

Basic Detail Report



Richard E. Johnson Oral History

Date

September 4, 2014

Primary Maker

Richard E. Johnson

Medium

MTS, PDF

Description

Richard E. Johnson served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid (CVA-11) as a yeoman second class (YE2) from

1955 to 1959. The Museum recorded his oral history interview on September 4, 2014. See transcript for complete interview. Below is a summary: Johnson began his interview by discussing his childhood in Yonkers, New York, before explaining his decision to join the U.S. Navy. He then noted boot camp in Bainbridge, Maryland; a brief misunderstanding with the draft board; and his first assignments aboard the escort carrier USS Siboney (CVE-112) and the Midway class carrier USS Coral Sea (CV-32). As the interview continued, Johnson recalled his next assignment, shore duty in Boston. Johnson discussed the difficulties he encountered being a Black sailor. His orders were to report to the Chief of Naval Operations, Intelligence Department. Yet upon reporting for duty, he was told to report to the receiving station instead. He also stated that, while working at the receiving station, he was falsely put on report and court martialed, and that this incident was caused by “a southern clique that didn’t like the idea of me being in charge of people—which was ridiculous, but that’s what was happening. So I was found not guilty.” After discussing shore duty in Boston, Johnson stated that he put in for sea duty and was assigned to Intrepid. Johnson explained that he went aboard as a yeoman third class and was assigned to the OA Division, in the Operations Department. However, he was reassigned to the Personnel Office after he had passed the test to become a yeoman second class. Johnson recalled his duties in both positions, before noting his last duty station in Washington D.C., and explaining why he left the Navy. He then discussed his return home to New York and his job with a record plating company. The interviewed then backtracked, and Johnson provided additional insights into a variety of topics, beginning with his time in Boston. He stated that, although “it left me with a bad taste in my mouth,” he still looks back and says, “I’m glad I did something to help and to show people that we’re all the same.” Johnson then discussed his job as a yeoman in greater detail, noting how he was assigned that rating and how he learned to type. He also discussed topics ranging from Intrepid’s awards and mission, to his thoughts on the Cold War, food aboard ship, and liberty in Europe. Johnson then ended his interview by stating what advice he would give to young people considering the military and providing one final story related to liberty. Extents: 3 media files, 13 page transcript

Dimensions

43 minutes