

Albert Duell
Veteran

Wayne Clark
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Interviewers

Interviewed on the November 21, 2005, 1:15pm
Warrensburg, New York

Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth, please?

AD: Albert Howard Duell, Jr. I was born in the town of Cobwell; that's Lake George. And the birth date is 7/15/36.

Q: What was your educational background prior to entering service?

AD: Oh geez, that was so long ago I can hardly remember. I know I quit school at 14 when the family broke up, and then I was shipped around on the county on different dairy farms.

Q: So it must have been around 7th or 8th grade than?

AD: Yeah, somewhere in there roughly. You get a tree that big around over your head, it gets hard to remember a lot of that stuff.

Q: Okay, I see you worked as a logger in sawmills, okay.

AD: Yup, truck driver.

Q: You entered service in 1952?

AD: Mhm.

Q: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

AD: No, I was only 17.

Q: Okay, why did you decide to go into the service?

AD: Well I had no place to stay, really, and I got tired of traveling around. Hitch hiking all over the country side and getting no where.

Q: So why did you pick the army?

AD: Well, I don't know, I thought it would be the best way to go. On top of that, I lost a brother here a little over a year ago, he was a year younger than I am. He had the army, and then I got another one, he had the navy for twenty years. Oh, and I got a brother down in Albany, he's the baby of us four boys in the family. And he had the Air Force.

Q: Where did you go for your basic training?

AD: Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Q: Could you talk to us a little bit about your basic training? How did you like it there?

AD: Basic training was alright, I had no problems with that. New Jersey? I never cared for New Jersey.

Q: Why not?

AD: Well, 'cause it's New Jersey, I guess.

Q: Well, let's see, you went into an artillery unit?

AD: Mhm.

Q: When were you changed into an artillery unit?

AD: Right during basic training.

Q: What kind of artillery did you receive training on?

AD: Like, all of them. We had the M1, the M16, the 57 recoilless, and of course, you know, the hand grenades.

Q: Now, in the artillery did you, were you with cannons, artillery pieces?

AD: No. Not that big. 57 recoilless was the biggest.

Q: Where did you get your training for that? Was that at Fort Dix also?

AD: Fort Dix, yup, Fort Dix.

Q: How many were on a crew of one of those?

AD: Well, the whole company went through it. You got four barracks and 60 men to a barrack, so 240 men.

Q: How did you like the recoilless rifle?

AD: Oh, I loved it.

Q: And what did you do on it?

AD: I fired it.

Q: Oh, you were the one that fired it?

AD: Yup.

Q: Was that the one that was mounted on a Jeep?

AD: No. It's one that's got what they call a horse cock. Shell like that, about that big around. When it goes through the air it goes (Spiral Gesture). It's got, like looked like split peas in the back end. And you get within fifty feet of that back end, you can consider yourself, goodbye. They're dangerous, fifty feet away I seen them blow milk crates all to pieces.

Q: So yours were on like a tripod?

AD: Yeah. You held them over your shoulder and shot them.

Q: Did you ever see any combat at all, or did you just tour at the end of Korea?

AD: No. Just the end of Korea, and I was right there at Fort Dix all through the end of that.

Q: Where did you go from Fort Dix, anywhere else?

AD: Fort Dix.

Q: That's where you spent your entire time in the service?

AD: Yup. You can laugh, but I'd rather be there right now, training in the hot sun, than in here on a cool day.

Q: Now, how did you like the equipment, did you ever have a lot of trouble with it at all?

AD: Nope, everything was up to shape as far as I cared.

Q: Now, after you were out in the firing range, firing the weapon, did you have to clean the weapon out? Did you have take care of it?

AD: Oh yeah, yup.

Q: Did you have to disassemble it?

AD: Yup.

Q: And how was the weapon like to carry it around?

AD: Right over your shoulder, 'cause it's a big long tub.

Q: So it's something like a Bazooka?

AD: Yup. Shoulder job.

Q: Now, how did you like your commanding officers in your unit?

AD: They were all good. In fact, one of my best buddies I lost in a hand grenade range.

Q: How did that happen?

AD: The sergeant was showing us how to pull the pin and hold them to throw them. Well, we had a big colored guy, that was it, he let it go. He just dropped it and bailed out. And the field sergeant, Sergeant Moran, he shoved his metal helmet over it, but it got his stomach anyway. Poor guy. He was a goody, too.

Q: What do you think was some of your experiences you remember from the service?

Are there some experiences that stand out more than others?

AD: Yeah, it's about the same all the way through.

Q: Did you have to do guard duty?

AD: Oh yeah, sleep in tents.

Q: So your whole time was in tents instead of in barracks?

AD: No, it was in the barracks. But we built, you know, big foxholes. Bury cigarette butts if you screwed up.

Q: Did you ever get to see any USO shows or entertainment when you were in the service?

AD: Oh, I can't remember that much of it.

Q: Now you were in for three years?

AD: Yup.

Q: So you were discharged in '55, What'd you do after that?

AD: Back to woods and work, sawmills, milk truck.

Q: Did you ever stay in contact with anyone that was in service with you?

AD: No, because so many got shipped so many different places that getting all those guys that had gone other places.

Q: Do think your time in the service had some sort of effect on your life at all?

AD: A little bit.

Q: Did you learn discipline or anything you thought helped with your life?

AD: No, I don't think so, really.