

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an  
Oral History Interview with  
SAMUEL C. NEUMAN  
Career, Signal Corps, Army, Cold War and Vietnam War.

2002

OH  
9

OH  
9

**Neuman, Samuel C.**, (1941- ). Oral History Interview, 2002.

User Copy: 2 sound cassettes (ca. 110 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 110 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 2 videorecordings (ca. 110 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

**Abstract:**

Samuel C. Neuman, a Wisconsin native, discusses his career in the Army Signal Corps, including the Cold War and three tours during the Vietnam War. He talks about his impression of military recruiters at his high school, difficulty finding work due to his draft status, basic training at Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri), and assignment to the Signal Corps. He speaks of pole line construction training at Fort Gordon (Georgia) and learning to lay communications wire. Sent to work in the supply section of the 127<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion in Korea, he speaks being put on alert after learning of the assassination of President Kennedy. Returned to the United States, he talks about reassignment to the 53rd Signal Battalion at Fort Chaffee (Arkansas), participating in the "Desert Strike" training maneuvers in Arizona, and reenlisting in the Army. Neuman discusses dial (communications) school at Fort Monmouth (New Jersey), becoming an instructor, and volunteering to serve in Vietnam after his wife and newborn baby returned to Janesville (Wisconsin). Assigned to the 41<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion and stationed in Vung Tau (Vietnam), he comments building a dial exchange. Transferred to Saigon with the Regional Command Group, he describes duty as a carrier equipment instructor. He addresses fear during mealtimes as the majority of attacks occurred then, living in private quarters, staying in small groups to discourage guerrilla attacks, and return to the U.S., and taking his wife on a second honeymoon. He speaks of maintenance and teaching duty at Fort Leonard Wood and work under the US Army Joint Support Command at Fort Ritchie (Maryland). After receiving orders to go back to Vietnam with the 4th Infantry Division, Neuman describes duty providing field tactical communications. He describes moving to a firebase at Song Mau with the 2nd Squadron, 1st Armored Cavalry and rebuilding the communications bunker that had been blown up the night before his arrival. He recalls his first fire fight, daylight attacks, crossing into Cambodia, and having his brother assigned to his battalion. He states drugs weren't a big problem except for one individual who was wandering around high during a fire fight. After a year, he returned to the U.S. and again worked as a "shake and bake" instructor at Fort Sill (Oklahoma). After some marital problems and a divorce, he talks about volunteering to return to Vietnam. Assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, he describes building firebases, relations with his commanding officers, and the actions that earned him a bronze star. Sent back to Fort Sill, he mentions working for post special services, providing communications for an armor unit of the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry, and remarrying. Rotated to Aschaffenburg (Germany), he touches upon participation in walking marathons, bringing his wife to the base, and field training. Assigned to provide communications at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Evacuation Hospital at Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri), he

speaks of maneuvers at Fort Irwin (California), retiring from the Army, and working for the State of Wisconsin in facility maintenance. He touches being a life member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Veterans of America and discusses his disability rating.

**Biographical Sketch:**

Neuman (b.1941) served in the Army from 1962 to 1982. Born in Waupun (Wisconsin), his family frequently moved around the state, but he calls Janesville his hometown. Assigned to the Signal Corps, Neuman served at a variety of United States bases as well as in Korea, Vietnam, and Germany. After his service, he worked for the State of Wisconsin for twelve years in facility maintenance and settled in Kaukauna.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2002.  
Transcribed by Jeremy Osgood, 2010.  
Abstract by Susan Krueger, 2010.

**Transcribed Interview:**

Jim: Neuman, and the date is the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, 2002. Where were you born, sir?

Samuel: I was born in Waupun, Wisconsin.

Jim: And when was that?

Samuel: In December 7<sup>th</sup>, uh, correction, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

Jim: 1941, okay.

Samuel: Right.

Jim: And you went all the way through your grade school and high school there?

Samuel: No, I moved around the state of Wisconsin. My dad travelled around cause he was just a general laborer, he worked as a farm hand, he worked in construction as a laborer. And we moved quite a bit.

Jim: Oh, was that hard, going to high school while changing schools all the time?

Samuel: Well, it was up until I ended up in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, and then I stayed there for three years, so I did get to complete my last three years of high school in the same—

Jim: Then it counted, then.

Samuel: Right.

Jim: That's nice. And then, tell me about your military, well, what did you do right after high school, that's what I'm asking?

Samuel: Right after high school, well, about three weeks before we graduated, all of the services sent recruiters to the high school. And, they—

Jim: All services.

Samuel: All of them. Navy, Marines, Army—

Jim: They had them at a meeting—

Samuel: Right, all of the seniors were invited to the auditorium, and they all came up and—

- Jim: Gave a presentation.
- Samuel: Give it a little presentation, and today, even with my own military training I feel that the Marine Corp was the only one to give a truly honest representation.
- Jim: Oh, really? Was that your impression at the time, that they did a better job than the others?
- Samuel: Well, not immediately at that time, but as time went on and I learned, and I listened, and I remembered what we were told. The Marine said, "We'll promise you a weapon. We'll promise you some place to sleep. And we'll promise you something to eat." On either three they did not go into detail on. Where the other services bragged on their food, and you get to sleep in the barracks. None of them promises, I mean, I've slept a number of times in some real muddy places, and ate some food I don't know if I would really declare food.
- Jim: Right, so, anyway, they were impressive?
- Samuel: Yes. All of them were impressive in their, I mean, like, the Army did carry through like, if you took the tests and qualified for the schools you could get the schools and education. And I don't know about the Navy and the Air Force, because I didn't go into those two.
- Jim: You went into the Army and the Marines.
- Samuel: No, I didn't go into the Marines. I just remembered so strongly how the Marine recruiter put it.
- Jim: And then the presentation, you saw them from all services?
- Samuel: Yeah, all of them. Even the Navy. The Navy promising schooling, and service, and sailing.
- Jim: The deal was, if you went in, what, two years you'd get two years of college, or what?
- Samuel: Well, if you went in the Navy you had to take four years. Air Force was four years. And the Army was three years.
- Jim: And the Marines?
- Samuel: And the Marines was four years.

- Jim: Probably be the same as the Navy.
- Samuel: Right.
- Jim: And what did you get in return? Equal amount of college? Or what?
- Samuel: No. Equal? They all promised what schooling you qualified, and the Marines were a little more vague on how much they would give you. But the others, you would get the schooling, their schooling. Like I went into dial central office repair. I got that. I went through what they call, what's nicknamed a pole jockey school, which is outside telephone line construction, you know. I went through that.
- Jim: Yeah, but what did they promise you at the end? College?
- Samuel: At the time, no. College was not a promise at that time.
- Jim: You knew you were about to be drafted? Finishing high school?
- Samuel: No, one of the things that made me go in. Well, I was about to finish high school at that time.
- Jim: Wasn't everybody who was finishing high school eligible to be drafted?
- Samuel: Oh, we were all eligible to be drafted. Well, I would say ninety percent of us were. There's a few kids yet that had a few more months.
- Jim: Until they were what?
- Samuel: Eighteen.
- Jim: Oh, eighteen, you had to—
- Samuel: You had to register. So there was a few of them that were still seventeen that had not registered yet and had a few months to go. They would have all had to, before the end of the year. Registered.
- Jim: So, you decided to join before that?
- Samuel: No, after that I didn't want to go in. I didn't want to go to college. I went out and took a job as a farm hand. Because that's what I had the greatest experience in.
- Jim: Yeah, but I mean, when you went in service?

- Samuel: Oh, when I went in service, I'd been out doing farm hand, and I was looking for a better paying job.
- Jim: Right, but I mean, did you enlist before you were drafted?
- Samuel: Oh, yes, I did enlist.
- Jim: Right after high school.
- Samuel: No.
- Jim: Oh.
- Samuel: I was out almost a year before I enlisted.
- Jim: Okay.
- Samuel: And the reason it came around to enlist, I was out looking for a better paying job. You know, I was going around hunting for a job. Everywhere I went, "We'll hire you if you got your military behind you." They didn't want to take you and then lose you in six months to a year. So I got tired of hearing that and I went down to my friendly recruiter and enlisted.
- Jim: In the Army.
- Samuel: In the Army at the time. And I enlisted, went through Milwaukee, and went on down to Fort Leonard Wood, where I took my basic training.
- Jim: How long was the basic training?
- Samuel: Eight weeks. Well, actually, it amounted to about, like nine weeks. Because you were anywhere from a week to a week and a half in the reception center. And then depending on when you came into the reception center, that week or week and a half you would be there, and then you had eight weeks of basic training. Then I went to Fort Gordon, Georgia for my advanced training. Which was another eight weeks.
- Jim: And the basic training is simply marching, and—
- Samuel: Marching. Shooting a rifle. Physically conditioning. Learning military jargon, you know, like recognize a lieutenant colonel or a general or sergeant.
- Jim: Everyone who finished that generally went on to advanced—

- Samuel: Some advanced training, yes. Some went on to infantry, some went on to specialty schools. Some signed up to go on to airborne schools.
- Jim: What made that determination?
- Samuel: On how they, we took a test.
- Jim: It wasn't by choice though.
- Samuel: Well, you could, you had to select. You selected three areas you had a preference for. And if you qualified.
- Jim: Meaning your test.
- Samuel: Through the test. Then you would get your choice, in that way.
- Jim: It was a written test?
- Samuel: Yeah. They were written tests. Most of them multiple guess, but. And they covered just basic general knowledge on what a person had. They didn't get real technical. Now some of it was on your reading comprehension and understanding of numbers and stuff like that, but it was still just basic, general questions. Does this person have the ability to learn things, is what it boiled down to. And if you qualified high enough, which, I qualified fairly high on all of my exams.
- Jim: Then you could make it your choice, as to where you went.
- Samuel: Yeah. I was allowed more choice. I was even offered the chance to go to OCS [Officer Candidate School], but after they showed me the movie, I said, "Ain't no way I'm gonna."
- Jim: [laughs] What movie?
- Samuel: They showed us a movie on what the training was like. For Officer Candidate School.
- Jim: And that turned you off?
- Samuel: And that turned me totally off.
- Jim: Because?
- Samuel: Well, they showed the people out there polishing the floor. After I learned what it was all about, I can understand what they were doing. But at the time I didn't—

- Jim: You were too young.
- Samuel: I was too young to understand what was going on, and foolishly I made the decision that I was not going to go to Officer Candidate School.
- Jim: I'm still trying to grasp, did it seem too difficult to you?
- Samuel: No, it seemed petty, and that they were looking for any way to throw you out. To break you. Actually it's what it boiled down, is "Can we break this man." In plain words, giving you meaningfully details, like, most of the floors had a dark border, with lighter color in between, and you had to have this polish and you could see yourself in it, okay.
- Jim: That was in a training film?
- Samuel: In a film they showed on it. It showed the continuous marching and physical training. And partially I didn't feel I could live up to that, and I didn't want to put up with the hassle.
- Jim: Seems like they're discouraging, rather than encouraging.
- Samuel: Well, after I learned, really, they're encouraging. They wanted the best.
- Jim: And they were challenging—
- Samuel: Yes, that's what they were doing, they were, "Can you do this? Can you put up with this?" And I understood that, after years. It didn't sink in right then.
- Jim: Yeah, when you're a young kid, that's a turn off.
- Samuel: It was a turn off. But there was six guys out of my—
- Jim: Who elected to do that.
- Samuel: Elected. "Oh, I can handle that." And as I found out, and learned later on, because if they can bust you there, you'll break in combat. Was their theory.
- Jim: That was the point.
- Samuel: Yeah. If you hold on to that, then we can't break you in combat, either. Because your attention to detail will be there. And your willingness will be there.

Jim: So you turned into what?

Samuel: At that time I went to dial school. Or, not dial school, I'm sorry. To the pole line construction, the outside plan.

Jim: So this is with the engineers I assume.

Samuel: No, Signal Corps.

Jim: Signal Corps, okay.

Samuel: It was with the Signal Corps.

Jim: And what did you have to learn, here.

Samuel: They taught us how to—

Jim: How to climb up that pole.

Samuel: Well, that's one of the many things we learned. We learned how deep to dig holes, I mean, of course, they had a lot of power tools. I mean, you weren't gonna stand out anymore in these days and dig a hole deep enough.

Jim: But you still had to know, if you had the power tool, how deep you had to go.

Samuel: Yeah. You knew how deep you had to put the pole. Putting the poles up. Lining them up, showing us how to make sure they're absolutely straight.

Jim: Where was this training?

Samuel: Fort Gordon, Georgia. And then you'd go up on the, we'd learn to climb the poles, and then they had cross arms on. Fastening wire on glass insulators. Stringing other types of cable.

Jim: That's hot wire.

Samuel: Yeah, it was hot wire. Well, when we were learning it was cold wire.

Jim: I'm sure. They'd end up with no recruits.

Samuel: Right. And then they'd teach us how to take cable, and they had a machine that you'd string up a steel cable and then you lace regular telephone cable underneath of that. They taught us what they call spiral four cable, which was one that you could lay on the ground, running that, hawking that to

get how many you could go before you put a repeater in it, and all this stuff.

Jim: A repeater just boosts the hell out of the—

Samuel: Boost the power yeah. So they taught us—

Jim: How big was a repeater?

Samuel: Those repeaters were about eleven inches in diameter, and about thirty-six inches long.

Jim: Pretty good size.

Samuel: Yeah. They were designed—

Jim: How did you fasten them to the ground?

Samuel: Basically you just laid them on the ground, you didn't. Now, but they taught us picking spots to lay them. Don't—

Jim: Yeah, you wouldn't put them in the road, they could be crushed by a truck.

Samuel: Right, if you had to cross the road you either went overhead at, like, eighteen feet, or underneath at least eight inches.

Jim: How often would you need those repeaters?

Samuel: They were every five and three quarters miles. So.

Jim: And you had to have those. You'd be dead without them.

Samuel: Yeah, you couldn't produce enough power—

Jim: These were telephone wires, or power lines?

Samuel: Telephone.

Jim: Telephone.

Samuel: So, you didn't need the, now, the power lines were all hot wired. You, we learned basic power lines, but most of our construction was all telephone communication. Or carrier equipment.

Jim: I would say handling those power lines would be a little tougher.

Samuel: It is.

Jim: Because you have to be so much more careful.

Samuel: And you were learning what protective equipment to wear.

Jim: You handled those with rubber gloves?

Samuel: Rubber gloves. You handled them with, you had pads on it so you didn't brush again. You learned about wearing no jewelry. All eyeglasses were made out of cold plastic.

Jim: The jewelry on your hands would attract electricity?

Samuel: Oh, yeah, you didn't dare wear jewelry.

Jim: Even with the rubber gloves?

Samuel: Even with the rubber gloves. When you went up to work you stripped your watches your jewelry, you put it in a—

Jim: Your watch and all that.

Samuel: You had a little bag, you put it in your pocket, so it was out of the way.

Jim: Now, if you just accidentally brushed your arm against one of those power lines, that would knock you flat?

Samuel: No. It would depend on if you were properly protected so you weren't grounded to the ground.

Jim: If you weren't grounded, you probably wouldn't notice anything?

Samuel: Right. You could brush millions of volts, and never feel it.

Jim: But if you're connected to the ground—

Samuel: If you're touched to the ground—

Jim: So long pal!

Samuel: Yup. You're fried. So they taught us all the safety stuff with that.

Jim: So, did a lot of guys get injured in training?

- Samuel: Very few. Because, I mean, they were very, before you even went allowed, they double checked, make sure you were following all safety procedures. The worst I ever done is welded a screwdriver.
- Jim: In a flash?
- Samuel: Yeah, I had it in my hand, I had the plastic handle of a screwdriver, the rest of it was gone.
- Jim: Into the weld?
- Samuel: Into the weld, yup. So, that's the worst I ever, and that's the biggest problem most of them had, is they would weld a tool.
- Jim: From, you touched something you shouldn't have touched?
- Samuel: Right, like you brushed against the metal on the pole, one of the braces, and you touched the wire at the same time. It was hard to do that with your hand, but easy to do it with something that was real firm and solid. Like a piece of metal, like a screwdriver.
- Jim: I bet that gave you a jolt and got your—
- Samuel: Well, it got my attention real quick. It didn't actually shock me.
- Jim: No, no, but the noise of that, the zap, I'm sure widened your eyeballs.
- Samuel: It woke me up. So. That kind of stuff worked. You know, and they were always very strict on safety. As it turned out, years later, I became the safety NCO of the company, so.
- Jim: Okay. So, you were down there for how long?
- Samuel: I was there for eight weeks. And our eight weeks was kinda nice, because it was a little bit broke up, because of Christmas. We got down there in late November, and we started our training. We were three weeks into training. Then we ended up going to—
- Jim: Sorry, now. I just want to make sure it's running.
- Samuel: We would go into Christmas vacation. They shut down the post. They needed six, eight volunteers that weren't planning to go home, to stay. Well, the ones that we found out later that stayed, were guys that didn't have no family. You know, no particular place to go. Well, they ended up getting better than what we had. They got some time off that we didn't get.

- Jim: So, once you finished that training, then where was—
- Samuel: In mid-January we finished the training, I was put on orders to go to Korea.
- Jim: What was this year?
- Samuel: That would have been 1963. I went to Korea. In 1963, after going, getting into Korea. Korea was kind of, my first job in Korea was not what you call a Signal Corps job. I ended up working in the supply for the battalion. I was assigned to the 127<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion. And I worked S4 for them. Which means I went and pick supplies up, delivering them to the companies. Because they needed a supply clerk, and they had an excess amount of people that were—
- Jim: You're still in the Signal Corps.
- Samuel: Still in the Signal Corps.
- Jim: Yeah, it was a signal battalion, right.
- Samuel: Right. But they had excess. Pole jockeys were a dime a dozen. You know, in plain words we had more than we needed. And a lot of them like me ended up working other jobs.
- Jim: So, you were there for a year.
- Samuel: I was there, well, by the time I got back to the states it was 13 months. In my twelfth month, at the end of my twelfth month. As a matter of fact on February 1<sup>st</sup>, I boarded a boat heading for the states. Well, actually on the first of March, I got off the boat.
- Jim: Ship.
- Samuel: Or, ship, yeah.
- Jim: Us Navy people.
- Samuel: I know, you have a hard time talking boats and ships.
- Jim: It's very simple. A boat is something you put on a ship.
- Samuel: Yep. I know that.
- Jim: You know that, I know.

Samuel: But, off the ship. We were on a troop carrier. As a matter of fact, my first night out from the ship, coming back, I was like a drunk. Cause, sitting, rock all night long. We were in a little rough sea, so we did this all night long.

Jim: Did you do this, too, at the same time?

Samuel: I don't know, but I felt most of this.

Jim: That's what I noticed when I was aboard.

Samuel: And then I got up like I'd been drinking all night. But after I got, what they call my sea legs, then it was nothing. I wasn't really sick. I was just like I was drunk. "Wait a minute, I ain't had nothing to drink." But in 127<sup>th</sup>, all I basically did is, I say, deliver S4, went on maneuvers.

The greatest excitement I had in Korea was when President Kennedy was assassinated. And when that happened we were, as we called him, the guy was the company drunk. In them days they had somebody that was always the company drunk, he was drunk more than he was sober. Was the duty NCO that night. And he was coming around waking us up, and everybody was throwing their shoes at him, "Get out of here, you're bull." Cause he was telling us.

Cause he woke us up about two hours early, because we were put on alert. He said, "The President's been assassinated." You know, nobody's believing him, everybody's reaching for the radios, turning it on. I can remember when the radios first come on, they had this long, in them days most of the young kids called long-haired music. Or the concert type music, you knew the slow, sad music.

Jim: Oh, elevator music.

Samuel: Yeah. Another good term for it. But then a few moments later, then, the newscast came on, when then we all took a different turn. We could have moved that battalion within ten minutes after he woke us up. We realized. Those of us that had portable radios carried them with them. Those of us that didn't we just went about our job. Getting ready. And then we sat there for three days. Ready to go to the field, and going nowhere. Our unit wasn't sent to the field, we were just put under preparation—

Jim: Nobody knew what to do, so they just—

Samuel: Well, there was no orders from higher to move out, so we just. We sat there, ready to roll. Ready to go wherever we were told, and waited. And

we spent the day sitting around our trucks listening to the radio, and then at night going back to bed.

Jim: Was the food and everything in Korea—

Samuel: It was basically fairly decent food.

Jim: A mess tent and all that.

Samuel: Yeah, we were set up. Regular mess food.

Jim: Where was that, in Korea?

Samuel: I was with the 127<sup>th</sup> signal battalion at Camp Casey. That's north of Seoul. It's about halfway between Seoul and the DMZ. Because then above us you had Camp Hovey, and then you still had another ways to go to the DMZ. Below us you had Incheon. Or not Incheon.

Jim: Suwon? Suwon is in there.

Samuel: I can't remember the particular name of the town. And then you had Seoul. And then below Seoul, you had Incheon.

Jim: It's okay. So, anyway, the duty there was just sort of boring.

Samuel: Kind of standard, routine. Like I said, most of the excitement we had was when the President was assassinated.

Jim: When they put you on a ship to go home, in '64. Did you know where you were going?

Samuel: I knew I was going home, and I knew I was going to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Jim: For more training?

Samuel: No, I was going to, wait a minute, let me correct that. Not go to, I'm sorry. Let me back up a little bit, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Jim: You went to Arkansas.

Samuel: I went to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas with the 53<sup>rd</sup> Signal Battalion. And I can remember, from getting off the boat I got on a bus and went home. Of course I had to go see my girlfriend and thirty days of leave. And I left home, I was in a heavy winter overcoat. And by the time I was getting to

Fort Chaffee. And I had on my heavy weight greens, not my lightweight greens. I was looking for my khaki uniform and t-shirt.

Jim: What was your rank then?

Samuel: I was a PFC. I had some problems in not agreeing with the commander all the time, and it took me a while to make PFC and keep it. That typical tough kid come off the wrong side of the street.

Jim: You came off the wrong side of the street? Not from Wisconsin. I don't think anyone's from the wrong side of the street in Wisconsin.

Samuel: If you're familiar with Janesville, you've heard of the Fisher Addition. That used to be the tough side of town, because that's where all the dads worked in the plant. Or ninety percent of the dads that lived there all worked in the plant. That was the tough side of town.

Jim: Never had any of that education or anything.

Samuel: Well, just other than high school.

Jim: That's what I mean.

Samuel: And so, that was the way. But, I arrived at Fort Chaffee and joined the 53<sup>rd</sup> Signal Battalion. And that was kind of just routine work. You know, our most excitement from Fort Chaffee, we went on Desert Strike. And Desert Strike was a training maneuver for ninety days. And we had to load all the train cars with our equipment. And then we were put on a train and trained out to Arizona. Got off the train, we had to unload all our equipment. That was about the time I made, no, I was still PFC. When we started that. Shortly after we got back I made my E4, then.

Jim: And you were gone for a year, then.

Samuel: Well, we were there part of a year. We loaded up and went to Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Still part of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Signal Battalion. And the whole battalion moved. And they moved the whole battalion. After we got in Fort Huachuca we continued basic routine training. We went to Fort Hood, Texas for a ninety day exercise. And come to find out, as time went on they were training us and preparing the battalion to go to Vietnam. But I was coming up at the end of my enlistment.

Jim: Right. Now we're down to decision time.

Samuel: And I had just been married. I had a wife, I had just found out she's pregnant. Okay, I have no real future back home right yet. You know, I

had nothing to really go back to. I'm going to have a baby in nine months. So I said to myself, "Well, what do I do?" So I went in and reenlisted. I talked it over with my wife, she said, "Yeah, stay in for three more."

Jim: You got that past your wife? Your new wife?

Samuel: She was okay with that. But she said she wanted to go somewhere besides Fort Huachuca. She was not particularly happy in Fort Huachuca. Well, Fort Huachuca at that time was just rebuilding, the town was just rebuilding. Because it had become kind of a little bit of a ghost town. It wasn't total ghost town, but—

Jim: Very similar.

Samuel: But they kept bringing units into Fort Huachuca and making it bigger and stronger area. Today it's a very modern, intelligent Army base down there. And the town's a lot better and stuff. So there's more to do. So we ended up going to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and I went on to dial school.

Jim: What is dial school?

Samuel: Dial school is your telephone system. And when I went to school, we were learning what was called the AE Strowger Step Switch.

Jim: Give me that, slowly.

Samuel: A-E.

Jim: A as in Alfred?

Samuel: Yeah. A.

Jim: Letter E.

Samuel: Yeah.

Jim: Standing for what?

Samuel: It's All Electric Step Switch, is what it amounted to.

Jim: Which does what?

Samuel: When you called in, it would go up to, the first switch would go up to some magnet, according to the first number on your telephone. Then it would step over to the second number, activate another switch, that went

to another, and eventually it went through, and then the number you dialed would step through again to ring somebody's phone.

Jim: Is that the same way now?

Samuel: Only it's all electronic switching, there's no. There's still a few step exchanges left if you go overseas. Matter of fact, about twenty years ago when I got out of service, I could have went and took a job overseas. They were looking for people that were—

Jim: Could repair this stuff?

Samuel: Repair it and service it.

Jim: So, this school, how long did they—

Samuel: School was eighteen weeks.

Jim: Oh, my! That's a lot of training.

Samuel: Oh yeah, a lot of electronics training, you had to learn to read schematics. I could set and draw what they call straight line schematics in my sleep. Well, matter of fact, I taught one of the weeks, as you go through, you just learned about each switch. You learned about each type of switch you had to go through. And I ended up staying, spent two weeks going to instructors training, which they rated the equivalent of one semester of college. And we learned it in two weeks. I mean, when you started that—

Jim: It's intense, then.

Samuel: Oh, yes, it was very intense. The classes went from seven in the morning to five in the evening. Even though they were longer than the normal, regular hours. Plus, you went home with a lot of homework. You know, you had books to study and come back and everything, so.

Jim: Was it hard?

Samuel: To a point it was. It was a new concept to me. But I did enjoy it. And I passed the final, and—

Jim: Once you've mastered it, then it's easy—

Samuel: Right. And then I spent the next several weeks teaching. Several months teaching.

Jim: In the same school. These are people behind you.

Samuel: Right. I was teaching, I had the fifth week of training. That's what I taught in. And the only reason they didn't rotate the teachers all the way through was because they wanted you to become an expert on one part of it. So they put you in one week, so that you could come in, stand in front of the class, and teach for eight hours.

Jim: At one single subject.

Samuel: On one single subject. Without reading notes. So you had to know anything. We had a lot of questions asked, and you had to learn how to field the questions, and all the stuff. So it was good training. It prepared me for a lot of future stuff.

Jim: I bet it did.

Samuel: Anyway, as it went on my wife got sick. And I ended up taking her back home. Because, I couldn't keep coming up with the babysitter to take care of the baby. Take care of her. And everything.

Jim: She went to Janesville?

Samuel: So she went to Janesville. And I went into Top [first sergeant], [**End of Tape One, Side One**] and I says, "Look." And I says, "I know I'm going to go to Vietnam." Because Vietnam was just building real strong. I says, "I want to go ahead and volunteer." He says, "Well," he says, "Since you're going to volunteer," he says, "I won't wait till Friday. Cause," he says, "Friday I was going to give you your orders. Here they are now." So he threw my orders at me that day. It was on, like, a Wednesday.

So, and my son had been born by now. Darling little baby, you know. So I went on home. I took a thirty day leave and went home, spent thirty days with my wife and kid. Then left, well, about on the twenty-eighth day I left for San Francisco, to report out there to go to Vietnam. Reported in, and probably within a two week period I was in Vietnam.

Jim: How'd you get to Vietnam?

Samuel: I flew. We flew from, I got in, like I said, in San Francisco. And I was there about a week and a half, two weeks. Then we, I can't remember the exact number of days. And we flew from there to Alaska, to Japan, to Vietnam. Once we arrived in Vietnam, at that time I wasn't even issued a weapon. They just put—

Jim: You're in the 41<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion.

Samuel: Yeah.

Jim: Where was that?

Samuel: That was stationed out of Vung Tau.

Jim: Tell me that?

Samuel: V-A-U-N-G.

Jim: V-A-U—

Samuel: No, V-U-N-G. T-A-E. I think it's T-A-E. or T-A—

Jim: That's T-A-O.

Samuel: T-A-O it could have been. Yeah. Now, they were stationed at Vung Tau. And they were part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Signal Brigade.

Jim: And what was your job?

Samuel: There we were building a dial exchange. We literally built one. When I arrived they were about three quarters done with it. After we got it completed, I didn't stay there till it was completed. Matter of fact I left about a week before it was completed. Then we were going to be maintenance people, and we were going to work maintenance shifts through. And some of us were going to be shipped off to build another exchange somewhere. And I wasn't sure where that was at, because they weren't telling us that stuff. They just said, "Some of you are going to go on, some of you are going to stay here."

Jim: Now you did go on, you left—

Samuel: I left there, though, and went to Saigon. Cause I got pulled because of my instructor capability.

Jim: You went to US Army Regulatory Unit?

Samuel: Regional Command.

Jim: Oh, that's Regional Command group. And what does that entail?

Samuel: And that was in Saigon. And one of the things they done there, we trained people on carrier equipment. And my particular section, that I got selected to train on was, first all, I was put through the whole school, so I had a concept of the whole idea.

- Jim: The whole idea of what?
- Samuel: On the carrier equipment, how it worked, how the patch panel worked with the carrier equipment, and all.
- Jim: Carrier? What's carrier?
- Samuel: These were individual posts that could take a truck and set it up in the middle of nowhere.
- Jim: So the carrier was a truck.
- Samuel: Well, it was a truck, but it had a big antenna that, like your microwaves, and stuff like that. And they were showing people how to put these systems together. These are all people that are signal qualified to begin with. And then, some of us were going through the class I went through were to be instructors there in the school. And, we took the whole concept, and then they just broke us down, "Okay, you're going to teach this, you're going to teach that, and you're going to teach this now." I taught on how to set up a patch panel. That was bringing the guy in out here on the line with the telephone into us, and sending him out so he could talk, like he could talk from the middle of his jungle field to Saigon. Or to Taiwan, or to Cam Ranh Bay or—
- Jim: You showed them how to use the telephone, didn't you?
- Samuel: Well, we showed them. Then we didn't have to show. It was to show the people that set up the site how to do it. The little guy out there, all he knew is, "I pick up my phone and talk to who I want to talk to."
- Jim: That didn't require any basic expertise at all.
- Samuel: No. But the expertise was on the people that set that rig up.
- Jim: Got it.
- Samuel: Because the rigs they sent out included a patch panel, included the radio equipment, included the switchboard system. So, the whole system was there inside of, it was actually a semi trailer. That it was in. And they could—
- Jim: Are these, excuse me, are these the ground lines, or from air.
- Samuel: These were ground to air. So while recruit grunt out here or company commander could talk to Saigon, or—

- Jim: But he went through the air, though, with his—
- Samuel: Right, after it left there it went through the air. So they'd send out, take Madison for example, the way it's shaped and stuff. They'd set a rig up here on the hill. And then there might be another one out there on the hill on the west side of town there.
- Jim: That goes through the air.
- Samuel: And it'd go through the air, between them two points. But all the camps down around it, here, were on land lines, yep. So, that's how that works. And I spent the remainder of my time there. And our biggest fear in Saigon was we were going to get blowed up while we were eating supper.
- Jim: That's a real worry, that's what happened.
- Samuel: Yeah, that happened, but that was our biggest fear, cause at that—
- Jim: How were your quarters? What kind of situation, were you in houses, or—
- Samuel: We were in, like, estates that were behind fenced areas. And they were like two or three stories.
- Jim: You were worried about sabotage, or mortars coming over the wall?
- Samuel: More of people parking bicycles. Now, the ones that they did that, though, too, were the hotels down town. At the time they didn't bother the outlying—
- Jim: Well, that embassy was a car in front. I've spoken with a girl that was in there. In the CIA office. She was—
- Samuel: See they used cars, but I'm saying, they attacked more the big stuff down. See we were broke up in such small groups, that we were only—
- Jim: Not profitable.
- Samuel: We were only five, ten, fifteen maybe thirty people in that area. But if they hit a hotel, a big hotel downtown-- And they always tended to pick meal time. Because what happened, all the big motels, the two or three big motels downtown all served meals. To the outlying units. So we had to go downtown to a hotel. We didn't have a restaurant out with us. Or a mess.
- Jim: You didn't have a mess tent?

- Samuel: No, we had to go downtown to eat in the, that's where the messes were.
- Jim: That's unusual.
- Samuel: Yeah. So that's where our mess—
- Jim: Now when you go downtown, how many people form your group? Thirty or forty?
- Samuel: There may be thirty or forty at basically the same time in the hotel. But we would ride in vehicles, some of us rode in jeeps, some of us rode in three quarter. So we were in smaller groups getting there. But once we got there we were a big group.
- Jim: So how did you enjoy living in that country?
- Samuel: Well, that part I kind of enjoyed. I mean, at the time because I was a young kid, and I thought money was all important, and here I'm being paid extra money to, extra money for quarters because we didn't have government issued quarters, we got money for rations because rations some times weren't available.
- Jim: The weather didn't bother you?
- Samuel: And I was living in a fairly comfortable condition. So, I enjoyed it.
- Jim: The weather didn't bother you.
- Samuel: The weather didn't bother me particularly. On that tour. I completed that tour in November. Came back home. Ended up at Fort Leonard Wood, this is when I went back to Fort Leonard Wood.
- Jim: Yes, I see that. You went in December—
- Samuel: But over there, because of making all the extra money I did, I was able to get myself debt free. Have a brand new car. I was smart enough that I didn't keep that much money over there.
- Jim: Sent it home to the boss.
- Samuel: Well, we sent it home, we had some, she paid off all our debts, bought a brand new car. And we had saved enough to have more of a great honeymoon. We didn't have a real big honeymoon the first time. So we saved to have a bigger honeymoon. And we spent a week in San Francisco. She flew out, met me in San Francisco. I flew in. I got in, I

scheduled her to arrive after I did. Because she had never traveled much as a kid. Her biggest travel was, she went with a group to Chicago.

Jim: Big deal.

Samuel: That's the furthest she'd ever been from home, and we lived in Janesville. So that's not a. So, I scheduled to get in, I went out, I checked in at the hotel, then I went down, I went back out to the airport to be there just before her plane arrived. Met her there, and we took, we were living big, because we rode the limousine back. We weren't going to ride a bus back. Well, we hadn't seen each other in a year, come on!

Jim: Oh, that's time to let her go.

Samuel: So we grabbed the limousine and went back to the hotel. Of course, that night we didn't do much. In the line of seeing San Francisco. We ate supper, and that was about it that night. Then the next day we went out to Chinatown.

Through our marriage one of her uncles lived there in the San Francisco area. He was involved in designing the ink that goes in the ball point pens. Okay. So, and because he found out through the family chain that she was going to be out there, so they invited us out to the house for a picnic dinner one night. So we went out to there house. Spent one night out there, in the evening. Very enjoyable. That's when I got to cross the Golden Gate Bridge. Riding across. I'd sailed under it, but I'd never drove over it.

Then after that, we decided we wanted to see some of the country, so we took a bus back to Wisconsin. And we stopped in Vegas, and she made two hundred dollars. I didn't make anything, I lost probably two hundred and something. Came out kind of even. And we got to see some of the country riding in the bus.

Jim: That's a good way to do it.

Samuel: And then, when we got home, we got visited for a while and stuff, then went on to Fort Leonard Wood. Arrived in Fort Leonard Wood, I went on to the dial central office there to work as a maintenance person. And I had a hard-core master sergeant. He said, "If you ever plan to get any higher in rank." I'd been an E5 by this time, now. I was an E5. But he says, "If you ever plan to get any higher than you are." I was actually what they called a specialist five. You know with the specialist's patch with the one single stripe over it? So that's what I was at that time. And he said, "If you ever expect to get any higher," he says, "you're going to have to find yourself a home."

I said, "Well, what kind of home they got around here that I can get into?" He says, "Well, I see in your records you're instructor qualified." Which, like I said, was a key thing, and I'm very glad I did, because I ended up going to field communications in Fort Leonard Wood training. Okay, while I was at Fort Leonard Wood training for field communications, teaching there. I was teaching the switchboard, what they call the SB22 and the SB86, the two switchboards that they used in field communications. I can go out and design you a real, set you up a good field communications system. I was training for that. Anyway. Other than that there was nothing really exciting at Fort Leonard Wood.

Jim: So you left there in July of '68.

Samuel: And went to Fort Ritchie, Maryland.

Jim: For what purpose?

Samuel: To work in Fort Monmouth, for the military. And that's about all I can say about that place, other than it was underground. We were secured and locked in.

Jim: Who were you working for? You say the military.

Samuel: It was a signal corps, I was basically providing signal communications.

Jim: For all services?

Samuel: For all services, for all, the President on down. It was to be his command post if there was a nuclear war declared.

Jim: It says "US Army, JSC", that's US Army, J, what?

Samuel: Joint Area Command.

Jim: What's the "S" for?

Samuel: Or, Joint Area Services.

Jim: All right, you're there for three quarters of a year. And then back to Vietnam.

Samuel: Right, then I came back. And I said, "Why did I get orders to go back to 'Nam?" They said, "Well, very simple. You haven't been to Vietnam as a field communications person." They needed field communications people, is what they needed.

- Jim: How was this different from your previous duty?
- Samuel: Oh, this one turned out big time different. I arrived in Vietnam, and we were sent to the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division headquarters at Pleiku.
- Jim: And your job now involved what?
- Samuel: Providing the field tactical communications for a unit.
- Jim: Sending men out to set up radios?
- Samuel: Set up radios, set up, when we were on fire bases set up the inner communications on the fire base.
- Jim: And you made sure those people did what they were sent to do.
- Samuel: Right. Now we were a mech outfit. Now, mech throws a whole different aspect on running landlines. Because you're all track vehicles. So anything that you laid either went twenty feet in the air, or two feet under ground.
- Jim: Yeah, otherwise they'd get run over.
- Samuel: Well, they'd get tore up by tracks, and with the soft dirt if you got a muddy season. And a track didn't just break out a piece of wire the width of the vehicle. It tangled that stuff up in track and—
- Jim: Might have a mile.
- Samuel: Yeah, a mile or more.
- Jim: What about the boosters?
- Samuel: Oh, them boosters we didn't use. We didn't use them in that system. We just used strictly field wire. I mean I had somewhere in the area of about 35 miles of field wire on hand at all times.
- Jim: Now, I thought you said the signal would be reduced after—
- Samuel: Right, but that's on spiral-four cable. On most of field wire, you don't have nothing more than three quarters of a mile. In distance out.
- Jim: There's no loss of power, then.
- Samuel: No, because you're nothing that long or far out. It's a different type of communication.

Jim: All right.

Samuel: And, then the radios, and the tracks—

Jim: Where'd you stay then, when you were in that—

Samuel: And that's when I went to Song Mau, 2nd [Squadron] of the 1st Armored Cav.

Jim: That's 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. 4th Cavalry.

Samuel: 2nd of the 1st Armored Cav. Fourth [Infantry Division].

Jim: Wait, where did you say you were?

Samuel: I was in Song Mau.

Jim: How do you spell that?

Samuel: S-O-N-G M-A-U.

Jim: Where was that? I'm not familiar with that one.

Samuel: Okay. That's south of Pleiku. Kind of, probably about forty miles from the ocean, inland. And—

Jim: Yeah, I know about it. How far from Da Nang?

Samuel: It was way south of Da Nang.

Jim: Okay. All right.

Samuel: If you take where Cam Ranh Bay is, if you look at a map and drop just about straight south of Cam Ranh Bay. It was on highway one.

Jim: Good old highway one.

Samuel: If you wanted to, you can go over to Vietnam and you can follow that highway down. It was on the highway.

Jim: Okay.

Samuel: I arrived at my firebase after a week of refresher training getting to Vietnam. They run us through a gas chamber. They run us—

Jim: A gas chamber?

- Samuel: Oh, yeah. Well, the gas chamber was outside. They just, you were out and all of a sudden somebody popped a gas grenade and you had to put your protective mask—
- Jim: What kind of gas?
- Samuel: CS. Just the standard training gas. And you had to put your protective mask on and just—
- Jim: Sure. Otherwise you'd still be coughing.
- Samuel: Yeah, right! [laughs] They put us through that. And put us through some indoctrination about never trusting even a young kid walking down the street. Because—
- Jim: Well, what are you going to do about it? I mean, are you gonna shoot him? Be aware?
- Samuel: Just, be aware.
- Jim: After you walk past him he might be dropping something and—
- Samuel: Yeah, be aware of what they're doing, make sure they're not getting too close to your vehicles, or to you.
- Jim: Oh. This is in the streets of the city.
- Samuel: Streets or some of the back villages that you may drive—
- Jim: Where'd you bunk at? In a building again?
- Samuel: Well, we had kind of a building with a tent top to it.
- Jim: A hooch.
- Samuel: Yeah. Then we ended up going out to firebases, different areas. You know, the whole plane load didn't all go to the same place. I ended up in Song Mau. I arrived there. By this time I've made my E6. I'm staff sergeant now. And first sergeant took me out there and he said, "Here's you commo shop. Or," he says, "Well, it was yesterday. They blew it up the night before."
- Jim: Oh my god. Not a mortar?

- Samuel: No, they'd snuck a couple of peoples through the wire, and they thought they were hitting the ammo bunker, and they hit the commo and the medic bunker.
- Jim: Wonderful.
- Samuel: He said two of the commo people were injured and shipped out on evac. The others were either on guard duty, or working in the communications center of the command post at the time.
- Jim: I would have thought the dogs, the guard dogs would pick those guys up.
- Samuel: They got missed. We didn't have dogs on our firebase.
- Jim: Cause there's a guy in town who had dogs.
- Samuel: Yeah, there are some that had—
- Jim: Interesting story. I have him in the book. Jim Boch.
- Samuel: Okay. I'll read it. But our group, we didn't have dogs with us.
- Jim: That's quite a thing.
- Samuel: They didn't, because of being the mech outfit, I think. Because it'd be too easy, you know. The dog would be getting away.
- Jim: Well, you had to be careful with them, because an unmanned dog wasn't anything to play with.
- Samuel: Right. But anyway, so, one of my first jobs was to rebuild the commo shop. Put new sandbags, get it rebuilt. That was one of my first commitments. I had extra help from other areas of the camp that had extra—
- Jim: They flew in equipment.
- Samuel: They flew in the PVC and the sandbags so that we could rebuild. We did that. We got that rebuilt. I spent the next couple of months there providing communications. Just repairing radios, fixing telephones, and doing that kind of stuff. Just standard communications. Redoing our perimeter. And going through my first fire fight.
- Jim: Tell me about that.
- Samuel: My first fire fight, when it happened that night, we got hit—

Jim: What were you doing?

Samuel: I was, at the time, setting on my bunk reading a book. It was about, oh, 8:30, 9:00 at night. And I had just switched the guards on our vehicle. And I went back in where I was sleeping. Down in the thing, in my—

Jim: A dug out area.

Samuel: Yeah, in a dug out area, bunker area. And I was reading a book. I forget what the title of the book was, because I don't know if I ever went back to the book or not. But, the next thing I heard is the alarm. Well, I heard the blast, and then I heard the alarm.

Jim: The blast, was an artillery shell?

Samuel: Like a mortar shell exploding.

Jim: And the alarm was what?

Samuel: The alarm was a siren system that could be rung from the command post, you know. And they only used the siren after dark. Because a lot of people would be sleeping.

Jim: Right, so they needed to wake them up.

Samuel: And wake them up. Well—

Jim: The explosion must have done it.

Samuel: Explosion, but they wanted to make sure everybody was awake.

Jim: So, what did you do? You rushed for your—

Samuel: Went to my vehicle, took over as commander of the vehicle, which was my job, behind the fifty caliber machine gun.

Jim: So you were ready to—

Samuel: Oh, I was shooting already.

Jim: Oh, you were?

Samuel: As soon as I hit the—

Jim: At what? The perimeter?

Samuel: Movement in the perimeter. Okay. I may or may not have killed somebody. I don't know. Because the VC had a bad habit of sneaking off and dragging off their dead. Because they knew one of the strong things the American military did was body count. And—

Jim: So, anyway, you didn't see anything, you just—

Samuel: At the time we new we had movement coming in, because of where the bullets were coming from. We could see tracers and stuff. So we knew they were coming our way through the fence. And we were getting mortared. And basically, we were laying down a line of fire to keep anybody from getting in. Cause on the—

Jim: Well, you didn't want them to overrun your camp.

Samuel: Right. On the PCs, like I was on, you had a fifty caliber machine gun and two sixties. And you had the driver with the track running. And he fired the M79, I don't know if you're familiar with it. It's a little grenade about this—

Jim: Oh, it's a grenade launcher.

Samuel: Yeah.

Jim: Yeah, okay.

Samuel: And he was shooting that from the driver's seat out into the area. Plus handling the claymore set up. Because we had claymores out in front of us.

Jim: I thought those things were self activated. Just step on them and they blow up.

Samuel: No. Not the claymores.

Jim: You had to set up [unintelligible] and you had to set them off.

Samuel: Right.

Jim: I see.

Samuel: And the only time you would use them is if there was a flash and you could see somebody.

Jim: Right. You had to signal along the trigger.

Samuel: Right.

Jim: Got it.

Samuel: Each track had five of them out in front. You had from this point to this point, that was your area. And every area overlapped. The vehicle on this side, he overlapped me by about ten feet.

Jim: How big were these divisions? I mean wide. Hundred yards?

Samuel: No, I think they were more like 25 yards. And then they were overlapped by five yards on either side. All the way around the whole perimeter was that way. The widest gap was the one at the main entrance, to the road into the base. That was the widest area. But it was overlapped by both vehicles. One on each side of the gate.

So, when we went into that, and I remember thinking, "Am I going to chicken out?" But then my training instincts took over, and I just did what I was trained to do. I mean, I changed the barrel, because my barrel got too hot, I had to change the barrel on the fifty, in the middle of all this. And I didn't really get scared until the next day. That night I was tense. I didn't go to sleep right away or anything.

Jim: You were wound up.

Samuel: I was wound up. I was a combat soldier. I had lived through fire. We went out the next morning and the commander said, he says, "Either you can think that we got that mortar that was shooting mortars at you, or he decided to quit firing."

Jim: You never saw any more mortars?

Samuel: Oh, I saw mortars several times explode that night yet. But we went out in front of my vehicle. And you could watch. You could go to the first one, that was about 25 yards in front of me. That was the last one I'd seen. If he'd have dropped one more, he'd have dropped it right in my back pocket.

Jim: Oh, my.

Samuel: And, well, of course, I wouldn't be here talking to you today, I'd be on the wall in Washington, D.C. But, every 25 yards, out to the end of our fence line you could see where he dropped a mortar. He just kept raising his elevation. One more raise, and he would have. Either he didn't know that, he shifted and started shooting somewhere else.

Jim: Well, your counter fire probably drove him away.

Samuel: Or our counter fire interrupted his idea.

Jim: I would think so. So, he never came back to you, that same guy? Or—

Samuel: No.

Jim: That was a one-time experience for you?

Samuel: Well, we come into several other fire fights. We don't know if it was the same group or different groups. But that was my very first experience. After that I wasn't worried no more. I would just, I wanted to do my job, keep myself alive. I become more conscious. Like, when I smoked, I smoked where I cupped the glow of the cigarette so I didn't stand out as a target at night. Because back in that days 99 percent of the people smoked, and one percent that didn't.

Jim: How about grass? Anybody smoke grass?

Samuel: There was a little bit of it in that unit, but not real heavy quantity. Now we had one guy that was so deep into drugs, matter of fact it was the next fire fight we were in. He was walking around saying, "Look at the pretty fireworks."

Jim: Had to get rid of him.

Samuel: Oh they got rid of him right then.

Jim: Yeah, he's dangerous.

Samuel: He was dangerous to himself!

Jim: More dangerous to people.

Samuel: Yeah. So they got rid of him. But, so we didn't have a big usage of it.

Jim: Did all these attacks come at night?

Samuel: No. There's some attacks that happened during the day. Especially ambushes.

Jim: How was an ambush?

- Samuel: Well, we would send people out [**End of Tape One, Side Two**], one of the platoons out on patrol with their mech units. And they'd go driving down, and checking roads.
- Jim: They'd go a mile or two from the base, or more?
- Samuel: Oh, probably thirty, forty miles from the base.
- Jim: Well, then you're really isolated, if your out there.
- Samuel: And we had one company that was about a click from us. A thousand meters. They were sitting up on a hill.
- Jim: A click is a thousand meters.
- Samuel: Right. About a click that they were from us, and they were sitting up on a hill. I mean, just a platoon up there, then we had one platoon that was guarding the fire base. And one platoon that was out on maneuvers. What they were doing was trying to keep the highway one open. I mean, they were patrolling it up and down. Thirty, forty miles on the far end, either way.
- Jim: Well, they were subject to ambush on that thirty mile stretch.
- Samuel: We lost a few people that way that got caught in ambushes. Or mortars, or land mines. Just keeping the highway open. So that was one of our primary doings. Then we left there and went back to Pleiku, the whole battalion. Went to Pleiku. And that's when we crossed, went on over and we crossed over into Cambodia. Now I know, the law says, or the books all say that we didn't have American troops in Cambodia.
- Jim: I've interviewed twelve guys who were in Cambodia. A lot of them went there.
- Samuel: Well, I went there, and I can remember crossing the border. And I happened to be reading the Stars and Stripes that day. And I says, "Now wait." I was reading it, we had crossed the border maybe half an hour before, and we were taking a break, while the commander was going to decide how far and which, you know, get his bearings, and get us where we needed to go. And I was reading the Army Times while I was drinking a cup of coffee. And it says, "We got no American troops in Cambodia." And I say to myself, "Wait a minute. Somebody better wake up and find out what's going on here, because we got American troops in Cambodia."
- Jim: Right. State department didn't want to admit that.

- Samuel: So, anyway, we were there for a while, in Cambodia. During this time, my brother had joined the outfit.
- Jim: Your outfit?
- Samuel: My outfit.
- Jim: Oh my god.
- Samuel: We could get away with that, I mean there was some rules about brothers serving together and stuff.
- Jim: After the experience in World War II they discouraged that.
- Samuel: They discouraged it pretty highly. But we had another brother, and we were in two separate areas of the battalion, so we weren't technically together. Except a few times when we got together, and Top would come and chew us out for doing it, but we did it anyway. He said, whenever we'd go on the road, "I don't want you two on the same vehicle." Because of the very reason, he said "I don't want to write home and have to tell your parents."
- Jim: He didn't want to take the heat.
- Samuel: "And tell both of you died on the same vehicle."
- Jim: Right. That would have been his fault.
- Samuel: Right. So we had to make sure we were riding in separate vehicles. So we got to be together for about four months of the tour. Or the hitch.
- Jim: Oh, that's nice. He's younger?
- Samuel: He's younger, yeah. He's the youngest of the boys.
- Jim: Then you went back to Fort Sill.
- Samuel: Well, before I come back to Fort Sill, we just come back into Vietnam, had a couple firebases, and then came back to Fort Sill.
- Jim: What purpose? Just to rest?
- Samuel: What, into Fort Sill? No, I came back, I was stationed there for a number of years.
- Jim: It says from 70 to 71.

Samuel: Okay, correction, that tour I was there for one year.

Jim: Was your duty different?

Samuel: My duty, I was the instructor in what they called shake and bake school. Where they trained people to be NCOs. People could make E5, E6 within real short periods of time. It was kind of like an OCS for NCOs. They called it shake and bake school. And I trained people to do the job. Then I had some problems with my wife, and I asked for a volunteer tour to go back to Vietnam. So we went through a divorce and all that stuff.

Jim: Oh, that's too bad.

Samuel: I mean, it had been building for years, so it was nothing. See, she done one thing that I couldn't deal with. She started using drugs. And, at that time, if you wanted—

Jim: Sounds like you were lucky to get out of that one.

Samuel: Yeah, I was lucky to get out and still have a career. So I got rid of her before I got to that.

Jim: She weighed you down. Would have been the end of both of you.

Samuel: Right. So, we had our divorce and stuff, and I went over and the judge asked, "No way to save it?" "Nope, nope." Went back to Vietnam.

Jim: Where'd she go?

Samuel: She went back home.

Jim: To Janesville?

Samuel: Yeah.

Jim: She still there?

Samuel: No, she lives in Milwaukee now.

Jim: What about the kid?

Samuel: The kid went with her, at the time, because the law was so strong unless a woman was totally, and we didn't bring the drug thing up, we went under that title, irrevocable, you know, that there was no—

- Jim: You never see that child?
- Samuel: Huh?
- Jim: You never see that child?
- Samuel: Oh, yeah.
- Jim: Oh. So it didn't destroy that.
- Samuel: No. It just, he went and lived with his mom. I went to Vietnam, served another year. Now I went over there, I was with the 1st Calv unit. First of the twelfth [1/12<sup>th</sup>] battalion. 1st Calv [Division].
- Jim: I see that. Spent a year there.
- Samuel: I spent another, my last year there, my third tour in Vietnam there. And, now, the Calv, we travelled all over.
- Jim: Doing repairs?
- Samuel: No, I was in a mech, not a mech, a calv, infantry unit. We became, as Vietnam was starting to wind down at this time, they were taking troops out of Vietnam. They took the 1st Calv, except the Third Brigade, which I was part of. And they moved our battalion, I wasn't initially a part of the Third Brigade, but they moved our battalion into the Third Brigade to make it a bigger unit, and the rest of the calv was sent home. We went around, in 38 days we built 17 fire bases. Chasing a division all over south east Asia.
- Jim: How big a crew did you have to do this?
- Samuel: We were a whole battalion. Well, actually, the brigade—
- Jim: You had a construction battalion attached with you.
- Samuel: Yeah, but not with our battalion. Our battalion kind of acted, we were independent—
- Jim: You could handle the specialized equipment, I guess.
- Samuel: Right, in this battalion. And the biggest thing, I got liked by the colonel. And don't ask me why. But he asked me one day, he says, "I want this, can I have it?" And I says, "No, but I can give you this." And after that day, he liked me. Because I did not become one of his yes men. Told him

what the problem was, why he couldn't have what he wanted, but told him what I could do in place of. What I was capable of. And after that day—

Jim: You're okay.

Samuel: I was okay. His deputy in command didn't like me, and one night he run me up, he literally told me to get on the next chopper and leave the firebase. While the colonel was gone on his R and R. Well, the colonel came back that night, and he called. And I wasn't in my normal place, and he says, "What are you doing over there?" And I says, "Well, talk to your XO, he run me off your firebase." He says, "Well I'll deal with that, but I want you on the first chopper, tomorrow morning, back on this fire base." And I went back.

Jim: And you never saw that deputy again.

Samuel: Oh, he was there.

Jim: He was there; his mouth was shut.

Samuel: He didn't say a word to me.

Jim: I'll bet. I'll bet.

Samuel: But I told him, right out, I says, "I can't do what you want." He wanted something I didn't have. But the battalion commander took a liking to me, cause I wasn't a yes man, but I told him how he could fix what he wanted in a secondary method. And one of the things he had me design, he says, "I want to be able to split up into three units and move on a moment's notice." So what he wanted was three commo centers. One on the main base, and two that he could move at a moment's notice, two different directions. So I took, and I said, "Well, can I get two more conexas?" You know, that's what I needed.

And I built him two mobile centers. I bolted everything down in, so to unhook it, all they had to do was unplug it from the outside, and they could go. They didn't have to disconnect all the radios. They just had to disconnect the antennas outside, throw the cables inside, throw the antennas inside, throw the generator cables and slide the generator in on the floor, and go. And he liked them. And he was happy with that.

Jim: But you only were there a year.

Samuel: Yep.

Jim: How'd you happen to leave? The tours are only a year.

Samuel: Right, the tours were only twelve months, you go home unless you volunteered to stay. And I didn't do that, because I wanted to come back to the states.

Jim: You went back to Fort Sill.

Samuel: Right. That's when I served a number of years there. Now I ended up—

Jim: Four years.

Samuel: Huh?

Jim: Four years.

Samuel: Yep. I ended up there starting in a school. Then, because Vietnam was winding down, they didn't need as many of them students. So the school reduced the number of people it had. Number of instructors. And there wasn't a lot of jobs to choose from on post, so I ended up working for the post special services for several months. I worked in the gymnasium. Nothing exciting, but.

Jim: Kept you busy.

Samuel: Kept me busy. And I kept looking for a job that was more in what I wanted.

Jim: Well you found one, you went to Jersey.

Samuel: No, I found one before that. I went to the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry there in Fort Sill. And under the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry I was with the B40th Armor, which was a subcommand of them. But we provided communications for the infantry company that put on demonstrations for how to work the artillery and infantry companies together. It was part of the training thing for the officers. The OCS officers that were going to be artillery officers. It was training for them. It was training for several other organizations that that went on. And then they had one big to do every year. That we put on.

And I got probably a stack that thick of recommendations. It started out because the commander, located in Texas or somewhere liked it. And of course, everybody between him and where I worked endorsed it, you know. Cause they said, "If he liked it, we had to like it." Whether they did or not, I don't know. I don't even know if they were there. But everybody from his command on down endorsed it. So it ended up about this thick in endorsements, including my company commander and my platoon leader endorsing it. So.

Jim: So, then what?

Samuel: After that I went to Germany.

Jim: Voluntarily, or they announced it, or?

Samuel: No, just rotation time.

Jim: I see. And, this is a different life.

Samuel: Oh, yeah, Germany is a different life.

Jim: You enjoyed that, I'll bet.

Samuel: I liked it. I enjoyed Germany. I found out how to enjoy Germany, in the fact, I didn't stay inside that little fenced area that they called a concern. I got outside of there. And I found out that there's a beautiful life out there. You know you had to get out of the concern.

Jim: Meet some German people.

Samuel: I met some German people. I went on volksmarches. I don't know if you're familiar with what they are.

Jim: No.

Samuel: Well, volksmarch is just a big long walk. But what they do is they pick them in different cities and countryside. Throughout Germany. And they vary from 15k to marathon, 26.5k.

Jim: Walking.

Samuel: Walking. I did one marathon.

Jim: Walking.

Samuel: Walking. And they take you through countryside and through villages. And most of these places are places you wouldn't go on your own if you were just driving down the road.

Jim: You'd miss them.

Samuel: Yeah.

Jim: How nice, what a great experience.

Samuel: Oh, yes. And that was very enjoyable. And when you sign up for them you pay, like, five deutschmark. And you get a little medal, or a plate to remember your walk. I got a whole box full of medals.

Jim: I'll bet. I'll bet.

Samuel: So, I enjoyed it.

Jim: Did you find another wife by this time?

Samuel: Yeah, I'd met another girl.

Jim: Not in Germany?

Samuel: No, no. Prior to going to Germany. Matter of fact, while I was down, I met her at home, but then I went on down to Fort Sill, and then after about eight months I went back home and got her.

Jim: She lived in Janesville, too?

Samuel: Yeah. Another hometown girl. She lived in Janesville. I call Janesville my hometown.

Jim: I would guess so.

Samuel: Well, that's where I left to go for service. That's where I was living when I went into the service. So I kind of call it my home town.

Jim: You were in Germany for three years. Almost.

Samuel: Yeah, and all of them in Aschaffenburg.

Jim: Tell me that.

Samuel: Aschaffenburg. A-S-A—

Jim: Oh, Aschaffenburg. A-S-C-H.

Samuel: Something like that. E-N-E

Jim: F-F-E-N.

Samuel: Yeah.

Jim: B-E-R or B-U-R-G.

Samuel: B-E-R-G. That I remember.

Jim: Aschaffenburg.

Samuel: Yeah. That's just south of Frankfurt a little bit. And, well, when I went over there, my wife couldn't go over directly with me. I went over, like, in June. And she didn't come over until September. But what was so interesting my first few months there, I went over, and then I was told by the company clerk I couldn't make E7 because I hadn't been in Germany long enough. I said, "What's that got to do with me making E7." Cause, E7 promotions had nothing to do—

Jim: Right, nothing to do with geography.

Samuel: No. So he said, "Well, I'll look." Then he apologized to me. Well, how I found out I made E7. I was reading the Army Times. And I see my name was on the list. On the board, you know. Well, I looked at how many people were promoted that month, and I said, "Well, I should probably make E7 in about February or March." My number was 1400 or something like that on the list. And they only made 400 or 300 or something, you know. And based on the months it would take to get down to my number, I figured not to make E7 until January or February.

Well, September I got the notice my wife was coming and I had my place to live, I had gotten all that taken care of. And I went up to pick her up at the airport. And, I had about a half an hour or so to kill, waiting for her plane to come in. I picked an Army Times out of the machine, and, I was reading it. I picked it up specifically because they said they come out with the new promotion list.

And I looked, they promoted twelve hundred people. The first time I read it was back in August, and now they're going to promote twelve hundred people. That's gonna get me. And sure enough, I went down the list and I was on it. So finding out, shoot, I made E7, she's coming.

Jim: Right. Big day.

Samuel: I still had, I wasn't going to be promoted until October, but I knew I was going to get it very shortly, you know. So, I picked her up and brought her down. Then Monday, I brought her in on, like, a Thursday. The following Monday I was sent to the field for four months. Duty. She's got less than a week in German.

Jim: Totally alone.

Samuel: And I'm gone. And we were living not in a housing unit, military housing unit. We were living on, what they call on the economy, you know. In an off-post type living. But fortunately the boy of the family that we were renting from spoke real good English. He was going to school and he could—

Jim: Help her.

Samuel: He helped that way. And they became very friendly. And for some reason, all of most Americans, we love German potato salad. But we forget, they like our American potato salad just as well. So, they made a deal, they'd hold a picnic every week. On Saturday or Sunday they'd set outside. She had to make a bowl of American potato salad. And she'd make a bowl of German potato salad. And they'd fry brats or some kind of, and they'd have a little picnic out there every day, or every week when the weather was good.

Well, it got after I went down there, after I'd been there for three weeks, then we got to come back home on the weekend. They would bus us back. Friday night they'd bus us back up. They'd cut the training at noon, load us on busses, and bring us back to Aschaffenburg. So I came back to Aschaffenburg. I'd be home all weekend. Monday morning we had to go back. Training started a little late that day, cause it was about a three hour, three and a half hour ride from the training area to Aschaffenburg. On a regular bus. Now on a convoy it was almost an eight hour ride.

But what we were doing, we were training on some new firing techniques. You probably heard of the by now, because they've been advertising, TOE firing systems?

Jim: Yes. T-O-E.

Samuel: Yeah, now this is when they were first being developed, part of the system. And we were going through some of the training and that. I got a good letter from them that they wrote because I was coming up for my annual evaluation. And they wrote a real good letter to the commander to be added to my evaluation. Just because of the things I did for them. You know, I helped maintain their records, keeping real good records. I was assigned several people underneath of me that I had to see that they kept their vehicles operational, that they were out there, in addition to that. It was part of my job, down there, for them.

And it turned out to be very interesting. I learned a lot about it, and some of the stuff I don't know if it's been unclassified, and I won't basically talk about it. A lot of it, I know that the TOE missile system, the words have been unclassified, because it's been on the news.

- Jim: So, and you came home to Leonard Wood as your final station.
- Samuel: Right. I came to the 93<sup>rd</sup> Evac Hospital. At Fort Leonard Wood.
- Jim: Hospital?
- Samuel: But I was providing their communications.
- Jim: Well, they must have had communications at some time before you got there.
- Samuel: I just took over from the NCO that—
- Jim: Operate what they had.
- Samuel: Right. Operate and maintain what they had. And, basically because they had only a small amount equipment. The biggest thing is we had a number of operators but only a small amount of equipment. Each ward had a telephone. Cause this was, if you're not familiar with a inflatable hospital. But they got these rubber tents they blow up, and—
- Jim: I know about them.
- Samuel: Well, each ward has a telephone. And then there's a telephone in the commander's office, and the XO's office, and nurses' quarters, and the doctors' quarters. And first sergeant, company commander office and quarters. So there are probably eighty telephones. And we've got switchboards, they're wired to the switchboard. And, basically, you gotta have switchboard operators. Around the clock. So, we had a lot of operators.
- Jim: That was your last big duty, then.
- Samuel: Right. And, of course, we went out, and we went on training exercises. And we went out to Arizona. What the heck's the name of the post out there. Fort Irwin. California. Not Arizona, California. I'm sorry, Fort Irwin California. And we went through some maneuvers out there. I was out in Fort Irwin, this is the last time I watched people die in the military, when an airborne unit jumped that shouldn't have jumped that day. And when that happened, I was there through that, okay.
- And we went out a second time to Fort Irwin for maneuvers. And when we came back from that, I'd been setting at home. Of course, reading my favorite paper. The Army Times. Reading my favorite paper, the Army Times. And if you were within 13 months of having 20 years. You could put your paper—

- Jim: Count it as twenty?
- Samuel: Huh?
- Jim: You could count that as twenty?
- Samuel: If you were within 13 months of your actual retirement date, you could put your papers in. Well, there's some advantages to this, cause it was an advantage to me. Because I was, of course, on their weight program. Because they'd gotten real particular about weight, and the more years you got after Vietnam, the stronger they got on the weight problem. And I was border lining on the weight. My max weight was 205, and I was border lining on that [seven second gap in tape] just desert training.
- Jim: But you'd done that before.
- Samuel: I'd been through it several times. But, with the 93<sup>rd</sup>—
- Jim: New people this time.
- Samuel: Right. The 93<sup>rd</sup> Evac, we were with, annually we were going out there to Fort Irwin for training. But, I think, because of some of the stuff that was going on in the Far East at the time. Well, actually the Middle East, not the Far East.
- Jim: When you're just training like this, when you talk about training. What did you, your people practice reading phone systems. In the beginning, or what kind of training did you get.
- Samuel: No, basically the training we got was just maintaining our normal routine jobs like running the telephone lines, commanding the switchboard. But the hospital went through with setting up. And once we set up, all the other units that were out there on training would come through our unit for their hospital care instead of going to Fort Irwin for the medical care. The 93<sup>rd</sup> Evac, they provided doctors, nurses. Actual real doctors, you know, not simulated doctors. They always had, they did surgery out there; they did the whole works. They did just like they were a real hospital. People that were injured either in accidents, and had to have legs patched up and everything. Some that were just normally sick. So we were basically an active hospital. I mean, we didn't have no civilians, but they were all military person.
- Jim: I understand.

- Samuel: And, they were preparing them because of the plans that they had were like, if they got a war broke out in the middle east over there they could send the hospital over there and they could function. And the reason we went to Fort Irwin is because in the daytime—
- Jim: Irwin or—
- Samuel: Fort Irwin. It's out near Twentynine Palms, I'm sure you heard of that. Fort Irwin's out there in about the same area, and it's desert. It gets hot in the daytime, and it gets cold—
- Jim: That was hotter than Vietnam.
- Samuel: Yep, and it gets cold at night. And you got sand, so they were teaching them to work in this kind of environment. And that's in case they got sent to the Middle East or something. And I don't know, I heard during, what was the one they had over there?
- Jim: Desert Storm?
- Samuel: Desert Storm. That the 93<sup>rd</sup> Evac had went there. I just heard, I don't know. Cause I'd been out of service so many years. But they had said evacuation hospital, so, and 93<sup>rd</sup> was one of the few active evacuation hospitals. They've got reserve hospitals, but the 93<sup>rd</sup> is one of the few active. And—
- Jim: When you'd go out to California, how long would you be there? A couple of months?
- Samuel: Sixty to ninety days.
- Jim: Right. So it was a long time.
- Samuel: It was long enough to get some good training in. But I was going back to my last tour in Vietnam, when I got the Bronze Star.
- Jim: Yeah, tell me about that.
- Samuel: When I was over there, we went out, a company or unit out of our battalion had to go to a firebase that was near the Cambodian border. We didn't go with the whole battalion. It was a company. But I went along to—
- Jim: To do what?

Samuel: Well I went over to provide communications. The company went over, the infantry portion went over to send patrols out, because they thought they had a lot of infiltration, and stuff. And you may have read about it. At the time it made the news, because they had a platoon that refused to go on a night patrol. It made the newspaper, I didn't keep that particular article, but it made the newspaper that they refused to go on patrol, because they knew the ambush was there and they didn't want to do it. They just flat refused to go out.

Well, it turned out, a couple days later they had to set charges. We were setting there on a firebase that had 175mm cannons on it, that was shooting into Cambodia. And the Air Force was dropping napalm and stuff. But they'd gotten intelligence that **[End of Tape Two, Side One]** we were going to be overrun. And they brought in a number of choppers to pick us up and take us out, and they had to set charges to blow all of our equipment. We took no equipment with us except our individual weapons and what we could pack in our duffle bag, everything else got left. Or, not in our duffle bags, our back packs. Course we didn't go out there with much.

So, when they were trying to evac us, a gun ship got shot down. And seven of us went to rescue the people, survivors from the gunship. And we went to rescue. We got to the edge of the cleared area. And they stopped us. They got the word from other choppers that there were no survivors. But we were ready to give up, and go get them, instead of leave them out there. But the other gunship reported, cause when the plane hit it exploded, and they didn't have a chance to get out. So there were no survivors. Cause he, I guess, could actually see the two bodies that were—

So, we went back to our ships and evacuated the firebase. I wasn't the only one that got, there was a lot of other Bronze Stars given. So that's where I picked up my Bronze Star. Through that.

Jim: Right. Now, when you finished your career at Leonard Wood, you really had very little to do right at the end.

Samuel: Yeah, right at the end I had very little to do. I was more of a—

Jim: Hanging out.

Samuel: Hanging out, and—

Jim: Wait till they said go.

Samuel: Well, I had, was given, like, when they came back from the desert I had to supervise the clean up detail where we took all the tents out, and we laid

them out, and we hosed them down, and hung them and dried them, and folded them all back up, and counted and inventoried how many the tents that were damaged, to get them into repair. The poles that were broken, how many new poles we had to order. Stakes, and stuff. So we had a complete contingent to go.

Because besides taking just the inflatable tents, the ones that each ward took care of, we had a number of canvas tents. Now, the canvas tents is where the people slept, individually, you know. They slept in canvas tents, so we had to get those repaired and fixed and ready to go for the next time.

Jim: When you went home, though, where were you discharged?

Samuel: I was discharged, and I went on back to Wisconsin. I came back to Janesville, Wisconsin.

Jim: I was going to say, your wife number two was there.

Samuel: Yeah, she was with me, and—

Jim: Did you have children by her?

Samuel: We adopted two children. She couldn't have kids, she can't have kids to this day. I mean, medically reasons. But we adopted two kids. We had a girl and a boy.

Jim: Very good.

Samuel: We adopted them to this day, and the girl is the pride of my eye, and the boy I'd like to strangle him, but.

Jim: How old are they?

Samuel: She's 31 and he's 30.

Jim: She has children?

Samuel: She has one boy, and my son has five. And part of why I want to strangle him, he never took care of any of the mothers, he just go out and make babies.

Jim: He can't hold a job down, and that sort of kid?

Samuel: I don't think he's held an honest job in his life. Well, he's held an honest job, okay. But he's always been paid as an independent. He's never had a job where—

- Jim: You had to be there at eight o'clock in the morning or any of—
- Samuel: Well, he had to be there early on some of them, but it wasn't the type of job where he got the paycheck, and I don't know if he's ever filed a tax, income tax statement.
- Jim: He's just irresponsible and never changed.
- Samuel: Yeah, never changed. Part of it is probably some of the things that happened to him when he was a kid and why he was being able to be—
- Jim: Don't take any blame for that.
- Samuel: I don't, I just say, I'd like to see—
- Jim: He does. I'm sure, because kids like that always look for someone to blame.
- Samuel: Yeah, but I look at it, I did my best with him, and—
- Jim: You have any contact with him at all?
- Samuel: Once in a great while. Through his—
- Jim: When he wants something.
- Samuel: For a long time when he wanted something, and now through his last girlfriend, she's talked to us several times and keeps us updated.
- Jim: Need a little money, it's nice to send a little, any time you want.
- Samuel: Yeah.
- Jim: I know.
- Samuel: But, I'm not upset with the fact that I didn't have a perfect life with him—
- Jim: That's right, you did the best you could. That's all anyone can say.
- Samuel: Then I got out, and I went to work on a farm. You know, back to farming again.
- Jim: That's something you knew.

Samuel: But, well, part of why I did that, there were not many real jobs out there. I come back in '82, when it was an employer's market. One of the places I put in an application, one of these ground round hamburger type places opened. Had 40 positions. Had 800 people show up. For interviews. To get one of them 40 positions. And when you got that, they weren't looking for people my age. Here I am forty-some years old.

Jim: They want some kid.

Samuel: They wanted some young kid. Somebody that's fast on their feet, and get around.

Jim: Well, they can fire that one, too.

Samuel: Yeah. So, I got this job working on the farm. And I kept taking exams to work for the state. I had heard, "Take the exams. Regardless, if you think you can do it, take the exam." And there's only one exam the state ever give that I didn't pass. I had some training in it, but I got a 68 on it, and you needed a 70 to pass. And it was in accounting. Cause I had got an associate degree while I was in the service. And eventually I got hired by the state working as a laborer.

Jim: Where?

Samuel: In Waukesha. And I went to work there, and then I got promoted to what was called a facility repair worker one. From that I went to facility repair worker two. And then I went on, from there I became a maintenance supervisor. Assistant building superintendant was my title. I was the assistant building superintendant. At Racine Correctional Institute, when it was brand new. From there I was hired and ended up at the state capitol, working in the maintenance department in Tommy's house out here. And now, somebody else in there now. And hopefully it'll be somebody else living there after this election is over.

But, I ended up working in the maintenance department up here at the state capitol. And I got hired on as a maintenance supervisor three. I was happy about that, some of the guys said, "Why don't you want to be the building superintendant?" Well, as a maintenance superintendant I only had to write evaluations on five people. I supervised eleven, but I only had to write the evals on five. As the building superintendant, I'd had to write the evaluations on all eleven. And I was happy, five was enough.

Jim: That was the end of your working?

Samuel: That was the end of my actual full-time working, yeah.

Jim: Did you join any veterans' organization?

Samuel: I joined what's called the DAV, and that's listed on there. And I'm a lifetime member with them. And I joined the Vietnam Veterans of America. When I was working up in Green Bay is when I—

Jim: Disabled American, Disabled?

Samuel: The DAV is the Disabled American Veterans.

Jim: I know that, but when did you get disabled?

Samuel: Through my knees. Running in combat boots I tore up my knees so bad. Throughout my service career, it's been in my service record for a number of years.

Jim: Oh, I see. What kind of pension is it?

Samuel: Now I'm getting sixty percent.

Jim: Sixty percent. That's pretty good.

Samuel: I'm fighting for higher, due to the fact now, I've also gotten diabetes, which has been related to Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Jim: And excess weight.

Samuel: And excess weight, but, I know, that's part of it, but part of it, because even—

Jim: Agent Orange would be hard to prove.

Samuel: But they have, the military has accepted it.

Jim: Have they?

Samuel: Yes. It's been in the Army Times. How much or what kind of a rating we're going to get is supposed to come out in the end of June.

Jim: I see. Well, hopefully you'll get a boost.

Samuel: Yeah. I got high blood pressure.

Jim: That's weight related, too.

Samuel: That's related to weight, but it's also related to being around chemicals.

- Jim: That's a hard one to prove.
- Samuel: I understand, but it's some the military has accepted.
- Jim: We're about to find out [laughs].
- Samuel: They've accepted, to some point, okay. I understand some of it's related to weight. And then, I'm having to go through an exam at the end of the month for possibly having skin cancer.
- Jim: Where?
- Samuel: On the face. See this thing up here on my eye? The nurse and the doctor both think it's cancer related. They asked me how it, it's been there for several months, okay. And it keeps—
- Jim: Skin cancers are common.
- Samuel: They're common—
- Jim: Okay. I think that's all. Oh, last question, you keeping track of any of your buddies?
- Samuel: Not a whole lot. Okay, I was—
- Jim: They dissipate, you don't go to any of the reunions, or the—
- Samuel: I haven't been to any of the reunions.
- Jim: You moved in different groups, it's kind of hard to keep track, doesn't it?
- Samuel: I run across, now, I go regular to the retired thing at Fort Leonard Wood. Where all the people that are retired go to and get updates on medical and stuff like that. You know, up in that area.
- Jim: Sure.
- Samuel: So, I go to that. And I go quite a few trips, I make quite a few trips to Fort Leonard Wood. And, as a matter of fact I've made some new friends in the military. And then I'm going to have myself a party at the end of the year. Or, the end of September, not the end of the year. Not the end of the year, end of September. And that's due to the fact I'll have been retired 20 years come September 30<sup>th</sup>. So I'm going to go ahead and have myself a party.
- Jim: I think you deserve it.

Samuel: And my wife says there's two people we're definitely inviting. One of them's another retired service member.

Jim: Okay. That's it.

Samuel: Now, did you want to take a quick look at some of the pictures I've got?

Jim: Yep. Just let me get this stopped.

Samuel: Okay.

**[End of Interview]**