

Veterans interviews – RETURN TO: Judy Allen, Choctaw Historic Projects, PO Box 1210, Durant OK 74702 – [judy.allen@choctawnation.com](mailto:judy.allen@choctawnation.com). 580.513.7984.

Interview conducted by: JudyAllen at (location): Durant CN HQ Date and time: Nov 8 2023; afternoon

NAME -- Ronnie Parent

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Birthday --7.25.44

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PHONE –

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Next of Kin and their contact info:

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Jane Parent, wife – same #

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Are you Choctaw? Can you share a copy of your CDIB and/or Membership card?Y

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In which branch did you enter? US Seabees

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Division --

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Unit --

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Were you Drafted or Enlisted or Commissioned? – signed up for 30 months. Spent six months at boot camp, then California for training. Spent 13 months in VN, when returned from VN, went home, and received an early out with honorable discharge. Worked with the Marines part of the time in VN. It was a Naval Advisory Group to the Vietnamese. We patrolled rivers at night and I was an advisor to Vietnamese

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(If given a choice) Why did you choose that branch? I enlisted with the Seabees. I had been teaching school for two years; I was single; I was 25 years old. I was going to get drated, so I just joined

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RANK at discharge: Highest rank achieved was an E-5, and the Seabee language for that was UT2, or Utility 2.

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Years served – from- 1969 to -- 70

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Peace or wartime? Vietnam

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Where did you attend basic training? -- Gulf Port, Mississippi

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WHERE DID YOU SERVE ? – During boot camp, we were in Hurricane Camille. The hurricane blew away the barracks and everything. It nearly blew me away! It blew away the building I was in. (Because of the hurricane, Parent and the other troops were put on search and recovery detail, with a focus of looking for people and bodies.

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After Mississippi, Parent was sent to Coronado Island, California for training. “Then we went to Vietnam, then home. We landed in California from VN and were sent back to Dallas, then I went home.”

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What was your job while in service? – Naval Advisor to the Vietnamese

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Was there a point during your service, that you decided the military was, or was not, the right career choice? (Please explain) –

I knew going in that the military was not going to be my lifetime career.

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I hunted and fished all my life around Spiro. After discharge I taught at Spiro for over 20 years. He also served as Principal part of his time at Spiro Public Schools. “I was mayor of Spiro for fifteen years from 2004 - 2021.”

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Ronnie Parent was honored as Choctaw Veteran of the Month for District 4 in 2022.

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Is there a battle or point during your service that you would like to describe so that future generations can better understand what military life can be – for better or worse?

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PROMOTIONS, MEDALS AND CITATIONS RECEIVED

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While serving in support as a Seabee with the Marines, I received my 5<sup>th</sup> promotion in the field.

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**Stories of Military Service:**

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What or who did you leave behind when you joined the service? (family, child, pet)  
Was not married at the time; Parents were Mildred Darnell and Clifford Parent.

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Did you serve alongside other Native/American Indians? How did that inform your experience?

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Don't remember any

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What did you think about the chow? (at base and in the field!)

We were on a little base on the Cambodian Border – sometimes you would have steak or lobster – the best to be had – but nothing to go with them. I missed hamburgers and fresh milk. The food wasn't bad, but not a primary focus for me.

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**Wartime Service vs. peacetime service.**

Were you in a combat, combat support, or combat service support role? Or did the war zone make that designation irrelevant?

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(If combat/ wartime) How did your combat (wartime) experience change you?

"People don't realize what the flag means. As long as we had the US flag flying (on our location), we had support and supplies. When we left, and took our flag, the Vietnames flag was the only one flying. The support and supplies from the US stopped. I realized then how tstrong the US is and how they ensure a peace.

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**Reflections**

How did your military service experiences affect your life?

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What are some life lessons you learned from your military service?

I woud tell the next generation to work hard and care about your country.

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Are there lessons to be learned from the way Native communities treat their veterans?

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How has your military service impacted your feelings about war and the military in general?

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**Conclusion**

Thank you for taking the time to share your recollections of your military service.

What do you wish more people knew about veterans?

I remember when a veteran didn't mean nothing. No one knew anything about them. Now they are published enough that everyone knows about them.

Native American veterans?

Questions not related to your military life:

Where were you born and who were your parents and siblings? Any of them veterans?

No veterans

What did your parents/grandparents do for a living?

My dad was a mechanic

Where did you go to school? (youth and adult)

Spiro through HS and Northeastern and Southeastern for College/University

Did you have brothers and sisters? One sister, Myrna, now deceased

What are some family traditions that have been passed down?

no

What was it like growing up Choctaw? Did you ever face adversity as a youth, or as an adult?

no

Did you marry and have children? Tell me about them, including their names.

Married Jane Ann Parent in 1976

Did you have a non-military career after service?

What is most important invention you have seen in your lifetime

Computers and SMART bombs

What has amazed you most during your lifetime:

How has COVID 19 affected your life? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any photos from your life (including time in the military, when you were a youth, during your career, adult life with family, or other photos that are important to you and your memories)? Can you share up to 15 of those photos with us? Please list a description of any photos you are sharing?

Can you share copies/images of any discharge papers or other military documents? Please list what they are:

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Do you have any news clippings, significant event programs, or other material you would like to share? Please list the items.

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Can you please share an image or copy of your DD214?

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Anything else you would like to share or donate that helps tell your story?

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