarters as well?
- McMurray: We ate in different chow halls, right.
- Flatt: Well, that's interesting. It occurs to me that this was an early experiment in integration, because there was no full integration of our forces until Korea.
- McMurray: 'Til Truman, yeah, not until Truman, yeah.
- Flatt: So you were in the vanguard, DeLoyce. You were proving that people could get along together.
- McMurray: Absolutely, absolutely.
- Flatt: Did you feel at that time that that was part of what was going on?
- McMurray: That's the way things were in those days.
- Flatt: You just didn't question the sleeping and eating segregation?
- McMurray: You could question it if you wanted to, but there was laws—places you couldn't go to eat and so forth—before we went into the service.
- Flatt: Yeah I know that.
- McMurray: You know?
- Flatt: I know.
- McMurray: So it didn't change when you were in the service; it was the same thing. We had all white officers. We didn't have any black officers. At the time there wasn't any black officers in the Marine Corps. They had one that I knew of when I was on Saipan. He wasn't overseas, however, and he wasn't an officer, I don't know what you call warrant officers. They're part enlisted and part officer.
- Flatt: They're sort of an in-between thing, aren't they?
- McMurray: Yeah, they're in between. But Bankhead was his name. I knew him in the States. He made warrant officer. And warrant officer consists of testing and a whole lot of other things.
- Flatt: Well, that's interesting. Was there any friction between the white and black people in the working, just during the work?
- McMurray: No, no, no.
- Flatt: No? You all got along?

- McMurray: No, no, we got along, oh, yeah. No. Now those in battle—and they found out—I know they found out in Peleliu, as early as Peleliu. I had a friend of mine who was on Peleliu and he was in an ammunition company. And by the way, other than the Fifty-first and Fifty-second Defense Battalions, which were totally all black—with white officers, of course—now what was I saying? Oh, well, those were the only two units that were not service units.
- Flatt: They were combat troops.
- McMurray: They were combat troops. But everybody including cooks and everybody else had to do the training.
- Flatt: Everybody had to go to boot camp.
- McMurray: You had to go to boot camp. And most of them did some extended training. They didn't have to do much cooking until they got overseas though.
- Flatt: Was the chow pretty good?
- McMurray: It was fair, it was fair. But we went around to various other places though. Like the Navy had good chow. Army wasn't any better than ours. But the Seabees had good chow.
- Flatt: So how did you get a Seabee dinner?
- McMurray: How did I get a Seabee dinner?
- Flatt: Yeah, you said they had good chow. You must have known.
- McMurray: Well, I knew one of the Navy fellows on Wake Island who was in the Seabees, and he was a cook. Well, that's like the Navy—before the war most of them were cooks and what else?
- Flatt: Cooks, stewards, truck drivers, right?
- McMurray: Yeah, cooks and stewards. But he was a cook. That's how I knew that the Navy chow was pretty good.
- Flatt: Well, after all you were part of the Navy. Marines belonged in the Navy.
- McMurray: We weren't then. We weren't then. Early part of the war I don't think Marine Corps was part of the Navy. They are now. But they weren't then.
- Flatt: They weren't? That's interesting. I didn't know that. Okay. Well, you mentioned earlier that you were doing things with some of these other islands. Where did you go from Wake?
- McMurray: I went to Saipan.

Flatt: Went to Saipan, okay.

McMurray: Yeah, they sent us up to Saipan.

Flatt: Still service battalion of course.

McMurray: Yeah, still service.

Flatt: Doing the same sort of thing?

McMurray: Doing the same thing, yeah.

Flatt: Now Saipan is a whole other story, isn't it? Let me look at this map. Here is Saipan. And the date on this shows where different troops or different lines of defense were and so forth. But instead of an atoll with a big harbor it's sort of an elongated island that goes northeast to southwest. And where were you on there?

McMurray: Oh, we were here.

Flatt: Way out on the north tip, okay.

McMurray: We were way out here, yeah. And division headquarters was up here somewhere. But this must have been during the invasion.

Flatt: This is in June and July of '44, so that'd be a little before.

McMurray: This is during the invasion, because the Second Division was up here too. I don't know where the Fourth... I don't know where they were, but the Second was up here when I got to Saipan.

Flatt: Now when you got there was the big fighting from that battle over?

McMurray: It was supposed to have been secure, but their saying secure, that means there's no major battles going on. But they still had people that were still running loose.

Flatt: Was that one of the islands where they were dug into caves and that sort of thing?

McMurray: This one was, yeah, yeah. They blew up an ammunition dump right out here. They never did get them all off of those islands I guess, on some of them islands. Probably never did get them all off.

Flatt: On this map it looks as if there is some higher ground right in the middle of the island. Was that the case?

McMurray: This is high ground here, and this is high ground over here. But I don't know what this is here.

- Flatt: It's darker in color as if it was high ground, but I can't tell. This one shows...
- McMurray: Yeah, this is Mount here. This is high ground. But I'm trying to think. When we come from here we went up the high ground to the—oh, yeah, this is Mount here. Here it is here. This is where the Second went, because we came from here and went up here to island command, yeah. Yeah, and see, this was high ground where we were too.
- Flatt: So if most of the fighting in Saipan was over at that point, where was the major fighting going on? Do you remember?
- McMurray: There wasn't any major fighting going on when I got there.
- Flatt: Anyplace?
- McMurray: Not here.
- Flatt: No, I know, you said that Saipan, most of the fighting was over, you had a few people running loose and a few dug in. But where else was there activity going on? Were you hearing about it?
- McMurray: They were getting ready to invade Iwo Jima, and that's the reason equipment was sent to Saipan.
- Flatt: Okay. So that was closer to Iwo, all right. Well, that makes sense, get you closer so you can shorten the supply line.
- McMurray: Yeah, shorten it up. And from here they went from Saipan, they went to Iwo Jima. And from Iwo Jima they went to Okinawa. You got a map here?
- Flatt: I don't have Okinawa here because I didn't have a record that you went there.
- McMurray: I didn't go there. But I'm just saying that's what they did.
- Flatt: Well, it would be on that big first map if we can find it here. We'll just take a moment and get the magnifying glass and see if we can find it.
- McMurray: It's closer to Japan.
- Flatt: To Japan, isn't it? Yeah.
- McMurray: And they left from Iwo Jima going to Okinawa.
- Flatt: Okay, yeah, here's Iwo, and it's labeled in a group called the volcanic islands. So there, you want to look with the glass? Well, in any case, DeLoyce, you were on Saipan to supply Iwo Jima. And the Battle of Iwo Jima I think was primarily...
- McMurray: Stopping-off point to go to...

Flatt: That was the next one, yeah. Let's see. Let's look on the map here.

McMurray: Where's Iwo Jima? I don't even see Iwo.

Flatt: Here's Iwo Jima. Here's a map of Iwo Jima that shows positions.

McMurray: I know, but I don't see Iwo Jima on this map.

Flatt: Iwo on this map is over here. See the yellow? I highlighted it.

McMurray: Yeah, there's Iwo. But I mean Okinawa.

Flatt: Yeah, I know it's over near Japan somewhere. I'm embarrassed that I don't...

McMurray: But I don't see it on the map. Not that I can make it out.

Flatt: No, that map is too hard to read—the scale is poor. So did you actually deploy from Wake Island over to Iwo Jima then?

McMurray: No, I went to Saipan.

Flatt: I'm sorry, Saipan, excuse me, yes, that was the next stop. Let's get our maps straight here. So here's Saipan again. Okay, sorry I lost that map for you. Okay. So you're on Saipan, but you're supplying Iwo Jima now. Now on the big overall map, let's see, which one is Saipan? I think it's here, isn't it? And here's Iwo over here. So you were here to be closer to Iwo Jima. I know that I had an Iwo Jima here, because I made it a point to get one.

McMurray: But I only spent about a day, I'd say, not a day, in Iwo.

Flatt: Now how did you get from Saipan to Iwo? On a DUKW?

McMurray: LST.

Flatt: An LST, landing ship, tank.

McMurray: LST, the Casey.

Flatt: Casey, C-a-s-e-y?

McMurray: C-a-s-e-y.

Flatt: LST stands for landing ship, tank, named Casey. See, I learned something. How many men will an LST carry, roughly?

McMurray: Let me see. Roughly I would say there was eighty to eighty-five men. I'd say about eighty to eighty-five.

Flatt: It's called landing ship, tank. So I guess they could take tanks on them. Was the one you were on...

McMurray: Have tanks? No. Didn't have nothing but beds on there, yeah.

Flatt: But beds? Because you were going to what?

McMurray: Going to evacuate troops.

Flatt: Okay, wounded troops?

McMurray: Wounded troops.

Flatt: Okay. And so you just went there, loaded the wounded troops.

McMurray: Came back to Saipan, and some of them went to Tinian.

Flatt: Okay. Was there a hospital at Saipan?

McMurray: Saipan, yes.

Flatt: And one at Tinian also?

McMurray: Tinian also, but I wasn't on Tinian.

Flatt: No, I understand, but I'm just trying to get a feel for...

McMurray: They went from Saipan to Tinian, they put some in Saipan and some in Tinian.

Flatt: So you were actually doing something a little different than your regular headquarters during...

McMurray: A whole lot different, yeah.

Flatt: Were you actually helping the men get on and off the...

McMurray: People that were nonessential. I guess they were picked to go up there. Or volunteers. Like the Marine Corps picks volunteers. I want three volunteers, you, you and you.

Flatt: You and you, count off one, two, three, right? All the threes will go.

McMurray: They're all volunteers. That's how they selected volunteers in the Marine Corps.

Flatt: So how many trips back and forth did you make with wounded? Just one?

McMurray: One. I imagine there were more trips made but I was only on one.

- Flatt: Okay. Give me your assessment of what those wounded were, what they were suffering from, what kind of wounds did you see?
- McMurray: Well, the troops that we were evacuating were troops that were categorized as troops that will return to duty.
- Flatt: So not real serious wounds?
- McMurray: Oh, yeah, they were serious wounds, but...
- Flatt: But could be fixed up, okay.
- McMurray: Yeah, right. But they weren't good enough to stay there at the time. They would be in the way if they stayed. So we evacuated those to Saipan and Tinian. Now they had a big hospital ship out there in the bay, but I don't know what kind of troops were on it or anything.
- Flatt: Now which bay was it? You said in the bay.
- McMurray: This was about D eight, D eight or D nine.
- Flatt: What was the location of the ship roughly? You said in the bay. Which bay? In Saipan?
- McMurray: Say that again.
- Flatt: What was the location of that hospital ship?
- McMurray: Well, it was just out in the bay—there were a lot of ships surrounding it of course. And they had destroyers that were circling. And as a matter of fact we had a destroyer to take us back out through the ships that were there. There was a lot of ships there, a lot of ships out in the bay.
- Flatt: Now you're talking about Iwo Jima.
- McMurray: Iwo Jima.
- Flatt: Okay, that's what I was trying to picture. All right. The battle is going on.
- McMurray: A lot of ships there, yeah. The battle was going on at that time. I think it was either eight or nine, I don't know which. We got there at eight and left at nine, or we got there at nine and left...
- Flatt: Pretty quickly. Were you ever subject to any shelling or bombing or anything?
- McMurray: Well, you could hear it, but we weren't being shelled. We weren't being shelled.
- Flatt: You were far enough away? But you went right up to the island to get...

McMurray: Went right up to the beach, right. So they hadn't been there too long. What's the need of bringing troops out of there if you're going to wait until...

Flatt: Sure, sure. Now when you were there on that one trip, had the famous flag been raised at Iwo Jima?

McMurray: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know when the flag was raised.

Flatt: Mount Suribachi, wasn't it?

McMurray: Yeah, I don't know when the flag was raised, I really don't know.

Flatt: Well, things were pretty hectic. You're not looking for flags.

McMurray: I don't know when it was raised; I knew it was, but I don't remember when it was raised.

Flatt: Might have been hard to see from the beach anyway where you were or wherever...

McMurray: I didn't see anything but the mountainous area where they came in.

Flatt: Yeah. I read something very interesting not long ago. An officer, I'm not sure which service, somebody asked him were there a lot of Japs on the island. He said they were not on the island, they were in the island, because they had dug into caves and they had dug tunnels.

McMurray: Caves, they were in every—yeah.

Flatt: Yeah, that's why it was so hard to root them out, wasn't it?

McMurray: That happened on Iwo.

Flatt: Right, exactly. I think that was the place he was talking about when he said they're in the island.

McMurray: Yeah, they bombed and bombed and bombed. Well, Iwo Jima too. They bombed that. There wasn't a tree on that island. They really bombed that island. But they were dug in.

Flatt: Right. Well, so you went back on the LST Casey then with a load of wounded men to Saipan, correct?

McMurray: Yeah.

Flatt: And where did you go from there?

McMurray: Back to Saipan.

Flatt: Well, yeah, you took them back to Saipan. How long were you there again then?

McMurray: Let's see. Well, I was there until the war ended, on Saipan, yeah. I stayed on Saipan. And after the war ended I was moved down to Guam and that's where we were mustering out through.

Flatt: Mustered out on Guam, okay, that's another spot that's been a little special place in American hands for a long time I guess.

McMurray: Yeah, a good while, a good while.

Flatt: So they actually mustered you out there, not back in the States, is that correct?

McMurray: Right, right.

Flatt: Were you glad to leave?

McMurray: That was a good idea, rather than let them get back to the States.

Flatt: Now had the war ended at this point or had you just served your time?

McMurray: How was that?

Flatt: Had the war ended?

McMurray: Yeah, the war had ended.

Flatt: All right. So the bomb had been dropped in Japan then, the atomic bomb.

McMurray: Yeah. I was on Saipan when they dropped the bomb, yeah.

Flatt: Okay, did the news come back about that?

McMurray: Oh yeah, radio, yeah, yeah. We knew about it immediately.

Flatt: A lot of cheering, I'll bet.

McMurray: Oh yeah.

Flatt: Well, that's why they could muster you out at Guam then, wasn't it?

McMurray: Yeah.

Flatt: Okay. So from Guam how did you get home?

McMurray: Went on a ship.

Flatt: You remember the name of it?

McMurray: The Whitman.

Flatt: Like Walt?

McMurray: Like Walt Whitman.

Flatt: Okay. Was that another troopship?

McMurray: Yeah it was a troopship.

Flatt: And it took you into what, San Francisco again or San Diego?

McMurray: San Diego. Yeah. And I stayed at (Camp) Pendleton until I got out.

Flatt: How long were you at Pendleton till you got home?

McMurray: I don't know, because they kept me an extra six months. It seemed like a year.

Flatt: Really? Even though they had mustered you out at Guam?

McMurray: No, no, that was before they mustered me out. Four-oh-five specs.

Flatt: Okay. So you weren't actually mustered out, they just redeployed you back to the States then rather than mustering you out at Guam?

McMurray: No, they mustered me out at Guam too, but I'm just saying that on Guam they muster you out but you still have to get papers in order to travel through the States, back at the States.

Flatt: Okay. So you had to go through some more paperwork and routine to do that, okay.

McMurray: There was other people to do that though.

Flatt: How did you feel when you saw the shores of the good old USA when you came home?

McMurray: Well, to tell you the truth about it, I had a job at Lockheed.

Flatt: Oh. Well, tell me about that one.

McMurray: Well, I had a friend of mine who lived in LA in Compton. Compton is not a very nice place today. It was all right then. But his father worked at Lockheed. He went to work at Lockheed. And they were going to get me a job at Lockheed. But I hadn't been home in a couple of years. So I said, "Well, fellows, I'm going home first. I don't care what happens." And I never came back. I've been back, but I mean I didn't come back for a job.

- Flatt: Well, let me ask you a couple of other things about while you were still overseas before we get too far beyond that. Did you get much mail from home?
- McMurray: Oh yeah. Yeah we got a lot of mail, mostly from my family. A few girlfriends, but they stopped writing after a while.
- Flatt: They dropped by the wayside?
- McMurray: They stopped writing after a while.
- Flatt: Now did you know Alleen before you went?
- McMurray: No, I didn't know Alleen, no. I didn't know Alleen 'til I got back.
- Flatt: Well, you came home then from San Diego. Again did you come on a troop train?
- McMurray: On a troop train, no; on a regular train.
- Flatt: Just a train. Did you have a bedroom coming home?
- McMurray: No, it was regular coach.
- Flatt: Oh, you had to sit up and sleep.
- McMurray: Yeah, just a regular coach; they weren't flying them like they are today. Today they fly those boys home. Come to think of it, I came home on emergency. My mother passed when I was in Thailand. Now I was out of the service. But I went over there as a civilian to work.
- Flatt: Okay. Well, let's get you home first, and then we'll go to Thailand, how's that? All right, sure, we'll just keep the sequence. So you came back home to Edwardsville, where your family is still in Edwardsville. And tell me what happened with your life at that point.
- McMurray: Well, I met my wife after that through a friend of mine in Edwardsville. I met her at a party at this friend of mine, at her home. And we went together for oh approximately eight, nine months I guess, yeah, I guess it was eight or nine months. Then we got married. And at that time I was headed to school. So we both went to school.
- Flatt: Okay. Were you going on the GI Bill? Where were you going, and what were you studying?
- McMurray: At Illinois State. And I went there about a year and half. My wife got sick.
- Flatt: Now that's in Edwardsville, right? In Edwardsville?

McMurray: It's in Normal.

Flatt: Oh, you went to Normal, oh yeah, that's right, ISU. So you were both going there?

McMurray: Yeah. And my wife got sick at the end of the year, so she came home. When I'm speaking of home, I mean to her mother's—we didn't have a house at that time—and I stayed there for the summer. Then I came home and I started at Shurtleff. And I went to Shurtleff till it closed.

Flatt: That's S-h-u-r-t-l-e-f-f, is it? And that's where?

McMurray: Right up here in Upper Alton.

Flatt: Alton, okay. What did you study on the GI Bill?

McMurray: Well, I really hadn't had a major yet. I was contemplating physical education, but I kind of got away from it. I think it was more education than it was physical education. So I went there until—at nights rather—until they closed.

Flatt: At that point how much did you have toward a degree?

McMurray: I had about a year.

Flatt: Altogether between ISU and Shurtleff you had about a year?

McMurray: Yeah about a year left.

Flatt: Year left, okay.

McMurray: I had about a year and I went one summer at Normal and then I started at Shurtleff when I got back because I'd started to work.

Flatt: Where did you work?

McMurray: Went to work for the good old government and that's where I worked for thirty-six years.

Flatt: Okay. Well, tell us about that then. Now you're married. Had you had any family by that time?

McMurray: No. We didn't have a family until five years after we were married. I didn't have a family during the time I was in school at Shurtleff or Normal.

Flatt: Okay. Easier to go to school that way, isn't it? Tell me about your job with the government.

McMurray: Couldn't afford it.

Flatt: Which branch?

McMurray: I started off working on IBM equipment as an operator.

Flatt: Okay. For what part of the government?

McMurray: For Department of Defense. And from there I got into computers and from there I went on up. I went to Scott Air Force Base. I came back to Saint Louis.

Flatt: Always doing computer work?

McMurray: Yes.

Flatt: Okay. Let me take you back. You said you were an IBM operator.

McMurray: Old cards.

Flatt: Old cards, those punch cards.

McMurray: All punch cards.

Flatt: My goodness. The kids today wouldn't know what that's about, would they?

McMurray: They wouldn't even know what a card—well, I guess they would know what a card is. But some of them wouldn't. These guys who are working on PCs, they don't know what IBM cards looked like.

Flatt: Well, that was before the Univac, and certainly it was before they had transistors, because the Univac was before transistors.

McMurray: Oh yeah. Well, the Univac, they named it Maniac.

Flatt: Well, let me ask you a question for future generations. You talk about cards. Tell us what the cards were like and what you had to do to manipulate them to get data sorted out and so forth.

McMurray: A card is eighty columns, okay? And you've got one through ten and special characters to make A through Z and percent signs and dollar signs and all of this, you know what I'm saying? So it's all in an eighty-character record. And if there's any additional to that record it's another card. And if there's any addition to that it's another card, another card, another card. That's what IBM cards are.

Flatt: And the information. Tell them how the information got into the card.

McMurray: Through keypunch operators. Keypunch operators put the information into an IBM card.

Flatt: It actually punched a hole, didn't it?

McMurray: Punched a hole in the card, yes.

Flatt: And then what did you do when the cards got to you?

McMurray: Most of the times you had to sort them.

Flatt: How did you sort them?

McMurray: On a sorting machine. Then you had to collate them on a collator. And in order to keep back-up records you had to reproduce them on a reproducer. And those are all wired circuit boards. Depending on what columns and so forth that you wanted, if you wanted the stock number and a name and some other information you had to wire the board for that information.

Flatt: So you had to keep changing things depending on what the nature of the job was.

McMurray: Yeah, yeah.

Flatt: They couldn't even imagine that today, DeLoyce.

McMurray: I know it, I know, I know.

Flatt: One hundred years from now I don't think people will be able to imagine what we're doing now.

McMurray: They wouldn't know what you're doing. And then if you wanted to print it, you'd print it with a tabulator.

Flatt: I'm old enough to remember those machines.

McMurray: Do you remember those days?

Flatt: Yeah. I was not an operator. But I remember working in an office where somebody was always sorting those cards. That's interesting.

McMurray: Yeah, that was interesting.

Flatt: So you were at Scott Air Force Base and where else?

McMurray: Well, I worked in Saint Louis first. And from Saint Louis I went to Scott Air Force Base. And then from Scott Air Force Base I went overseas and I came back to Scott.

Flatt: Well, where did you go overseas?

McMurray: Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand.

Flatt: How long were you there?

McMurray: We were there about a year and a half, weren't we, Neyna? About a year and a half.

Flatt: So you had Neyna by that time.

McMurray: Oh, yeah, we had Neyna and Dru by then. Neyna was fifteen and Dru was eleven or...

Johnson: Ten, we're five years apart.

McMurray: Yeah.

Flatt: So did your children go to school in Thailand?

McMurray: Yeah.

Flatt: They had an American school there?

McMurray: Yeah, oh yeah.

Flatt: Was that interesting duty?

McMurray: Very interesting.

Flatt: Well, tell us about it.

McMurray: Well, I worked for the Navy, the OICC, which is the Officer in Charge of Construction. And the Officer in Charge of Construction managed the American contractors who had joint ventured to work in these various countries, like they had Dillingham, Zachry, Kaiser, Utah, Martin and Day in Bangkok. And they had Raymond, Morrison Knudsen, Brown and Root and Jones in Saigon. So I traveled back and forth because we were a backup for RMK-BRJ. And every Friday they would ship tapes. They would fly tapes from Saigon over to Thailand so that if anything went wrong there we could run their tapes in Bangkok.

But before I left they had moved some of the people from RMK-BRJ to the computer center in Thailand. See, the reason why that was is because they almost knocked them out two or three times in Saigon. They would come down the streets with a mortar, and lay down mortars. In order to get their coordinates to line up, they would usually shoot here, here, here, here, and the next shot should land on their target. So they did that in Vietnam in Saigon a couple of times. They came down the street. Boom, boom, boom, boom, the next one is supposed to drop on RMK. But when they got there they stopped, they didn't hit their office. And they did it a couple of times just to show them that they could get them.

Flatt: Now you say they. They being who? The Vietcong?

McMurray: Vietcong. They had more Vietcong in Saigon than they had out in the field.

Flatt: Oh, my goodness.

McMurray: Those same people who worked for you during the day were shooting at you. Saigon was not a safe city.

Flatt: Not safe at all, I'd say. Were your children with you in Saigon?

McMurray: No. No American women were in—yeah, they did have—RMK-BRJ did have some women stenographers and other people working in Saigon. The government didn't have any. I got called over there twice during the Tet. The first year I was over there and before I left I got caught over there. I got caught over there twice during the Tet.³

Flatt: That was not a good thing. Must have been scary.

McMurray: Nothing comes in and nothing goes out.

Flatt: It's about as bad as being in World War II, wasn't it? McMurray: Oh yeah, you can lie in your hotel room and hear what's going out there. Boom, boom, boom, you could hear it all.

Flatt: Now you talked about how much you enjoyed Thailand. Tell us a little bit more about Thailand and what it was like.

McMurray: Oh, Thailand was like being in any American city really. The only difference is that there's not a large American population in Bangkok. You had people doing R&R over there from Vietnam. You had those. But there wasn't a large community of Americans. They had the USIS, which is US Information Services. I'm trying to think of what it is. There was an American information office there. This was Army. They had an Army office there. And they had their dependents. The Navy had their dependents from OICC. And there were a few citizens there. I knew one guy who used to be an entertainer here in the United States. What was his name? He died while over there. Then Billy Banks, who was from Alton, Illinois, who lived in Tokyo, was in Bangkok during the time when we first got there.

Flatt: This was somebody you knew before?

McMurray: My parents knew him; I didn't know him. But what had happened, the colonel who was over the officers' billet, we stopped there first because that was one of our places of entertainment and eating before we got our own apartment. The colonel who ran it, he asked me where I was from. And I said, "I'm from Alton, Illinois." He said, "You're kidding me." I said, "No, why would I kid?" He said, "I got a fellow up in my room from Alton, Illinois."

³ Tet was a major holiday in Vietnam; the Tet as used here was a major offensive by the Viet Cong.

Flatt: Oh, for goodness sake, small world.

McMurray: And I said, "You have? What's his name?" He said, "Billy Banks." I says, "I know the name, and I know my parents know him, I've heard about him all my life, I've heard of Billy Banks." He was an entertainer. He played with Noble Sisal. You ever hear of Noble Sisal?

Flatt: No, is it N-o-b-l-e?

McMurray: B-e-l I think it is. S-i-s-a-l, Nobel Sisal. He played with other major bands, but I don't know who they were. My parents would have known. And then he went single. He used to sing and dance. He played the piano. And he came down and you would think it was old home week. He didn't know us, but he knew our parents.

Flatt: Well, that was nice, wasn't it? A friend away from home?

McMurray: Yes indeed. And we asked him where he lived and all of that, and he says, "Where are you staying?" I told him where we were staying, but I told him, "I can't tell you how to get there; I haven't even been there myself yet." We were staying at the Montien Hotel on Patpong.

Flatt: You have to spell those for me.

McMurray: Patpong. Montien. M-o-n-t-e-i-n I think. It's Montien. It was on Patpong.

Flatt: P-a-t? Two words?

McMurray: I think it's Patpong. Patpong, Patpong.

Flatt: Two words?

McMurray: One word.

Flatt: One word, okay, P-o-n-g-h maybe?

McMurray: Yeah. Off of Silom Road, because we worked on Silom Road.

Flatt: Well, tell me, did you have a chance to interact much with the Thai people?

McMurray: Oh yes.

Flatt: What were they like?

McMurray: Very humble people, very humble people. I understand that's changing, because they want a different type of government in Thailand. And they've been demonstrating in Bangkok quite regularly. I wish we could have brought her home with us--a girl that worked for us. Everybody, all American citizens over there had maids, chauffeurs, gardeners, if you had a home, what have

you. Because it's too hot for American people to be out there doing that kind of [work]—and I knew people who had homes and chauffeurs and the whole bit. I never had a chauffeur. Well, I had one at work. But I didn't have one personally. But it's a very interesting place to be.

A friend of mine had a bar in Bangkok. He worked for Control Data Company when he went over there, and his tour ended while he was in Bangkok. Quite naturally when his tour ends, they would send him home, and his family and all. And his wife had a baby while they were over there. His name was John McCoy.

Flatt: Did you get to travel much in Thailand? Did you get to Angkor Wat for example?

McMurray: Not that I could have.

Flatt: Of course things were kind of—it was a little hot. I mean the atmosphere was a little hot there with the war going on.

McMurray: Yeah, we were going to Japan in November to visit Billy Banks. He left there in October, I think it was. He left there in October, and he died in December.

Flatt: Oh, dear, that's too bad.

McMurray: Yeah, in Japan.

Flatt: Well, let's wind up here a little bit. How long did you work for the government then? I think you said thirty-six years.

McMurray: Well, that includes my military time, yeah.

Flatt: Okay, well, that's the government. Okay. And when you retired you came back to your home in Alton?

McMurray: When I retired from where?

Flatt: From the government.

McMurray: I always stayed here. I worked in Saint Louis. And we lived right here.

Flatt: Well, when you left Thailand did you come back to Saint Louis or Scott or one of those places?

McMurray: Yeah, I went back to Scott.

Flatt: Okay. So that Thailand was in the middle of your service. And always doing computer-oriented things? Well, you've had a long and interesting life I would say, very interesting. Let me ask you a wind-up question. Looking back on

World War II where you served honorably, looking back on the war, do you think we accomplished what we set out to accomplish?

McMurray: Well, I don't know what the accomplishments were. Well, you see, the war was over when they integrated the service. They didn't accomplish much. That was supposed to have been the war that was fought to end all wars. And just was the beginning.

Flatt: Be nice if it had been the end, wouldn't it?

McMurray: It would have been nice, it would have been nice.

Flatt: What do you think might have happened if we had not defeated the Japanese and the Germans?

McMurray: Oh, well, I think it could have been a lot worse.

Flatt: Well, maybe we accomplished at least that much for our country.

McMurray: Yeah, we accomplished that much. But we didn't accomplish what we thought we were going to accomplish, a war to end all wars. We didn't accomplish that, just different places.

Flatt: How did you feel about America's use of the atomic bomb?

McMurray: Then I was glad. But now I'm not too sure. But when you look at what was going to happen—and you don't know whether you'd have been one of them or not—they had anticipated that they were going to have one million casualties, and you could very well have been one of them.

Flatt: True.

McMurray: So looking at it from that point of view: what would you have done if you were in charge of the atom bomb and you were going to lose one million Americans? What would you do?

Flatt: Well, I'm the one asking the questions today, so what...

McMurray: I'm saying.

Flatt: I know. Yes, I understand what you're saying. It's a terrible choice to have to make though, isn't it?

McMurray: It's a terrible choice to make, but it wasn't too bad a choice to make then. We had lost several thousand men.

Flatt: One million as you said. And many more Japanese would have died as well, not just...

McMurray: Oh yes.

Flatt: Maybe many more than died in the two cities. So you never know what might have been, but it didn't look too promising, did it? Do you have any advice that you have for grandchildren and future generations that you'd like to pass along?

McMurray: I didn't have to tell my son. He wasn't going into the service, period. But they didn't have any wars while he was coming along either. But they did while my grandson came along. And I encouraged him not to go.

Flatt: Did you?

McMurray: Yes.

Flatt: Why?

McMurray: I wasn't in favor of the Vietnamese war, and I'm not too sure about Korea. You see, I was still in the reserves during the Korean War, and like to get called back. So I'm not too sure.

Flatt: Do you think we accomplished anything in Korea?

McMurray: Yeah, we accomplished South Korea, who is our ally. We accomplished that. But I don't think they went far enough.

Flatt: You'd have gone on to win instead of to armistice, right?

McMurray: Well, we might have then had a war with China, if we had.

Flatt: That was the trade-off.

McMurray: And Vietnam, I don't see that at all. I didn't see that war at all. And what we set out to do, we didn't accomplish it anyway. We were trying to do the same thing that they did in Korea, have a separate country with South Vietnam. It didn't work. I spent a lot of time over there.

Flatt: So you say you advised your grandson not to go?

McMurray: Yes, I advised, if he had a choice.

Flatt: Sure. Did he go to Vietnam?

McMurray: No.

Flatt: He took your advice.

McMurray: Yes. I'm glad he did. I didn't demonstrate or anything of that nature. I don't really cotton to that. We were in a war and it was supposed to have been an

all-volunteer Army at that time, all-volunteer service. But I don't know. I think that was a useless war, Vietnam.

Flatt: So how do you relate your feelings about that to any future events that happen to face the United States?

McMurray: With a war facing the United States?

Flatt: Yeah. If there were a future war and you had a great-grandson who might be called to duty, how would you feel about it? What would your feelings depend on?

McMurray: My feelings would depend on whether or not it was a necessary war, whether it was necessary, if the United States was going to be attacked or something of that nature, yes. But Iraq for an example, I think we had a choice with Iraq, I really do. I feel strongly we had a choice with Iraq. And I don't know what we accomplished. The intent in the first place was just to remove Saddam. I think it was personal.

Flatt: You don't believe the intent was to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction which apparently people on both sides of the aisle believed were there?

McMurray: I think he had a personal vendetta with Saddam because he tried to kill the first George Bush. I think that was a personal vendetta. And men shouldn't die for personal vendettas. I don't feel that way.

Flatt: Well, DeLoyce, you certainly have done what you were asked to do. You've been a good American.

McMurray: I appreciate it.

Flatt: And I hope that what you contributed during your time in working for the government, both in the services and as a government employee, have made America a better place. I'm sure by being the kind of person you are, you've no doubt helped on the issues of integration, which I think is important.

McMurray: I hope so.

Flatt: So, I thank you for both your kinds of service. And I thank you for your time today. It's been very interesting to me.

McMurray: Thank you.

Flatt: Any time you're in Springfield, be sure that Neyna knows it, and maybe we can have a cup of coffee together.

McMurray: Very good, very good.

Flatt: Thank you so much.

McMurray: All right, very good.

(end of interview)