

**Douglas H. Cady
Veteran**

**Charles Leven
Interviewer**

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Shaker High School
Latham, New York**

Douglas Cady: **CD**
Charles Leven: **CL**

CL: [unclear] I am with ARP and we are at Shaker High School in Latham New York. The 26th of September, and I'm interviewing Doug Cady, who is a veteran of World War 2. And we are going to chat a little bit about some of his memories. And it should be very interesting. I have a couple questions for you just to start. What Branch of service were you in?

CD: Navy.

CL: How did that come about, were you drafted, did you enlist?

CD: I was drafted. I believe, at the time when the war started, I had felt that because of the fact that when I was in high school, they took a physical of me and I had a Heart murmur. I felt at the time that I could do nothing but wait and see what would happen that I would probably wouldn't be able to [unclear] you know? Because I figured that anybody who has a heart murmur isn't going to be enlisted or anything like that. So, that's why I was called in, they wanted to check me out for the service. Everybody was [unclear] it was near the end when they needed more people. I had to go over to Albany and go through the army over there. They had quite a few doctors over there who checked me out all the way through, and after I got finished I was walking through, I asked the doctor there, I said "Did you find a heart murmur on me?" he says "No, your fine! Everything is great, you are in good shape." I said, "Wow, I did not expect that." When I walked out, there was fella that represented the army on one side and another guy representing the navy on the other side. When I walked out the guy at the army said, "Hey buddy, you'd make a good soldier" I said, "I think I'd make a better sailor" I walked over and signed up for the navy.

CL: You were allowed to choose? That's interesting. Do you recall your first days in service? Where did you go? What happened?

CD: They sent me to Sampson, in New York, mainly you had to go through a lot of physicals up there

CL: What time of year was that?

CD: It was in the month of May, we had a lot of exercises to go through, and I think everyone gets them when they go in the service. We had to go a mile track that we had to go through, go around a couple times during the day, maybe whether they decided to

[unclear] I have gone through three or four of them in an hour. Everybody did, of course they had to go through some of the other things

CL: You were a young guy, right?

CD: Yea it wasn't too bad then, not now.

CL: What did it feel like though? You were a stranger in this great big camp.

CD: It was something that I sort of felt good about because, I always liked physical education anyway. I always did a lot of that sort of thing.

CL: Was it your first time away from home?

CD: Yep.

CL: How did you feel about that?

CD: I always missed my family; my father and mother were very close to me all the way through anyway. I could tell you what happened to me, at the end when I was discharged. What I went through at that time would be kind of interesting. I think because around the time the war was over, I decommissioned a ship with a bunch of other fellas and this was quite a difference because all of the other fellas that was on the ship got sent home and I had to stay there to decommission the ship.

CL: Let's hold that for the end [unclear]. Tell me about bootcamp, where did you do that?

CD: Sampson

CL: What happens after that?

CD: They always send you to a camp or a place that you learn something that you might need while you are in the navy, and they sent me to Boston for doing mechanical kind of work. We lived in a hotel there at the time, then we march through the streets. We had like a couple hundred fellas at the time. We marched down through the streets and into the institution that did this kind of work. After that, we left Boston and went to San Diego for diesel school. They teach you all the small diesels that's alright, right then I figure well I'm going to be in one of those little [unclear] I'd have to go pick up the soldiers that are going to go into one of the islands there in the pacific.

CL: What were your instructors like?

CD: They were pretty good because I was used to those kinds of people because when I was an apprentice at a GE, most of them are young fellas.

CL: Did they speak to you in the same way as [unclear] spoke to the GE in?

CD: I was sent to [unclear] high school at night and they had instructors and everything there, and teachers there. You had to go through all the different things they taught.

CL: And you were in World War II?

CD: Yep.

CL: And where did you go? In terms of where did you serve?

CD: Well I served in on a DE

CL: Right out of San Diego, right out of the final training?

CD: We went to a troop ship there over to New Lithe in the Caroline Islands I think it is, I'm not positive of that, but in the Pacific. New Lithe was a place where the navy used for new fellas taught in different ships. It was like a reception area. I had to get on a tugboat and find DE 9 [unclear]. They were all lined up all the DEs with me, lined up right after the other.

CL: Must have been an enormous harbor.

CD: Yea it was, it was like a horseshoe type thing. It was all of atolls, there would be a small atoll, and then another one would be like maybe twenty feet from that one. It was only about eight or nine, not even that, about seven, well maybe we better make it less than that. I think you could almost walk between the two, as you go around it, there might have been ten of these atolls. It was shaped just like a horseshoe. These horseshoes were lined up all these ships. All the way around, they went from small ships, like the one I was on, to cruisers.

CL: That must have been some sight.

CD: Yea it was, when you look at it back then you couldn't believe all the ships that were stationed there. I got on the DE9 there.

CL: What was it like when you got onboard ship?

CD: It was something I have never experienced because I have never been in the Ocean much, I have seen it naturally, but I have never had a ship that I went out, to sort of get the idea what it's like.

CL: You were a new recruit I'm sure, so how did they treat you?

CD: They treat you like an ordinary guy. They throw your bags up on to the deck, and after that I had to carry it to the bunk, they gave me. Then I was down there with a bunch of other fellas that had bunks alongside of mine.

CL: How many guys were in one of those areas?

CD: Well the area I was on, I'd say it was probably about forty or fifty guys.

CL: All sleeping in the same?

CD: Same area.

CL: Was it big?

CD: Yea, it was pretty good size. Although the ship wasn't too big, but it wasn't too bad, I still can't believe that there's two hundred guys on the ship like that. Because it didn't seem like it was big enough for two hundred.

CL: They sardined you?

CD: Yea.

CL: What was your job?

CD: I worked in the forward motor room. Which was mostly making saltwater into fresh water because everybody had to drink correctly. You made sure you got fresh water to all the guys. Also, you had to have fresh water for the engines, the engines couldn't take-

CL: Because it would corrode the engine.

CD: Right, they couldn't use saltwater in the engines. So those all had to be fresh water.

CL: So, what, do they keep recirculating it?

CD: Yea, because while you're there you're either working four hours and your off eight hours.

CL: So that was a pretty significant job.

CD: Yea, so actually they teach how to set up [unclear] to do that type of work.

CL: Did you fellas miss the group down below miss separately from the deck sailors?

CD: Yea there was a lot of difference, ours was pretty good because we had it set up just like you would at home. We had a table that everybody sat around the table and we would have one of our fellas that worked in the galley. He would give what we needed and bring it up. He was met the set up mostly because we got it, so he didn't have to do any work other than that. So, we would just handle the food for us. He would bring it up and hand it to one of the fellas and take what he wanted and passed it to the next which is like you would at home.

CL: What was the food like?

CD: It's pretty good, couldn't complain too much.

CL: I knew the navy was well treated.

CD: *Laughs*

CL: Did you see any combat?

CD: Yea, quite a bit.

CL: Where?

CD: Okinawa that was the main place we served. We had come back from the Philippines, bringing a convoy of ships for that that job there. Okinawa was one of the islands at the time they wanted and actually the Japanese had that island, it was part of their territory I believe.

CL: Did you folks supply fire support for the assault?

CD: We took care of mostly, they had it set up so that all destroyers and DEs circled that island. The way they circled it was, the first group that circled it was 20 yards from the shore of Okinawa. They circled it, so it would be miles out. There would be a series of DEs and destroyers circling that island. Then it would go back like, we were 20 miles out when we started, then the next one was 15 miles; they kept on going down till it was about 5 miles out. It was a group of ships all the way around, just keeps going around

until that last 5 miles. They were mainly used for the Japanese, at the time were sending in all their Mitsubishi Bombers. We used to fire on them.

CL: So, you did the [unclear] fire?

CD: Yea, so they would know that they were coming in. The Army would know that they were coming in and they would be ready for them when they got to the shoreline.

CL: Did you ever combat assigned in addition to what you did down below, were you on a gun?

CD: I was a talker for the damage control party. I had six guys with me at all times. I had a telephone on, and I would be up there at this telephone right at the wall, or actually the [unclear] that separated us. I would have a helmet on plus the telephone, and I would be talking to the bridge most of the time. He would let me know what is going on, and I would report that to the engine room. Because the guys down below in the motor rooms had telephones down there, so they would know what's going on topside. So, they would not get too nervous about, we would be afraid that we would get into much trouble or something like that.

CL: Difficult getting out.

CD: Yea, we would let them know what's going on up there.

CL: Were there casualties on your ship?

CD: Nope, we were lucky. We didn't get any casualties, although a few times we could of, but we were always lucky. They said somebody up there likes us, that's the main reason.

CL: Were there any kamikaze attacks?

CD: Oh yea, we hit one.

CL: Did you?

CD: Yea, I happened to be on the deck at the time. I was looking out at all ships we had out there. There was this plane coming from quite a way down from where we were located, but I knew it was a red nose plane. As it got closer, I recognized that it was a Japanese plane. As it came closer, he looked to me that he was getting ready to plow into one of the ships. We had a ship right next to us and he came up and looked like he was going to come at our ship. Our Guys were firing, the fella on the anti-aircraft gun was right over my head where I was stationed. That's why I had to have the helmet, because the shells as they fired were flying off. I had them banging off the top of my head, that's why I had a good size helmet on. As he got closer, one of our ships, either the one next to us or ours, fired on it and they finally hit it. They carry a five-hundred-pound bomb in the nose that would blow up a ship if they hit it. They hit that bomb and it blew right in front of us, and the stuff flew all air from the plane. We had to sweep the deck off after we got through, because we wanted to clean up the deck, of course that come off that plane is all junk. The bomb exploded and the plane blew the whole thing up.

CL: Did your ship stay in the Okinawa area throughout that campaign?

CD: Yes, practically the whole time.

CL: Where did you go from there?

CD: Back to into Guam, and eventually we were said to go home to San Pedro. The war was practically over then, because after that we would go back to convoy oilers. They were big tankers that we would come up with and, we went right along the coast of Japan. We brought those tankers up there to refuel the other ships that were up there. You would be surprised; I got a big kick out of watching what happened. These tankers, we would bring up ten of them with the other ships. We set up these tankers so that there would be one right after the other. When that happened, they got them all set up and the other ships that wanted fuel that needed it there, like the aircraft carriers, battleships, and cruisers. One on each side they would come up, every one of them would line up. You would look out there, and you couldn't believe how many ships we had out there. It seemed like as you looked out there, they would disappear on the sight after a while, they were so far away. They were all on each side of each tanker that was there, and they were all filling.

CL: How did you stay I touch with your family during this time?

CD: I used to get a letter once in a while, about every three months.

CL: That's all?

CD: That's it, you were lucky you got that because everybody else was jumping in to get their letters.

CL: How did you communicate with them?

CD: You would write a letter. Then once I wanted to, small ships that were going to deliver mail, you would give it to them, and they would take care of the rest of it.

CL: Did you have plenty of supplies?

CD: Yes, we had supplies but every once in a while, we run short on certain things we thought we need. One time, it was kind of funny to me in a way, because we were having problems with some food and we were right next to a British ship. They said that we could have some of their legs of lamb. The guy said to hook up to them so we could go to their ship, pick up the legs of lamb, and bring them back then put them on to our ship. This was in a Bay like area, so it was very easy. So, we got up. I don't know how many guys said, "Geez I hate lamb!" "I can't stand that stuff you know?" The British had big legs of them. We had to [unclear] all over your shoulder, [unclear]. This guy that was on the ship that was negotiating the deal, he was a seamen first class and said, "You follow me." We followed with the legs of lamb and then we get to the back part of the ship so that nobody could see, and he said, "Throw it over the side!" So, we had to do what he said so we threw it over the side, before we got through, we had legs of lamb flowing all around the Bay area. Of course, one of the officers caught him, you know. He was the Seaman First when he got through it [unclear].

CL: Did you ever get seasick?

CD: Yes, I did. I was in San Francisco when I went to this transport, from there I went all the way out. We went to Pearl Harbor first, then left Pearl Harbor and went to New Lithe after that. I was on the transport there and like I said I never been on the ocean

that much. They gave me a job of peeling spuds down in the galley, so I went down in the galley to peel spuds. As the ship went out of San Francisco they hit the waves out there, there is a lot of them in that area. As we got out there the ships was rocking. Oh boy, I started getting sick to my stomach. There was an old Chief sitting on a barrel on the side in charge of the whole operation. I said Chief I got to go, to my bunk I said, I can't stand this I'm getting sick as a dog. "Oh, that's nothing he said. If you don't think about it and think about other things, don't even think about you; you'll get over it." I looked up, I couldn't figure that one out, you know?...So I stayed there and finally went over to him and said: I think I better go now and "Nah, you'll be alright, you'll be alright, just hold on" So after he left to do something and when he left I took off. I had to go three decks to get up to the main deck. I got up there, I was in the front of the ship where my bunk was, so I went up that way. There was the first bunk all the guys were going into. The Navy calls it the Head.

CL: Did you ever have any lead ports or just constantly at sea?

CD: We were always at sea then.

CL: How long were you actually at sea?

CD: We were at actually at sea for probably, except for you know, at different islands we'd stop at. We stopped in Guam once, and they let a few of us that had the time off at that time. I went into the seaport there and walked around.

CL: You also mentioned that you came to Pearl Harbor.

CD: Oh yes.

CL: What was that like?

CD: [unclear] The ship that were hit by the Japanese were found, some of them just had their main deck up, we just see the top of it and then the rest was under the water. They hadn't taken them out yet. So, they just left them there to do that sort of job, I guess so. You could see lot of them along the seaport.

CL: What do you think of your officers and fellows' sailors?

CD: It wasn't too bad, there were fellows that were mostly college graduates, I think they were a lot like us guys too. They had some jobs that they were handled by other people and they would show them how to do the job, like that. Some of them were down in the engine room, in the motor rooms too, because they also knew how to handle that type of job so they could show fellas like me what had to be done.

CL: You mentioned that when the war ended you had to come back and decommission the boat. What do you do?

CD: Well, it was strictly, mostly it's just clean the whole ship up. You get it ready and they were supposed to take it to another port and then they were eventually after a while I think it was decommissioned there where we were.

CL: Which is where?

CD: [unclear] Bay. Off course I left before the ship ever left, so got my orders to go home. It was something great for me. I was waiting for that for a long time.

CL: Do you remember the feeling?

CD: Oh! I never had such a feel in my life, because I missed my folks and at the time I was married too and my wife and all of them. What happened is I left on the train and I got down into Chicago. When I got into Chicago, they had a big snowstorm in that area, so I couldn't get another train out of there. I had to sit there for about 6 hours and finally, I got that I would be able to leave on a special train that is going straight directly to New York city. They wouldn't stop for no place. If you want to go to New York, and maybe you could get another train back to Schenectady, that is where I was from. You might be able to do that if you wanted to, or else you could wait here until we find another train going another distance away.

CL: But you grabbed it?

CD: I grabbed that because I figured, well, if I get to New York I think I can find another train that would go to Schenectady. On the way to New York, we were coming into Albany, and the conductor comes up to me and says "Hey buddy, where are you bound for?" and I said, "I'm bound for New York City right?" he said, "Yea, where are you really bound for?" I said, "Schenectady." "Oh!" he says, "Well, too bad." "Yea." I said. Anyway, we went into Albany and kept on going. As we were coming into Schenectady, the conductor comes over and says "Hey! Do you want to get off at Schenectady?" and I say, "Boy, do I!" he says, "You are going to get off at Schenectady, I got it set up." We were coming into Schenectady stop. I got off and I was the only one to get off the whole train, and everybody else was on. I was there, and there was a fella in a taxicab right there. He was sitting there for a while, and he said, "Do you need a taxi?" and I said, "I'd like to go to Henry Street in Schenectady, can you go there for me?" and he says, "Sure, hop in and we will take you right there" I get in the cab and we went right up to where my father's house was. That is where we were staying until we got our own apartment. I got up there, and of course my father's house was up on top of a hill. He had concrete steps going up, so naturally I climbed up those steps. He had a big front porch on that house and big glass windows in the front. I got up onto the porch and I'm looking in the window, I didn't want anybody to see me. I'm looking in the window and my father's sitting in his chair reading the paper. My mother is running back from the kitchen and the dining room and back and forth, she must be getting ready to feed the people. My wife was sitting there with my sister, and my brother in law was with them. He was in the Air Force, so he just got out too; he had his uniform on, and they all start talking. I stood there for ten minutes just watching them. I was so happy, I was just watching, I couldn't wait. Finally, I pushed the doorbell, and my mother was the one who came running to the door. She says, "I knew I was going to see you!" That was the best time I've ever had in my life.

CL: What did you do after you got out of the service?

CD: I went back to work, I worked for General Electric and they paid for all the time I was in the service. They paid me everything, they gave me my service time which never [unclear] was taken away from me. I still had to [unclear] for two years, and I got credit for being there for two years. When I retired, that whole setup was all mine. My wife and I moved to an apartment after that.

CL: You ever been touched by anyone you were in the service with?

CD: The only time I could say I felt really bad was when I first got on the ship when I was down in the bunk. I started going to a bunk and there was quite a few fellas around that area. One of the fellas was a little older than the rest of us, I would say probably five or six years old.

CL: So, he was about 23?

CD: Yes, he just had gotten on the ship too and he said, "All I hope for is that I can get back to my wife and my kids that is all that I care about."

CL: You never saw any of these fellas again?

CD: No, I never saw them again.

CL: Did you have a reunion of a ship?

CD: We had reunions of the ship, but they were so far away that nobody ever got together.

CL: Did you ever keep a diary?

CD: Nope, I never kept a diary, but I can remember most of the stuff anyways.

CL: How about Veterans Organization?

CD: I belong to the legion, the American Legion.

CL: A local Post?

CD: a local Post, yes.

CL: Well, thank you very much, is there anything else you want to add that might be interesting to folks?

CD: I think most of it's there right now.

CL: Your story was wonderful.

CD: It was the best of times and worst of times, but I enjoyed the fellas that I served with. One fella that I know, used to send me a card every Christmas. He was from York, Pennsylvania, and he was a mechanic at the time. He had his own garage there and everything He was an older fella; I would say he was in his middle or upper thirties when I met him there on the ship. I used to send him cards too all the time. Then one time I got this card that had this picture on it that his wife sent me because he had just passed away.

CL: I hope that was just a short time ago.

CD: It wasn't too long ago.

CL: Good, that is encouraging. If you were to think back, what's the most interesting thing you remember about those years [unclear]?

CD: It sticks out to just be on that ship in a way. The four hours that you had to put in for each tour of duty. Mine was in the motor room, I had took care of making fresh water out of saltwater. You had to clean it too when you got done with it. You'd open this door

up and inside there was copper coils, all around like this *makes circular motion with hand* When it's bad, the saltwater goes into it, it's like white crystals all over the copper, all around those coils. You would just have to take a torch and torch them; they would start popping off and eventually they would all be cleaned off if you got them heated up enough.

CL: You have a good memory; you practically feel like it was just yesterday afternoon. Just one more thing, what is the thing that was most unpleasant about your time?

CD: The most unpleasant thing, somebody getting sick. I can understand, because I went through that with the seasickness. I could understand, but usually they turned out alright after a while. Every once and awhile you might have to heave on the floor.

CL: Thank you very much, it's like reliving that history that you have been through. It's very interesting, thank you very much indeed and good luck to you.

CD: Thank you.