

Andrew Durkin

- **Maureen Durkin (wife)** Interviewed by Kyle DeSantis, Nicol Haywood, Jack Duncan, Stan Haywood, Perry Verrino
- *Date: August 10, 2020*
- *Documented by Eamon McEnaney*



Branch: Army

Rank: Corporal

Years of Service: 1950-1953

Locations of Service: Korea

Interview:

Do you remember where he was living when he was drafted? He was living in Brewster. He was the first person to be drafted in Brewster. He didn't want to go but did not regret it when he got out.

What was the day like when he was drafted? The men were called to the Brewster station, the Mayor Henry Wells saw the men off and they went down to White Street in New York City where they were inducted. He then was sent to Fort Devens in Massachusetts.

Did he send any letters? He sent many interesting letters. When he got to Korea he was injured in an accident and flown off in a helicopter to a base hospital, then to hospital in Japan then finally to Valley Forge Hospital. He hadn't been in Korea long at all, just 43 days. After he was discharged he heard from the Korean government for sometime after, sending him medals and letters of appreciation for his service.

How was he injured? He was injured in a truck accident. It was very cold. He was building roads and when the truck was going up a hill they could see the other truck was going to hit them. Some men were able to jump off but Drew was in the middle and could only get half way off and one leg was crushed by the truck that was coming down. A helicopter was flown in to take him out with his badly smashed leg and he ended up in a hospital in Japan for a while. Then they flew him to Valley Forge Hospital.

What was it like not seeing him much? Mrs. Durkin looked forward to his interesting letters about Korea. He wrote about how cold it was and the experience of going by boat. They were packed in the boat like sardines, very crowded and many of the men got very seasick and would have rather died.

What was his assignment in Korea? He built roads. It was very cold but the army had very good equipment. He was just below the punch bowl where the fighting was going on. The work was not very glamorous. Drew and his companions were in very good physical shape and got a lot of exercise.

How did the soldiers entertain themselves? At Fort Devens and especially in Fort Drum, the Tennessee National Guard were brought in and at night they could get their radio stations and they would listen to country music every night. They had gambling also but Drew was not into that but liked to watch. There were a lot of card and crap games with lots of money changing hands. The soldiers were very interested in mail as there were no cellphones and iPads back over 70 years ago so the written letter was very important. The letters were important for the soldiers to get and those at home to receive. Mail calls were an important thing for them. The soldiers also formed relationships among themselves. They enjoyed traveling when getting a boat to Japan. They had time to sight see through San Francisco, which many of the soldiers had never seen so it was an interesting experience for them.

Did he bring back any photographs? No he didn't. He did not have a camera but one of his buddies did. He is still alive and Mrs. Durkin still hears from him.

Do you remember the day when he came home? Yes, he was in Pennsylvania on January 3, 1953. The more difficult day was the day he was injured. His mom received a call from the army that he had been injured and that he had hurt his leg. Then eventually a letter came to her from his best friend and when he was well enough, he wrote to her.

Was there any close relationships he made when he was in the service? Yes, there were about five of them but only one is still alive today.

What did he do for a job after returning from the service? Same as he did before, he worked here in Brewster. The business started out with feed and coal, then they went to oil now they are water and propane. The company is still in business. It's the third generation now. He worked very hard when he got home in building up the fuel business.

Final Thoughts: Drew Durkin had an interesting Army career; he never wanted it but he adjusted to it, people adjusted to it back then more than they do today. He instilled many of the values. He had great patriotism which today you don't see so much and he was very glad to have had the experience.