

**James K. McDonald
Veteran**

**Wayne Clarke
Roy McDonald
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on February 9, 2016
Saratoga Springs, NY**

Q: Would you please state your full name, and date and place of birth please?

JKM: August 31st, 1940, I was born in Troy, NY, and James K. McDonald.

Q: Did you attend school in Troy?

JKM: Yes... Lansingburgh High.

Q: Did you graduate?

JKM: Yes in 1960.

Q: Did you go on to college from there, or enter the service or go to work?

JKM: From there I worked for Ford Motor Company for two years, then I went in to service for two years, and then came back to work for Ford Motor Company again.

Q: Okay so when you went in to service did you enlist or were you drafted?

JKM: I was drafted in to the Army.

Q: When was that?

JKM: 1963

Q: Whereabouts did you go for your basic training?

JKM: Fort Dates.

Q: Was that your first time away from home?

JKM: Yes.

Q: What was basic training like for you?

JKM: Typic basic training where they shoot machine guns over you while you are crawling under the... you know... and um... learn how to throw grenades and the use of the M-14 rifle.

Q: Alright, so after your basic training did you go to an advanced infantry training?

JKM: No. We didn't go to Vietnam right away, we stayed in Alaska for six months. From Alaska we went to the Philippines to get familiar with the nature, and then we went to Vietnam.

Q: How did you get in to Vietnam?

JKM: We flew in.

Q: Do you recall where you landed?

JKM: We landed right in Saigon.

Q: What was it like when you stepped off the plane?

JKM: Well the first thing was, all the soldiers brought cameras, and the MP's quickly began taking all of them away from us. Remember that.

Q: Was it very hot and humid there?

JKM: Oh yes, it was very hot, we never entered a cold season while I was over there, very hot.

Q: Okay, now what unit did they put you in over there?

JKM: Let's see, I was in the 100th transportation core... Battalion, four story Virginia.

Q: Whereabouts in Vietnam did you operate out of?

JKM: Quinn Yan.

Q: What was your job there?

JKM: Supply handler, that's my M.O.S

Q: Did you go out on convoy?

JKM: Oh, we went on quite a few convoys. Basically, we would bring supplies to the front troops, wherever they were.

Q: Now what kind of vehicle did you operate?

JKM: The vehicle I would be on all the time was a Military jeep.

Q: Did you become under fire at all?

JKM: No, no we had shots way far off, but our Company never got hit.

Q: Did you have much contact with the civilian population?

JKM: A little yes, but we were surrounded by 10 miles of barb wire, Sometime there would be kids asking for food at the front. Whatever food our company didn't eat, we would give it to the orphanage close by us.

Q: Did you fill a lot of sandbags while you were over there?

JKM: I lost count...

Q: What about guard duty, much of that?

JKM: Basically 4-6 hours, you would be on and off like that.

Q: Did your base ever come under attack from rockets or anything like that?

JKM: Not when I was there, it never came under attack.

Q: Did you have time still in the Military after coming back from Vietnam?

JKM: Oh yes, I told them I didn't have transportation, I didn't want to go there from Pittsfield, where I live. So, then they sent me a letter saying I had to go to the mountain division, you know where that is? Camp/Fort Drum. I had to be up there for two weeks as a drill instructor teaching people how to fire machine guns, still don't know why I was chosen to do that.

Q: You had a couple of brothers in the Military as well correct?

JKM: Well my Father was in the Army, I was in the Army, he was in the Marines.

Q: You mentioned earlier that you were with Australian troops, how long were you with them?

JKM: They stayed about 10 miles down the road. We liked their beer and they liked our beer.

Q: Now, what did you think of the food over there?

JKM: It was all k-rations, lost about 25 pounds but it wasn't bad. I loved the brownies in the cans.

Q: Did you get in to the city of Saigon?

JKM: I've been to Saigon twice

Q: Get to see the folks?

JKM: Oh yeah.

Q: What was it like back home with the protestors?

JKM: When I went to New York I couldn't remember my trip there, so I must have had a great time.

Q: When you got back to Troy, out of the service, what was it like?

JKM: Nobody said anything negative, a couple guys congratulated me on my service, and I met up with Pat and Kiddos in a bar. We ran to lake George for a week. I mean what else are two young guys going to do.

Q: Did you make use of the GI bill at all?

JKM: I used my GI bill to buy my house.

Q: Did you stay in contact with anyone you were in service with?

JKM: Maybe for two years, John Wood, he lived in Pennsylvania, but we used to write back and forth.

Q: Did you attend any reunions at all?

JKM: No.

Q: Were you injured at all over there? Did you come down with Malaria or anything like that?

JKM: Not too bad, I got Agent Orange poisoning while I was over there. We would transport it in to Saigon.

Q: You mentioned that you did funeral services for General Douglas McCarthy?

JKM: Oh yes, I was an honored guard, there were three picked from our company.

Q: Now where did they hold that?

JKM: Norfolk, Virginia. Me, a marine, a naval guard and an Air Force guard had to stand for 3 hours as his casket was getting prepared.

Q: How was your relationship with the commanding Officers?

JKM: We had a Captain, he was a West point. Very nice gentleman.

Q: How about race relations, were they good in your unit?

JKM: So, state side, anyone in the military from another country couldn't go overseas.

Q: Did you bring any photographs with you?

JKM: Oh, yes, I have a great album.

Q: Is there anything you would like to add?

JKM: The biggest thing was the orphans, you live state side and never see anything like it, you go over there it is extremely sad.

Interviewers: We appreciate your time, and we appreciate your service

JKM: Oh, were not done, are we? Let's talk! C'mon ill go get the beer!

Interviewers: Alright, well thank you for your Interview.

JKM: Yep!