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Veteran**

**Johnny [unclear]  
David [unclear]  
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on April 26, 2006  
Orchard Park Senior High School  
Orchard Park, New York**

**Q:** So to start off were you a drafted or did you enlist?

**RH:** I enlisted.

**Q:** What was your reason for joining the war?

**RH:** Well, well I was 15 years old when they bombed Pearl Harbor and I knew that sooner or later I would have been drafted and I choose the Marine Corps that way you know by enlisting I could choose by being drafted I would have to go where I was told.

**Q:** So you picked the Marines right?

**RH:** Yes.

**Q:** Do you recall your first days in the service?

**RH:** First days was [unclear] discipline mostly and obeyed orders you learned how to fire, you learned how to use a rifle, march and [unclear].

**Q:** How did it feel like?

**RH:** Well everything was strange to begin with.

**Q:** Do you remember your instructors in boot camp?

**RH:** Not too many of them don't know, 60 years ago.

**Q:** Remember how you got recruited?

**RH:** It was easy about this, it was, they made it possible.

**Q:** Where were you first stationed?

**RH:** Well that was at a . . . well let's see . . . all different kinds of camps and stuff like that. I forgot, I almost forgot the name I, Camp Lejeune was one that I was in . . . Camp Pendleton in California.

**Q:** So what was your job in the army, a regular infantryman?

**RH:** Just, rifleman is what they called me. I have all kinds of training, Camp Lejeune you went into all small weaponry, hand grenades, bazookas, flamethrowers, and you name it. But all small you know, hand weapons.

**Q:** Did you see combat when you . . .

**RH:** No combat.

**Q:** So there weren't any, in the unit you were in there was, how many casualties or any casualties or?

**RH:** Well the units that I joined, I joined an outfit that lost people on Iwo Jima and I would replace the ones that were lost. Almost nineteen to twenty percent of them were lost in that engagement, then this was in Hawaii where I joined that up.

**Q:** Did you get to see Hawaii?

**RH:** It was the 4th Marines that I joined, you could see here it is, all the engagements that they had previously, getting in there and this would be interesting for you to look at. There's four or five different engagements that they were in, pictures it's good.

**Q:** Tell us about all the battles

**RH:** All the battles that they were in yes. I was fortunate enough to go there after, but I was ready. I had training with every artillery and tanks and maneuvers, all that kind of stuff getting ready for the next battle which never occurred. They dropped the bomb and that basically ended the war, saved my life, I think. Well that was a nice experience, I was two years in the services approximately the whole thing.

**Q:** A lot of people that you met in the Army, are you still friends with them today?

**RH:** There's one that just died about two months ago that we carried you know through all the time.

**Q:** What was your most memorable, some of your most memorable experiences while you were in the war?

**RH:** Well, the whole thing was an experience for me.

**Q:** How old were you when you first joined the 4th Regiment Marines?

**RH:** 18 that was, we're supposed to be 18 to join.

**Q:** How did your service and experiences affect your life back to work?

**RH:** Well its just, I don't know if they had any effect on me, just that I appreciated that getting through you know that they did stop the war before I got into it.

**Q:** Were you awarded any medals or citations?

**RH:** No.

**Q:** How did you stay in touch with your family while your're . . . ?

**RH:** Just mail.

**Q:** You write to them often?

**RH:** Not as much as they would have liked.

**Q:** So after you completed your service what did you do after, after the army? Did you go back to school or start a family or . . . ?

**RH:** I was looking for work, I think one of those questions you could ask there is the if I took advantage of the G.I. Bill of rights, which I tried to but it didn't work out too good. They hired me to learn thermoplastics and I didn't learn nothing I just produced products for them. They took advantage of the cheap labour is what they did, so then I after I stopped that job I drifted from one job to another and here and there, finally settled at the steel plant.

**Q:** What was the food like?

**RH:** It was adequate, healthy as matter of fact.

**Q:** You got three meals a day?

**RH:** Yes.

**Q:** Did you have anything special you did or had for good luck while you're in the military?

**RH:** No.

**Q:** What you guys do in the army to entertain yourself?

**RH:** Well usually somebody would pull up some kind of a joke on another one or something like that, short sheet [unclear] I don't know if you guys ever heard of that.

**Q:** What's that?

**RH:** Well they take your sheet and double it up and then you try to get in there and you couldn't get in, and then they put shaving cream on your forehead while you were sleeping, watching you make a mess out of yourself but there was always something. Every Thursday would provide us with entertainment, I seen Bob Hope at one time he was always with the troops, and USO's would entertain us.

**Q:** What did you do when you went on leave from service?

**RH:** Well that's just a wait, just glad to be home for a week or two you know, just spent that time with your parents.

**Q:** While you were in service did you travel to any fun places?

**RH:** Well I was in Hawaii and was on Okinawa, this was after the war I was stationed in Okinawa, they called us the military government but all it was, was a military presence there you know what I mean. They wanted to establish a presence there and we did a little guard duty, stuff like that but otherwise I hardly knew why I was there.

**Q:** Did you keep a diary or any notes when you were in the war?

**RH:** No.

**Q:** Do you recall the day that the war ended?

**RH:** Yes I do.

**Q:** You felt relief?

**RH:** There was an awful lot of ammunition being wasted and that time everybody was firing rifles and machine guns and everything.

**Q:** When did you first hear that they dropped the bomb?

**RH:** Well that was the same day that they dropped it. I don't recall exactly what date that was or anything but we didn't know that was the end of the war either. I mean it was several weeks later before they declared the war over.

**Q:** Do you remember where you were when they declared that?

**RH:** I was in Hawaii. I was in Hawaii training for the next . . . the next phase of the war that would had been in mainland of Japan and South, that's what we were training for so you could imagine what a relief it was. There would have been a million casualties over there, civilian and . . .

**Q:** So after like they dropped the bomb and the war was over, where did you go after that, back straight home or?

**RH:** Well like I said I went to Okinawa for the military government.

**Q:** How long were you there for?

**RH:** Eight months, and then back home and out.

**Q:** So after the war you worked for thermoplastics and then just went straight to the steel companies?

**RH:** That's basically it.

**Q:** Did you join any veteran's organizations?

**RH:** VFW.

**Q:** Did your military experience influence your thinking about the war or about the military in general?

**RH:** I don't know you're always looking for a reason for a war I guess . . . that was obvious.

**Q:** How did your service and experience affect your life?

**RH:** It's hard to tell I mean. I'm sure it would had been different if I you know hadn't went into the service, I would have completed high school for one thing which I didn't.

**Q:** Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

**RH:** [unclear] So it was a great experience . . . forced into it but it was . . . makes you think about people in general you know. We was taught to hate the enemy and when you get over there and the war was over they are no different than anybody else. It's the leaders that's why you guys should be careful and make sure you vote, pick out a good man.

**Q:** Alright, thank you very much.

**RH:** Oh that you're welcome . . . I hoped it helped you a little bit.

**Q:** Definitely, do you mind if we scan some of these pictures into the computers?

**RH:** That would be alright with me.