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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *Air Force 1986-2000, as a member of the Security Police, Base Ground Defense, and as an instructor for a Combat Evaluation Squadron evaluating strategy and tactics. During that time, I was based at San Antonio, TX; Incirlik, Turkey; Cheyenne, WY; Osan AFB, Korea; Hickam AFB, Hawaii; and finally based in California as a recruiter.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *E6 Tech Sergeant*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *Nope.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *When I was growing up poor in the New York/New Jersey area, I knew I didn't want to be poor anymore and, since about the 5th grade, I had had my eye on the Air Force. I grew up a patriotic kid, wanting to support my country, that kind of thing. I didn't see any commercials or get any recruiting material, there was just something I liked about the Air Force.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *Looking back on it, I liked the change, the travel, and doing things not everybody could do. What I liked most was working with weapons systems that were state-of-the-art, with the latest technology like GPS and bone-mikes that are just now becoming available to civilians.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *Couple of hard knocks being a young street kid, so I learned things the hard way, but once I adapted to it, it wasn't so bad. When they started drawing down (downsizing) the military, it really hurt the people who did the work, and their families, too. When you have to deploy overseas for six or eight months, it's tough on the wife and the kids at home. I didn't mind the sacrifice so much, but didn't like having to do the duty because somebody is trying to make a political statement.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *Absolutely when I went to work in Korea as an instructor. I'd never done any instruction and we were starting a brand new squadron from the ground up. You don't get too many opportunities to do that in the military, everything is pretty much set. I had a very aggressive commander over there, so I learned a lot about leadership, a lot about myself, and within 90 days I was teaching land ops, tactics, and special ops like an expert. I still use many of the techniques I learned there as an instructor in my career right now.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *When I got out of the Air Force, I didn't want to get into something that was completely foreign in a civilian job. The camaraderie, esprit de corps, and structure of the fire service paralleled the military, and that's why I was drawn in this direction. I have a strong sense of serving the community as well. Money wasn't a motivator for me, and I didn't want to work in the police force.*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *The spontaneity of this job, the variety. One day we may be on a horse-trauma where someone fell off a horse and the next we may be on a house fire. It never gets boring and you work with people you trust, and that's a pretty good motivator for me. But my favorite part of the job is seeing the little kids who get excited to see us, which may sound kind of wimpy, but after growing up like I did, it's great to see these kids get fired up because you never know how it might motivate them to go somewhere.*
- 10) What do you like least about firefighting? *Nothing, really. I'm pretty content all around.*