

**Raymond E. Primeau
Veteran**

**Wayne Clarke
Interviewer**

**Interviewed on January 27, 2010
Slingerlands, New York**

Raymond Primeau- **RP**

Wayne Clarke- **WC**

WC: Today is the 27th of January, 2010. We are at the terrace at Beaverwick, in Slingerlands, New York. My name is Wayne Clarke I'm with the New York State Military Museum and Veterans research center, Saratoga Springs New York. So for the record, would you please state your full name and your date and place of your birth?

RP: Raymond E. Primeau. I was born 3/28/61. I was born in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey.

WC: And you mentioned your father was full-time military?

RP: Yep. He was 26 years in the Army, retired.

WC: Were you born on a military base?

RP: Uh, yes.

WC: Okay. Did you attend school down there or different places?

RP: Different places in Virginia. Mainly in Virginia and New York I went to school.

WC: And when did you graduate from high school?

RP: Cohoes High, here in New York.

WC: And what year did you graduate?

RP: 1980.

WC: Did you go on to college at that point?

RP: No I didn't. I went directly to military.

WC: And you went into the army?

RP: Yep, went into the army.

WC: And was that because your father was in the army?

RP: Yes. He was in the military, so I followed in his footsteps.

WC: Alright. And where did you go for your basic training?

RP: Fort Dix, New Jersey.

WC: And how was that?

RP: It was different.

WC: Was it difficult?

RP: Yes it was...to me.

WC: Okay. And that was an eight week basic training?

RP: I believe so it was.

WC: And once you completed your basic, whereabouts did you go?

RP: I went to fort Leavenworth, Missouri to do my AIT, which was for-at the time they called it 64 Charlie, s truck driver.

WC: And what type of trucks did you drive?

RP: Um, we were from the jeep all the way up to the M15, which was a 10 ton truck that hold tanks.

WC: And how long was that school for?

RP: I believe it was 12 to 14 weeks.

WC: Did you learn any mechanical training down there, or how to train change tires?

RP: Um, yes we do. We had all the training on how to maintain vehicles, change the oils, changing the tires...grease and moping all that.

WC: Let me ask you something. How dangerous are those truck tires? I've heard the stories of the rings...

RP: Yes. When I was stationed at Hawaii there was one person there that was uh-we had to use a pick to get on top to break the ring, but he didn't get the all the air out the tire, and the ring came up and took part of his forehead right off. He survived that incident, but it was a bad site at the time.

WC: Alright. After you completed that training, were you promoted at the end of that?

RP: Yeah. I went as an E2 at the time. I went in as an E2 at the time for some reason. Can't recall why.

WC: Alright. And where you promoted to a PFC?

RP: No. Not that.

WC: Alright. And whereabouts were you sent next?

RP: I was Barrington, Hawaii. I think it was the 25th entry division.

WC: And what did you do in Hawaii?

RP: I drove a truck, a two and a half ton truck with a trailer or a water buffalo on the back of it.

WC: Did you do a lot of field maneuvers?

RP: All the time.

WC: Training?

RP: Yep we were always constantly out on the field, or training with other units. By the time we drove troops to the training course, we would stay up here all day and come back at night. I basically did that.

WC: Did you through the air assault course yourself?

RP: Yes it did. I think it was in 1981 I did that, because I figured that I was driving and I see it, I might as well do it.

WC: Speaking of that course, how difficult was that? Was there a lot of PT and physical action?

RP: There was a lot of physical action involved, more so than basic training was. But it was different because you're hallowing, calling helicopters, down mountains, landing helicopters on the landing zone. It was interesting. Something different.

WC: How long was that school for approximately?

RP: I want to say 4 to 8 weeks.

WC: Okay. It was pretty intense then?

RP: Yes.

WC: Alright. What was your living conditions in Hawaii? You said Schofield Barracks?

RP: Yep. It was just like what you see in the movie Pearl Harbor, with the old World War 2 buildings there, and it still has bullet holes in the wall you could see.

WC: Really?

RP: Yes. It was nearly a six-man room with bunks in it, and the shower was located off the balcony in another part of the building.

WC: Okay.

RP: It was nice.

WC: And how expensive was it being posed. I did you have a car at all?

RP: No I didn't have a car because I couldn't afford it over there. Beers were fifty a bottle and that was expensive. Everything was expensive down there.

WC: In Hawaii?

RP: Yes. When we were off the military base. On the base, it was pretty decent.

WC: How were you treated by the civilian populace off base?

RP: At the time I was down there. The Samoans didn't really like the military personality. There was one of them that was they were trying to find because they were killing soldiers when I was down there. In general, most of the people were friendly to the military.

WC: How long were you in Hawaii for?

RP: Two years.

WC: Were you promoted at all at that time?

RP: Yeah. I was promoted to PFC.

WC: And after your two-year tour, were you discharged or were you sent somewhere else?

RP: No. I was discharged in California.

WC: Whereabouts in California?

RP: Um...I can't remember.

WC: Was it Fort Prd?

RP: I don't think so.

WC: No? Okay.

RP: It was close to San Francisco. That's what I can remember.

WC: Okay. And you went back home?

RP: I went back home to New York, and from there I joined a National Guard.

WC: Did you make use to GI Bill at all, when you were discharged?

RP: GI Bill?

WC: The GI bill of rights? Or...

RP: I used the one for... the VA loan thing I guess.

WC: Okay. Were you married at the point?

RP: No, but I used the loan thing after I got married.

WC: Alright. Now what did you do as a civilian?

RP: Well for the first year I didn't work. I just lived off my saving and unemployment. I wanted to take a vacation.

WC: You went into the National Guard, but did you have any civilian training besides being in the Guard?

RP: No.

WC: Okay. Now what kind of guard unit did you join?

RP: I want to say to two-fifth support, based out of troy.

WC: And was that a truck unit?

RP: Not really. We supported I believe every two weeks when we took off, we went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and did our training there. I guess we were attached to the A second for some reason.

WC: Okay. And you drove a truck?

RP: I drove a deuce and a half.

WC: Ok. Alright.

RP: And in that unit, I was also was trained as a mechanic too.

WC: How long were you with the guard?

RP: Seven-eight years.

WC: Okay. And then you switched over to the reserves?

RP: Yeah. Went to the reserves after that?

WC: Why did you make the switch to the reserves? Any particular reason?

RP: Ah, yes. At the time with the Guards and going away-I went away more than two weeks a year. I had two kids, two little kids and a wife. You know, I needed to be home more with them, and plus my job at the time needed me here instead of going away.

WC: Okay. Alright, and you were discharged in 1993?

RP: Yes.

WC: Alright, and we just go back to when you were on active duty. Did you stay in touch with any of the people you were in service with?

RP: Just one particular guy, which he is now with my son down in Virginia when I see when I go down there.

WC: Have you intended to any reunions at all?

RP: No.

WC: Okay, and did you join any veterans organizations.

RP: Uh, yes. The American Legion.

WC: Currently, you are working for this facility the terrorists...-

RP: Part of a review show.

WC: Right. You got some photographs from when you duty.

RP: Yep.

WC: You want to hold those up and tell us when they were taken?

RP: [Holds photos] This one here was taken during my basic training.

WC: Okay.

RP: And this one here when I was in Hawaii. We were heading out for our teams Barry.

WC: Okay.

RP: And this one here was in one of the islands in Hawaii, where we were at a volcano doing maneuvers.

WC: Alright.

RP: And this one here, we were on another island on Hawaii doing maneuvers too.

WC: Okay. Now when you were in the National Guard or reserves, was your unit ever activated for any of the storms.

RP: We were activated for when the storms. I can recall with the National Guard, and we were- got the truck downs in Troy, we were loading trees that fell down. I can't which year that was.

WC: Okay. That was the only time your unit was activated.

RP: Yes.

WC: Okay, and where there any other incidents you can recall, or any humorous events, or anything that stands out about the military that we didn't cover at all.

RP: Nope. The only one that stood out when the soldier- the ring from the tire cut his head.

WC: Okay. How did you think your time in the service and in the National Guard changed or affected your life?

RP: More discipline, more job focus, and more with the family too because being with the family, you see what you missed.

WC: Okay. Well thank you-oh you mentioned that your son is in the military currently?

RP: Yes he is in the military.

WC: Do you want to tell us about what he's doing and what kind of training he had.

RP: He is in the army. He went in a year ago. He's stationed at Fort League, Virginia. He graduated from air assault school, just like me, and he is currently deployed to Haiti to help them out. He's attached to the eighty second airborne right now.

WC: Okay. Alright well thank you so much for your interview.

RP: You're welcome.