

## **DUNCAN ROBEY**

DUNCAN: My name is Duncan Robey and I started out as a Fireman 1st Class or 3rd Class, sorry, and just by virtue of longevity I managed to get to Motor Machinist Mate 3rd Class.

LINDA: How old were you when you were doing all of this.

DUNCAN: I was drafted in June of 1943. I was working at a military post, Fort Lewis to be exact and being single and no responsibilities it became embarrassing even though I had been deferred for a year and half I finally decided this has got to end. I am not interested in wearing a uniform but I am not going to deny my country my support in a crisis. So when the call came again I answered.

LINDA: How do you feel about that today.

DUNCAN: Well this far down the road they couldn't drag me into a uniform. I would go to jail; I would take a firing squad, whatever. In retrospect you realize that though you had good intentions there is something evil about war. How can you hate any other human being enough to kill him? And my attitude has changed. I wasn't anxious to get into action but whatever came I was willing to go through it at that time. But now there is a different focus. We are not at war anymore and I think that is the reason I put most of my experiences during the war, just put them out of my mind. Makes it a little difficult to bring back certain incidents. But nevertheless there is a value there. There is something that you learn even though it was negative.

LINDA: Did that experience affect your whole life?

DUNCAN: Not particularly. Because once you put it out you can have a new focus, a new direction. In most cases you have a family to deal with so you end up doing another career.

LINDA: How do you feel about me asking you to dig down there and dig it back out?

DUNCAN: Well you are talking about history in spite of our personal feelings about war and human conflict. There was an experience there, even a negative experience which can be turned into something positive and life is nothing but a school. I have been able to survive the negative portion and hopefully now I can concentrate on the positive.

LINDA AND MATT TALKING.

LINDA: When this is all said and done I want you to say Well I look pretty good - I don't want you sitting there saying how come she didn't straighten my collar or do this.

DUNCAN: My wife is going to be the critic. I am going to say whatever came, that is it.

LINDA: Can you repeat for me in retrospect how you feel about the war and how it affected your life.

DUNCAN: Well at the time I thought I was doing the right thing even though I consider myself a Christian. Here I am fighting against other Christians. It didn't occur to me at that time that this was a factor and now that is the

difference. I realize now so many of these negative things that you go through will affect your personality and affect your character or they can be completely wrong as you develop a different vision in life. But I don't regret the experience. I feel like it was a positive thing overall.

LINDA: When you were 23 had you ever experienced death before.

DUNCAN: Well growing up in a small community you always went to the neighbors' funeral and I saw plenty of funerals. Some suicides in the neighborhood. That sort of thing. Started thinking about more important issues at an early age but that too has a purpose. It is not the end of the book it is just a chapter you have to go through.

LINDA: What kind of sailor were you?

DUNCAN: I frequently thought, if I had stayed home the war could have possibly ended sooner.

MATT Talking.

DUNCAN: I have often thought that if I had stayed the war might have ended sooner. That is how effective I felt I was. You recognize you are a small clog in a big wheel.

MATT AND LINDA - Train

DUNCAN: East Olympia. East Olympia is where I met the train every night and later on when vacation time came around I drive the truck and help in Olympia, which is the main office in the express company. So that is how I got started in the railroad business. But my dad was a telegrapher for 47

something years, my older brother worked on it 45 years, on the railroad. I was kind of the black sheep I guess but I do love railroads.

LINDA: We were talking about the kind of sailor you were and you said the war might have ended earlier if you had not been there but...

DUNCAN: Well I have always had this conflict - I want to do my duty to my country and do something in a crisis that affects the nation, but there was always this conflict. Should I be fighting against someone else? Same God. The Germans praying to God, I am praying to God. What is this? It is not very reasonable. That always bugged me. I guess I just did my job that was it.

LINDA: So you can't see yourself saying I just love being in the Navy?

DUNCAN: No. I wouldn't say I was in love with it. I love the ocean, I loved the excitement of travel, ports of call...branches relating these different places with the history of the world and learning a lot. Very educational. Better than a college education, I am sure.

LINDA: So you wouldn't want any of your five children to go off to war.

DUNCAN: Well everyone has to stand on their own feet. Fortunately my children have reached the age where they can speak for themselves and none of them to my knowledge have the same convictions that I have. They would have to resolve that. I would tell them where I stood and let them decide from there. My oldest boy has served, not during wartime. My youngest boy just didn't happen to be called, so...

LINDA: So the day you guys came home was a happy day for you - huh?

DUNCAN: Yeah I was kind of glad to set foot on Tarafoma? I enjoyed the ride for what it was worth.

LINDA: Did you make a lot of friends aboard ship?

DUNCAN: Well yes and no. It seemed like the black gang or engineering departments were a little bit clannish. You had reason for contact. Deck force was another ballgame. I didn't gamble, didn't smoke, didn't drink, didn't drink coffee; I was kind of a misfit. I didn't mind the role necessarily. It makes you peculiar I guess that is expected.

LINDA: Well I know a man sitting in Wilmington, North Carolina who thinks you walk on water. So you had to have made some friends when you were there.

DUNCAN: Well sure I did. I didn't have any enemies as far as I was concerned There were some I didn't like as much as others, but I liked them all. We are all in the same boat; you have to get along. I didn't mind that.

LINDA: When you first saw torpedoes, what were you thinking, you were this kid from Washington State where it is beautiful?

DUNCAN: I don't think I ever saw a torpedo in action. When we were attacked in convoy it was one of those moonlight nights with broken clouds, buttermilk sky, ideal for a submarine. I never saw the wake of a torpedo. I did visualize what it would be like down in the engine room. While I was down there I would look at the sides of the ship and say there is a quarter inch of steel between me and that 28-degree water. If a torpedo came through that I wouldn't remember a thing. Sayonara. That is about the only thought I had about torpedoes. One hits you while you are on duty it is all over, so...

LINDA: The guys in the engine room area did you feel like you learned about everything last. Obviously if you are part of the deck force you are up there and something flies over you see it, but if you are down in the engine room. Did you spend time down there? Did you walk around the ship?

DUNCAN: For some reason I was always fascinated by valves and pipes.

LINDA: Let's go back to Evansville, IN. Is that the first time you had seen an LST?

DUNCAN: Yes. I didn't really know what I was getting into. All I know is we were to report to Missouri Bridge and Iron Works, Evansville Indiana but a certain date. I was a like a fish out of water. I didn't know what was going on. They said get aboard and that is where I went. I loved my ship. It was home. When everything was working I considered we had a pretty comfortable duty considering the poor guys out there in the trenches, in the mud and the rain. Pretty cushy detail.

LINDA: Do you remember anything about Evansville, IN.?

DUNCAN: Not a whole lot. Like I mentioned, coming from a small town, anything over about 7,000 population and I was uncomfortable. That was big city to me. The capital of the State of Washington, 7,000 people. That is downtown. I just wasn't comfortable. I think that is one reason I kind of stuck around Norris Long. You felt like you were with a man of the world. I discovered that was true.

LINDA: More than you know.

DUNCAN: But he was a good sport. We got along well. He overlooked my idiosyncrasy and I overlooked anything he did that I didn't understand. But like I said a good sport.

LINDA: When did you meet Norris.

DUNCAN: On the ship. I think he came aboard in New Orleans if I recall but somehow or other we just sort of drifted together. We didn't always go ashore together. We had different duties, but I was not in a habit of going into bars but when I was with Norris we went into bars. We bought two and he drank them both but on the other hand when I said now there is a war going on, when we got to England I said there is a war going on lets go up and give a pint of blood. So we went up to St. George's Hospital and he gave a pint of blood and so did I.

LINDA: His with a little more alcoholic content, right.

DUNCAN: I think his was better preserved.

LINDA: What happened with the banana.

DUNCAN: Banana Split. I didn't realize he was forcing it down. I would have been glad to help him.

LINDA: He said you liked Banana Splits.

DUNCAN: Well I didn't realize that but I had to have my weakness too you know.

LINDA: Do you remember the first day you met Captain Olson?

DUNCAN: No I don't.

LINDA: Say I don't.

DUNCAN: I don't remember meeting him. I had respect for him. I felt here is a regular Navy man.

LINDA: Start over and say his name not him

DUNCAN: Well Captain Olson in my estimation was a professional. I had complete confidence in him because I just felt like a regular Navy man would know what he was doing. From a personal standpoint I probably never looked him in the eye.

LINDA: I guess because you were doing your thing and he was doing his thing.

DUNCAN: Right.

LINDA: Anything memorable happen on the way over from New York to Nova Scotia to England?

DUNCAN: Well basically two things that happened on convoy. We stopped in Halifax Nova Scotia. My impression of that was so austere. The city was blacked out. Everything looked gray and then when we got in convoy we took as I recall a northerly course somewhere above where the Titanic went down. And the purpose being to kind of get in the icefalls which would discourage submarine attacks or at least give us a better chance. I remember on one of the ice flows there was a great big spot of blood and I assume that a polar bear must have dinner there or somewhere in the past. But that water 28 and 29 degrees coming into the engines I realized that if I had to swim for it I was good for about 15 seconds then I would be so



numb I couldn't do anything. And we didn't have what you call survival suits. We had

#### LINDA SAID SOMETHING

DUNCAN: The temperature of that water, being salt water it was fluid at 28 degrees no problem. But you realized that if you had to swim for it without survival gear you wouldn't last long. I wasn't as I said scared but I was being realistic. The only, we did have life jackets kind of like a May West, what they call the May West type, and then we had a kind of wide rubber belt to put around your waist and you punctured two little CO2 cartridges which inflated but that was meaningless. It would keep you afloat but it wouldn't keep you alive. Another thing I remember too when submarines were reported as is typical on a ship the scuttlebutt goes from one end of the ship to the other almost automatically. They formed a work party, the engineering department that was off duty. Formed a work party and sent us off into the port shaft alley. The extreme stern of the boat where the shaft from the engines to the props turned and they had us painting, painting the skin of the ship and it was fresh out of the shipyard. It didn't need to be painted and as it turned out there was ice. The moisture in the air had frozen on the skin of the ship and we were painting over ice and I thought how stupid could you get. Is this the way the Navy does business? But you know I had to wait to learn what that was all about. The purpose was to get the crews' mind off the submarines. You put them to chipping and painting when there is no need for it. Just keep them busy with something physical so they don't sit around and exaggerate the problem or the threat. So I learned a lesson from that. I kind of backed off from my attitude towards the Navy.

LINDA: It's the old idle mind theory.

DUNCAN: Right. Keep the crews busy. Don't let them sit around.

LINDA: Did you have nightmares the times you were on the ship?

DUNCAN: No. I was very comfortable. I figured well this is home. Enjoy it while you got it or at least appreciate it. It is not first cabin but we never suffered for anything. We always had plenty to eat and a place to sleep. And we had a job to do. The sooner it is over the better that was my problem.

LINDA: When you were in the Normandy invasion, tell me about that.

DUNCAN: Well we were, we were attached to British forces so we went in on I think what they called Gold Beach. Yes we landed on Gold Beach and we were not the first wave. I think we actually came in on June 7th. The beach was secured. There was some wreckage. Not much but some wreckage. German prisoners being herded around doing odd jobs. The thing I thought was peculiar about those prisoners was they were Orientals, a good percentage were Orientals. So they obviously were, probably captured on the Russian front is my guess and forced into labor groups by the Germans on the Normandy Coast. Of course they would probably seek the first opportunity to surrender. They had nothing to lose. But beyond that I realize that a lot of guys gave their lives right where we were landing. Sobering thought.

LINDA: That it could have been you.

DUNCAN: Sure. I often thought how did I happen to get in the Navy in the first place. I gave up my privileges my choices. I was inducted. When you go down the induction line the last guy you talk to is a psychiatrist and he makes a decision for your life right there. Army, Navy, Army, Navy. I

don't know if he used his head or just used numbers. But I wound up in the Navy. I had no idea I would be that lucky shall we say.

LINDA: At that point in time you had no idea you would wind up in the invasion of Normandy, did you.

DUNCAN: Mr. Eisenhower wasn't sharing any secrets with me.

LINDA: Were you reading the paper, did you have a clue?

DUNCAN: No didn't have a newspaper. I regretted that in retrospect because now the newspaper is very important to me. I like to know what is going on in the world. Even though you realize in wartime that the news is going to be slanted, but at least you can read between the lines. No we didn't have any contact really; once in a while we would get something from the radioman. Had to sneak it into the conversation you know, illegally. But so much of this is retrospect you know. You realize you are making history after you are all through with it. Making history. You are fulfilling even bible prophecies. What stupid little job I am doing on a ship. Fulfilling prophecy. It is amazing. So that is one of the pluses I guess from all the negatives.

LINDA: When I talked to you on the telephone, the first time I called you, you said you loved history. What you did during that time gave you a perspective of pride historically?

DUNCAN: I wouldn't say I was proud of the fact that I was making history, just a reality. Maybe a little bit surprised that I was a participant because history is mostly a matter of looking back, learning lessons from what has already happened. Like Norris said we made our mistakes and the Axis made their mistakes. We just maybe made fewer mistakes or some unseen

hands tilted the scales so that it came out a certain way for all our sweating and straining. But I realize a little bit more about history now. You grow up, you read more, you get the overall picture of what it is all about. What is that saying? If you can't learn from the history that is past you are going to have to repeat it to learn the lesson. So I guess retrospect is appropriate. Why were we fighting a war? What was it all about? Must have been an overall purpose, even Winston Churchill suggested that. There was kind of an unseen hand that made things work out a certain way even when the outcome was absolutely negative, no hope and yet we pulled it out of the fire. I was just looking, well I think I mentioned that earlier that the evacuation at Dunkirk was a miracle in itself. It was four years later before we could gather enough strength to come back and take the continent. It might have taken 8 years or it may not have worked at all if those guys hadn't survived the evacuation of Dunkirk. 320,000 men. If we had lost those the whole chapter might be lost, maybe the whole book.

#### LINDA - TIME OUT FOR THE TRAIN

DUNCAN: Well you drive through a military camp and these guys are gearing up for war and you are obviously healthy and I couldn't lie to them. They would say how come you aren't in uniform. I would say well just breaks of the game. I said, I will probably be in it soon enough. I remember one guy he made a statement. It was kind of funny at the time but then it was realistic. He said you know we are just sitting around here just waiting to be pulled out and sent overseas. I am not earning my money, (This is an officer incidentally), I am not earning my money but he says the first guy that shoots at me I am underpaid. Very much underpaid.

LINDA: You said that you were a loner?

DUNCAN: Basically, yeah. I

LINDA: Start out I was a loner....

DUNCAN: I was a loner. I think part of that is from growing up in the country. A little three room school house, one building, three rooms, and you had a separator between the 6th, 7th and 8th grade and the rest of the room for the lower grades and everybody was pretty much on the same economic level. You could go down to Olympia and you could see all these fancy buildings, and the capital building and you begin to think you are the low end of the social stader you know. I think it kinds of bears down on you. But country kids have a different viewpoint of the world anyhow and sometimes you don't learn the social graces. You don't learn how to get along with people. You are embarrassed by certain situations. Living in a railroad atmosphere in a small railroad junction a stranger was always suspect. He is a bum; he is a hobo, a transient. It seems like you are always on guard on the defensive with strangers. And that kind of carries over into your social contacts. You are always testing the waters. Don't trust anybody. Various things involved.

LINDA: I guess it made you a more introspective sailor.

DUNCAN: I would say so. I don't think I appreciated my opportunities. Norris Long seemed to have an attitude hey I am here I am going for the top attractions even when we took a run up the Seine River to Rowin the first thing he did went he went ashore to get the charts he gets a taxi or gets a ride up to the Rowin Cathedral. Checks it all out. Goes to the place where they have a statue for Joan of Arc, comes back with all this historical stuff you know. He just fit right in. The world was his oyster. I stayed on board. Perfectly content to stay on board. The few occasions when I broke loose from my chain I remember we were in South Hampton and wandering around the streets with a couple of other fellas. An Army truck pulled up. Two guys

and they hollered to us you want to take a ride we are going to drive up to Winchester about 12 - 15 miles in-land you see. It is the rules you are not supposed to leave the environments of South Hampton. And I swallowed my caution and jumped aboard. And it was a great experience. The Rowin Cathedral. Got a great tour. Learned some history. A couple of Henry the 8ths wives were buried there and all these different things. I kind of pussy footed back to the ship with my fingers cross but got away with it. It is like it is so out of character you know. I'm supposed to be the straight guy you know. Here you are stretching your chain.

LINDA: Hoping you didn't get caught.

DUNCAN: Hoping I didn't get caught.

LINDA: Is that how you have lived your whole life?

DUNCAN: I suppose to a certain degree.

LINDA: Cautious.

DUNCAN: Well I like the word conservative. Maybe ultra-conservative.

LINDA: Have any regrets about that.

DUNCAN: Yes and no. It can work for you and against you. All part of the learning process.

LINDA: Takes every kind of person to make the world go round.

DUNCAN: Yes it would be pretty dull if we all had the same tastes. You drive into a city if everybody painted their house grey it would be depressing. You

have to have some rebels mixed in there to brighten things up. To give it some life.

LINDA: The Longs and the Stockdales.

DUNCAN: Fellas like that like Stockdale and Sarres, Fielder. I have a story to tell about Mr. Stockdale if I may. We were in New York. Manhattan. Lower Manhattan, Hudson River Side. We are on shore every night practically and some of the guys naturally would come in late. And of course if you came in late you were on report and there was some penalty to pay. Well Johnnie Wilson came in late but he was ingenious. They were loading stores and equipment and doing some work on the ship and they had a crane there and they were putting some stuff in this big steel bucket, lifting it up and setting it on the bow for the workmen. Well Johnnie made a deal. He got in the bucket with all this equipment and whatever and he ducked down in the bucket. Okay boys take her up. Sat him on the bow of the ship but Mr. Stockdale spotted this whole scenario. He saw it developing and as the bucket was being set down on the deck Mr. Stockdale was standing there and when Johnnie's head came up he was looking right into Mr. Stockdale's eyes. And he had his clipboard you know and you are on report. I will never forget that. I think that was probably the funniest thing that I experienced. That is my style of humor.

LINDA: It is pretty funny humor.

DUNCAN: Johnnie was a perfect guy for this part because when he popped he sat up above the bucket he was smiling. Always smiling. He had a tremendous personality.

LINDA: He told us that story.

DUNCAN: I am glad somebody got some good out of it besides me.

LINDA: I am going to have to let you listen to him tell it because he was saying when he was over...

DUNCAN: My recollection on your father's trip to the field hospital in Shurbert was that he had some problem with his eyes and I don't remember if we actually docked there. It was on June 7 of 44 which is the day after D-day I don't know whether we docked or he went in to the field hospital by small boat. That is about as much as I remember. But I thought that date was significant because Shurbert was not actually secured until June 27th. So it was still a hot spot. We may have secured the dock area and maybe they set up a hospital there I am not sure but that is my recollection of Henry going ashore there.

LINDA: What was the difference between the Atlantic Theatre and the Pacific Theater?

DUNCAN: Well for one thing, weather

LINDA: No you have to start it out the difference between

DUNCAN: The difference between the European Theater and the Pacific Theater, well my first reaction is weather. As you left New York there was snow on the ground and you arrive in Cuba, Guantanamo is where we went, and there was a warning out that everybody should be caution about sun exposure. Everybody taking their shirts off you know. One of the boys got a terrible sunburn. I don't know how he survived but he did and then of course you go through the Canal Zone. That is very warm and pleasant. We went ashore there. I think both the northern and southern outlets I think we were on shore there briefly. Then we went to San Diego. Still



pretty decent weather. Hawaii decent weather. Hanaweta, decent weather, Guam, Sapin, swimming off the boat 60 feet down see the bottom just clear as glass. Beautiful swimming water.

LINDA: I WANT YOU TO STOP A MINUTE AND REPEAT THAT. SHE IS TELLING HIM ABOUT JOHNNY WILSON'S INJURIES.

DUNCAN: Well we just don't realize how lucky we are.

LINDA: You remember him? I only know him after the accident and he had kids

DUNCAN: We are talking about John Wilson. After Linda, after you told me about his accident after he got back to civilian life and it didn't seem to change his personality obviously. He turned life into a positive thing but I remember when he was young, around twenty years old that was his characteristic. Always smiling, always happy. Nice guy to be around, and your father Henry Alvers. My major recollection is a beautiful smile and an easy laugh but took his work serious. Dependable person. Sense of humor.

LINDA: Now I want to ask you a question. Here is this young Duncan Robey with this kind of conservative personality and you are approaching the International Dateline. What was that like? You had to have known there was scuttlebutt out what was going to happen when you all cross the International Dateline. Do you remember that?

DUNCAN: Crossing the International Dateline to me was just another day but somehow or other the crew or the officers decided that this was an important day. I have a little card in my memoirs dated March or May 25, 45 heading for Okinawa eventually. Now here is this crazy stuff. They do all this work. They build this artificial pool and they make everybody

slide into it and they get a rub down with I don't know if it was paint or what it was but it was horrible stuff to get off. It was supposed to be fun I guess but to me it was just a pain in the neck. But Norris got some pretty good pictures of all this activity. And Captain French thought it was important to make a note of it. We are on the record you crossed, your name on this date, LST 534 big deal.

LINDA: Brings you back to idle mind stuff.

DUNCAN: Yeah well there were distractions or not distractions but ways of getting the tension off. And I suppose that was one of them. There was always the chance you could get hit by a Japanese torpedo. They were still alive and well but never but seemed to give much thought and when we got to Guam and then went up to Sapin it took a little what we call rest and rehabilitation for this type stuff so we went to a small island there and had a beer party. Of course I didn't drink beer and as Norris mentioned in his interview, Doug Brownell didn't drink so that six pack went to Norris and he did his best arose to the challenge - was only able to consume 16 as I understand - which is a pretty good accomplishment. But I don't remember him being poured back into the boat. He got on just as good as new. I don't remember what I was drinking if I was drinking anything. Must have had something there besides beer. I used to bargain my beer as a general rule. Norris' case is probably just take it, you know. But in other cases I would barter for something that was of interest to me. A book or something permanent. That is history. Meaningful, hopefully.

LINDA: You talked about swimming. Could you talk about that again?

DUNCAN: Well I recall a swimming party. What we did we opened the bow doors, dropped the ramp so it was a foot, foot and half above the water line and all the swimmers lined up there. All the guys looking at the other guy.

Who is going to be the first, you know? And I think it was Lt...from California, I can't think of his name right now, he said Robey you go first. Big honor. 60 feet of water boys. You had to have no fear of the water or else you would get spooked. But it was beautiful water. You could see all the coral

LINDA: Where was this?

DUNCAN: Sapin. Of course we did a lot of swimming and R & R in Honolulu and on the beach there in Waikiki but you couldn't get one of those surf boards. The ladies were on them. I guess servicemen we in an over supply at the time.

LINDA: I want to go back to for a second. I have a picture of you and Norris sitting in a restaurant called Jack Dempsey. Remember that.

DUNCAN: Yes, we had some interesting experiences in New York.

MATT:

DUNCAN: Norris and I had a lot of interesting experiences in New York. He seemed to know where to go. I just seemed to follow along in his wake and we either went to the Turf or we went to Jack Dempsey's. And there again we ordered two and he drank them both. But I also mentioned that he was a good sport. And I had to insert my conservative viewpoint here - I said we are going to see a good stage show while we are here - I think I tried to get in to Oklahoma, one of the big ones anyhow, maybe it wasn't Oklahoma. Well we did get into Sound of Norway. And I have always loved \_\_\_\_\_ music and I had to pay for the seat. Normally if they had space and you were in uniform - just go take a seat fella. This case I think I paid \$6 a seat which was big bucks to me but I felt it was worth it. Once in a

lifetime opportunity to see a Broadway musical. Well Norris being a good sport you know he went along. Never said too much about it. Yeah he is a good sport.

LINDA: I saw a picture of you at the Cafe Dempsey with Norris and you were basically a pretty good-looking sailor. Do you know that?

DUNCAN: Well I got away with a lot of things. I don't know. I always figured as long as God gives me a personality where I don't scare little kids I am going to settle for that. If he puts a little extra icing on the cake fine.

LINDA: Well I would say you got a lot of icing on the cake.

DUNCAN: Well I burned a lot of it. It is just ice moved in but we'll go for it.

LINDA: Did girls flirt with you when you went on leave?

DUNCAN: Well being a country boy I still had my running shoes on. I think I was, like I said a social misfit and for what it is worth when I was in the line for induction in Tacoma where I went to be inducted there is a kid in front of me and when he got up to the table where decisions were made this guy says close your eyes and put your finger on your nose and the poor kid couldn't find his nose. He was a born sympaletic and that made a lasting impression with me - I thought wow is that the kind of stuff that is out there in this world. Is it worth it? So that affected my social activity a great deal just that one incident.

LINDA: You didn't want to wind up in a hospital on penicillin huh?

DUNCAN: No. Because I don't think you ever really get rid of it. You may suppress it but you don't ever get rid of it. Maybe I was a little overboard on germs, plagues and things like that. Certain things I did not feel worth it.

LINDA: Do you have copies of the pictures Norris has of you and him?

DUNCAN: Yes I have pictures of us taken in Jack Dempsey and the Turf. No maybe not the Turf. I enjoyed my time in New York but I didn't have enough money though. Every time I turned around, what were we paid 30 a month. But I went to see a lot of good stuff. I remember one place I went into Jonah Jones, remember him? Not overly famous but a well-known black musician. Not a Louie Armstrong but had his style. I went to a couple of others. I have forgotten one show.

MATT: TAKE A BREAK HERE.

DUNCAN: Pump up the tires same as a clutch. And that thing would cut in every so often to keep the air pressure up for the clutches. Over that 24-cylinder roar you could pick out that Briggs and Stratton.

LINDA: Okay New York City.

DUNCAN: New York City interesting, what do they call it the Big Apple. There was something going on all the time, war or no war. I went to hear a violinist; Moscof was his name, just another great violinist to me. But I sat there enthralled. And his accompanist was I have forgotten his name now but very well known. And I ate it up. Saw Jonah Jones. Went up and watched the Perry Cuomo show in Radio City. Guest was Victor Borga; the vocalist was Margaret Whiting, Chesterfield or whatever it was. Perry Cuomo, beautiful voice. Still mellow as far as I know.

LINDA: That must have been something for you a little conservative country boy in the Big Apple.

DUNCAN: Yes. I don't even know where I got the nerve to appear in some of these places.

LINDA: Did your personality change a little while you were there? Did you take advantage of it?

DUNCAN: I suppose so. If I had more money I guess I would have gone berserk. There is so much going on in New York.

LINDA: Tell me about being seasick.

DUNCAN: Well I guess it is something you have to go through. I didn't have any trouble with seasickness as long as I was up on deck. Because the roll of the ship didn't bother me a bit as long as I could get the salt air and the waves and so forth but you get down below deck and smell the fuel oil and things like that and sometimes it brought on nausea. Like I say it affects everyone differently. I just got a bucket, I was on duty in the engine room, my four hours or whatever I was putting in. I just had my bucket there and when I had to I barfed in the bucket and kept on doing my job. And I guess I got off pretty easy. I think it was about 8 hours later I was able to take some food. Canned peaches as I recall. And this was about the time I was getting over my seasickness we hit Cape Hataris which is notorious for rough water. You get crosscurrents there. The ship was rolling and Lt. Stockdale is saying - just a floating coffin boys. That was good news of course to the sick seamen. Norris Craig was telling me that one kid was so sick he was running his head against the wall - the bulkheads. So it was rough for some and some didn't have a problem at all. I know from experience the kid I grew up joined the Coast Guard and he was finally

discharged because he had what you call chronic seasickness. He could never breakthrough, stabilize. Any other time I would get nausea would probably be in the English Channel where it gets very rough at times. But there again I was able to get up topside, get some fresh air and stabilize.

LINDA: Were you lonely on the ship? I know you mentioned being a loner but loneliness is different than a loner. Were you lonely?

DUNCAN: I am not so sure if I ever experienced it. Loneliness is just something that doesn't occur to me. As I have gotten older I appreciate people more. But it hasn't always been that way. But that is something that we deal with. Whatever our idiosyncrasies are we have to deal with them sometime and no one is going to come up with the perfect personality anyhow. But you should be working on it.

LINDA: If everybody had a perfect personality forget it, it would be boring. It is just interesting to see how different personalities deal with the same situation. You know everybody is going through the same war, everybody is on the same ship and the personality of each person is what brought the ship alive.

DUNCAN: Well that is the value of what you are doing here. We reach that common ground where we can all just open and put it all together maybe after all these years.

LINDA: Did you write letters or did anybody write letters to you?

DUNCAN: Well my folks wrote pretty regularly. A couple of girls in Evansville used to write to me. You know I can't think, you know Watington sounds like a name, is that one of the girls or two girls. I discovered early on that one of them is already engaged to a Marine so that correspondence faded away

and the other little girl I don't remember now it was just one of those ships that pass in the night you know. Nothing serious. The only thing I resented really was that I never got a letter from my dad. He left all the writing up to my mother. He had his hang-ups too.

LINDA: Maybe you are chip off the old block, you know.

DUNCAN: The apples don't fall far from the tree as they say. Yeah it is interesting.

LINDA: Did you ever tell your dad that - wish you had written.

DUNCAN: No. Or if I did it didn't change anything. He had a beautiful handwriting. I think that is what I wanted something to keep. But that is life you know. I have left a few gaps in the picture in the record so I am not going to point fingers at anybody but it is always fun to get letters so, very much fun.

LINDA: When did you get married.

DUNCAN: I didn't get married till I was 29 so I had been home, lets see discharged in 47 for two years before I got married.

LINDA: Did you have trouble adjusting to civil life afterwards?

DUNCAN: No I think I was pretty easy on myself. Basically when I got home I took a year off. Didn't do anything really. Folks had what we call in western Washington logged off land. It was logged off in the 1870's and the trees had grown back and they were 50, 60 years old and we burned wood for fuel so I spent part of that year just cutting that grove of tress and cutting firewood. No it wasn't much of an adjustment. I knew I wasn't going to go back to the railways especially. It is a good thing I didn't because when



the passenger trains quit railway express died with them. Kind of at loose ends.

LINDA: How did you get your wife?

DUNCAN: My wife was a waitress in my doughnut shop. We had five children. Three daughters, two boys. The marriage lasted 34 years. She died in 1983, 53 years old. They called it Alzheimer's. Sometimes they use that classification when they don't know what is wrong and they use the word MS frequently because they can't decide what is wrong. But I am very happy now I have a good wife and compensation comes in time. The books get balanced.

LINDA: How did you meet Carolyn.

DUNCAN: We actually met in church. I met Carolyn my present wife in church, which is probably one, the criteria that everyone should follow. If you have the same religion you should be able to harmonize to a point. So I have been very blessed with that. She has two grown kids; three grandchildren and I have eight grandchildren. I even have a great-grandchild already. The population explosion that is your baby so I did everything I could in that department. I contributed to the population explosion for what it is worth.

LINDA: That is something to be proud of.

DUNCAN: There again I have to live longer to appreciate all these things, so I should live to be a 100. My boss used to say that. He said only the good die young.

LINDA: You said something about you had a doughnut shop?

DUNCAN: Yup. We took a flyer it was crazy. I had a little savings, my buddy had the brains, his cousin had the talent to make doughnuts. So we enlisted him to get us off the ground. Show us what to do. It was a stupid time to start a doughnut business simply because you couldn't get shortening, had to have green stamps or blue stamps or something. Sugar was in short supply. But we struggled through. For about three years we struggled with that. My buddy died from cancer and I was sick of the doughnut business by then anyhow so I just backed out of it. Well I eventually ended up in the hardware business. As a follow-up I had family on the scene and I have always liked tools, hardware, so I started working for a couple of upstart hardware wholesalers and I spent 26 years at that. Nothing exciting, just do it, cover all the bases, so I feel real lucky that I was able to make a living and keep food on the table, bought an unfinished house and I would come home from work and drive a few nails, pay day buy some more boards, some more nails, and in about 20 years I had it all together.

LINDA: And were you working in the doughnut business then?

DUNCAN: No the doughnut business was in Seattle on University Way. Good place for a doughnut shop. A lot of students. Then I moved, well I worked in the hardware field in Seattle for 26 years and then eventually I retired as early as I could. The minute I saw daylight I bagged that eight to five. I have always wanted my freedom. I figured I am going to starve but I am going to be free. Then I don't know how it works out but you survive. You don't buy new toys. I get to buy a new car. But I get from A to B just like everybody else.

LINDA: You feel free?

DUNCAN: I feel free. But with freedom comes responsibility. Now I have to make sure I don't waste my time because I am running out of it. The years go on and on and they move a lot faster after 70. Better shape up.

LINDA: You are conscious of how you spend your time.

DUNCAN: Yes. I consider this interview time well spent.

LINDA: Even if we have to keep stopping for trains - huh.

DUNCAN: The trains, I would take them anytime.

LINDA: You mentioned music a couple of times. How did music affect your life?

DUNCAN: Well what is it said about music. Music has charms to calm the savage breast. I have always been inspired music. You ought to know that when you are in the military. You can't march to Beethoven but John Phillip Sousa that is on. Everything has its place and good music can bring tears to my eyes. A beautiful choir. It can enrich your life and I don't know music. I don't play an instrument. Can't read it. But it balances your life. You learn to have respect to those who God has give a certain skill to. I have my favorites but they are all good in their place. I don't recall coming over the system in the way of music. We did have movies pretty frequently. Don't remember any of the names of them. I am surprised that one of the men could remember the movie that played the night before the kamikaze hit us. Blew me away.

LINDA: That was John Wilson.

DUNCAN: Was that Johnny? Well another talent that he had I guess.

LINDA: Must of liked movies.

DUNCAN: He apparently had a good memory. You said he made an excellent interview. I am so glad you got it.

LINDA: His kids are grateful.

DUNCAN: I am sure they are.

LINDA: Ever cry when you were on the ship.

DUNCAN: No and  
As far as getting emotional to the point of crying I don't recall ever having reached that point. I can remember me being very thankful at times, realizing that certain things happen probably to spare my life and probably a couple of other men. That was quite a feeling. But to shed tears no.

LINDA: Did you ever pray?

DUNCAN: Well actually prayer is something you know it is not a formal thing as such. Prayer is something that you know you can say a prayer in a few words. You don't have to have certain position or fold your hands in any way. I was not religious should we say. I did read my bible when I was on the ship but I didn't understand it but I respected it. I realized that this is a unique book but I don't understand it. I need help. And it was 15 years before the doors really opened and I could make sense of it. But prayers are something that you can say in a few words. Depends on the situation. Beautiful sunset, beautiful sunrise, a beautiful act between people, kindness. All those things.

LINDA: The 534 had a charm about it. Tell me a story. Say the 534 did seem to capture a certain charm

DUNCAN: Well that is a little hard to put in words a ship having a charm but I believe that every person has a guardian angel. This might sound far out because you have 5 billion people on this planet and you can say where are you going to get enough angels for all these folks but I don't think that is impossible. How do we know how many times some angel stepped in and spared us disaster? When we were in the London docks so many times these buzz bombs start coming over. They don't even tell you what they are. Like they are afraid if you know you will panic. Those things used to impress me realizing that you are not dealing with another human being. If you throw up a lot of flack against one of those things it is not going to be deterred from its' target when it is due to tip over and explode. It is going to do it. I really got bugged about those things. And the B-2, if you heard them you were safe. If you didn't hear them you are dead because they move too fast. The ship like some of the other fellas mentioned, we were in London docks and a LST right alongside of us had been hit by one of those and the whole superstructure was gone. And then we got on a beach a strange thing happened. We are on the beach in France and here is a buzz bomb coming over our ship into France. Now I mentioned that to Norris Long and he said well the British had developed a defense. If they could get the right position they could overfly these things and tip them over on their wing. Throw their gyro off and turn around and go back. All sorts of crazy things. Of course they meant to steer them away from population centers mainly. But I am sure there were angels watching over our ship. The fact that we went through so much. I have even seen a mine floating on the surface within feet of our ship. Some of those explode by magnetic attraction. Things like that. Buzz bombs all around. Submarines. The whole bit. The fact that we made 29 round trips to France. Over twice the normal life of an LST and go back to the Pacific.

Might say start a new war against a different enemy. Now it was the end of the line of course, but there again, the three of us in that compartment were probably the closest to being wiped out. In fact the bridge had decided they had written us off. We were gone. What would cause John Shipe and a couple of others guys to come down to our compartment and check on us? Were they sent by somebody? I never talked to John about that but here he was probably the only guy on the ship that had the muscle to open that hatch. There he was. That is a charm I guess. It is a miracle. I still like to find the two guys that were in there with me. We have a lot to talk about. Maybe they would have some additional thoughts about that. I had a chance to talk to Frank Cotter oh what was it two or three years after the war. I was in St. Louis on a family matter and I called him but wasn't able to get together with him. I don't know where Frank is now and the other kid that was down there with us, Erwin Shankwitz so far as I know he was just a recent addition to the crew. And all I remember is he was from Chicago. Frank Cotter was from Granite City, IL. I don't know what has happened to either one of them. We all lived charmed lives and the LST I guess was part of it in this case.

LINDA: I found John Shipe and he said have you found Duncan Robey? I said no Mr. Shipe I haven't but you aren't the only person who has asked me that. Johnny Wilson wanted me to find Duncan Robey and Norris Long wanted me to find Duncan Robey. I said why do you want me to find Duncan Robey and he said you know Linda when the kamikaze plane hit and we were on fire I opened up they were down in the bilge area and I opened up the hatch and I have often wondered if he realizes that I saved his life. I was so moved by that storey that I promised him I would find you. And when I found you and confirmed that you were on the 534 I said to you do you know a guy named John Shipe - do you remember what you said to me? I do he saved my life. I called him and it made me cry too Duncan. I

called him and you know what I said - Mr. Shipe I found Duncan Robey and he knows that you saved his life. And he started crying.

DUNCAN: Well there you see that we take too many things for granted. We put off showing an expression of appreciation when we have an opportunity. That is why I say the fact that John was there at the right time whether he came on his own or somebody told him to come down there he wasn't going to write us off. When I banged on the hatch he was there.

LINDA: You wouldn't have five kids today if he wasn't there.

DUNCAN: Yes. Everything fits together in time. The only thing that I regret about that is that I was the first one out. Like I was chicken.

LINDA: So you said you are sorry that you were the first one out.

DUNCAN: Well for some reason, of course I had been on the phones. I had followed that plane around the other LSTs and I heard their gunfire on the phone whereas John and Irwin might have heard the gunfire. But I was getting the blow by blow description on the phone and repeating it verbally to the guys. I said he is coming around our stern and then we began to fire. He obviously was flying so low that you couldn't bear down on him and then in just a matter a seconds boom. Now the estimate was that it was a 500-pound bomb and I don't know if it went through the skin of the ship or under the ship but it blew up and we were 10 or 15 feet away.

MATT SAYING SOMETHING

LINDA: So you were hearing the bombing.

DUNCAN: I was kind of giving the boys a blow by blow as I listened and then boom. I began to do something. Apparently I wasn't as shocked as they were because they just stood there. I went over to the starboard hatch and I couldn't budge it and the water was starting to squirt in from the bulk edge and all that but the lights stayed on. Now I might have gone into a case of claustrophobia if those lights had gone out. I don't know what I would have done but the lights stayed on. Not sure about the phone. The phone might have gone dead. But the water starting to come - that was clue enough that it was time to bail out. So starboard hatch was jammed. I went back to the port hatch and I banged on it - open this up, open this up. And that is when John put his muscle on there opened it and the water was already coming in on that deck. Coming down through the hatch. We don't know how much water we had to go up through of course it was a piece of cake. It was only about a foot deep at that time. I was the first one out and got down on my knees and started hollering come on out guys, come on out. Frank was out next and Irwin he was a pretty cool guy. Neither one of them showed any excitement or panic. Cool as cucumbers. I was the nut running around loose you know. They both came out. If I saw them today I ... but you miss death by inches and you get right up and move on. Whatever you could do. The ship was. I don't exactly remember what I did but I remember I went back to the crews quarters and somebody came and said hey we wrote you guys off. I said yeah I guess so. We weren't far away from it. And then somebody said you have to get down there we are fire. I guess some of the cargo was on fire. So anyhow, quite an episode. And that compartment even when we were on the beach it was full of water right after that hatch. Things happen. We don't always know why.

LINDA: Did you go through the typhoons?



DUNCAN: My recollection of the typhoons is we had one every month. September we had a typhoon. October we had a big one. You may find some of the details and statistics in those books there. 300 vehicles or vessels were below the shore or something. That was a rough one. Winds were about 140 miles an hour which you know if you read the disasters occurring across the country now you realize that was chicken feed you know. Small time stuff but you could not walk in it. You had to crawl. You can't walk against 140 mile an hour wind. That part had some interesting things. We were afloat even though we were flooded up front and we had our engines, we had our screws and I guess the order was to beach it. You have to stay on the beach. Don't allow us to be pulled out to sea because we are dead. Our keel is broken. Ship is going to part company. So beaches were ordered. We weaved around there, we bumped up against the MacDonald Victory, it was right one of our guys panicked. He probably figured our ship is going to go down so he jumped across - no names onto the McDonald Victory. He jumped back and he wanted to say we are going to survive and we weaved our way through - no damage. We found a spot to beach it; we rammmed it at full speed. Kept the screw turning to hold her on the beach so the wind wouldn't blow us out into open sea. And that is where she wound up. Waiting for the cu de crau.

LINDA: It seems Mother Nature was worse than the enemy.

DUNCAN: Did more overall damages. I have got pictures. Maybe I should have brought those to you. The shore was just littered with all kinds of vessels. Double decks, undersides, stern down, bow down, man what a mess.

LINDA: Overstake was a signalman - do you remember him? Ed Overstake.

DUNCAN: I can't picture him in my mind but he is the guy that wound up a 25 year veteran with the Salvation Army wasn't it. Interesting experience. I

wonder, I haven't responded to his letter. I have to do that. At least touch base with him. And I am really concerned about all these people we can't locate and I feel responsible for that to a certain degree because some of these people I had an address on them once.

LINDA: Ed Overstake he was a signalman during the typhoon so he told me that he was on the light and these small boats out in the harbor were signaling could we tie up to you and he was signaling back get out of our way we are out of control. He said it was a very tense time.

DUNCAN: See I missed that.

LINDA: You were probably down....

DUNCAN: I have to remember now. I must have been topsided because I remember bumping into the MacDonald Victory.

LINDA: You said you kept a little book and you said you were really supposed to do that. Can you tell us about that?

DUNCAN: The reason they discouraged or gave us an order sometimes people ignored the fact that they were keeping notes, a diary you might say. I always felt that the main objective of that was in case you were captured or these notes fell into enemy hands it might be useful to them. So I took a pretty conservative approach to it, what I wrote didn't really have a lot of meaning to anybody but me. And I guess I got away with it because I still have the notes.

LINDA: You told be since I been calling you and kind of forcing you to relook at all this, which I guess I didn't force you because you wanted to go there with me apparently, tell me about that.

DUNCAN: Well to bring these things back I think that just fits into reading your history. Learn the lessons even though they are disagreeable and bring out certain memories that you are not comfortable with, they are things you have to deal with and it is part of personality development, just maturing. The past is only sort of a blueprint. You just have to read it right. You are going to make mistakes but you hopefully won't make the same ones and like I mentioned earlier if you don't learn from history you are going to have to repeat it to learn the lessons so I say look back and glean what you can from the past so that you don't have to go through it again.

LINDA: What value is it to you that we are doing this documentary?

DUNCAN: Well the value of this enterprise is you are putting a human family spin on something that was more or less obligatory. You put on a uniform and go through all the motions and learn a trade or learn a different way to destroy your fellow man and you forget that human lives are involved here. Lives are being disrupted and in your father, Henry's case, breaking up a family, running the risk of a widow and orphans. So I think we should take advantage of the opportunity to put all of our lives together and learn from each other. Your experience, my experience, and maybe come up with some guidelines for the future. Even though we are past that three score and ten who knows how many years are given to us. I am sad to see how many have departed and that to me kind of increases the urgency to get involved to appreciate the miracles, the friendships that we just sort of took for granted. Should be a good day. Appreciate your hard work.

LINDA: It has been great. There is no hard work here at all, Duncan.

DUNCAN: That is good. There is no better thing than to enjoy your work, if it is work.

MATT: If you had to do it over again knowing what you do now about war, this particular war, would you have done the same thing?

DUNCAN: Well having the advantage of the years, in retrospect I think I might have been a consciences objector. If I understood my bible it would have helped. If I had understood that war is something that man is going to have to abolish. He is going to have to learn peace. He is not going to learn war anymore. If I had understood that at the time I probably would have been a consciences objector for all the shame and being ostracized has resulted from that in my community. I could usually have perceived that from a selfish standpoint. When I took my physical I had sugar in my urine and basically I was rejected. Either diabetes or potentially diabetic. But by then I had set my course and I wasn't willing to take that course at that time. So I went home and readjusted my lifestyle. Went back and got a clean bill of health.

LINDA: Do you think somehow you were in search of something at that time of your life? I mean you easily could have walked away when they rejected you for sugar in your urine. That was your chance to run the other way. Were you testing yourself?

DUNCAN: Well it was a conflict at that time of my life, it was a conflict. You read your bible; you respected that book like a blue jacket, a manual from God to its human family. But I was in a system of a religious system, which says you can kill under certain circumstances. Conflict, complete conflict you see and this was certainly bothering me. I wanted to be loyal and help my country but I didn't want to kill and yet I could not find a middle course. And the embarrassment like I said being around a military port or

installation and seeing guys with families ready to lay down their lives, I felt a certain obligation to do my part. As minimal and ineffective as it was. I felt I had to put the uniform on even though my heart wasn't in it. Maybe I was just afraid of criticism from society, I don't know.

LINDA: Well everybody was doing it back then.

DUNCAN: There are 3 million, 500 thousand sailors out there at one time. Probably each one of them had their crudders.

LINDA: Had their conflicts.

DUNCAN: Yeah and the surprising thing is I never belonged to a church in those days but you read the ten commandments, thou shalt not kill and yet these churches were saying there is a time when you can or should for your country's sake. It is just so confusing.

LINDA: What kind of religion were you?

DUNCAN: Well basically just the run of the mill protestant. I wasn't catholic and like I said I never joined a church because I couldn't resolve all these differences. These conflicts. Down the street you have two or three churches all claiming to be on the right track. It is impossible. I think I took my conflicts right into uniform. But anyhow, there is a course and it works and a course I have followed for almost 38 years now. If you call yourself a Christian you ought to follow Christ. Simple as that. So my conflicts are basically resolved. But boy at that time I was on the ropes.

LINDA: Being at war and being on a ship doesn't help the conflict.

DUNCAN: Well it made me think when I looked at acres and acres of Plymouth and London just wiped out and you know right across the channel the same thing was happening to the cities in Germany and France and it is impossible to resolve that. Sensibly that is. And of course I lost a few friends from the neighborhood there. A few school friends from Olympia High School. Kind of made me stop of think you know. The waste of human resources, material resources, all the sacrifices made in the home front. And then you pull out of port and get something. So ridiculous. Depressing.

LINDA: you served under Captain Olsen and Captain French. What was the difference in the LST 534 between those two men?

DUNCAN: Well at the time that I was on the ship my feelings were not necessarily too well, not too clear in my mind as far as the leadership was concerned. My first experiences were the Navy was kind of dumb you know. They do stupid things. Painting over ice. Things like that. But I realize from Norris Craig's? Interview and a little bit of reflection that Mr. Olsen was extremely competent. He knew his sailing. Made good decisions and maybe that is the reason we had a very successful expedition into the European Theater. I don't think Mr. French had the experience and background maybe but nonetheless we ran our course and accomplished our assignments pretty well. But I stayed away from the officers. I think I only had one conversation with Captain French. It was after we got hit and they were removing ammunitions from the floury into the ship. Our compartment had flooded and I asked Captain French, well can't this be used. The old Scotch you know what are we going to do with the leftovers you know. Can't those shells be used? He said no after they have been wet, especially salt water they become unstable. They were going to take them out and dump them in deep water and you know how many man hours were involved in those shells and all they are meant for is to blow

something up. Take them up and dump them in deep water, they are unstable. But I realized that he had some smarts too. I don't think I had near as much respect as I should have had. My shipmates or my officers. Kind of rebellious. Misfit. Cantankerous.

LINDA: When there were fires you grabbed this book.

DUNCAN: You know I don't really know how I came by that. I must have been rummaging through some of the flotsam and jetsam from the whole affair and discovered it. There again I salvaged some of the craziest stuff. Makinster had his head on straight. He got the pearl handle pistol of souvenirs.

LINDA: He was a signalman, what do you expect? He deals with flags.

DUNCAN: Yeah that is a natural. I should have thought of it that way. What would a motormac save as a souvenir? A briar of diesel oil.

LINDA: Was that a reference book you used?

DUNCAN: I never used it but I understand you look through there and you realize the complexity of the equipment that was put together for us. That engine for example in the apartment where we were trapped, that particularly pumping station was added in the States when we came back from Europe. It was not there when we went to Europe. Its purpose was in case the pumps in the auxiliary room were disconnected or ruptured you could start up this diesel engine with a pump attached and pump out the bowl tanks, the landing tanks to increase your buoyancy, whatever. I don't know how much it cost to put that engine in there; it was a 6 in line Hercules diesel. Beautiful little diesel engine. It was never used. They put it in, tuned her up, shut her down and was never used. But

LINDA: Hey if you were running the Navy it would have been different, right?

DUNCAN: Yeah.

LINDA: How would it have been different?

DUNCAN: I would have put that in a truck and put it on the road.

LINDA: Do you remember meeting that pretty dark haired photographer at Jack Dempseys?

DUNCAN: I have a picture of her someplace.

LINDA: You two would have made kind of a cute couple.

DUNCAN: Really. Where was my agent? No I don't remember too much about her except that she autographed a photograph. Jackie I think was her name.

LINDA: You are right.

DUNCAN: Jack Dempseys was kind of an interesting place. It attracted a lot of interesting people.

LINDA: What kind of people?

DUNCAN: Oh a good cross-section of human nature. Humanity.

LINDA: I think Norris was jealous that day.

DUNCAN: You really think so. He was holding on to his drink though.



LINDA: Because he didn't have that girl to hang on to. I think Norris always wished that he was as good looking as you were.

DUNCAN: Well he didn't have any problems. I think he did rather well. He didn't seem to be concerned or otherwise.

LINDA: I don't think he was negatively jealous I think he was fun jealous.

DUNCAN: I don't know where he came up with this Doington stuff but that was his trademark for me. Doington.

LINDA: Duncan was too simple, huh?

DUNCAN: I guess.

LINDA TO MATT - You get one and half questions - What are they?

MATT: This guy Wilfred Owen who is actually one of the last people to die in World War II, one of the things he said to a poet's response is all a poet can do is warn about war. What is it that you feel that you have to teach your kids about war?

DUNCAN: What can I teach my children about war. Well that is a tough question because they are growing up in this society and our present society is sort of every man for himself. It is hard to get across the principles of, I think the basic lesson of history is that man has never learned how to live with his fellow man. And all the systems that man has put together has failed. Even democracy. Churchill made that statement. He said - Democracy is a failure or something to that effect but it is the best of all the systems. So I think we have made a failure of government, we have made a failure of

getting along with each other. We have been created in the image of God but we act like animals. So I don't know I guess my children are going to have to learn it the hard way. It is not an easy solution. You can't put a brush across it and cover the whole thing.

LINDA: You said you had conflict for a long time. How did you resolve it?

DUNCAN: Well the solutions in the blue jacket manuals for Christians. The Bible. Until you understand that book and it is a miracle when you do because the world we are in is so confused, so mixed up, as soon as you resolve that - this is your guide book and God is not the author of confusion, and a Christian should follow Christ not some idea that a man puts together. So it was more than just resolving my own confusion but just getting all my ducks in a row.

LINDA: Some people are able to get their ducks in a row earlier than you were.

DUNCAN: Well they may have been more comfortable than I was. They may have died in confusion possibly. But the playing field will be leveled at some time. Nobody dies alone. There is another day when they will see the light again and they will have a clean shot at it. Not this kind of system. Too confusing. So what's to worry. It is all going to come out in the end.

LINDA: I know people with internal conflict who are 60 years old. That internal conflict and turmoil inside never allows them to see the beauty.

DUNCAN: Well it is, well I like to use the expression that God is equal opportunity. No one has ever lived, or is living, or will live, will be denied the opportunity to get their head on straight. It is a fact to learn what life is all about. It may not happen now but it will happen at some time. There is a time and a place and in my case I just had 40 years of age I decided my

children were just growing up. I went to a minister and I said look I want my children to grow up with some understanding of God and the bible what should I do? I have never been baptized, how do I get baptized. He said well you know it is just symbolic. I thought well that doesn't sound right but he is supposed to be a minister. So we went through the motions. I even joined this little group. Technically I rejected it. In about two months I was sick of it. Here I thought here is a man educated in the flock, he is supposed to understand the bible and he tells me that I can have a choice I can be immersed or sprinkled. And every time I had a questions I got this ambiguous answer - well that is symbolic or in the seminary where I went 40% thought this way and 60% thought the other. I thought this is not sensible. And then I begin to discover that there was somebody out there who was trying to do it right and say it right and explain it right so from that point on I just found out there was a source of truth and when you stumble over the truth you better get up and keep moving. Don't miss your opportunity. Like I say I have faithfully been following that principle for 38 1/2 years, 38 years I think, but it is each in his own time. I can't convince you of anything. You can't convince me of anything. It has to be you. The real thing or nothing.

LINDA: What do you do everyday to keep busy since you got rid of that 8 to 5 job.

DUNCAN: I like to garden. I like flowers. Growing things. We live in a mobile court you know. Very limited space. You have to bring in your own dirt to make it grow. I just try to stay alive. Try to learn a little something every day. Keep in touch with the news. I take two newspapers. I did take the Wall Street Journal for a while. Just don't have time for all of it. Keep my eyes on Jerusalem, which is the center of the world in many respects. Just keep your head on straight. Don't get distracted. Realize that time is the most precious thing you have. That old expression I have

more time than money doesn't work. You will surely run out of time and there will be enough money to bury you. So quit worrying about it.

LINDA: Have you ever been to...

DUNCAN: No but I would like to go except that this is a poor time to do it. I wouldn't be surprised I wind up there some day if I am still alive. But it is going to look like the poorest time in the world to go I am sure. When they say go, I go.

LINDA: Anybody helping you?

DUNCAN: I have been very fortunate. Very fortunate. I had a little problem with my heart about a year ago but it was, I have what do you call it irregular heartbeat. Went down to the VA and they thumped and diagnosed and suggested a couple of medications. Very simple stuff. I may even get rid of that eventually. But then I woke up see. That was kind of a wake up call. So then I started checking my vitamin cabinet and adding a few things to that and taking them on schedule. Not just hit and miss. Quit drinking caffeinated coffee. That helps. Caffeine and alcohol both will wipe out your vitamins. My brother-in-law he is smart enough to stay away from coffee period. I wasn't quite able to do that. So I drink decaffeinated, naturally decaffeinated.

LINDA: Folgers.

DUNCAN: Folgers, the very best.

LINDA: Is there anything else you would like to say.

DUNCAN: I think I have said enough. Unless you have a question,

LINDA: I could listen to you all day.