

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT Michael McDaniels
CDR Richard Fahy

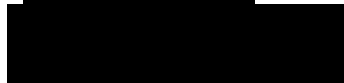
Interviewer's Organization:

Naval Historical Center
Naval Historical Center

Interviewee:

CDR J. Todd Ross

Current Address:



Date of Interview:

December 12, 2001

Place of Interview:

Navy Annex

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:

CDR Ross grew up in [REDACTED], PA. He went to college at the University of Pittsburgh, graduating in 1984. He went to OCS and started in the intelligence officer pipeline. His tours have been primarily with air wings in San Diego and duty in the Pentagon. He was on the joint staff (J2) for two and a half years before taking his current assignment with CNO Intel staff (N20) in the Pentagon working for Adm Porterfield. He has been there for about 18 months.

N20 does Naval plans, programs and policies. CDR Ross specifically works in the requirements and assessments branch (plans) that looks at Navy programs that looks at future requirements for Naval surveillance and reconnaissance. It's a forward looking part of the staff.

Leading up to September 11th, his staff was working primarily on prioritizing intel programs and funding requirements. One of the most contemporary issues was the potential transitions, if not transformations, from manned Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets to unmanned ISR assets. This is being played out in Afghanistan and is very topical right now.

Topics Discussed:

CDR Ross's office had been located close to the DNI's office (5C6) since N20 directly supports that office. His office was located at 5D6. Just prior to Sep 11, DNI had moved to corridor 3 area on the 4th floor in the new wedge. N20 was scheduled to move to Crystal City. The DNI's new office was smaller than the old office. In the N20 office, it was a large room with about 50 people assigned their own cubicles.

He saw the WTC attacks on CNN. Despite the magnitude of the news story, he couldn't comprehend it all, so he alternated watching it with working at his desk. At one point, he mentioned to someone, "I wonder if there's any activity on the roof right now." Since he was on the fifth floor in the Pentagon, he figured that he was in a primary target.

On the morning of 11 Sep, it was a typical day. There was an 8 am staff meeting with smaller branches within N20 (202 and 203 – current readiness and future readiness).

Ironically, he thought about calling Vince Tolbert in CNOIP to ask if he had any information, but figured that he was too busy at the time. Instead, he emailed him about a "dining in" invitation at 9:14. It turned out that LCDR Tolbert was in a "hot wash up" with 6 other people at the time in CNOIP.

When American Airlines 77 hit the Pentagon, CDR Ross was standing up in his office space. He felt the impact and heard a very loud explosion. He didn't immediately deduct that the airplane had hit the Pentagon, even though, as an intelligence officer, he never discounted an airplane hitting the Pentagon.

He immediately decided to evacuate, and tried to exit via North Parking, but that was already closed off. He tried the Metro, and that was closed. So he went to south parking and exited that way. It was apparent where the damage was coming from. They went towards Crystal City. CDR Ross walked 6 miles south to his wife's office, where he caught a ride with her back home. They were on the far end of south parking. A co-worker's father made several calls for CDR Ross and others to friends and families. There was confusion, chaos, traffic, and noise. Since his wife works in a dentist office, she was not up to date on all the news.

He found out that the Navy Command Center had taken a big hit through email. He had good friends in Vince Tolbert and Dan Shanbauer. He had been to dinner with the Tolbert family several times, and called Vince's wife, [REDACTED] at around 6 pm to find out if she had heard anything. Since Vince works from 3 am to 3 pm on most days, this was not good news. He tried to reassure her and made some phone calls but received no encouraging news. CDR Ross got a call from Adm Porterfield (DNI) at home around 10 pm. He was asked to escort the CACO team that was suppose to go to the Tolbert house later that evening.

As good as the CACO is, it still turns over a stranger to the family. Adm Porterfield wanted to augment the team with someone who the family knew. Adm Porterfield was very engaged and very giving of his time to each family during subsequent days. Prior to this, CDR Ross had phoned [REDACTED] Tolbert. [REDACTED] had been "just waiting for that van (or limousine) to drive up in front with those guys in the black suits." The CACO team and CDR Ross got to the house around midnight. There were people still at the house and [REDACTED] was up. The CACO team was one officer and a chaplain, plus CDR Ross. It was a painful experience. At this stage, CDR Tolbert was just missing.

The decision was made early on that all identification would be conducted at Dover AFB. Because of the overwhelming number of badly burned and decomposed bodies, this was a very tough situation at Dover. Vince was one of the first bodies identified. Vince's office was one of at the far end of where the plane ended up in the Pentagon, since his office was closest to the C ring. There wasn't as enormous an explosion and trauma as the more outside rings. That part of the Navy Command Center had the most positive identifications early on.

Children: 9 years old [REDACTED], 7 year old [REDACTED] (with severe cerebral palsy), and a 20 month old son.

CDR Ross felt very awkward very early on with [REDACTED] Tolbert. However, as time continued, he played a key and vital role. He offered stability, was able to find specific information for her. The confirmation of. The DNI wanted CDR Ross to stick to that family, which he did full time for nearly 3 solid weeks. Parts of this will continue, for instance there will be a memorial in the Spring, the one year anniversary next fall. It's a bond that will never go away.

A couple of days ago, [REDACTED] Tolbert and her children moved to [REDACTED] where she and Vince owned a house. It's a neutral ground to start her life in, since they met in Fresno and he died in Washington, DC.

He gave the eulogy at Vince's funeral on September 27th in Arlington. Although CDR Ross was close friends with Vince, they weren't best friends. They had seen each other once in the last 6 weeks, since they had played golf together. However, a bond developed early on with his participation with [REDACTED], and it felt appropriate when the funeral was finally conducted. The funeral was with full honors, and it is conducted very well at Arlington.

There were over 350 people who attended the funeral at Arlington. It was given large press coverage including AP news, ESPN, and the LA Times. The sports crowd from Fresno State, where Vince played football, was very interested in this story.

CDR Ross made several points during the eulogy. Vince was an American hero, not because of the way he died but because of the way he lived. He was a hero at his job, as a friend, with his Dad, for his wife, and for his children. Vince was 6ft1in and about 280 lbs and strong as an ox. Despite his size, he was unselfish, caring, gentle, respectful, humble, and friendly.

He had been hand picked to serve at the job in the Pentagon. He had been at his job since April, and he was required to be at the Pentagon from 3:30 am until 3:30 pm. His wife works at night, so they saw each other for about 15-20 minutes each day. His watch rotation was suppose to continue for about 12 months, and then they go do something else. When he got home, he took care of his three children. He was very unselfish, but he had a long list of successful accomplishments, including 3 different medals at the Central Command over a three year period. This is extraordinary. He was on the inside track professionally in the intelligence community. He was never around for personal glory.

Parts of CDR Ross's eulogy were used by a speech by SecDef Rumsfeld on the one month anniversary of the Pentagon, attended by President Bush and ex-President Clinton.

He gave another eulogy during a Memorial service for Vince Tolbert in Lamoure, CA about 3-4 weeks after the funeral. There were about 500 people that turned up from his hometown. He gave a completely different eulogy in California, and it was funded by the Navy. Vince's number was retired by his high school football team. There were signs all over the school and it was very patriotic. There was a portion of the highway was renamed after him. Two F-18's were part of the memorial. In his home town, he was truly a hero.

Most of the information CDR Ross received was from the Pentagon Family Assistant Center in the Crystal City Sheraton. He spent 3-4 hours a day there for about two weeks. There was a 3 star Army general (LtGen Van Alsteen) who was in charge of this and he “was probably the most perfectly suited for this job.” He gave updates twice a day. There were financial counselor booths, the food was free, “grieving dogs” were there, and the Washington Post retrieved their stories of each family from there.

CDR Ross racked up a \$200 phone bill on his cell phone talking to everyone. He did things for the family like finding out how much leave Vince had on his LES.

Vince’s wife, [REDACTED], had several frustrations. He was identified on Sunday, September 16, which was one of the fastest identifications, but it seemed a long time. There was a delay in retrieving the body since the autopsies took a long time since there were so many bodies. There’s no solution to this, but for the family, they want answers “now” and wanted to know when to schedule the funeral.

Her contemporary frustration is the charities that are holding all the money. Although there was an outpouring of support from the public and the Red Cross was great, there was no guidance on the charities. A Bethesda businessman gave [REDACTED] family \$17,000 directly. Another group raised \$4,000 and gave the check directly to [REDACTED].

Now that [REDACTED] is in [REDACTED], the Navy has assigned her another family in [REDACTED] for the foreseeable future. The CACO is a point of contact to hook the family up with someone that can solve any of her problem. Secondary CACO’s are sent to his parents and also to assist with the memorial in California. It’s amazing to see the degree of professionalism in the CACO community.

The N20 shop has changed since September 11th. They accelerated their move to Crystal City. The staff has lost 40-45% of its personnel since many of the staff have been “farmed out.” In response to the “war on terrorism” N20 people have been sent out to OSD, carriers off of Afghanistan, and Bahrain. Old tasks still have to be completed, and there are several new tasks. There is twice the work with half the people. It’s a very resource constrained environment. The money that’s being thrown at this problem makes even more work. Only in the last week or two has there been a sense of normalcy. We’re still trying to find out who we are fighting and how we are going to address this. The decision makers want answers. There are new approaches that have to be decided on to new problems. There’s a lot of pressure. It starts at the top and it works its way down. “When you’re on the end of a dog’s tail, it’s quite a ride.” It’s been quite chaotic.

From a personal stand point, it makes it easier to see what’s important and what’s not. The Tolbert family story is a great point of reference for people who are concerned with petty problems. The whole experience has made CDR Ross look inward and realize that life is pretty good.

An Admiral gave CDR Ross a good analogy about how to approach this war. “It’s not like a children’s soccer game where everyone goes to the ball at one time. You have to take your positions and take the ball when it comes. You can’t all do it at once.

His experience was a lifetime of experience in 90 days. He's impressed by the way the armed services meet the needs of the family in crisis. It's a great display of the Navy's taking care of its own.

The people in the mortuary were fantastic. The spouse wanted to see the remains since she assumed that since he was one of the first identified that he was viewable. She insisted. Unfortunately, the remains were not viewable. ("Non viewable" means "no way" the body should be viewed, although it is ultimately the decision of the spouse.) It took a lot of convincing to have her not see the remains. This was CDR Ross' obligation to convince her not to view the remains. Mrs Tolbert compromised by seeing inside of the coffin at the blanket with the uniform placed over the blanket and the purple heart and meritorious service medal. There was no form resembling a body. It was important to prepare Mrs Tolbert about what she was about to see, and he was there when she did this.

Mrs Tolbert has full access to the autopsy, which is available several months later. She has to be prepared for this as well – CDR Ross gave her an eyewitness account of some expectations and a comfort level of certain sensitivities.

Abstract completed by
CDR Richard Fahy
December 12, 2001

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CAPT Michael McDaniels
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Topics Discussed:

Q. (07:07) Where was your office physically located. Where are you all?

A. Before 11 September?

Q. Up to 11 September, yes.

A. Naval Intelligence direct support to the DNI, the Director of Naval Intelligence had long been very close to him right there in the Pentagon. His office was on the 5th floor, C ring, 6th corridor and we were right down the hall, 5th floor, D ring, 6th corridor. Just prior to 11 September he and his immediate staff, a very small number of folks had moved down to corridor 3 area on the 4th floor, which was part of the new wedge, and were scheduled to move to Crystal City. But on the 11th of September we were still located on the 5th floor, D ring between corridor 6 and 7.

Q. (08:38) Kind of gives us - the offices that you just mentioned give us kind of the physical layout if you would, just kind of for the tape's purposes. What were they like? Kind of describe it, kind of virtual audio tour.

A. Well, the DNI's offices were in a very, particularly his new one, in wedge, in the newly completed wedge was smaller than he was use to but was on the perimeter of the building so there were you know, views of the South Parking lot for himself and his deputy. But again there was a very small number of people.

For those of us back in the "sweat shop" as some people would call it, just think of a very large room which is nothing but rows and rows of cubicles, with some fairly modern furniture for our time, but nonetheless a lot of people in one place, separated only by the cubicle walls so to speak. So in my particular area there were probably fifty people in one large room with every person having his own cubicle, his or hers.

Q. (09:55) Walk us through 11 September. Tell us as you recollect, your recollection of that day.

A. I would characterize the morning of 11 September before 8:45 as pretty typical of a Pentagon day. I had arrived maybe between 7:00 and 7:30. Had an eight o'clock staff meeting, which didn't last very long that day.

Q. (10:25) Who was the staff meeting with?

A. The staff meeting would have been with a couple of smaller branches within N20, particularly 2-0-2 and 2-0-3, current readiness and future readiness is what they were called at the time, which since reorganized. But probably between ten and fifteen people. But let out around 8:30.

Q. (10:50) Do you remember what some of the topics were that day?

A. You know I don't. However, a large percentage of it would have been devoted on this mission capabilities package that we were trying to put together for ISR. I'll just say ISR in the future instead of Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, but ISR's a lot easier to say. But the "misp", the MCP as we were calling it would have been the bulk of it.

I remember being at my desk and someone had just returned from the television which was right around the corner. At most times I could have heard the television volume, and she said that you know the World Trade Center, one of the towers was on fire, and that there was live camera footage of it and she had thought an airplane had flown through it. So I went around the corner to see the television, and you could plainly see that one of the World Trade Center towers was on fire.

Immediate thought, accident, airplane off course. Was it bad weather? Started asking all kinds of questions, because you could tell it was a fairly serious fire, but it didn't look like there was you know a huge gapping hole so to speak. But as they started to try to put together eyewitness

accounts, I remember the television was on CNN, and CNN had just grabbed an eyewitness. They were trying to let him start talking about what he saw. I remember as soon as he started talking, it was either him or somebody off camera that said, “Oh my God, here comes another one!”

So I watched on live television, United flight 175 fly into the other tower. At that point it was very clear that the first one was no accident and that this was a deliberate attack on the United States.

But even with the magnitude of that news story, I just couldn’t comprehend it all at one time, so I only watched it for about four minutes, certainly no more than five. I remember saying to somebody I thought you know, “I wonder if there’s any activity up on the roof right now?”

Because I knew I was in the Pentagon. I knew I was on the 5th floor and I just thought you know, maybe there’s more than two targets here and we’re right now standing in the middle of a primary one. But for whatever reason I was very consumed by the task at hand that day and I needed to get started on that mission capabilities package. Ironically, I was good friends with one of the victims in the Pentagon crash site, and I knew that he was working for the Chief of Naval Operations Intelligence Plot, which is a very small section that directly supports not only the DNI, but the CNO and the Secretary of the Navy with daily intelligence briefings.

Q. (35:14) What was his name?

A. VINCE TOLBERT, and I thought about calling VINCE to see if he had had any indications, and warning or advanced knowledge. If there was some terrorist threats that were known beforehand, but I reconsidered, because I thought well you know, he’s probably kind of busy now.

But it made me think about him and I thought you know I owe him an email, because he had left me a message a couple days prior. Wanted to know if he should attend the Naval Intelligence Dining-in which was coming up within six weeks. Since I didn't want to call him and bother him, I just returned an email to him. I said, "Vince, I think you should go to the Dining-in. I go every year, and I'd love to have you sit at the table with me and we can have some beef and some good times," something like that. Something that was very informal, and I still have that email in my computer. I sent it at 9:14 on September 11th. Twenty-five minutes later, VINCE would have been dead, and I never, he never responded and as it turns out he was busy. He was in a meeting with six other people from his shop and his shop was the intelligence section that was co-located with the Navy's Command Center.

The Navy Command Center in the 11 September strike was a total loss and a large number of Navy casualties came from the Navy Command Center, but that intelligence section since it was co-located lost seven people. VINCE was one of the seven and they would have all been sitting around their supervisor's desk doing what would have been called a "hot wash-up." Where they would have just completed their morning cycle briefings for the Navy's Operations Officer, the CNO and any questions that came up or things that they would have had to answer right away or the next day in the follow-on briefings would have been the subject of the conversation, which means their whole team was sitting around one desk and that's when the airplane hit.

So I sent that email at 9:14 and then went back to you know the routine work and I probably walked to the television three or four times. Couldn't watch it all you know for very long, but you know wanted to keep apprised of what was going on. I was walking back from the TV to my desk when I felt the explosion of what would have been American Airlines flight 77 hit the Pentagon.

Q. (17:11) Can you describe that explosion? What happened, what (_____ Inaudible 17:13)?

A. Well you know I'm over, I'm on the 5th floor over between corridor 6 and 7, closer to corridor 6 at the time. The aircraft would have impacted in corridor 4, approaching corridor 5. Primarily on the 1st and 2nd floor was the biggest impact. So I was around the corner so to speak, but around the corner of a building that's three hundred and thirty yards long on each side. So, far enough away to not be threatened, but certainly close enough to feel the impact and also hear a very loud explosion. But even with the knowledge of the World Trade Center attacks, two airplanes, was not immediately thinking airplane into the Pentagon, because that was a side of the building that you just don't associate with airline traffic.

Now airline flying into the Pentagon, before 11 September to me as an Intelligence Officer was not an unimaginable scenario because of the proximity of the approach to Reagan National Airport. But any scenario I had imagined always involved an airplane coming down the normal air traffic corridor down the Potomac River on a VFR approach and flying into the river entrance. So knowing that, knowing that the airplane had impacted a side of the building that I just, the explosion had occurred on a side of the building I don't associate with airplanes, I didn't know if it was a bomb, a truck bomb, suicide bomber. I just wasn't thinking airplane.

Nevertheless, having felt that and watching the television I knew that indeed the Pentagon was targeted. So there was no hesitation in the organization that I worked in that it was probably time to evacuate.

By the time we started working our way down the steps, it was clear that most of the building was evacuating. Tried to go to North Parking, but they wouldn't let us get out that side of the building. Tried to go to the Metro. Metro was already closed down. So evacuated into South

Parking and then it was obvious which side of the building was in great danger because of the very large black cloud of smoke coming up from the helicopter pad. But still there was a very close highway there, and you just didn't know if it was an airplane, or a tractor-trailer or what had caused this explosion.

But we evacuated through South Parking and into Crystal City. I was with four or five other folks from my organization, some of which had cell phones, but even those that had cell phones weren't getting any outgoing signals. Some folks were successful in getting in-coming calls. One of the guys had his father call all of our other you know loved ones, Mothers, spouses, but that day I essentially ended up walking six miles south to my wife's dentist office. She's a dental hygienist, and that's how I got home.

So it was pretty much of an all day event. But we were, we were on the far end of South Parking from where all the medical emergencies and crash equipment were. And as I recall walking through where they were, most of the security personnel were trying to steer everybody away from the building.

I just remember you know, not only a big black cloud of smoke, but big cloud of confusion, chaos and traffic noise.

Q. (21:20) Did your wife know where you worked in the Pentagon?

A. It's you know, I said my wife works in a dentist office and it's different, because they don't have CNN running all the time.

Q. Right.

A. I think she had just heard a patient, or a co-worker say something about the World Trade Center, that there was a problem in New York City. But she was with a patient when she got this phone call from this person's father that had you know gotten the number from me, and he called her to say, actually the receptionist came back and she said, "There's somebody on the phone wants to talk to you about your husband."

So that caused a little bit of concern because she had just heard about this New York City thing and then the message that this guy said was, "You know, you don't know me, but your husband is outside the Pentagon, and he's safe." And that's really all he knew, so that's all he said.

So she just said, "Well, thank you very much." Then you know, then she, they turned on the radio and tried to listen. So she knew that I was outside the building by the time she knew of the incident.

Q. (22:41) Tell us about the days afterwards.

A. It took me a long time, well, took me a long time to walk to Old Town. We took a break in Old Town Alexandria at a guy's townhouse. That's where we started making all our phone calls to the people that would care the most about us. So we just sat in his townhouse and watched the breaking news cycling through the networks. Dan Rather, and CNN, and Peter Jennings, and you know trying to pick up as much as we could, because in the length of time that it took us to walk from the Pentagon to Old Town Alexandria, both World Trade Center towers had collapsed. You know so the world changed significantly between the time we left the Pentagon and the time we got to Old Town Alexandria.

So we were just glued to the television and actually just sat there and you know talked with, talked amongst each other there for a couple hours. So I didn't get home, after giving other

people rides, 'til about four or five in the afternoon. Remember getting a call from a school newspaper at the University of Kansas, because I have a niece out there, and you know the school newspaper knew her and they wanted to get to talk to somebody that was in the Pentagon. That was a breaking story there. So I talked to them.

Then I went up and checked my email and there was an email from a co-worker who had courtesy copied a lot of people on the internet, in his email address book on a letter he wrote to his son who is in college.

It basically says, "Son," you know, "I'm safe." Just a few things like that. Had a little analysis of the day's events, but in that email it said that the Navy Command Center had taken a lot of casualties and that there were intelligence folks in there and he had heard that they had all perished.

I thought well that is not good news. Because I remember walking away from the Pentagon, seeing the side of the building that was impacted and I thought, you know, "I bet you I have dead friends and I just don't know who they are yet." I remember thinking that. Then when I saw his email I thought well I'm good friends with two people in the Naval Intelligence section that supports you know the CNO. So I called. The one guy was a bachelor and I had actually gone through Aviation Officer Candidates School with him in Pensacola, Florida.

Q. (25:29) Who's that?

A. DAN SHANOWER. So I didn't know who to call about Dan, but VINCE TOLBERT's wife you know, VINCE and his wife's name was [REDACTED], VINCE and [REDACTED] and I, and my wife [REDACTED] have had dinner a couple times and we've been to their house; they've been to ours,

and so I called [REDACTED] immediately and I said, “[REDACTED] have you heard from VINCE?” She said she hadn’t heard a word.

Now that was pretty much all I needed to hear because VINCE was a guy who showed up for work at 3:30 in the morning and he was usually home by 3:30, four o’clock in the afternoon. So at six o’clock at night she hadn’t heard from him.

So that was, and I remember telling her I said, “Well, let me see what I can do. They’re trying to do a very detailed muster now.” You know Naval Intelligence-wide, super in Pentagon. I said, “Let me make a couple of phone calls and see what I can find out.”

Well, I never found out anything of any encouragement. The initial word was that these seven people are listed as missing. Well, the gravity of the situation caused the Navy to kick in right away to the Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) program and I got a call back that night at about ten o’clock from the Director of Naval Intelligence. It’s not often I get a call from the Admiral at home. He said, “Todd, we’re going to be sending a Casualty Assistance Officer to [REDACTED] TOLBERT’s house. I want you to go with him.”

Q. (27:19) He knew of your relationship?

A. He knew, because I had passed that along when I was trying to you know find out where VINCE was and you know help along with the muster and get word to his wife. So they, yeah, they knew I knew him well.

So he, much to the credit of ADMIRAL PORTERFIELD, the DNI, he knew in advance that the Navy’s and the Armed Forces Casualty Assistance Calls Program - I think the Army calls it “Survival Assistance” – that as good as it is and as remarkable as a service as it provides to the care and nurturing the needs of the family, that it essentially turns over a stranger to the family.

So he wanted to augment that, and he took this Pentagon strike as a very personal event because he lost seven people that directly supported him in his efforts of supporting the CNO and the Secretary of the Navy. So these were his people and he was very, very engaged and very, very giving of his time and his interest and his concern for each and every family.

So he gave me that initial task to just go down there with the Casualty Assistance Officer program. Had I ever done that before? No, had never had any experience with it whatsoever. I remember telling my wife I said, you know, "I had to call [REDACTED] tonight and ask her about VINCE. I remember her saying on the phone, she said, 'Well, I haven't heard anything and I'm kind of just waiting for that "van" or that limousine'. I forget what she said, but kind of just waiting for that car to show up out front with the guys in the black suits.

Q. (29:23) That's what she said?

A. Yeah, something like that. I remember telling my wife right after the Admiral called, I said, "Well, [REDACTED] said she's waiting for that car to pull up out front and when it pulls up out front tonight, I'm going to be in it."

So we didn't get to her house until probably midnight. It was late, but she was certainly up. She had friends sitting there with her, and I remember arriving there with the Casualty Officer and also a Chaplain. So it was the three of us. That was a very painful experience, but there were no, there were no bodies recovered from the Pentagon for four or five days, because of the intense fire, and so there was a long period of "missing." That was the status, and throughout that, you know the Casualty Assistance Program is giving the spouse updates, but eventually it becomes pretty clear that there's no hope. But the military does not, you know, provide that notification of death until there's been a positive identification. In this case all the Pentagon victims, including

those on the airline, the decision was made early on that all the ID would take place in Dover Airforce Base. So the logistics, first of all there was a delay in recovering bodies. The bodies had to be flown to Fort Belvoir, Fort Belvoir helicopter to Dover Airforce Base and then Dover you know had a very big challenge on their hands, because you know, the overwhelming majority of these victims had been very badly burned and the decomposition that occurs in you know between 11 September and I think the 14th or perhaps the 15th is when the first day they started recovering bodies. So this was a very tough situation up at Dover.

But for the TOLBERT family, their, VINCE was IDed pretty early on. He was one of the first identified. I think that had to do with the fact that his office was about at the far end of where that airplane would have ended up inside the Pentagon. So I don't think there was that enormous trauma and explosion in that part that there would have been on the outer rings, because he was closer to the C ring and the airplane really didn't go any, it penetrated C ring to go into the alley between B and C, but not by much. So that part of the Navy Command Center seemed to have the most positive identifications early on in the process.

Q. (32:35) TOLBERTS have children?

A. They have three children. The oldest is a nine-year-old girl, [REDACTED]. Middle child is severely handicapped with Cerebral Palsy. Seven-year-old girl named [REDACTED]. And then they have a 21-month-old son. So there's a lot of, a lot of opportunity to help in the TOLBERT family in a situation like that. Pretty challenging.

Q. (33:09) Can you tell us about the initial visit?

A. With the Casualty Calls office?

Q. (33:21) Just kind of - what your personal involvement. That's a very unique aspect of it we haven't heard yet.

A. Yeah, I felt, you know to go back where I said, you know she tells me she's waiting for a car to pull up and I tell her I don't really know anything and then I show up in the car. So I kind of felt awkward being there early on. But it became clear to me pretty early on, particularly in the first couple days of why I had been chosen to do that. Because you know she views, or I think anybody would view the CACO and the Chaplain, they are strangers. I mean they're there to help but they are not family members and it's not the same. So for me to be in the same community and same profession as her husband and also to be her friend and she knows that I was best friends with her husband, that added a level of, I don't know if you could call it comfort, but a little bit more stability to the process then I think would have been there otherwise.

Because she knew she could come to me to get you know inside information on what Naval Intelligence was doing, and you know what activities were occurring. Where through the casualty program you know, things are kind of slow to get moving and there's a filtering of information because there's that delay of positive ID and you know they'll only tell you so much about benefits. So she could come to me to get some details that weren't available to her through the casualty program.

But the first visit was very awkward, but over the next few days as this situation got a little bit more involved, as you went from missing to confirmed dead to an Arlington burial, to a Pentagon memorial service, I was, the DNI wanted me to stick with that family and he had representatives sticking with the other families and make sure their needs are taken care of.

So I did. I missed about two and a half, three weeks of work, which my office had been dislocated anyhow, because it was badly smoke damaged. So there wasn't a whole lot of work environment that I missed. But I was essentially assigned to this family fulltime for three weeks. You know there's parts of it that will continue because Naval Intelligence is going to have a memorial established in the spring, a statue or something. They're going to fly the families back to that. I'm sure DoD is going to do a one-year anniversary next September 11th. Families will be back in town for that. So there's a relationship here that was, you know the seeds were planted and it's a bond that you know will probably never go away.

But ██████ TOLBERT and her children just moved back to ██████, Florida just a couple days ago and that's –

Q. (36:46) That where her family is?

A. No, that's where her and VINCE owned a house together and she just chose to go back there and try to start her life there among friends. She's comfortable with the handicapped facilities down there. She was comfortable with the school district. So I think she saw that - and it's a house that she owns - I just think she saw it as a kind of a neutral ground to start her life over on, because she met VINCE in Fresno. That's where they were both from, the Fresno, Lemoore, central valley area in California, and I think she just saw the move to the West Coast being pretty radical at this stage of her life and I don't think she really wanted to live there. But I think ██████ will work out for her in the long run.

Q. (37:41) You spoke at the funeral.

A. Yes.

Q. (37:44) Can you tell us a little about that?

A. I don't think I would have spoken at the funeral had it not been for this relationship that was established early on. I was good friends with VINCE, but I wasn't his best friend. I had played golf with him six weeks prior, but probably with the exception of one other time in the hallway it was the last time I'd seen him. So I considered him a close friend, but I don't think that I would have been the one giving a eulogy had it not been for the fact that his brothers were from Fresno, and couldn't fly in until the day before the service. The wife didn't think either one of them was interested in giving a eulogy. She wasn't, the father wasn't and since I had been with the family so much in that two week period between the 11th, he was buried at Arlington on the 27th, that's a little over two weeks, it was just the relationship that I had formed with them in those two weeks where they had decided on me to give the eulogy.

I had never experienced the Arlington events before, but that's really a fitting way for a good soldier and a good sailor to go out. They really do a great job up there. It was a pleasure to work with them and it was nice to see how much care and effort goes into you know a full honor ceremony and what they do for the families. So it was an experience that I wish I hadn't had to go through, but I was very comforted to see it play out.

Q. (39:31) Can you kind of give us a breakdown of what you said in the eulogy?

A. I knew VINCE pretty well, but when I was first assigned to, when it first became inevitable that I was going to give this eulogy –

Q. (39:55) Had you ever done anything like that before?

A. Oh no, well, I had spoken at my dad's funeral with my two other brothers. So I had stood up in front of a crowd like that before, in that circumstance, but I was the only speaker at VINCE TOLBERT's funeral, other than the Chaplain, you know the Chaplain's routine. So I was the only speaker.

Q. (40:21) Your father had passed away. How long ago had that been?

A. My father passed away, actually two years and three days ago. So the 9th of December in 1999.

Q. (40:32) Wow. Besides your father has anybody, have you ever lost anybody that you were close to?

A. No, not that you know, not close like that. So I'm an amateur. I'm a rookie at this. And this is Arlington. This is three hundred and fifty maybe four hundred folks there. Most of which were military. Cameras, it was being filmed by office of Naval Intelligence; Associated Press was there.

Q. (40:58) When was the funeral?

A. 27th of September. You know, the media started building on this story because VINCE was a very successful college football star at Fresno State. He'd be very glad to see how they're doing this year. I think they're 11 and 2. But he had, he was a standout football player in high school and four-year scholarship to Fresno State. So the sports crowd out in Fresno picked up on his death pretty fast. ESPN got a hold of it and the weekend before his burial, ESPN was in my house, in [REDACTED] TOLBERT's house, came in and videoed us for show they call "Outside the

Lines.” So I was on TV before this Arlington thing. The LA Times was all over this and they were at Arlington. It was, it kept building, and we were also under the assumption SENATOR MC CAIN was going to show up because VINCE’s father was a Viet Nam combat pilot for the Navy and had flown with ADMIRAL MC GANN who’s the Navy’s N7 right now, in charge of naval warfare. MC CAIN and ADMIRAL MC GANN and VINCE’s father knew each other so there was the potential here that this was going to be real big on television.

So since I spent so much time with the family, I was able to listen a lot to what the family said about VINCE. I knew what VINCE was all about. I mean I was a good friend of his, and but it was very helpful to hear what his mother would say, and hear what his father would say, and hear this person here tell a story. I started you know kind of painting this picture of this person and how I would describe him in a eulogy, because I knew what was important to the family. When I first got the task I thought, you know I really need to know what a eulogy really is. I mean speaking at your dad’s now that’s one thing, but what are you suppose to say at a eulogy. I started looking up on the internet “eulogy” you know, and there’s all these books and references and sources and canned lines.

I did that for about four minutes and I said, “I’m not doing any of this. I’m just going to talk about VINCE TOLBERT and what I know about him.” What the family knows about him and this will be easy because he really was an easy guy to talk about.

So if you look through my eulogy here, you know, I talked, one of the first things I said was how naval intelligence, the leadership we have now is real big on getting the bottom line up front. So I wanted to get the bottom line up front, because that’s the way VINCE was. He was a bottom line up front kind of guy.

So I simply said, “LCDR VINCE TOLBERT is an American hero.” But then I wanted them to separate a hero, and it’s such an easy word to throw around in the midst of a tragedy. I wanted them to know that he wasn’t a hero because of the way he died, but because of the way he lived. So I wanted to talk about how he lived his life and how in fact he was a hero everyday. He wasn’t a hero after the 11th of September. He was a hero because of the way he entered the Pentagon that morning. I spoke about his dad you know, being a Viet Nam guy, but I said, you know so some of this heroism was surely inherited.

But I focused on him being a hero because of not just what he did in the uniform, but out of uniform whether it was in friendship, which was my relationship, marriage, or fatherhood. I wanted to talk about his wife and kids as well. Talked a little bit about how I met him.

One of the things that I knew the crowd would get a kick out of you know, VINCE probably went six foot one, two hundred and eighty pounds maybe. Very big, large, muscular African-American man. Just a very intimidating presence. And just as strong as an ox with metrics in the weight room that just no one can handle, imagine. But the irony of that was that as intimidating as he looked, if you didn’t know him, once you got to know him, there was this soft, humble, friendly person that was just so caring about the needs of others. Just wasn’t an ounce of selfishness or you know personal glory associated with VINCE at all. You know he had this very successful football career that he never talked about. Nobody ever really knew anything about it, if you’d met him in the Navy. But everybody he grew up with knew all about it. When our two worlds would cross you know, they didn’t know about VINCE the naval officer and we didn’t know about VINCE the athlete. So it was like we got re-introduced to VINCE whenever we met somebody that had met him at some other point in his life.

I had heard that he had had a black belt in martial arts. I asked him about that. I said, “VINCE, is it true you have a black belt?”

He said, “Yeah.”

I said, “That is the most redundant thing I could imagine anyone pursuing.” Of course, when I said that, I said, “Most unnecessary physical qualification,” in the eulogy, everybody in the audience just thought that was hilarious, because it was true. Why would he have to spend his time getting a black belt? It’s just most people do that for self-defense. Nobody is going to challenge him.

So I wanted to point out the irony of that, because I went on to say you know, “Those of you that know him know that he’s one of the most humble, respectful, most gentle man I’ve ever encountered.”

But then I wanted to bring out his relationship with his family, too. He had been handpicked to serve at that job in the Pentagon. He had been there since April. So, one-two-three-four, five months at the most. But the job he was in at the Pentagon required him to be there 3:30, four o’clock in the morning, because the leadership gets briefed starting at 6:30, seven and on. So there’s a lot of preparation work that had to occur before that.

Keep in mind this is a father of three kids, one of which is severely handicapped. The wife works and she worked with the United, with USAA Insurance and Financial Service Corporation that has you know a large military base. But she had arranged to have a night-shift parttime. I think she worked maybe four or five hours a day, but they were in this routine since he took this Pentagon job where he would come home at 3:30 in the afternoon and he’d take the kids and she’d be off to work you know, for four or five hours, and she’d come back nine o’clock at night. You know they’d talk maybe fifteen, twenty minutes and he’s dead exhausted because he’s got

to get up at three o'clock in the morning. So they were running hard like that for you know, four to five months.

You know he was doing a magnificent job where he was, but you know guys can't keep up that kind of pace for you know, some, usually they're only in that job for about a year and then they go do something else. It's usually something rewarding in nature because they've worked so hard and done such a good service for the Navy.

So it was one of those things where, yeah, they were running hard but it was, you know you can do anything for a year. You can do anything for a year, and you know we've only got five more months of this and then it will be better. You know, so they were in the middle of that sprint.

So you know his work at the end of the day kind of just began, because then he's got this 20-month-old son that demands his time. The mother's not there, and the handicapped child you know is fulltime care. So pretty demanding environment. I brought that out in the eulogy as well.

I emphasized his unselfish approach. I also wanted them to know that although he had a very unselfish approach, he had a very long list of professional accomplishments. I pointed out the fact that he had earned three individual medals which he was attached to Central Command down in Florida. Three medals, three different medals in a three year period was something not everybody does. In fact only the few do it in my community. So I pointed that out. Talked about that loss represents one from the inside track in Naval Intelligence and we can't replace him, but immediately switch back you know the loss you can't even quantify for the family.

Talked a little bit about you know what he would ask of all of us in attendance, you know and for everybody in uniform he'd just want us to continue to do the job we're trained to do in the pursuit of justice, and he would have been you know right there with us.

I also called you know for his family and friends, wouldn't want you to be upset. He'd be glad to know that he touched your lives in a loving and meaningful way. I gave some words to [REDACTED], his wife, to close out. I said you know, "You knew VINCE better than any of us, but he would want you to have eternal strength, patient love and inspired wisdom," as she continues to raise the children.

Then for the children, you know they were all right there in the front row and I said, "Hey, your father would just ask that you do your very best in all that you do, and let only your skills and capabilities define your qualifications with grace and humility at all times." Because that's the way he was. He was never out for personal glory. He was never trying to draw attention to himself. He brought his skills and capabilities to the table and let them speak for themselves and that's all he really relied on.

Then I simply reiterated you know, "Want all of you to remember VINCE as a hero, not because of the way he died, but because of the way he lived all day and everyday, twenty-four/seven." I tried to emphasize you know, the unselfish nature of this professional and the love he had for his wife and children.

Q. (52:52) Have you given the family a copy of that?

A. Oh yeah, yeah they had it. They had emailed it all over the place. A note: when Secretary Rumsfeld had the 11 October memorial service at the Pentagon you know, President Bush was there, former President Clinton was there. Rumsfeld, the Chairman, everybody. I don't know if you were there, but it was a big event. In the middle of Secretary Rumsfeld's speech, he probably gave a ten minute speech and he talked about you know, the Pentagon, the people that we lost in the Pentagon were attack because you know they work in the Pentagon. This building that we're

in front of represents completely the opposite in values and integrity that the people that attacked it stand for. That's why they attacked it.

But in the middle of his speech, Secretary Rumsfeld started saying like, “ ‘He was a hero every single day,’ ” said a co-worker of one of the victims killed here.” Then he went on to say something about you know going home early to take care of a handicapped child and he used a couple other lines right out of my eulogy.

(Everyone chuckles)

Thought, well this is sounding familiar. It turns out that his office had called the casualty officer the day prior to that service and said, the casualty officer was at his daughter's soccer game and gets a call on his cell phone. “Hey this is the Secretary of Defense's office and we've got a...” so he has to run out to the parking lot and talk and they said, “We think you're associated with this family that was in the newspaper and we just want to make sure we've got a couple of facts straight. Is this the way it read?”

He confirmed it. So he was sitting next to me at the service and knew it was coming but hadn't said anything.

Q. (54:58) Hadn't said anything to you.

A. But, yeah, Secretary Rumsfeld chose the TOLBERT story to kind of capture the tragedy of the Pentagon.

Q. (55:09) That's right. So then you spoke again at the service in Lemoore?

A. VINCE had grown up in Lemoore, because the naval air station there is where his father was based for most of his career when he was flying A-7s. The mother really wanted to have a

hometown memorial service where all the friends that had grown up with him and the football players in the high school and all those folks could you know gather and share because very few of them if any were able to come back to the Arlington event. So that was about one month later by you know, she wasn't in a real hurry to set it up because it took a while to get over all this Arlington, and travel and people going all over the country trying to get sons, daughters, relatives here. So about a month later they did it at Lemoore and there were probably five hundred people that turned up in the hometown there. They asked me if I could come out and do the eulogy. Well, we had to make sure all the you know "I"s were dotted and the "T"s were crossed for me to do that legally and be funded to do it. But it was legally listed as casualty support and the Navy flew me out there to Fresno, rental car to Lemoore to give this eulogy on a Saturday morning service.

So I essentially had to craft you know another eulogy because I wanted to steer toward the hometown crowd. Me being a naval officer that was kind of there to report back to them what a great person had grown up among them as you know in their family and in their friendship and how well he served the United States Navy.

The night prior, the day I landed at the airport, [REDACTED], the wife picked me up and said we had to go to a high school football game that night. Turns out they had decided the day prior to retire his jersey that night at the hometown football game. So had to go to that little ceremony at halftime. I hadn't been to a high school football game in a long time so it was kind of inspirational to see that because the whole town was behind this. Had signs up on billboards, "LIEUTENANT COMMANDER TOLBERT Memorial Service," and the city council had voted to name a portion of Highway 198 which runs between the town of Lemoore and the air station as the

“Lieutenant Commander Otis V. Tolbert Memorial Highway.” So that had just been decided before I got out there.

The Navy supported VINCE’S service on Saturday with two FA-18s with flyby, following 21 guns and taps and so it was a real strong hometown showing. You could tell you know I spoke at Arlington three weeks prior to a military crowd about hey this guy was a hero everyday, but to that hometown Lemoore, California, he was a hero. He grew up as a hero and that was very apparent.

So it all, all those things and the messages, hometown heroism, and love of family, it all kind of came together and the Navy really took care of its own in the case of VINCE TOLBERT.

Q. (59:00) How were you getting your information? The Casualty Assistance program has its function. Where were you getting your information?

A. Well in this case the Pentagon Family Assistance Center was kind of like CACO headquarters if you will, and set up a shop there in the Crystal City Sheraton. The Crystal City Sheraton was a place that I probably spent three or four hours a day for two solid weeks in preparation for this Arlington thing, because that’s where the families were getting their information. There was a three-star Army general put in charge of it which was probably the most perfect personality choice I’d ever seen. This guy was just perfect for the job. His name was LT GENERAL VAN ALSTYNE.

You know the families had everything they needed right there. They had financial councilors. Guys that were smart on benefits and could spit out their social security and SGLI and monthly payments and just gave them a snap shot in very easily understood graphical format, you know, what they were faced with. The families really felt good about that, but the Red Cross was there.

Grieving dogs were there. They were called therapy dogs you know, never heard of therapy dogs. The food was free. They ate lunch there. They ate breakfast there. They ate dinner there if they wanted. There was always coffee, juice, cookies. Everything was laid out for those families. That's where the Washington Post was and they were collecting the stories that they had published in the paper of each individual victim. It was just really, you know it was a phenomenal display of the outpouring of support that was coming at these families.

But the three-star would do briefings twice a day and he would stand up everyday and his primary purpose was to say, "Here's the status of the rescue effort." Here's how many bodies have been pulled out. Who's been identi – you know, those kinds of details.

All that information gets funneled through the CACO process, but where there was so much in this situation that you know it was just information overload. So it kind of ends up you know I would, the information I was getting was just stuff I'm picking up talking to other people that are involved with other families that were doing the same thing I was. I'd share with him. He'd share his information with me. Both of us had cell phones. You know I racked up a \$200 cell phone bill that month just because it was glued to my ear. Couldn't figure out how we did any of this stuff before we had cell phones.

But it was just teamwork. It was, you know I wasn't getting – and she'd come to me with military command specific information like can you find out how much leave he had on his LES you know, and you know I've got the same PSD you know so little things like that.

You know she'd ask me if the CACO wasn't around you know, she'd ask me CACO related questions or you know, or if I wasn't around she'd ask him questions. So it was teamwork.

Q. (01:02:45) If [REDACTED] was here what roadblocks or frustrations did she go through, would she tell us that she went through?

A. She would talk to you initially about the frustration of not, the delay of “missing” to “dead”.

Q. (01:03:01) How long was that for her?

A. Well for her it was pretty short. He was ID’ed on a Sunday. So Tuesday the 11th to Sunday the 16th and I don’t think there was anybody IDed earlier than the 16th. There may have been one on the 15th, but I think the 16th was the earliest.

OK so there’s that and there’s - when you’re just missing, there’s only so much that the CACO process is willing to talk to you about. They’re not going to go over you know, your SGLI’s not even going to be discussed. You know there’s benefits that kick in after death that just aren’t discussed. They’re not even really addressed. So that was frustrating.

Then you know there’s a delay in confirmed dead to Dover turning over remains. So there’s frustration there.

“Well, why is that taking so long?”

“Well, got to do an autopsy.”

“Well, what do we have to do an autopsy for? We know why he died.”

That actually was probably the deepest level of my personal involvement in this case. Because the Navy is hard over on a military escort for remains that come from Dover and go to private funeral homes or wherever. So I was the military escort, the military escort. I was surprised to learn that Dover Airforce Base is only about ninety miles from here. Drove up there in about an hour and a half. That was shocking to me.

But she would have talked about you know how frustrating that was. That delay there, because I don't think I went to Dover until maybe Wednesday or Thursday of that week. And you know there's the frustrating part that she's dealing with is "When can I have a burial at Arlington? When do I tell people to fly in from Fresno?" When you know, the family wants to come in and help, but the family can't come in and sit around for three weeks, which is really what her parents ended up doing, you know, and but brothers and sisters who are working, they can't do that. So that's tough for – and there's no real solution there. I mean this is a unique circumstance. But for the family you know, they want answers and they want them now and they want to plan. You know they want to move forward as much as they can, because that's kind of a way of grieving. You know move forward so that you can forget about the pass. So she would have been frustrated with that.

Her contemporary frustration is something you can read about you know in the papers just about every single day. Actually I kind of thought early on this is going to be a problem because you've got three, four thousand casualties up in New York. You've got you know hundreds, no less than two hundred casualties in Virginia. You've got the casualties in Pennsylvania. The nation you know, outpour support, charities, fundraisers, you know. Hey, give to this fund; give to that fund. Hey, we're raising money over here.

I'm thinking who is tracking all this and you know who gives the family these funds that are raised? How does this all work?

And even though - I think [REDACTED] will tell you the outpouring of support and the assistance from the Red Cross is invaluable. All you hear on the news is things like these funds are raised, these funds are raised. There's corruption over here. These people are holding these funds. So the

families are thinking, “How much information is there out there that I am just totally unaware of and how do I get my hands around all this? Who do I call?”

You know the military’s not really structured to do that, because a lot of this is you know, private fund here, private fund there and you know who knows. Then things pop out of the blue. A Bethesda businessman gave ██████ TOLBERT a check for \$17,000. Said he wanted to. Said he didn’t want to contribute to a fund. Said he wanted to read about a family and read about ██████ TOLBERT’s handicapped child, a young child and said you know, “I just want to give to that family.” Seventeen thousand dollars.

I had to go speak last week at a group called the Executive Women in Travel Organization at the Army/Navy Club. They did the same thing. They researched families at the Pentagon and they wanted to give funds that they raised themselves to the TOLBERT family and they’re mailing me a check tomorrow for \$4,000.

Q. (1:08:09) Great

A. So those are point to point kind of evolutions that are very easy to track because those people call you on the phone and say, “I want to give you money.”

Well great you know, but you know when you read in the newspaper about hey, the Red Cross is holding funds and these folks are doing this it’s just insurmountable to even get your hands around. You don’t know what’s all out there and you don’t know who to ask. So she’s frustrated with that, and that frustration is shared among many victims.

Q. (1:08:44) And adding to that frustration probably is the fact that she’s now geographically removed from the situation.

A. Yeah, I mean this is information central here. You know you can't get much closer to the information than you are right here, and now she's down in [REDACTED]. Now the Navy assigns her a Casualty Assistance Officer in [REDACTED].

Q. (01:09:06) Really?

A. Yep.

Q. (01:09:08) Even after the funeral and everything?

A. Yep.

Q. (01:09:09) Why is that?

A. Well, I don't know when exactly it cuts off, but you know she's got household goods that you know are sitting in storage down there because her property isn't open yet. She's you know, she'll have to travel back here next year for the memorial. There's things like that you know when something comes up she needs somebody to call. Now, it's not that person's you know problem to solve necessarily, but it's his task to kind of get her hooked up with the person that can solve it.

There's a secondary next-of-kin CACO assigned to the parents down in Tennessee. There was a CACO assigned out in Fresno to help them with that memorial service. So there's layers of this support that kind of trickle out to the edge of the lake that you know it's great to see. There's nothing comparable to it I don't think, in the private sector. So yeah, she is removed from the information now but she's not – I mean she certainly knows how to get a hold of me for things that can be done up here and she has a CACO rep down there.

Q. (01:10:36) How have things changed at N20 since 11 September?

A. Well, initially there was a lot of, you know when the nation absorbs an attack of that nature, I think there's a natural tendency to hurl out a lot of old assumptions that we were dealing with threats that just, now we have to focus on this. There was a lot of churn on that, not just in N20 but throughout Naval Intelligence and throughout the national intelligence community. We need to figure out right now how to stop something like this from happening in the future.

As you churn through that in the first few weeks when you don't have an office, your office has been burned, it's you know smoky, it's environmentally unsafe to even go back in there, nevertheless we were suppose to move anyhow. So our move ended up getting accelerated to Crystal City. So in a span of about a month we had a big contractor rollover. Our contractor support team had just changed hands. We had to move. We had the airplane hit the building and then with the war on terrorism we lost about 40 or 45 percent of our people who got called off to go do other things. Deploy to Bahrain, help fight the war, deploy to this carrier help fight the war. This office over in OSD needs help on counter-terrorism, take somebody from Naval Intelligence.

So it, all of a sudden we have not just all the old tasks we were doing, but all the new tasks of trying to figure out homeland defense and anti-terrorism force protection and do that with half the people. So it really hasn't been you know a walk in the park here. I don't think N20s going through anything unique. I think a lot of organizations across the Navy are feeling the same kind of pressure. It's battling the old. It's confronting the new, and it's trying to come to grips with you know supporting this in a resource constrained environment.

You know there's money being thrown at this problem, but that just involves more work because now you have to figure out you know where this money can be best applied. So it's been pretty chaotic. Only in the last week or two can I sense any kind of attempt to return to normalcy. But you can just imagine, I mean we're here inside the beltway. We're working for you know a directorate of the OPNAV staff if you will. The whole nation is trying to get its arms wrapped around you know, how do we win this war on terrorism? Who is the enemy? Who are we fighting? How are we going to prevent this in the future?

So the decision-makers at the top are asking a lot of questions and they want answers and they're asking questions that aren't easily answered, but nevertheless they want answers. This involved innovative thinking. New approaches you know to new problems. So there's a lot of, there's a lot of pressure. You know, starts at the top you know with the leaders getting pressed by the big decision makers, and that works its way down and you know when you're on the end of the dogs tail, it's quite a wag when it wags.

(Everyone laughs)

Close to the beginning of the tail it's not much of a movement, but – So it's been pretty chaotic, but the whole national experience for me I mean you've been through it. You know what it was like to try to comprehend all that.

Dealing with the TOLBERT family at least allowed me as an individual, the opportunity to feel like I was contributing and unto a fallen shipmate's family. I mean that was meaningful. You know, I'm not helping win the war on terrorism, but I'm helping my buddy's family. So that allowed me to kind of narrow the crisis and little bit. But still you know even after I would spend all day with ██████ TOLBERT, her kids and VINCE's parents, I'd come home at night and watch the news and just think well, I'm just one of four or five thousand people in this situation

that are trying to help somebody out here you know. There's just thousands upon thousands of people that are directly impacted by this. And the reverberation of secondary impacts just spread through the whole country. Everybody you talked to knows somebody or somebody that just barely escaped World Trade Center or you know, it's amazing.

You know, you hear the number you know, now I think it's down to 3,000 up in New York City, but 3500 people you think in a nation of 250 million it doesn't sound like that big a number. But walk down the street and talk to somebody about this and there'll be a connection.

Q. (01:16:16) That's right. Kind of a reflective question. What is – has this changed you, and if so how?

A. Well there's certainly an appreciation for what's important and what's not that makes you reevaluate your priorities in something like this, because boy you see a situation like the TOLBERTs and here's now a single mother left with three children. Not just an infant boy that is fulltime, but she's got a handicapped child that will never, ever not need care. So she's looking at a lifetime commitment here and right now she's essentially by herself. You just look at that and think boy, I don't think I'm going to complain when you know, the water bottle isn't filled up at work again or you know the – we have to work an extra half-hour making power point slides, or something, or there's traffic, or the Metro doesn't show up on time. You know, it allows you to just say you know, life's a piece of cake you know. It can be a lot worse.

The whole experience, I mean we've watch the war in Afghanistan unfold and you get an appreciation for the way those people live over there and it just, the whole experience has allowed me to look you know inward quite a bit and say, "Life's pretty good."

Q. (01:18:15) I'd love to sit down and talk with you again couple months from now, especially as we look at homeland security and some of your involvement and perception. So as you go through these next months riding the dog's tail, take good mental notes. When he finally lies down and takes a little nap maybe we can talk again and get the perspective of a couple things. One is just on the capacity of N20, but also some of the leadership challenges with some of the people you're working around, and with, and working for you.

A. Well, I you know, a family member always, a lot of family members say well are you going to have to deploy? Are you going to have to go fight this war? I'm in a situation where I'll have to go to sea someday on a carrier, but you know my numbers not up yet. Soon will be so I don't know where I'll be nine months from now. I think I'll be here at least through the summer, but it was interesting right after 11 September and the evidence started coming out about bin Laden and Afghanistan and AlQueda and everybody wants to play. Everybody wants to go help win the war. You know as it turns out you know, we're in these jobs over here in the Pentagon for a reason. I mean we do do things that need to get done in support of the CNO.

One thing I remember the DNI saying one day is all of you are going to have your lives impacted by this. It might inconvenience you on a weekend. It might cause you to deploy. He says, but we can't all deploy at once. Everybody's going to get their turn so this can't be like you know the little kids soccer game where everybody runs to the ball. Everybody's got a job to do.

Everybody's got a position to play and that's the way we're going to do it.

I thought that was pretty good about all the kids running to the ball, because it, you know, that's what everybody wanted to do.

"Oh, I want to leave my DC job. I want to go out on the ship."

We don't have that many ships.

(Laughter)

Q. (01:20:24) Well, we'd love to talk to you again. Anything else you want to add for the historical record for today?

A. I would say it was a tragic event. It was a lifetime of experience in the last ninety days and I wish I hadn't had to go through it, because I lost a very good friend in the process, but if I could say you know, anything good that came out of it for me as a person was to see how well, what a remarkable job the armed services and the Navy in particular do when it comes to insuring the needs of the families are met in a circumstance like this. It really was just a sensational display of the Navy taking care of it's own.

Q. (01:21:17) Good to hear. Who else should we talk with? Who would be some other good ones to talk with, from what you've experienced?

A. Have you talked to anybody else like that was doing my kind of stuff?

Q. (01:21:30) CACO?

A. Well like CACO support.

Q. (01:21:32) Yes, not so much, we talked about some of the coordination efforts of the CACOs. We're going to talk with the Casualty Assistance folks there at NDW(Navy District Washington). We've been to Dover. Spoke to the Naval Liaison team up there. That was a real experience. In that facility.

A. I bet. Those guys helped me out a lot. I mean that Dover experience I kind of eluded to it there. It was probably the deepest I got on a personal level because the spouse wanted to see the remains.

Q. (01:22:10) Ohhhh.

A. And I thought, OK, she wants to see the remains, you know, because she you know, she had heard he got IDed early on. He was IDed by fingerprints. So I think she was operating on the smallest assumption, well finger prints, that means he's got a hand and everything's fine. Not the case at all. But when I went up to Dover, the spouse was pretty much insisting that she was going to see the remains, and she would be the only one that did. So I just started asking questions up there of the corpsman. I think it was a Chief. I said, "I've got," you know, "spouse wants to see the remains," and I had seen a spreadsheet back in his office. I mean if you were up there you might have seen the same spreadsheet, but had all the names up there, and you know "non-viewable, non-viewable, non-viewable" and then some of them were viewable and then they crossed it out and wrote non-viewable.

So I asked him a question, I said, "I saw that you had changed some of the statuses from viewable to non-viewable."

He said nobody in the Pentagon's going to be viewable. So OK. I think there were two exceptions. And I just mentioned to him, I said, "Well you know I've got this spouse that you know wants to view the remains."

He said, "Sit right there. Be right back." He went and got the pathologist. So the pathologist you know, sits me down asks me what case I was working and he says, "Well, you a friend of the family?"

I said, "Yeah." I said, "I'm a military escort."

He said, "We can make this as detailed as you want to hear it, or you know I can go easy on you," but he says, "It's your job to go back and convince the spouse that she doesn't want to do this."

Well, I'm in a pretty serious situation here. He talked to me a long time. You know if you talked to the Dover folks up there you realize that these are experts that are flown in from all over the country to you know, help in a mass casualty like this so. He talked with me for a while and then he went and got the mortician. The mortician came out and talked to me. You know I started getting this professional indoctrination into mortuary science. That you know I felt like I had about six credits when I walked out of there. You know they told me stuff A) I never wanted to hear, but stuff that I kind of needed to hear to go back and convince the wife that

Q. (01:25:03) She didn't want to do this.

A. "You don't want to do this," and here's why. I took her out to breakfast the next day and then you know, about a two and a half-hour breakfast with BOB EVANS and I told her everybody I'd talk to, and you know, I only told her as much as I needed to tell her. But she made the decision. The compromise position that I was hoping for is that all she would do is open the casket and all you see is the uniform and the blanket. You can see the uniform laid out you know in pristine condition with the ribbons and the Purple Heart and the MSM (Meritorious Service Medal) were hanging there as if they had just been presented. But you know you don't see anything that resembles a body and they do that deliberately.

So she just opened the casket you know. Touched that and then that was it. So that was good.

Q. (01:25:49) Were you with her when that happened?

A. Yeah.

Q. Wow.

A. Now fortunately, I had you know the, since I was military escort, the funeral director, he was aware that I was fighting this issue and he says, “If she wants to go through with this you have to give me as much heads-up as you possibly can.”

So you know, and then he said, “I want you to know what this is like.” So he opened up the casket for me so that I could even prep her for that so that you know it wasn’t such a, so that she kind of knew exactly what she was going to see. That was helpful. I mean –

Q. (01:26:33) So you had a chance to tell her what she was getting ready to see?

A. Yep. Now I don’t, I don’t know if that was the right thing to do, but I did learn that morticians and funeral directors they take this stuff very seriously. And when they say non-viewable, they don’t, they mean non-viewable. They mean no way. The pathologist – the mortician up there was saying hey, you know we make this decision pretty early on. There’s no such thing as a border line case. If it’s borderline we’re going to do everything we can to make it viewable, because we know it’s important to the family. But when we say non-viewable, that means non- no way.

This subject came up at the Family Assistance Center with General Van Alstyne and he had to tell people the same story.

I rode back in the hearse all the way from Dover with another mortician from a local funeral home in Dover and he said yeah, he says non-viewable means –

Q. (01:27:40) So you drove up to Dover.

A. With the CACO.

Q. (01:27:49) With the CACO and then you drove back with the hearse.

A. Rode back in the hearse.

Q. (01:27:49) OK.

Q. (Another) Now ultimately she has the finally decision?

A. If she wants to see it, she can see it. And she also gets one action item I have to, she can have full access to the autopsy if she wants it. But, instead of taking the three months.

That became something else I had to dig into because I said, I asked them what the cause of death was. In VINCE's case, the cause of death was smoke inhalation. I said well that's not good. Because she had had an eyewitness come down. I think you talked to a LCDR CHUCK CAPETS.

Q. (01:28:36) Yes.

A. I think CHUCK was the one that gave you my name.

Q. Yes.

A. CHUCK came down, you know, I'm good friends with CHUCK, but CHUCK doesn't work down in IP. He just happened to be down there. So when I was trying to find people that could tell [REDACTED] what it was like down there, I never thought to call CHUCK because he doesn't work there. I found out a couple of days later he was in fact there. He came real close to losing his life,

because he was just on the other side of the hallway. Nevertheless he was able to tell [REDACTED] an eyewitness account of what that would have been like back when VINCE was hit. So she had developed that sense of comfort about instantaneous death; no suffering and immediate.

Then I come back from Dover with a smoke inhalation story, but I knew enough that it was going to be sensitive at the time so I started asking the questions and that's when the pathologist came out and said, "Here's the way the autopsy works here. I've got to come up with a definitive reason of why this person died. Now if I've got blunt force trauma to the head I don't know if that caused the guys heart to stop. His oxygen shut off. You know I can't attach that to death necessary."

He was just throwing out examples. He said, "But if I've got a half inch of soot in a guys trachea," he says, "I know that killed him," and he said, "So I have to come up with something definitive. Now when you sit there and hear smoke inhalation, you're probably thinking about you know carbon monoxide or camp fire stuff." He said, "I'm talking about jet fuel that was probably inhaled you know in a gasp by a unconscious person and that was never exhaled. You know it was that fast." he said. But you know that information I was able to prep [REDACTED] for for someday when she's in [REDACTED] and gets this autopsy mailed to her and sees smoke inhalation she now knows what the story is.

Q. (01:30:54) Wow.

A. And the only reason I was able to talk to all these folks up there is because when we arrived they said well there's been a delay. "You're going to be stuck here for about four hours." Well, if I hadn't of been delayed up there I wouldn't have had all this information. Because I kind of just stumbled into it anyhow, because I had time and I started asking questions. But that was

probably the you know, that was clearly the most personal side of this story that I got involved in.

Q. (01:31:28) Wow, who else should we talk with?

A. There's a guy who worked with another Naval Intelligence victim. His name's FRED FREDRICKSON, and he works in my office.

Q. (01:31:38) He does. Ok.

A. And –

Q. (01:31:43) Lieutenant Commander type?

A. He's a civilian.

Q. Civilian?

A. Yeah, I think he's a GS15. Either a 14 or a 15.

Q. (01:31:50) He did what again?

A. He basically like me was assigned to -

Q. (01:31:56) As a family Assistance?

A. Yes.

Q. OK. For a civilian for?

A Yeah it was for –

Q. Was that intentional, civilian for a civilian? Or was it just more personality?

A. In this case this civilian use to work for MR FREDRICKSON.

Q. Who was he working under then.

A. This civilian was the 25-year-old BRADY HOWELL was killed. He was a Presidential Intern. So he was a brilliant, brilliant young civilian that was you know, just working his way around diff- he had worked in another part of the CNO's staff a year prior and just happened to be on a you know, stint with Naval Intelligence and became a member of the briefing thing. He's survived by his wife. They were both Mormon and I think she still lives here in Arlington, but yeah FRED FREDRICKSON's, he's still working with her. Some of these Red Cross issues.

Q. (01:33:06) That would be good. His number, same as yours?

A. I don't know his number, but I can, I'll, I can call you back with that.

Q. OK that will be great.

A. I might have it here. Looks like it's [REDACTED].

Q. OK, great. Anybody else you can think of? If not right now you can get back with me.

A. I mean there are you, how big's this effort. Are you trying to talk to the Admirals and – ?

Q, (01:33:52) Yes. We're going to try and have the story together.

A, You know VICE ADMIRAL KEATING lost 28 people.

Q. (01:33:58) Right. We talked to some folks in there. They're obviously fighting the war still.

A. Did you talk to KEVIN HANNES?

Q. No.

A. I don't know his number. KEVIN HANNES described himself to me as kind of like the central guy for ADMIRAL KEATING that's handling all these CACO issues. So he'd kind of be, you know he's a Navy Commander, he's like me, but he's not just attached to one family. He's kind of like a coordinating element for you know all 28 families.

Q. Really.

A. Yeah. His last name's spelled H-A-N-N-E-S. I'd be able to look his number up on the email when I get back.

Q. (01:34:40) OK Great. Anybody else you can think of you know, just you know, give me a call on that as well. But I would like to get together with you a couple months from now when we're focused more in homeland security stuff and get your perspective from there and that will be a different perspective.

A. OK.

Q. Well thanks for taking the time to be with us now.

A. Sure thing, you want to keep this.

Q. Yes, absolutely.

A. OK.

Transcribed by:
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12 June 2003