

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT Gary Hall
CAPT(S) Carol O'Hagan
CDR Karen Loftus
YNCS Kathleen Wright

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
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Interviewee:

CDR Yvette BrownWahler

Current Address:

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Date of Interview:

30 Jan 2002

Place of Interview:

Navy Annex, Arlington VA

Number of Cassettes:

One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

Subject Terms/Key Words: Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; triage; evacuation; lessons learned; Defense Protective Service; FBI; carnage; Navy Command Center; renovation

Abstract of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

1. Born and raised in ██████████ CA in ██████. Graduated from Weaver State University in 1985. Enrolled in Navy ROTC; commissioned March 15, 1985. She has served on five ships: USS Emory S. Lynn (AS-39); USS Truitt (FFT-1095); USS John Young (as the OPSO, first female department head to serve on a combatant ship); served on the 2nd Fleet staff (Flag aide to ADM Fallon and Special Projects officer to ADM Clark); selected for XO and LCDR command; XO of the USS Gonzalez (DDG-66); and now is reporting for a CO tour on the USS Chafee (DDG-90). At the time of this interview, she is leaving her position as the Director of Recruiting and Public Outreach.

Topics Discussed:

2. On September 11th she was working in the Pentagon in 2B271. Their walls shook. Everyone began to evacuate. People started to call in to get their loved ones' status. She called her husband in Norfolk to tell him she was fine. She left the building, walked around the parking lot to ensure their personnel were mustered. She lives one mile from the Pentagon, and she began to walk up the hill. A Colonel had not been able to find her child from the Pentagon Child Care Center. They tracked down the children; they had been taken to Potomac Park. She took the Colonel to her apartment and they used her phone to track the children down. These two women ended up on Columbia Pike but got there by going through Arlington Cemetery and back around again. She walked the

- women to Potomac Park. She then went back home, got into her cammies, but the Arlington Annex area was blocked. The 3rd Infantry Battalion had already taken over.
3. On September 12th she was working at her computer and was told to evacuate – that the fire and the flooding was spreading and that part of the Pentagon may be lost. She went up to General Van Alstyne’s office and his EA asked her if she would go over to the Sheraton in Crystal City and take care of the General. She acted as his flag aide; it became a daily challenge to stay compassionate and understanding and patient. Within that first day they planned to brief the families daily. This recommendation came from the National Transportation and Safety Board. Secretary Rumsfeld announced the set up of the center, and the families’ members began to come in. They received 500 phone calls in the first 24 hours.
 4. On September 13th she had to tell a man that his wife was on the missing list. Another time she had to coax out a lady who was camped out at the Pentagon waiting for her husband to come out. They convinced her to come to the Sheraton, but she stood outside for 24 hours before she went in.
 5. They briefed the families twice a day, at 1000 and 1600, starting on September 12th. Later on it was reduced to one briefing a day. General VanAlstyne talked of search and recovery; hope of finding missing persons; and how the fire was spreading. By the 14th the Navy had officially released their list. By the 17th the Army officially released their list. American Airlines had a center at Dulles at one of the hotels, and they closed it down and moved into the Sheraton Crystal City family assistance center. On Saturday the 15th they planned their first site visit. There were 300-400 family members present; it was a sacred moment. They bused the families over together by police escort. Arlington County’s fire department provided a bagpiper, and the police saluted the families as they passed. Military District Washington, General Jackson, was there to meet them. One of the local florists had donated flowers and flags. They also set out a memorial table for the families at the attack site. Part of the building collapsed again while the family members were present.
 6. The American Airlines families began to show up for the briefings. The following week positive identification of remains began. Walter Reed sent over blood collection kits so that they could start taking blood samples from the families. Mortuary Affairs from Dover briefed the families as to Dover’s role.
 7. They provided a cocoon for the families. It was a one stop shop with daily briefings; food; lodging; transportation; financial grants from the Red Cross; USAA with death benefits and gratuities; the USO; Department of Veteran Affairs; the Office of Victims of Crime; FEMA (played a minor role in the Pentagon attack as opposed to it’s major role in New York). There was legal support from the 10th Battalion; all reserves that were pro bono lawyers. They handled a couple of child custody cases, name changes, and worked both the civilian and military side of the issues. There was Chaplain support as well. These were not the same Chaplains who went with the CACO’s to do death notifications. There were counselors, psychiatrists, and counseling rooms were available. Some members of families resided at the Sheraton. Therapy dogs were of great help to the families. 18 hour a day childcare was made available so that families could attend briefings and get information. These were manned by volunteers or they were detailed by the Office of Family Policy, Child Care Director. The CACO’s and Navy Casualty joined the Family Assistance Center on September 15th. That prevented the center from providing the information more than once.

8. There were many lodging donations enabling all of the family members to stay in local hotels free of charge for the memorial service. There were a myriad of financial grants available to the families.
9. The daily briefings became the place to be. They became the resource; Public Affairs went to them for information. Survivors from the Pentagon wanted to mingle with the families; they were not allowed to do so. They also excluded the wounded, which in retrospect was not a good idea.
10. Congressman Moran talked of retribution to the families; Miss America sang God Bless America. She broke down in front of the families. These two times were the first and last times General Van Alstyne relinquished the microphone during the briefings. Many well-known dignitaries came to the family assistance center.
11. October 11th, 2001 was the date of the Pentagon Memorial Service. The family members were given as many seats as they desired. They were flown in, bussed over and lodged all and at the expense of the Department of Defense. There was a huge reception at the Sheraton afterwards. It was also the last day the Pentagon Family Assistance Center was located at the Sheraton. The memorial table was a showcase for the families to let other families know what their loved one was like. They put a flag on the wall, and the table was laid out in the form of the flag. Flowers were donated every day.
12. Partial remains became an issue for the families. A child was identified by a bone in a chin; a woman was identified by a piece of skin. Many family members chose to have the funeral with partial remains; others waited. Five were not identified; the decision to stop positive identification was made in November. The FBI flew all over the country to retrieve old specimens in order to do positive identification. Those families are still fighting the state of Virginia for a death certificate. Several family members wanted to go to Dover and they were discouraged to do so. Family members were discouraged to open caskets; Dover was encouraged to seal the caskets.
13. The Office of Family Policy decided to set up a satellite office in the Polk building. That was where the Pentagon Family Assistance Referral and Resource Office (FARRO) was set up for three weeks. BGEN Spivey was now the Director. The Red Cross was still providing grants and food. They became a sanctuary for Navy officers. Some of the relocated Naval officers were having a hard time dealing with the tragedy and it became a place for them to gather information. They put together a Resource and Referral Guide to give to the families; married up the closest Family Support Center to the families' hometown. For the AA families, through the Office of Victims of Crime, they found the closest counseling center available for them.
14. At the Sheraton people dropped off donations. Teddy bears, quilts, angels, flags; all showed up at the door. When the Sheraton closed down every organization was given things and they did not know where to send them. These organizations were interested in gaining access to the families. They created a list of every victim, every family member, and their CACO's. The FARRO was in charge of marrying up these donated items to the families.
15. On September 16th she was walking with the General and told him she did not want to leave the Family Assistance Center. On the 12th of October she was told she should go back to her job again, and she again said no, that she would not leave the families when all of their issues had not been resolved.
16. The Polk building was shut down on November 1st. She has been a one person operation since that date, still providing assistance to the families. CAPT Steve O'Brien, the officer who headed the Navy Liaison team at Dover Port Mortuary, is relieving her of this duty.
17. She has learned patience by dealing with the families. Somewhere in their tears and

anger you could discern what they needed.

18. The contractors were assigned CACO's; this will become DoD policy. American Airlines passengers' families were assigned volunteer escort officers for the memorial service who also served as their conduit to the assistance center.
19. They have started the United in Memory website so that families can at their leisure collect information.
20. Meg Faulk from Navy Casualty and the National Transportation Safety Board provided much of the guidance as to how to set up the Family Assistance Center. By the second or third week they did not need meetings anymore but had figured out how to run it well.

Abstracted by:
CDR Karen Loftus
7 Feb 2002

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Topics Discussed:

A. (12:41) On September 10th I was doing all this wonderful stuff as Director of Recruiting and Public outreach. On September 11th I walked into the building and we're doing our normal email and my husband called and said, "Do you know a plane just flew into the World Trade Center?"

just like everybody else had called. We just kind of gathered everybody up to the conference room. We're all trying to look on the internet, and I got kind of bored, and then of course the second plane hit and of course we were "Oops this is not, this is not an accident," kind of thing. From there you know, of course, went back to my desk and I was playing around and then the boom, the big hit. Our walls actually shook. We're in 2B271, so we're off the second corridor, the Department of Defense corridor. The first initial reaction was to go out in the hallway and see what was going on. Of course, people were already evacuating. It was interesting, a month before we had had a fire when they were doing the renovation in the building and we had to evacuate the building. So everybody went out very orderly. It was very surprising. But Colonel Capanski (phonetic) and I went back into the office. Everybody was evacuating. There's about twelve people in our office and I sat there for a few minutes and I said, "OK," you know, of course everybody's going to be rushing out of the building, but people are going to start phoning in. Sure enough I had four phone calls. Spouses calling in, and we also had two pregnant women in our office. So I answered the phone calls, told them everybody was OK. Called my husband's office down in Norfolk and told him I was fine, and then of course, you know went out the building, myself, you know, later. Walked around the parking lot for a long time making sure everybody did get out. We didn't miss anybody or lose anybody at all. But of course they had just scattered to the four winds. Luckily I only live a mile up the road here. My car was in the parking lot so I couldn't get to it. You know, of course couldn't get it out. So I decided it's time to go. Walked up the hill and of course as you're walking around the parking lot, you're hearing all different kinds of news stories of what had happened.

Nobody could believe, you know, that by then the World Trade Center had collapsed, that a plane had flown into the Pentagon. Everybody thought it had been a bomb. And then you know just all the mess that was going on.

Walked up the hill and I heard this Commander, there a lady who was standing there and she said, "Hi, my name is Colonel so-and-so," and she was in civilian clothes. "I can't find my child at the daycare center. They've evacuated the daycare center. Where are they?"

I said, "Oh. Well, let's go down the hill," and of course every rent-a-cop, started to use that term, or somebody who thought they were somebody was out that day and we finally were able to track down the children. They had taken them over to Potomac Park and Marina, but you couldn't of course get through the annex and couldn't get through parking lots. So we, basically, and the way we found out was I took them into my apartment and we made some phone calls since we couldn't use cell phones and you know basically tracked down the kids that way, through different learning centers.

From there I took the two ladies, we had gained another lady by then who also couldn't get to her child, and what was interesting is the way the building was evacuated. These two women actually worked, one worked in the White House and the other one worked, she was at the DeLorenzo Clinic or something, for some strange reason, but they ended up on Columbia Pike, because when they evacuated the building they sent everybody to basically Arlington Cemetery and back around again. So they were totally misplaced.

From there I took the two women, basically because I was in uniform and I could show my badge basically all I had, I talked my way through the highway patrol. Talked my way through everybody else, and got the women and walked down 395, down to Army/Navy Drive. We

walked around Crystal City, got up by Boundary Channel and then, and then basically through the park and then found the children.

Park Service was smart enough to commandeer a bus and got all the children whose parents were still looking for them and brought them back to this small building over here at the Navy Annex. Across the street from the Navy Annex the B-dot (phonetic) building, so the women got their kids back and I proceeded to go back home again, and got into my cammies and said, "Well, I guess maybe I can help," but of course by then they had blocked Arlington Annex, or blocked the Annex up here and you couldn't get through, and the 3rd Infantry Battalion, whatever had taken over from Fort Myers, so they didn't need any help.

September 12th I walked into the office and we were getting, of course, thinking everything was going to be either messed up or destroyed. I'm sitting at my computer working and all of a sudden we get the word from the MPs who were scattered throughout the building and says, "Evacuate your office. The fire is spreading, the flooding is spreading and we don't know if we're going to lose this part of the Pentagon or not."

So we did the thing we did before, is gather up everything, our keys and everything else just in case we couldn't get back in. It's a really funny thought, because later in the office everybody was more worried about their lunch sitting in the refrigerator than their keys and stuff that you couldn't get back into.

So we all went up to General Van Alstyne's office. He's the deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy. He'd only been on the job about a month and we walked up to his office, because we didn't have anywhere else to go and then we were just trying to look for other office space outside of the Pentagon just in case we did lose our office. Commander

Christi Wheeler, who's the Executive Assistant to the General, said, "The General's over at the Sheraton in Crystal City in Arlington, can you go over and take care of him?"

I said, "Sure." So I went over, you know just in cammies, did the thing you normally do as a flag aide. You start answering questions and started taking care of things and moving people around. You know, planning meetings and things like that. I kind of like—I guess the rest of this is sort of history. It became a daily—first of all it was an honor to serve the families over the last four months—but it became a daily challenge to stay compassionate and patient and understanding while these families are walking around basically mindless.

They didn't know if their loved one, a husband, daughter, sister, mother, brother, was still in the Pentagon; what the search and recovery efforts were; positive identification; funerals. Just a whole gamut, but within that first day we planned, based on the recommendation from the National Transportation Board to have a brief for the families everyday. So as soon as the news media had gotten a hold of our 1-800 number, where to call at the Sheraton and then as soon as it was publicly announced at the press briefing by Secretary Rumsfeld that we had set up the center, family members started coming in.

We're not just talking about the primary next of kin, we're talking about all families, whether it was, you know, a long-lost brother, or a long-lost sister, or a long-lost daughter or something like that. We were getting phone calls. We must have gotten over 500 phone calls in the first twenty-four hours. Some of it repetitive information, maybe call somebody Jimmy, or Jim or James, and so we were taking down the same information over and over again.

I'll never forget the look in one man's eye when, this was probably on the second day, so the 13th, and I had to look him in the eye and tell him yes, his wife is on the missing list. He hadn't heard from her in 48 hours.

Another incident where we had to sit somebody down and actually had to coax this one lady who was staying over here, camped out at the Pentagon waiting for her husband to come out. She was going to stay there until he, or nothing. We slowly coaxed her, sent the Chaplains over, and we sent a couple of senior officers over and finally convinced her to at least come to the Sheraton.

“We can do more for you at the Sheraton than we can do anywhere else.”

She eventually made her way over to us, but she stood outside for about twenty-four hours. She wouldn't come in, because walking through the doors was kind of like the finality of it—they're gone; it's over you know. Finally she did come in and we took care of her.

We had briefed the families starting on the second day so that was September 12th, twice a day. One briefing at ten in the morning and one briefing at four in the afternoon and then later on we went down to one briefing a day. General Van Alstyne would stand there and say what the search and recovery efforts were going on. If there's any hope of finding missing people. They're listed as missing and how the fire was spreading.

By Thursday, Friday, I think it was Friday, the Navy had officially released their list. The only way family members were actually finding out if their loved one was missing was if I made a phone call to the Army/Navy casualty or to DIA, because nobody would officially say anything. So I was the one who had to make the phone calls and tell the general and the general went ahead and told the families that their loved one was on the list. It's just that the list hadn't been published.

It wasn't until the following Monday, 17th, that the Army finally officially released their list. So, of course, everything was known. Then we started making clarifications; there were a couple of people that were on the airplane that were written building, and you know, Army/Navy casualty is trying to work all that out, as to which way to list them.

The other thing we did which was very interesting, is we convinced American Airlines to come and close their center down. They had their families scattered all over Dulles, one of the hotels at Dulles. FBI was really putting the push on them to not have the families congregate just in case there was another attack. You know, you not only lost your loved one, but now you lost the whole family as well. So American Airlines joined us and their families also ended up joining us. So what happened was on Saturday the 15th we planned our first sight visit. The General and I had gone over to the attack site. We wanted to make sure that it would be something that—do the families really need to see this. Many of the families we found out had never been in the Pentagon so they didn't really know, they knew what the outside of the building looked like. So we planned the first site visit. We had about three to four hundred family members come. We made it a very kind of sacred time and moment. Very, very, emotional. We bussed them, by a police escort we bussed the family members over, all together at one time, and the Arlington County Fire Department provided a bagpiper to play. The Arlington County Police were very respectful. They saluted the families as they went by. Military District Washington, General Jackson was there to meet them, and one of the local florists had donated flowers and America flags. So that was all out there.

We also set up a memorial table for them so they could bring whatever they wanted and set it on the memorial table. Eventually that was gathered up by the Center for Military History. So whether it be one of many teddy bears, or lockets or jewelry or hair, or you know, you name it, pictures. All kinds of pictures and posters, cards they had got together were on the table, laid on the table.

Q. (25:02) Was this the same table that the Senate moved back to Crystal City later on, or was that a different –

A. No, we had two different tables. One actually at the attack site. It was kind of like a memorial table and then we had the one actually at the Sheraton.

During that afternoon briefing, we only did one briefing that Saturday, to go back to American Airlines, is we had a woman stand up in the briefing and she said, “I’m sorry, General, I didn’t, I thought we were doing a tour today. I didn’t know that this was only for the Pentagon.”

The General asked her said, “Well, did you lose a loved one?”

She said, “Yes, on the airplane.”

The General told her she was more than welcome to stay. That little incident, if you want to call it, became the door opening for American Airlines, who, all the families then showed up Sunday, Monday.

The, going back to the visit of the attack site on Saturday, we must have stayed there two and a half hours. People just stood there and watched the building and realized, it was the first chance of reality that their loved ones weren’t coming back. There was just no way. By then four days had gone by and you know, the bodies were starting to come out. So two and a half hours, one of the things that did happen is part of the building had collapsed again while they were there. So that, again sunk home that their loved ones weren’t coming back.

We proceeded again with two daily briefings. The next hard thing was the following week was positive identification of remains. So we had worked with Walter Reed and they sent over, basically blood collection kits so that we could start taking blood samples. Of course Dover had come over and briefed, or Mortuary Affairs from Dover came over and briefed the families on what was actually happening at Dover.

Some family members, you know, their loved ones who died right away, you know they were already, bodies were already ready to come back.

Q. (27:21) Can I ask you who did the brief? Was it Captain O'Brien or was it one of the civilians who did the mortuary address?

A. No, it was actually an Air Force Colonel from, actually works here in Mortuary Affairs in the Pentagon. It wasn't Captain O'Brien although I know he's fully qualified.

The wide range of options that we provided the family, first of all we provided a sanctuary for them, or a cocoon as we ended up calling it. It was almost one-stop support. We had daily briefings. We had food. We had lodging for them. We had transportation for them. The Red Cross provided just about anything. Financial grants right off the bat. You know, walk around what we called the infamous ballroom. We had USAA there to help with death benefits and gratuities and car insurance and things like that. One of the things is cars were still in the Pentagon Parking Lot, so we had to go track those down and make sure they got back to the right family member, and they could move the cars.

We had the USO, who were getting a flood of donations in hotel rooms. Everywhere from Potomac Mills all the way up to Chevy Chase in Maryland. So we gave the USO the responsibility of managing these hotel rooms for us. So when the memorial service had come around a month later, family members were able, as many family members that could come, you know, could stay for free. They also provided the hotel rooms for funerals. So that was all kind of gratis, which was nice.

We had the Red Cross of course stayed with us and are still with the families as well. Providing financial grants, they would sit down there, take their information down and whatever their

immediate needs were they met. Anywhere from three to five thousand dollars all the way up to eventually \$20,000.

We also had Department of Veterans Affairs were there to take care of death benefits. The Office of Victims of Crime, ran by the Department of Justice through the FBI, was there as well as the, because the attack happened in Virginia, the Virginia office of Victims of Crimes receives the federal money to give out to the families for counseling and all kinds of different benefits that they gave. The only thing they don't do is pay mortgages, which is kind of interesting.

FEMA was also there, but it was interesting that FEMA played a very low role compared to what happened in New York City. They played a very high role in conjunction with the city. FEMA wasn't really a part of the compensation package even though the federal government has set it up that way. But they were there to, if all else failed, you could go to the Red Cross. You could go to FEMA. You could go to the Office of Victims of Crime or you could go to the Federal Employees Educational Assistance Fund, and one of those five agencies could help you financially. But most of the families, just, they didn't, they couldn't comprehend anything so far. We had a couple of other corporations, (Unintelligible 30:52) first command in Armed Forces. Upstairs we had legal support so the 10th Battalion Legal Assistance came and what was interesting about the Legal Assistance, they were all reservists, so they were pro bono lawyers, and they would handle child custody cases. We had a couple of those. We had a couple of, you know, we never got divorced. You know it's been seven years and they never divorced. Who's really the primary next of kin? How to handle, you know, getting into stock certificates, and credit cards and mortgages and changing names and things like that.

And these lawyers, which we ended up finding out because all of this was kind of happening in the background, would actually in one case, they would say this is a military issue or this is a

civilian issue, they would just change their hat. Either they're the pro bono lawyer, you know, with all the experience and they'd go down to court and take care of it or they'd play the military side of it. So it was either way, so it was very interesting.

We had Chaplain support. We learned early that, don't use Chaplains at the Center to make family calls when notification is made, because it would scare the families, that, "Oh, Oh, this Chaplains approaching me. My time is up." We let the services go ahead and do their normal Casualty Affairs and have a Chaplain from someplace else.

That became really important because as the Generals would say, "Divine intervention." We would probably wouldn't have been able to do a lot of the things that we did if we weren't, I want to say, religiously based. A lot of the things we handled, a couple times, you know in the meetings, we would say a prayer for the families. We'd pray for the victims, this kind of thing. So that became an interesting support measure.

Counselors, we had counselors there. We had child psychologists. We had marriage counselors. We had all kinds of different things, in the counseling role of things. Even had a couple of psychiatrists. Some of the family members would break down, so we had counseling rooms set aside throughout the Sheraton where they could go calm themselves down and then they'd come out again.

We also had moved a lot of the families into the Sheraton. They would have family members come from out of town and it got to be too difficult, or they were diverse or dysfunctional families, or high maintenance families, so we would move part of the family into the Sheraton and let the other person, you know, reside in their home, in their own safety. Well being I should say.

Therapy dogs. We had therapy dogs there, which is very, very interesting. These dogs are specially trained. They will, they can react, they don't react to anything really. They're just like having a stuffed animal there. The kids would lay down on the floor with them and pet them, or you know, a woman would just sit there and pet the dog. They were very strengthening for a lot of people, especially the kids.

Some of the victim's families thought that they shouldn't be bringing their kids everyday to the Sheraton, but they found that they couldn't balance child care needs with getting the daily information and walking around the tables, and casualty assistance officers and bouncing back and forth. So we also opened up a childcare center. So we would have about eighteen hours a day, the family members could bring their kids and as long as they stayed in the Sheraton or something, we would take care of the kids for them.

Q. (34:28) Where did the personnel come to man that?

A. Basically either volunteers or there's a, in the Office of Family Policy, there is a childcare director who runs the things. So a lot of them were just kind of volunteers.

The daily briefings became the place to be. The first couple of days the General would call Public Affairs and say, "Can I say this? Can I say that?" Then we found out we seemed to have more information than Public Affairs had. We were being fed background and backup information by just placing a lot of phone calls. So we became the resource. Public Affairs ended up calling us to find out if certain things were true.

We also became fact-based and bottom line of truth. We stopped using body bags, the counts of body bags, because it didn't make any sense. There were bags coming out, doesn't necessarily

mean there's anybody in them. Once we did that, Public Affairs, you know Tory Clark started to do the same thing. So it was kind of an interesting twist.

We became a place to be because everybody wanted to be with the families. We had to put a stop on let's say those that survived in the Navy OP Center wanted to come over and be with family members, and we said no. We had to keep the two separate. We couldn't handle the grieving of somebody living with the grieving of the grieving families of somebody who had died. We also excluded the wounded, which in retrospect was probably not a good idea, or we should have had a separate center for the wounded because they were really left out of the loop of a lot of things that were being offered to the families at the time.

So that was a very interesting two briefings a day, because you didn't really know who was going to show up. We had the Secretary of the Army, we had the Secretary of the Navy, we had the Joint Chiefs of Staff show up. We had the spouses of the Joint Chiefs of Staff come almost everyday. Mrs. Rumsfeld came over. At our second site visit, Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz (phonetic) met the families out at the site visit. That was the following Saturday, so that was the 21st, 22nd.

We had Miss America, the brand new Miss America. The General would only relinquish the microphone, he only relinquished it a couple of times. One was to Congressman Moran, who's the representative for Arlington, and that was a mistake, because Congressman Moran talked about retribution. When you're grieving you don't talk about retribution. We didn't even know he was going to talk about it. That was a mistake.

He also let Miss America sing God Bless America and she lost it during her time in front of the microphone, so that wasn't very good, because having somebody breakdown in front of the families wasn't, wasn't good.

Mrs. Cohen showed up, I mentioned earlier. Linda Carter, they came

Q. (37:52) Wonder Woman.

A. Came over, she's a local and she came over. She'd come nine or ten times to be there with the families. Just talking to them and provide just another little shoulder to cry on. And of course we had all the senior enlisted advisors had all come over.

We just, you know, basically became the gathering place. It didn't matter who you were or what you were, you know. Finally Secretary Rumsfeld came over in the last week, and Senator Warner came over. Senator Carnahan came over. Mrs. Powell, Secretary of State had come over. Mrs. Cheney came over, again just to be there with the families.

They didn't want, one of our guidelines was, you know, no media, no press, no television, no nothing. Whatever happened on the second floor was sacred and none of them, that was fine with them. They were just coming over to be with the families, which was interesting, and share their sorrow with them.

October 11th 2001 was the Pentagon Memorial Service. It was designed for two things. One, it was designed to share the Pentagon's grief, or the world's grief with the families and the families became the centerpiece and, secondly, it was to have the Pentagon employees as a whole, whether civilian, military or contractor to allow them to grieve and move on. The Secretary, in my opinion, decided he had to pick a date, you know, and they'd stuck in the ground, and we will need to move forward from that, even though the families didn't. We did.

Twenty-two hundred family members, friends, all from across the country or around the world—we had a couple of, one lady that was killed on the airline was from Australia. Another was from

Ethiopia and of course, China, and American Airlines actually flew in the Chinese families, family members for that one. So we had basically a worldwide audience.

The family members were originally given only 8 seats and then it went up to fifteen and then it went up to as many as the family members wanted. As long as the family members selected was probably next of kin. We had one family bring sixty from Iowa. That was Mrs. Hymel. All flown in, Department of Defense expense and all put up by the USO, or the Red Cross, so one or the other. They were bussed over on the day of the memorial service. They were put in the very private section up front where they actually, members of Congress were sitting behind them on the lower parade field and we were sitting out basically it's the River Entrance Parking Lot.

I can give you a tape of the Memorial Service. And then after the memorial service we brought everybody back to the Sheraton and we had a huge reception. So it got everybody a chance to meet, meet each other, or families to basically have the opportunity to relax before they pushed on. Other families had actually planned their funerals or memorial services around the Pentagon memorial service. So once the family members came, you know, they only came once. Didn't have to come back twice.

The memorial table that you'd mentioned earlier in the Sheraton became a real focal point for family members to show what their loved ones were about. How they spent their life. What they did and happened to be doing in the Pentagon. Or the fact that they had come from the Hoffman Building one day and they didn't walk out again, or they came from a local contracting firm and didn't go back again. There was this huge meeting with General Moda (phonetic). A lot of those people were only there just for a day.

Some of the interesting stories about the attack that day, one lady said her sister and her were having coffee at 9:30 and eight minutes later her sister's dead. One guy walked –

(cell phone goes off – brief interruption)

The memorial table again became a focal point. One family member stood up one time and said could “we have a place where we can put our loved ones pictures,” especially since they were coming over everyday. So we got the biggest American flag we could find from Naval District Washington and put it up on the Sheraton wall and then we, the Sheraton very elegantly laid out the table in the form of the American flag. When you looked at it, they had laid out for the stars, white napkins and then they folded the blue napkins, so as you placed your items—we had flowers donated just about every day, so we placed the flowers on the table, or they could do what they wanted to.

When you did have your special visitors, or your VIPs or whatever come, that was the first place we took them. This is the memorial table. These are the actual people that are either missing or positively identified and had died. And that became a very solemn time when Mrs. Cheney, for example, would walk down the table and actually take a look at it. You could visualize what the family member sitting in the audience was feeling and the fact that their loved one was gone forever.

From September 13th to October 11th when we finally closed down the Sheraton on October 12th, one of the hardest things was to sit down everyday, or call everyday, either calling Armed Forces Institute of Pathology over, located up in Walter Reed as well as the DNA Lab up in Rockville, which I actually had a chance to go tour, or Dover and find out exactly positive identification of remains, and how much of the body was left.

Some of the family members wanted to know, if when they started to move the bodies to Dover, should they wait. Should they sign a release form and go ahead with the funeral. The reason

being if there was only going to be sixty percent of the body should they wait for the remaining pieces to be found by DNA?

In one instance the child was positively identified from a bone in the chin. In another case a lady was identified from a piece of skin. So AFIP and the DNA Lab were doing everything they could to do positive identification as rapidly as they can, but not necessarily creating the whole body to be put in the casket.

Many of the family members chose to go ahead and waive their right and go ahead with the funeral. Others still waited. They waited 'til the bitter end. We had five not identified, and that decision was made on November 12th to go ahead, November 12th, right before Thanksgiving, to stop positive identification. There was just nothing to be found of these five people. No matter how hard they had tried. They tried hairbrushes, they tried blood samples. The FBI went and flew to Colorado, Washington State, California, Texas just to receive old specimens. If one woman had happened to have a biopsy and it was located in Colorado, the FBI went and got that from the hospital or from the doctor and brought it to the DNA lab so that they could try to do positive identification.

One child was unidentified. That was, if you're under the age of three your body just basically dissipates and that was on the airplane, and then we had four others not identified, one woman and three men. Those families are still today fighting the state of Virginia for a death certificate, since there's nothing left of the—so that's just one of the hard things about that.

But again, positive identification of remains became critical after search and recovery efforts had ended, and you know the fire was out and the talk about already rebuilding the Pentagon really bothered the families while they're waiting to find out for sure, you know, did my love one really die? Did they—many of the questions we answered over and over again in the first week was

“Are you sure they’re not in the hospital?” “You sure they didn’t get moved someplace else?”

“Are you sure—?”

And we said, “Look, all the hospitals have been searched for all these people.”

A couple of families tried to go to each hospital just to check and see, and we told them no, don’t do that. Several, some of the family members wanted to go out to Dover and we said, “No, you can’t get out to Dover. It’s just impossible. There’s just too much going on and you don’t want to do that.”

We had to stand in front of the family members—I say we, General Van Alstyne and I—had to stand up in front of the family members and say, “Do not open the coffin.” Do not open the coffin, because 1) of the percentage of remains; 2) many of them had been badly burned to the point where in one of the cases in the DNA Lab, the body had calcified. So every time they would try to take a sample off it, it would crumble. Convincing family members do not, you know just do not open, do not put that image in your mind for the rest of your life. Keep the way your spouse or your son or daughter looked in your memory and in your heart, but don’t destroy it by doing that.

Q. (49:09) Did they all listen to him?

A. A couple didn’t, and I really think they were sorry after the fact, that they shouldn’t have done that. And we encouraged Dover to seal the caskets, and especially put on there, you know, to seal the casket. Now things were a little bit different when it finally when to the mortuary and the, or the mortician and they may want to view it, do it that way. In some people’s mind they thought, you know, is it really my loved one in there? They’re just not coming back.

October 12th we shut down the Sheraton. We shut down the Pentagon Family Assistance Center, so it was time to tell the families that we still want to be resource and referral for you, but we can't continue to hold their hands like we had everyday. The Secretary again decided we need to move on and that's one of the things we did. But the Office of Family Policy decided and this is Mr. John Malino (phonetic). He was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. Because of what we had done at the Sheraton and because the families still needed a lot of assistance, we had not finished positive identification even though everybody, you know, the list had been researched by then knowing that these people are missing and presumed dead, that we needed to set up a satellite office. Not as big as what we had at the Sheraton, but something that the families can still get counseling support, Chaplain support, legal support. Those kind of things. So they found an office space in the Polk Building. The Navy had actually moved out of that about three weeks before, and so we set up a very small room called the Pentagon Family Assistance Referral and Resource Office, otherwise known as the FARRO, and we set up a three week operation. BGEN Spivey, who'd been a deputy Commander, come over and was basically there as the Director.

We provided, a few families had actually come in and wanted some resource and referral support. The Red Cross was still, you know, sending out money, our grants and meals, fed us very well everyday, very nice, actually. And it's very interesting too that the Navy had moved back into the building, because you know, of losing all their office space. One of the things that we noticed was we became a kind of sanctuary for those Navy officers. Bonnie Moorhouse (phonetic) had come down one day and she goes, "I've got a few of my officers about ready to crack up."

I said, “Well bring them on down,” you know, “The Red Cross has got all this geedunk here we can eat that,” they can eat that. But more importantly, as they’re walking through this tiny office space, we had counseling books set up and we had, you know, all kinds of different little, little things, but pieces of paper that they can very quietly walk away with, without anybody really noticing. So that became kind of an interesting side bar to what we were doing with the families. We also were able to help Pentagon employees, because again as I said, at the Sheraton we didn’t want to mix up victims, wounded and others together. So that was interesting.

For three weeks we basically worked putting together a resource and referral guide so we could send out to the families. We also worked nation wide with the family support centers, depending on what the service is called.

We tracked down where the family members lived, whether it be here in the DC area or if they were on you know, American Airlines flight and they were in California somewhere. And we did two things. One, we married up the closest family support center and military installation with that family, and made sure that they made contact with that family. So we had one family member who actually ended up moving from Fredricksburg out to Arizona and so we married up those two together. We also took care of American Airlines families in that we found through the Office of Victims of Crimes, that the closest counseling area available for them. You know we would point them at FEMA. We would set it up for them as well as you know, Chaplain support if we happened to know their religion. So that became very important to marry those two up.

We also found out—when we were at the Sheraton people would just drop off donations. After the first couple of nights, people were asked to stop bringing food, you know, there’s nothing we could do with the perishable items. But the teddy bears, the quilts, the angels, the pencils, the

books, the American flags, all would show up you know, at the door, and of course, the families would take them off.

When the Sheraton closed down, Congress, the Pentagon, Congressional Districts, churches, every organization, foundation, you know nationwide wanted, was giving things, but they didn't know where to send it. So we also began to become the facilitator of the Brittany Spears' concert, facilitated the United We Stand concert, the Robin Hood Foundation, you know.

Vermont Telephone sent all the families a hundred dollar long distance credit card kind of thing. We also found out protecting the privacy of the families was paramount. We had gained their trust at the Sheraton, and we weren't going to let just anybody gain access to them, and that's what everybody, you know, these foundations and organizations wanted. They wanted to gain access to them. So that became the other big thing to do beside the resource center, referral guide and family support center created a master list of every victim and then their associated family member or primary next of kin, and a Casualty Assistance officer. So as of today I am still the holder of this list, and I could, over four months, I could tell—the White House this morning that, you know, they had a quilt sent to the President from a third grade school, or third graders. Should we give it to an individual, and I said, “Yes,” you know, “It should go to, “ so and so. So that became very important.

On September 16th, I was walking up the stairs. I kind of remember these dates because my birthday was September 14th and I didn't tell anybody that, that day. So on September 16th we were walking from the second floor to the third floor, the General and I and I looked at him because he wanted to send me back to the Pentagon and go off and do my normal job, and I said, “You know, Sir, we've gained the trust of the families by now. If you replace me with somebody else, you're going to lose that trust,” because we have sat there now for four or five days and we

had heard everything about these families. Even their most private intimate thoughts, you know, holding their hands when they're crying and things like that. I said, "I've got to stay, General, I can't, we can't do that to them."

And then on October 12th, he said, "No, you've got to go back. Go back to the Pentagon." This was a fight between General Van Alstyne and General Spivey (phonetic). I got in the middle of it, but I said, "No, Sir, I'm not coming back. I need to stay, " you know, "to the next three weeks with the families." Make sure everything gets turned over properly, you know. Still hadn't had positive identification on about half of them, especially American Airlines families. American Airlines by then had had, this is 45 days after the accident, they were expecting the legal, law suits to start, so American Airlines started to pull back as well. So you would lose your continuity with that as well. So I stayed for what we call Phased II from October 12th to November 1st, when we shut down Phase II.

We had gotten out all the information, we created this master list, and then of course, the Office of Family Policy was not equipped to do things operationally. Of course, they write policy, even though they had created the Pentagon Family Assistance Center, they, Mr. Malino was still, you know, we want to, we want to back away from this.

So we went from having hundreds and hundreds of volunteers at the Sheraton and Casualty Assistance officers—I did mention this earlier, but on Saturday September 15th, Admiral Weaver had come over for the first or second time and I looked Admiral Weaver in the eye and I said, "Admiral, you've got to get your Casualty Assistance officers over here." You know the Army had already come in a couple of days before, and I said, "We can't, everybody's got to get the word once. We're not going to fax information over the NBWUC (phonetic), you can put it out with your spin on it to tell the Casualty Officers what was going on. For the first couple of days

they were calling and saying, “can you just send us the briefing points or the briefing papers,” and I’d said, “No, if you want to know the information, you come over here.” And Admiral Weaver saw the light of day. When he saw what we were offering at the Sheraton and on Sunday Navy Casualty moved over, much to the chagrin, but it worked and it worked well.

That’s another thing I forgot to mention. Army Casualty, Navy Casualty, DIA 8th and Contractors this was the first time the services had been faced with what to do with contractors. They didn’t have a Casualty Assistance Officer. No policy was ever written for them to have a Casualty Assistance Officer so all that has been re-written now and each one of them did get a casualty assistance officer.

November 1st, closed down the Polk building, shut down the office, gave away all the food that we could give away, put everything in burn bags and on November 2nd I took a trip up to New York at the invitation of the City of New York to see how they had run their Family Assistance Center, which is basically broken up in three different buildings on the pier as well as FEMA which I mentioned before had satellite offices throughout the actually damaged area of the World Trade Center. So we took the train up there. We spent the day in New York seeing how they set up their system. Actually going down to ground zero when it’s still burning, you know. It’s unbelievable that, you know what we were seeing at the Pentagon, you know, the bad air, but I had to wash my hair three times after visiting the World Trade Center. It was just, you just reeked of all the stuff. Who knows what those people have been breathing.

It’s interesting, in new York, people in New York were still living, in the surrounding, the base like a normal everyday life. Very interesting, but it gave me the perspective on how we had helped our families even though we had a hundred and eighty-four of them, and the one that had

died at the hospital a week later, and the thousands of people that they had to help up in New York.

We had a very, we ended up having a very sophisticated system compared to, you, you know, those poor families up in New York would have to spend days, and days, and days just to get one form filled out, compared to what we were offering in the one-stop support

Came back on November 3rd and I was told to take a few days off, so I flew to Utah to see my parents, because they wanted to touch and feel and make sure I wasn't dead. My parents had moved from California to Ogden Utah a couple of years before, so I went home. Let everybody touch and feel me. Had enough of that and says, "It's time to go home again. " Time to come back to Washington. Came back to Washington and the General realized, General Van Alstyne realized, you know, I wasn't coming back after October 12th, but he also realized that he made a lot of promises that had to be fulfilled and nobody was going, nobody was really going to fulfill them except for, I don't know, I just decided it had to be me. I had all the corporate knowledge. I had all the master lists, I had everything. So I came back the second week of November and started doing, you know, the daily—as I said before we had hundreds and hundreds of people at the Sheraton, down to me, answering phone calls, answering, should call them Congressionals, but the plea from Congress. So and so in my district, or so and so in my state has made these quilts or has made these bears or made these ornaments, or you know, whatever. How do we get them to the families?

So I created the system, you provide the postage paid package and I'll walk out to the parking lot and I'll put the labels on, or in many cases, they sent them to my apartment and at one point I had, I don't know like fifty boxes of stuff. And you know, take the labels, stick it on there, walk down to the post office and you know throw it in. Even went all the way out to New Carrollton to

AMVETS to go pick up their letters. They sent all the families twenty minute phone cards. So that, protecting the privacy of the families, even CAPT O'Brien knows how important that is. So from mid-November until actually today, that's what I've been doing. Whether it's inviting, getting a request from the White House to take, to find a child for the tree lighting ceremony with the President and Mrs. Bush. I actually ended up finding two and they got to go up and sit with the President and Mrs. Bush and then actually light the tree. Or it it's finding twenty family members to go to the tax relief bill signing with the President. Those people got to go and stand with the President and he signed the bill. Or at the Kennedy Center event or the zoo or you know, whatever. Many, many Americans have found a variety of ways of sharing their grief and their fear in doing something good for the families. You know, I had one lady from Arizona call me up one day and she goes, "I just don't know what to do after September 11th. I was," you know, "distraught and everything. So I started collecting pencils for the children. I can't collect as many as I want for the victims up in New York, because they had no count of the number of children each family member had. Can I send them to you?"

I was like, pencils are really, really hard. How would we send them out? So in the end she sent me, I don't know how many pencils; a thousand pencils. And just about that time I was getting ready to box up the memorial video, and for each one of the families, we promised the families five copies. So I had this nice box so every family with children in it, you know, I threw the pencils in. You know, hopefully they were able to use it.

But the other thing is that I found is people needed just somebody to share their grief with. This lady called me the other night and she said we heard about one of the wounded people and so I've been making this quilt for her for the last three months and how do I get it to her?

I said, “Fine you know, can’t send it to me, but send it to my relief. I’m sure he’ll be happy to get it.” So you know the outpouring of generosity also, going back to Congress, they had to find a way to support their constituents, so, in all I just became a jack of all trades, I guess that is what I’m trying to say.

So January 30th 2002 is my last day, and I head off to command the *Chafee* (DDG-90) that’s being constructed up at Bath, Maine. It will be commissioned probably the following 2003 and then I’ll take her to, right now it looks like the home port will be Pearl Harbor Hawaii. Quite an adventure over the next three years.

As of yesterday I’m homeless and I’ll be homeless for the next two years. I’ll have to get used to eating out of a microwave because I sent all my furniture away.

I didn’t tell you before my father had served in the Air Force for three years during the Korean War, but they actually sent him to Iceland and then I had some other uncles serve in the Air Force and the Coast Guard, so I don’t really have a strong military background. Had a great uncle who served during the Great War and was gassed, and that was his, I guess unfortunate claim to fame. Other than that I have no other military background.

But again it was an honor to serve the families over the last four months. As I mentioned at my awards ceremony a couple of weeks ago, that, you know, a hundred and eighty-four names are engraved on my heart forever, and you know, you’ll never, I’ll never forget. For one thing, that’s one of the things the families asked, that we never forget that their loved one was serving their country, or serving on duty the day that the attack happened and that we never forget their service and sacrifice. Of course I won’t, but I’ll also never forget some of the very haunting moments.

But, General Van Alstyne had asked me during my exit interview the other day, he says, “Well, what did you learn in the last four months?”

And I said, ‘Patience and how to listen.’ Because, and of course, being compassionate, but for me to sit still for twenty or thirty minutes is awfully difficult, and it’s going to be difficult in training pipeline here. But to sit there with those family members and try not to stare them down, but at the same time, hold their hand, listen to them cry. Listen to them tell you their deepest darkest secrets, and listen and then you had to really listen to what they were saying, because somewhere in the tears, or somewhere in their anger, somewhere in anything else, and most of the families are at the anger stage now, you had to find out what they really needed and what they really wanted. Then point them in the right direction, or go grab the Chaplain at the right time, or go grab the lawyer at the right time, or go grab the counselor. That kind of thing. So listening, I was really amazed in the last four months, somebody will call for fifteen minutes and tell you, you know, whatever their story was and then whatever they happened to be offering, so those two items I personally learned through all of this. That’s probably the best.

Talking about working for the Number one, two and three in the Navy, Admiral Clarke told me the other day at this SLO (phonetic) party we’re having at Fort Meyer, He goes, he goes, “You know, Yvette, you’ve been well trained and you’re ready for command with or without this experience,” but he said, “You’re better for this experience. They deserve you.”

Not everyday you know, when the CNO tells me something like that. So that’s the story. Have I answered your questions or -?

Q. (01:08:44) What is your position title. I mean did they ever give it a name, or-?

A. General Van Alstyne was the Director of the Pentagon Family Assistance Center and General Spivey became the deputy Director and then I became the Deputy Director on November 1st and then I became the Director on whatever, November 9th, or whatever it happened to be, so that was the title.

Q. (01:10:08) OK, so CAPT O'Brien is now -?

A. He's the Director.

Q. (01:10:11) He's the Director. OK, and for how long is that? I mean just one --.

A. Yes, One of the things that is important and I was at the Capital last week and Senator DeWater (phonetic) and Senator Allen and Congressman Moran, the Washington Capitals had created this, the spouses had created this calendar and they were giving it to each member of Congress. So they asked me to stand up and say a few words with the Eagle or whatever the Washington Caps, snapshot (phonetic) or whatever standing behind me, and I said, "One of the things the Pentagon had realized in a hard way is that there's unborn children who, we're into this for the next twenty-five years. This is not going to go away in a year or two. This is twenty-five years from now. And as September 11 rolls around next year and as they finish the family memorial or the outside memorial in a few years, it's always going to bring it back to what, what happened that day. So we can't just tell the families, you know in some cases, "see you. Thanks, thanks a lot."

Q. (01:11:17) How did they decide to have CAPT O'Brien relieve you?

A. He called me one day, and the Navy, Meg Faulk (phonetic), said the Director of the Office of Family Policy had called Admiral Ameral (phonetic) —I'm stuck now, hang on—anyway looking for, to find somebody to relieve me because she knew that somebody would have, this is a daily job, and he I guess, maybe since he'd already been recalled back to duty, Navy Casualty called him and asked if he wanted to try. He called me and I said, "You're O-6 and it's a lot of scutt work. A lot of sitting on the floor putting labels down, or a lot of, you know, making phone calls, or you know tracking down the Pentagon Chaplain or whatever else, so you may or may not really want to do this.

He goes, "OK, so you think I'm under-qualified for the job." (everyone laughs)

I said, "No sir, " and then Meg interviewed him a couple weeks later and decided yes. You know he already knew of half the families, at least all the Navy families.

Q. (01:12:27) I was just wondering if it was because of the tie in of his position –

Q. (another) At Dover.

Q. (First one) Did you have much interface with him? Did you know him in that position?

A. No, not at all. My main point of contact was CAPT Glenn Wagner. He was our background, AFIP Medical Examiners office.

Talking to him and Penny Rodriguez became a daily event when we were at the Sheraton.

Q. (01:12:59) You had mentioned that you had counseling for the, I don't know what the other, the SPRINT Team, was there any interface with that through the Family Assistance Center?

A. No, not at all. Walter Reed and Colonel Bill Hewlett (phonetic) had brought his own counseling staff.

Q. (01:13:17) That was mainly the army.

A. Uh huh—no, Army, Air Force, it was a complete joint operation.

Q. (01:13:24) Is the SPRINT TEAM -- or is that just Navy?

Q. (another) Navy.

Q (01:13:26) SPRINT is just Navy. You mentioned civilian contractors. Did I understand correctly, you said, they were assigned a CACO?

A. Yes.

Q. (01:13:37) Is that going to become written DOD policy?

A. Yes.

Q. (01:13:47) And this is the unique situation where you had actually civilian airline passengers were they also given -?

A. No, but they were given, when we were setting up the memorial service, we went and protocol offices from all the services went and asked for volunteers. Those volunteers became American Airlines families escort officers for the memorial service. And they've also become their conduit for, if there's a question, they'll email me and I would email the answer back, but over the last three weeks or so since we've been trying to get, sorry, should have told this before, we started a family web site. With all this information coming in there had to be a way to push out information to the families so we created the United in Memory website and I can show you what it looks like. So the families can go at their leisure and pull up whatever information. We

didn't have to keep on calling them and contacting them. For the last, basically right before Christmas and now, you know, we're talking to the families you know just as much as I did in the very first weeks, you know, I've been doing as well. I also had three wonderful volunteers that were at the Sheraton, who stayed with me, and you know the intimacies of the families as well, and CAPT O'Brien will tap into that resource as well. So, so the civilians, that policy has already been changed and it was also a very big shock to the services.

And what was very interesting was NAVSEA (phonetic) had had their five, some of them were contractors, some of them were employees, in a blocked (phonetic) program on airlines when it went in and they wouldn't tell us for a long time, who they were. Which didn't make any sense, so eventually that got taken care of, you know.

If the program is going to be, reside with NAVSEA (phonetic) not necessarily with those people.

Answer your question?

Q. (01:15:38) The 800 number, are you aware of any confusion with that where people who had been at the Pentagon are now looking for a way to muster in called that number by mistake.

Have you had any -?

A. So many 1-800 numbers went out that first night, you know, even I tried to call, even though I'm at the Pentagon, you know worked at the Pentagon for the Secretary of Defense, you didn't, weren't sure if you were suppose to be, have a 90 locator number If you could call on that as well, if somebody's trying to track you down that way.

It was very interesting. You've got, each one of the services had their 1-800 number and the Army over here at Fort Myer, Army Families Community and Support Center had started up their own casualty office. Actually I ended up shutting that down, so they had a 1-800 number.

And so basically, by the end of the second day or third day we had to tell everybody else to shut their 1-800 numbers down and we'll need to concentrate—so we got the phone calls for, you know, calling about the same person in ten or 15 times or we also got the, you know, “I want to join the military.” (everyone laughs) So we started having all these 1-800 number all over the place and –

Q. (01:16:52) It went with your recruitment outreach job.

A. Yes, that worked real well. (laugh) So yes there was a lot of confusion at first and then when we finally got CNN to put the right phone number on, because the first time they reversed two of the numbers, and then of course the flood of phone calls continued. Continued all the way 'til probably oh about the third week. And then we started seeing, you know, not everybody was calling in the middle of the night anymore.

The 1-800 number stayed activated until the 31st of December. So that's how a lot of people were finding me. Eventually if they started down the list of services we were offering, eventually they got down to my phone number. It's gone now. So, they won't be able to find me anymore.

Q. (01:17:41) Did you and the General have daily meetings?

A. Yes.

Q. (01:17:46) How did you plan and strategize what you were going to do as it progress?

A. As we got a lot of assistance from, of course Meg Faulk who every time there was a major casualty issue, Secretary Commerce's plane went down, MC bombings, the Cobar (phonetic) Towers and stuff like that, her office responds to it. But she also had a close relationship from

the, with the National Transportation Safety Board. And in their what they do, one, is gather people together as quickly as you can so that the families have a place to go. Make sure you do brief them at least once a day. You know, we ended up doing twice a day. And the General started to think well, you know, of course, we need to have daily meetings, so the first night we had probably, you know, three hour meetings. That's September 12, and then we, the next morning we would have an hour, hour and a half meeting where you brought all the basically, their policy makers together. Sat around the table and we had a guy there that does operations, a logistic officer was an Air Force major, we basically had, I can't use that term, basically he took care of anything we needed. Buses and food and hotel rooms and you name it. Operations, you know, General would say, you know, "Take care of this" and off the Air Force Colonel would go off and do.

The dynamics around the table was interesting because again they were all policy makers out of the Office of Family Policy and as Mr. Malino (phonetic) started to see things were shaping up at the Sheraton and the General had control, and I'd run around and do a lot of things, he started pulling those civilians out, and so our core team started to shrink, down to maybe only five or six people actually being the brain of the organization. Then we got to the point where we didn't need, you know we got to the second and third week, we didn't need meetings anymore unless it was something really going on, because as the General had mentioned, it's almost like (Unintelligible 01:19:51) now it was, because we had to go, we had to go do, each of us had to go through a counseling session. So they brought these special people in from San Jose and they sat us down and asked us in a group session, you know how we felt. Were we doing OK, and you know things like that.

And one of the guys mentioned and said, you know, “The only way this whole thing would have worked, is divine intervention.” We ended up becoming basically one brain. You know we created this cocoon and I could tell somebody to do something because the General wanted it done, or I thought it should be done or whatever else and it just, it got done. You didn’t have to check up. You didn’t have to do all this normal things. We probably broke every policy there ever was. That’s why they’re rewriting it today. And truthful, I probably broke the law several times, too. By the law, you know, one day they’re going to come and get me and throw me in Leavenworth, I’m sure. But if we didn’t do –

Q. (01:20:46) We’ll let you listen to your tapes.

(laughter)

A. But if we hadn’t you know, just gone with the flow, you know, just picked up the phone and if I had to yell at a general to get something done, you know, that’s just the way we did it.

Whatever was in the best interest of the families. So we would take the advice of the people around the table. Figure out what was in the best interest of the families and where to go in the next step, And then once we had created this brain trust, you know, we were on automatic pilot until we closed down on the 12th. So.

Q. (01:21:21) Where do you get your strength from, because it had to be very hard at times.

A. One, being a Christian and two being, you know, serving at sea so often, you just know how to make, make things happen. And I, I’d gained the trust of the General, you know after the first few days. Gained the trust of the families and so I could make a decision based on their interest.

You know what was the right thing to do. I think, you know, sea experience probably played a lot into it.

Q. (01:22:00) And your family, your husband's in Virginia Beach?

A. My husband is a Navy Reservist, Commander [REDACTED] and he works at (Unintelligible 01:22:08) in Dam Neck, Va. He's also got a sixteen hundred on Merchants, Mariner's license, so he instructs at the Marine Safety International Ship Simulator and for SURFLANT in Norfolk. My daughter's eleven and matter of fact she was born when Iraq invaded Kuwait so that was an interesting time. And she goes to, she's in 6th grade and goes to Corporate Landy (phonetic) Middle School. She's eleven going on 21 some times. I have a sister and her family who live in Oregon. That's about it.

Q. (01:22:46) If you said I didn't catch it, what influenced you to join the Navy's college program in college.

A. Going to school in Utah and not being Mormon and at the time computers, computer program was the big thing and even though I got my degree in Computer Information Systems, I was not interested in really doing that. I had worked at a Savings and Loan before that so I thought maybe I'd use the degree for banking. My uncle said one day, he says, "Well, why don't you consider the military?" So I went over to Hill Air Force base and talked to the Air Force Commission Officer, I guess like a Sessions. And he said, "You don't join the Air Force. There's nothing the Air Force will offer you, you know, you're a woman. Go to the Navy. The Navy's making some changes." So I went down to the ROTC unit and signed up and they sent me to the Naval Science Institute six-week wonderful program with the Marine guys yelling at you

everyday. And my first trip to Newport, that was exciting. You know at first I thought patriotic duty and then I got my first class cruise on the *John Hancock* and there's two, of course we had to go in pairs, so two midshipman together, but the first midshipman didn't want to stay after the first week, because we had got sent out during hurricane Diana and she got really sick. She was not happy. So she got off, and so basically I was the only midshipman aboard, the Captain let me have the run of the ship. So I got to do all the things that an ensign was getting to do. Drive the ship, you know, steam in formation well that was after the hurricane had passed over. And so, love the surface Navy and then I said I never want to sit behind a desk. You know, there's no way. So patriotic duty became more of a, you know, your taught, you know, from the day your commissioned as an ensign, command at sea, command at sea, you know. And it became the focal point to that first wonderful sea tour.

Q. OK, thank you.

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