

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CDR Carol O'Hagan
CDR Karen Loftus
CDR Robert Sawyer

Interviewer's Organization:

Naval Historical Center
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Interviewee:

CDR Paul E. Gonzales, USN(ret)

Current Address:

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Date of Interview:

13 Feb 02

Place of Interview:

Navy Annex

Number of Cassettes:

N/A

Security Classification:

UNCLAS

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

Subject Terms/Key Words: Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; triage; evacuation; Navy Command Center; Survivor; Medical Care; Pentagon evacuation

Abstract of Interview:

Interviewee Information: CDR Gonzales was born in ██████████, California and attended Catholic grammar and high school. He came to the Navy via the NROTC scholarship program. He applied as a lark. He attended the Citadel, graduated and commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy. When he was a midshipman in the early 70's they did real firefighting with diesel fuel in a blockhouse. He was commissioned in 1976. His first ship was the *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) the command ship out of San Diego. He spent tours in Operations and Engineering. He did a follow-up tour on the *USNS Navasota* as the OIC of the Communications detachment spending most of this tour in the Indian Ocean for the Iranian hostage crisis. They were in the Straits of Hormuz when the helicopters were outbound from Desert One. He then went to the Saudi Arabian Naval Expansion Program in San Diego. This was the boot camp and decelerated A school heavy into English, basic mathematics and engineering. He was there a year and went to Naval Amphibious Base Coronado to be one of the initial instructors for the International Surface Warfare Officer School teaching tactics and operations/communications. He then went to become Commanding Officer of several reserve centers in Altoona, PA and Johnstown, PA. They closed Johnstown and made Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center Evansburg. From there he attended Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA studying financial management. He was supposed to do a payback tour so he became the first military budget analyst in COMNAVRESFOR in New Orleans. From there he was sent to NAVCOMP doing O&M and Reserve Personnel Navy. This was followed up with a tour to the OPNAV O95 Staff. He was there a year when he got a call offering him a fellowship, which he accepted, working for the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense. He retired from the Navy in 1996 and went to finish working for the Senate. He worked for a company called Prometheus doing financial services and support. The company moved from Crystal City to

Patuxent River, MD. He wanted a job closer to home and applied for an analyst position at DIA. He ended up with a budget officer job at DIA.

Topics Discussed:

The staff at DIA had about 15 people. They were located in Room 1C535 in the Pentagon in wedge 2 against the wall between wedge 1 and 2. They were a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF). They had one door, the front door, which opened on to a hallway that went out to the fifth corridor. They had two fire doors that were on the west wall. The wall towards the B ring was a 16-inch block and brick wall next to the A and E Drive. They had a small door in their conference room that opened up into a void. The room had about 70 people in it. They had OSD C3I staff, DIA Military Intelligence Board (MIB) his DIA Comptroller/Budget Office and another office of the Comptroller, which was Force Manpower and Planning. Their office was adjacent to the Command Center. The Command Center was in wedge 1 up against wedge 2 so they shared a common wall.

On 11 Sep it was a beautiful day. They were very busy doing financial close out and getting ready to start a new fiscal year. They were supposed to have moved the week before but had been delayed a week. They were going to move that Thursday so most of the office was boxed up. The C3I and MIB people had already moved. They had gone from 70 people down to about 30 because of the moves.

They got the word that a plane had gone into the World Trade Center. Then the second plane went in. They only had one TV in their office. They had an SES equivalency whose office was against the same wall as the CNO IP Plot in the Command Center. They turned his TV and were watching it. Chuck Sabin who had a meeting at Bolling postponed his meeting so he could watch what was going on. In the room were three of CDR Gonzales' budget analysts, Patty Mickly, Carl Tepe and Shelly Marshall. They were watching TV with Chuck. CDR Gonzales got a call to send one of his people down to the new space to watch the locksmith who was installing their new locks. He picked up the paper he was working on for Patty Mickly, got up and walked out of his office. He walked past Chuck Sabin's office and saw Patty sitting in a chair talking to Carl Tepe and decided to put the paper on her desk rather than disturb her. He went to tell Chris that she had to go watch the locksmith. The exterior of the room had offices and conference rooms but the interior of the room was mostly cubicles. They had 80-inch high cubicle furniture. He was probably about 30 or 40 feet away from Patty and Mr. Tepe. He talked to Chris and told her what she had to do. He laid the paper on Patty's desk and he heard a sound. It was an ugly sound. He could feel his body tense. A blast of air and heat hit him from behind. He watched things go flying past him. He was standing on the far side of a cubicle.

His first conscious thought was that he was alive. He didn't think he was going to come out of this one. He looked at his hands and the palms and some fingers looked like a vegetable scraper had scraped them. He heard screaming. Kathy was screaming, she was on fire. Most of the false ceiling had blown away, and what was left was on fire. A piece of the ceiling had fallen on Kathy. She was hitting with arms but it kept rocking back and forth across her back. He crawled over to her because they were both on the ground. He batted the tile away with the back of his hands. He had burn marks across his knuckles from knocking the fire off her.

He called out, "Who do we have here?" He went to the fire doors. The emergency light had come on. It got dark fast, going from a light gray to a black billowing smoke. They were about

two feet above the ground. The black smoke came down to about a 12 inch level and then went back up to a 2 foot level. The fires around them everywhere gave them light. The tall cubicle furniture had protected them. The cubicles got moved around 5-10 feet. He told them where the fire doors were but the furniture was blocking all the doors. Two people from that side of the room got out, LTCOL Dan Hooten and Lance Hulinson.

He gathered everyone together and they started screaming for help. (Some rescuers have reported hearing screaming, this may have been the screaming they heard. CDR Gonzales reports that he has been told that the people who were killed, died in a nanosecond and had no time to scream). He told them that they were going to have to get out on their own. One girl, Chris Morrison is a reservist and had actually stood watch in the Command Center. She got hit and thrown under a desk. She ended up with 24 staples in her head, she says she got scalped. Kathy had burns across her neck, shoulders, her left arm, and her hand. Dave Lanigan came out the best and stayed really low the whole time. Patty ended up with a sprained ankle. Aaron tore his knee and had to have knee surgery because he jumped on a desk and over a partition landing on debris. His desk shoved Clarence. He followed Mark out. Mark got knocked down and thrown under his desk.

CDR Gonzales initially thought it had been a bomb. The thought of a plane getting to the first floor of the C ring of the Pentagon is not conceivable. He crawled onto a desk and stood on the desk to look over a partition. He is now at the 80-inch level with his head. He was looking for an exit. It was hot like putting your head in an oven. He saw fires everywhere and black smoke. He wanted to crawl under a desk and go to sleep but knew he wife would never forgive him if he died. He went back to check on the others and started to look for an exit.

In their mind they were in a canyon and the open side of the canyon toward the first wedge was open fire. They found out later that everyone else was dead within the first second or so. He came towards the far end of the furniture. They can't see and as far as they know it's all solid furniture. He found a tunnel through the furniture. He didn't want to get stuck in the tunnel so he kneeled up and realized there was a desk in the furniture he could crawl across. (They were in there 20 or 25 minutes total).

One of the things that motivated him toward the door was Dave Lanigan told him he didn't think they were going to get out of there. They were a little complacent because the fire wasn't on top of them, they were safe. As far as they knew there was fire on the other side of the all the partition, you could see the glow, so they weren't motivated to move.

When CDR Gonzales cleared the furniture he called the other people. They came up to the hole and waited on the other side of the hole calling to him. Chris and Kathy were the first people to the whole. Chris looked at the hole and told Kathy that CDR Gonzales couldn't have gone through the whole. Kathy told him to get through the hole. CDR Gonzales was worried that he was leading them into danger but the air was better on the other side of the partition. Out of the corner of his eye he sees a gray object. He was looking at the bottom of a dumpster. There had been a dumpster right outside their front door that people had been throwing large things in. He knew that was where the door was. He crawled closer to the door and he could see natural light bouncing off the floor. He knew they had an exit. Like a little column of ants they came crawling out the front door. The dumpster was actually holding up part of the wall so it made a tunnel.

They were not able to stand up until they had four or five steps from the Fifth Corridor. Larry Mangan who was the other supervisor in the room greeted them at the Fifth Corridor. He had been in the center courtyard when the plane hit. They had 18 people in the room when the plane hit, 7 died, 6 required hospitalization.

When the plane hit there was a blast wave that became more powerful as it went through the building. Wedge 1 had the new blast-proof windows. As a result a lot of the energy that should have been dissipated in wedge 1 was channeled into wedge 2. The blast came through their office and put the 8-10 foot hole in their conference room area. There was smoke and fire coming out that door. Larry Mangan had tried to use fire bottles to get into that hole. They were pulling people out of the next hole over in the Command Center. He guesses the fire wasn't as bad over there. Larry Mangan thought he could do the same thing in their area, but the fire was too ferocious. Their front door was a two-inch thick wood door with a steel frame. It was gone. It was blown down the hallway somewhere. If that door had not blown he would probably have been dead from the overpressurization. These two holes gave a chimney effect. Their ceiling also got blown away. With the false ceiling it was 8 to 10 feet to the ceiling. With the false ceiling gone it was a 20-foot ceiling. The smoke had someplace to go.

They came out into the center courtyard. He was helped out there by two people. When he got to the center courtyard he collapsed. A woman asked him his name, wife's name and phone number. An Army doctor came up to him as he lay on the ground. Dave Lanigan got him so water. They put an IV in him. People started screaming that another plane was coming. That was the first time he knew the Pentagon had been hit by a plane. They put him on a stretcher and took him out by the Child Care Center and across the street. They put him in an ambulance and took him to Walter Reed Army Hospital. There were two litter cases and a walking wounded in the ambulance.

When he got to Walter Reed he was unconscious. His airway had closed and he was turning blue. They performed an emergency tracheotomy. His first conscious moments were waking up to his wife's voice. She had received a phone call from a Navy doctor informing her that he was at Walter Reed. He was in a neck brace. All he could see was that his hands were bandaged and he had one IV in him. The two-star general who is in charge of the hospital visited him. He didn't know that he had three IV's in him and a central line. He had a feeding tube and oxygen going into his tracheotomy. His lungs were in bad shape.

They told his wife that he had a 90% probability of getting worse in 36 hours. Thursday morning at 0200 he crashed. The lining of his lungs sloughed off. His lungs stopped working. They put him on a respirator. He was heavily sedated while on the ventilator. Laura Bush came to visit him Wednesday night. She said some words of encouragement to his wife and they took two pictures but he doesn't remember any of this.

On Saturday he started to come around and on Sunday he tried to stand. He was released from ICU and put in a MCU (Medium Care Unit). He believes Walter Reed Army Hospital saved his life. The Navy treated him like he was on active duty. Capt. Judy Logeman or her petty officer came to see him every day. The Secretary of the Navy, CNO, and VCNO all came to visit him. He was in the hospital until 25 Sep. He came out of ICU after 10 days.

He went to all the funerals of his coworkers. Everyone was buried at Arlington except one person who was buried in West Virginia.

When he was in the hospital someone told him it took a long time for them to identify the bodies of his coworkers. He took that to mean that they had burned and he had let them burn. He found out later that wasn't the case.

He has two people from his 13-person staff that went to work on 12 Sep at Bolling Air Force Base. They kept the office running.

In his office there was a line of death. If you were on one side you died and on the other side you lived. It was a matter of feet and seconds. His staff now feels 11 Sep was their luckiest day because they had 2 chances to die that day. For every good there was a bad. The partitions protected them from the blast but they trapped them. The ceiling being on fire was bad, but having been blown away enough gave the smoke someplace to go. Water coming in on the floor was good, but with live wires near the water it was bad.

Because he went to Walter Reed Army Hospital he doesn't have the medical bill problems some of the other people are having.

Abstracted by:
CDR Carol O'Hagan
15 FEB 02

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Unclassified

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Transcript of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

CDR Gonzales was born in ██████████, California and attended Catholic grammar and high school. He came to the Navy via the NROTC scholarship program. He applied as a lark. He attended the Citadel, graduated and commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy. When he was a midshipman in the early 70's they did real firefighting with diesel fuel in a blockhouse. He was commissioned in 1976. His first ship was the *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) the command ship out of San Diego. He spent tours in Operations and Engineering. He did a follow-up tour on the *USNS Navasota* as the OIC of the Communications detachment, spending most of this tour in the Indian Ocean for the Iranian hostage crisis. They were in the Straits of Hormuz when the helicopters were outbound from Desert One. He then went to the Saudi Arabian Naval Expansion Program in San Diego. This was the boot camp and decelerated A school heavy into English, basic mathematics and engineering. He was there a year and went to Naval Amphibious Base Coronado to be one of the initial instructors for the International Surface Warfare Officer School teaching tactics and operations/communications. He then went to become Commanding Officer of several reserve centers in Altoona, PA and Johnstown, PA. They closed Johnstown and made Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center Evansburg. From there he attended Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA studying financial management. He was supposed to do a payback tour so he became the first military budget analyst in

COMNAVRESFOR in New Orleans. From there he was sent to NAVCOMP doing O&M and Reserve Personnel Navy. This was followed up with a tour to the OPNAV O95 Staff. He was there a year when he got a call offering him a fellowship, which he accepted, working for the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense. He retired from the Navy in 1996 and went to finish working for the Senate. He worked for a company called Prometheus doing financial services and support. The company moved from Crystal City to Patuxent River, MD. He wanted a job closer to home and applied for an analyst position at DIA. He ended up with a budget officer job at DIA.

Topics Discussed:

Q. (16:18) So where were you located in the Pentagon?

A. When I got to the Pentagon we were located in Room 1C535, which was in wedge 2 against the wall between wedge one and two. We were a SCIF, a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility. As a result of that our access was extremely limited. We had one door, our front door which opened onto a hallway which went out to the fifth corridor. We had two fire doors that were on the west wall, than a wall attached next to the D ring and then our wall toward the B ring was actually a 16 inch block and brick wall that was next to the A&E drive, which is like a little driveway between the C ring and the B ring. We also had a small door in our conference room which opened off into a void, basically. The room at the time had probably pretty close to about 70 people in it.

Q. (17:48) So were you in wedge, when you were in Wedge 2, that was not renovated, yet, right?

A. Not totally.

Q. (17:53) But you were next to the renovated section.

A. We were next to the renovation section. We had 70 people. We had some people from the OSD, C3I staff. We had somebody from DIA called the Military Intelligence Board, “men in black” they always called themselves. They kind of ran community management for the CHETA

(Phonetic). Then we had my people which were Comptroller Budget Office, and then we had another office of the Comptroller which was the Force Manpower, and Force Manpower and Planning, I guess.

Q. (18:47) For the tapes purposes could you explain where your office is located in relation to the Command Center?

A. Our office was adjacent to the Command Center. The Command Center was in wedge 1 up against wedge 2, so we shared a common wall. Our wall was adjacent to the Command Center probably started right about where the Intell Plot was. In back, because you've got to look between wedges C & D, or between C ring and the D ring, obviously we were the C ring at that section of the building. There was a little hallway to our office and then Air War Four to the hallway was either Air Force on the left hand side, walking out of our office, or to the right was actually used by a contractor who was doing renovation work. That had one time been a medical facility, small clinic.

Q. (19:51) Can you tell us about September 11, start with the beginning of the day, what you did that day?

A. September the 11th was a beautiful day. It was just gorgeous, the sky was blue, the weather was beautiful. You could not have asked for a more pretty day. You just couldn't have. We were very busy, September—we're a financial office, we're in end-of-the-year close up, everybody had started a new fiscal year so we're busy to begin with. We were supposed to have moved the week before but we had got delayed because they couldn't fix our alarms and doors in our new

space yet, so we had been moved back a week. We were going to move that Thursday. As a result of that most of our office was boxed up. We have these big, normally we keep things in big, thick heavy binders and all our binders, all our paraphernalia, all our files were pretty much in boxes. Now the C3I staff had already moved. The MIB people had moved, so we had, and we actually had another 5th group in there called our DIA's LAN Support Administrators, so they had a large group. So it kind of, so we had gone from like 70 people down to like 30 and the—everybody was getting ready to move. Everything was boxed up. We were still kind of busy and then we got the word that a plane had gone into the World Trade Center. We're all kind of looking at each other, going like, "This doesn't quite sound right." You don't—one of the guys in our room was a pilot, had been a pilot, he goes, "Nah, this is not right. You don't go flying into the World Trade Center. You just—air corridors aren't that close to fly in there." Then a second plane went in. Well we only had one TV in our office. We had an SES equivalency in our office. He had a small office. His office, actually looking at the diagram is against the wedge 1, wedge 2 wall. I would say his office was pretty much right about against the Intelligence. It was against Plot. I know that for a fact. And so they turned his TV on and they were watching the World Trade Center. Everybody had kind of walked in, looked at for a minute, but we really were kind of busy so most people were kind of just going back to what they were doing. He who was, CHUCK SAVIN who was supposed to be at a 10 o'clock meeting over at BOLLING, postponed it, so he could see what was going on. I guess he had been up in New York. In the room were three of my budget analysts, PATTY MICKLEY, KARL TEPPE, and SHELLY MARSHAL. They were watching television with CHUCK. Interesting what was going on. My office which was right next to CHUCK's, even though I did not, my office did not abut the wedge 1, wedge 2 wall. For some strange reason our wall had like a little bit of, a little

dogleg there. I never did figure out what was in that one space. But my office was against the side toward wedge D, the corner. I was actually the corner office, even though CHUCK's was a little more toward the wedge 1, 2 wall. There was about a five foot knock out coming in our direction.

I got a call asking me to send some of my people down to our new space to keep an eye on the locksmith while he was installing our locks.

I said, "OK." Picked up the piece of paper I'd been working on for one of my people, actually it was PATTY MICKLEY, got up out of my chair and started to walk out of my office. Walked by CHUCK SABIN's office, saw PATTY sitting in a chair talking to KARL TEPPE, and I thought—I have a piece a paper for her—"Oh, I don't want to go in and disturb her. I'll just go put it on her desk, and I'll go tell CHRIS that she has to go." So I kept walking, turned the corner in the cubical. We had cubicles, mostly. The exterior wall had offices, conference rooms, but the interior of the room was mostly cubicles, cubical furniture. We had 80 inch high cubicle furniture. Big tall stuff, big heavy, thick cubicle furniture. Walked up to about the middle of the cubicles, probably not quite halfway, about halfway, mid-point of the room. I was probably right in dead center of the middle of the room.

Q. (25:57) Twenty feet, how many feet were you away from them, from PATTY and Mr. TEPPE and -?

A. Oh, I would say a good 40, 50 feet at the most.

Q. (26:18) OK.

A. Trying to think our distance, as the crow flies it probably would be maybe 30, 30-40 somewhere in there.

Talked to CHRIS, told her she had to go do something. She asked me a question. KATHY CARDERO said something to me. I said something to her. Got the piece of paper, laid a piece of paper onto PATTY's desk and I heard a sound.

I've only remembered the sound the last couple of months. It was, I can't even describe the sound. It was just, it was an ugly sound. I could feel my body tense as soon as I heard it, and I have a flash through my mind, do I tighten or do I loosen? 'Cause sometimes something hits you you're better off being loose then tight, or tight. What am I going to do? And then I got hit from behind by a blast of air and heat. I tell people if you want to know what it was like, crank up your oven to about as high as it will go. Let it sit for about an hour and then stick your hand inside. And that's what it felt like.

If you've ever been on to a beach and got hit by big waves, think about that, but increase it by about ten, fifteen fold. I remember looking and just watching things go flying past me. It was almost like half second, not even a second, and everything just went forward. Just flying and I started flying with them.

I was standing, I was standing on the far side of a cubicle, so the wave would go over a cubicle wall and it hit me from behind. I consider myself extremely fortunate that I didn't eat PATTY MICKLEY's monitor with my head. I had a huge bruise on my head later on, but how that happened I don't know.

My first conscious thought was, "Well I'm alive." The sound and the blast was so bad that I didn't think I was going to come out of this one. I thought it was over. I'm on the floor. I looked down at my hands and the palms of my hands and some of my fingers looked like someone had

got a vegetable scraper and just peeled back a layer of skin and it was all rolled in a nice little curl at the bottom of my palms, and the ones on the fingers were just hanging there. The skin was just hanging there. Looked down and said, "Well, this isn't good." I heard screaming.

KATHY has a healthy set of lungs. She was screaming (he puts emphasis on screaming). She was on fire.

No, I won't say that she was on fire. What happened was the ceiling had blown. We had false overhead, false ceiling and most of it had blown away. What was left up there was on fire. But a piece had fallen on her. She was in the cubicle directly opposite of me. She had been sitting down on the phone and it had fallen on her, almost like a "V" like a little hat. So she was hitting with her arms in the front, but all it would do is rock onto her back and then rock forward again. Because she just kept hitting it back, because the way it was it just kept rocking back and forth across her head, and it was on fire. So I crawled over to her. Somebody asked me why I crawled, because I was on the ground, she was on the ground, you know. It wasn't that far. Crawled over and as I was reaching for the ceiling tile, training from thirty years ago said, "Use the back of your hand." My hand was in mid-motion and I'm hearing, "Back of hand. You need the front." And I batted it with my hands, the ceiling tile and knocked it off her.

She said, something like, "Well, I kind of remembered being on fire," and you know, and then she goes, "I'm not sure about that." We both looked at my hands and you could see the burn marks across my knuckles, knocking the fire off.

I don't know why, again I guess training kicked in, I called out, "Who do we have were?" Got everybody together, started going through my entire list of people trying to find out who we had. Where they were. Went over where the fire doors were.

Q. (32:45) Was it smoky or was it dark in there? How were you able to see? Do you remember?

A. The emergency light had come on. It was, it got dark fast. It went from a light gray smoke to a black billowing smoke. Now we were at about the two foot level. We were either laying or kneeling on the ground and it was coming in heavy. In fact, I don't know what happened but the black smoke had actually come down to about the twelve-inch level and then it went back up to about the two and a half foot level. I guess somewhere a chimney had opened up, and some of the smoke was coming out.

We did have one emergency light come on, which I could see which gave us a reference point of where we were to some extent, and then we had the warm glow, the camp fires around us to give us some other light. We had fire everywhere. We even had a fire that was oh, about the size of a fifty-cent piece. It was maybe Oh, six inches high. Burning jet fuel, that's the only thing I could think of, on a piece of carpet just burning away.

We had been protected by the large furniture, cubical furniture, again it was 80 inches high.

That's pretty tall furniture, big, thick. We had six cubicles on a side, the cubicles were stacked together, you know back to back so it was like a (Unintelligible 34:48) six on each side, and then another one of six. Those cubicles got moved probably around five to ten feet. As heavy as that was, it got moved. The center stack moved a couple of feet and the other one moving a little bit farther. One of the guys was at his desk. His—was looking toward the blast, behind the high partition. His desk went into his belly and just pushed him and his chair backwards.

Q. (35:39) Tell us about the muster, you, did you just, you called out to people and -?

A. Called out to people, went down the list of who we had. Went over to where the fire doors were. Having been an engineer an old habit, you go into a room, you know where the fire trunks

are, escape trunks. It's a bad habit (laugh) I won't say it's a bad habit, it's a good habit actually. They didn't know where the doors were, which to this day amazes me. They didn't know where the fire doors were. Told them where the fire doors were. They wouldn't have done us any good, because in the blast, by moving—there was some furniture on that side of the room, too. The furniture actually shifted down far enough to block all the doors. All the doors were blocked by furniture.

The people on that side of the room, on the far side that got out, there's two of them. LTCOL DAN HOOTEN, who basically crawled up a wall that had been blown half over, crawled up, got out into the D ring and came out. LANCE HULKINSON, who also worked for the other group has no idea how he got out. None whatsoever. If you ask him, he will swear on a stack of Bibles he saw DAN HOOTEN die. He saw DAN HOOTEN engulfed in a fireball. DAN swears he saw LANCE go up in a fireball, but LANCE has not idea how he got out. He was found wandering in the C ring on the other side of the 5th corridor.

Gather everybody together and we started screaming for help, and I told them nobody was going to come get us. We're going to have to get out on our own. I sometimes wonder about the wisdom of that. Should I have had somebody call every couple of seconds, you know, listen, call listen, but I also think—nobody did come and get us.

The—one of the gals, who's also a reservist, she just got selected for Lieutenant Commander, CHRIS MORRISON, had actually stood watch in the Command Center, was with us. She worked for us as a budget analyst. She got hit, thrown under a desk. We think she got hit with something from the ceiling. She ended up with 24 staples in her head. As she says, she got scalped. Her scalp was just a flap.

KATHY had burns across her neck, shoulders, her left arm, her hand. She's still burnt. She just took the bandages off in about the last week to start drying it out.

DAVE LANGAN probably came out the best of us. I don't know why, but he did. He was a big runner, thinks that's part of it. He stayed really, really low the whole time. PATTY PAGUE ended up with a sprained ankle. AARON tore his knee, had to have knee surgery because he had jumped on a desk and jumped over the partition and landed, you know, on the ground and twisted it on the way down I guess, when he, because the ground really wasn't even, because of all the debris that was down there.

CLARENCE HABLING was one of my analysts. He was the guy that got shoved across, got hit in the belly with his desk and just got shoved. He was on the far side of the room, so when the smoke started rolling in, he followed MARK out. MARK got knocked down, thrown under his desk, got up, saw how bad things were quickly.

Q. (40:48) How did you all get out? You mentioned something earlier about a hole?

A. We came out the front door. We actually came out the, I'll get to the front door. It gets better.

Q. OK.

A. Oh believe me, this gets better before it goes on. When we got, when CLARENCE got to the front door, our LAN Ord Administer, they had one, she had sent all the people out, so she was the only one left. She had like eleven people in there working for her. They were all gone. She was behind some partitions, with ceilings and everything. Those were all gone, they PFFFT, blown with fire. She was standing there in the middle of the room, kind of dazed, looking around going (he must have made a face). CLARENCE goes "BUNNIE, we've got to go. BUNNIE

we're leaving come on." (speaker indicates Clarence is talking to her like she is a frightened child) Grabbed BUNNIE and out they went.

I'll get the other guy out, because that's in there. I initially thought it was a bomb. We, yes I know, two planes just went in the World Trade Center, but we still thought it was bomb. The thought of a plane getting to the first floor of the C ring of the Pentagon is not conceivable. Just, Ohhh, we thought it was a bomb. DAVE LANGAN thought it was a bomb. CLARENCE says his thought was, "Oh, what have those engineers done now?" Renovations going like hell, see.

Q. (42:20) Gas leak.

A. Gas leak, who knows. We had been flooded. We had all the pestilence. We had flies from a dead animal that caught in wedge one, so we got little flies that came into our office. We had pestilence, we had flooding. We hadn't had fire, but we solved that problem. The only thing we didn't have was famine.

I crawled onto a desk and stood on the desk and looked over a partition. So I am now at the eighty some odd inch level with my head. Not the wisest move in the world, but I was looking for an exit. It was hot. I got unbelievable hot. Again, turn your oven up and stick your head inside. It was that hot. I saw hell. My vision of hell is not solid fire, but fires everywhere. Not one big fire, just little fires everywhere. That's what I saw. I saw black smoke and fire. That's all I could see, no exit. When I crawled down off the desk, I was now looking under a desk. The thought goes through my mind, it's quiet. It's dark, and go in there and go to sleep, because I don't want to burn to death. But at the same time, I said if I die, my wife will never forgive me. She will haunt me. She will be pissed. She will never forgive me.

I have a mortgage. I've got kids in college, I've got, you know, I can't do this to her. So I'd better get my ass out of here. So I went back, checked on the group and then started looking for an exit.

In our mind, we were in a canyon and the open side of the canyon was all fire. The open side of the canyon was toward the first wedge. We had called out to the people, "Anybody else in here?" Calling for people, never got an answer. Never heard a sound. We found out later that everybody was dead within the first second or so. Everybody died immediately. Most of them died in a nano-second. I was told by one person I tried to kick down a partition. I don't remember that. She also said I moved furniture, started moving furniture, pushing it out of the way trying to find a way through the furniture to the front door. I vaguely remember moving my arms, but that's all. I came towards the fire and furniture, and you have to remember there's black smoke so we can't see very high. I mean we can't, far as we know it's all solid furniture. I found a tunnel. Looked through the tunnel, go, "Hey, there's a tunnel through the furniture." But not being very small, I realized this is not a good time to go get stuck in the hole in the furniture. So I just kind of set back up, and kneed, set kneeling and I realized that there was a desk in the furniture. I could see across it to some extent. So I crawled up on the desk and started crawling across the furniture. What we had thought was a solid wall of furniture, actually had no tunnel, but a flat area I could crawl across. Now it was full of debris and it was long. It was long enough that my whole body was stretched out on it. As I was going over to the other side, trying, you know, to get down off it. I mean it was like, you know, you're laying on this desk, belly first, think of the long way across you're desk. How are you going to get off? You've got debris everywhere, so I just kind of put it into four-wheel drive and just go head first off the desk. I lost my shoe. I had loafers on that day, for some strange reason and I lost a shoe. I decided not to go back for it, but

at the same time I'm thinking of BRUCE WILLIS in "Die Hard" running around with all this broken glass into his shoes. I was going, you know, with my luck I'm now going to find broken glass. I could see it coming.

Q. (47:40) It seems like it was an hour. You know that?

A. You want to know how long it was? We were in there twenty, we were in there twenty-five minutes, twenty, twenty-five minutes.

Q. (47:51) You were in there twenty or twenty-five minutes?

A. The engineers find out and they're going, "No, you couldn't have been there all that time. No you couldn't have. You couldn't be in there that long, you'd be dead."

Yeah, well duh, we came real close, another couple of minutes and we'd been dead. The smoke would have killed us.

Q. (48:09) How do you know it was twenty or twenty-five minutes?

A. Because we came out at ten o'clock. First time we took a look at a clock was ten minutes after ten.

Q. (48:19) I'm going to have to, I have to ask you another question, how do you think that could be? Was there some, some avenue for the smoke that allowed it to dissipate somewhat?

A. We'll get to the smoke because there was some holes.

Q. (48:41) OK.

A. I'm kind of going what I knew at the time, not what I knew afterwards. Well, the things that go across your mind in situations like this, my pastor asked me about it, I said, "No, I wasn't on the floor making a deal with God. " I think I said, "Thank you," right after I realized I was alive, because I really didn't think I was going to come out of that blast. The noise was horrendous, the blast was just –

I'm laying there on the floor and I watch my files around me going up in fire, into smoke.

They're on fire. I'm a financial guy. My thought goes, "Well, I guess the end of the year's not going to be a big deal for me." You know, our files are all going up in smoke, I mean, you know, we, you know.

One of the ladies had taken her blouse off, wrapped it around her face. I look over at her, sans top, next to her is PATTY PAGUE, in all of this insanity, she's sitting there in her dress, with a purse under her arm. She had a death grip on that purse. She came out with that purse.

(everyone laughs)

She came out with that purse. I want you to know that. She drug that purse out.

Q. (50:00 (laugh) And she was glad she did.

A. Oh, my God, and I'm going, "I've got to get out of here." One of the things that helped motivate me toward the door is DAVE LANGAN came up to me and said, "PAUL, this doesn't look real good. I don't think we're going to get out of here."

I'm thinking, "You know something? I think he's right. We've got to find a way out of here, or we're going to die real soon." We had, in retrospect, I think we were a little complacent where we were, because the fire wasn't on top of us. We were safe where we were. The fire was around us. I mean, we were in a little canyon. The fire was on the other side, so, you know, as far as we

knew, it was all fire on the other side of the partitions. You know, you could see the glow every so often or whatever. So I guess they weren't really motivated—they weren't motivated to move.

Q. (51:03) I guess I, the thing that I'm surprised about is the fact that what we've heard is that the smoke was so, so, intense, and –

A. Yes, we were also on the ground.

Q. (51:13) Right, so just that pocket, you were able to stay in that pocket.

A. We were in there, we had when I cleared the furniture I called for the rest of the people. They came up to the hole. I waited and then started all calling for them and the first person to the hole was CHRIS and KATHY. CHRIS looked in the hole. Looked again, told KATHY, "PAUL can't go through this hole. This can't be the exit."

KATHY's exact words were, "Get your skinny ass through that hole now!"

I was very worried that I was leading them into danger, that the air was better on the other side of the partition, of the furniture, because we were actually closer toward where our door had been. Saw them start coming through the hole and I kept crawling toward the front of the room and out of the corner of my eye, I see a gray blob. I have 2200, 2400 vision, Not the best eyes in the world, but then again, I'm only looking from, you know, from a foot to eighteen, twenty inch—we're actually a little bit farther up then. We're probably up in, we're probably good for a whole two feet there. I say two feet, I mean that's before it just went, nothing. You know, you could see through a little bit of it. I could see a wheel and I could see the bottom of a dumpster. Those big plastic dumpsters, you know, that are maybe six feet long by three wide, you know. And we had had a dumpster right outside our front door, where people had been throwing, you know, big

stuff. And I'm going, "That's where the door was. That's where the door is or was. Maybe we can get out. Start crawling closer and closer to the door." As I got to the door I could see down the hallway which is that little hallway you see out to the 5th Corridor and I could see natural light bouncing off of the floor. Natural light is different than any other light, you can tell. I see light. We have an exit. Told them we have an exit and we all, like a little column of ants came crawling out the front door.

They say that the dumpster was holding up part of the wall, so it made a little tunnel. I don't remember. All I know is sunlight, locked on, tracking, PFFFT, head for the sunlight. We all came crawling out. We did not, we weren't able to stand up until we probably had maybe four or five steps from the 5th corridor and we were greeted at the 5th corridor by LARRY MANGIN. He was the other supervisor in the room, except he wasn't he was in the center courtyard when the plane hit.

We had eighteen people in the room when the plane hit. Seven died, six required hospitalizations. You asked about the smoke. When the plane hit, according to my understanding, my people have talked to the engineers, is there was a blast wave, and the blast wave becomes more concentrated, powerful as it goes through the building. It's built up speed. Wedge 1 had the new fancy windows. They're blast proof, but they're blast proof both directions. As a result a lot of the energy that should have been dissipated into wedge 1 was channeled into wedge 2. It came through our office and put the 8 to 10 foot hole in our conference room area, which I could probably show you where it was. It was the corner. There was a stairway here, our conference room is right this there. Right here.

Q. (56:16) Which is for the tapes purposes, it's the, it abuts the right hand corner of the Navy Command Center.

A. Correct.

Q. (56:25) OK. Bottom right corner.

A. Bottom, and there's a little, we're not a hundred percent sure, when exactly it popped out, either in the conference room or the next personal office over, but it came out right there. So there was smoke and fire coming out that door, 'cause LARRY who had been in the center courtyard, LARRY MANGIN, I always had visions, it's slow, remember the FORRESTAL fire with the chief running down the flight deck and planes going up, I had visions of LARRY grabbing fire bottles as he runs through this hole. Real smart you know, a flame-thrower. He tried to use fire bottles to get back in the hole. They were pulling people out of the NAVY hole. I guess the fire wasn't as bad, but they were pulling people out of the Navy hole, so he thought we could do the same on our side. It didn't work. It was just too ferocious.

So we had some smoke coming out that way, and then our front door which is at the end of that hallway there, it was oh, two inch thick wood door, steel frame combination, big solid door. It was gone. Doorframe, door, everything was gone. It got blown down the hallway somewhere. I have no idea where it ended up. And it never dawned on me 'til later that our door was gone. It was just gone. I mean who knows where it ended up. Nobody knows. It was just, the blast blew the door off its hinges. Off the, the door, the whole doorframe and all just got launch on—if that door had not blown, I'd probably'd been dead, from the pressure, or pressurization. It would of put 2000 pounds per square inch on us or something, or a foot. I can't remember what the number was. A foot. I think it was a foot.

Our door got blown, this hole got blown so there was a little bit of a chimney effect. Now I can't speak for the Navy Command Center, but our ceiling had gotten blown away. Unlike your spacious office, we had like an eight, ten foot ceiling. With our ceiling gone we had almost a twenty-foot ceiling on the first floor. So the smoke had someplace to go and it was up there. Again we were, the fire was on the other side of the partitions from us, and maybe because of like the chimney it just kept it a little higher, away from us. So we were protected to a certain extent and there was some water—I'm not sure where the holes, where'd they'd been around.

Q. (59:37) I understand you went to the hospital, didn't you?

A. We came out. We ended up in center courtyard. A nice lady in a blue dress with brown polka dots was very nice. Asking my name, where I worked, phone number, my wife's name and phone number and to this day I've never found her. Tried to, but I couldn't find her. A doctor came up to me, it was an Army doctor, long white coat, the green Army pants with a strip. He said, "I'm sorry I have to touch you, but I've got to see what kind of shape you're in." And he moved me. I was laying on the ground. When I got to the A and E drive, I went through the double doors. Even though I could see all the way down the 5th corridor outside, people go, "Why'd you go to the center courtyard? You could see outside." In my mind I wanted air. Which was just outside the courtyard doors, and also to me the center of the Pentagon was safety. Again, we thought it was a bomb and little did I know.

Somebody helped me to the A ring and a second person helped me, get me com—I was weaker by the second. When we got to the center courtyard, I collapsed. That's when the lady came to help me and the doctor came. They gave me some wa—DAVE LANAGAN got some water and gave me some water. They, somewhere along they gave me some oxygen, or an I—they put an

IV in me, but I'm not sure where. The doctor checked me and people started screaming, "another one is coming. Another plane is coming." That was the first time I knew that we had been hit by a plane.

You know, I'm not very bright, but someone says another plane is coming you can kind of figure it out. "Oh, I guess it was a plane." I did not know at the time that it had come in the first floor. I thought it had come in on the fourth or fifth floor and the fire had come down, and jet fuel had come down the air ducts, because we have these big huge air ducts. I knew where all the air ducts were, and the air ducts happened to have been right behind me where I'd gotten blown so I believed it came down the air ducts. I knew where all the air ducts were going up to the fifth floor.

They put us on a stretcher, put me on a stretcher. Put me on one of those little carts that we have and took us out to the, by the childcare center. I didn't know it. One of my guys told me, "Yes, they laid you down for a second. Picked you back up and then moved you across the street." Because they were again worrying about another plane coming and they wanted us to move farther away from the building.

For some reason, I've yet to figure out a hundred percent why, they put me in an ambulance going to WALTER REED. I don't know if it had anything to do with the fact that I was retired. I found that the lady had basically moved, the ambulance driver was a sergeant. Going back to the emergency room and talking to some of the people they said that as soon as the plane, the first plane hit, or that the plane hit us, they scrambled the ambulance to the Pentagon, so you know, probably the good Army person she was, she came from WALTER REED, she's going to go back to WALTER REED. So they tried to take me back to WALTER REED. Well, they did take me back to WALTER REED.

They had three people, two litter cases and then like a walking wounded get in. MYRAM COOPER was one of my guys that got hurt in his knee, in fact he was helping LARRY with the fire bottles, after he'd gotten out. Got in, and they said, "oh, no, no, no, we've got this guy that's even worse." So they put him in, on a handboard, and off we went to WALTER REED. And that poor sergeant, you have to admire them because the traffic was horrendous, just horrendous and she was trying to get us to WALTER REED. I thought she was going to have to put that thing in four-wheel drive and go across people's lawns before this thing was over, because traffic—everyone was trying to escape from the city.

I remember throwing up a little bit, finally remembering that I had a handkerchief in my pocket, trying to blow my nose, and I was told I was unconscious when I got to WALTER REED. My recollection of arriving at WALTER REED is kind of being jostled, people yelling, "He's first." Kind of some lights going by. Losing all my clothes in about two seconds.

My airway had closed, I was about to become a Smurf, I was turning blue on them. They did an emergency tracheotomy, or it's not called a tracheotomy at that point it's a Cyck (phonetic), cryotomy (phonetic) or something. They gave me an airway, stabilized me a little bit, took me up to the ER and gave me a full-blown tracheotomy.

My first conscious moments in WALTER REED is waking up to my wife saying something to me. She's a teacher in Fairfax County, Linear (phonetic) Middle School. She knew a plane had gone into the Pentagon. She kept waiting for a phone call. She called my office. My phone rang once, went dead, never rang again. She said she thought she walked by and saw somebody being carried out of the Pentagon and said it looked like me. She said that she knew I was alive, but I was hurt. She knew I was alive. As soon as school let out, she raced home. The phone was ringing. She picked up the phone and the man said, "Is this [REDACTED] GONZALES?" [REDACTED] her

middle name, [REDACTED], she never uses it. The only people that call her [REDACTED] are solicitors. So she was about to give the man an earful of “not a good time to be calling.” He goes, “He’s going to be OK.” She dropped like a rock, and said, “He’s at WALTER REED and he’s going to be OK.” She asked him where WALTER REED was? Said “Any of you know where WALTER REED is?”

So she’s - He goes, “Well it’s in Washington, in the District, or is it Maryland? You know I really don’t know.” He’s a Navy Commander by the way, LCDR, Dr. SARINYANI (phonetic) Very nice doctor. So he had, I guess he lost the bet and he had to call her. So he told her call back in a few minutes. He’d find out where WALTER REED was and some directions. She sat on the floor, cried, and my brother called and she kind of told him. She got directions. She called the school and said, “I don’t know when I’ll be back. Paul’s in the hospital” They offered to send a school policeman, Fairfax County policeman to get her to take her.

Q. (01:08:30) SRO, right?

A. They offered to take, and she said, “No, I’m not going to wait that long.” She said she did eighty miles an hour on 495 all the way up there.

I said, “How could you have done eighty miles an hour?”

She said, “There was nobody on the freeway. “ Four o’clock in the afternoon. Everybody was home. Everybody was tightly in their little houses She got to WALTER REED and she said she had made herself a promise to say something light, joking, and she said, “So this is what you do to get me to drive in the District?” I think that it was her voice, is what brought me out. I remember her voice and she talked with me. They explained I couldn’t talk, that I had a hole in

my throat. I brought a picture, actually what I looked like, because LAURA BUSH came the next day.

I was in a neck brace. One of the first things ██████ told me, asked me to do was, “Open your other eye.” When I’m really tired sometimes I’ll only open one eye. Well, when you come out of surgery and you only have one eye open, the anesthesiologist starts thinking he killed part of your brain. So, she then realizes that most of the doctors sitting around me are neurologists.

Q. (01:10:11) Another comic moment.

A. Yes, they were like, whewww (makes a whizzing sound). You know, note to self: Ask patient to open eyes. (everyone is laughing) But they, I was in a neck brace. When she got there I was in restraints. Because of the neck brace and no glasses all I could really see was my fingers. I can’t see the rest of me. I could see part of one arm, or I guess I could see the one IV. So all I can see is my hands are bandaged, and I have one IV in me.

Q. (01:11:00) It’s not bad.

A. That’s pretty good, hey, I’m doing good here, and so she kind of talks to me a little bit, and they came in and kind of asked me some questions, and I could kind of scribble. They kind of give me a pen, in the wrapped hand and I’d kind of go like this and kind of give them answers. The head of WALTER REED complex, I’m sorry I can’t remember, it’s a two-star general, my mind is gone already, came in, gave me some grief about you know, “I understand you’re an old Navy guy. This is an Army hospital, but we’ll still take good care of you.”

I'm sorry, again I had a piece of paper and pen, so very promptly I wrote down, "Go Navy, beat Army," and handed it to him. Needless to say he got kind of excited. "Oh, we're going to throw you out with the trash."

But, ██████ said that they actually were very glad that I did that, because it told them that my mind and my functions were still operating. So that when things went bad, they would know it. I actually comparatively speaking felt pretty good Tuesday night, Tuesday afternoon. To me Tuesday and Wednesday are the same day. I don't remember much about it. I got notes that I gave ██████ that I was writing.

What I didn't know was I didn't have one IV in me, I had three IVs in me and a central line going into my neck. I had a feeding tube. Had oxygen going into my trach. Had a rather large bruise over my hand, and my lungs were in real bad shape. Because you have a trach, when you breath you put moisture in the air before it goes in your lungs. So what they were doing was they were putting hydrogenated water misted oxygen past my hole for me to take into my lungs. They told ██████ that I would get worse.

They said, "He has a 90 % probability in thirty-six hours going bad." Being they were prompt, Thursday morning at two in the morning I crashed. My understanding is the lining of my lungs sloughed off. They were burned, damaged beyond repair and they just sloughed. They put me on what's called a ventilator. Instead of the air going by my hole, it was plugged into my hole. They would push oxygen in, pull it out. ██████, it's interesting what she knows and she'll eventually pop out little tidbits that she hadn't told me. She said, "They'll inflate your lungs to 55%. That's all they'll do it, because they're afraid of blowing your lungs up." So the machine pushed the air in, pushed the air out and this is at 2 in the morning. She woke up at two. Sat there for a little while and at 2:30 called and said, "OK, how bad is it?"

They said, "How'd you know? It happened about two."

She goes, "Been up since two. I've been waiting for you to stabilize him." She got there that morning about 6:30 or 7:00 and I guess you really only hear what you want to hear. And they greeted her with, "He's had major organ failure."

"Define major organ failure, I don't understand."

"His lungs no longer work."

"They're moving you to ICU, you're critical." I was there all Tuesday and Wednesday. I was critical but stable. On Thursday I went to critical. I was no longer stable. I was on life support. They told her they couldn't repair the lungs. They can give him medicine. The lungs have to repair themselves, and they'll have to wait and see, and the next 36, 48 hours will be critical and they didn't know.

(Unintelligible 01:16:29) bad lungs. She had told the children to stay home, because all three were at college. Well two are in college and one is a research assistant at Vanderbilt. And she had to call them and told them to come home. Not this afternoon, not tomorrow morning, now. There was serious doubts whether I was going to live the day.

██████ said she sat there and watched the monitor and it tells you how much oxygen is going into me. Tells you how much the machine is breathing. And one of the lines is how much I am breathing. A little red line, she said, and she watched it be a flat zero. Not registering for a long time and every so often it, I'd kick in for a couple of seconds and stop. And she had to sit there and watch me all day like that.

To me Tuesday and Wednesday are the same day. I don't remember anything until Saturday. Thursday and Friday they sedated, they sedate you very heavily, because they don't want you fighting the machine. I'm not very bright, I never knew the machine was breathing for me, even

when it was only partially breathing for me. Heard a clicking sound. My lungs are going up and down, I thought I was doing it, and it was just kind of following along. What do I know?

The—LAURA BUSH came to visit Wednesday night. ██████ said, “Are we going to tell him?” Because I didn’t know. So she told me LAURA BUSH is coming. I mouthed to her, typical response, “Why? Why is she coming?”

I admire the First Lady. She came to WALTER REED to visit three people. That’s all WALTER REED got. WALTER REED is suited for mass trauma, they were ready. They got three patients. That’s it. They said LAURA BUSH had gone to Arlington and Washington Center where most of the patients were. And I know she didn’t drive, but she went all the way out to WALTER REED for three people. It would have been very easy to say, “I didn’t know about those three.” She came, said some words of encouragement to ██████. They got a picture of her talking with me. No knowledge. I’m out of it. They’ve got two pictures of me.

Q. (01:19:40) You don’t remember.

A. Not a clue.

Q. (01:19:47) That is really unfortunate.

(laughter)

The eyes are open.

Q. (01:19:48) I like her, too.

A. The eyes are open, but no one's home. I mean my recollection of the visit is she’s standing at the far end of the bed, but I’m also in a wrought iron, little old-fashioned hospital bed. I’m in a

\$30,000 super hospital bed, and she is literally, show you this picture, she's closer to me than you are. She was literally laying on a little armrest talking. She turned around and hugged [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] did what you would do if LAURA BUSH turned around and hugged you, she kind of like, you know, kind of, but they got a nice picture of her being hugged by LAURA BUSH, and she left.

Q. (01:20:35) Your moment of glory and you missed it.

A. I missed it, I missed my girlfriend. I always tease [REDACTED] now, my girlfriend LAURA.

(laughter)

I don't remember Friday. I remember Saturday, starting to come up, around. Sunday, Sunday I actually tried to stand. I stood for about a minute or two. I was going crazy. My feet looked like sausages because they had me full of fluid. I had a feeding tube, which I dearly hated, and they released me from ICU. They sent me to what's called a MIDCU. Medium Care. I want to say that I firmly believe that WALTER REED saved my life. I wouldn't be alive right now, if it wasn't for WALTER REED. I've never been a big fan of military medicine. I'm the first to admit it, but WALTER REED took better care of me than I could have got anywhere in the world. I firmly believe that.

I honestly believe that the patient, that the people on that ward cared about my health. Cared about how I was doing. I think the tracheotomy was a great benefit for me, because it was direct access into my lungs. They were able to stick tubes down there, and pull out junk. [REDACTED] said they were pulling three inch of strands of black soot out of my lungs. And they were doing it a lot.

They were able to put the oxygen right into me, control me. I never panicked, by being on the ventilator, because it wasn't against my, you know, against your mouth. It was a hole, in my neck, I didn't feel it. You can't be afraid of something you don't feel, I mean –

Q. (01:23:06) You were conscious when you were on the ventilator?

A. No, not 'til the very end.

Q. (01:23:12) OK, OK.

A. When I started coming around a little bi- they said I came around a little bit on Friday.

CAROL –

Q. (01:23:19) I thought they had to have you completely out when you're on a ventilator.

A. Most of the time I was. I mean I was—they told me later, that was the way they liked them, sedated, intubated and something else. Thursday, my wife's going to hate me for this one.

Thursday she tried to keep people away from me, because if somebody came into the room and started talking I might try to wake up and they, she knew I had to stay asleep. She didn't want me panicking with the machine and everything else. I guess it's very unnerving, the ventilator being on you but—so Thursday, she was actually screening doctors coming in.

“What are you here for?”

“Neurology.”

“He's been cleared by Neurology. Why are you here? Ok, you can look at him. You can't touch him.” She was very, she wanted to make sure I was out and stayed out. She wouldn't talk to me that day, because she didn't want me waking up.

Well somebody decided to come visit me that day. She said, "No, you can't go in."

"I just want to go in and kind of see how he's doing."

"No. You won't go in." She stood at the door. Wouldn't budge. The Army hospital staff particularly the military members were getting very nervous, because the person she not letting in was General CHINSECKY (phonetic), Chief of Staff of the Army. It's his frigging hospital. He only has four stars, what the heck. He was in greens, the black stars, it's hard to see.

(Laughter)

No big entourage She would not budge. Refused. He came back on Sunday. He brought backup. He brought his wife, and brought flowers. I got a birthday card from him right after that. Very nice man.

Q. (01:25:30) When were you able to go home?

A. I went home September the 25th. But he came back that Sunday, he told [REDACTED], I wish my soldiers stood guard as well as you do. He wasn't upset. He was a very nice man. Very understanding.

I was briefed, I know up to the CHINSECKY level everyday. I was briefed up to the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations everyday while I was in the hospital. The Navy treated me like I was on active duty. Captain JUDY, I can't think of her last name. (Editors Note: CAPT Judy Logeman).

Q. (01:26:14) LOGEMAN. LOGEMAN.

A. LOGEMAN, or her Petty Officer came to see me everyday. Navy Chaplains came to see me. Secretary of the NAVY, CNO, the VCNO. I have very few memories about any of these things. I

was in hospital 'til the 25th. I came out of ICU after ten days. Got to the ward, I was so weak the first day all I did was be moved. The next morning, ██████ showed me in the little, I couldn't, I could walk but I couldn't stay up long enough to be, shower myself. The next day she helped, by the third day I did it by myself. Fourth day actually. I asked them what I needed to get out of here. They told me that I had to have my trach out. Before I had my trach out, I had a block in my trach.

When you breathe about a third of what you breathe stays in your mouth, nose, sinuses. It doesn't go into your lungs. So I'm now breathing through this little hole. I'm not breathing through my mouth and my nose anymore. So you have to put—I could talk by putting my finger over the hole, or they have what's called the speaking tube. I could talk. Well, to block the hole is very unnerving. You previously at this point, have had a breathing issue somewhere along the line, so just the fact of not having a lot of oxygen or air going into you is, and you have to remember how to breath again, because that's not something you've not been doing for a couple of days.

Q. (01:28:12) Your body would have taken over naturally, but you didn't trust it, right?

A. That's what you got to, bring it back at this stage of this game. Well also being used to it going through this little hole and you have to block it. You have to put a little plug in it, so now not only are you having to breath more than you were before, 30% more than you were beforehand with the little hole. It's got to go a little farther and it's a little odd. Trust me, it's—they have people who have a very hard time coming off of the tracheotomy, blocking the hole. We had a very nice Army nurse, First Lieutenant. She came in said, "OK, we're going to do this." She came up with this very aggressive schedule. An hour in, an hour off, posted it up and

everything. It kind of—I put the hole in, plugged it up a little while. Took it out, put it in, you know. I tried it once, I think, on Saturday for a little bit.

Saturday, COL DUNN who's the Commanding Officer of the hospital itself came in. "You know it's a beautiful day," and we have a friend or ours, SUSAN HOGAN, who's his aid, that's another, she's a Navy Commander, retired, known her for fifteen years. She had come to spend the day with us, and he came in and said, "It's such a beautiful day, why don't you guys go down to the cafeteria, get some lunch. Go outside and eat, don't eat this junk they bring up here.:

Because I was, I was not with the real food, but.

So we're sitting there kind of, you know, "Ok, you guys go have lunch." We're kind of looking at each other going I don't know. We'll the Lieutenant comes zipping around the corner with a wheelchair, says, "I understand we're going outside." I guess the Colonel told them, First Lieutenant, you know, she wanted the wheel chair for me to go outside. Surprise and it happened very quickly. So we went downstairs. I had a Popsicle and they had lunch. We went outside and had a nice little lunch outside.

In addition, a feeding tube is, my mouth is very dry. You've got this thing in there and your mouth is like propped open and there's no saliva going and you know, all they will give you, they didn't want you to choke because of the little airway issue down there, so what they gave me was these sponge Popsicle things that have this solutions on there which is, I can't even begin to describe it. It's just not good, but I guess has some nutrients or something, but it's just kind of yucky. I mean, OK, I had one of these little things. They're not pleasant, Yuck. So, you know I'm wanting water and they're getting these little Popsicle things, the very most they do you know, is dip them in a little water and give them back to you. After they kind of wring it out a little bit. The feeding tube had come out a little bit, and SONYA one of the nurses, goes, "OK."

She gets a little glass of water and a straw and she says, “OK, I want you to try and suck on the water. You want to suck on the water,” she said, “And push the tube down to where it belongs.” So she gets it started sucking, she gets the tube about where she wants, and then she grabs the water and pulls it away from me. I was ready to pull the feeding tube out to get to the water. Well on Monday they made a decision to pull the feeding tube, because they thought I was OK. They had needled me, they stuck a thing in my probe, a probe in my nose and looked at this, because I had burned all the area, what’s called the false vocal cords, up in here, all, my throat was burned, damaged raw. Plus all my, ___ somewhere. So they made a decision to feed me, take out the feeding tube and then those speech people came back and said, “Why don’t we wait and do a fluoroscope.” So they waited until the next morning. Believe they said, “we’ll put the feeding tube back in,” and I said, “I’ll live off the IV for a day, thank you very much.” I didn’t know they had fluoroscope anymore. A fluoroscope is like an x-ray but it’s real time. They can actually do it and watch what’s going on.

Sure you guys have all had barium shakes or whatever tests. It’s like a little barium drink and you’re basically up against a machine and they can watch it going down. They watch the process of it, to make sure I’m not going to choke and it’s going to get past the little hole. So they gave me the barium shake. Looks good They gave me a little pudding, the barium on a cracker and they’re watching this all real time. Well, the machine, as they kind of prop me up against the machines because this is like Monday, because I just got, you know standing, but I’m only standing because I’m leaning on something. And in the—first time I saw myself was a reflection off a piece of glass on the machine. I have a big red bump and blotch on my forehead. I haven’t shaved in a couple of days. They had kind of shaved me a little bit. I looked gaunt. I ended up losing thirty pounds over all of this. I found it though.

(Laughter)

But I looked suntanned. I'd been flashed burned. I've got this thing in my neck, which I had never seen. So they started giving me food. What they do is they cook the food a little bit and they shred it up a little when they finish cooking it. It's not really the best. Me and mashed potatoes got to be friends. Nice soft stuff on my throat. They move me to the ward. It was much better.

That Sunday, the second Sunday I, I put—what the nurse had done, which was really good, she's very smart, was she took me to a mirror and said, "This is how you put the plug in and this is how the plug comes out. The plug goes in, plug goes out. You practice. Plug goes in, plug goes out." By knowing I could take the plug out relieved some of the psychological burden.

I put the plug in on Sunday, the only time I took it out was to blow my nose. I can't blow my nose, because I can't, they didn't want me generating that kind of pressure so instead I would plug my nose, my fingers, I'll hold my nose type, and kind of blow and the stuff would come out the hole. It was a very marvelous way of doing this.

(laughter)

I loved my trach. Give me a break, it was a very efficient way of doing business.

Q. (01:35:48) That's rather disgusting.

A. Yes, it was. You get a little towel and you make it go away, but it also let's you breath, so I was very happy with my trach.

Q. (01:35:59) You didn't want to give it up.

No, I thought everybody should have one.

Q. (Unintelligible 01:36:02)

A. But –

Q. (01:36:06) So when did you get your trach taken out for good.

A. Monday. You have to have it in for 24 hours. They came in that evening, Monday afternoon, late afternoon or evening and said, “OK, you’ve had it in for twenty four hours, we’re taking it out.” Because I’m going to go outside, they see me walking out with her and the doctors all block the door. “Get back over here. Lay down,”

You’re laying there and you have like a little dog collar on, it’s a strand around your neck and they’re attached, and you’re sitting there, laying there, laying there going, “What is this going to feel like when they yank this thing out of there.” So this guy’s doing this and I’m looking, like, you know, kind of looking like, “OK.”

He shows it. It’s in his hand. He’s already taken it out. So they don’t stitch it shut. Don’t even butterfly it shut. They let it close naturally. What you do is you put a, you put this, like impregnated gauze over it. You get the foil wrapper that the gauze was in, cut it in a square and put it over the gauze and then you tape over all that with a bandage to make a little airtight seal, and they let it close naturally.

Yes, it’s a little odd to see, and they clean up the little package and stick it on top of you, and that’s how they do it. They seal it up and it just closes over in a matter of a couple of weeks.

Q. (01:37:50) Were you able to go to any of the funerals of the people who were in your office?

A. I went to all the funerals.

Q. (01:37:54) Did you?

A. Unfortunately some of the events were scheduled on top of each other. I wouldn't make all the services, or the wakes, or you know, but I was at Arlington. Everybody was buried at Arlington, but one. She was buried up in West Virginia in a very private ceremony later on. Nobody was told about it.

I went to all the services, went to hers, all the services. I went to all the funerals that were at Arlington. One gentleman, LtCol BOB HYMEL, United States Air Force Retired was a B-52 pilot during Vietnam. Was shot down, I think in '68. Spent almost a year in the hospital. His wife's a principal over in Alexandria, and she said that the last thirty years were bonuses. BOB should have died thirty years ago and didn't. She was very grateful that she had another 30 years with him. And the Air Force had a B-52 flyover for his funeral. Big BUFF (slang term) come flying over.

KARL TEEPE was a LTCOL, United States Army Retired, buried under his own right.

CHARLES SABIN, "CHUCK" SABIN was a, had been in the Army, honorably discharged so he was able to be in a crypt, you know, cremated and put in a little—██████████ MICKLEY, her husband's a retired Air Force Major, so she went into Arlington on her husband's—██████████

FOSTER's husband, KEN FOSTER's retired, I'm pretty sure, Air Force, and went into

Arlington. ██████████ CHAPA, her husband's a retired Air Force enlisted and was cremated at Arlington. So six of the seven are in Arlington.

Q. (01:40:47) Is there anything that you—how did this change you in terms of the way you feel about your life or how you live your life?

A. Two of the most common questions I'm asked is has it changed your marriage? Has it changed your life? The first time my wife and I were asked about the marriage aspect, we just each looked at each other. Our kids had just gone to college. We have three, we have two that are freshman in college so this is the first time we've been alone in 25 years, around 23 years. So it was a little odd, just getting use to that. This happened, and we ended up spending more time with each other then we ever had. She went to work about, Oh, a week or two before I did. She actually went two weeks, because she went back to work. Fairfax County never charged her leave. So we spent a lot of time with each other. Think about your own spouses. All of a sudden you now have a couple of weeks with them. There's just two, basically the two of you. You feel a little odd, and she got me through it. I think in many ways it was harder on her then it was on me. I was very sheltered. I didn't know what was happening most of the time. I wasn't told. I never knew how bad off I was. I never knew I almost died. I didn't even know I was unconscious getting to the hospital until a couple of weeks ago. There was many things I wasn't told. I also know what an effect the deaths of those people had. My only way I sleep at night is knowing they died quickly, without pain. When I was in the hospital they had told me, someone told me that they had died and then he said something very strange, he said, "What took so long to identify the bodies?"

In my somewhat drug induced stage I took that to mean they had burned to death and I nearly lost control of my breathing. I lost control, basically it sent me into a panic attack. The thought of those people who I dearly loved, cared for, their supervisor. I had let them burn to death, thirty feet away from me. I found out afterwards that didn't happen.

This was also a very bad day. It was the bad day I had at WALTER REED nothing had gone right. It wasn't in the ICU, and it wasn't in the regular ward.

We learned a couple of things out of this one. For my own staff I have two gentleman, CLARENCE HAPLING, MARK SMITH, CLARENCE went back to work on the 12th. They put him in an office in Bolling. Sat down, looked up, looks at the airport and looks at the Pentagon, as it's still burning. It effected him very badly, very deeply. More than he could take, but he went back to work on the 12th. On the 13th my division which is supposed to consist of now thirteen people was two. CLARENCE and MARK, Everyone else was either dead or in the hospital, and he kept the office running, eventually got some more people to help him, come in and help. But for the strength of the will of those two people they kept the thing going.

The lessons we learned out of this was that you are what you are. You're office was in the line of death. Perfectly straightforward. If you were on this side of the line you died. If you were on this side of the line, you lived. It was all a matter of fate, a matter of seconds of where you were.

If I'd sat in my desk a minute later, we wouldn't be having this conversation. If I had walked slower we wouldn't be having this conversation. It was all a matter of fate. If I had not, CHRIS had not asked me questions, if I'd not laid a paper on PATTY's desk I might have been over halfway back to my office and I would be dead. It was all a matter of where you were. You can't change it. When your time is up, your time is up and you're going to be gone.

That doesn't mean we're going to go out in the freeway and see if trucks will hit us or not, but we, but a lot of the things in the last day about terrorists coming, you know chemical weapons, biologicals, nukes or whatever, initially it bothered me, then I started thinking that I can't change it. Worrying about it's not going to change a thing. So I came to peace with it.

When my staff, who's now all back at work, I watched them all heal, when they could say that the 11th was our luckiest day. They're OK. It's a hell of a thing to say it was your luckiest day, but we had two chances to die that day. I had three, another one had three, and I tried to die two

days later. The 11th was my luckiest day, not my best day, but my luckiest. For every good there was a bad, for every bad there was a good. Partitions protected us in the blast, they trapped us. Ceiling being on fire is bad, but having been blown away enough, the smoke had someplace to go. Water coming in on the floor was good. Water with live wires around was bad.

So has it changed us? Yes. We're a little bit more mellow about some things. Certain things don't bother us. The doctor asked me in WALTER REED when I finally went to a room, "Does the sound of the planes bother you." Because there's the planes kind of fly over WALTER REED the whole day.

I said, "No."

He looked at me a little quizzically, and I said, "I never heard a plane."

My wife would be very happy with Bin Laden's head on a pike. I'm not really angry, because I have no one to be angry at. It's kind of hard to be angry at a picture on a screen. I'm very grateful to WALTER REED for being alive. I'm not sure what would have happened if I'd gone to another hospital. Would they have noticed me go into stress? Would they have even seen it, with all the other burn patients, would I have been even noticed? Would they have all the – they did so many diagnostic tests on me at WALTER REED, because I was unconscious. As a result of me going to WALTER REED I don't have any of the medical bill problems that my people are having. I did not use the Dept of Labor, so I've been far better off.

It's a little, I won't say disheartening, it's interesting because look at my medical record, my discharge paper, a fracture of the C-1 column, thickness burns across hands and fingers, acute respiratory distress. The list is long and distinguished. I went to the Primus Tri-Care whatever they call another facility in Fairfax. Had to check in because they're my gatekeepers. The doctor

looked at it, he starts going down the page and you can see his eyes getting about as big as saucers. They looked up, like, “How are you alive.”

You look at me right now, you can’t tell anything ever happened. My damage was primarily interior. My hands, the scars are barely, see them, and barely tell. You have to look to see them.

The reason my hands are in such good shape and I have the mobility is because of LT SMIRK (phonetic), the occupational therapist at the hospital. She made it her personal mission to give me my hands back. She came in everyday, changed- twice a day sometimes three, changed the dressings. Believe me when they’re scrubbing your hands with those little sponges and the soap, there’s not enough pain medicine to make that go away, but – She massaged my hands, she manipulated them so that my fingers cannot bend back like that. My finger goes all the way forward, it didn’t in the days afterward. She worked on it and they had this wonderful cream called silverdine, which is a miracle. I had my hands back. Never thought I would.

And the exterior of my body the only thing you’ll ever see, is oh about a two and a half, three-inch scar on my neck going down. All the other damage is internal, both in I guess in the mind and in the lungs. My lungs are up to 66, 67% percent capacity. That’s it. I don’t know if it will ever come back. They hope they will, but I don’t know. We’ll see.

Q. (01:52:45) Thank you very much Mr. GONZALES, we appreciate your speaking with us.

A. Did I answer what you wanted?

Q. You did.

Transcribed by:
Ethel Geary
March 15, 2002.