

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Army Reserves Project

Reservist Experience

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DAVID MCCULLEY

Interviewed

by

David Arms

on

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YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: DAVID McCULLEY
INTERVIEWER: David Arms
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A: This is an interview with David McCulley by David Arms for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, Tuesday, April 13, 1976, at approximately 1:40 in the afternoon at the Youngstown Naval Reserve Center, 315 East LaCleda Avenue, in Youngstown.

Mr. McCulley, how about if we start this interview by me asking you just a few questions. Could you give me an idea of your background, where you were born, brought up, and educated?

M: I was born in Cannosburg, Pennsylvania, in 1930. I grew up around the Pittsburgh area until I was ten years old when I moved to Youngstown. My Dad came up here after the Depression and got a job with U.S. Steel. I went to school in Struthers. I did not graduate. I joined the Naval Reserves in January of 1948 and enlisted in the regular Navy in June of 1948. At that time, I went in for a three year enlistment and ended up putting four years in during the Korean War.

A: As a sailor?

M: As a navyman, right. I also completed my high school education while I was in the service through GED and USAFI [United States Armed Forces Institute] courses.

A: What was your specialty in the Navy? Where did you serve?

M: I worked in the auxiliary gang aboard a destroyer for 44 months, but my main purpose in the ship was a machinist mate.

A: Did you get any rank while you were there?

M: Yes. I went as high as third class and I got reduced a couple of times.

A: What kind of action did you see? What destroyer was this that you served on?

M: I served on the USS Gyatt DD712 for 44 months.

A: Where was this stationed?

M: It was out of Norfolk, Virginia. It operated out of Norfolk, Virginia, with the 4th Squadron.

A: Where did you go while you were on the ship?

M: We made various cruises. We went down to South America and the North Pole; we were up inside the Arctic Circle for 54 days. Then we made four cruises over to Europe and the Mediterranean.

A: You didn't see any action per se. You didn't go into Korea or anything like that?

M: No, we didn't go into Korea.

A: What made you join the Navy?

M: Basically, my family was always Army and I guess I had a little stubborn attitude and I wanted to try the Navy out.

A: Where did you join the reserves for the Navy?

M: The reserve, at that time, was down in Youngstown. I forget just what building it was downtown. It used to meet at South High School. This reserve center was not completed back in those days.

A: So then you joined the regular Navy?

M: Yes, in June of 1948.

A: The naval reserve didn't offer you anything or . . .

M: Well, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do, whether to go on with my education or go into the service. At that time, the service was quite a thing in 1948.

A: So you served on the destroyer for 44 months. Was this your total Navy experience, basically?

M: I went through boot camp at Great Lakes. I went to New London, Connecticut, through shallow water diving school up there. At that time, I was qualified to go

submarine, sonar submarines, but there was only one squadron operating. They cancelled the submarine school-- they had too many applicants--so I went to shallow water diving school. Then I got shipped back to the Great Lakes to go to diesel school. Then I got my destroyer up in Boston.

A: You served on that and then got out of the Navy?

M: Correct. I served all my time on that one ship.

A: What happened then? What did you do after you got out of the Navy?

M: I got out of the Navy in June of 1952 and I got a job in a mill. I felt lonesome for the service, you might say. I missed the buddies and that. I ran into a couple of guys who had just been out of the service for a short time also and we came down and joined the Naval Reserves. I was in the Naval Reserves approximately three months and got promoted to third class machinist mate. I started a program . . . I had a program all set up about the steam cycle on the destroyer to teach classes. At that time, the Naval Reserves was not really geared for the veterans, it was geared, more or less, for the new people coming in and we could not really get the class going. All we got was knot tying and that. So I dropped out of the active Naval Reserves and went in the inactive and went up on the OAR boats up at the Great Lakes. I spent a year up there and came back and worked in the mill. When my four year enlistment was up from the Naval Reserves, I joined the Army Reserve.

A: Here in Youngstown?

M: In Warren. They were just starting an infantry company up there at that time. They had no equipment or anything. This was back in December of 1956. I really tried it out; I didn't know too much about the Army. I got into the maintenance end of the Army. It was an infantry battalion. I worked out there and I liked the program. They had a good unit program set up in the reserves at that time. So things started working out pretty well for me. I got promoted right away to . . . In fact, I got E-4 right back; I didn't lose a rank or lose one stripe by going into the Army that I carried in the Navy. I started taking subcourses and correspondence courses about the Army and came right along with it. That belonged to the headquarters company of the 2nd Battalion and the 331st Infantry Regiment.

A: That was in Warren?

M: Yes. One of the companies that was here in Youngstown under that battalion was having problems with their maintenance here in Youngstown so I was transferred here by the battalion commander to see what I could do. At that time, we got squared away and the units started growing. That's when they started the eight-year obligators. They had no basic training; they came right into the reserves and the reserves gave them their basic training. At that time, the Army changed over and went from battalions to battle groups. We were organized from a heavy weapons company into a regular infantry company that had a heavy weapons platoon in each company. We started training. Our summer camps were held at Breckinridge, Kentucky, at that time.

A: This was Army, it wasn't any state guard or anything?

M: No, this was Army Reserves.

A: You said that there was a battalion headquarters in Warren, Ohio, where you belonged?

M: Yes.

A: And there was a company here in Youngstown?

M: Yes. At that time, the battalions were set up with four or five companies. One of those companies was a heavy weapons company, and four of them were regular line, infantry companies.

A: The one down here was the heavy weapons company?

M: Yes.

A: You were transferred down here because the maintenance on the equipment wasn't being conducted properly?

M: Right, they needed someone down here to, more or less, supervise the maintenance of the equipment and to train personnel.

A: What was your rank at that time?

M: I got transferred down here as E-5 or a buck sergeant.

A: What was your responsibility here with the unit at that time?

M: I was made motor sergeant for the company. My responsibility was to inventory the equipment we were just starting to get in, set up preventive maintenance schedules, schedule maintenance on the equipment, and train personnel.

A: Where did you meet at that time?

M: At the Packard Garage in Youngstown on Wick Avenue. They had a couple of units there. One was the infantry company, one was a medical detachment, and I don't quite remember what the other unit was.

A: Where on Wick Avenue?

M: At the old Packard Garage. Packard had closed up and the government had taken it over for the reserve center.

A: Is that building still standing today?

M: Yes, I believe it is still there.

A: About how many people were there when they had their weapons companies?

M: At that time I believe there were about a hundred people in each company.

A: Do you remember any of the officers or anybody that was in there?

M: Yes. Captain Lindsey was our company commander. He is quite well-known now; he is with NBC National News out of Chicago. He was, at that time, news broadcaster for Channel 21, I believe, in Youngstown. Bill Lindsey was his name.

There was another lieutenant by the name of Chapmen who, I believe, was a director down at Channel 21.

A: Were most of the officers from a certain area?

M: Most of them were from around this area; Warren, Salem, and the Youngstown area. Some were from Cleveland and Akron. At that time, the reserves were basically still growing, you might say. We had no six-year obligators and basically ninety percent of the personnel were veterans, Korean or World War II veterans.

A: These other companies that were attached to the Packard Garage or drilled at the Packard Garage, who did they build for, who was their boss?

M: Each had their own units. The Army units were set up as individual units to train. If they were called, they would go as a unit, not as individuals. I believe, at that time, Lieutenant Droeya was commander up there with the medics. He is now retired as a colonel from the reserves and is head of the welfare program for the

state down here in town.

A: He was up there at the armory at the same time?

M: Yes.

A: In the heavy weapons company, what happened to this area? Does this company still exist today?

M: Like I said, the heavy weapons company under the battalion was reorganized. They came with the new pentatomic army at that time. This was set up, more or less, for defense against atomic attack. It was set up in fives, that's why they called it pentomic. There were five companies to a battle group. Our headquarters were in Akron, Ohio. We got reorganized and we were C Company of the 3rd B.G. 28th Infantry Division here in Youngstown. This was when we moved over to the Youngstown Reserve Center here on Miller Street.

A: That was about what time?

M: That was in 1959.

A: When this change took place in the Army and became part of the battle group, each company had two platoons of infantry and one of heavy weapons?

M: It was set up of, more or less, cadre strength, not full strength. They had two line platoons and one heavy weapons platoon. They were supposed to actually have three line platoons and one heavy weapons and a head-quarter.

A: I see. What happened to the Warren area?

M: Warren also got reorganized under another battle group out of Ashtabula. They also became an infantry company.

A: Does that still exist up there?

M: At that time, they were meeting at the Packard Garage right in downtown Warren. The government built them a reserve center out at Lordstown Military Reservation. When that was completed, they moved out to that reserve center.

A: And they are still there?

M: They are still there today, only it is not an infantry company. There have been two or three organizations since then.

A: But they do drill at the Army Reserve Center in Lordstown,

which remains part of the federal property?

M: That is correct. I believe when McNamara was secretary of defense or the Army, he changed the whole system around, reorganized it. The federal reserves at that time became support units. The guards were kept as combat units, so most of your army reserve units that were combat arms became service company.

A: When was this?

M: This happened in 1961 or 1962. It was reorganized. They took the infantry company and half of us went into a medical company and the other half went into a signal company of the 83rd Division.

A: Where did you report to?

M: At that time when we first reorganized, we became D Company of the 308th Medics and our headquarters were in Cleveland. Shortly after that, a year after that, they reorganized and made the headquarters of the 308th Medics down here in Youngstown; this became battalion headquarters. The company that I was with became A Company of the 308th Medics. I was assigned to the battalion as a battalion motor sergeant. By this time, I had already been promoted up to E-7.

A: Just going back to when you were part of this battle group situation, what was the overall strength of the company supposed to be?

M: The overall strength of the company was supposed to be, I believe, 144 people. We always maintained 120 or 112, but basically we retained a cadre strength.

A: How many vehicles were assigned?

M: Each company at the time had a 105 Recoless jeep. This was a recoless rifle mounted on our jeep. They had one of those and they had one quarter ton with a radio command for the company commander with a trailer. They also had one duce and a one and a half ton trailer, one three quarter ton weapons carrier and one trailer. So they were very limited on their equipment, their vehicles.

A: What was your responsibility being motor sergeant? Did you maintain these vehicles?

M: As a battle group company, we had no capabilities for maintenance. We had to rely on higher headquarters. At that time, I became a section leader in the 81 mortars

and the recorless rifle.

A: Was this a different MOS than you had had before?

M: Yes, it was.

A: How did you convert your MOS? How did you change over from one job to another?

M: Through correspondence courses and OJT [On the Job Training].

A: Was this common in the army? I notice there are a lot of changes here.

M: Well, if you want to stay in the army reserves, you have to be able to accept change. To change your MOS you have to take an MOS test.

A: So every year you have to take an MOS test?

M: Yes. We have just now been reorganized from an engineer pipeline company to a general supply company.

A: How many changes have you been through?

M: Oh, I imagine a half a dozen or more.

A: It seems like quite a few in that area. Now, when the Army lost its combat roll and became a support unit, what happened to all the equipment and everything that was assigned to the units?

M: Basically, your weapons, your mortars and recorless rifles were turned into a depot. At that time, depending on the unit, we received more vehicles. For instance, when we became a medical unit, we received ambulances and more things for a medical hospital type unit. We kept our personnel weapons, our rifles, and our bayonets, but no crew serve weapons. We had a few light machine guns per unit.

A: Going back to the theory that you are a soldier first and a . . .

M: Yes, but more or less set up for a defense type unit than say an attack type unit.

A: When all these changes occur, do you find that it is a factor in morale that has this constant change, or is this mainly accepted by the people?

- M: Just personally speaking, I've grown to expect change and go along with it, but it does rupture a person who is really trying to get MOS qualified and to become really proficient in his MOS and then to have it change. It does upset a lot of people and a lot of people have gotten out of the reserves because of it.
- A: I see. Like you say, you have to accept MOS change and changes. Are you still doing the type of job today that you originally trained for in the long run?
- M: No. I was originally trained basically as a rifleman when I went into the reserves and to be maintenance qualified. Through the changes I became more or less infantry qualified as supervisor or leader. I had to take certain leadership courses and different courses, correspondence courses in the different types of weapons. Also my navy background with maintenance has helped me out with army maintenance. I became very qualified with diesel and this type of maintenance equipment. This has always helped me through my military career.
- A: When you were in the mortars or things like that, were you still in the maintenance area or were you still . . .
- M: All we were responsible for was our own equipment or operators maintenance. Any organizational maintenance that had to be performed had to go to a higher support unit.
- A: When you say a higher support unit, where would something like this be?
- M: At that time, our battalion or our battle group support was up in Akron. If we had any vehicles that were down because of maintenance, we had to have them transported up to Akron to get them repaired or the battalion would send maintenance people down to do it down here.
- A: These were full-time people or were they reserves also?
- M: At that time, they had maybe two full-time people working on the battle group maintenance. Then if it was something serious, like an engine or something, we also had our general support maintenance or field maintenance. It was out at Lordstown Military Reservation. We could go out there also. But organizational, we had to go through our battle group.
- A: So basically, you were responsible to the battle group to keep these . . .
- M: Operation, right, operator maintenance only.

A: At one center, you might have a bunch of units report to a different boss. How is this coordinated? Is there any coordination between the units?

M: Yes. In each center, generally if they had more than one unit there, they have what they call a center coordinator and a center commander. It is their job . . . This center coordinator is generally a top-ranked civilian working for the Army. They coordinate with different units on dates of drills, places of storing their equipment, and locations for their orderly rooms and supply rooms.

A: Is this a full-time person or is he a reservist?

M: Your coordinator is a full-time civilian employee with a dual status, what we call the Army Reserve Technicians Program, ARTS Program. He is also a member of the reserve or is supposed to be a member of the reserve.

A: Does he have to be the senior man?

M: Generally, no. Generally, if there is more than one unit there, there is more than one civilian. Generally, they are government ranked ratings of a GS-6 and if they are in charge of a center then they are a GS-7. Then they become the coordinator. Now they might hold the rank of a first sergeant or they might hold the rank of a supply sergeant in a unit. Right now one of our senior workers is a company commander. Generally, your center commander is the highest ranking officer in one of the units.

A: Who, for instance, would be the senior officer today?

M: This is a little odd today because we have a special forces unit up at the center, but they are not out of our 5th army area. Their headquarters are in the first army and they are with the 79th ARCON. So they are more or less a tenant in this reserve center. Captain Hutzon is the center commander now over an AST they have up there who happens to be a lieutenant colonel. But he has nothing to do with the center or command of the center.

A: How does this work as far as recruiting and things? Who's responsible for the recruiting of the new people?

M: Well, each unit is responsible for their own assistance?

A: Do they have any full-time recruiters or any assistance?

M: The Cleveland area has a full-time man hired as a recruiter. Akron has a full-time man as a recruiter and we have one that goes between Wooster and Youngstown

- as a recruiter and he coordinates. But each unit has their own personnel assigned as recruiters generally an officer and an NCO. This is an additional duty for them.
- A: Everytime something changes, the man power allowance changes also, is that it, the numbers that are required to be there?
- M: Yes.
- A: What happens when you get too many people in?
- M: We went from a 160 man unit down to a 120 man unit. The way things are with the reserves today, there is not a lot of people coming into the unit. Basically, prior service men are coming into the unit today. They are well-trained and have been on active duty at least two years. Those are the types that are coming in and making a career out of it. There are very few nonprior service coming into the reserves today. The fact is that they are not really well-educated on the reserve program.
- A: Do you mean while they are on active duty?
- M: No, while they are in school. They are not getting the word out to these people of what reserves are and what they are really capable of doing?
- A: Let's say you are required to have 120 men now and let's say that you have 150, what happens to the other . . .
- M: We feel that they give you a year for normal attrition. You are going to lose so many people. Also it gives them a year to get MOS qualified. And if they cannot get the qualifications, they can be released or go into an active control group. Generally, through attrition nobody really loses out.
- A: What is this active control group?
- M: You are still in the army reserve; you can still take correspondence courses; you can acquire so many points a year and you can go to summer camp for two weeks a year, but you do not get paid for anything but summer camp. But you can get retirement points.
- A: For an individual to become MOS qualified in this change-over type of thing, what kind of requirement is there? Do you just have to pass the test?
- M: Basically, if you can pass an MOS test . . . If you get changed from engineers to supply, like we did, and you happened to work as a warehouseman, and you feel that

you are qualified to take this MOS test, and you can pass this MOS test, then you can become MOS qualified. But if you are not familiar with the warehousing and that, then the Army also gives you correspondence courses that you can obtain yourself if you are planning on making a career. For the younger men, this summer we are planning on sending them to school when we go for a two week training. It is really up to the unit to get the younger men through correspondence courses and classes and OJT to get them MOS qualified.

A: For example, one unit here just changed from Pipeline Company to Supply Company. When this happens what do you do with all of your equipment? Do you pack it up and send it off?

M: Right. What we do now we get the new manning chart for the different type people and the new TO&E, this is Table of Organization and Equipment, for different things. The property book that we do have, everything on the old company . . . We start a new property book. Anything that is excess to the company now, such as dozers, cranes, or something like this, we make out a list and this becomes excess. If we are authorized the same type of vehicles, naturally these fall right in line with the company. Anything that we are supposed to have in the new company that we are short, we'll make up a shortise list, too. This would be sent forward to our higher headquarters who will go through it with the computers and see if there is any of this equipment in the area that they can transfer over to us, plus if any excess equipment we have are needed by any unit in the area. Once this is completed and we are still short or have excess, then the 5th Army gets into the act. They are the ones that see that we get the equipment we need for training plus the excess goes to where it can be used for storage or distributed throughout the 5th Army area.

A: What is the depot that is used here?

M: Ft. Knox.

A: Ft. Knox would be the closest one. When you have two or more units using the center, from your experience have you found that people get along really well? Are there any conflicts?

M: At times there are conflicts, but that is through, basically, lack of communication and cooperation.

A: Do you normally drill at the same time?

M: No, they generally try to drill at different dates. Our unit has always tried to drill on the second

weekend of the month. There are times that arise when you have to change those drills and you might correspond with another unit that is training there. At that time, you just got along.

A: Basically, you don't use the same spaces other than the main central drill hall?

M: The main, central drill hall is about all that is really used because each unit has their own orderly room and supply room. If they are having classes, we do share the classrooms.

A: In your experiences, did you find that the reservists have cooperated and have tried to contribute to community affairs? Is this part of their program or anything?

M: The young men that are in the reserves that really aren't planning on staying in like to get into community program services because it really is beneficial to their type of training; it keeps them busy and makes it possible for them to do something. The unit we were in before, the engineer unit, did a lot of work with Boy Scout Camp and at one time we had people going up to the children's hospital, Tod Hospital and North Side. They liked working with the children up there. Basically, when you do a community project, it has to fit into your line of training. We also had some projects as far as Massillon State Hospital. The men liked this too. In fact, they went over there on a Saturday morning and stayed there until Sunday afternoon. They had overnights there and they did an awful lot of work on pipelines and things of this nature for the patients so they could have their own garden. They enjoyed that and felt that they were really accomplishing something, instead of just doing a classroom type of thing or just a maintenance thing.

A: Have you see a change in the two things? Have you seen a change in the reserve and have you seen a change in the reservists?

M: There is definitely a big change in the reserve from back when I first went in. Basically, the people who were in the reserves at that time wanted to be in the reserves, believed in the country and the program. Lately, the REP 63's, who started out during the Vietnam War to fill the reserves up, had the attitude that they would rather go into the reserves than go into the active service or get drafted. Quite a few of them came out to be very good soldiers. But quite of few just put their time in; they just did what they were told and were not looking to get ahead. All they were looking for was

- to serve their time and get out. There were quite a few people that really felt that it was our fault that they even had to show up on a Saturday and Sunday and gave you a bad time from the word go.
- A: Do you think this is a reflection of their upbringing?
- M: I feel that it is a reflection of the attitude of the country during the Vietnam War. I felt that the reserves really do not have any teeth or authority to punish a man when he is really out of line. The ones that are trying to do their job get the same thing as a man that does not do his job, and there is nothing done to the man who does not cooperate.
- A: What do you see for the reserves in the future? Do the changes that you are going through right now mean good or bad?
- M: Right now the only thing the reserves can really hope for is these prior services. The pay in the reserves is much higher today than it was back when I started. For example, at the time I went in, you were lucky to clear \$48 for a two week summer camp if your rank was PFC. A private today clears \$250 almost \$300 for a two week summer camp depending on the amount of years he has in. Plus, at that time, we had no insurance. Now they have a twenty thousand dollar insurance policy which only costs them \$3.40 a month. Everything is not as strict as it was back then.
- A: With these latest cuts that you read about in the paper by Congress, do you think it is going to end up helping the reserves in the long run? How do you think it is going to affect the Army Reserve?
- M: I don't know how it is going to affect the Army Reserve. Right now the way the reserve program is going, they are losing people every day. A person staying in the reserve is generally holding the rank and the younger men coming in have to wait more or less through attrition to get any kind of promotion at all. It is set up to where legislature is going to have to do something to keep the reserves up to strength.
- A: More benefits.
- M: More benefits or better equipment and better type training.
- A: Could you give me an idea of what happens at a summer camp?

M: We were very fortunate being a pipeline unit because generally there was a sight support mission. If an army camp or army base needed something done, we could go down there and do our type of work. They built up a storage tank, petroleum tank, laid pipeline, or put in a pumping station and knew that it was going to be used. It was very beneficial to the men themselves because they felt a sense of accomplishment. I have gone to summer camps where we had gone out there for more or less a training type of thing, dug holes, laid pipe, and the next day tore the pipe back out, and put it away. The morale is very low in this type of training.

A: How does your family feel about your participation in the reserves?

M: When I first started out in the reserves my wife didn't really care for it, then reserves got to be more or less a hobby. I put extra time into the reserves. If you want to go anywhere in the reserves, you have to put extra time in. You get no benefit out of it except self-satisfaction and maybe a promotion.

A: Now they have come to accept it?

M: Now they have come to accept it as part of life.

A: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you want to bring out?

M: Not really. I think we have covered just about everything.

A: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW