

**Ronald Tremper
Veteran**

**Wayne Clark
Interviewer**

**Saratoga Springs, New York
April 20, 2012**

Q: We're at the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York. My name is Wayne Clark. Sir for the record would you please state your full name, date place of birth place please?

RT: Ronald Tremper, born January 11, 1966 in New York City.

Q: Did you attend school in New York City?

RT: No I did not.

Q: Whereabouts did you go to school?

RT: I grew up on the jersey's shore in Lakewood, New Jersey that's where I went to elementary and high school

Q: What year did you graduate from high school?

RT: In 1983

Q: Once you graduated did you go on to college or did you go into the service?

RT: I did. I went into college at Boston University where I went for my ROTC

Q: You graduated with a degree in what?

RT: Bachelor of Science and Aerospace Engineering

Q: You were commissioned as a second lieutenant?

RT: Second lieutenant in the Air Force.

Q: All right what happened next?

RT: I had 7 to 8 months off before I went into flight school. I went in as a navigator for the flight school in Sacramento, California major air force base.

Q: Navigator on what type of aircraft?

RT: Eventually ended up in the R4c Reconnaissance Phantom. Well it was definitely an unique experience.

Q: Did you find the course pretty tough?

RT: Parts of it was a lot of math science and degree in engineering wasn't all that difficult. The toughest part for me was trying to balance it all together. You know you were out of college you and you still wanted to have that freedom but at the same time it

was probably more studying and more time in the books and then actually you can do in college.

Q: Why did you pick navigation over becoming a pilot?

RT: My eyes weren't 20/20 and some years you get lucky and they have so few people applying for pilot spots, but in my case it wasn't. The only way I got a chance to fly was to go to the back seat in a fighter jet.... I don't think it really mattered.

Q: Ok you graduated from that course. Did you have to go for more schooling or did you go to a unit?

RT: Once graduating I had to go to basic survival school at Spokane

Q: What type of survival training was at the winter summer tropics?

RT: Probably the best time to go was when it was early fall. The weather was perfect. It was almost like going on a camping trip with the scouts. We were actually up there for two weeks Spokane and then we went down to Homestead Air Force Base where we did a week of water supply survival before heading off to go around the base number one leading fighter training but we spent a few months with the t-38 been straighter fighters preparing to going into RTU.

Q: What is RTU?

RT: Pretty much basically it was preparing you for your jet. So, then I went to from there was Bergstrom Force Base in Austin. Then we did seven months of learning actually to fly the Air Force. So basically you start with the simulators for a couple of days and then you send you off onto the plane and then has been about seven months learning the systems on the aircraft before then getting your assignment and for me myself and actually because of the way the basis of closing I ended up staying there at Bergstrom for four years.

Q: You actually got some stick time in case something happened to the pilot, you were able to fly the aircraft and land it. Well although you're technically not a pilot?

RT: Technically what it was...that most of the pilots wanted to get as much stick time as possible because for them they were the ones up front, bird strike and the ones incapacitated they were really hoping that you guys you know the backseat will be able to take it. So, I didn't get a lot of stick time. There were definitely some things that were not allowed: to takeoff landings, air fueling and the policy was if you ever took a bird strike and the pilot couldn't land striking, you are supposed to reject both out. But it was a tough thing to do, to know that you have to eject somebody that may or may not have a torn sheet.

Q: So you spent four years state side?

RT: Yup...then the F4 was in decommission because the air force was getting rid of 14 and 16. I had the opportunity to give in a little air liaison officer working with the army. So, I planned on spending two years over in Germany for headquarters working in a main air force unit working on plans and programs for the Air Force. What was it like with some of the other guys that were in smaller units spread out in Germany and I was a big city office building type work.

Q: So you stayed in Germany for about two years?

RT: I was supposed to but we had reduction enforced and unfortunately I was let go at the time and spent almost a full year in Germany.

Q: Now what rank were you in when you got out?

RT: I was Captain when I got out

Q: Anything going on in Germany that which was basically like Cold War?

RT: I was able to be on the early side of people going over into Eastern Europe and getting to see what that was like.

Q: Did you get to go over there?

RT: I spent some time in Berlin and in Czechoslovakia. I even gave it a chance to see. Europe was different to begin with but when you go to Eastern Europe and see how things were back then. It's amazing how the different the two sides were because of what was going on.

Q: Were you married at the time?

RT: No, I was single. It gave me the opportunity to do a lot of traveling throughout Europe.

Q: Anything that really stands out in your mind? Any of your experiences either stateside or over in Europe?

RT: I realized at that time being an engineer I was like the bumblebee putting on power anything can fly and I realized that you got a chance to be part of something amazing. Flew some aircraft that were built before I was born, and getting a chance to go to Davis Monthan (?) we used to take the Jets back there and just see all of them lined up and it's just the history that was involved with that.

Q: How many flying hours did you clock?

RT: 650 total hours when I was in and when you think about the missions were only an hour and 1 hour and 45 min for a lot of different flights. They also want us to do cross countries where you fly in like a Friday morning and come back on Monday evening and you spend the whole weekend flying around different parts of the country for such as to where the flying to different bases. So, you got a chance to see different places and do different things. Being single I used to volunteer anything, "you want to go I'll go" give me a chance to see a lot of parts of the country. My kids are so amazed that have been to so many different states. They pay me to go visit and travel and see this stuff.

Q: What was the top speed in the aircraft?

RT: The F4 without it was floating a clean which is no external tanks everything like probably about an altitude is about 1.6-1.7 mark

Q: Did you have any other duties or responsibilities outside of working with the aircrafts?

RT: My job when I was flying additional duty was a grand safety officer. I was responsible to make sure everyone took the training. I work with the guys that ran the simulators. Then set up training and create profiles so I basically did a lot of the ground training. One of my other side duties was, assistant safety officer. I followed up a lot of the safety stuff ground training is most of what I did. Then while in Germany my job special plans and programs so that means managing the exercise such as before you're responsible to get those plans and building plans for contingencies if we ever had to go into war any other countries worked on developing.

Q: Any accidents or incidents while you were in?

RT: There were but none while I was doing safety. We had a pilot that came in the class before I did. He was flying with a marine back seater and he put the plane into a spin and wasn't able to recover. Unfortunately in that case they waited too late to eject and the back seat was able to get out, but Jim got out just before the plane crash and he still didn't make it. Who didn't make it, makes you think of me because we're 24years old and 25years old at the time thinking we're invincible and maybe one reason why he waited as long as he did.

Q: When did you get out?

RT: December of 92, right after the reduction in force.

Q: Did you have the option of joining a reserve unit or a near Guard unit?

RT: Unfortunate because the floors were being phased out, there weren't as many units as it used to be and most locations were in places where I didn't really wanted to go. I was really hoping to be able to go to the unit in McGuire, New Jersey. It's to where I grew up at but they just transition to the f-16 and single seater so they had enough of their own back seaters that they want to send to flight school to get trained. So, they were not taking any additional ones. Unfortunately it was at a time when they were doing all the unit cut backs, the plane cutbacks and just didn't have the ability did get on with someone else unless I wanted to go to one of the larger aircraft and just going to the fighter to have it, just didn't seem right.

Q: So, you got out into you're civilian life, what did you do then?

RT: I had no idea what I wanted to do. My background is engineering. I was just finishing up my master's that I was getting through the air force on aviation science and promotion to an airport but again there were no jobs for me. I've always liked to cook, so I actually got a job and moved back down to Texas and got a job in a little Italian restaurant just to doing to pay bills and chef convince me to go to culinary school, which I would never have thought of doing. I became a chef and made me end up in the company I'm in now but not as a chef. I'm a trainer, so back to my additional duty that was in the Air Force's which was being in charge of ground training years later, that I will be doing that for career and never imagined that.

Q: That's an amazing story. Where did you go for your chef training?

RT: I went to the CIA in Poughkeepsie, Culinary student. If I was going to school, I mine as well go to one of the best.

Q: You graduated from The Culinary Institute and you went to work for?

RT: The company I went to go work for was called Flick. I got hired by the company but shortly after it got hard and I was still in school at the time that I purchased my compass group which I work for now and went to the HR department charge of training and safety. We've been getting the two things that I worked on in the air force and now the parent company compass as a development of leadership training.

Q: Where are they located?

RT: Their corporate office is in Charlotte but their global headquarters is just out of London.

Q: You're working in this area?

RT: I have a work at home office.

Q: When did you have time to get married?

RT: I was actually still living outside of New York City walking in Manhattan and that's where I met my wife. She worked in the area and we lived down there for about 8 years before moving up here. The kids came and it's much nicer to be up here with the space, the land, and the room.

Q: Anything else that sticks out in your mind that you might want to mention or talk about?

RT: one of the things is that when I went to Germany, I got there and never knew really what to expect. To live in a foreign country was something interesting. The minute you get there, you find all these trips that you're able to take. They want these vacation packages that you can take. Have you ever seen the horror stories about the Europeans and ugly Americans? I find just quite the opposite. People are just amazingly friendly. I didn't spend as much time over as I was hoping for. The whole military experience was just amazing. The opportunities of seeing different parts of Europe but I would've loved to stay at longer. My goal is to make a career and I would've loved to fly for 20 years but never had got to that point. It was just so amazing getting the opportunity to do that. I still speak to some of the guys that I knew, a friend of mine that I graduated college with just retired after 25 years is a full colonel, another friend of mine is a lieutenant colonel is a squadron commander down at the guard base flying 15 now and he was the first pilot to ever fly. It's nice seeing these guys be able to get that full career. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to be one of the judges and got a chance to go back and then I went to our different bases in the US. I had a chance to go over the Turkey and Japan to visit the Airforce bases and see how things have changed. It really has changed a lot since then.

Q: Did you join any veteran's organizations?

RT: I keep saying I'm going to. It's just demanding time.

Q: All right, well thank you for your interview.