

Murphy, Timothy USN

[00:00:14.13] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I was born in Brookline, Mass, grew up in North Cambridge my whole life, high school, and then entered into the Navy. My father was a linotype operator for the Boston Globe. My mother was a homemaker. And that was about it. I didn't have a very large family, just me.

[00:00:44.08] MARC HENDERSON: How old were you when you began your service in the Navy?

[00:00:47.11] TIMOTHY MURPHY: 19.

[00:00:49.09] MARC HENDERSON: And what year was that?

[00:00:50.35] TIMOTHY MURPHY: 1969.

[00:00:52.54] MARC HENDERSON: And the draft had been going on. What were your impressions of that?

[00:00:57.91] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Scared to death. I did not particularly want to go to Vietnam, did not want to be a ground troop. I had graduated from high school in '69-- May, June '69. And about two weeks into June, about 10 o'clock at night, I had a call from a city councilor who lived two houses up the street from me. And I got a call from him telling me that I was going to see my draft notice in about two weeks.

[00:01:36.53] I saw that, talked to my parents, and I said, "I don't want to get drafted." So I went down to the Navy recruiters, did the tests and everything like that, and they said, "Yep, we want you." So I signed the paperwork, did all the tests, joined the Navy. And one of the things I will remember after I had done all my paperwork was getting ready to be transferred to Great Lakes, the old Army base which was on the harbor, which is now the cruise ship terminal.

[00:02:16.40] They had a group of draftees there. We could see them, and the Marines were still choosing draftees. So you could see the Marine gunny sergeant going down the line and counting every 10th guy. They were not too happy. So I knew I had made a great choice.

[00:02:41.96] I wound up at Great Lakes in-- was it the end of June, beginning of July 1969, and that was a two-month boot camp.

[00:02:56.55] MARC HENDERSON: Before you walked down to the recruiter, you said you were scared to death of Vietnam and being drafted, what had you heard? What was--

[00:03:04.71] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Everything you see on the TV. You'd seen the firefights and the reaction to the Soldiers that were coming home and what was going on. I didn't want to be involved in that. And my father was a Army World War II vet. He had landed at Normandy on June 7th. He was Army engineer, so he was always behind the troops. Never would talk about what happened.

[00:03:39.23] I didn't know anything about what he did until after I had come back from Vietnam. And if I had avoided the draft or done something like that my father would have never talked to me. I would have been dead to him. And I've always heard good things about the Navy, so I decided that was the best thing to happen.

[00:04:08.96] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I had signed an agreement because I did very well on the tests for the Navy's six-year nuclear program. I go up to Great Lakes and going through all the tests and they found out that I was slightly colorblind. If you had five shades of gray I saw three shades of gray. It doesn't go too well on a submarine, especially when you're wiring things.

[00:04:37.00] So they told me at boot camp that they did not feel the six-year program was right for me, so they changed me down to a four-year program, and they offered me a choice of five different rates-- radar, radio, medical, one or two other things. I forget what they were. So I put down radio, radar, and medic. And I thought, geez, becoming a medic would be a great thing.

[00:05:22.21] I get back to the barracks after doing that and I told one of the guys what I had done and he looked at me and he said, "What? Are you crazy? Medic? You know what that means?" I said, "I'll wind up in a Navy hospital and get some medical training. I could really get a good job in that." He said, "Yeah. Do you know that all Navy medics are in the Marine Corps?" "Oh."

[00:05:50.05] [LAUGHTER]

[00:05:51.40] I didn't want to wind up in there. So I luckily wound up with radar, which became a new rate called operation specialists, OS. So I went to A school at Great Lakes, did well with that, finished that.

[00:06:14.12] MARC HENDERSON: Is there any memorable experience from boot camp that stands out?

[00:06:18.08] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I wound up with night baking duty for a week. So it meant we baked at night, slept during the daytime. So for Service Week, it was the easiest way of going because we got a hell of a lot better fed at night than most of the guys did during the daytime.

[00:06:44.45] MARC HENDERSON: What were some of the things that you baked?

[00:06:47.81] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Rolls, bread, pastries, cakes. And yeah, the bakers really treated us much better than some of the other people were treated. So I didn't have no complaint with that whatsoever.

[00:07:07.56] MARC HENDERSON: And then when you got to A school, what were some of the things that they taught you about radars?

[00:07:14.33] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Well, I mean, all the different things about radar parameters, what frequency meant, what the scan of a radar would, which you would have a

circular scan, where you have an attack radar, that type of thing. One of the things as a radarman that you would do on board a ship is you'd use a board we called the maneuvering board.

[00:07:43.33] The maneuvering board was a compass rose with all degrees marked on it and lines showing mileage and distance and you'd plot a ship's position from your radar scope to that and you'd be able to tell course and speed and inform the bridge, which was interesting. And then radar school being in Great Lakes, we get off for the weekend if we didn't have a duty, we'd wind up going down to Chicago or Milwaukee. So that could be fun.

[00:08:22.06] MARC HENDERSON: How often did you get the liberty to do that?

[00:08:25.30] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Quite a few times.

[00:08:28.62] MARC HENDERSON: And did A school adequately prepare you for your job once you got to ship?

[00:08:34.68] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Absolutely not. You had to learn all over again. Now, I had been assigned to a destroyer that was home-based out of San Diego, USS Southerland, DD-743, which was a World War II Gearing-class destroyer. It had gone through what they call FRAM. In other words, everything from the main deck up was removed. She kept her dual 5-inch/38s forward, and her rear gun mount, which was a dual 5-inch/38. Everything above deck was new.

[00:09:23.88] When I wound up on board Southerland, we were getting ready for deployment and they were short radarmen. So I didn't wind up-- usually, you wind up on board a new ship and one of the first things you wind up is doing mess duty. I avoided that. So I was pretty lucky. And you have to learn new things, you have to learn the way the ship wants it done, and you're also the target. You're the new guy.

[00:10:05.12] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Sparse. On board our ship, our quarters were in the aft part of the ship and we were in a compartment that slept approximately 60 men and they were all various operations rates, which would have been radarmen, radiomen, quartermasters, and electronic technicians. So it was pretty crowded.

[00:10:38.89] And you would sleep on board a rack. And anybody who was in the Navy knows what a rack is. It was a extruded piece of aluminum that would have a canvas strung over it and taut. You would have a mattress which was maybe about two inches thick and would fit, not uncomfortable, but you're sleeping there. And when you're at sea, well, our location-- we're underneath the propellers. You tend to get a lot of vibration.

[00:11:17.50] You had a lower area underneath the three-- we generally had three racks-- lower rack, middle rack, upper rack, and the new guys usually wound up on the lower rack. And there were cabinets that they had made underneath the racks and you had three different containers. So each guy had to put his sea bag in there. And then there was a cabinet on another part of the living quarters where you stored your pea coat and that type of thing.

[00:11:57.28] MARC HENDERSON: How was the food on board?

[00:12:00.01] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Not bad. Perfectly adequate. I mean, it was hot. Some of the stuff I didn't care for. Fried rabbit was not one of my favorite choices.

[00:12:13.78] MARC HENDERSON: Did you say fried rabbit?

[00:12:14.93] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Fried rabbit, yeah. Southerners liked it.

[00:12:24.37] MARC HENDERSON: What year was it that you reported on board?

[00:12:26.50] TIMOTHY MURPHY: 1969. I was on her 1969 till I left the Navy. Active duty, 1973.

[00:12:34.21] MARC HENDERSON: And how many WestPacs did you do?

[00:12:36.19] TIMOTHY MURPHY: We did three.

[00:12:41.64] TIMOTHY MURPHY: They were from all walks of life. I mean, I met guys that were from New York City. And a lot of Midwestern kids joined the Navy because they didn't want to be stuck on the farm for the rest of their life, or they were going to get drafted and they did the exact same thing I did-- they'd rather be in the Navy than be in a foxhole.

[00:13:11.08] Some blacks, some good old Baptist Protestants. I mean, I'm Roman Catholic and that was a complete different revelation, different beliefs, different understandings of things. I mean, I grew up in a very mixed community. I went to school with blacks, with Jews, some Hispanics, and you would get the sense that there was a big difference in ethnicity.

[00:13:53.16] Some had no use for blacks. I met a guy who was a Mormon and it was really, for me, scary how Bible-oriented he was. Being Catholic, quite frankly, I may have read catechism and things like that but I never read the Bible. He was constantly reading the Bible. So it's different. You meet people with different backgrounds, different educations.

[00:14:27.81] MARC HENDERSON: So in the United States in 1969, '70, '71 the time that you were on the ship there were a lot of social tensions in the United States. Did any of those tensions make their way to your ship or the crew?

[00:14:43.59] TIMOTHY MURPHY: They were just starting to. I avoided most of them.

[00:14:48.34] MARC HENDERSON: Can you think of a specific example?

[00:14:52.96] TIMOTHY MURPHY: There was a young guy-- this was when I'm a second class-- who was part of my division, and he was a young black guy, very nice kid, and I wouldn't ask him to do anything that I never did as a Sailor. And you're new to the division, if you are told to clean the brightwork and to scrape the deck and polish the deck, that's what you did.

[00:15:27.25] And there were some new blacks who had gotten on board the ship, who he was involved with, and his attitude changed considerably because we were white and he was black. And he did some things where I had put him on report and they just wouldn't enforce-- if I had done the same thing, I would have been put in captain's mast, which was non-judicial punishment issued by the captain for doing something you shouldn't have done. They didn't want to cause a problem.

[00:16:12.22] MARC HENDERSON: So he wasn't disciplined?

[00:16:13.89] TIMOTHY MURPHY: No. But if it was me doing the same thing I would have been disciplined.

[00:16:21.60] MARC HENDERSON: How much time did you have to yourself?

[00:16:23.61] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Not a bad amount of time. I mean, if you were at sea, you would either have-- well, when we went to WestPac we went to port and starboard watch. Now, port and starboard watch means you were on for four hours, you were off for four hours. You were on, off, that type of thing.

[00:16:45.49] But with the type of job that I did, I had full access to the ship. After part of the ship, the after-mast area, had the electronic warfare shack, which was up above the helicopter hangar. I could go up there and just take a blanket with me and a pillow and I could sleep up there. Nobody was going to bother me. They knew where I was. But I think a destroyer is far better than being on a carrier.

[00:17:22.84] Gearing-class destroyer was about 390 feet long. I think it was about 50 feet wide, had a dual 5-inch/54 gun forward, a dual 5-inch/54 aft. Amidships, we had an ASROC. An ASROC was a missile launching torpedo. You would have a canister that was in the middle of the ASROC container and there were like eight missiles there. Basically, the weapon system was for anti-submarine warfare.

[00:18:05.88] The after part of the ship, you had a deck which was kind of a helicopter deck. It was built for a system called DASH, which was the Navy's first attempt at using a remote control helicopter for ASW use. It was not heavy. So our ship could not take the weight of a regular-sized helo. The heaviest thing that could land on our rear deck would be like a Army Huey.

[00:18:47.20] Our bridge, the forward part of the bridge was the operations center. CIC was right behind the bridge. We had the sonar shack there. My EW shack was right next to that. Radio central was down below that. Then you had the officer's wardroom. And you were close by to the kitchen spaces, that type of thing. The food decks were on the lower decks.

[00:19:18.49] MARC HENDERSON: Could you get food anytime or only at meals?

[00:19:20.71] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Only at meals. It's not light to carry, having a 24-hour meal system.

[00:19:27.76] MARC HENDERSON: What did you do for recreation on your off-duty time?

[00:19:31.54] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Well, I would probably read or that type of thing. I didn't play cards. And card playing was a big thing and a lot of it was gambling, which was not allowed. You would have guys who would play guitar, that type of thing. So basically, me, reading.

[00:20:00.81] MARC HENDERSON: And do you have any specific memories of pop culture? Were there any movies on board?

[00:20:07.20] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Oh, they would occasionally do movies and we'd see movies which weren't that old. And if we were going over to WestPac, and even when we were over in WestPac, captains would-- usually if there was downtime, we'd have a barbecue on the rear deck, and we'd also have swim call.

[00:20:37.76] We weren't doing anything, we were in between patrols and everything like that. They'd stop the ship and throw over a cargo net and we could go swim. And then you think about it. They'd have somebody up on the upper part of the bridge that had a 50-caliber machine gun in his hands, anti-shark detail.

[00:21:02.91] MARC HENDERSON: Did that keep you from swimming?

[00:21:04.44] TIMOTHY MURPHY: No. Most of the destroyers that they have now today have a very high freeboard. You take an old Gearing-class destroyer like I was on, the rear deck area, you did not have a high freeboard. You were maybe at the most at times 6 feet from the deck down to the water. It's easy to jump overboard and easy to get back on board the ship.

[00:21:40.77] TIMOTHY MURPHY: No. We had basic systems. Electronic warfare was just starting. So it was a very-- even at the time, it was an antiquated system. Because you go to bigger destroyers at that time and DLGs, and of course carriers, they had a system called NTDS, Naval Tactical Data System, which was a computer relay system between ships that were equipped with it.

[00:22:12.83] My old tin can was not equipped with that. So we had basic surface search radar, air search radar, and a SQS-23 sonar, which were all late '50s innovations.

[00:22:34.74] MARC HENDERSON: You mentioned having the DASH-1 on board. So in your three deployments operating around Vietnam, did you ever do operations with the DASH?

[00:22:47.23] TIMOTHY MURPHY: No. It was the type, a piece of equipment that was so bad. They would try to launch it and it would go off somewhere never to be seen again. It didn't work very well. It was shortly abandoned in '69.

[00:23:12.33] MARC HENDERSON: Describe just a quick overview of your first WestPac.

[00:23:17.90] TIMOTHY MURPHY: A lot of paperwork. Because you'd have to fill out all the requisition cards that you needed for your deployment to get all the electronic parts that you needed.

[00:23:32.69] MARC HENDERSON: Is that for a six-month deployment?

[00:23:35.06] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Yeah. Well, actually, our deployments were like nine months. But you have to get your supplies on. And we would be ordering transistors, resistors, capacitors, tubes, all of that type of thing that we would need in order to maintain our gear. And we'd have to do the paperwork on the pieces of gear that we were responsible for. So you're filling maybe 50 to 60 cards in order to make sure that the naval supply system would get the parts on board that you needed.

[00:24:09.59] So you'd have a lot of preparation work, a lot of busy work. And you're also trying to get everything repaired. So you may-- in San Diego, we would go alongside a tender. A tender would be a ship that would be a repair ship and it would have many shops on board. And you could take a piece of electronic gear that let's say wasn't up to specs and take it over to the tender. They had the technicians to repair it, get it up to specs, and get it back to you because you were a priority because you were going on deployment.

[00:24:46.27] And also you take on stores, get ready to go. And then we had a trip to a place that they called Seal Beach. Seal Beach was not the San Diego-- south of Long Beach, and it's the naval ammunition base. You'd go there and you'd take on your 5-inch shells and your powder. And it's an all-hand detail.

[00:25:17.29] Of course, I was a seaman at the time, but later went up in ranks. And it's an all-day affair. They're coming down with the 5-inch shells that you're loading on board.

[00:25:28.93] MARC HENDERSON: By hand, right?

[00:25:29.62] TIMOTHY MURPHY: By hand. They would get a pallet, they'd lower the pallet up on the deck and everybody would be there in line picking up a shell and sending it and then passing it down the scuttles to the guys who were below who were putting it in the magazines. That was not fun.

[00:25:52.64] And once you were ready for deployment you'd be going through exercises with other ships, making sure that your respects to what you were supposed to be doing. Then on deployment, you would have maybe one or two destroyers or maybe a whole DESRON, destroyer squadron, you'd be going over at one time.

[00:26:16.79] So you'd be going from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, from Pearl Harbor to Midway, from Midway to Guam, doing refueling in Guam. And then after you left Guam, you would either do one of two things. You would either go to Yokosuka or Sasebo up in Japan, which meant Sea of Japan duty, or you'd head to the Philippines. Philippines would be Subic Bay. From Subic Bay you can then get deployed to Tonkin Gulf.

[00:26:58.27] MARC HENDERSON: What were your first impressions the first time that you arrived in Tonkin Gulf?

[00:27:02.80] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I didn't know what the hell was going on. And it's a pretty big place and a lot of activities.

[00:27:08.65] MARC HENDERSON: And what year was this?

[00:27:10.15] TIMOTHY MURPHY: '69.

[00:27:11.77] MARC HENDERSON: So you went from boot camp to A school onto the ship right on deployment and right over to Vietnam, essentially.

[00:27:22.42] TIMOTHY MURPHY: First deployment was to Yokosuka. And Yokosuka was something else. It was Japan. I had no idea what Japan was, and Yokosuka is a huge naval base. And the city is bustling. So this E3 with other guys in your whites going out into Yokosuka for the first time and it's mind-boggling.

[00:27:59.20] MARC HENDERSON: Did you ever see any protesters while you were walking the streets in Japan?

[00:28:02.38] TIMOTHY MURPHY: No. That didn't happen in Japan.

[00:28:08.45] MARC HENDERSON: Your first time in Tonkin Gulf I presume Yankee Station?

[00:28:13.54] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Yeah.

[00:28:14.82] MARC HENDERSON: What were operations like there?

[00:28:18.40] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Hectic. At Yankee Station-- well, a destroyer going to Vietnam, you would probably wind up doing one of four different operations. If you were assigned to a carrier you were patrolling in front of the carrier or you were doing another job in back of the carrier called plane guarding. where we were usually 1,500 yards to the port quarter of the carrier and we're guarding the planes that are launching and landing on board the carrier, and that could be a very hectic time.

[00:29:03.43] Then you would either go to what they called-- there was a maritime patrol that we did, we were just patrolling the waters-- North Vietnam, South Vietnam, a couple of things that you're doing. And then there was also the gunline. We would go off the coast of South Vietnam and we were available there for call for fire.

[00:29:33.40] You'd either have Marines or Army, and even Australians, depending on the section of Vietnam that you were in that would come on board. They'd come on one of the small helicopters and land. And they'd bring their charts, we would have our charts, and we would go over and check their grid systems so we would understand what they wanted us to do if they called us for artillery fire.

[00:30:04.46] So a Gearing-class destroyer with four 5-inch/38 guns, we could be a mile or two off the coast and we could get shells 10 miles inland. So it was not unusual to do harassment fire and call for fire because it was a mission.

[00:30:27.13] I mean, it wasn't any different than any other type of Navy ship being deployed over to the WestPac. We were in the Sea of Japan, having left Sasebo. Sasebo is a naval base that is northwest of Nagasaki. But Sasebo would be the port that you would use to go out into the Sea of Japan.

[00:30:53.88] We played games with a Russian destroyer. We had a Russian destroyer that came alongside and was probably 50 to 100 feet off our starboard side and he wasn't going to move. He wanted you to know this is a Soviet lake, not an American operations area. He was a bastard.

[00:31:24.64] MARC HENDERSON: Did you guys have to go to general quarters for that, or you each knew you were both there?

[00:31:30.61] TIMOTHY MURPHY: We each knew that we were there. And I don't think our captain wanted to go to general quarters because he didn't want to alarm the Soviet. But it was a Soviet destroyer. I forget the class, but it was formidable.

[00:31:51.32] But we're all there looking at it. And you had Russian sailors on the lower deck. They're waving back and forth, we're waving back and forth at them. It's like the Captain wanted to prove a point, but the sailors wanted no part of it.

[00:32:10.09] MARC HENDERSON: So you mentioned being in the Sea of Japan, which makes me think about weather in the North Pacific. Do you have any experiences with being in extreme weather in such a small ship?

[00:32:24.06] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Third cruise that we had. Southerland had been transformed from a active duty destroyer to a reserve destroyer, so they decided to send us to Japan. So they sent us the northern route, which was great because you got to see San Francisco to refuel, Seattle to refuel, and then we wound up at Adak, Alaska.

[00:33:00.00] Adak, Alaska is an Island in the Aleutians, very barren but had a active Navy Air Force base. P-3 Orions would fly out of there. And Air Force EC-137s I think would fly out of there occasionally. And it was also a dependent base-- they had families living on it.

[00:33:31.41] We were the biggest event that they had seen in six months-- the two destroyers that pulled in. Then we pulled out after we fueled into the Bering Sea. We had water over the bridge and everybody-- E-6 and below-- had to get out there and chip ice. It was scary. And the ship was rocking and rolling. And we were taking water over the signal bridge and we couldn't get out of there soon enough.

[00:34:13.57] But it was again another game because they wanted to show the Russians-- this may be the Bering Sea, but it is not your territory. It's our territory, too. Then we sailed down off

of the coast and got into Japan and down into Yokosuka and then Sasebo. But I never want to be in that type of sea again.

[00:34:45.05] MARC HENDERSON: Did you go up far enough to do a Bluenose ceremony?

[00:34:47.72] TIMOTHY MURPHY: No.

[00:34:51.17] MARC HENDERSON: How about Wog Day? Have you ever participated in that?

[00:34:56.21] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Well, the second cruise that we did, Enterprise was going with Bainbridge into the Indian Ocean for the Pakistani-Indian War. So we were escorting them and we were detached. And because we were so near the equator we did Shellbacks, which is passing over the equator, and Court of King Neptune, and all types of various activities.

[00:35:32.09] I would have liked to have gone over again and had a little bit of revenge, but there are some ensigns that were on board that really would have liked to have done that too.

[00:35:42.69] MARC HENDERSON: Your LPOs, chiefs, and your officers, what are your impressions?

[00:35:50.12] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I had no problems with them.

[00:35:52.97] MARC HENDERSON: Anyone stand out?

[00:35:54.86] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Well, for the longest time when I got on board my ship, probably a good six months we only had a lead E-6, we did not have a CPO. Then we had a new CPO show up on board. We had just come back from deployment and his name was McDonald Shan. He showed up on board 10 o'clock at night and he wanted to let us know who was boss.

[00:36:42.17] He shows up at CIC, and CIC was clean, but it wasn't clean to his standards. He looks at us-- because I had a small TV-- we're watching that, a couple of the guys are playing cards, you know, the usual type of thing. And he comes in, takes a look-- this is 10 o'clock at night-- "This place is a shithole. Go down and get everyone who is in this division and I want them up here."

[00:37:27.76] MARC HENDERSON: Was this in port or at sea?

[00:37:29.35] TIMOTHY MURPHY: In port, in San Diego. And we had to scrub CIC from the top down to the bottom. He just wanted to let us know who was in charge. He had just gotten off the New Jersey. New Jersey had just decommissioned. So that was enjoyable.

[00:37:55.20] [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:56.18]

[00:38:02.06] MARC HENDERSON: How much interaction did you do with those allies that came on board, whether it's from different services-- the Army, the Marines, or the Australians?

[00:38:11.78] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Quite a bit, especially when we were on gunfire.

[00:38:15.26] MARC HENDERSON: What was your impression of the men that you interacted with?

[00:38:19.19] TIMOTHY MURPHY: They knew what they were doing. Vietnam was divided into four corps-- I Corps, II Corps, III Corps, IV Corps. I Corps, which was Da Nang, as the naval base, was generally Marines. II Corps, III Corps was generally Army. IV Corps, a lot of the people were Australians.

[00:38:45.32] And you'd have them and they'd come on board and you would have to understand what they would do when they called for fire and what their coordinates were because their coordinates were far different than what we were used to. Different system.

[00:39:12.59] TIMOTHY MURPHY: We were-- probably second deployment. We were with, I think, Enterprise, and it was at night. And the bigger planes would usually launch first on the carrier. And one of the planes was what they called a C-5E, which is a Vigilante, which was a swept-wing plane, which was used for reconnaissance.

[00:39:51.73] The planes were coming back at night. Most of them had landed. And I'm up in CIC and we had kept the door to CIC on the starboard side open. It's hot as hell. The air conditioning doesn't work. And there was an RA-5C that was coming in and you could hear the air controller on the Enterprise calling this plane or the landing flight officer calling this plane and telling him to wave off, wave off, he was too low, too low, too low. Something had to happen to the plane.

[00:40:40.41] It crashed directly starboard to us. So it crashed 1,500 yards before the carrier. Either they had battle damage or something was wrong with the plane or any-- it was the biggest flash that I've ever seen in my life. And of course, you immediately go to general quarters and try to retrieve anything. And they didn't pick up any survivors.

[00:41:13.08] And it's absolute chaos because you have this huge fire that's in the middle of the ocean. You're trying to find out what's going on. You have your searchlights going. Other ships that are in the area are taking part in the operation. Since we were the first ship there, we had operational control and it's hectic, not a nice sight to see a plane explode.

[00:41:49.30] MARC HENDERSON: What are your general quarters duties?

[00:41:54.07] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Well, I worked in CIC, Combat Information Center, which was right after the ship. So if we went to general quarters, we all went either to CIC, radio central, the gun mounts, whatever. It all depended.

[00:42:15.40] MARC HENDERSON: So pretty much it was different, you still just continued to-

[00:42:19.36] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I just continued to do what I was supposed to be doing.

[00:42:27.76] TIMOTHY MURPHY: We were in Vietnam, they had a USO thing. And we had this young blonde who came on board the ship for entertainment, singing. They set up a little thing on the rear flight deck and that type of thing. It was a real hoot. I mean, nobody expected her. She sang and was trying to be nice. I don't think USO thinks of the best things in the world, but at least it was something.

[00:43:07.28] MARC HENDERSON: And how much of the ship got to-- how much of the crew got to attend?

[00:43:12.26] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Probably pretty close to 70% of the crew. Because we were in stand-down situation, so most of the guys were able to go to the flight deck and watch what was going on.

[00:43:25.89] MARC HENDERSON: Were you anchored or at sea?

[00:43:27.27] TIMOTHY MURPHY: We're at sea. So you just had to stand watches.

[00:43:32.61] MARC HENDERSON: How about holidays, do any holidays stand out?

[00:43:37.48] TIMOTHY MURPHY: First time I was on board my tin can, we were out near a place called San Clemente Island, which is to the northwest of San Diego. We were out there getting ready to go over to deployment and doing gunfire support drills off of San Clemente.

[00:44:05.58] So it was Thanksgiving and we had a chief messman on board plus a first class and he put together the best food spread I had ever seen in my life. He had everything. He had turkey. He had ham. He had roast beef. He had potatoes. He had ham, yams, three types of pies. It stinks that you're not in port at Thanksgiving time. I've never seen as good a spread and our food was as good as the carrier.

[00:44:54.16] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Just the occasional letter. My father since he was a newspaperman used to always send me newspapers. So I'd get half a dozen newspapers when we'd get the mail drop because most of the times we'd either get our mail sent over from the carrier via UNREP, or we'd have a helicopter come over and drop the mail on board us.

[00:45:21.31] So mail call would come and somebody would get the mail and bring it around and I'd get a half a dozen newspapers. I'd be lucky if I saw one because other guys would see it and grab it-- and especially the officers.

[00:45:38.85] MARC HENDERSON: You want to describe an UNREP?

[00:45:41.15] TIMOTHY MURPHY: OK. UNREP is at-sea replenishment. And you are on board a destroyer, and it is an all-hands operation, and you're going on alongside a oiler or an ammunition ship or a carrier and you're taking on fuel and supplies.

[00:46:09.32] On a destroyer like I was on, you would have the main line, which would be just forward at the bridge, and you would have a fuel line that would come over from the oiler on a metal line which was transferred to the ship where they would tie down the metal line in a kingpost and this would come across as royal rollers.

[00:46:42.66] And quite literally there was a female and a male connection and you would have to-- everybody was on the side of the deck, whether you were-- E-5 and below. So second class, third class, and seaman, seaman apprentice, and that type of thing. And you'd have a line that you'd have to pull and it was hand over hand. And you had to get it going as fast as you could because that line would go over and connect to the fuel receptacle on the destroyer, then you would have food.

[00:47:24.75] Then you would also have other high lines that would be set amidships and to the helicopter deck aft. And you would have pallets of food come on board and also pallets of ammunition. So there was a lot of hectic work.

[00:47:44.45] Many a time, especially when I got up to be an E-5, I would be up at CIC and we would have to keep a constant bridge. We would be informing the bridge constantly of our distance from whatever it was-- whether it was the oiler, whether it was the carrier-- our distance, so the fuel line wouldn't get over-taut or wouldn't go slack. And we also would want to know about contacts that were in the area because we'd be looking at the radar, we'd be looking at contacts, we'd be plotting course and speed.

[00:48:24.02] Many a time, the captain would come off the bridge, come into CIC because he'd want to see what's going on. You had a senior officer of the deck taking care of the ship, and it's hectic. It could be very dangerous.

[00:48:46.17] TIMOTHY MURPHY: The third captain that I was under-- I don't remember his name, and the XO, his name was Eberline, thought I was pretty good at what I did. And they had me take the fleet exam for the Academy. For the most part I did well on it. But I did lousy in math since I never had trigonometry or calculus. You need math if you're going to be in the Academy. But they also tried to convince me that I should re-enlist and become an EW, electronic warfare. That was a new rate that was starting.

[00:49:34.38] So I'm getting ready to go off the ship. I was going to college, I had passed the exams here, and they had in the wardroom where I had to do my exit interview with the XO a \$10,000 VRB check, variable reenlistment bonus, and also orders to the new electronic warfare school, which would have been up at Treasure Island near San Francisco. I think they were convincing me that I was making a mistake and I should have re-enlisted, which I should have done.

[00:50:17.09] MARC HENDERSON: And you turned them down?

[00:50:18.86] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I turned them down because I thought I should have gone to college. Because at the time when I applied to Tufts University in March of 1973, Tufts had NROTC. When I got there in September of '73 because of the anti-Vietnam sentiment they had disbanded NROTC.

[00:50:47.68] Quite frankly, I would have liked to have come back in the Navy and been an officer because I liked operations, I liked navigation. I would have been very happy.

[00:51:10.90] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Well, I was coming out of the Navy and seeing what was going on with Vietnam veterans I really got pissed at that. One of the last things when I was coming home off-- on leave, I landed at Logan Airport. And I'm coming down the corridor and I'm in my whites because you had to be in uniform to fly, to get your flight miles. There's this woman at the bar, at Logan, who sees me. She's drunk. She throws a glass of red wine on me and called me a baby killer.

[00:51:56.29] There was a state police trooper there, grabbed her, and he looks at me and says, "Do you want to prosecute this woman?" I said, "No. I just want to go home because I lived-- and here I am uniform soaked in red wine." And this Mass state trooper said, "Don't worry about that."

[00:52:21.66] He grabs my sea bag-- no, he takes me and walks me down to where the sea bag was coming off the carousel and everything like that. He was on the phone. He grabs it. He walks out to the road and there's a state police cruiser there and he said, "Don't worry. We're going to take you home." Nicest thing anybody did to me.

[00:52:55.67] MARC HENDERSON: How did your naval service influence the way you think about veterans coming home today?

[00:53:01.70] TIMOTHY MURPHY: Much more appreciative of what they have done. I think also the Iraqi veterans, the Afghani veterans are much more accepted. I think 9/11 had a lot to change with that. But you always need to accept the veteran for what he is and what he's done. He's doing something that you're not doing. You better honor him for that.

[00:53:32.74] MARC HENDERSON: What do you think the war meant to your generation?

[00:53:35.53] TIMOTHY MURPHY: The war was a big mistake-- something we should have never been involved in, something that the planners in Washington thought-- well, it was the end of the McCarthy era.

[00:53:50.60] I'm a big history person. My major at Tufts when I was there was Sino-Soviet history and politics. I could easily understand what went on. Vietnam should have never happened. But we did what we were supposed to do. Politicians were responsible for it, we weren't.

[00:54:19.63] MARC HENDERSON: Did you learn any lessons during your time in the Navy that you'd like to share with future generations?

[00:54:27.38] TIMOTHY MURPHY: It's not all that bad. You learn stuff, you grow. Again, I think one of the biggest mistakes we ever did was getting rid of the draft. Because with the draft you meet all types of people. I don't care whether they're blacks, white, Hispanics, Asiatic, Catholic, Jews, Protestant, you meet all type of people and you have to live with them. So you have to learn how to get along with them. I think sometimes today that's missing.

[00:55:11.29] MARC HENDERSON: What are your impressions of--

[00:55:12.91] TIMOTHY MURPHY: I think it's very nice what you're doing. You're trying to put into history something that happened.