

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Col. Norman McDaniel

Overview of the Collection

- Repository:** The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
- Creator:** McDaniel, Norman A.
- Title:** The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel,
- Dates:** June 18, 2012 and March 8, 2012
- Bulk Dates:** 2012
- Physical Description:** 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:06:44).
- Abstract:** Colonel (retired) Col. Norman McDaniel (1937 -) served in the United States Air Force for twenty eight and one half years, achieving the rank of Colonel. He was one of the few African American POWs during the Vietnam War and earned (among many decorations) a Silver Star of Valor for his leadership. McDaniel was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 18, 2012 and March 8, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
- Identification:** A2012_052
- Language:** The interview and records are in English.
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Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Retired United States Air Force Colonel Norman A. McDaniel was born on July 27, 1937 in Fayetteville, North Carolina. The son of sharecroppers Fannie Marie and Clyde Oliver McDaniel, he graduated as the valedictorian of the Armstrong High School Class of 1955. He attended North Carolina A&T State University, participated in the AFROTC program, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Air Force (AF) upon receiving his B.S. degree in

Mechanical Engineering in June, 1959.

After entering AF Active Duty, McDaniel completed a series of military trainings. From 1961 to 1964, he served in the 23rd Bomb Squadron at Travis AFB, California, and then, was assigned as a Sub-Systems Program Manager on the F-111 Aircraft Development Program at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. In 1966, McDaniel was assigned to Takhli Air Base (AB) in Thailand, where he flew combat missions over North Vietnam. On July, 20, 1966, McDaniel and four of his five crew members became prisoners of war (POWs) when their plane was shot down. While a POW, he was promoted to the rank of Major and was awarded the AF Silver Star for valor and leadership in the POW camps. As one of over 700 American POWs held by North Vietnam, McDaniel was released on February 12, 1973, as part of Operation Homecoming. After returning from Vietnam, he completed the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia and graduate school at the Florida Institute of Technology (earning his M.S. degree in systems management). Between 1975 and 1987, McDaniel completed tours of duty as a System Program Staff officer at AF Systems Command, Andrews AFB, Maryland. He also served as Division Chief for Congressional Activities and Acquisition Policy at Headquarters USAF, the Pentagon; commander of AFROTC at Howard University in Washington, DC; commander of the Air Force Survival Training Wing in Spokane, Washington; and as Assistant Deputy to the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense (AD,DUSD) for International Programs and Foreign Disclosure Policy, the Pentagon. During that period, McDaniel also completed the Naval War College, Senior Program at Newport, Rhode Island. After retiring from active duty in 1988, he worked in the defense industry. From 1991 to 2006, McDaniel was a Faculty Member, Department Head, and Associate Dean at the Defense Acquisition University in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. He currently works for himself as a motivational speaker, and part-time, as a Facilitator of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) helping men and women separating or retiring from U.S. military services to succeed in their transition from military to civilian life.

On September 18, 1998, McDaniel served as the keynote speaker at the Pentagon's celebration of National POW/MIA Recognition Day in honor of all of the former POWs, unaccounted for service members and civilians, and their families. McDaniel's military honors, include the Silver Star for Valor, three Legions of Merit, Bronze Star with "V" Valor Device, three Distinguished Flying Crosses (the POW medal), the Purple Heart and the Vietnam Service Medal with fourteen bronze stars. McDaniel is married to Jean Carol (Breeze) McDaniel. They have two children, Christopher and Crystal, and four grandchildren

Norman A. McDaniel was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 8, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Col. Norman McDaniel was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 18, 2012 and March 8, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Colonel (retired) Col. Norman McDaniel (1937 -) served in the United States Air Force for twenty eight and one half years, achieving the rank of Colonel. He was one of the few African American POWs during the Vietnam War and earned (among many decorations) a Silver Star of Valor for his leadership.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

McDaniel, Norman A.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

McDaniel, Norman A.--Interviews

United States. Air Force--African Americans--Interviews.

United States--Armed Forces--African American Officers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Air Force.

Occupations:

Colonel (Retired)

HistoryMakers® Category:

MilitaryMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, June 18, 2012 and March 8, 2012. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_001_001, TRT: 1:30:32 2012/03/08

Norman McDaniel describes his family background. His mother, Fannie Marie McDaniel, was born on April 17, 1916 in Cumberland County, North Carolina. His maternal grandfather, William McDaniel, was a minister. His maternal grandmother, Ida Crumpler, was his

grandfather's second wife and died in childbirth. McDaniel can trace his mother's side of the family back to three sisters from Kenya, Africa who were sold into slavery in the U.S. during the 1840s. McDaniel's father, Clyde Oliver McDaniel, was born on April 1, 1912--also in Cumberland County. McDaniel can trace his father's family line through those same three sisters, which is why he and his wife have the same last name. McDaniel's paternal grandparents were Dockery McDaniel and Quilly Cogdell. McDaniel recalls working with his father until his sophomore year of high school as a sharecropper. He talks about how his father was treated by the landowners he sharecropped for. McDaniel also talks about his eight siblings--of which he is the third oldest.

African American families--North Carolina.

African American fathers.

African American mothers.

African American grandparents.

Slavery--United States.

Sharecropping--North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_001_002, TRT: 2:29:03 2012/03/08

Norman McDaniel talks about his younger siblings and describes how his parents met in elementary school. McDaniel describes his parents' personalities and who he takes after. He comments on his father's alcoholism and the subsequent break-up of his family. McDaniel describes his earliest childhood memory and the sights, sounds, and smells of growing up in North Carolina. He remembers his family moving to Cedar Creek, North Carolina in 1942 and starting elementary school. McDaniel was a good student in school; he skipped the seventh grade and ended up becoming valedictorian of his high school class. McDaniel talks about how the military offered African American men the opportunity to better themselves. However, he notes that his high school teachers worried about him joining the military and so instead they made arrangements for him to work at and attend North Carolina A&T State University.

African American families--North Carolina.

African American fathers.

Childhood--North Carolina.

Education--North Carolina.

Education, Secondary--North Carolina.

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_001_003, TRT: 3:29:52 2012/03/08

Norman McDaniel talks about the revival meetings he attended at Lock's Creek AME Zion Church in North Carolina when he was a boy. He discusses his high school experience at Armstrong High School and the various jobs he had as a high school student. McDaniel was the valedictorian of his graduating class in 1955. With the help of two of his high school teachers, he attended North Carolina A&T State University and remembers being a sophomore when his parents separated. McDaniel participated in the U.S. Air Force ROTC program, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force upon receiving his B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1959.

Education, Secondary--North Carolina.

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

United States. Air Force ROTC.

United States. Air Force.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_001_004, TRT: 4:28:21 2012/03/08

Norman McDaniel discusses the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. He also talks about his wedding anniversary and how he was married the day after the late president's inaugural address on January 21, 1961. He talks about his training in the U.S. Air Force and tells the story of how he and his wife met in college at North Carolina A&T State University. After entering active duty in the U.S. Air Force, McDaniel completed a series of

military trainings. From 1961 to 1964, he served in the 23rd Bomb Squadron at Travis Air Force Base in California, and was then assigned as a Sub-Systems Program Manager on the F-111 Aircraft Development Program at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. In 1966, McDaniel was assigned to Takhli Air Base in Thailand, where he flew combat missions over North Vietnam.

Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963--
Assassination.

Marriage--United States.

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State
University.

United States. Air Force.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--African Americans.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section
A2012_052_001_005, TRT: 5:30:20 2012/03/08

Norman McDaniel was assigned to Takhli Air Base in Thailand, in 1966, where he flew combat missions over North Vietnam. He recalls his impressions of Thailand and talks about his experience in flight combat on an EB-66B aircraft with a six-person crew. He explains the purpose of electronic reconnaissance and the sequence of steps crew members had to go through in order to eject from the plane successfully. On July 20, 1966, McDaniel and four of his five crew members became prisoners of war (POWs) when their plane was shot down. McDaniel describes being captured by Vietnamese soldiers and speaks about his interrogation at their POW camp.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Aerial operations, American.

Prisoners of war--Vietnam.

Prisoners of war--Abuse of--Vietnam.

Military interrogation--Vietnam.

United States. Air Force.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section
A2012_052_002_006, TRT: 6:30:05 2012/06/18

Norman McDaniel describes the Vietnamese soldier's interrogation tactics at their POW camp near Hanoi,

Vietnam. He explains his decision early on in his capture to be loyal to his country and his fellow prisoners. Therefore, he would take torture through death before he would say or do anything that was harmful to his fellow prisoners. McDaniel describes his incarceration at the POW camp. He was psychologically abused, beaten and tortured, and placed in solitary confinement for several months. McDaniel explains how his love for his family helped him withstand torture and incarceration. He also talks about how the senior ranking officers from the U.S. Army prisoners at the camp secretly organized themselves in order to establish policies or “Plums” on how American POWs should conduct themselves during their capture. These policies were similar to the U.S. Army Code of Conduct, which McDaniel explains, ex-Vietnam POW’s reviewed after their release and return to the U.S.

Military interrogation--Vietnam.

Prisoners of war--Vietnam.

Torture victims.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Psychological aspects.

Hanoi (Vietnam)

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_002_007, TRT: 7:31:03 2012/06/18

Norman McDaniel provides the chronology of his time at the POW camp in North Vietnam, where he was incarcerated from 1966 to 1973. His survival training at Stead Air Force Base in Reno, Nevada prepared him for this experience as a POW. McDaniel talks about what happened to his combat flight crew after their plane went down. He remembers initiating the ejection sequence and seeing the plane burning on the ground as he descended in his parachute. Each crew member sustained significant injuries from the hit and, as McDaniel would later find out at the POW camp, one of his crew members died.

McDaniel was the only African American in his crew and notes that out of the 700 POWs at Wallow Prison, less than forty were African American. McDaniel speaks about prison life and race relations between black and white POWs at the camp. He also describes Wallow Prison’s facilities.

Prisoners of war--Vietnam.

Airplanes, Military--Accidents.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Aerial operations, American.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Participation, African American.

Torture victims.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_002_008, TRT: 8:30:59 2012/06/18

Norman McDaniel describes the food the prisoners ate at the Vietnamese POW camp. Due to the poor quality of food he received at the camp, he went from a healthy 150 lbs. to a mere 110 lbs. McDaniel talks about how his wife, Jean Carol Breeze McDaniel, found out he was alive in 1971. By 1973, McDaniel had been in captivity for 2,399 days--over six and a half years. McDaniel discusses the long range effects of his capture and torture in Vietnam. For example, stress and vitamin deficiencies were common symptoms of the POWs long incarceration. McDaniel describes how, because of the food deprivation and the nutritional deficiencies, one of the things his medical examination found was that his bone structure had changed. Although he was in his thirties, when he came back to the U.S., he had the bone structure of someone in their sixties or seventies.

Prisoners of war--Abuse of--Vietnam.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Veterans--Mental health.

Post-traumatic stress disorder.

Torture victims.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_002_009, TRT: 9:30:02 2012/06/18

Norman McDaniel describes how his faith in God helped him survive incarceration in the Vietnamese POW camp. In addition, he talks about the crisis of faith he experienced during his captivity in Vietnam as well as his release from the Vietnamese POW camp in 1973--as part of Operation Homecoming. While a POW, he was promoted to the rank of Major. He talks about his return to the United States from Vietnam and wanting to stay in the military. He discusses his adjustment to civilian life and

re-establishing relationships with his son and daughter, who he had not seen in several years. After returning from Vietnam, he attended the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia and graduated from the Florida Institute of Technology with an M.S. degree in systems management. In 1981, he was assigned to command the U.S. Air Force ROTC at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Religion.

Faith.

Prisoners of war--Vietnam.

Operation Homecoming, 1973.

United States. Air Force ROTC.

Howard University.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section A2012_052_002_010, TRT: 10:30:17 2012/06/18

Norman McDaniel discusses his work as Commander of the U.S. Air Force ROTC at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and shares highlights from his career in the U.S. Air Force. Between 1983 and 1987, McDaniel completed tours of duty as a commander of the Air Force Survival Training Wing in Spokane, Washington and as a system program staff officer at Air Force Systems Command, Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. Additionally, he served as division chief for Congressional Activities and Acquisition Policy at the U.S. Air Force Headquarters and as assistant deputy to the deputy undersecretary of defense for International Programs and Foreign Disclosure Policy at the Pentagon. McDaniel retired from active duty in 1988. He discusses his professional work and activities, following his retirement - which included employment with the Defense Acquisition University in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia and motivational speaking. McDaniel reflects upon his legacy and talks about developing post-traumatic stress disorder in 1990.

United States. Air Force ROTC.

Howard University.

United States. Air Force--Officers.

Motivational speakers.

Video Oral History Interview with Col. Norman McDaniel, Section
A2012_052_002_011, TRT: 11:06:10 2012/06/18

Norman McDaniel talks about learning how to manage his post-traumatic stress. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community and how he would like to be remembered.

Post-traumatic stress disorder.

Reminiscing.