

**Richard L. Barclay
Veteran**

**Michael Russert and Wayne Clark
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on 7 October 2003
Newburgh, New York**

Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth please?

RB: My full name is Richard L. Barclay. I was born in Newburgh, New York on May 4, 1925.

Q: And where?

RB: In Town of Tallify Village, about ten miles north of here.

Q: What was your educational background prior to entering service?

RB: Just high school.

Q: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

RB: I was drafted. I got my high school diploma on the 23rd of June, 1943, and the 25th I was sworn in the Army.

Q: Do you remember where you were and your reaction when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

RB: I was in school as far as I know?

Q: Do you remember your reaction when you heard about it?

RB: All I remember really is here we go.

Q: Okay

Q: Now, when you were drafted, where were you inducted into the Army?

RB: In New York City. I went to Fort Dix and then was shipped to Fort Eustis, Virginia in coast artillery.

Q: Okay so you were assigned to the coastal artillery?

RB: Yes.

Q: What kind of specialized training did you receive?

RB: Only on half-tracks with 450 caliber guns mounted on it, then I was shipped to Hawaii at the end of 43 and from there they formed up an artillery outfit...24th Corps artillery, which consisted of 155 howitzers and two 25th artillery which was 155 Long Toms.

Q: Now, I notice it said that you were a line man, you laid out the telephone lines and operated them. Were you given any special training for that?

RB: Only in Hawaii. After the outfit was formed, I was put in a crew and headquarters battalion and since radio at that time wasn't that good, we had to maintain double lines in every outfit and every gun battery and we just received some training on the island of Wahoo. After that, no more.

Q: Now, how did you lay the lines out to the batteries and back? You laid two lines out, how did you do that?

RB: Well, they went by different routes. Primarily, drill fire took them out or tanks took them out. They wouldn't get both of them.

Q: So, they went in different areas then?

RB: Yeah, well then, I also had a crew. I had a crew of four men and we laid the wires with a truck...4 x4 Dodge truck and we laid the wires from there and as much as we could, we tied it up off the ground but that wasn't always possible.

Q: Okay, now where was your first campaign?

RB: Saipan. They formed up and then we left Saipan and we went ashore on the third day. It was a long haul.

Q: In what way do you mean?

RB: Well, there was a lot of people we had to help pick up, a few of our own people to get them through to set the guns up. There was a lot them that didn't make it though, and of course the Japanese had no surrender at all. Very few of them would you ever see behind bars.

Q: Now, did you carry any type of weapon?

RB: Yeah, I always carried a rifle. In fact, we had spares on the truck that we had picked up off the field and we had spares and extra ammo that we used and then the guns we carried all that time. I had a 45-sub machine gun. That got pretty heavy carrying around all day.

Q: How close were you to combat?

RB: Well, quite often we had to go to the front lines to lay wires. To put the wires down.

Q: Now, how did you power these systems? You did this with your truck or had to go on foot sometimes?

RB: Well, we always had the truck within a short distance from us. Sometimes we had to get off it and hike, but most of the time was from the truck. But at that rate, somebody had to run along behind the truck and tie the wire off to get it out of the road. We took turns at that too.

Q: What do you mean by “to tie the wire off?” What do you mean by that?

RB: Well, when you’re laying out the wire, the pull of the reel and if you go around a corner, you pull it out in the road so you had to find something to loop it around and tie it fast so it wouldn’t fall out in the road.

Q: Did you ever have to go out and repair the wires or did you have to replace the wire if it was hit?

RB: Well we repaired what we could and replaced what we couldn’t repair because sometimes the Japanese would cut the wire and drag it in to someplace where they could probably pick us off so having laid the lines, we knew where they went, so it was cut and dragged off and we spliced a new piece and went from there. Primarily because I was very reluctant to get in a spot I couldn’t get out of.

Q: Was it in headquarters that you had the switchboards?

RB: Yeah, we had four wire crews, 20 men and we took turns...had a week on switchboard and the other three weeks out fixing lines or laying lines...what have you.

Q: Now, how did you power this system? It needed some type of power. How did you power this whole system?

RB: Most of it was battery.

Q: Battery, okay.

RB: The vehicles had D batteries in them.

Q: Where they the type you cranked it?

RB: Yes. You had to crank that with a trippa (?) flap on the switchboard so that you could plug it in. The person on the switchboard could open that circuit up and relay the message where you had to go.

Q: How long would it take to hook a battery up to your headquarters?

RB: The batteries were permanently installed.

Q: No, I mean you have an artillery battery sitting out here. How long would it take to take the wires, hook up to the battery and hook up to your...install the switchboard. How long would it take to do that about?

RB: We would install the switchboard right away when we moved in and then the rest... getting the lines to the battery would depend on what the conditions were, also because we didn’t like to take chances.

Q: How long were you in Saipan?

RB: To the end of Saipan, just a little over a month and then we went to Tinian which is an island just a short distance from Saipan, then in December of that year, we went to the Philippines.

Q: Now how long after D day did you land on Leyte?

RB: That battle was pretty much...the island was pretty much secure when we got to shore, but then one of the small islands off Leyte, Shebu (?) I think it was, we had to go to the other end of the island to provide gun coverage to the people taking that small island.

Q: Now, your final campaign was Okinawa. When did you land on Okinawa?

RB: D-day and then that was April the first, Easter Sunday, 1945.

Q: Now, the landings on Okinawa didn't receive much opposition.

RB: For some reason, the Japanese had retreated to the hills and they didn't do anything for, I think, a couple days but I went ashore early because I had a truck on top of an LST and I had to drive that ashore.

Q: Now, did your whole artillery unit go in together in that LST?

RB: No, it was only part of it in that LST, but it was a pretty good size outfit so they had the guns and tractors on various ships, mostly LSTs.

Q: How were your guns towed?

RB: They had tractors. The one 155 had a smaller tractor. It was almost like a tank.

Q: How long were you on Okinawa?

RB: Until after the war. December of 45 we left...headed back to the states.

Q: How...do you recall...were you involved in any of the attacks in Okinawa close up?

RB: Yes, we were right close up to the front lines quite often. Had to lay the lines and maintain the lines so fortunately I came out with a whole skin.

Q: Were many in your unit killed or wounded?

RB: Fortunately, none. A few people had probably accidents. One guy dropped something on this his foot. He had to be taken away because he broke a lot of bones in his foot, but other than that, we lost nobody.

Q: Were you there during the typhoons?

RB: Yup.

Q: What was that like being on land? I know we talked to some of the Navy people...

RB: I have some pictures here and in our outfit, there was only one tent left standing and that was mostly because we threw telephone wires over the top and tied it to trucks on either side, but when daylight came, you could see right through the canvas.

Q: Did it do much damage to your lines? Did you have to lay new lines?

RB: No, it didn't do much damage there, but all our tents were gone.

Q: While you were there, did you do any training for landings in Japan?

RB: No, we were just doing our equipment, bringing that up to snuff when the war was over.

Q: Do you remember hearing about the death of President Roosevelt? What was your reaction to that?

RB: He was pretty well hurting, so we kind of figured he was out of it, so in his sake was a good thing.

Q: Do you remember what your reaction was when you heard about the dropping of the atomic bomb?

RB: Well, I for one was happy because we were loading for Japan and the predictions there were not good.

Q: Okay, did you ever get to see any USO shows?

RB: A couple. That's about all.

Q: Did you see any celebrities at all in them?

RB: No, I don't recall.

Q: Now, you were discharged in January of 46. Where were you discharged?

RB: Fort Dix.

Q: Okay, did you ever make use of the GI bill?

RB: Yes, I got two years in college at Sampson which is near Geneva and that was the four runner of these community colleges. New York State colleges had gotten together and they had three places, Sampson and the one in Plattsburgh, one in Utica. I think there was one small one in Middletown. I got two years free engineering really.

Q: Did you make use of the 52-20 clause?

RB: No, not that I know of.

Q: Did you join any Veteran's organizations at all?

RB: Only the American Legion.

Q: Did you stay with the American Legion?

RB: Yes, I was the commander '99 and up to 2001.

Q: Did you stay in contact with anyone that was in service with you?

RB: No, not lately...well shortly after we got home I saw one guy, a buddy of mine, but other than that, no.

Q: Okay, will you show us the pictures that you have brought over?

RB: Well I got these pictures. They were taken on Okinawa. (Holds up photographs for interviewer to see).

Q: If you hold it just like this Wayne can focus in on it.

RB: This was the Monument of Bunker on Okinawa (showing photograph to interviewer).

Q: Are you in that picture?

RB: No. I'm in this picture here (holds up photograph to interviewer). That was a group of people in our outfit.

Q: Are there other pictures of men that you served with?

RB: Yeah, this was a close friend of mine. He was from Jersey and then this was another picture of the group. This was my friend and I. Clark Brady his name was.

Q: So, you're the one in this photograph...you're the one...this is you? (Interviewer points to photograph).

RB: Yeah

Q: Okay.

Q: Now when were those taken and where?

RB: They were taken on Okinawa. I think towards the end, or after the island was secure and then this picture was taken in the Philippines later (shows interviewer photograph).

Q: All those pictures were taken there? Were all of those taken in the Philippines?

RB: All these were yes. They were all taken in the Philippines. I can't remember how I got copies of these. This was my brother-in-law. He was in the engineering section of the Army and he came to visit on Okinawa. He was on a small island.

Q: Now, were you married when you were in the service?

RB: No

Q: Oh, okay.

RB: And then these pictures were after the typhoon on Okinawa. These were others taken on Okinawa and then this picture was Memorial Day 2000. I was Commander of the Legion post at that time and that was our Memorial Day service.

Q: Anything else?

RB: Uhh, yeah, I got a whole bunch in here. Now this was currency handed out to all the personnel who went on the island (showing interviewer military currency).

Q: So, military payment certificates?

RB: Yeah, military currency because they did not want the enemy to get a hold of any of our money so all this here (opens wallet full of military currency) and then...now this was a flyer that was dropped on Saipan and Tinian (showing interviewer flyer).

Q: If you can hold it back a little bit?

RB: On the other side of it here, it says "this leaflet guarantees you may give treatment to any Japanese desiring to surrender. Take him immediately to your nearest intelligence office."

Q: Can you turn it around and show us the other side please?

RB: Yeah, these were dropped on Saipan and Tinian. I don't know whether this is good for you or not?

Q: Yes.

RB: And then this was a booklet handed out before I went into Saipan showing a brief bit of their history and also, I believe on the back here, there are translations of various words and then these here were maps given out prior to Saipan and Tinian, kind of worn a little bit, indicating where the beaches were.

Q: Okay.

RB: And of course, on the back, they have the various colors. This is a map of Tinian.

Q: Okay.

RB: It's a little worse for the wear. It's almost 60 years old.

Q: Yes.

RB: That was Saipan, the same thing (holding up map). I think that was primarily so that people were assigned to different beaches, so they know which one they were going to. We went ashore here, it was down here (showing location on map), and then this was handed out prior to Okinawa. That gives a brief history of the Yokatsu, which was islands part of Okinawa and they give a brief history here and things to be watched out for and what have you. This was stuff I

picked up....oh, that was Rasha (?) stamps I think from Japan (showing interviewer Japanese Rasha stamps).

Q: So, you picked these up? Where did you pick those up?

RB: Well, they were scattered around when the invasion force went through, these guys looked at everything.

Q: Which island was that?

RB: Okinawa.

Q: Okinawa, okay.

RB: And then this was uhh....oh, this was put out by just almost like a newspaper put out by the government written up by some of our people from some other outfits.

Q: Okay.

Q: How do you think your time in the service affected your life?

RB: Um well, I think what happened was I got to the point where minor things did not irritate me. Especially on my job I could. Something breaks, we fix it and go back to work. Never mind worrying about it. That was probably helped on by my service so small things don't bother me.

Q: Okay, well thank you very much for your interview.

RB: Okay.