



Michael Driscoll Oral History Interview, October 9, 2013

Title

“Atomic Veteran and OSU Grad”

Date

October 9, 2013

Location

Valley Library, Oregon State University.

Summary

The bulk of Driscoll's interview focuses on his military service, his experience of the Dominic I nuclear test series in May 1962 and the impact that being an Atomic Veteran has made on his life. In addition, Driscoll discusses his upbringing outside of Portland; his time as an undergraduate at Oregon State during the Vietnam War era; his stint in the Peace Corps teaching mathematics in Samoa; and his long association with the Boy Scouts of America and Kiwanis Club.

Interviewee

Michael Driscoll

Interviewers

Chris Petersen, Linda Richards

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/driscoll/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay, Michael, so let's start by having you introduce yourself. If you could give us your name, and today's date, and our location?

Michael Driscoll: Michael Lawrence Paul Driscoll is my entire name, and I was born 1942, March 1st.

CP: And today's date?

MD: And today's date is October 9th.

CP: 2013.

MD: 2013.

CP: And we are at the Valley Library, OSU. I'm Chris Petersen. I'm here with Linda Richards, and Michael's sister, Betty, is also joining us today.

MD: Mm-hm.

CP: So, Michael, let's start. You were born in 1942 in Portland?

MD: Correct.

CP: Is that where you grew up?

MD: Yes, between Portland and Gresham is the area that we were growing up in. That was the David Douglas district.

CP: What did your parents do?

MD: My mom was a stay-at-home mom, which was one of those unusual things which was common then, but today it's two women—I mean, the man and the woman are both now working today, in today's living. Sad to say, but that's the way it is. My mom stayed home and took care of us. There was nine of us. I was number six. Edward Jr. was the first one. He was born in '35. Frances was born in April of '36. Johnny was born in '37, in July. Peggy was born in July of '38. Betty was born in 1939, in October. I was born in March of 1942. Angela was born in '45, in June. Teresa was born in August of 1946, and Walter was born—the last one, the number nine—November of 1950. So between 1935 and 1950, my mom was having nine children. [Laughs]

CP: And your father?

MD: And my father was a painter, among other things. He did different jobs, and he had a difficulty with alcohol, beer. And so ultimately, in the time when I was transitioning from the eighth grade to freshman at David Douglas [High School], that's when my mom said, "You know, either you give us the money that you're spending on that beer, or you leave," and he left, sad to say. So I became, by default, actually the oldest male in the family, because Sonny through Betty were essentially leaving the nest, so to speak, and that left me with Angela and Teresa and Walter.

And then I went through high school, and at the time when I graduated, in June of 1960, that's when I thought, "Well, I'll go down to the recruiter." And I went down to the recruiter, and the Navy recruiter looked at me, and he said, "When would you like to go?" And this was now June, 1960. And so I said, "Well, when would you like me to go?" Or, "When can we go?" So he said, "Well, how about this day—June 27th?" And so that's when I went from Portland to San Diego; stayed through June, July, August for boot camp in San Diego, with the Navy. Came back for a short time, and I was given an assignment to go to Kodiak, Alaska. My brother had been up there already, and he had married, and he had a child, I think, at that time, so in September of 1960, I went up to live with him, and do my Navy job. He did his Navy job, and I became the person that'd clean up the administration building for the captain and all the administrators at the Kodiak Naval Station, which we also had, in addition, at that time, we had—Coast Guard and Navy were at the same location.

And since I had the evening job, my job was to clean the—when everybody was gone, then my job was to go in and clean the administration. So I cleaned the captain and the executive officer, and all the other officers that were running the station in Kodiak, in the evening, and then I had all night to clean it. I could be there until six in the morning if I wanted to. And sometimes I was—and many times I was. Sometimes I'd clean the entryway, and de-wax it and then wax it, and that was an interesting experience. Now, here in Kodiak, Alaska, it's similar to the temperatures and the weather like Portland and Seattle, at that time. Now, whether it's changed, I don't know.

CP: Could I ask why you decided to join the service? [0:05:00]

MD: Well, my brother was in the service. Edward had joined the Guard, and then eventually he left the Guard in Portland, and said he's going to go Navy, and so he was regular Navy for over 20 years. My other brother, John, decided not to go that route, to be active, but he went active for about six months with the Army. And then he did his Reserve time, and then he got his obligation that way. But I said to myself, "I'm just going to go." And so I went down to the recruiter, and talked to the Navy recruiter, and decided I was going to sign. And I didn't tell my mom until I signed, and said, "I'm leaving in two, three weeks. I'm leaving on the 27th." And so I guess it was a surprise. I don't know. I never asked her, because—she's gone now.

She was killed by somebody not paying attention to their driving when she was crossing the street on Division and 119th in Portland, Oregon. And she was going from the grocery store across the street to her little trailer, and somebody came out of the driveway to the left of her. She was in the middle of the road, and that's when she was struck by this van. And we learned later that the young man who was driving the vehicle was apparently being in some kind of a disagreement with his wife, and they were not—he apparently was not paying attention when he hit her. And she was in the middle of the four-lane road, and it made her go about 100 feet. She was pushing the cart, so it was the—I think it was the Fred Meyer, and they found her along the road, on the right there, and they had a helicopter come and fly her out.

And I was told by my younger brother Walter, by a telephone call. I was in Spokane at that time, and he said, "Our mom has died." And I came that weekend—I think that was on a Thursday, and I came to—we had the funeral, I think, on Monday, and I stayed in her trailer. That's Friday night or Saturday or Sunday. I'm not sure whether it was two nights or three nights. And so we had the funeral, and then I went back to Spokane. And the family went after the person who killed her, and said, you know, "She had many more years of life," and ultimately, I think it was about two or three years before they made a settlement, and each one of the members of the family at that time received some stipend of some kind. It wasn't a huge amount, but it was a little bit amount.

CP: What year was this?

MD: That was 1986. And oddly enough, at that time I was then the lieutenant governor in the Kiwanis Pacific Northwest district, Kiwanis International. And that was in 1985—'86 and '87 was when I was lieutenant governor. I was the president of Kiwanis Club of North Spokane in 1984 and '85. And just about two weeks before, because I was lieutenant governor, I had to be in Portland for a board meeting. I had come to see her, and I took her to breakfast, and we walked from her trailer to the restaurant and then back, and [sighs] it was the last time I saw her alive.

CP: So when you were in the Navy, at some point early on, you were voted "Outstanding Recruit?"

MD: When I went through boot camp in San Diego, yeah, that was June to—June, July, August. At the end of our training—my company was Company 288 in San Diego, and practically every state was represented in our company, and the guys decided that they were going to vote me in as the "Outstanding Recruit." There was another title. I would have to go back and look at [laughs] in my yearbook, but I can't remember. There was a picture of me standing with my head down, because I was making sure I wanted to shake this officer's hand when he was giving me this little certificate saying I was an "Outstanding Recruit." [0:10:08]

CP: And what did you do to merit this award?

MD: Well, it was voted on by the guys in the company, 288. They just said, you know, "You're the right guide; you're the guy that's up there making the pace for everybody." And you've got to think that there's the guide carrier, who's carrying the flag—there's me in front of all these other guys—there's lines and lines and lines. I forgot how many men were in

our company—a hundred or more? Two hundred? I can't remember right now. I'd have to go back and look. But I was designated the right guide, and he's the person who sets the pace for the whole company. [Laughs] If you're familiar with how people march, that's how it's—that's the purpose of the right guide. And then they have squad leaders, and Tom Redding was voted the "Most Outstanding." I was "Second Outstanding." [Laughs] That's how that came about.

CP: Were you athletic in high school?

MD: Oh, yeah. I was in track, and I was in wrestling. I was in wrestling all four years, but the first year, as a freshman, I hurt my neck, and I hurt myself to the point where I said to the coach, you know, "I hurt my neck." My neck has actually hurt me all my life, because of that. And he said, "Well, turn in your uniform." And I thought that was unusual. I thought maybe he should at least let me go to see a doctor, but it didn't happen. So I came back the next year, as a sophomore, and I continued as a sophomore, junior, and I was a three-year letterman. Junior varsity in sophomore and junior year, but in my senior year actually, I was in the varsity squad, and earned enough points to obtain my letter.

But I didn't buy a letterman sweater, because I didn't think it was important to carry just one slice on your sleeve that says you're a one-year varsity letterman. And they were expensive, and we were not a people that—in our family, we didn't have a lot of money. So I just decided, "Okay, I earned this award," and we got the recognition at the assembly, and everybody clapped for everybody else, you know, and I earned my letter. That was a unique thing.

And I also was in track in sophomore year. I pole-vaulted, believe it or not, and I also ran some races. But my brother Edward, who also was known as Sonny, he also pole-vaulted when he was in high school, at Benson High School, in Portland, Oregon. And he said one day—and I never saw him do it, but he said one day that he had pole-vaulted nine feet, six inches. So I did 10 feet, so I beat him by six inches. [Laughs]

CP: There was no mat though, back then.

MD: And when I was—I literally made my own pole vault, on my own—on our property. Our property was three-fourths of an acre. And I would cut the hole in the ground, and I would cut the grass, and put the grass down there to fall on, which, you know, was still hard! There's hard ground. I made the poles, and I made the bar, and I went out in the woods and found a pole that was long enough, and it was heavy. It was probably 20 or more pounds just to carry the darn thing. And then I would practice on my property, or our property, the Driscoll property, and jump over this, that I made myself. I used to make slingshots. I used to make bows and arrows. I made my own crossbows, and I did all kinds of things.

CP: Well, it sounds like your transition into the Navy early on—it sounds like it was pretty smooth, then?

MD: It was, and I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the service. As a matter of fact, if you were to—if I would've brought my picture book that we had, you know, I probably looked like about a ten-year-old in the service. I mean, I was really young. As a matter of fact, recently I was in a business office with one of my customers, and he said, "Well, how old are you, Mike?" I said, "Well, how old do you think I am, Jim?" And he said, "Oh, 62." I said, "Well, that's good, because I'm not. I'm 71." And around that time, one of his fellow employees come walking around the corner, and he remarked to her, and he said—I said, "Well, how old do you think I am?" She said, "52, 51." I said, "Well, I'm 71." And so she was kind of like, "Well, you look pretty good, you know, for 71." [Laughs] It was kind of funny.

CP: So you fit in pretty well socially in those early years in the Navy?

MD: I felt I did, yeah. [0:14:57] I enjoyed the guys, and you know, when you get your yearbook or whatever little item, then people sign them like they did in high school. I had lots of guys sign it, and said little—lots of little things, and it was a good time. I thoroughly enjoyed being in the Navy, being on the ship. I didn't necessarily say, "I'm waiting for the day I'm getting out," when I was in—1964, when I left the *Yorktown*.

But it puzzled me. I used to say, "Nobody's trying to bend my arm to make me stay!" I was a second-class, E5, at that time, and I had a large responsibility. I was responsible for the gyros, and there are two gyros on the ship, the carrier *Yorktown*. The carrier *Yorktown* is 900 feet by about 250 feet wide, and about 150 feet from the keel to the top. And so it's 47,000 tons, and it carried helicopters, and AD's, and S2F's—single-engine and double-engine aircraft—and also jets.

CP: So we sort of left off in Kodiak, Alaska.

MD: Well, yeah, okay, I went to Kodiak, and during the time that I was given this opportunity to clean the Administration Building, I was also having free time in the day, so I went to work for the Navy Exchange, and that allowed me to literally save a lot of money. I walked out of Kodiak with probably between \$1,500 and \$2,000, and it wasn't until I got out of the Navy that I said, "Well, I got all this money." So I went and bought myself a brand-new Volkswagen, red Volkswagen, and I used that actually to come down to Oregon State. [Laughs]

CP: So, and then at what point did you leave Kodiak, because you have these two jobs?

MD: Yeah, I did them at the same time. I did the Navy Exchange in the daytime, and did the administration building work in the evening. So I was literally working practically almost every hour, except enough—six or eight hours to get enough sleep. And this also allowed me, because I worked at the administration, to be given an early chow pass, and also to be given a dungaree pass. Because in the evening, when you're in the Navy—and I don't know whether they still do this—but you were required to change your uniform from dungarees to blues or whites, depending upon the time of the year, and that was what you had to wear when you went to the evening meal. In the morning meal and the afternoon meal, you could be in dungarees.

Well, this dungaree-chow pass and early-chow pass, I could go to the head of the line. I mean, [laughs] I had the—I didn't ask for that. I was just given that! I just—that was choice, you know? How many times do you get that? And I wasn't protesting to get it; I just got it. And it was crazy. I thought it was unique. So I was there from September of '60 to August of '61, and then I came back home. I got 30 days leave, and that's when Betty got married, in September 2nd, 1961, to her husband, Joe. And we had—this was the first time we had the entire family together. That whole family photo is the only one that exists, even though the rest of the family members—of the eight other ones, seven got married. I never got married. I never married once.

CP: Okay, so after this 30-day leave, what happens next?

MD: Well, then I went to San Diego, and I went through ICA school, which is an Interior Communications Electricians Mate—long word—Class A School, which allowed me to be in school for three months.

CP: How did you choose that?

MD: I was selected, again. Nobody—just like the dungaree pass and the early-chow pass, they just said, "Here, Mike, you've got this now. What are you going to do with it?" [Laughs] To a certain extent, that's what happened. And I went to ICA School, and then after ICA School was done, then I went to Motion Picture Operations School, and then I was assigned the carrier *Yorktown*.

CP: Was this training pretty straightforward for you?

MD: Oh, yeah. Matter of fact, the information that I learned, it was equivalent to about a \$2,500 education. And when I left the Navy, then within one week, I was in school at Multnomah College, working on an associate degree, again furthering my information on what I had learned in the Navy. [0:19:59] And when I finished the school in December of 1961, then the carrier *Yorktown* was coming back. It was about three or more months before it came back from its Far East cruise, which would be 1962, '63. And then in 1960—let's see, 1961, '62, excuse me. And then when I graduated from ICA School and Motion Picture Operation School, in December of '61, then around the first of January '62, until about March, I was waiting for the *Yorktown* to come back. And so I just—whatever they decided. "Well, you're on work party, and you're going over here. You're going to go here." So I was kind of like moved around until they said, "Okay, here's your ship," and then I walked aboard and I was on there for the next—from March of 1962 to April of 1964.

CP: And Motion Picture School, I assume, is what it sounds like? You were learning how to operate a camera?

MD: I operated the 16-milimeter projection cameras, and also on the ship, the *Yorktown*, had two cameras, so that you could show the movies to the men, and anybody else who was walking on the hangar deck. And these are, you know, good movies. Matter of fact, in my little book here—this is the book that I had when I was on the ship, and there's a lot of interesting things that are in here, and it also tells about when I was showing movies, and the type of movie, the kind of movie that, the title of the movie, and who I was showing it to, whether I was showing it to the officers in the wardroom,

or whether I was showing it to the hangar deck, to the men. The officers may have been walking down on the hangar deck and seen it, but it was—essentially, it was for the sailors. And the movies were all kinds.

CP: Hollywood productions?

MD: Yeah, and mostly black-and-white at that time, because it's still 1962, '63, '64. And for some reason, I see a little mark in there saying, "You got X dollars for this movie." And I'm thinking, "Gee, did we get paid to show these movies to the officers, and to show them to the sailors that were in the hangar deck or the anchor deck?" You actually had two cameras, so when you would start the movie, there was a leader on there that you watched, and then you'd watch your reel, and you could switch it, just in a matter of seconds, so that when this reel ran out, then this one started, and they didn't see down there, if you were doing it right, any change between this reel to this reel, and that was a trick. It was fun. [Laughs]

CP: So what was your first impression of the *Yorktown*?

MD: Well, it was big. It was huge. And then you'd get on the carrier, and so there's two gangways. You had the officers', which was fore, forward, and then the enlisted men, who are the after one. And when you'd come up to the gangway, you'd have to salute the flag, and then you'd walk up and show your ID, and the chief or first class would be there to say—you'd salute and say, "Permission to come aboard." And he'd then say yes or no, or he'd pass you on. [Laughs] So that was interesting.

And then I was in—my job on the *Yorktown* was to be—the first year, I was telephone man. So your telephones today, that would be my job on the ship, to repair. And people would call up and say, "Mike, I got a handset that needs to be replaced," and so I'd go up and—anyplace! I literally had to learn the ship.

I had to understand how to navigate, to say, "I'm going to this space on this deck, and I got to find—and how do you get there?" Because they're not—in order to retain water-tight integrity on the ship, so that it doesn't sink, you've got to have water-tight doors if they're below the water line. And when you have general quarters, and everything is locked down, and if there was a torpedo that supposedly hit your ship, and if you're hit on that side, supposedly you were able to survive, as long as it didn't hit one of the magazines and didn't just destroy the ship entirely. So it was a challenge in order to say, "Okay, I'm here in this part of the ship, and I've got this phone call, and I don't know where this is, so I have to go start to find where this guy lives." [0:25:01] And so, you know, I mean, it was 900 feet long, and 250 feet wide, and it had an angled deck at that time, although in some of these *Yorktown Association* newsletters that I get, there was a time when the *Yorktown* did not have the angled deck, and that goes back many years.

CP: How many people were on this?

MD: Well, at the shot for *Frigate Bird* and for *Swordfish*, there's actually—I found a document that says, "This is how many men were on the ship that day." 2,347 was the amount that was written in this document that was under *Dominic One*.

CP: So we'll talk about this in a second. I want to know a couple things. What was sort of the mission of the ship when you got on it? I mean, did you have a sense of what—you said it had just come back from a tour. You were going out on another tour, I assume.

MD: Yeah.

CP: Did you have an understanding of what the ship was—?

MD: Well, there's two entities on a ship. One is the ship's crew. I was ship's crew. That means that my duty was to help run the ship. And being in the IC Department, and other departments that the IC gang oversaw—we oversaw the sound power telephones, which allowed you to talk without having to be the telephone that you have over there on your desk. So we had telephones, and we had sound power telephones. We had alarms; we had the gyros. There's a forward gyro and an after gyro. You have all these repeaters throughout the ship, up on the—what's the word I'm looking for? [Laughs] Where the ship is being steered, there's a helmsman up there, and the captain is up there, and he can see, you know, probably 180 degrees like this, in front of the ship, and I don't know whether he has very much visibility for the back. I hope he does.

[Laughs] I can't remember right now. And we show the movies. We went and when we were in port, we would go find the place, where to go rent—to obtain the movies, and return the ones that we had got, so other ships in the vicinity would also be able to have access to those.

CP: But there was never a time where the whole crew was informed of, "We are on this ship for this particular mission." You were just setting out to sea, and you would [unclear]?

MD: Occasionally, we heard a little bit, and that's kind of what I'd like to get in here. But anyhow, you've got ship's crew, and then you've got airmen. The purpose of the aircraft is to have airmen that fly in and fly out. And there was the four different kinds of aircraft: helicopters, single-engine plane called AD's, and then 2F's—the 2F's have two engine, and then you have the A4's, which is the jet. These are kind of like mosquitoes almost! I mean, they're really tiny, and they fly in and they fly out off the ship. And you have two catapults in the front, and you have about four or five cables that are like that, that when the ships' aircraft come in for a landing, one of their hooks grabs one of those lines that are on the back. And if they come and go, when they touch off then they would go on the angled deck and then go out that way or out this way. So then we'd have helicopters at different places in there, and if those weren't supposed to be on the ship's flight deck, then they would be underneath in the hangar deck.

CP: What would you do when you were not on duty?

MD: Well, I could study. I did a lot of studies. I did a number of home-study courses, and also advancement in rank. And we'd go on liberty, depending upon where we were, in Long Beach or San Diego. We were mostly in Long Beach. That's where we moored, at the dock.

CP: How about when you were out at sea?

MD: When we were out at sea, we were running watches, and those watches were four hours in length, and they would run like midnight to four, or four in the morning till eight, eight in the morning till noon, and then 16:00, 20:00, 24:00. And there was a cycle like that, whether we were out there for a few days or long days. And on the shot that we were participating in for Dominic One, we were out there over 10, 12 days, I think it was. But I could find out in here, if I were to go back and check it. [0:29:59] [Laughs] And that's the interesting thing about this little book.

CP: There wasn't a particular leisure activity that you were prone to doing during your—you were on a ship out at sea.

MD: Yeah.

CP: But you're not working the entire time.

MD: I don't remember whether there was a wait. You know, I think maybe today there would be a necessity for—and also today, women are those ships, believe it or not. When I was in, women probably dreamed about it 30 years ahead, but that didn't happen until I don't know what year, maybe the '90s or the 2000s, when almost any ship—submarines, as well as carriers, as well as destroyers, as well as cruisers, and other auxiliary ships, were then being able to say, "Yes, you can come on board, women." And I just wonder, is this an invitation for a problem? And I just don't know how they handle it. [Laughs]

CP: Okay, so take us through the first test, then, the Operation Frigate Bird, May 6, 1962.

MD: Okay. I'd have to go back and look in my book to see what the exact date was, and I'm sure you'd—

Linda Richards: We have it.

MD: I'm sure you don't want to go back into the date. I was in Long Beach, and then I went down to San Diego, and then we were out at sea. I have those dates in here, but I haven't got them memorized. [Laughs] I didn't know I was going to be not able to use props, so I brought them, but I guess we're going to have to just use extemporaneous memory here. So we were in Long Beach. We went down to San Diego. We picked up our airmen. And then those aircraft that are going to be a part of us, they have to fly out to us, as we get a certain distance out from the port. And we were out a number of days, and as I recall, we weren't being given very much information, as far as, "Men on the ship, this is what's going to happen."

And so we would go to the meals, and somebody would be talking over here and saying, "Christmas Island, Johnston Island, Polaris, ASROC, anti-submarine rockets." And I'd be thinking, "I'd better write that down." So I wrote a lot of little things down here, and I wrote little words. I didn't write long things like I write today. I still take a journal, and I've taken a journal for, well, I was in the Navy there in '60 to '64, and now it's 2013, and now I write a bigger journal daily. And it wasn't until August of 2008 that I was beginning to piece these two things together that happened back in May of 1962. So as I recall, there was supposed to have been a shot, which we didn't know the name, which we didn't know—which is why I have this. [his cap] The Joint Task Force Eight was what we were a part of. Later, I learned that we were a part of Dominic One. Later, I learned that there were 36 different atomic tests during that period of time, of which two—the *Yorktown* was among other ships; there was about 14 other ships in our group as we were participating in these shots. The first one was Frigate Bird, and May 6, 1962. This was where the *Ethan Allen* was submerged—this being the surface of the Pacific. We were approximately—according to the information I've been able to receive—approximately 370 miles off the coast, south and west, of San Diego.

CP: What is the *Ethan Allen*?

MD: The *Ethan Allen* is a submarine. It's a nuclear submarine. And it had been on the east coast, and it had to come all the way around to where we were, within a very short period of time, which they did. They had these Polaris missiles on them, and these were armed. This was the first one that a Polaris missile, with an atomic weapon on it, was launched below the surface of the Pacific. And it went, when it was launched—and we have a picture of that in the 440-page document. You can actually see it rising out of the water, the trail. And it went 400 miles into the air, and it went 1,020 miles down range to where another set of my men, that I learned later, were in an activity part of Dominic One. [0:35:08] And this Polaris missile with an atomic warhead exploded at 11,000 feet in the air.

Now, I didn't know that until later; I didn't know that then, in May of 1962. I learned about it after August of 2008. So all this time, these things are running around in my head. And I went back, in August of 2008, and I began to learn about: you're an atomic veteran. And Kathryn Higley, who's now a nuclear scientist, professor here at Oregon State University, told me on the telephone one day. This is an interesting thing, because I get weekly notices from Oregon State University, the alumni—I'm an alumni—that there's a raft of information that we can choose to look at. I chose to look at this one article that had to do with nuclear engineers are being wanted, and I kept asking myself, I wonder if this is an interesting article? So I read the article, and at the end of the article, there was a name and a phone number. Oddly enough, I had the interest to say, "I'm going to call that number." I called the number, and all I could do was leave a telephone message.

And good enough, this person who received the message called me back. I don't know how long it took. He called me back, and he said, "I'm sorry, but the number you've called for this person is not at this number." Apparently whoever wrote the article, the reporter, had twisted some numbers, or omitted a number. So he called me back, and he gave me Kathryn's phone number. And I called her, and I talked with her, and I gave her my symptoms that I been experiencing—my backache, and my thyroid pill, and my skin issues on my body. And I said I had been on the *Yorktown* when they were participating on this test, and she said, "You're an atomic veteran." And I said, "That's the first time I knew that." And she said, "Give me your e-mail address, and I'll send you this attachment."

And that's when I got the attachment; that's when I opened it up, and that's when I learned that there were over 400,000 men—all services, Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard—that participated with other civilians in atomic tests that took place from Trinity, which was July 16th, 1945, and a few weeks later was Hiroshima, on Japan, and then a few days later was Nagasaki, on Japan. And then a few days later the Japanese said, "We surrender." And then on September 1945, on the *Missouri*, General MacArthur said, "Okay, here's this information, and we're going green." I haven't got that memorized, but I have those kind of steps. But it wasn't until the next year, in August of 1946, that the United States and the Department of Defense said, "We've got to test some more!" And they were given the permission. And of course, every test is approved by the president, whoever the president is—and this meant that, at that time, it would be Roosevelt. Well, no, that would have been—Roosevelt was the one who initiated the nuclear program, the Manhattan program, in the '40s, early '40s. And then they started working on that, and they worked on that in three different locations. The one with plutonium was in Hanford; one with uranium was, I think, in Tennessee. And then you had Los Alamos was the ones that created the gadget. That's as I understand it. So what direction would you like me to take now?

CP: Well, we were at May 6th still.

MD: Okay.

CP: So it sounds to me like there wasn't anything that was unusual about that day, from your perspective, when it actually happened. Like, you didn't see an explosion.

MD: Exactly. And you're right. Matter of fact, if you look at my notes, my notes say nothing about a bomb. And it wasn't until May 11th that my notes say "bomb exploded." And that's the one—because I know I felt it. I mean, you've got to understand—okay, here's the—as the picture comes to my mind, you've got the *Yorktown*, which was about 9,850 yards, supposedly, according to this 440-page document, *Dominic One*. [0:40:05] That's where the *Yorktown* was in relationship to Surface Zero—Surface Zero, not where it detonated. Where it detonated was about 650 feet into the Pacific.

How it got there was when the *Agerholm*, the U.S.S. destroyer, *Agerholm*, shot this ASROC missile at a floating raft. And on this raft they had a smoke bomb that, okay, that's the target over there, and here's the ship. So he shoots, and on this document—440 pages long—you can actually see the rocket leaving its launcher on the ship. And then there's another picture where the rocket went into the water, and it exploded, and within seconds, it was 2,100 feet in the air. And then you see another picture. Now, when that blast took place, and when that heat took place—which was equivalent to Hiroshima and Nagasaki—that water, as it went away from the explosion, that bubble eventually hit every one of those ships, the other 14 that were part, and everybody was pointed—why were they pointed at the explosion? Because if they were at this angle, they would be tipped over.

So they were all pointed at the explosion point, and when they water was coming toward us, there was somebody up on the captain's visual, seeing this. It was actually a tsunami, coming toward each one of the ships. And so he said to the person who speaks on the 1MC, which was the speaker system—which is another one of our responsibilities as IC men, Interior Communications Electricians Mate responsibilities, the IC gang—he said, the 1MC said, "Everybody, lay down on the deck." So here I am in my general quarters place. I'm back-aft. Forward is the first gyro; that's the forward gyro. I'm in the back in the after gyro. I'm underneath the mess deck; I'm about on the fourth deck in the center of the ship, in the back, and there's probably another 200 or more feet before we get to the fantail. I'm by myself, and I hear the 1MC say, "Lay down." So I laid down! And within seconds, I was literally raised up, like six inches! And I said, "Wow, that was scary!" I literally was shaken. And then it was done! That happened approximately May 11, 1962, at 13 hours, two minutes.

Now, fast-forward and kind of think about going to lunch or dinner, the meals, and we were saying, "Boy, that was something!" "Yeah, well, it didn't hurt us." So here we are; that happened on, I believe, a Friday. The next day—it could've been Thursday—the next day, we were in San Diego, so we were that close, to get from our location where the shot took place, called "Swordfish." We were back in San Diego. We'd left the airmen there. The aircraft flew off into San Diego, on its own, before we came to the ship—the ship came into the port. And then from San Diego, we went north to Long Beach, which takes about six or eight hours, depending upon how fast the captain says we need to get there. [Laughs] So after that, we were on liberty.

Now the thing that comes to my mind is, all right, we were in this atomic blast. We were in this atomic radiation water. We did not—as far as I'm aware of, and nothing says in the literature that I've read, that we were hosed down to eliminate the radioactivity being on any of us—2,347 of us, according that document. So we left the ship, and I called my sister and I went to see her. And it was gone, you know? [0:44:58] From May 11, 1962, it was like the water just was placid now. There was no more discussion.

So what happens in October of 1962? The Cuban crisis. That's when we learn about the Russians bringing over missiles to Cuba, and John Kennedy says, "No, you're not going to let that happen anymore." They put a blockade around it, and then October—I can't tell the exact date, but in my book, it gives you a date. It's either the 22nd or somewhere around the 22nd of October, 1962, that we came to Long Beach, and went south to pick up the airmen in 1962 at San Diego, and then we said, "Which way are we going? Are we going to go toward Hawaii or west, or are we going to go south?" If we went south, we would go in through the Panama Canal, and then we'd be joining those people in the Caribbean to say, "Let's blockade, and not let any more ships come and land on Cuba." Well, we didn't go to Cuba. We didn't go to Panama.

We went west. And within a week or so, we were in Hawaii, and then we began to hear little things. Well, somebody blinked, and no more is this on the brink of destruction by both Russian and American shooting missiles at each other, and the entire world is essentially being annihilated, because somebody said it's time to shoot. It didn't happen.

CP: What was the atmosphere like on the boat?

MD: It was scary. It really was. We didn't know which. And we got a little bit of information. Today, I'm sure that every ship out at sea has access to a color television, which we didn't have then, and they have now computers, and they also have smart phones that they can—wherever they're at, they can say, "All right, I'm going to find out what my GPS is, and find out exactly: what is my coordinates? What is my latitude; what is my longitude? Where do I fit on the earth at this moment?" And with their smart phone, they could do that. With my gyros, we had access to latitude, longitude, but my question is: was I reading it right when I wrote it down in my book? Because the information that I write there, and the information I get in this 440-page document, Dominic One, there's a little bit of difference. And I've actually gone to Google, and found, all right, a latitude-longitude, plug it in, and then say, "Latitude, longitude—what's the difference between those two? And I found the discrepancy between San Diego and Surface Zero was not 370 miles; it was more like 412. So, was somebody trying to exaggerate the wrong way, or were they not knowing, exactly? I don't know. But that's a couple of the discrepancies that I find in reading, and I don't know whether you, Linda, have found any of those things in your—so, you found them.

LR: There's even discrepancies about the size of the Hiroshima bomb itself.

MD: Fifteen—?

LR: Yeah.

MD: Fifteen to 13 kilotons.

LR: Yeah. Well, some people say it was larger, and then it's been misleading, because the way that you get compensation is by the calculations that they use to calculate the size of the bomb, therefore, the area of people that would have been contaminated.

MD: And that's called a bang meter.

LR: [Unclear] the bomb.

MD: And that's called a bang meter, and the bang meters are on the submarines. And the submarine was where these guys—when they did the Frigate Bird test, they were actually—they were submerged. I'm not sure whether they were submerged or not. They had to be on the surface. And they watched the explosion, and they had their bang meter that said, when it got so many seconds, then they were able to size it and say, "This is how much that bomb was."

CP: Linda, do you have questions about the two tests?

LR: Well, I do. I do have a few questions.

MD: The thing that I wanted to go back to was, when I began to learn about this in August of 2008, I began to read more about—I read at least 10 or more books. I've found articles, and I've literally—and as you can see here, which I can't show the people who are watching this—I've printed a lot of pages. [0:49:58] And one of the things I learned in the book—and I thought, well, this is really important, and I wonder how many people know this? And I've asked a couple people occasionally. I'll say, "Well, you're aware of Nagasaki and you're aware of Hiroshima. Were you aware that when the plane took off, there was more than one plane? Were you aware that when the bomb went off, it didn't—where did it explode?" Well, there was more than one plane that took off, because there was another one that was watching, and taping, and filming this whole thing, and that when it was dropped by the plane that carried the bomb—on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—it exploded literally between 1,900 and 1,850 feet, as I have read the information, which meant that when the blast took place, and the heat took place, and the radiation took place, in milliseconds, that those people underneath that—we weren't bombing military people, we were bombing civilians. Those civilians were disintegrated, within seconds. Milliseconds. Undescribable [sic] how fast it happened, and far it went, and then that's when they the began to say in

these future tests—in 1946, which was Able at Crossroads, and Baker at Crossroads, and the mistakes that took place at Crossroads Able, and why they corrected it with Crossroads Baker—the sad part about it is that when these bombs were dropped, people, Japanese people, were destroyed, in too little time to say how much.

LR: It was very catastrophic.

MD: It was just—and we're the ones that created the bomb, and we're the only ones, sadly, that have used the bomb. And now there are other countries, are saying, "It's our right to have the bomb. You've got to give us that right to let us have that, and let us go and destroy the world." Should we let somebody do that?

LR: There's a lot to think about. But one thing I want to hear from you is—I did want to hear, specifics about the—actually, my question is more, I want to know all the times that you've had health issues.

MD: Okay.

LR: And you went to the VA?

MD: Yeah.

LR: I'm assuming that you went to the VA.

MD: I did.

LR: No one—I'm just very surprised that it wasn't until 2008 that your health problems might have been connected to your service.

MD: Yeah, in the back of my mind. In the '80s, actually in the '70s, I was having little issues that would crop up. When I worked with the Boy Scouts of America in Fairbanks, Alaska, one day in November of 1979, I was sitting there for two hours, typing my newsletter that I had that obligation to do for the people in the program. And I stood up, and I had this terrible pain in my back! And my executive at that time said, "Well, how's it feel?" I said, "Well, it doesn't feel good." He said, "Well, let's monitor it for a week, and if you still have that problem in a week, we'll send you to the hospital, and let them evaluate that," which we did. And we evaluated, and then they found nothing. Okay.

So in January of 1980, as an executive with the Boy Scouts, I was given permission to go—because the North Slope Borough, and the Lions Club and the North Slope Borough, in Barrow, Alaska, said, "We want to start a Boy Scout troop up here," and I said, "Okay, I'll come up and help them." So I flew in on a day that I was going to hopefully come back out the same day, and I wound up staying there three days, because all of a sudden, there was a brouhaha on Paul Harvey's radio program. It was a nationwide event where he was saying, "And in Alaska, in Barrow, there's some drinking problems." And the mayor knew about this—he was an Eskimo—and the chief of police knew about this. Apparently, it was the chief of police—I think he may have been a white person—who was the one speaking to the media, because the media was calling up the chief, instead of the mayor, and saying, you know, "We heard this on Paul Harvey. Tell us about it." [0:55:01] Well, the mayor fired the chief of police.

My man, that I was going to see, was the assistant chief of police, Jim Christensen, and Jim Christensen said, "Mike, we've got a little problem here." So I said, "Jim, I'm not leaving until this is resolved. I've got these pages; I want them signed. And I've got this movie I want to show you," [laughs] and so I stayed two, three days. And I got it all done, and then I got on the plane and went back from Barrow, Alaska, to Fairbanks. And that troop eventually went to two, as I understand—later I learned this—jamborees in the United States, in Virginia, which I thought, if I had not done that in that year, in January of 1980, those kids would not have had the opportunity to do that.

So I came back, and it was in the first Sunday of February 1980, and I woke up on a Sunday morning, and my whole left leg was numb. I said, "Whoo, I never had this before!" So I went to church, came back. I still had the numb leg, so I went to the hospital. And as I was waiting in the emergency area, the doctor, who was an Eagle Scout, who was on our executive board, and who I knew—he came up to me and said, "Mike, what's going on? What are you doing here?" I said, "Doctor, my whole left leg is numb, and I don't know why." He said, "I want you to go home, and come back at two o'clock and check into the hospital." And that began traction; that began a myelogram, where they put you on a table that

they shoot a fluid in you, and then this fluid is able to be monitored, to find out how your spine is doing. And then they said, "Well, according to this myelogram, you have a ruptured disc." And the doctor said, "Do you want us to operate?" And I said, "Sure, it's going to help me, right?"

And I kind of—that's kind of paraphrasing it. I really would like to have a capsule of that conversation to say, "Here's what I should have done instead of the surgery," because I now have found out there's an alternative. And I don't know whether you want to go about that now, but, you know, that's—that's something that I said to myself. Surgery was what I thought was necessary, in order to cure myself. And ultimately, I have now a seven-inch scar on my back that I've carried around now since 1980. It's now 2013. And I kind of look at it and say, "I really probably didn't need that." Because it was in—no, it was in 1986, 19—let's see, 1979, 1980, 1986, '87, 2003, 2004, 2010 that I had these issues that come back, and I said to myself, "Is that related to the atomic test?"

My skin, when I was in the Peace Corps, was diagnosed as psoriasis. That was in 1974, when I went to the—going out of the Peace Corps, they have a medical, and they say, "Well, now you're able to go back into civilian life." And so I had five days in Hawaii, that I went through Tripler Army Base, and the doctor, who was a lieutenant colonel—talked to him, and I said, "Can you tell me what this is?" And he took a scraping of it, and had it diagnosed under a microscope. And he came back and he said, "Well, we've decided it's psoriasis," or some words to that effect. Now fast-forward to 2004, in Spokane, and I went to a doctor who's a dermatologist. Now I don't know whether the man was, in 1974, was a dermatologist, or just a general practitioner. I don't know. But what he diagnosed then, and what it was diagnosed 30 years later, to be, was EAC, erythema annulare centrifugum, which was not psoriasis.

LR: Well, what I was curious about was just that when you started having problems, especially with your thyroid, it seems to be that someone might ask you about your history, and ask you, "Were you in the service? Were you exposed?"

MD: No.

LR: And I'm just surprised that no one put it together for you.

MD: No one—no, they didn't.

LR: But I do want to know, when the tests were happening, and you were on the deck, and you laid on the deck—?

MD: Well, now this the fourth deck, not on the flight deck.

LR: Yeah, were you outside?

MD: No, no.

LR: That's what I was wondering. Where are you on the ship? [1:00:00]

MD: The flight deck is the top deck. Then you've got the hangar deck, and then you've got the fourth deck, and that's in the body of the ship itself. If you're to look at the side here, I was, like, down here—not up here, or in the flight deck above us.

LR: And I know this was a shot—it was underwater.

MD: The shot—

LR: So the explosion—but did it stay under? It doesn't sound—

MD: No, it hit us. I mean, we were less than 10,000 yards from the explosion, where it took place.

LR: And so you all—you talked a little bit about what's happened when you come in the meal hall, when you come to eat. You talked with each other. Do people talk about what they heard that day?

MD: Well, you hear a conversation over here, and you hear a conversation over here, and somebody was saying Polaris; somebody was saying ASROC. Some people were saying Christmas Island; some people were saying Johnston Island,

and I kind of was under the impression that we were there. Well, we weren't there. We weren't at Christmas Island. We were 1,000 miles away from there. We were toward the San Diego area, 370 miles, supposedly, off the coast.

LR: But since you all hadn't been told that you were going to be a part of this exercise, it seems to me that wouldn't you all maybe talk with each other and be concerned, or scared, or were you worried about the radiation exposure at the time?

MD: No, it was not discussed that way, sadly. I think the knowledge that we have today—

LR: Right.

MD: —and the absence of information that was then, was to the servicemen's benefit, because then they wouldn't have been scared to death. But if they would have been saying—and the captain were to bring us all together, or talk on the IMC and say, "Men, I want to let you know what's going to happen here"—but that did not happen. No. That did not. It was not available in a written piece of information that said, "Men, let's go to your divisions. Let's have your officers who are in charge of you, let's have your petty officers, your chiefs, your first-class, disseminate this information." That did not happen. That maybe should have, in order for us to be more informed, but I think they look at it as: the less you know, the better off we are able to do our job.

LR: Yeah, that idea that secrecy is important, so that the operation—

MD: Well, I don't know whether I'd classify it as secrecy. I would just say, "Nobody's telling anybody anything," so it's—it's passive secrecy, possibly!

LR: Yeah, so that need to know—like, if you don't need to know it, we're not going to tell you.

MD: And nobody has enough information to say, "I need to ask this question to you."

LR: Right, yeah.

MD: The captain of the ship.

LR: Yeah, I think that captures it. And so, as all this is happening, you all aren't even aware that you're part of this exercise, for either shot that you were at?

MD: We didn't know the name, and we didn't know what was, literally, around us. If the *Polaris* or the *Ethan Allen* had exploded, everybody in the world would have known about it. If it had been a mistake, and when it was coming up it exploded above the water, that would have most likely killed all of us in the fleet that was part of the exercise then. But it didn't happen; it was a success. It went 400 miles, and 1,000 miles, and exploded. But the people that were down there, I know. Three other people, eventually, I began to know. There was Dick Sowdy [?]. Dick Sowdy was in the Air Force. Dick Sowdy's job as a Air Force man was to clean the plane, of the pilot that had flown the plane through the exploding bombs that were over there, of which 34 took place in that area—two over here, 36 total, the *Dominic One*—Dick Sowdy's job.

He came into my office. He sat down there and we talked about this. How did he learn about it? He learned about it because there was an article, and I have the article right here, if I could show you. It was in the *Spokesman Review*. It was on November 11th, 2008. I had talked with the reporter. I had said to him, "I learned this in August of 2008. Now it's September." I said, "Would you like to have an article for the Veteran's Day, coming up on November 11th?" I said, "I'm an atomic veteran. I've just leaned this within the last couple of months." He said, "Yes." We got together twice, ultimately four hours was discussed. He sent a photographer. We spent another two hours with—I had spent another two hours with the photographer. He took pictures of me pointing on the map, in my office, and you see this picture, that's this big in color on the front page of the *Spokesman Review*. [1:05:05] And over on the right side is the two Presidents, because Barack Obama had just now been nominated in November of 2008, and that's when this article was taking place.

But there was two pages—and I have the article; I can show it to you, in case you want to look at it—that talks about my battling uncertainty. And that was the title that the reporter had said. I didn't talk to him about how to create the title for the article, but that's what he did. And we see me, showing my hand going up on the map in the office, and then there's

another picture, where we actually see the explosion of the *Agerholm* in the front here. In the back, you see this exploding water that went 2,100 feet in the air, seconds after it exploded at 650 feet deep, in the Pacific, 370 miles off the coast of San Diego, on May 11th, 1962.

LR: In the document, the 444-page one, it talks about how many radiation badges were distributed during Dominic.

MD: I got one.

LR: That's what I wanted to ask. Did you have one?

MD: I did. I did get—no, no. That was the interesting thing. As a matter of fact, in here you can see me write "yes." Everybody who had a camera was told to turn the camera over to somebody.

LR: Oh.

MD: All of our cameras, all the individuals on the ship who had cameras, were—the cameras were taken away. We were given dosimeters. After the event, the cameras were given back to us. The dosimeters were given back to whoever was the person that we gave the dosimeters to, and then they were supposedly kept. Now, as you go and read about the dosimeter, then you find out that some of them were working and some of them were not working, at all, and were probably worthless.

LR: But when they distributed the dosimeters to you all, did they—you had no idea that the badge was connected to the test that was going to happen on the 11th of that?

MD: I think we had about this much information, Linda—

LR: Yeah.

MD: —about, well, somebody's going to—this little badge is supposed to monitor whether you get some kind of radiation. That's about how much information we had

CP: How about after the test? Were there more extensive physical examinations?

MD: No, there were no examinations. There was no washing down of the deck on the *Yorktown*, that I'm aware of. On other ships who were closer—

LR: [Unclear]

MD: Now, the *Bausell*, B-A-U-S-E-L-L, was really close, and I could show you, and you probably looked at this one the picture. You could actually see where it was located in relationship to after the bomb had exploded underneath, and then you see this water, and then you see this ship, and this ship, and this ship. There's about three ships that are real close. And you see this bubble of water that was six minutes later. They took a picture of the water six minutes later, after the explosion. I mean, this is the Pacific Ocean. Now, you say to yourself, "How deep was the ocean?" And I asked this question. I literally went to NOAA, N-O-A-A, the—I forgot what those letters stand out for, but it has to do with—you know, their job is to see what's in the environment.

So I sent a message to them, and I said, "I'd like to ask a question." And I said, "Well, at this coordinate," that was the coordinate that you can see on this picture, of where all of us were, and where the *Swordfish* exploded. I said, "At that coordinate, according to the information that's on this document, tell me what the depth of the water is." Now, we were told in the article that the depth of the water was over 17,000 feet. When the answer came back, he said it's less than—oh, around 13,000. So there was a 4,000-foot difference, which meant, to me, you were closer to the floor of the ocean, which meant that—is there a possibility that somebody could go down there, even today, at that coordinate, and see, is there a crater? Because when Dan Vitt [?], who was the helmsman on the *Yorktown*, sent me a message, and said, "Mike, there was two events." One was when it exploded, and you felt that, but there was another one when the explosion hit the surface of the floor of the Pacific, and then it bounced back up. That was the second event. [1:10:00]

LR: So have you gotten together with people that were on the ship, to talk about what happened?

MD: [Laughs] The *Yorktown*, oddly enough, and interesting enough, just had their annual reunion last weekend. And when I found out that Chris and I, and Linda [laughs], was going to be in this interview, I sent a message by e-mail to the coordinator at the *Yorktown Association*, and they're in South Carolina. I said, "Can you put up a little sign, because I understand your reunion is going to be taking place this weekend, "which is last Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday, whatever those dates were; I think it was three days. And she said, "Okay." I said, "Here's the message that I'd like you to put on the gangway as the *Yorktown* members who were potentially there in 1964, 1962—that were on the ship when we went out to experience those two tests, Frigate Bird and Swordfish—can you put a little sign saying, 'Were you there? And if you were, call Mike?' Or, e-mail Mike. Here's his home phone; here's his office phone. Here's his e-mail."

I got no phone calls. I got no e-mails that I am aware of. Well, I haven't been able to look at it since I haven't looked at e-mails since Monday—today being Wednesday, that's two days now. Maybe somebody e-mailed; I don't know. But I'll find out on Friday, okay, this week. So that's the 11th, right? So I said to myself, "Sadly, nobody—maybe nobody replied because nobody who was a part of that was there at the reunion to say, 'I was there.'" Well, I did find, in the last two, three weeks, Paul. Paul was a radioman. He sent me an e-mail, because George Brubaker, who was also on the ship—but he wasn't there when the Frigate Bird and the Swordfish event took place, when those two shots—as what they're called—took place. And apparently, Brubaker, when I sent out the information that Chris and I were going to have this little meeting here on this week, I said, "Well, you know, I'm going to have this meeting up in Oregon State University. They're going to record my experience as an atomic veteran." I said, "If anybody out there," in my e-mails that I sent to, "has any ideas or, you know, experience, send me back that." Nobody sent me back any information.

So Paul got a message from George Brubaker. George came on after we had left, May '62, after we had left the Cuban crisis, and he came on during our middle or to the end of our cruise, '62-'63, to the Far East. The *Yorktown* went in October of 1962, and came back in June of 1963. So I sent a message to George. I sent a message to Dan; Dan was the helmsman, and he was there. He was there. He literally said, "I saw this water coming at us." There might have been another person, but I can't remember what his name was. None of the IC gang members that I was with, that I can recall—I don't have an e-mail address, although there was, recently, a *Yorktown* publication that came out that showed a directory. Well, I'm in the directory, but there's a lot of guys that were in my IC gang that are not in there, and I'm thinking if those individuals who became aware that there was an association called the *U.S.S. Yorktown Association*, CV-10—if they became aware of that, then maybe they called the *Yorktown* and said, "I'd like to be a part of it." But if they didn't, then they're absent, and that's what happens.

And I think that's the same thing that happens when you go back to the time when William Perry, who was the Secretary of Defense for Bill Clinton when he was President—that said in February of 1996, we kept hearing these atomic, these veterans talking about their ailments. And so he wrote a memo, and I have the original one that he signed, and I have the one that was dated September 5th, 2008, Chris. Why would it be so late? This happened in 1962, May 11th! [1:15:03] But it took from May 11th, 1962, to February 3rd, 1996, before a secretary of defense said, "Now, you atomic veterans"—maybe he didn't want to use that word, but "You veterans who participated in these atomic events that took place from 1945, with Trinity, all the way up to the end of December of 1962, you can now talk about your experience." Whereas before, those individuals were told, "If you talk about this, you could go to jail." So they had the fear of the Defense Department over their head if they talked about it.

And as a matter of fact, there were people who died—and I just learned about this by another article that I read, which I had printed. I went back and I read some of those other things. It was about a woman who said her husband told her something, and she told somebody else, and he learned about it, and then he wouldn't tell her anything else. And I think he eventually committed suicide, because he was afraid the government was going to come and take him to jail. Well, I don't know how many of those stories William Perry learned about, and I don't know whether Bill Clinton literally did learn about them—hopefully he did. But whether William Perry made the decision on his own, or with consultation with the President, I don't know. But eventually, there was a memo that said, "Now you can talk about this, men. Tell your story." But as I was waiting to have this interview today, and I was up there in the area where Linus Pauling is—you have all this information about him. He was very instrumental about saying, "We've got to stop these bombs." Well, today there is another entity, and it's called the Nuclear Threat Initiative. Were you aware of that?

LR: Mm-hm.

MD: You're aware of that?

LR: Yeah.

MD: And that's the Nuclear Threat Initiative, NTI.org, and it's been created with the assistance of Secretaries of State, Secretaries of defense and Sam Nunn, being a Senator, Colin Powell, as a former Chief of Staff, four-star general, Secretary of State—Colin—no, George Schultz, Secretary of State or Defense—which one it was—Henry Kissinger, who was Secretary of State, and William Perry is also a part of that group. And they have said, "Our goal is to eliminate," to go back before 1945, July, to say, "We've got to eliminate nuclear weapons from the face of the earth." The question is, is Iran going to listen to us? Is North Korea going to listen to us? Is Afghanistan going to say, "Sure, we can not do it"? India, why did they get the bomb? They said, "This is going to help us to say to the next person that's near us, to say, 'Don't cross our border and don't do this to us, because we have the bomb.'" And that was the threat.

Now, hopefully they'll never use it, and hopefully North Korea will never use theirs in an actual event. China has done it. We know that Great Britain has done it. We know that the United States has done over 1,054 of these bombs. We know that Russia has done in excess of 700 bombs. We know that France has done them, and that's where France and I became a little bit acquainted with this, because it was when I was in the Peace Corps. I was a Peace Corps volunteer in 1973 and '74—that I learned not then, but later, years later, that during the two years that I was there, France, literally in the Polynesian Islands, had detonated, in around the 800-foot level, six in 1973, and six again in 1974. That's 12 during the period that I was there, but they were doing it in Algeria between 1960 and 1966, and they were protested against by the Algerians, to say, "We don't want you to do your bombs over here," and they went to the South Pacific and the Polynesian Islands, which, if you look for Western Samoa and you look for the Polynesian Islands, they're about a thousand miles different, and they're in the southern part of the equator, the Southern Hemisphere.

So the distance is not—maybe not too far, especially when you look at the fact that there's nothing in between except water [1:20:00], and which way—do the prevailing winds go this way? And on the north part of the equator, they go this way. And so you say to yourself, when the bombs were exploding, and we recently experienced this with Fukushima, when Japan had their earthquake and then their tsunami, and then their power plant at Fukushima was affected—you have them sending their debris, that eventually has now gone the entire Aleutian chains, and is now being deposited on our Oregon, Washington, and California coast. And they're saying, "Well, when something happens in one part of the world, it is affecting the other part of the world, and don't say it isn't." You've got to open your eyes. It is happening.

CP: Okay, so we're under a little time pressure now, so we need to move forward. If you could kind of quickly take me through the rest of your military experience, through your discharge in 1964.

MD: Okay, let's go back to 1962, May 11th, 1962. That's when Swordfish took place. And the Cuban crisis was in October of 1962, and our ship went on the Far East cruise. And then, when we came back in June of 1963—well, we were in Hong Kong in March and April, and of course my birthday is March 1st, 1942, so I turned 21 in Hong Kong. And believe it or not, I had the duty! [Laughs] So I couldn't go over and celebrate on my birthday. But we came back the next month, and in April of 1962—'63, excuse me—we were again in Hong Kong, and oddly enough I was given the opportunity to go on a retreat. We left the ship, and we were gone for three or four days. We went on this little boat that took us to an island. I can't tell you the name of the island. I can't tell how long—maybe an hour away from where we were, from Hong Kong.

But we were told when he had to walk from the boat through this village, and got up to where our retreat was, we were told by the seminarians, by the priests, that, "If you hear noise, that's China, and they're, you know, doing their propaganda." And that was 1963. So that was unique; that was a unique opportunity. And I also one time, when we were in Hong Kong area—whether it was March or April, I can't remember what day—but John Cutty, he and I—who was a second-class; I was at that time a third-class, and E4 was third-class, and E5 was second-class. I eventually became an E5, and then shortly after that, I left. And it was about four months that I was an E5, so I had some perks.

One day we were in Hong Kong—in Tokyo, excuse me—and we were in, like, a kind of store that looks like JC Penney, and all of a sudden this young woman and this young man come up to us, and "Would you like to have a tour of the area?" [Laughs] I looked at John, and he said, "Sure, let's go!" So they take us to the Tokyo Tower. We had lunch at the Tokyo Tower, and I remember sitting—we were in this little, small table, and the woman sat there, and you know,

[laughs] and she was eating her soup, would go [slurps]. [Laughs] And that was—yeah, that was—well apparently, that's the way they drink their soup in Japan." And so—I mean, China—and so that was interesting. And then they said, "Can we take your picture?" And John and I said, "Sure, why not?" Well, we thought, what are we, being potentially approached to be spies? I don't know whether we were being spies or not, but I was kind of a, you know, James Bond-ish kind of thing that came into my mind, and it kind of went away. But it was one of those weird things that you get in your head, and then they were gone.

So, now that gets us to '63, so I came back to Long Beach in June of 1963. My brother, John, got married at that time. We're now in November of 1963, and I was on leave, and of course, November 22nd, 1963, was when John Kennedy was shot. And I was in the vicinity of my home, my mom's home [1:24:59], and I walked into a shoe shop, and he had his television on—black and white, I'm pretty sure—and they were talking about it. It was about 1:30 in the afternoon, and Mr. Cronkite, you know, with his emotion, "The president is dead." And then we watched; the whole world, especially the United States, watched on television. Were you alive then? Sorry. Were you alive then?

LR: I was born in 1963, but I was a very little baby.

MD: Okay, so you were unable to—?

LR: I've studied this in the archives a little bit.

MD: All right, so, I mean, the United States was literally transfixed to watch the entire thing take place on television. This was an event that is seared into the people's minds, that were old enough to remember this. They never will forget that. I can always remember getting out of my car, walking in to the shoe repair man, and hearing and watching, and having—I can't remember what the man's name that I was there standing beside. He was in the counter, on the other side. Whether he was the owner or whether he was an employee, I don't know, but there was the television, the little television like that. And we watched it for a few minutes, and then I went someplace. I don't know whether I went home or not, but we watched when the funeral took place. It was hours and hours and hours.

It was an event you didn't want to miss, because it was too important. Our President of the United States had been assassinated, and all of a sudden, a transition had taken place, and President Johnson was now the new man. What was he going to do? So while I was there, in November of '63, I was looking at the possibilities, because I knew I was going to be getting out in the next six months from the service. And so I was looking at, well, do I want to go to college, or do I want to stay in the service? And that then had not been resolved. So April—March came about, and they said, "Would you like to get out three months early?" I said, "Sure!" So they said, "Okay, April 2nd will be your last day." Signed the papers; walked off the *Yorktown*. A week later, I flew back to home. I think that plane fare was less than \$30. Today, plane fare today from Spokane to Portland, and Portland back to Spokane, it was over 300-and-some dollars, about \$360 dollars. That's round-trip today. But we were talking about Long Beach to Portland, Oregon—\$30. I mean, that's about the amount of money. So, you know, that's history.

So I get out of the service; I come back. Within one week, I'm in college, and I enrolled at—I looked at Portland State University—at that time, it was called Portland State College. Eventually, when I was a teacher I went back, and I was at Portland State University, and I did some graduate work there. But I didn't have in my mind that said, "You've got to go get that master's." I didn't have that! I didn't have that internal desire, and that drive and that passion. I didn't have that then, so I said, "I don't want to go through it and just go through the motions. I want to have a reason." So I went through the classes, because it was encouraged by the Portland Public Schools system to do periodic upgrading of information, so that it helped your professional experience. And in 1964 I started, and in 1967, in June, was when I graduated from Multnomah College. And I said, "Well, what am I going to do now?" I had no job.

CP: What did you study?

MD: I graduated with an electronic engineering degree, a two-year degree. And oddly enough, Lambda Chi here at Oregon State University sent me a letter, and they said, "We'd like to invite you to be a part of our rush period, which is going to take place in September."

CP: This was before you decided to go to Oregon State?

MD: This was before I even had the idea, yes. I had no idea, in June of 1967, that I was going to be at Oregon University in September. That thought did not even occur. Interesting, huh? It wasn't until Lambda Chi sent me an invitation that said, "Would you like to come?"

CP: How do you think they found you?

LR: Yeah.

MD: I think they found me—maybe a couple of ways. Whether colleges put out this information, junior colleges put out the information, to say, "So and so graduated," and I graduated with a 3.12 GPA at that time. [1:30:06] And how they learned about it, or whether somebody who was in the administration at Multnomah College—because I worked, again, putting myself through junior college and Oregon State University. At that time, the GI Bill, I don't know whether I was getting anything when I was going to Multnomah College, but when I came to Oregon State, I was getting maybe \$130 a quarter. I mean, then it was like, "Whoa, this is—I wouldn't want to turn that down!" And I didn't. So it helped. And, of course, I got one loan. I forgot the name of the bank I went to. But that's all paid for. And I paid, you know, a very small amount of money monthly, in order—once the interest period started, that said, "Okay, now here's your card that says this payment, this is the amount, and I need it by this time," and so I was on time with all my payments. So I paid my whole way through college. I didn't go into debt, like many people are doing today. I don't know what that percentage is, maybe 50 percent or more, that are saying, "I want to go get the degree at Oregon State University," or whatever university or college that they're going to, and wind up having to put themselves into debt, and that goes for literally, maybe decades. I don't know how they're going to—and then recently, they talked about this, giving a lower percentage for the interest.

CP: What was your first impression of OSU?

MD: I was overwhelmed. I went through rush; I went through the other houses. Lambda Chi said, "Would you like to stay with us?" So I said, "Sure." So I stayed. And in April of 1968—I started in September of 1967—I was initiated.

CP: You were somewhat older than most of your brothers, correct?

MD: And yes, you're right. I was called "The old man." I was 25 years old! I was also without teeth, and so they called me—you know, one of my nicknames, they said, "Well, we're going to name you 'Choppers.'" And if you see my mug with Lambda Chi on it, on the other side, it says, "Choppers." [Laughs]

CP: So what did the fraternity mean to you?

MD: It gave me a place to stay. It gave me stability. It gave me camaraderie with the men. Of course, everybody was younger than I was. These guys were 18, 19, 20, 21 at the most. Maybe 22. And one man came to me, and he said, "Will you buy me some beer?" I said, "No, I'm not going to do that." And he walked away, and nobody else came to me at any time. And I did not buy beer for anybody, because I said to myself, "If you're not old enough, and you don't have the age, and your father is probably going to say, 'Don't do that,' then I'm going to say, 'Don't do that.'" And I didn't. One person, that was all it took. And I'm sure that the 60 or 70 men that lived at the house in that time frame, between 1967 and 1969—which is when I resided in the house, until student teaching days in September of 1969—that was the time frame that I stayed in the house, and then from then on, I was no longer in the house. And then when graduation took place for '69-'70 graduates, I came back in 1970, in June, and my sister Betty was there, and my mother was there. My brother-in-law Ron, and my sister Frances, and I participated in the ceremony at Oregon State University.

CP: I want to ask you a few more questions about OSU when you were there. What was it like being a student as a veteran?

MD: You know, that wasn't mentioned. That wasn't emphasized. That wasn't something that I recall today, then, was not an important thing. I was just another student on the campus.

CP: So there weren't friends that you knew during that time that were also students in a similar situation to yours?

MD: I think they probably said, "I served; I'm out. I'm a civilian. I'm now in college, and end of story."

CP: You were there when Vietnam was really starting to heat up.

MD: Exactly. I left the service in April of 1964, and of course, those of you who are knowledgeable, the Gulf of Tonkin took place in August of August of 1964, four months later. And we kept asking ourselves, "Why is this getting worser and worser and ugly?" [1:35:00] And oddly enough, Monday of this week, I had a man call up in my promotional products industry, as a request, and he said, "I want to put a flagpole, a 100-foot flagpole, on my property, and I'm asking you, can you do this?" So I call him back and I ask his name, and his name was Darwin. And I ask him—he sounded like an older person—I said, "Were you an atomic veteran?" He said, "No, I was in World War II and I was in the Vietnam War."

And then he went on to tell me a story that was sad. He said that when the Americans were leaving Vietnam in '75-ish—whenever that was—and they had planes that were taking off with kids, that his wife and child were on that plane, and it crashed. And there was one—I think there was only one plane that crashed. It was Operation Baby Whatever, Vietnam. Here was this man on the telephone with me, sharing this story, and I never did learn—was she a Vietnamese lady? Was she a helper that came from the United States? I don't know why she would have her baby. I mean, the questions just don't make sense. So he had to have met this woman, and married her, and had a child, and she was on the plane coming out, and it crashed. And so not only he lost his wife and his child, but all these other children were in that accident, and I don't know how many people were on it. Fifty or plus. And it was a—

CP: So what was the atmosphere like during the Vietnam War? It was obviously very tense on a lot of campuses. Was that the case at OSU?

MD: Again, sadly, Chris, it was a non-issue topic. Really. That's how I see it. Now maybe in some other houses, maybe there were some people that were in—history majors that said, "I want to—," "because you were—," "I heard you were —," and "I want to talk—," and—didn't happen.

CP: Kids were being drafted, weren't they?

MD: There was a draft. I volunteered. I said, "I'm going into the Navy," in 1960. I don't know how many people in my class of 1960, the class of David Douglas High School, were eventually given a notice that said, "You're now being drafted." And I don't know how many of my class, of the class of 1960, David Douglas High School, in southeast Portland, went in automatically and said, "I'm here. Take me, for six months or two years," or in the Army, or the Reserves, or the Navy, "I'm here."

CP: But in the late '60s at OSU, the draft was obviously affecting a lot of young men. That was not something that was coming up as a topic of conversation?

MD: As I understand it, Chris, it was a non-discussed problem. It was non-discussed issue, at that time—as I understand it. And you would think that being a veteran, there would be other guys that were inquiring about it, especially if they were being potentially in a position to have a number that was from their geographical area, and whether it be Oregon or another state, because other states send students to Oregon State University, and whether there are other countries that were being affected, as well, I don't—it wasn't discussed!

LR: Do you remember any protests at all on campus?

MD: I don't remember any protests. No, I don't, sadly.

CP: Can you tell us more about your social experience at OSU, I mean, outside of Lambda Chi? Were you involved with any campus groups?

MD: I was involved with the School of Education. I was involved with a fellow by the name of Doug Smith. Doug Smith was a School of Education—he had a master's, I remember. I don't know whether he had a Ph. D., but Doug had an interesting way of involving the students. We literally went to prisons. And I don't know how many of us that he invited were in that little group. It was a small group, I'm pretty sure, but those events. And I was living; I was having fun. I was learning. I was getting new perspectives.

CP: So he was a mentor for you, Doug Smith?

MD: He was a good guy. And Dr. Hugh Wubben was another important history man that I learned about. It wasn't until I was in one of his classes that we had to read a book that had to do with the internment of the Japanese people. And I read this number, of 110,000; it was on the book's cover. And I thought, "How come I never learned about this?" [1:40:00] And I went home one day, because we were—you know, you would be in class, and in three weeks or a month, or three months, and then you'd have a break, and then you'd go to school and go home and come back. And one day I asked my mom about that, and I think her comment was, "Yeah, we knew about that." And that was about the extent of the conversation! There was no delving into the topic itself. There was no dissecting it, and saying, "Here's my opinion, Mike, as your mother. Here's what I think you should know about." No, it was not—it was not discussed, and I think that's a sad thing. Maybe my mother didn't—I have no idea if she—

LR: She had nine kids.

MD: She's gone, yeah. And you look at nine children, and there's a father that was there, and a father that wasn't there, and then all of a sudden, the other children that were older than me were gone. And all of a sudden, now I've got to make sure that there's wood cut for the fire we've got to have in order to cook our meals, and clean the house, and cut the lawn, and cut the wood, and, you know, those were things that I had—more important than talking about what was the politics, what was the event of the day. Those were not in my table conversations with any of my brothers and sisters, and mothers and dad—mother and dad. Sadly. It should have been, but it wasn't.

CP: Can you say anything more about your academic experience at OSU? You were in the College of Education, you said.

MD: Well, no, I started out, sadly, in the wrong direction. I went to Multnomah College, and got my degree there in electronic engineering. And then when I came to Oregon State University, I followed that into engineering, and I thought electronic engineering was the direction I was going to go and stay in. But oddly enough, when I was going to the engineering classes, and when I was going through and saying, "This is the study that I've got to do," and I'm thinking, "How come I was getting so good grades at Multnomah College, and here it's like I'm learning a new language?" So I went to the Dean of Engineering, and I said, "I was this last summer," in summer of 1967, "a counselor with the YMCA and a bus driver, and I learned, you know—we were having fun." So I said, "Do you mind if I change from engineering to education?" And at first he wanted to say, "No, I don't think that's a good idea."

But I did; I switched. And in the process of switching—not in the beginning, but you know, in the first, maybe, month—obviously, that put me at a disadvantage for all the stuff that had taken place before I got there, at that point. And so I'm thinking, "Some of these classes are going to be not total good classes!" [Laughs] And I wound up getting on probation. And I was on probation for one term, and then I got out of probation, because I started with everybody else, and I was able to do the courses. And I eventually began to do better. But there was a period of time, and I can't remember the name of the person—the name of the professor, but she was an older person. She must have been in her 60s-plus. And I'm pretty sure that she probably looked at me and said, "I don't think you're going to be a good teacher, so I'm going to do everything I can to not let you go through this." And I literally either wrote her a letter, or went to her face-to-face, and said to her, in essence—and I'd hate to, you know, do other than just paraphrase, but the paraphrasing was, "I'm sorry, Professor, but this is my choice. It's not your choice. I'm here to get an education, and if I fail, it's because I didn't do the work. I'm paying for my own education, because my mom and dad can't do it. I don't have a large sum of money that's in a trust that says, "You can spend as much time as you want." And I said to her, "Please don't put obstacles in front of me, but let me go through this program. Let me get to the end of it, and if I have not satisfied the requirements, then you fail me. But you can't fail me before I try." And she allowed me to try.

So that was—I wish I could name the name of the teacher, but that helped me to go through, and I completed. Now, when I was a student teacher, I was with Whitaker Grade School in the Portland public school system, and I started out with 120 kids. [1:45:02] I started out with four master teachers. I started out with three—I was one of three student teachers from Oregon State, two women and myself, and one intern that came from Portland State University. And we eight adults were working with 170 kids, in math and science, and language arts, and social studies. I did the social studies and the math with Jim Hyatt [?], who was a master teacher. And halfway through the fall of 1969, the principal at Columbia Grade School came to the Whitaker Grade School principal, and said, "I have a teacher in my sixth and seventh grade who is leaving in December. I need somebody to replace her. Which one of these four can I have?" [Laughs] And I don't know how I was selected, but I was selected. And I suspect I was probably asked, "Do you want to do this?" And I hopefully

said, "Yes," because I was there. And so for the last part of my student teaching experience, I was at Columbia Grade School. January 1st, I was now all of a sudden the teacher of that sixth and seventh grade class, of which there was—it was a jewel of an experience. And then all of a sudden, when that ended—and now we're in June of 1969, '70—the principal came to me and said, "I'm losing my eighth grade teacher. Will you be my eighth grade teacher?" And so I said to myself, "Wow! All of a sudden I've got this responsibility of eighth grade kids, probably 30 or so." Twenty-five or 30; I can't remember how many.

And I said to myself, "What I'm going to do is test them in the beginning of the year. I want to know what they're doing in reading and math." And I did, and that's when I found out that I had five girls and five boys that were about second-grade level—and here the eighth grade! So I said to myself—I worked literally day in and day out. I prepared, I went, and I had one boy, André. André was my nemesis, sadly. He should have been my inspiration, but he became my nemesis, and every time we started anything, André would act up. And I tried everything that I could think of, and that's where I think back to this lady who was at Oregon State University, and saying, "I don't think you're going to be a good teacher." I said, "Maybe you're right." Maybe I didn't have enough experience back here, even though I had been in the Navy, even though I had been at these experiences before, at Oregon State, and at the Lambda Chi, which there's a lot of good things that I saw—neat examples of people, and men, young men, older men—because we participated in different events.

And I still said to myself, here in the eighth grade, "I'm going to do everything I can to try to solve these kids's issues." I'd have parent conferences, and I would have, you know—we would have modules where I taught about black studies. I was an eighth grade teacher. For three weeks, I taught about black studies. This is 1970, '71, and I'd like to know of any other white boy who did that in any school throughout the United States! I'd like to know it, because when I went to the library to find information on how to teach these classes on black studies, for three weeks for these kids who signed up to my class, who were in the sixth, seventh and eighth grade, and I took them to the Martin Luther King School, from Columbia Grade School. And one boy came up to me who was a black boy from Martin Luther King, and says, "Can I come to your school?" I said, "I'm sorry, I don't have that decision. You'll have to talk to your teacher." [Laughs] And so that was my—I couldn't take him and say, "Yeah, I want you, you would be really good to compete with André." [Laughs] But I couldn't do that. So I taught that I don't know how many years.

I also taught—how many times did we have the opportunity? We'd use these modules, they called them, and we would do these modules in the afternoon—two hours, and you'd choose a class, and you'd choose a subject. I did black studies. I did electronics. I had creative writing, things like this. I even asked her husband, Joe Egner, to come, as he was an electronic person in the business of putting installations in hospitals, and bring these big tubes, to show to my students, and I involved him that way. [1:50:00] And it was fun. But when I had André in my eighth grade class, and we had these other events that were just—I would start to do something, he would act up, and then I would say, "I'm not getting anywhere with this kid! How am I going to solve this?" And I knew—I can't remember whether I ever met with his mother. I don't know whether there was a father, because if you look at the kids that were in this Columbia Grade School, there was a large number of kids that were in broken families. And I once was told by somebody—I can't remember, it could have been the teacher that I was replacing—where she said, "This is the end. If these kids don't come from other schools and be placed in our school, and get anywhere, they're going to drop out."

So that was the information that I had about Columbia Grade School. I didn't know really all the ins and outs, and understandings of: here's the total population of the school; here's the percentage of the kids that have parents, mom and dad, and siblings, brothers and sisters, and they're working fine, and how many of them are coming who are in broken families? There's no father; there's maybe no mother. There is other issues that are happening that I don't know about, and they're bringing their issues to our class when they're in our classroom, and they're saying, "It's time for me to act up, because I haven't had breakfast this morning," or, "I didn't get enough sleep last night," or, "I don't know how to read, so I'm going to pester this person next to me, and then that'll distract the teacher, and we'll have our little row, whatever." It was not education. Sad.

CP: So we're running out of time, Mike. The last topic that I need to address with you is your Peace Corps experience, which began in 1973, and that was in Samoa. You want to take us through that?

MD: Okay. What brought me to joining the Peace Corps? I was in the eighth grade; I resigned at the end of the year. I wrote a little note, and I said—I wish I had kept that letter. It's about two pages long. And after I had submitted it to the principal, that's when I went to my friends, Betty Campbell and Benita Moody, who were in my school there, Columbia

Grade School, and I thought, "I should have gone to them before I submitted this letter!" And they read the letter, and they said, "We don't think you should have done that." So I went back to the superintendent, I talked to the assistant superintendent, and ultimately they said, "You made your choice. Goodbye." So I thought about that for a while, and then I said, "No, I'm not going to go away that easy."

So I applied for the Portland Public School system, for being a substitute teacher. I went to Clackamas. I went to Multnomah County IE, Intermediate Education, districts, and I said, "I would like to be a substitute teacher. I can go from first grade to eighth grade." And so I did these phone calls. I was living with my mother, and I had no job. And all of a sudden, now I began to receive these calls as a substitute, and I would go to Oregon City one day, and I'd go to Gresham, Oregon, another day, and I'd go to another Portland Public School system another day. And one day, oddly enough, I went to one of my own niece's classes in Gresham, Oregon, and they lived here, and the school was not more than four blocks—two blocks away. And it was Kim. Kim was, I think it was the fourth grade, and I remember only being there once, and I remember asking her, when we had something to pass out, "Kim, would you help me pass it out?" And I don't know how much she remembers, or whether she's ever talked about it, or whether she wants to say, "I don't want to remember that! I don't know. But she ultimately went to the University of Oregon, and graduated in electronics—economics, excuse me. And so that's a positive thing. That's a good thing.

So here I am, coming up to '71, '72, and then I thought, "Is this what I want to do?" There was a lot of unrest that was going on, in the United States and throughout the world. And I saw a notice about the Peace Corps. And so I thought, "Well, maybe I ought to try this." So I submitted an application. That was around February of 1972, and it wasn't until November of 1972 that I got an invitation. It was called the PRIST, Pre-invitational Staging, and they took me for four days. They said, "We're going to have four days together, but you must make a decision on the third day." This is Chicago. [1:55:00] I went to Chicago, and I met these other people that were going through the same process. And by the third day, they said, "Now we want you to make a decision. Do you want to stay with us? You have the opportunity to, at this time, look at this more. Or if you're satisfied and you want to go home, you can go home now. If you're going to stay, you've got to go through the medical." So then I said, "I want to stay."

And then there was another decision that had to be made in January of 1973, and that was around the time that a president issue came up. I can't remember. It was having to do with Johnson, 1973, and somebody could easily pull that up, and say, "In January of 1973, this is what President Lyndon Johnson said, and therefore that's the decision that you helped remember," but whether that was something that was a part of my decision? But in February 19th, 1972, I was on the plane from Portland to San Francisco, to Hawaii, to Pago Pago, and American Samoa, and then to Apia, Western Samoa, and that's when I began my three months of training. And we were trained by the Samoans, whereas if you were to go back in history, the Peace Corps literally were not being trained in country, but they were being trained in universities. And then they changed it, and they said, "Well, we're going to go to some other location that's similar to the country that you're eventually going to go to." And eventually, they got the idea, "Well, the only way that you can really understand what the country is, is for you to be trained by those individuals who you're going to work with." And so it was an evolution. There was a thing that I saw and experienced, and then when I was going through my training in February, March, April of 1972—'73, '73 now—I had been told, "You're going to be at the teachers' training college in Apia, in Western Samoa, and that's going to be your job. You're going to be a math teacher." Well, that was what I was told. That's what I had in my mind.

And ultimately, that's what I became when—ultimately, when I went through the three months of training, and also you have to go through some language, and they have a Samoan that's asking you questions in Samoan, and you're supposed to be replying in Samoan, in the language—and I passed. And so I said, "Wow, I passed." So then I was assigned to the teachers' training, which there was about 300 students—first-, second- and third-year students. The fourth-year students were actually put into their village, and they survived or they failed. That was succeed, or not succeed. And as a teacher, as a math teacher, and as an English teacher, and then, later on—and before I left, I was doing a little bit of science—we were given the opportunity to literally go on section. And "on section" means that we would leave the college. We would be put into a vehicle, and drive around to the different villages, and our students were at these different villages, and we would watch them do their class. We would see how they presented themselves in their class, whichever grade level that they were working with.

And then what I would do, I brought a book. I said to my students that I was interviewing, "I want you to write down in my book"—and I have that book; I still have that book, and sometimes it's hard to read, because [laughs] some of those penmanships were not legible. But then after they had evaluated themselves, then we would talk. And maybe we'd have 15 minutes or a half-hour—you know, a little bit of time. And then they would have their feast, and almost every time you go to school, there's a lot of singing, there's a lot of food that's going to be distributed to the guests. And if you are the more important person, then you are the first one to receive the food. Everybody who else who was less important would get the food last, or later, or after you. So that was—I was a white man. I was a single man. I was a teacher at the training college. I was a Peace Corps volunteer. I had all these accolades that were helping me to be puffed up. But when I left the Peace Corps, and I was now on my own, and I was saying, "Well, now what am I going to do?" [1:59:59]

Well, before I went into the Peace Corps, I was looking in the seminary, and I was looking at the Diocesan Priesthood. I was looking at the Jesuits. I was looking at the Paulist Priests. And when I came back in '74 and '75, I went back to the Paulist Priests, and I said, "I'd like to continue this." And ultimately in June of 1975, these men made a decision, without even talking to me. They said, "We have not accepted you." I said to myself, "I anticipated being in seminary in September of 1975, and now I'm not!" So I went looking in the newspaper, and I found a job as a portrait consultant, and they flew me from Portland to Missouri. The name of the company was called Chromalloy America. And my job was drive around to Sears and Montgomery Ward stores, go in, set up my table. And the pictures that I had picked up at a UPS Store, or mailbox, whatever—an airport—I'd bring them out, and these people would come to me, and I'd show their pictures, and I'd ask them if they'd like to buy more pictures, and I made my money that way. I was on commission.

And I drove 15,000 miles in four and a half months. I went through 29 of the United States' 50 states, and started in Portland, went to Missouri, went up to Wisconsin, back down to Alabama, over here to Florida, over here to New York. Ultimately landed up in Washington State, down in Oregon, down in Chula Vista, and that's when I said to my regional manager, "I think I'd like to go home." It was a 24-hour, seven-day work job, and I was constantly trying to figure out, "Where am I staying? Where am I going to go get my laundry done? Where am I going to get my money order," because all the money had to come together with—I had to reconcile all that information, put it in an envelope, and send it back to Missouri. And I had to do this for a number of weeks, all on paper. I had no calculator. Ultimately, I bought a calculator that today would overwhelm the one that I had then. But for a long time, I had to it longhand. And sometimes I would see literally hundreds of people. I would be in a Wards store one day, and I'd be in a Sears store another day.

So I came back to Portland, Oregon, after I told the regional manager, and I was in Chula Vista. He said, "I want you to take the car"—now this is a 1976 Oldsmobile Cutlass, a cream color; it had two doors, and it had three miles on it, plus some tenths, when I picked it up out of the parking lot, where they said, all of us in that Sunday group, said, "We're going to go to the car lot, and you're going to go pick your car that you're going to get. And then you're going to get in line, and we're going to back to this place at this hotel, and then we're going to give you the assignment," and I was off on my own. And if I had no money, I wouldn't have had no money to buy gas. So I think I had \$50 in my pocket. And that's how I went for the next four and a half months.

And I came back to Portland, Oregon, and oddly enough, I went back again to my mother's. And there was a letter. The letter said, "You've been selected to go on jury duty in Portland, Oregon." And I went and served on four different cases over a sixteen-day period. At that time, we were told that it was 20 days that you were to be on jury duty, and one of those, I was selected by the group to be the foreman, which again was another—I went, "Wow, these guys want me to be the spokesman!" Which of course, I did. And I also, during that period of time, began to say, "Well, what do I do now? I'm going to have 20 days here to think about going to jury duty, and then what am I going to do after that?"

So I went and started interviewing with the Boy Scouts of Portland, Oregon, and submitted my application. And I didn't get any hits until September and October. And then I had a man who had come from Fairbanks, Alaska, George Brennan, came to Portland, Oregon, and we met at the Hilton Hotel. And he said, "I'm going to be here Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and I'm going to make a decision on Sunday, and you're one of two or three, or four people." And by Sunday, he calls me up and he says, "Mike, I'm going to give you the invitation to come to Alaska. Would you like to come?" [2:05:03] Wow! I've got a brand new car I'm trying to pay off! It was a Honda. And I said, "George, do you mind if I try to sell my car? And if I can sell it in a week, then I'll fly up to Fairbanks from Portland. If I don't, I'm going to have to drive." I sold it in a week. And I had just started payments. I think I wound up paying—or getting a fellow to buy it, for almost even, and so I didn't make any money.

And I flew up on November—I think it was November 4th, 1976, and I became the District Scout Executive for the Fairbanks Council—the Midnight Sun Council, Council 696. It's the largest council, at that time, in the Boy Scouts of America. And then I went, in January of 1977, to National Executive Institute Phase One, in Mendham, New Jersey, for over three weeks. And the second phase was at Mills College, in California. That was Phase Two. And then in phase three, the national executive boards—executive council—the National Executive Institute, national training program for the Boy Scouts of America was in Irving, Texas, and that was Phase Three. So I had all that information, all that learning, in '77, '78 and '80. And then I was to say, "Do I want to stay at Fairbanks, Alaska, in the Midnight Sun Council, or do I want to put my hat in the ring to say, 'I've got three-plus years experience?'" I'd been camp director; I'd been program director. I'd been assistant camp director. I'd started Boy Scout troops; I'd started Cub Scout troops. I'd started an exploring program at the Alaska State Troopers, the Eielson Air Force Base, the Boy Scout Troop in Barrow, Alaska, and other things—the university Cub Scout program, I believe. And I had all this experience, and I said, "Do I want to stay in Fairbanks?"

And the question was because the change of the Scout Executive had taken place, in June of 1979, and I was in no way in a position to help the executive board—who are all volunteers—to help them to say, "Can I be a part of the process for you men to help us select our next council executive?" Because there was two men—the executive who was over the whole thing, and me, who was assisting him. But I couldn't walk into his shoes, according to the rules of the Boy Scouts. So I was kept out of it. They made their selection. They chose another man, and he had never been an executive. He came in, Pat McKean [?], and in a matter of I'd say two months or so, I didn't see him and I being on the same page. And so in January, when I had my back operated on—February was when my back operated, 1980. Actually it was in January, he said, "Well, we have no money for you to go to NEI3." That was supposed to—and that eventually took place in May of 1980. But he said, "There's no money." And I thought, "I'd just raised \$14,000 back in September-October, before you even got here! How can you say there's no money?" I said this to myself. I didn't say it to him in person.

CP: Mike, we're running out of time, so we've got to wrap this up. If you could just—I mean, I think we're getting a little bogged down in some of these details.

MD: Yeah, yeah. So, ultimately I made the decision to come to Spokane. And then I ran into another problem, because I was here in Spokane for two years, and oddly enough there was embezzling going on in the council, which nobody knew about. There was a cloud over a number of people before me, and me, and after me, that happened. Ultimately, in 1985, it was found out, and the council president at that time wrote an article, saying, "We have found one of our bookkeepers has been embezzling." And I thought to myself, "Was that the reason why these other men left, and the reason why I was kind of being jostled around here?" And I have no definitive answer. But I thoroughly loved working with the Boy Scouts. I thrived on it. [2:10:00] I thrived in the Boy Scouts. I thrived in the Peace Corps. I enjoyed the Navy. I enjoyed life.

I never married. Maybe having married, I wouldn't have been able to do those things! [Laughs] But going to Oregon State was a thrill. It was something that helped me get the next step up, and I want to thank Oregon State University. I want to thank you, Chris Petersen, and Linda, and my sister Betty for being here to listen to my story, and probably make you go to sleep in some cases! [Laughs] And I just am very honored to be able to come and do this, and I hope that what I have said is—well, hopefully listened to, and said, "Well, that was an interesting story, and what's next, Mike?" And I'm currently the administrator for Adspec in Spokane, Washington. I'm 71, and I still don't know whether I'm going to be staying there for how long, or whether that organization is going to even exist. Because I'm under the impression that the current president, who oversees Richards Pen Supply, Adspec and Nobles, is in a transition, age-wise, himself, to say, "Do I want to let my son take over, or do I sell it to somebody else? What do I do?" So there's another transition in the next year or two, and that's what life is all about, transitions. [Laughs] Thank you very much.

CP: Thanks, Mike. [2:11:43]

[End of Interview]