

**Naval Historical Center  
Oral Interview Summary Form**

**Interviewers:**

CDR Carol O'Hagan  
YNCS (AW) Kathleen Wright

**Interviewer's Organization:**

Naval Historical Center  
Naval Historical Center

**Interviewee:**

Barbara Wilson

**Current Address:**

████████████████████  
████████████████████

(w) N09B13 – Navy Awards

**Date of Interview:**

11 Apr 02

**Place of Interview:**

Washington Navy Yard

**Number of Cassettes:**

One

**Security Classification:**

Unclassified

**Name of Project:** Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

**Subject Terms/Key Words:** Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; Awards

**Abstract of Interview:**

**Interviewee Information:**

Ms. Wilson was born in ██████████, MD. She grew up in Maryland, attended and graduated from college. After college she began work for the Department of Justice. After a few years she changed jobs and began to work for the Department of the Navy in the current organization she is in but they were under SECNAV vice OPNAV who they are currently overseen by. This organization was the Secretary of the Navy's Awards Board and the year was 1978. Their office was originally in the Navy Annex. They then moved to the Hoffman Building in Alexandria. In 1995 the Secretary of the Navy Award's Board and the Chief of Naval Operations Awards Boards were consolidated and collocated at the Washington Navy Yard in Building 36. Even though the two organizations have separate boards the organization is one: Navy Awards. The consolidation is of the administrative staffs. Ms. Wilson was originally a citation writer for both the SECNAV and CNO. She was then promoted to the position of Decorations and Medals Specialist with the SECNAV Awards Board. In April 1999 the Branch Head of Navy Awards, N09B33, retired and Ms. Wilson moved into her position. The Division is called Director of Organization and Management Services Division under the Director Navy Staff. She had no personal military background even though she has worked for the Department of Navy for many years. She has four brothers who were all in the Army.

**Topics Discussed:**

The Navy Awards office is responsible for the processing and adjudication of awards at the CNO and SECNAV level. They maintain the awards information management system. This maintains the personal awards records for everyone in the Department of the Navy.

There are nine other members of her staff that do a diversified number of jobs. They are the custodians of foreign gifts given to Navy members.

Traditionally there has always been one military billet on the staff that reported to the SECNAV as well as periodically they get other military personnel. The OPNAV side also has a military person.

On a day-to-day and weekly basis they receive the awards of the individuals who are being recognized by CNO or SECNAV or who have been recommended in the field for awards whose approving authority is CNO or SECNAV (Legion of Merit and above as well as all combat and terrorism related awards). All of the awards processed related to 11 Sep were initially reviewed at the CNO Awards board and then turned over to SECNAV for final adjudication.

On 11 Sep they had someone who had been detailed to the office to help them. She had been detailed from the security office at the Pentagon and was friends with Mr. Lynch, who worked in the Navy Command Center. They were corresponding via email that morning and he mentioned what was happening in New York. This alerted the office to what was happening. The email correspondence kept up through the morning until she emailed him back and received no response. They then heard on a television that a plane had hit the Pentagon. Some people in the office started to get nervous, especially when they were told they might be put on lock down. They lost their phone service. They were also unable to call out on cell phones.

The base went into lock down with no one allowed on or off the base. This was scary because people started to think something more was going to happen. Around 1100 they could receive calls but could not make outgoing calls. They started to receive calls from family members.

She normally goes to 1200 mass every weekday at the Navy Yard. It was a little before 1200 when they announced people were going to be let off the Navy Yard a little at a time. She had been wondering if they would be having mass and thought she would go check. A reservist, CDR Biskaduros, was there working in the office that day and decided to go to mass with Ms. Wilson. Most of the staff decided to go home when allowed to. Ms. Wilson and CDR Biskaduros went to the chapel, but on their way they found Marines guarding the waterfront. They finally made their way to the chapel, which normally would have about 15-20 people at the midday service, but on this day was full. The priest conducting mass had been at the Exchange on base and was caught in the lock down, while the normal chaplain had been caught off base.

Later in the afternoon Ms. Wilson decided to leave and went to get her car at the parking garage. She went to the top deck of the garage and could see the Pentagon from there. There were other people there watching the Pentagon as well.

When Ms. Wilson got home she had a phone call from her niece, Andrea Adam, who worked at the Pentagon in the A ring. Her niece had totally panicked during the evacuation. She hadn't known which way to go to get out of the Pentagon. An older woman, Janis Allen, had told her to hold onto her and she led her out of the Pentagon. This woman is Ms. Wilson's family's hero for

helping Andrea out. Andrea Adam catches a commuter bus to and from work so she had no way home. Janis Allen gave her a ride to her car at the commuter lot so she could get home.

The next day they started to hear about casualties. The Director Navy Staff called in a number of reservists as support staff. Captain Maryanne Lynch, a reservist, was called in and tasked with heading up the awards dealing with the events of 11 Sep at the Pentagon. All the awards became expedited awards due to the memorial services being set up. They tried to make the process as painless as possible and initially tried to bypass the normal documentation steps. They found out quickly they needed to back up and retain the documentation steps. Initially they were working with 33 Navy personnel (combination civilian and military) that were killed.

They kept thinking about how they had just finished the *USS Cole* awards. From May to October is also their peak busy season due to military transfers and retirements. When 11 Sep came along they had no time to catch up with their normal load.

One thing that made these awards different from any other she had done was the familiarity of the names. She has a friend who recently retired and whose last command had been N3/N5. He knew 17 of the 33 Navy casualties. It was new to be doing posthumous awards for individuals on their staff. Everyone on the staff knew someone or had talked to someone whose name was on the list.

As people's remains were being identified they would receive the information from Capt. Lynch and process the Purple Heart. They would also be given the anticipated dates of the memorial services to ensure the Purple Hearts were at the services to present to the family.

Prior to remains being identified there was a list from Casualty of people identified to Ms. Wilson's office as probably killed. The approval for these Purple Hearts was verbal without any paperwork. It was a terrorist attack and they were killed, they got the Purple Heart. Qualifications for the Purple Heart are that the individual sustain some type of injury as a direct result of the enemy where they engaged the enemy. Whether they had the opportunity to fight back is not the issue.

Once they got the list of the names of presumed dead they went ahead and prepared the certificate, no citation is given with the Purple Heart. They also needed to gather the medal sets. With the *USS Cole* they had to order more Purple Heart medal sets. They hadn't had to issue many Purple Hearts since Vietnam except for the *USS Cole* incident. With budget cuts they usually try to keep peacetime awards on hand because that is 99% of what they do. They do not keep a lot of Purple Hearts and other combat awards on hand. The Marine Corps Awards Office in Quantico had Purple Heart medal sets and drove some to her office.

As the other awards came in they set up special awards boards for the 11 Sep Pentagon attack awards. There were awards from Navy Achievement and Navy Commendation to the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is a peacetime award in the sense that you are not in a "combat zone hostile environment" and is given for a peacetime action at a great risk to oneself. Because the people that went into the Pentagon were not rescuing people at great

risk to themselves in a “combat zone” they did not receive the Bronze Star. The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is the noncombat equivalent of the Bronze Star.

As they got the cases in they entered them into a database to enable them to be tracked and put on permanent record. They then set up the special board. The board members were determined and they went through the awards meticulously. It was difficult to contact the board members and commands because of so many having been displaced from the Pentagon. They couldn’t go to the Global Locator to find phone numbers for people, as they normally would be able to.

The awards were processed on the CNO side of the house. CDR Brian Fletcher, the Secretary for the Board of Decorations and Medals, was collated with them even though he’s a SECNAV billet. Ms. Wilson’s staff provides administrative support to the board and sets up the administrative issues for the SECNAV board as well. They started the process of administrative setup for the SECNAV board concurrently with the setup for the CNO board, which meant all they had to do was get the results from the CNO board for the SECNAV board to be ready to go.

There is research involved in these awards. They look to find out what was done previously in similar incidents such as at the Marine barracks in Lebanon. They do a case history of past similar events. This helps them look at precedents that may be out of the normal. It also gives a comparison of awards given in similar incidents. This was different because it happened on U.S. soil.

The cases went through the SECNAV board. They had already started the process of having all the awards generated. They try to hold off for a decision before they actually print the award, but the soft copy is done. If there is a change in the award the meat of the citation doesn’t change but the award given may. The appropriate lead on and closing sentences would be all that would change as well as salutations. Before they even set up the first board they also looked at what was recommended and made sure they had enough medals and at least ten over for upgrades and downgrades.

The whole staff stepped up to the plate and worked on things they didn’t normally do to get all the awards done. With the budget cuts they had to make due with what they had. They put all the regular awards on hold to use the presentation folders, whose supply was almost exhausted, for the Pentagon awards.

They also kept getting straggler awards after the boards met. They had to be reviewed specially. Capt Sweeney would hold a cyber board via computer and email. They also had walk cases where the cases were walked around to the various board members.

Some of the people on her staff attended the funerals of some of the victims. Two people from her staff attended the SECNAV award ceremony.

They still have some straggler awards coming in from the 11 Sep events at the Pentagon.

The Defense of Freedom Medal is the civilian equivalent to the Purple Heart. There was initially quite a bit of discussion about whether the civilian DOD employees would be awarded Purple

Hearts. The Army asked for a waiver of Congressional law that was passed stating the Purple Heart was to be designated primarily to members of the armed forces. There are benefits associated with the Purple Heart that are not associated with the Defense of Freedom award due to the difference in the benefits accorded to Purple Heart recipients because they are military. DOD was able to get the Defense of Freedom award established so it was awarded to civilians meriting it from experiences at the Pentagon on 11 Sep.

Abstracted by:  
CDR Carol O'Hagan  
17 Apr 02

**Naval Historical Center  
Oral Interview Transcript**

**Interviewers:**

CDR Carol O'Hagan  
Senior Chief Kathleen Wright

**Interviewer's Organization:**

Navy Historical Center  
Navy Historical Center

**Interviewee:**

Barbara Wilson

**Current Address:**

Navy Awards Board  
Washington Navy Yard

**Date of Interview:**

11 April 2002

**Place of Interview:**

Washington Navy Yard

**Number of Cassettes:**

Two

**Security Classification:**

Unclassified

**Name of Project:** Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

**Subject Terms/Key Words:** Navy Awards Board; Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001

**Transcript of Interview:**

**Interviewee Information:**

Born in Maryland. Upon graduation from college went to work part-time for the Department of Defense, then for the Department of Justice, and then for the Navy. Started in 1978 at the Navy Annex, then in 1995 Secretary of the Navy Awards Boards for whom she worked and the Chief of Naval Operations Awards Boards consolidated the administration staff. Moved the operation to the Navy Yard. She initially was a citation writer for both the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations. Moved into Decorations and Medals Specialist in SECNAV. In 1999 the branch head of Navy Awards retired and she moved into her position in what was called N09B, and is now 13B. They work for Director of Organization and Management Services Division under the Directorate main staff. Her four brothers served in the Military, but none in the Navy. She has worked for the military for so many years she sometimes feels she in the military. The responsibility of the Navy Awards office is Headquarters responsibility for processing and adjudication of both the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of Navy Awards that are approved. They serve as the Navy-wide headquarters office for policy guidance, direction and multitude of questions that arise with Navy awards at any level. They maintain and are responsible for the awards information management system as originally established by the Secretary of the Navy to maintain the awards database. Their database networks with BUPERS database for the awards portion of service records. Another area of responsibility is maintaining the SECNAV Navy/Marine Corps Awards manual of instructions and other special products, like the tracking and storage of foreign gifts, changes made by Congress and veterans affairs. They

are staffed by two military personnel and the rest are civilians. Their day-to day routine consists primary of conducting, setting up and processing all awards that come to the level of the Chief of Naval Operations or the Secretary of the Navy for final decisions.

**Topics Discussed:**

(no questions was asked)

A. Pretty much on a day-to-day basis, on a weekly basis, biweekly basis we receive the awards for those individuals that are being recognized by the Chief of Naval Operations or the Secretary of the Navy, or have been recommended out in the field for awards that are approved at our level, which is Legion of Merit and above and all combat awards, and all Terrorist related awards are kind of handled at the SECNAV level. So awards that are submitted must come up the chain of command to the highest level of authority for that particular award. So all of the awards that were processed as the result of September 11<sup>th</sup> were initially reviewed at the CNO awards board, and then we put it over to the SECNAV side of the house for final adjudication with the SECNAV Awards Board. So it kind of had like double hands on it. We do that in a lot of cases where we handle it on the CNO side and then we have to handle it on the SECNAV side as well. On September 11 it was amazing you know how I guess anyone you talk to can tell you what they were doing on that particular day. Ask me what I was doing. Ask me what I was doing, (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 207). I've got to stop and pull out my calendar, my little date book and see OK was there any appointment and something comes back to refresh my memory, you know exactly what I was doing because unless it was a special occasion we don't remember (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 209) especially at work when you do so much. You know it's hard to remember.

But I do know that on that particular day because of the variety of things we do, especially with the awards and trying to get additional support with that, we kind of had like an assembly line going and we're still getting combat action and requests coming in. We could always use the

help of somebody that's not necessarily familiar with the awards, but just some of the things that you know being done.

There's one particular lady that had been detailed to our office temporarily and she was only with us a very short time, but it was just interesting that you know I'm going into her interview because it kind of like brings back a picture of what was going on.

She was detailed to us from the security office at the Pentagon and there was a gentleman at the Pentagon who worked in the Navy Command Center that had befriended her. You know they were good friends and I don't know the nature of the email that he had sent her that morning, or she had sent him, but at the time he was sending her the email was when they heard about the plane hitting the Twin Towers thing in New York. At that same time one of the other ladies in the office had some kind of talk show on radio that she listens to and they had indicated the same thing. So that was what brought us to the attention of it, and she emailed him back and asked him for details. So you know we were all wanting to hear details and at the same time the TV behind me was pulled on and you know the word just kind of spread and telling when something's going on. You know turn on the TV to the news station that was out in the hallway. Some of the members in the office had come down you know to hear what was happening with that and she gave me a copy of the email but I no longer have it I don't think. I'd have to go digging through the files to find it. The reason why she gave it to me was because of the time when he had emailed back to her. It was just a little after nine, almost 9:30. You know about that time.

What is the approximate time that the plane hit the Pentagon?

Q. (242) 9:38.



A. Yeah, because I think what it was his email, last email back to her was either 9:25, 9:28 something like that. I know it was just a little before 9:30, and he had indicated that there had been a second plane and that there was some other things that were going on and then it was right after that she emailed him back. She never heard back from him and so you know we're all just talking about what was going on and what was happening. Trying to figure out what was you know what was transpiring and that was when we heard that a plane hit the Pentagon.

We said, "Oh my goodness," you know and I guess panic kind of went up in the office. When they heard that and they heard that you know that they thought it was result of terrorist for both, individuals, a couple of individuals in the office and rightly so were getting, I wouldn't use the word panic, but just got you know nervous. They had indicated that they would probably put us in a lockdown, you know. So one of the staff members said, "I just want to leave." You know, "I want to go home."

I told her, "OK." So she called her daughter to come to pick her up and so she got her stuff together and I made a run out of the gate with her, and headed on out. So she left out and right at that point we lost all phone service. That was, it was a little scary because we didn't know why we had lost phone service and no one could explain why we had lost phone service exactly. Like we couldn't even call the offices, you know the front office to talk to anybody you know that we worked directly with.

I have a niece that works at the Pentagon and everyone here if they didn't know someone, especially most of the people that were here on the OPNAV side, because they all worked at the Pentagon until they were moved here with the renovation. You know they were sent over here during the renovation timeframe. So you know, it was like home, the Pentagon was. So we all, you know it was in a kind of like state of flux. Our division director CDR JOHN HONOREY

(phonetic) (275) at the time was also you know trying to keep us informed; stop us from panicking, and trying to find out what was going on, as well as going out and trying to use the cell phone. A lot of the individuals had cell phones, and you cannot get any kind of connection inside the building anyway at anytime. So you know folks were stepping outside to use it and then also I guess there was problems with the airways. No one could call a cell phone. It's you know it's really interesting as well because even though we were trying to find out what was going on you know with our counterparts at the Pentagon and loved ones and family members, we also had family members that was wondering what was going on with us here. Was trying to get in touch with us at the same time, and could not reach us by telephone or by cell phone. But I can image the anxiety with family members of those that were at the Pentagon. It was you know, much, much greater than those family members that we had that were concerned about us. They put us on what was termed "lockdown," and they weren't allowing anyone in or off the base, and so that particular woman that went out to meet her daughter was turned around and sent back to the office and her daughter was turned away at the gate. That was kind of a scary experience because it made individuals think even more, "Something is going to happen here. Why don't they just let us go home?" and you know, "What is happening?" I guess most of us were just in disbelief. We couldn't believe what was happening. It just caught us totally unaware and we didn't know what was going to happen or transpire from that point. We continued on with that probably for about a couple of hours or some, and somewhere around about eleven, we could receive calls in, but we couldn't make any out, which is kind of strange. But some calls starting coming in you know with family members or what have you, but we still couldn't make any calls out.

Needless to say, there wasn't much work getting done, because the LAN went down and so you couldn't even work you know through the system like you normally would anyway. We were getting calls from people out in the fleet, other awards offices were trying to find out what was happening at the Pentagon because they couldn't reach anyone at the Pentagon. So we were like the next contact. So we were getting quite a few calls for that. Couldn't answer most of the questions, you know, just could tell them what we knew and the fact that we were on lockdown at that particular time.

I'm a Catholic, Roman Catholic and there's a chaplain here on the Navy Yard, that has daily mass at noon, I also am fortunate and honored enough to assist Chaplain Brown with the service there. I'm what they call an EM, Extraordinary Minister. I can perform communion service in the absence of a chaplain and also serve as Eucharistic minister to assist him.

As you know as the morning went on I was thinking about you know mass and service and you know I try to go on a daily basis. My schedule here at work doesn't always afford me to you know, the opportunity to, but whenever I can I definitely visit. It's just you know a minute and a half away not even that far you know to walk. I'm really blessed with that. That's been one of the greatest joys with working here at the Navy Yard and how convenient this space is. If I leave this space, I don't think you know that I would be able to have the same thing.

The job can be kind of overwhelming at times, personally for me because I'm kind of blessed with the position of Branch Head, and the OPNAV things, the special projects and all these other things were not part of what the SECNAV side of the house ever did or got involved in and really didn't have a (\_\_\_ Inaudible 334) per se, so it's kind of learning as I went along. But there was just so much, and with losing people you know many times it became kind of overwhelming. I always liked that little respite that I've got there. I take my lunch and go over

there, and you know twenty, twenty-five minute services it just really helped, you know to get me through the day.

I was wondering about chapel. I was wondering if we were going to have anything in chapel and it was just a little bit before noon that they announced that they were going to let individuals leave and go home. But they were letting them go in kind of alike a little at a time.

So when word came that we could leave, most of the individuals left, and on that particular day as well we had another individual in the office. CDR, well CAPT now WANDA

BISKADORUS. She's in the service. She was with the Reserve unit that services the regular Navy staff's office. We had been working primarily with her on a side project to get our unit awards side of the database, you know, some of the discrepancies that were in there taken care of and so she was working on that and then she was able to come in during the day on a couple of occasions to try to finalize the project she was working on. So on September the 11<sup>th</sup> was one of the days she would be in the office working with us on that.

CDR BISKADORUS is also Catholic and so she said that she was going to kind of stick around and see what was going on. All the other members of the staff left and went home, and most of the staff was in our section that day, which is three other branches as well. All the other individuals went home, except for CDR. HONOREY (phonetic) (364). Of course to standby you know to be able to assist us to see what was going on at the Pentagon in case we got any calls or everything like that.

So we were wondering if they were going to hold Chapel service and I said, "Well, I'm going to go and see."

She said, "You know what? Since I do plan to be here for a while," she says, "I think I'd like to go with you."

I told her that would be very nice. So we left to go over there and it's a couple buildings over and as we were walking over there the normal path that we would take out of the side of the building to head down Patterson Street was blocked off. They weren't allowing us to go down there toward the waterfront, because we were going to the street that's directly in front of the museum. They had that blocked off so we had to come back and we went through the side of the building and then go around and come into the back of the chapel that way and around to the front. Just as we were walking around to the side of the Chapel, it was such an odd site to see, you know, things you see on TV and in foreign countries you know. Not things that I've ever seen on any of the Navy installations that I've been on or worked on before. There was a Marine standing right there as we turned the corner with an M-16, rifle, machinegun, I'm not you know, I don't know that much about weapons, but it was a huge black gun and it looked like a machinegun to me. I think that's what it was.

He stopped us and asked us where were we going. So we told him and actually they were not allowing anyone - you know directly across the street is the waterfront, where the *USS Berry* (phonetic) is docked and they weren't allowing anyone to go over there unless you were going to your vehicle, because there's a parking lot there, to go home, and they were escorting you over there. I never really found out exactly what was going on but I gather just in case they were making sure no one came to the yard by the waterfront.

So we were kind of skeptical. Is it safe to go into the chapel?

He says, "Yes," he said, "I believe there is going to be a service going on," and we went into the chapel, and except on Lent, normally the chapel will have anywhere from about fifteen to twenty people attending service per day, and once we got in there, there was more than like fifteen in

there when we first went in, which is kind of amazing, because they had you know said, “We’re (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 402) everyone, need to go home.”

Before mass actually started there was even more individuals coming in and it was packed. It kind of gave me the sense that you know you had to have that connection. I mean we realized that we were in a crisis, things were happening and that we were reaching out to one another and you know, reaching out you know to God. It kind of gave you a feeling of comfort to have so many people in there, you know, wanting to reach out; wanting to get some kind of solace; something of that nature.

I remember there was another priest, chaplain that was here that’s not assigned to the Navy Yard. I think he said he came to go to the Exchange (everyone chuckles) and couldn’t get off, but I’m not sure how he made the connection or whether someone called him or realized that he was. The Chaplain that normally comes, FATHER BROWN couldn’t get on the base (everyone chuckles). I don’t remember his name but he came onto the Chapel and he said that he would conduct the noon service for us, seeing as he couldn’t go anywhere.

All this kind of like transpired and he had made a decision to come to do it and subsequent to that that was when they started releasing individuals, but since he was there and our chaplain hadn’t arrived, he wanted to perform the service.

That was kind of interesting. Some special prayers were said, and we knew that they had said that there were definitely injuries and possibly casualties and that was foremost in all of our minds.

So we left and came back, There was really not anything else to do that day and I still could not reach the Pentagon, because I was concerned about my niece that works there and she works for ONC. She’s young and she hadn’t been working at the Pentagon that long, and we’d been

hearing all different stories and seeing everything that was happening so of course I was of course I was kind of in panic wondering how she was.

Then I had some close friends you know that work there as well. You know you wonder about them as well as you know co-workers and associates that you work with, dealing with so many different offices in the Pentagon.

As you're stopping and thinking about it you know looking where the fire seemed to be and trying to think who's working there and it seemed awful close to where, I know my niece was working at and then we realized that, hmmm, may be even kind of close to the Navy Command Center, you know we wasn't quite certain because with the renovation and people moving around so much sometimes you're not quite sure where exactly everybody's at now.

I stayed there for a while. Then I decided traffic should have died down some, I gave, the bulk of the folks rushing out at the mad rush time of the Navy Yard had gone. CDR BISKADORUS (phonetic) had indicated that she was just going to stick around a while with CDR HONOREY (phonetic) to see if she could be of some assistance. So she would probably see me the next day, and so I said good night, you know and I left.

There was probably some other things that transpired, but you know some of those things that happened, you know you probably don't even quite remember you know just what all took place. I left to go to my car and when I – I park at the garage up by the exchange, and I decided to drive up to the top deck of the garage which was open. When I got up there, there were a number of other people that were up there as well, because from the top deck you could see the Pentagon. It really kind of sent like a chill through your spine and brought it more into reality to you because you could actually see the fires all through. You couldn't imagine what the individuals that work there in the Pentagon were thinking and experiencing at that time because they were closer to it,

were experiencing. You know I just stood there and just watched it. You know I hate to say this, in walking to the garage, - this is just a little walk from here, about a five-minute walk. Got to weave your way through certain buildings and what not and you know there was all kinds of talk about who was responsible, as it was you know, for days afterwards. The yard was pretty quiet that day because most people had left. So as I was walking, I was walking by myself and only came into one person and I was just a little apprehensive, because it was someone that I hadn't seen before. It was someone that appeared to be of some kind of Asian descent that I wasn't you know quite certain. Normally I'm, I speak to anybody (chuckle) you know, I mean I could go out here and stand in the hallway and hold a conversation you know on the way home, you know with one of the cleaning ladies, or you know anybody, all ages, color, sizes and no matter you know who they are. And I normally make it a habit to speak to people, because generally that's all they're waiting for is for someone to speak and you know they'll speak back and sometimes you be surprised at how that can make someone's day.

I felt really bad that I was apprehensive, you know when the gentleman said, I'm not even quite sure what all he said, because sometimes when you're being apprehensive and you're wondering you don't really hear. Pretty much what he was saying is that, "Oh, this is just so horrible, isn't it?" you know and all of this you know, something to that effect, and I had to kind of like shake myself and say, answer the gentleman. I did and I was wondering if he was headed the same direction that I was, because you know I'm getting ready to go into a garage and he was carrying a huge, like, I guess like some of the technicians do. It's not a briefcase, it's almost like double wide, you know and a little bit bigger than what you're carrying. So it's just amazing how you know you can just be kind of leery and apprehensive you know, with the next person that you come in contact with when something like this happens, you know.



I was just a little relieved because we were crossing the street together from the Officer's Club, you know inside there, over to the Navy Exchange and when we got on that side of the street I was turning right to go to the garage and he says, "Well, drive safely and have a safe trip home." I said, "You do the same," because he was keeping straight on, and I felt really bad that I kind of felt a sense of relief that he wasn't still walking with me. I had to chalk it up to the fact that you know I'm scared right now. You know this is a stranger and right now, you know probably any stranger that would come up to me, I'd feel that way, and expect God to help me not to prejudge people, to be aware, but not to prejudge people and you know, it's kind of taught me with this. And the same thing you know, I was noticing the people around me, very closely when I went up to the top of the garage before I even got out of my car, you know, because there were at least five or six people up there, and had came up there and had parked up there and had pulled over to that side where you could see and that.

I got out and a couple of people just said some things, you know, "how are you? or just made some kind of comment and I watched for about five minutes or so. Then I got in the car and left. One individual happened to have a camera and was taking pictures. Once I got off the yard, and in this area where communications is really bad you know with cell phones, I did call my parents at home in St. Mary's County you know to let them know that everything was OK. It was really comical, my father will answer the phone all the time. My mother she hears the phone, sometimes she doesn't. She answer it. Sometimes she doesn't you know. She's from the old school, the phone is like a bother to you.

So I got what I normally get when my father's not there, the answering machine. So I felt kind of just a little bit deflated. Well no one's at my house worried about me, or stayed there waiting for my phone call to come through.

It just so happens she wasn't at home she had gone to BINGO, and her and my father had gone to BINGO that particular morning, so they weren't there at the house. I left a message and I tried my niece's job again and of course I couldn't get through, and I left and I went on home.

I made a couple of stops on the way home, because I felt I didn't want to go right home and turn on the news and be listening to what was happening, because you know I was just feeling so apprehensive, and my cell phone rang. I was supposed to have gone to K-Mart when I got off from work to return something, and I decided I was going to go ahead and do that and as I pulled into the parking lot my son called. He's a junior at Frostburg State University, and he was "I've been calling your job," and he says "I can't get through, it just rings and rings," you know.

I told him about the phone. I told him I was OK, and he asked about my niece as well, and I told him I'd give him a call and let him know. Once I heard something I'd call him back at school and let him know, but that I was fine, and that I was going home.

He said, "I kept trying the cell phone, but I know you normally don't take that into the office with you." He says, "But I'm glad I tried one more time." So he was kind of relieved. He says, "Where you at now?"

I said, "I'm at K-Mart,"

He says, "You need to go home." (laugh)

I said, "I will do that," and kind of assured him you know that I would go home, but I went on into K-Mart and found myself just kind of wandering around in there for a bit, and I had to bring myself back, "Why you here? Ok, remember what you're here for." So I went on and did that and went home. So that just pretty much tells you kind of like what I was experiencing you know on that particular day.

I can say even for days afterwards and months afterwards that it was just so (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 588) for me, and of course the next day, well actually when I got home I had a phone call from the niece, because she had called home and she had called her mom and at work as well and you know her Mom had said that I had called, you know and was wondering about her as well. So when I got home she had called me and she worked in A ring and she said she totally panic when they told them they had to evacuate, because she said you know, they heard some noise, couldn't quite identify what the noise was, but when they were you know told that they had to evacuate you know she just got up, but when they opened the door and went out into the hallway she said it was nothing but thick black smoke. And she's a very excitable type person anyway and she said that she just panicked and she said, all I know is how to get from here to the Concourse (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 612) bus, because she rode the, she caught the express bus from Walnut Mills. She lives down in St. Mary's with my oldest brother and second oldest brother. That's the family that's back there you know, beside my mom, and so she lives down there as well and so she –

**Tape 1, side 1 ends.**

Tape 1, side 2 begins.

A. (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible) coming to the Pentagon everyday, and she said, she didn't even know which direction to turn once she stepped out into the hallway. She said there was another lady there, and I don't remember the ladies name. Heather walked with her for a while.

It's an older lady and she told her, "Honey, don't worry. Hold onto the back of me. Just hold on to me. Close your eyes." My niece has allergies and stuff really bad and so immediately you know her eyes were watering. You know, she was beginning to panic. She said, "Don't worry. I

promise I'll get you out of here, if you could just hold on to me." She says she doesn't know which direction she went but the lady, the co-worker got her out and when you talk about heroes you know, in the awards side you know, we have those heroes and rightly so, but you know there's probably so many heroes of that particular day, personal heroes you know, individuals you know, even if it was just a hug to comfort you, that's your hero. You know that's somebody that got you through it and this lady got her out safely. They were in the parking lot and the lady then asked her, you know what was she going to do you know, from that point.

She said, "Well you know I catch the commuter bus that runs" and, she said, "It's not running now. My eyes and everything are watering," and she was a wreck. The lady had drove into work or drives into work and she took her to Waldorf (phonetic) to her car you know. And that's why she got home so quickly, because the lady took her in her Mercedes and took her to Waldorf (phonetic) and asked her if she was going to be OK. She said she was going to call home and let them know that she was OK, and you know what have you. I can't quite remember exactly what all transpired from that point.

She called me that she was home. Said, she said, "You know I'm a wreck inside. She said, "I'm a terrible wreck."

She stayed home from work the rest of the week, which I was happy that she did, primarily because you know they evacuated a couple of times after that, you know subsequent days following and I wouldn't want her to be there for that. That would have been more on top of it, so I think it was great that she just stayed home.

So you know that's kind of like an unsung hero. Look after the needs of me and my family, and I'm very grateful for it. I wish I knew the ladies name at this time, so I could share her name with you. But she does work with my niece and she knows who she is and I'm very thankful to her.

(Editors Note: The name of the woman who assisted Ms. Wilson's niece, Andrea Adam, is Mrs. Jamis Allen)

Shortly afterward you know things began to settle down. We're hearing about casualties and what have you. Of course you had many military and civilian individuals that were killed. So needless to say we had to get on with the business of you know taking care of burial memorial services and what have you.

(\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 33) I guess a number of reservists were called in you know as support staff to help out and CAPT. MARYANNE LYNCH was called in. She's a reservist on active duty as well and she was tasked pretty much I know you said you're going to interview her, she can tell you probably more detail about what her tasks was. But it was kind of to head up the awards to try to get those together.

Every since been working with her, you know and I got to know her pretty well and I guess when you're setting up something and you know you've got memorial service coming up and everything, all these awards became, what we call expedited awards. You know everything had to be done. We had to drop everything and put in work on those. Getting the awards together and you're trying to make that concept as painless as you possibly can. I guess you kind of look for ways initially to get the information and get it done without having to go through the entire normal process of documentation and what have you. We had to go through that for all of them. In fact we only did awards because even though you know we were trying to process the awards very quickly, there is a process that you must go through. There is documentation that's required and so you know we had to kind of like back up and say you know we need more certain information. Especially even though it was being head up at the CNO's side of the house to document the awards and get them done, from that CNO side that was just an endorsing the

initial review. It still had to go to the SECNAV side and all the way up to the Secretary of the Navy for final approval. So you have to make sure that you had all your ducks in a row, and that the cases were set up appropriately.

Initially we were working with 33 I think it was (\_\_\_ Inaudible 56) count, but I think it was a combination of civilian and military. Trying to remember exactly, the numbers just seem to run through my head. The only thing we could think of at that particular time, that “Wow, we just got through the *USS Cole* awards,” because even though that happened in October of 2000, awards did not reach this level, CNO and SECNAV level until you know later June, early July 2001.

That was for a number of facts. Primarily because the ship was about the business of repairs, taking care of the injured and of course getting the crew and ship safely back to the US (\_\_\_ Inaudible 063) investigation. So awards weren’t originated from the ship until April, March/April timeframe. Then because it was one incident they wanted all the awards at one time and they had to go through review and then they were forwarded to us. So we had just you know processed it through the CNO side in June and forwarded them over to the SECNAV side for processing in July timeframe. There was a lot of review connected with it for those seventeen sailors that were killed right out of the course within days of it happening. Purple Hearts were approved by the Secretary of the Navy. We processed those immediately, as soon as we could get the information on the individuals you know to help support the large memorial service they had at Norfolk. So those were taken care of. But any additional awards for the heroes, for those who do some outstanding things, that stepped up you know and helped saved the ship and carry out the duties and all those were the awards that came later.

I think probably there was like a hundred and fifty some of those, all different categories of awards and there's a number of different issues that come into play, because when you think of a terrorist attack, think of combat and sometimes it's not necessarily combat per se, because you don't actually do not truly engage the enemy. The enemy come and hit them. There's no more enemy, there's not an enemy to fight back. You know, so a lot of different things come into play with that. You have to look at that with the type of awards that you're giving and the type of recognition to maintain the integrity of the award system and to also ensure that the type of the awards that you have given are appropriate for the type of action they're given for.

So you know things have to be looked at very carefully, screening things out. A lot of discussion back and forth between the boards transpired before they were actually approved, and then for presentation, which they all came back here in a sack. We box them up, we label, put the medals in, put them all in presentation folders and make the necessary file copies and made arrangements with - it was SECNAV that (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 090) started off with helping to coordinate the ceremony down there. A gentleman from there drove up to our office to pick up the awards.

It was like OK, we can kind of take a breather now and then September 11 happened so it didn't even give us a chance to try to catch up, you know, on all the other hot items that we had. From May to October is our peak business season. I mean our workload just shoots up and that's the time that you know most of the military they get their transfers, or try to you know have their transfers, especially if they have families and kids and all in school. Only time that the (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 098) and so we seemed to get a lot of that and get a lot of expedites you know, the (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 099) ceremonies. And I won't get into my feelings on expediting, but you know it does break up the workflow and you have to stop and give consultation from point A to

B instead of kind of like an assembly line process that we have. Where we do badges with Boards and process that and you know each player has their part. When you have to expedite awards then you have to pull everybody in. Somebody, people that normally doesn't you know work with that, to assist you you know, to facilitate that process.

One thing about the awards that I have to say was totally different than any awards I have ever processed, from the time I have been citation writer, an award specialist or the Branch Head of the Navy Award section was that it's so familiar, the names. I have a friend who recently had retired about nine months, about nine months into being retired and we were talking you know about it and I had the list of names of you know of casualties and it was just some names, just a lot of individuals, like the chief that he had sponsored who had just made chief had been killed. Almost like seventeen on the list of thirty-three that he didn't just walk the halls with. In his own office, his own office had taken a huge hit. N3/N5. So that even brought it you know closer to home you know. Names that we had seen, people that we had talked to, you know on that list. And I'm quite sure that individuals that worked right there, it hit them even more, because you know actually processing the awards for them posthumously, was a very odd feeling. These are some of the same people that you would be doing end-of-tour awards for for the great job, you know that they did. Retirement awards you know for some of them you know who's retiring. This was (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 124) to be doing a posthumous award you know for individuals that were on the staff. I would have to say just about anyone on the staff knew someone or had talked to someone previously who's name was on that list. That was really odd, you know. It was an odd experience. It made me proud that, but it was also a very odd experience.

Q. (131) When did you get those lists, did it come bit by bit or how does that work?



A. Well, CAPT LYNCH was working very closely with the Casualty Office to get the names and to work I guess in conjunction with CACO offices, and this is a side of it that I've never actually worked on before. We ended up having to process those awards to support memorial services.

What was happening and taking place is trying to get the information on the individuals (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 140) to the awards was kind of slow in coming. I was watching and some of the (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible) Dover and they were being identified, and as they were being identified, sometimes I felt, you know how you want to know things but thank God there was just more information than what I need. And then talking to CAPT LYNCH she would keep me informed. OK, we've got this particular individual; we've gotten word that his body has been identified. She's talked to CACO Office, or Casualty Office, but then the next week we anticipate this person or that person, that there's a memorial service you know that's being planned for them. So of course we were wanting to have the Purple Heart available you know to present to the family at the memorial service.

She would tell me, like on one particular individual she said, "Well, they've identified the body, but they haven't released the body."

It was one of the Chiefs of a friend of mine and he had said find out anything, funeral arrangements or anything like that please let them know. Stay in touch with him-you know they had moved them from the old offices so like you can't call anybody from that point to make contact to the offices that were effected. She said something to me to the effect that well, he finally has been identified, but we thought he was being released but it wasn't because they were having problems with what remains they had.

I pretty much got the sense that they were trying to piece or put together what they had, before some of the bodies were sent back to the families. And I just went "Oh my God," you know, this

was so hard, it was hard to think of a human being having those type of things happening to them. The more you find out about jet fuel and heat and explosions and all that happened after that. It just let's you know how blessed you are and also how tragic of the death and everything that was endured. And like the only thing that you hope that they didn't suffer in so instant pain, you know they never knew what hit them you know. You know that's what you hope for them. You know you wouldn't want them to feel panic and then have something else happen to them. You know you wouldn't want that for them.

I had to pass that information on and you know and then to say, OK (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 177) his body was identified you know people crying to hear some of the things. At the same time I had the feeling that the young lady in the office with one of the gentleman you know at the Pentagon from the Command Center and she was in contact with his wife and they had him down as missing. I'm not sure if they ever found him.

Q. (184) Do you know the name?

A. They called him the Candy man, I don't know –

Q. LYNCH (phonetic). (Editors Note: Reference is to Mr. James T. Lynch, "the Candy Man")

A. Exactly, and that's how we referred to him, because he gave out candy to individuals. And that's how they met originally he gave her some candy. He kind of befriended her and helped her through a real hard time. And was always there to give her an encouraging word, you know because she was going through a rough time. So she was very distraught.

Q. They never found his body.

A. I didn't think they did either. She subsequently went to, her detail in my office was up a short time after that, like within about the next week or two. So I lost contact with her. She now works with Army, Bethesda. So but I do follow on those people for the longest time. I knew his body was one that they had not found and I didn't know if they ever did. And she found that they never did. It was so hard for her, you know, because she said that was her best friend.

And the fact that she thought that she was probably the last person, outside of maybe someone there in the office that he may have said something to, that communicated with him and she said that was very special to her.

It was really hard for her, you know, to try and get back into the swing, as it was for most of the individuals in the office. But my staff are troopers and you know it was just like how do you get back to normal. It was so hard to do that and I was so very proud of them because you know they stepped up to the plate to do whatever was needed to do.

Unfortunately as it was with the *Cole* and it was in the case of almost any group of awards that so many other players come in you know on the scene with and sometimes some of those players are not necessarily familiar with the award process and how to do things and in this incidences like this one sometimes the information you're given is not completely accurate, like individuals names, the current ranks and we end up you know doing duplicate, sometimes triplicate work. I was really proud of them that's less important and be even more important that family members get the correct - documents that we give are accurate and I was very proud of them because normally, and I'm not saying normally, but it does get kind of frustrating when you have to stop and access the right stuff and you stop everything to do it. Then you find yourself doing it two and three times afterwards, because the information that was given to you from CNO "incomplete" and what have you and I was very proud of them that it didn't seem to phase them

at all. OK, now we need to do these things to get this right. A sense of ownership that was really great.

Again we don't deal with a lot of posthumous awards so this was kind of new as well. We do get some, but the majority of them you know, we've got have been someone dying, but we do have a feelings pretty, but I guess right after the *Cole* awards having been it just kind of drained them emotionally, you know. It really, like I guess in so many offices took a while for them to kind of like relax a little and get back into the flow of doing things, because you know there was any number of times you know they were coming through you know, "I just have so much trouble trying to concentrate." You know, "It's really hard to concentrate." And others just wanted to talk, and we have to kind of allow time for that. You know we felt about the same way and it brought us closer together.

It makes - some people that we knew decided, "OK, why am I hanging around. Let me go ahead and retire and enjoy life," and whatnot.

And one person on the staff you know said, "Ok, it's time to go. I'm knowledgeable. I can been at this you know, it's just kind of good to get out of this rat race." Not only with our office, I realize that's happened in a number of other offices.

People have been on vacation, and I know about three or four people who retired, that had it as a thought kind of back in their mind, because they were eligible too, decided they needed to go on and do that.

Q. (247) Can you just walk us through exactly how it worked with the Purple Heart? You had a list of things and someone, their names were identified, what happened there in your office?

How did that information coming to you turn into a Purple Heart, I guess is what I'd appreciate your telling me?

A. OK, primarily, what had taken place prior to remains and all being identified, these individuals had been identified as probably dead. And when I say identified, identified to us. I'm not speaking for any official recognition or anything like that. Normally when that happens as it did with the *Cole* we try to get a list from Casualty or whoever would have the information as soon as possible with the names and that's something that we just kind of filter straight to the Secretaries front office. My point of contact is the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy, and normally we just get the approval is done and sometimes we just start without even any paperwork transpiring. It's a verbal approval you know. It's a terrorist attack, regardless result of that they were killed right out. We're going to give them the Purple Heart. Qualifications for the Purple Heart is that the individuals received or sustained some type of injury as a direct result of, you know by the direct result of the enemy. Where they in fact engaged the enemy and whether they had an opportunity to fight back or not is not the issue, but the fact that the enemy actually engaged them, and that they received a wound or an injury, and specific types of wounds and injuries you know that the individual can receive, in the course is he is killed. These service members were killed so the qualification was right there, and a matter of the Secretary of the Navy saying, "Yes we want to do it."

So we got the thumbs up to do for those that were killed, and from that point it's just a matter of coordination. Once we got the initial list of the names and, we had to check for typos, and we had the individuals name and rank. It had the office of where they worked, and the type of clearance they had and I don't think I did a ribbon thing, but granted somebody had wanted this for something else was copy of the actual awards for all of 11 September.

Some of them they had missing. Some of they had killed. All of those were presumed dead, and had been identified by the coroner. So once we got the information on them what we normally do is go ahead and prepare the certificate, because with the Purple Heart there's not a citation that's given, and the citation is the verbiage of what actually happened and took place. So Purple Heart is not one of those awards that a citation is given, it's just giving a certificate. It would have the individual's name, and their rank and service, and it would say you know, "For awards received on or for..." and we would put 11 September 2001 there. Of course up at the top we would put in the words "posthumously", the individuals that received. And then we put the approval date of the award and then imprinted verbiage on the Purple Heart we intend to give for that particular award, depending what he's getting it for, and then we have the medal sent.

Well you know, we had, we had the *USS Cole*. We give seventeen given right out. There was a number of them given, I think like thirty-seven of them given later. The other group of awards for injuries, for that you know survived their injuries, or any one treated or hospitalized or whatever. So one of the things we had to do, OK, you know, how many do we have on hand? How many people are we talking about? Because you really haven't had to issue Purple Hearts since the Vietnam War, on a regular basis. In Desert Shield there were a few injuries but not a lot, so the *Cole* was there. We made sure we needed them.

We were saying, "Are we going to have enough Purple Hearts? How many are we going to need?" A lot of things come into play, you know, OK as soon as we can get something back and all, we just need to go ahead and order some. With budget cuts and whatever, normally you try to keep a stock of those awards and primarily peacetime awards on hand to issue on short notice because those are the bulk of what we do probably at even given time. It's like 99 and a half

percent of what we do are peacetime awards. We may have given one or two Purple Hearts and what we had on hand was all we could find.

There's only like one or two other than the other service's offices that would hold a stock of Purple Heart and decorations and medals and Marine Corp down in Quantico was one of those offices. They were very blessed in not taking a hit like Navy and all did, and some of the Airforce personnel were casualties or injuries and you know of course they immediately offered any assistance they could provide which was great.

They said, "We have some Purple Hearts. You need some?" You know, when I was talking about assistance that's you know the one thing that came to mind, because I told them at that point I had no idea. I knew I had enough on hand to take care of the initial list that I had got, but we know that so many more people are injured you know one time they were talking about how many people were killed. So we didn't know how many of those would be military. We also didn't know at that particular time whether civilians would be included in the military awards. If that was the case we were looking at Purple Hearts enough to go around.

The Marine Corps, headquarters Marine Corps for awards there in Quantico, I can't remember whether it was Mr. (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 339) or who from down there, but they got in their privately owned vehicle and drove up here with the medals and you know dropped some off for us, and told us that if we needed anymore or needed anything else to let them know. They'd be more than willing to help. That was great.

So as with Navy, you know the medals that we had on hand, we had them for a while so we wanted just to make sure that all of them were in tiptop shape to give out. So that required Seaman (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 348) and one other individual I told them just to go and get me "x" number Purple Hearts, that I wanted to make sure that the ribbons were perfect on every single

one, because they come in from the manufacturer. You know sometimes ribbon torn, it's not necessarily together or crumpled you know. It wasn't the fact that they were old, it was just the fact that you need to examine them. When we give the medals out you know we always having to be looking to make sure that they're OK. You know they're not damaged or anything like that from the manufacturer when we get them. We get them in boxes and boxes you know. So have to examine them and look at them very closely because I want to make sure that everyone that was given to the family members were not to have, ensure you know messed up in anyway.

Sometimes the ribbon will be just a little skewered you know or whatnot. If we've got to use those, but right now take them and make sure we're, that you know, we're getting the cream of the crop you know what we have on hand, do the best job.

And the Purple Hearts, you know kind of happened and took place. We had gotten the approval for that list and that list was provided to the Secretary's office. The Purple Hearts were approved for them. It was just matter then of coordinating it with CAPT LYNCH and her coordination was, she was dealing with Casualty Office, CACO Officers and what have you. She made numerous trips from the Annex where the regular Navy staff made up their makeshift offices, the Reserve office over there that she worked out of. We were in constant communication.

The biggest thing that we did I guess was by the amount of time that we spent was going around to all of the N codes and getting the awards for those that were injured and for what we call the hero awards, you know, getting those together.

That was interesting. I guess it was a learning curve for her. You know she'd realize Ok you know we try to pick as best we can and you know and get the information and I can see and understand how the information is, that it's documented properly. It's extremely important and you know that's something that you've got to keep in mind with this, and I do that with any



awards that we expedite. If you've got the facts, and you have a summary of action and you know that you're going to approve the award at different levels, give me my paperwork still because there's a front end and there's a back end to the awards process, and the back end has to support the front end. Needless to say, you know the Navy Com that you win, if you got that item approved, and they did it, they presented it to you, they gave you your medal, they gave you your citation. You subsequently moved or it was destroyed or lost or stolen, you know you, establish and then you come in and I check the service records, and there's not mention of it in the service record. There's not a copy of it in the service record. My office is the office folks call for those types of things, and that's a part of the Annex database, and if nothing else we can verify that yes, it's a good award because the command followed through and sent that information to us to enter into our database, which we do. The second part of our job is to forward your award to BUPERS to have it microfilmed into your service record. The secretary of the Navy will reissue any award that's been given in his name for those commands that have since been disestablished or what have you. Because if the command is still active you can go back to the Command Center that had the award authority and present the award for them to reissue their award. But like some of the ships are decommissioned, some commands are decommissioned and you know the individual wants that award reissued because it was lost then we know what if the case may be they no longer had it in their possession we can reissue that award by contacting BUPERS and getting a copy of it out of the individuals service record. So again there's a front end and there's a back end.

As was the case with a lot of these you know you have family members that we were trying you know to get copies of them You have different offices like the project that you're working on, where you want copies of them you know what have you. So we have to make sure that we do

our administrative portion of it correctly even though we're trying to expedite. Even though we're doing a lot of them and we're trying to facilitate the process. We can't, we don't shortcut and that was a lesson that CAPT LYNCH had indicated that she learned, kind of belatedly in the process. You know and she was saying, "if I had done this at the beginning, this wouldn't have to be done," you know some of the dual work on some of these things. Because when I got a lot of the awards there were numerous things that were missing from them, that we needed to process the award appropriately and to review the awards appropriately. So we've kind of gone back and forth on that. That's something that we really should get into to talk about that it, I guess I think it's good for the fact that it really emphasized Navy's desire and intent to give recognition and to give that recognition as soon as they possibly could without going through so many, or sending the command so many of the changes where they were already, a lot of them had been displaced from their work location, the files you know and all that information. But we got through it and got through it in a timely matter. It was a learning curve and it was good. As those other awards came in we held a special Board on the CNO side just for the what we call the 11 September awards. We just kind of dubbed the Pentagon Attack and you go to my files you'll see I have "Pentagon Attack, 11 September." I have like three huge manila folders you know on that.

There were a number of different awards, anywhere from Navy Achievement, Navy Com, NSM, quite a few Navy and Marine Corps Medals, and when you think about heroes that's normally the award that comes to mind. The Navy and Marine Corps medal is a peacetime award, but it's a peacetime award in the sense that you're not in what they call quote/unquote a combat zone, hostile environment. It's given for a peacetime action. What the person actually did and going in and you know rescuing individuals. Leading people out, you know at great risk to themselves,

and some of them actually did sustain injuries for what they did. That was not done where you had, you were in a combat zone and at the same time trying to fight the enemy. That puts it in a different category and in a different category there are combat awards that you give for that, because you actually have to be in combat while you're performing your act. So that's where the distinction comes in.

The Navy and Marine Corps Medal, it's the non-combat equivalent or for lack of a better word of the Bronze Star Medal, you know we gave. A number of individuals got the Bronze Star Medal, I mean got the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. Going through and reading it was really interesting because some of the people that were getting those were also people that you know. You were very proud of them you know that they stepped up to the plate and some of the amazing things they did. You know with mass, you know exiting from the Pentagon and telling them to evacuate and get out, some of them went back in after they came out, you know something like that sort of thing.

Just piecing that all together and also much of you know sometimes I think I may be dubbed a bureaucrat. I wouldn't dub myself as a bureaucrat, but I would say that I take my job very seriously. I know that there's a front end and a back end to it and so I was trying to assure that as these awards went up to CNO, and to the Secretary of the Navy that the information that was contained was the documentation that's required to support the award that's being recommended or even a lesser award if that's the case.

So we go the paper done. We did what I call a scrub on it. We entered all of it into the database so that we can track, keep a permanent record of what we actually processed and then we set up a special board. We set up boards all the time on a regular basis. We have a schedule for them, you

know the awards that come in for CNO review and approval or endorsement and that's forwarded to the Secretary.

So we went through our normal process of setting up the award, which requires us to make the copies and all for each of the Board members. Schedule a board date and notify the board members and have the cases delivered to them. Because so many people were displaced in the Pentagon and you know there was a lot going on, CAPT SWEENEY the EA to the regular Navy Staff, who kind of heads up the CNO Awards Board and that's who I coordinate the Board with and in conjunction with CAPY LYNCH it was decided from the pool of board members, because they actually have two boards, two regular boards, those board members that would be available for a special board, just for the CNO Awards Board to review September 11<sup>th</sup>, Pentagon Attack and so that was done. Board members were determined and cases were issued and they went through the awards. (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 524) and reviewed them and if they had any questions or needed anything the guy would come back to me, to you know touch base with the command to get the additional information.

And the contacts was really interesting as well you know, because you couldn't go to the global and get their office number or what have you, but as they completed the award recommendation form, and that's another thing, if you need to get in touch with anyone we need a form you know so that we have a point of contact with each one of those commands so we can call them back. A lot of the times most of the questions on something that was missing I was able to get it emailed to me. I said, you know. "scan it in. Email it to me, fax it to me. Whatever's most easiest for you, whatever your capability is. Don't have to send somebody over here with it, don't have to worry about cause (phonetic) mail. If you've got the information you can get it to me with in minutes," with some mode of communication that we have, and there was a lot of that going on.

As a matter of fact I guess I get so use to getting in the mode whenever something's in and I've got a point of contact, I'll call the point of contact, because I get the same as CAPT LYNCH was to ultimately work with the award family that they were going to have, a lot of the commands that were submitting them, the N codes, they had like -for different ones dealing with CAPT LYNCH in filling that, but my office you know which I call the worker bees, we were getting awards from those office all the time anyway. So some of them would have point of contacts in DOD so I would just take the initiative and just call my POC and say, "This is what I need on this one. You'll probably hear about this through another source a little later, but I'm calling you first. Can you get them to me? As soon as you can that would be great," and through all the tragic and everything else that was going on and trying to reorganize their offices it was really nice you know they really stepped up to the plate and that really kind of speeded the process up. Getting the additional information that you needed on the individual.

So we processed this then on this side of the house and CDR BRIAN FLETCHER is Secretary of the Board of Decorations and Medals, who's co-located with us, even though he's a SECNAV billet, and must then provide administrative support to the Board and so the actual setting up of the cases on the SECNAV side of the house was in my office as well. So we had already started that process. Made extra copies and started that process. The only thing we were needing from the CNO Board was the results. The cover vote sheet on it. So it wasn't like once we did that we had to go to the SECNAV side and then start you know to process this. Two separate processes have and actually review the cases and how the cases are actually set up and so we already had that in place. That was right there. We already had that ready and waiting to go and with what some people don't realize as well and the same thing happened with the *Cole* awards because I funneled everything from the *Cole* awards that I had put together. This research, had this every

happened before? What was done previously? There was another incident that I had that I had previously in time and then you know they wanted (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 600), sometimes my mind just (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible), but if there were other incidents that happened, that taken place and they wanted kind of like a case history, the type of information from my staff, you know and I provide, you know we got to our historical awards file and any other previous incidents that may have happened that could relate to it, or maybe similar in some way, you know we give them the history on what was done then and you know what happened and what transpired.

Q. (609) Is that to make sure that certain type of awards are awarded directly for the same type of event?

A. Find like there has been any precedence sent in the past out of the normal what we do so that they can take a look at that. What that particular incident entailed in relationship to this particular incident and what was done. And yes, to kind of give you a feel for the type of award that were given in that particular incident and compare them to this incident to see if there are similarities and (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 622) and that was the type of thing that was done. So that was like 8 or nine pages of other documentation that was put together in kind of like a briefing sheet that was –

Tape one, side two ends.

**Tape two, side one begins.**

A.. .....first time they seen something, this particular board on the CNO side was seeing anything dealing with a terrorist attack, and the biggest difference about this particular one was enemy terrorist attack that had ever happened in the past, an incidents that have ever happened in the

past that happened on US soil, or on US installation. So it had a spin of its own because of that, and that's the part of the documentation that was given to the SECNAV Board as well. Based on what CDR FLETCHER felt that he needed to kind of summarized what the CNO Board had done and added to the briefing information that I had given and put together in his briefing package for the Board, because as the Secretary of the Board it's a part of his responsibility for preparing cases and briefing you know to the SECNAV Board. He's also a voting member on the Board and putting those cases together and scheduling a board on the SECNAV side and the cases went to the SECNAV Board and we from that point, we had already started the process of typing all the awards, generating them, and normally what we try to do is try to hold off until we have a decision before we actually print it, because if there's a change the meat of the citation doesn't change, what you did doesn't change, but the award that you get may, and so the appropriate lead on sentences and closing sentences for the particular type of award. So at least we had the meat already there and if we had to go in and change anything you know it would just be like opening and closing sentences, lead or, salutations up at the top, because we wanted to have that on hand.

What we did when the awards first started coming in before we even set up the first board we looked at what was recommended and based on what was recommended make sure we had these medals, and made sure that we had at least ten over of each medal, and that's to support upgrades or down grades, you know, make sure we had those set aside. One of the other ladies on the staff, we all had a hand in this. We all had different things that we had to do, but we all had a hand in (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 015). We all played different parts and we all did things. There was a lot of it pretty ordinary, but you know I had a couple meetings with the staff, and we were all kind of on a like, said, "You know we're going to be doing some oddball things that we probably never do.

I normally handle this, in connection with awards but you know I'm going to step up to the plate. I'm going to do this, that and the other," and those were some of the things you know that my staff did, and which was try to make sure, just about all the other awards, thank God, you know we had those on hand. We didn't have to go out and get them.

Being our busy time of the year and unfortunately with budget cuts and things like that we don't let, have all the, you know the things that we need at any one given time, especially when we have to give out a lot of, I think it was a total of what, about 180 some plus you know awards have been given out, and we still had all the regular awards. Although this was going to have to be placed on hold, don't put any of those in presentation folders, because we were told a week before the attack on the Pentagon that our supply of presentation folders, because we had pretty much exhausted our supply because of summer rush and what have you, whatever we order, we only get half of what we order most of the time. They just kind of like give us you know bits and pieces at a time, and so I was concerned about that. How many more awards, because we were still getting what we call straggler awards. Even though we had, they were given kind of like a deadline and trying to get them in so we could meet the Board we still had some that were coming in. You know that we had to add, that had to be reviewed specially. CAPT SWEENEY would do what she'd call like a cyberboard. It's like we would get one and OK, SECNAV Board is meeting is tomorrow. I just got this one in. It didn't make it to the CNO Board. Can I get this one reviewed? I'd scan it in and email it and it would go out to all the Board members that sit on the Board, and they would look at it and thank God none of those were problem cases. When I saw problem cases you know where they really felt that an electronic board wouldn't work, you know for that particular one. They had already seen the bulk of the awards and they pretty much



had an idea of where that fell in the category with those so we were able to do that without having you know to try and get them all together in a separate meeting.

We had a number of those come through that we had to kind of put in there and get prior to the SECNAV Board and then even after the SECNAV Board was done you know we had a couple of them that came through after that. And we have what we call “walk” we call them Walk Board, Walk cases, where it won’t go to an official schedule board but we actually walk them to the members, the cases is delivered to them or emailed to them and they review it and call in or send in their vote electronically. We do that now, on other peacetime awards as well, but the only ones that we did we’re trying to support the time of the ceremony. Sometime there’s an individual (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 046) which has the support of a memorial service or something like that you know we’ll go ahead and we’ll do that.

The majority of those are like end-of-tour kind of awards. Those are pretty standard you know, either fit in one particular category, or they don’t. You know not real hard to do. It was good you know that they had that one board reviewing all those too, you know the majority of them at one time so they had a sense for the few stragglers that came in. You know to get them all together in time to support the ceremony that they had set up for the Pentagon awards.

The only difference in how the back end of this was done on the Pentagon awards was that instead of getting the signed awards back from the Secretary of the Navy like we did with the *Cole* awards and we do with our regular awards, because we’re also responsible for the distributions and even though some you had individuals came up from Norfolk, you know to pick up the *Cole* awards, and you assembled all of it there, we had to assemble all of them and send them over with the award package.

When the SECNAV Board reviews the awards they review and make a recommendation to the Secretary of the Navy who is the final awards authority. When we sent that package over, it's what's called a smooth package. We prepare the approval letter for the Secretary's signature, and we also do the smooth citation, certificate, whatever award element is appropriate for that particular award, and we send that with the package. Once it's approved and signed, that original package comes back to us for our files to make file copies, to make the copies that we send to BUPERS, to be enclosed in the person's service record of the signed document and we also do the transmittal letter to send it out to the Command, either mailing it out to the Command or if they're in the local area we have commands that come in. Half of them you see coming in here are probably coming back to see us. You know because we have the Commands coming in on a regular basis to pick up their awards because they're in the area, and it probably saves about two weeks if we were to send it in the mail.

You know we put it in a presentation folder, we attached the medals, the transmittal letters you know and send them on. However, with these at that time it was getting close to the ceremony date that they had set up for the Pentagon awards ceremony. When we sent the smooth citations, got to get the approval letters over to the Secretary's office, we also sent the, we already had them in presentation folders. We also had the medals all ready sorted out with each one and sent the total file in packages over there, and that was coordinated with that office.

I said, "As soon as the Secretary signs these and you make your file copies, you be sure you make our file copies as well so we can (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 078), so we can get the signed letters back, so that we can update our databases showing the Secretary approves it and signs it. We can also forward a copy of that award for the service records so that you know there's closure, you know to it. Sometimes when we have so many awards we're so fearful that we don't get the

signed copies back and that's why we like being the final distributor of the awards because that signed document comes back to us and we make whatever copies we need so that we can follow through.

Normally when we have awards that are being expedited, there intercepted and you don't get that back and you've got to track the people down that intercepted it and you know get copies of you know the awards and we're just kind of fearful with that. You know trying to make sure that we've got those copies back you know, we managed to get them all back, and the initial ones and that's kind of closing the loop on it.

It was an experience. Some of the individuals here attended the funerals of some of the, a couple of the individuals. When they had the award ceremony, there was something else going on that particular day with me. I can't remember what it was now, but I wasn't able to attend but two other people on my staff were able to, and even though we're OPNAV pretty much, the invitation came from the SECNAV side. We was just looking, OK, they haven't forgotten us. You know that we were part of the processing, because there were so many people that wanted to attend. You know they were trying to make sure the officers that were involved in the fire and you know actually they had been visiting personnel, family members and then of course you know whatever dignitaries, principle officials that were appropriate to be there, you know attended. Then if there were any invitations left you know, or passes left that they were giving out then you know they (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible) around, and SECNAV office remembered our staff. So you know they didn't have enough for the intern staff, but you know they had a handful at least. So many people on the staff wanted to go, so you know I didn't feel bad that I was somewhere else about. That was very (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible) to attend the ceremony. Most of the time we just do

the paperwork, in discussing and hearing some of the discussions and so one, it makes us feel kind of proud

You know, it's like, "I did that citation." You know I had a hand in it. You know there was an ownership there. It was a little thing to have been involved in when you think about the scheme of things but it was a (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 108) to make us feel good.

Q. (110) Did you get involved at all with any of the discussion about the Purple Hearts up in Dover in the caskets?

A. When you say discussion, what do you mean exactly?

Q. Guess it was always normal that they would use the ribbons to put on the rack of ribbons for the uniforms that were placed in the caskets. The people up at Dover actually put the end-of-tour awards for the Posthumous Purple Heart medals on the uniforms. There seems to have been some discussion that happened over that.

A. I'm not really certain, because I didn't talk directly. CAPT LYNCH was the one that was dealing with the individuals in Dover, but my understanding was they had access you know to the medals and so for a number of them they were using the medals that they had access to, to provide, and again my not dealing directly with them and talking, I'm not sure how that supply came about. How they ended up giving them.

Q. (125) I didn't know if you had supplied them.

A. I don't think so, because in fact this is something that they've done over the years, you know, any number of incidents you know, that's something that was already in place for them to

provide. It was just a matter of knowing what the individual was going to get and you know be entitled to.

They also, not only the award for just the end-of-tour, I believe they also, the CACO officers they coordinate with BUPERS to get all the awards that their entitled to for their naval service.

You know whether it's a campaign award they may have gotten, Desert Storm, the Dessert Shield, whatever the case maybe. This is something that I think that they had pretty much outlined and you know had in place to accommodate prior to this happening taking place. And if there was any discussions or there was any problems or concerns, that didn't filter down to my level. I didn't get involved in that aspect of it.

I know, I can't call it closure but I guess I can call it reality really set in. In my church, I sing in gospel choir and one of our choir members a lady named [REDACTED] her husband worked for Army and he was one of the individuals in one of the fiscal divisions, financial divisions over there at Army and he was killed. Well actually he was missing in action and he was missing for the longest time and so it hit home at church, because she was a good friend and you know the anxiety she was going through prior to them actually identifying the husbands remains.

I don't remember whether it was an arm or whatnot, and they were saying at Dover that the DNA testing identified that it was really him. It was kind of like a different sense of what had happened and taken place because she was telling me that one you know he was missing and presumed dead because the area that was hit, their office took a huge impact. As a matter of fact she was saying like the Saturday before at her place their command had just held the command picnic, and she said they had lost I think about 12 people out of that one particular office that worked with her, including her husband, you know that worked with him. She goes, "It was just

so strange,” because a week later she’s been with the widows, you know, meeting with them and like the week before their husbands were there with them. She said it was so strange.

So that was kind of like a different insight to it you know, and she was telling me how they kind of closed down her street because, and she named the General, but his name fails me, I’m very bad with names. I hate to say that. But the General came to her home and brought his staff members and he said when he came in it’s like he had an entourage because they had charts and graphs and everything and pretty much told her where he husband was at that particular time that the plane hit. Where the plane hit and how it impacted him, you know, where his location was at. He was one of those that was at his desk, you know at the time and they said, it just engulfed him immediately and pretty much tore him to bits and she said even though that was so horrible to hear you know, he was that he died instantly. But you know it was still, she had to go on for like a couple of weeks or so, maybe even longer before they had, they found a body part they could identify and she could have closure to it you know with the family.

Of course, I attended the funeral and she was telling me that when that huge casket rolled by she did everything in her power to not jump up and grab it and open it and just hold onto the one arm. She said, “Barbara, you know, we work different hours and I leave about 6, 6:30 in the morning and he didn’t leave until later. So I get up before he left, and normally I don’t say goodbye to him because I’d much rather let him sleep, because he works later. You know sometimes his hours are late at the Pentagon.”

He was a retired I think, Master Sergeant from the Army, and then he went back and worked for the Army. I’m not quite sure if it was the same organization or not, but she said that you know that time of the year with the fiscal year ending you know he was working long hours and whatnot, so she’d try not to make too much noise in the morning. She works as a nurse, and her

hours are early and she said, anyway she's kind of comical you know in saying this. "You know what?" she says. "I got up that morning, I didn't even look over there at him, because I didn't want to disturb him in anyway," and she says, "I got up and left," and she's started thinking God, I didn't even look at him that morning. She said, "I just wish I had looked at him that morning, you know I didn't even look at him," and you know that really bothered her.

You know, the fact that you know not only did she not get a chance to say goodbye, but the last time she was actually in his presence, you know she didn't look at him. She said, You know, she said this oddly, "I wish I had, because you never know," and she said, "All I can do is cry."

I said, "Well, go ahead and cry.

She said, "Some people keep telling me I need to stop crying so much."

I said, "No, you don't have to, you know, go ahead and cry because I think (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible) it was and you know this is how you're expressing your emotions." So we talked, we cried some (everyone chuckles)

When we went to the funeral we went to the gravesite and I'm still not sure why the gravesites for these individuals are where they are. I know that space is being used at Arlington, but I didn't know if there was another place somewhere within Arlington as huge as it is that they could have chosen. Again I don't know if this was after the wounds kind of healed it would be more symbolic, because where the gravesites – have you been to the gravesites?

Q. Yes.

A. So you know where it is in proximity to where the plane hit and know you probably can't tell it, but at that time before any of the, you know, the renovations and before they even, you know they were still coming well I guess they had gone to the rescue mode, I mean to the recovery

mode. What do you call it? Recovery, no, it's rescue and recovery. So they were out of the rescue mode and they were into the recovery mode you know when we were there.

But I know for her, she said, "You're walking to the gravesite and you're trying your level best not to look over there at the Pentagon." You know I mean because she knew, she knew that you know it was (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 218) a part of (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 219) so you know I mean she's saying, "The rest of him's over there somewhere."

Well she's assuming that it is. And it was just hard for her, and a couple of the other people that was with us, you know some of the family members that we talked to you know they were kind of saying the same thing, even though they said for them it, you know sometimes you want to know. And you know to see that, that kind of brought the reality of it to them.

It did me as well, but more so than just looking at the Pentagon from that point. As we were walking to the gravesites, of crosses, the paths of quite a few fresh graves and the names were just so familiar because some of the first ones I came to were those N3/N5 you know members that we had did the Purple Hearts and the two awards for. That was the first time I have to say that an award that I was personally involved with and worked with, posthumous award that I actually saw the gravesite and saw the name on the marker and all that was there.

I can't tell you what I felt, but it was just so odd, you know and it added a bit of reality to it that I think I never had previously. You know the actual grave, you know because sometimes you're so removed from it.

Even and then I realize too, talking about it with CAPT LYHCN and talking about some of the actual injuries and all that some of them had sustained, and conditions of some of the bodies or some of them were bodies, some of them were body parts. You know some of them were you know just burned real bad. All that different aspect of it sent a chill down your spine and you



associated with the names, but to actually see the grave and see the marker on the grave and to recognize the names it was a (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 244) experience you know and again it - this is kind of hard for me to explain what that was, but it was a sense of reality. I mean just, you know such disbelief of what had happened and taken place even with doing the awards, even with seeing the funerals and all of that you know taking place on TV, to actually see it was, and then to actually see the graves of some of the others.

Q. (251) The finality of it.

A. Right, I guess at that point it became extremely real to me then. I guess in all sense you know it became completely real and I found myself going from grave to grave you know. As I went on there were some that didn't I recognize because they were like Army, you know some of the other services. There were a few civilians you know that were there as well, you know and I noticed their graves and I just said, "Wow, you know this is just really amazing."

And what was strange was they had a repast at Fort Myer Officer Club and when we got back there we were there for a while and then [REDACTED] announced that she was leaving. Her daughter-in-law, about nine months pregnant, well she didn't actually have it that night, but until that following Sunday. That was a Friday.

She said, "I'm going with her. This is the bright light in my life right now is the immediate family." She says, "Stay here. Enjoy yourselves you know whatever, you know but we're going on." And they took off you know and went to the hospital.

We weren't there I know not another ten minutes before they announced that they were putting Fort Myer on lockdown with in, if we weren't off by a certain, you know within a certain period of time you would get locked on the base.

I have to admire whoever was setting up the funerals. I didn't go to any of the others, but I did got to this one, but they had the (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible) you were going to this funeral, they had you meet in a certain place and you had the buses there that carried you, then you got a vehicle there that carried you actually to the chapel and (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 278)

I could have gotten on base you know with my ID. I decided to be with the people from the church and you know meet them all there and we'd all go together. So we kept saying there's two buses and the one behind you that's taking you to the graveyard, and I'm going, "Not a place you want to be when its dark, at least not for me." I don't want for anybody else you know. I said, they directed me in, but you know their shutting things down and they're on alert now. Those people there could direct me back out, because we were actually parked like when you come into and you come to one thing and you turn and you see "visitors". When you went down further they had you turning into there and going down a couple, I don't want to call them blocks, because they're lanes, and you know there's graves on both sides and they had you park up in between one of those lanes and that's where they had the buses for you at.

Let me get out of here. The whole thing was just kind of like an emotional roller coaster, because everybody was rushing out afterward and some of the people got on our bus that wasn't supposed to be on our bus, because they had separate bus for the family members that they were taking, that had came from out of town because you know, his home was in Louisiana, and so they had a lot of family members from Louisiana for the funeral. I guess about six or seven of them had gotten on our bus and he says, "Well I'll just take you over there and drop them off. I'm not suppose to, but I'll do that," and you know you need that. You know you need that so once he dropped us off and we got a ride there for the last and he went on and took them I think

somewhere over in Crystal City I believe. I'm not quite certain. I thought it was Crystal City because he was talking back and forth with them.

They kind of panicked. They said, "Well what bus do we get on. Where do we go?" And another bus had just pulled off and they thought that was the bus. And he said, "Don't worry about it," he says, "I'll take you over there." He says, "I'll take you."

I think everybody you know from all walks of survive, whether it was the people at Arlington Cemetery, whether it was the bus driver in Arlington, you know whoever stepped up to the plate and you know did what ever service they could provide. A little bit of comfort they could give. You know they were right there to do it, and you know I thinks that just, I think that's just so wonderful You know I really appreciate you know that part of it.

You asked me to talk and I'm a talker so I can go on, and give you different aspects of it, but on the awards side of the house, that's a part of history now. At the closing, you know kind of closing the mood we had what we call a couple of straggler awards that are coming in now. As a matter of fact I'm currently processing three straggler awards. And you know too with so much going on sometimes it's not necessarily a (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 318) An individual may have died in the part that they played and that doesn't come to light until later. Or when they finally get their information all together. You know they're just kind a little behind the power curve and you know I'm doing that. That was interesting.

The Defense of Freedom Medal is the civilian equivalent to the Purple Heart and there was quite a bit of discussion initially (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 325) with regard to whether the civilians, DOD employees, Navy, Army military what have you, if in fact they would be awarded Purple Hearts along side the military individuals. I know Army had went into DOD and asked for a waiver to Congressional Law that was passed by Congress and is a part of our one of the Defense

Organization Acts of 1980 where Congress had stated that the Purple Heart would be designated primarily to members of the Armed Forces and that DOD should look into establishing a civilian equivalent.

When they say equivalent, not necessarily with all the same benefits and what have you that the Navy Purple Heart does, because that's a little different because you're in the military and because you are in the military you know there are certain benefits that are accorded you simply by being in the military and the Purple Heart is one of those awards that support some of the other benefits that may be incorporated in that like being, you get the Purple Heart, you know to be buried in our national cemetery, as against a veterans cemetery. And as well you know there are a lot of veterans organizations that you can join that for the most part is associated with.

We had people calling in and telling us that they received the Purple Heart, but they didn't receive the documentation, could they get the documentation. Most of the time it'd be for some of the older awards like Vietnam or World War II, Korean, actually before my time of being in the office. And you'd tell them how to go about doing it, because they were saying you know they were saying they were either going to be a fire, you know they're going to be a firefighter, or there's different jobs out there that they look at certain awards, even some of the campaign awards, like some of the expeditionary medals and what have you, and you get certain number of points just like if you're military and you leave the military service and you go into the civilian work force, federal government how you get the veterans preference, you know something similar to that. So there are some benefits associated with it.

I don't think when the Congress was talking about the civilians as far as a equivalent, not necessarily all, that they have the benefits and the other things that come with it, but an award

that would appropriately recognize those civilians who are killed in the line of duty, you know in their service to the government. Like the military individuals and what can happen to them.

I gather there was a little bit of correspondence back and forth from DOD you know to the services asking like their opinions on Army's request you know for the waiver. But based on the law from Congress they say that this is something that DOD needs to do, go ahead and get that award established. You know you hate to think of the fact that they know there's probably more to come as they keep saying, and sometimes when it's a little (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 372) you know with everything that's going on now, that they're going to try and catch us with our attention elsewhere. And we're all beginning to be a little lax here at home, You know something else is happening here, and the way it's going to happen, you know I don't know that's a fact, but it can happen almost anywhere, but the fact that you're on a military installation and you work for the military you know you feel just a little bit more vulnerable than the next person, but that's not necessarily true when you think about the World Trade Center. You think about those types of things, but I guess that may be a part of it too, that you know there may be other terrorist incidents you know forthcoming. We need to go ahead and get something in place right now to appropriately recognize the civilians and again both the CNO and the Secretary of the Navy has a civilian awards office and so we don't really get involved in that. The only thing that I've requested from them is that when we really feel that we've gotten everything out of the way with the awards side of the house and all our stragglers, is to provide me copies of the awards on the civilian side and you know information on the Defense of Freedom and the other awards that were given so I can take it and put it with my file on the military side. I provide the same thing to (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible 402) on the CNO side of the house so that we can you know so our records can become complete. So there will be a complete record there, you know ten, fifteen years from

now when someone goes back and says well, what happened, you know, what about the awards, I hope not only that I have that on the military side.

One thing I had hoped to have gotten, that I didn't get and I guess that's why I kick myself in the leg for not going you know to that special memorial service that they had, was the fact that you know they gave out the pins and I would loved to have had one of those to put in the file. I tried to get one. Whoever has them, you know is not giving them out. So I just told one of the ladies on the staff, that didn't want to give hers up as well, "Oh when you leave us or a year or two years from now if you decide that you know it doesn't hold as much meaning as it did previously think about donating it back to the office so I can put it in the file."

The same thing with the program because at that time everybody wanted to take their own program home and show it to the family members and keep it. I ended up getting a Xerox copy of one of the programs, where I would rather have had you know one of the actual programs and one of the pins and then you have the little pamphlets, you know items that they gave out, and had that incorporated in the file as well. Because it's not too often you know with the awards and all that you have the back end of it as well of what actually happened with the ceremony and you know the other things of that nature, so I haven't given up on that. I'm hoping that you know somebody will decide that, "OK I want to give it to you," so I can kind of like complete the file with something that completes it. You have everything right there.

So I think that's pretty much it. I hope I didn't leave anything out.

Q. (430) No.

A. There's a lot of different things you know that we do. Little things that we do in the process but all that's (\_\_\_\_ Inaudible), and sometimes there's a case by case basis based on what you have in and what you're working with.

Q. You have any other questions?

Q. (another) Nope.

Q. OK thank you very much for all your terrific detailed memories. I really –

Q. (another) Appreciate it thank you.

Transcribed by:

Ethel Geary  
February 15, 2003