

Paul S. Bobinski
Narrator

Wayne Clark and Mike Russert
Interviewers

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at the NYS Military Museum
In Saratoga Springs, NY

Interviewer: **INT**
Paul S. Bobinski: **PB:**

INT: Can you give me your full name date of birth and place of birth please

PB: Paul Sigmund Bobinski D.O.B is 12/17/46 Stamford CT.

INT: What was your educational background prior to entering the service?

PB: I had gone to Clemson university and Tufts University dental school.

INT: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

PB: No I enlisted

INT: Why did you decide to enlist?

PB: I didn't really know where I wanted to go or how I wanted to work I thought that would give me a couple of years to kind of sort things out and get a little bit of extra experience, you know, even with coming out of school after four years of school you still not ready for a lot of stuff they throw at you in private practice and I thought that would be a good way to kind of ease into it rather than jump in cold.

INT: Why did you select the army?

PB: I had a good friend from college who lived around the Washington dc area and I used to visit a lot and we used to go out and party a lot and I thought I had the best chance at getting station around Washington if I was in the army as opposed to the navy or the air force but it didn't quite work out that way cause I ended up in fort Jackson South Carolina

INT: When did you go into the service?

PB: It was September of 72

INT: Going in as a dentist, you obviously didn't have basic training?

PB: We spent a month listening to red tape lectures in fort Sam Houston in san Antonio, there again I feel guilty telling this but they put us up in a share in a hotel the swimming pool send the shuttle every morning brought us back at the end of the day. I mean, They gave us a cost of living allowance you go out to restaurants all the time it really wasn't a hardship.

INT: Where you an officer, did you?

PB: Yea and then captain

INT: How long was this whole basic training?

PB: One month, and then it went back to fort Jackson

INT: and basically that where you stayed till the end?

PB: Yea the rest of the time I spent there the rest of the 3 years was in fort Jackson

INT: What was it like there? What were your duties? What was your equipment life?

PB: Facilities were excellent, I was very fortunate because I worked in an almost a brand new hospital they had just put up (---) hospital maybe 2, 3 years before I got there and I worked as a general dentist in an oral surgery clinic in the hospital my job was to treat people who worked in the hospital so they wouldn't have to go to the other areas around the base which was fairly large and lose a lot of men hours they could just run downstairs to our clinic and get what they had to get done and don't have to go, you know travel. Save time.

INT: So, being in a new facility then the equipment was very up to date?

PB: Oh Yea, yea

INT: How does it compare to what you train on? when you were in dental school?

PB: It was much better. I did spend almost a year in the dependent clinic and the equipment there was adequate but it wasn't really moderate stuff

INT: What do you mean about dependent?

PB: Dependents known as Wives and children

INT: So they receive their care through the military?

PB: At that time, they did, but they kind of phase that out after a while, I know from keeping in touch with some friends who stayed in the area there the dependence was not even retirees were not treated in the base anymore they kept doing less and less it was mostly active duty.

INT: Where did you live while you were in the base at fort Jackson?

PB: First year I lived in the bachelor officers' quarters then I lived off base after I got married just in an apartment complex.

INT: Did you meet your wife in service?

PB: No, I met her when I was in dental school.

INT: What was it like there as an officer? Some of the functions you attended some social life I guess/?

PB: There wasn't a heck of a lot that was official, once a month I think they would have the hail and farewell parties at the club where they would welcome people who were coming in and saying goodbye to people who were leaving. Other than that was whoever you made friends with you socialize with, I happen to have another buddy from college living in the area and I just to spend a lot of time with him and his family they lived of obviously off base. I didn't spend a lot of time on base socializing most people didn't

unless I suppose that people were really () career types who were looking to advance their rank.

INT: So you do a lot of socializing off base then, with local people?

PB: Yea I say so yea but there's also in our for instance in our little part of the apartment complex one other guy who lived right below us was another guy another dentist who worked on base. And they would be a lot of different apartment places around the area various dentist and physicians would be in this area and we just go you know swap apartments and times parties and so on dinners. I find that the people in the service were very congenial and sociable.

INT: I know in the service people expect on people and I know there's a lot of poor people that entered the service, did you notice any special problems taking care of their teeth? I mean were there in worse shape than some?

PB: Yea, you did notice that there was a certain amount of, there were more problems with people who were from a lower economic grounds and there were definitely there, I mean these people came from all over and you knew that they were there because they probably had nothing else to do you know at the time Vietnam was on I don't know if they were still drafting people or not.

INT: It was 1972

PB: Yea it was winding down but they were still doing it and but they were there. There wasn't a definite socioeconomic thing going on where these people didn't have good dental care prior to coming in into the service.

INT: So, your work could be pretty challenging at times?

PB: Not more challenging that what I'm doing now. But then again in an area where we lived is economically depressed there's a lot of poverty around where we are.

INT: Where do you live now?

PB: Hoosick Falls

INT: How long have you been there?

PB: 30 years

INT: So you find some similarities there with the economic structure?

PB: Yea because I had also notice that you know may have seen this too when you were in central school a lot of the kids go into the service after they get out of high school they don't want to hang around town and work in a factory they're not going to college so military is an option.

INT: How were your officers like?

PB: The ones that I had?

INT: Yes

PB: Almost all of them were really good people I really liked them a lot they were really good to me

INT: Now the form you filled out, you said that there were no one experience that stood out that you compare your unit to somewhat like the mash tv show, why?

PB: It just was, we had a good group of people working in our clinic in fact in both of the clinics that I worked at there were just. Nobody took everything super seriously I mean I'm not talking about the dental work but you know it wasn't strict military what do you call it what's the word I'm looking for? Decorum you didn't go around saluting everybody and all that stuff we were much much more than the line people who were really

INT: I was going to ask you; you think because this was a hospital site it was a different structure with the military decorum as if you were somewhere else?

PB: I think so. There used to be a little bit of resentment among the career people and the line officers because we came in as captains and I think there was resentment there that they were working their rear end off to try to advance their ranks and we just kind of waltz in way ahead of them I guess

INT: Did they pay the dental and the medical people a little bit more money than say, the infantry captain of what you would be making on the outside?

PB: Yea there was some of that but it was still we weren't getting paid a heck of a lot compare to what you can make on the outside salaries were decent, but they weren't you can make more to much more money if you were in private practice somewhere else.

INT: Where there some friends that stood out more than others acquaintances or acquaint-ship that you made while you in service?

PB: Yea I'm still friends with one, my wife and I are I friends with this one couple they still live down in Columbia and talk to them from time to time haven't visited for a while but we have over the years.

INT: Are there any experiences that you had that stand out more than other that you can talk about?

PB: One that was totally unrelated to the dentistry or the service even. One of my friends drown in a canoeing accident it was in the spring of 73 and 3 guys went on the canoe to this river about maybe 75 to a 100 miles away from where the base was and they thought they were going to get in and just take a leisurely canoe trip it wasn't white water but the () said just came out like the year before and one of the guys who was big on the canoeing was almost obsessed with that he really wanted to white water canoeing in the worse way but they went into this river which happened to be at flood stage and they didn't wear any life jackets which was foolish evidently the canoe flip on something branch tree whatever submerged because I say the river was probably about 8 feet higher than it should've been or normally was and went the canoe flip well they had 2 life jackets and being foolishly macho they said well if one guy can't wear the one then none of us will you know and two of them got out and one didn't and we spent the next this happen on a Saturday night or Saturday afternoon we spent Monday I think thru Wednesday searching the woods around the river looking for the body which we didn't find at that point it surface a few months later or what was left of it and the guy that I happen to be working for my boss at the surgery clinic had to go in and Id the body

according to the dental work because it was unrecognizable as a human. They had asked me to go with them on the canoe and I said no I'm not interested in that I don't like being cold and or wet and my parents were coming down to visit there were on their way to Florida so they were going to stop by I think I better spruce my apartment up a little bit make it presentable and I said no I just don't have the time. And they said just drive one of the cars you know they were going to take 2 cars and they drop the canoe in one end and then drive down to the end were they were going to get out and I said no I just don't have the time so I skipped it. And I get a phone call from one of the guy's wife it was about I don't know 12 or 1 o'clock in the morning Sunday morning saying this guy hank disappear and they thought he had drowned and sure enough.

INT: He was a dentist you said also

PB: Yea he had just graduated the same time I did he was from New Orleans I think he went to I think it was L.S.U. dental school

INT: What was life like for your wife/?

PB: She. it was a little bit difficult for her because she came from just outside Boston the first time in her life to go anywhere really here she was in the middle of you know South Carolina so there's some culture shock there she adapted pretty well I thought she made friends easily and she got a job first she worked in a McDonald's cause she just didn't want to stay in the house so she found a job at McDonalds which was just down the road from where we lived and she quit that after about I don't even think it was a week then she wound up getting a job on the base as an x-ray tech cause she was trained to do various things in a dental office. And she worked at this other clinic they wouldn't let husband and wife work together in the clinic same clinic she worked on the base but not in the same clinic for the rest of the time that she was there which was about 2 years almost 2 years.

INT: You mentioned you regret not staying in the military for a career but then you also off camera talked about that a little bit, you want to talk about why you did this?

PB: Primarily, because I didn't want to subject my children and wife to be moving around constantly I had have a little bit of experience with that as a kid because we used to spend winters in Florida and from CT and I had to go to school in Florida and my parents instead of renting in the same school district where I would've gone to the same school we went to the same area around Miami and Hollywood but we didn't stay in the same school district so you bounce around you were just there for a couple of months and then gone then back home I didn't like that experience I didn't want one of my kids to have to go through that which they didn't.

INT: When did you leave service?

PB: September of 75

INT: Did you go directly to Hoosick falls from there?

PB: Came home, went to CT went to Boston looked around Boston a little bit and wound up in Hoosick Falls in September yea it was also in September that year 75

INT: Why did you pick Hoosick Falls?

PB: One of my friend from high school parents from CT had sold their house down there and moved up to east Rupert and they bought a little old farm and rehab it and I just to come up to visit and I like the area and I'd probably go to Vermont to practice cause I liked Vermont and traveling up 22 I went through Hoosick Falls and I knew where it was like () I was offer the job to work in the town and they guy said you probably don't know where this little place is, is Hoosick Falls and I said Oh yea I can work it we just came in and I said to my wife let's see how it is for a year or two and if you don't like it well leave and here it is 30 years later.

INT: Have you join any veteran's organizations?

PB: No

INT: Never joined?

You did say you keep contact with at least just one person that was in service with you?

PB: Oh yea

INT: Just the one no one else?

PB: No I've seen other people over the years but not recently, my boss I saw two of the guys I worked were in charge of the clinic that I worked I've seen both of them over the years away from the service but is been quite a while.

INT: I know you had your education already but have you used your G.I Joe at all for anything.

PB: No, no

INT: How do you think your time in service had an effect on your life?

I think it was positive, definitely gave me an opportunity to get more experience to do what I do I felt much more comfortable working in private office as opposed to being just coming out school which is you have to believe me 4 years seems like a long time is nowhere near enough.

INT: You have a picture?

PB: Oh yea

INT: If you just hold it up in front of you

PB: I'll get the dust off it was up in the attic!!!
Just hold it like that.

INT: Can you tell when and where that was taken?

PB: You mean the base and everything?

This was at fort Jackson South Carolina Columbia South Carolina this is in front of the bachelor's office quarters called Kennedy hall they had just put this up it was brand new we had to wait a little bit for them to get it all together and this was in September I believe it was in 73 or late 72 maybe.

INT: Thank you very much for the interview.

PB: That's it?!