

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

Capt. Michael McDaniel
CDR Carol O'Hagan

Interviewee:

Capt. George Parker Croy III

Interviewer's Organization:

Naval Historical Center
Naval Historical Center

Current Address:

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██████████
██████████
W- OPNAV N784A

Date of Interview:

8 JAN 02

Number of Cassettes:

1

Place of Interview:

NC 2

Security Classification:

UNCLAS

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

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

Abstract of Interview:

Interviewee Information: Capt Croy grew up in Tallahassee, FL as a third generation Floridian. He left Tallahassee for the first time to play football in college. His father flew bombers in World War II and his aunt was a nurse in a MASH unit in Vietnam. He played the linebacker position in high school football. He played football at Gordon College in Georgia for one year. After one year he joined the Marine Corps. He left the Marine Corps and ended up graduating from Florida State University. He served on various ships mostly as an Engineering Officer. He served as a CO of a ship in MCM THREE and is due to go back to be a Commodore after this current tour. He also received his Master's degree in National Security Affairs at the Navy Postgraduate School in Monterrey, CA. Currently he works in the Surface Warfare Directorate. He has worked in Missile Defense as well as his current position in Force Air Defense within the N7 Directorate. During the 96 Olympics he did a lot of interagency work around weapons of mass destruction with FEMA, FBI, Public Health and the Department of Justice to establish a response capability for that type of event.

Topics Discussed:

On 11 Sep his office was on the Fifth deck, B ring. The office was mostly cubicles with two or three enclosed office spaces and a conference room. He was in the back of the office space in the small, secure conference room between 0830 and 0930. He had just left a meeting in the conference room at 0930 and noticed the TVs were on. He wondered why they were watching such a bad movie. At his desk his phone rang and as he answered it he heard the TV mention a second plane. His wife was on the phone and asked him what was going on. She told him two planes had hit the World Trade Center. He looked at the TV and saw the clear blue sky and knew it was no accident. He told her he didn't think it was an accident and then he heard an

explosion. His wife says he hollered, “ Hit the deck, take cover. Get away from the windows”. He started to hear people in the front office saying they couldn’t get out. The phone was still working so he told his wife there had been an explosion and he would have to go, but would call her back.

The door at the front of the office was jammed so they had to go out the back way. He walked around and checked under all the desks to make sure no one was hiding under there. People were starting to make their way to the exit. He told them not to worry that it was a sturdy building and it could take a lot. He still had no idea what had happened, but thought it had been a bomb. He looked over and saw the C ring had blown out and smoke was coming out of the second and third deck. The phones were still working so he called his wife again and told her he was fine.

They walked down the stairs and came out. It was very quiet. The smoke was still coming out of the building. There was a Yeoman female walking around and obviously in shock. There was construction chain link fence in the area where they came out. Someone showed up in a window on the second deck and then a second person. Capt Croy told people to go over towards the window and do a basket catch. The two people jumped and were caught. Capt Croy grabbed a couple of people to look for firefighting equipment. They found CO2 bottles and PKP bottles but no fire hose. The fires weren’t really bad yet. He feels the first thing they should have done is go straight in the building and not wait a second, but they didn’t know that.

It came to him that the fire was going to get worse and they needed to clear the debris out of the stairwell. That was the logical way to get in with a path to the building. The wall was blown out. There were seamen, petty officers, Marines, flag officers all helping. They cleared out one passageway. A couple of guys went in there and the smoke was still not bad. They started to hear people. He dropped his glasses. They cleared away a door to the right by an exit. To the left was where most of the blast had come, the wall was completely blown out. They were entering there in either another passageway or a blown area. It looked like everything in the C ring was blown to the B ring. They asked, ”Is anyone here?”.

They started to hearing coughing and crying. The Navy guys instinctively stayed low. They had to tell the Air Force and Army guys to stay low. They took turns going in towards this back wall; holler and they would hear people. They pulled a couple of people out of the stairwell area. The big area he knows they pulled at least two people out, maybe three. He carried one man out who was so broken up it was like carrying a bag of potatoes. They pulled out a severely burned Lieutenant. During this time he was with CDR Perez, George Mike Lancaster, Don Smiley, Denny Wetherald, and Steve Hurst. Then the smoke started to get a lot worse. The smell was awful. When he walks to the building today he still smells that smell. The smell is like roast lamb.

He thought they were really doing some good, getting people out and clearing passageways. They learned in Atlanta in a situation like this you only have about an hour to rescue people, after that it becomes a recovery operation. He thinks they got six people out successfully. It was very spontaneous. No one had to be told. Little teams formed and people started doing. They pulled another person out of the one stairwell, possibly a black female petty officer. In the last team he was with there were a couple of other people who got out. One man had to crawl out, crawl under and crawl through. The second team had a couple of E-9s and an Air Force General helping. The people who kept going back into the bigger room may have saved another person.

They kept saying, “Come to me, come to my voice”. The training to focus on exactly one area kept him from being more aware of what was going on around him. The last thing he remembers is when they were in last corridor getting the last person out, who may have been a civilian, he remembers looking up and the smoke was getting lower (about down to their heads). Then the smoke above started going back into the building. He said, “Guys, we don’t have much longer”. He thinks they got the last guy out as the smoke started to get so thick. They started to come back out and he looked down and bent over forward and found his glasses.

He got back to the gate and couldn’t see Capt Kosnik anymore, which worried him. (He ended up going another direction). By the time they got to the fence the smoke had completely engulfed the area of the B and C ring. It was hot.

The DPS people kept trying to get them to leave, telling them there was another plane coming. Capt Croy told them “We’ll leave when we’re finished.” He did not want to leave until they were sure they weren’t leaving any people in there. He is sure the Arlington Fire Department was occupied with the D and E ring where they could see the fire raging, but they never saw anyone from the Fire Department where they were.

When Capt Croy got outside he started heading down to Alexandria. He didn’t have a phone and kept seeing people with cell phones. He kept asking people to call his wife to tell her he was fine and headed down the Parkway. He got to National Airport and walked through Crystal City on Jeff Davis Hwy. (It was absolute gridlock). He thought about going to NC 1, but decided to keep walking. He was covered with soot and didn’t have his cover. He was carrying his leather briefcase and another white notebook that he had grabbed upon leaving his office because he thought it had the budget data in it. He was arguing with someone about what had hit the Pentagon. The man told him it was a plane and he had seen it. As he walked down the Parkway his neighbor (who had been sent by Capt Croy’s wife) showed up with a bottle of Remy Martin and bottle of Vodka. He brought Capt Croy to the hospital; even though he wasn’t hurt he looked awful.

Capt Croy’s wife had been called into the hospital, Mount Vernon INOVA, where she works as an emergency room nurse. That is where he saw his wife. They took his blood pressure and he was just fine. Prior to that day he and his wife had not been good about wearing wedding rings, now they haven’t taken the wedding rings off since 11 Sep.

Reliving the experience hits him at the strangest times. He might see a news story or be eating dinner at a restaurant and it brings the experience back. He doesn’t think people have fully come to terms with it.

He wants to be sure they rescued everyone who was not killed right away. He wants to know where the people were that were not rescued.

Lessons Learned:

Need an evacuation plan.

Need some degree of firefighting equipment and breathing apparatus for fire emergencies, or maybe for something else.

He wishes they had a fire hose to cool the people off. They needed breathing apparatus. He summarizes that day as an extraordinary effort with nothing. Navy training made them instinctively know to stay low, test a door with the back of your hand, don't grab electrical outlets, etc. The spontaneity of the response was a proof of Navy leadership and the quality of people. He is concerned by the response of the DPS trying to get them to leave the area while they were still in the midst of trying to save people.

It's not from a lack of will that we don't have terrorist attacks everyday. It's an extraordinary statement about our efforts as a nation that these events are not common. Collectively we are doing quite a bit and are keeping these people at bay. They will have successes. He doesn't think the terrorists thought we would respond as vigorously as we have.

The whole paradigm of warfare and national defense has changed since 11 Sep. We may change the whole Department of Defense to where we do something with Homeland Security being an interagency from national to tactical levels of response. You can't respond without local authority collaboration and cooperation. We don't have enough resources in the federal government to secure borders, rivers, etc. No one knows the ground better than the firemen and the police. They need to be trained in a way to be able to do that. He sees an almost militia-like response similar to a volunteer firefighting-type of response. Special Forces, forward presence, air power precision executed may be the wave of the future. The forward ability to continuously strike will continue to be key. We have to keep these people with their heads down and isolate them. The Coast Guard, Navy supported, have a significant challenge to secure lakes and rivers.

He feels that in regard to Homeland Defense within the Navy this will really come down to some type of interagency set up with a civilian Director, Deputy Director, Director of Operations that should be FBI or Coast Guard. The Navy role could be personnel support to the Coast Guard mission of maritime security. Designate ready resources from the IDTC so forward operations are not impacted, to respond in support of homeland defense. The Navy will have to work with harbor patrols, port security to help us. If the Navy waits to be told instead of trying to shape our future it will make this a more cumbersome problem than it has to be.

Capt Croy's next assignment is Commander Mine Countermeasure Squadron Two, Corpus Christi, TX in May 2002.

This generation that has been criticized (Gen X or Gen Next). They are as solid as an American oak, coming from solid stock. It was them that ran up the World Trade Center and is in Afghanistan. Outward appearance doesn't matter, they have responded famously. The day Osama bin Laden attacked the World Trade Center he signed his death warrant, and could not have imagined the response to that attack.

Abstracted by:
CDR Carol O'Hagan
11 Jan 02

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Transcript of Interview:

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Capt Croy grew up in Tallahassee, FL as a third generation Floridian. He left Tallahassee for the first time to play football in college. His father flew bombers in World War II and his aunt was a nurse in a MASH unit in Vietnam. He played the linebacker position in high school football. He played football at Gordon College in Georgia for one year. After one year he joined the Marine Corps. He left the Marine Corps and ended up graduating from Florida State University. He served on various ships mostly as an Engineering Officer. He served as a CO of a ship in MCM THREE and is due to go back to be a Commodore after this current tour. He also received his Master's degree in National Security Affairs at the Navy Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA. Currently, he works in the Surface Warfare Directorate. He has worked in Missile Defense as well as his current position in Force Air Defense within the N7 Directorate. During the 96 Olympics he did a lot of interagency work around weapons of mass destruction with FEMA, FBI, Public Health and the Department of Justice to establish a response capability for that type of event.

Topics Discussed:

Q. (08:23) Tell us about the capacity you serve here in Washington, and were serving in prior to September 11th.

A. I've worked in the Surface Warfare Directorate and I've been, I've had a couple of jobs. The first was, was here in Missile Defense. What we do are requirements and budget type activities. I presently work in the Force Air Defense section of the weapons branch. We recently reorganized N76. I came here in AD6, which is the Surface Warfare Directorate. At one time I was Anti Ship Missile Defense, did, I was working on QDR related issues. So it's mostly been requirements and budget, bringing these programs forward in capability to the fleet, and doing other assorted collateral duties like QDR, which I got involved with late last summer for most of the summer. It's an enormous opportunity to see the future of the Navy and have some hand in that. It's a lot of opportunity. A lot of hours. Our office, it's nothing unusual, you're there around six in the morning and you can be there 20, 21, 22:00 at night, and routinely. This last fourteen months have been extraordinary in that the hours have been, there's not been the normal break because of the new administration, of the QDR, because of this budget thing we're going through. So in September we were right in the middle of all this at that time.

Q. (10:04) The position that you were in at that time?

A. I was 765D, D shop was Anti Ship Missile Defense and I was in the Surface Warfare Directory D ring, fifth deck.

Q. (10:15) And now you're in what capacity?

A. I'm still—we reorganized. Instead of Anti Ship Missile Defense we call it Forced Air Defense, OPNAV 764A1. We've reorganized. I still essentially have all the TOA, all the money,

all the budget systems I had previously plus a couple more. And because of previous background, and how I did a lot of work around the Olympic time period '96 and did a lot of the initial interagency work on the response to weapons of mass destruction in FEMA, FBI and I would have to say other than command, that was an enormous, again just an enormous opportunity. I mean, South of I-10, pretty much a country town and to be involved with things like that, working with a very high level with the FBI, FEMA, Public Health Service, Department of Justice, establishing a response capability for that type of event.

The morning that the Oklahoma building went off, ten minutes after it was blown up I took the call in the office that I was in, in Atlanta, and that started all this, and -

Q. Really?

A. It really, when I say started all this, it started an association of two and a half years that led to, when the bomb went off in the park I also was called, and have to be involved in that type of thing. I was —the Response Task Force was the initial interagency response capability for the consequence of weapons of mass destruction, and again, they were, it was quite an effort to put together from nothing a capability of some type, to determine the biological instrument response force of the Marines to first deployment. You know, the office helped coordinate that and I got to be very good friends with the CO there. We called them when they didn't even have a UIC. They didn't have any, no way to get an accounting data, and they'll say, "We'll be on the trucks. We'll be there." We put them in a winery in downtown Atlanta. They wanted to put them at Dobins Air Force Base, but we decided that was too far away if something did happen and they had to be closer. The winery we put them in at Atlantic was less than a mile from the Dunn, less than a mile and a half from the stadium. There was one other event they were using, I don't remember

but it was right there. You know, we just kind of, I remember calling the real estate agent and saying I need a house with 60,000 square feet downtown Atlanta, and calling the General and telling him we had the building. I just need someone to write a check. (Laughing) But that was fun.

Q. (12:56) Tell us about where your office was located on 10 September or 11 September.

A. Fifth deck, D ring, my desk and office area was about in the center of that wing.

Q. (13:18) Kind of describe the physical layout of your office just briefly.

A. It's pretty much cubes, there were two or three offices and conference rooms that were enclosed for the Admirals, Admiral immediate staff and the deputy. I was actually in the back. I would say from the front of the office on the fifth floor, corridor, yes corridor four. Excuse me that's where you enter the office and then you have a reception area. You go to the left to the Admiral's offices or Admiral Suites, right over here. Then you come down behind those, all the way through. It's open to the back and then there's one small conference room down, a secure conference room, which is actually between 8:30 and 9:30, and I had really to this day don't have much of a timeline, but I believe we came out about 9:30. And then my wife, we were back in the secure office area, and I came back in that little area between four and, between the fifth corridor to where the Pentagon takes a turn. It has an emergency exit there, and that's actually how we got out.

We were actually in that meeting and then when I came out about 9:30, my wife, well we walked out and I noticed the TVs were on, and I actually thought when I looked over there, I wasn't, you know, thinking about the meeting. I looked over and said, "Bad movie." Then you know, not

even subconsciously just thinking, you know “the World Trade Towers, why would anybody— what is this about? Why is the TV on?” And, “not in a million years.”

And the phones ringing when I get back to the desk and then I’m listening to another TV that’s on, and the second plane they were talking about, and the second plane down, and I answered the phone –

Q. (15:12) Did you see that happen?

A. No, I think both of them had already happened and then my wife called and said, “What’s going on?”

I said, “What do you mean?”

She said, “Well two planes hit the World Trade Center.” The minute she said that, I knew that was no accident and then again I looked back over to the TV, the first thing that struck me was the clear blue sky and that one plane, World War II, one hitting the Empire State Building, but two of them it was obviously no accident. So I’m sitting there and she’s saying, “ Well, what do you think this is all about?”

My wife, [REDACTED], had worked the night before, as a nurse, nurse supervisor at the hospital, so she was already tired and she was staying up trying to—she said, “I think I need to sleep, but I can’t turn the TV off,” something like that.

And then while I was talking to her, and I said, “I don’t think this was an accident,” and then Kaboom!.

Then she says, I do not remember this, but she said, and a couple of other people said it, she said I hollered, “Hit the deck! Take cover!” And hollered it loud. Then she said I was doing, I said, “Get away from the windows!” Things are still blowing against the windows. I started hearing

people in the front office saying they couldn't get out and I didn't know what that was about and I heard somebody else shouting. I couldn't make out what they were shouting, but I heard the commotion.

So the phone was still on, it was still working in the D ring, or not D ring, I keep saying D, we were in B ring, excuse me. It wasn't D ring, B ring. So I turned back to the phone and I said, "Darlin', we've had an explosion. I'm going to have to go." (chuckle). So she immediately started crying.

I said, "I will call you back just as soon as I can. Don't worry, we're all fine. I can't see anyone that is hurt. There's been an explosion. Don't worry. I'll call you back."

Q. (17:14) So you were on the phone with her when it hit?

A. I was on the phone with her.

Q. (17:18) Did she hear it?

A. She heard me.

Q. (17:19) Heard you?

A. She heard me holler, "Hit the deck!" I honestly don't have any conscious memory, I do remember saying, "Get away from the window. " I do remember saying that. I remember saying, "Get down!" You know, because the debris was still plastering against the window. I think it cut the face of the brick. I don't know that. I saw it a couple of days later and several windows were broken, but I couldn't tell whether that was fire fighting or whether it was the blast.

I know you talked to Kosnik, he was in the front of the office. I don't want to spend a lot of time on that. I understand the blast came down the corridor. The door was jammed; they couldn't get out. At least that's my understanding. So they said we headed out the back way.

So I went by, because the windows, and that's where all the secretarial help worked, I went over there, walked down there, looked under desks to make sure no one was, you know, hunkered down under there or hurt because of the blast and what had happened. Stuff was still kind of raining. I believe I remember that. I never really saw the fireball, but I did see the dark cloud. My secretary was sitting there. She did see it.

So I came back –

Q. (18:27) Who's your secretary?

A. Cindy Norman, a wonderful lady, and then I came back over, and I remember, you know, people were starting to make their way to the exit. I remember saying, you know, "Don't worry, this is a sturdy building. it can survive a lot worse. It's concrete and steel." You know, "Just keep steady." I don't know what I said, but I do remember saying that this is a sturdy old building. She can take a lot. I had no idea what had happened.

Q. (18:59) What'd you think exploded.

A. I thought it was a bomb, and the whole time I was thinking how in the world did they get a bomb this far into the building, is what I was thinking, because the C ring blew out. It blew out and over. I looked down and there's a huge hole in the side of the ceiling, and somebody was coming out of the first and second deck. So anyway, I came back and I said, "Well, the phones were working a minute ago. So I picked it up and dialed home. I said, "Darlin' I'm just fine.

Everybody in our office is fine. Don't worry about a thing. I'm going to have to leave for a while. I'll call you as soon as I can." Usually I have a cell phone, but that day I didn't have it, and I never take the truck to work. I mean I usually take Metro or the old beater, and our Suburban's sitting down in the parking lot, South Parking lot. So I'm thinking, you know, I'll never be able to get that out of here. I'm thinking, well we have to wait.

Then walk down the stairs and come out. I think I was, if I wasn't the last, I was among the last. I believe Admiral Balisle, I believe he was right in front of me. Mark Kosnik was pretty close to me. His aide, the Admiral's aide was there. We came out and it was unbelievably quiet. The smoke was still coming out of the building. There was some things on fire. There was one Yeoman female that was walking, obviously in shock. That's the first thing I remember. There were maybe, there was a fence right by where we came out between the corridors, and I was sure it was connected with the construction that was going on, the chain link fence. It wasn't a particularly secure fence. We got through it very quickly.

I remember Mark went over and immediately—we stood there I would say several seconds and looked in there and saw her, and said, somebody said, "Come this way," and it was obviously to me she was walking around, just, I think in shock. I don't know that but it's just kind of the way it appeared. And then somebody showed up on the second deck. OK, they're survivors and then a second person showed up, and the other Army Colonel. The first one I believe was another female Yeoman, I remember a white uniform. Mark went over there, and I said, "Get some people over here. Do a basket catch." Like a cheerleader thing and then Mark went over there, started directing, get—because a lot of stuff had blown out, he said, "Let's start building up to the second deck," because there were obviously two survivors, we figured there were more.

But anyway the two people jumped, and like the cheerleader toss, they were caught, and I think one person was hurt doing that, catching them, but I know at least two people that came out that way. I went, when I saw Mark and I don't know how many other, several others, but a handful, half a dozen or so, go in that direction, I grabbed one or two people, don't ask me because I can't remember, "Let's go get some fire fighting equipment."

We couldn't find anything. We found CO₂ bottles, PKP bottles, we couldn't—I said, "Let's find a hose," and I sent two people, "Go find a fire hose. Start bringing it back over here. We're going to need it." Because the fire was not real bad at that point. The smoke was pretty intense coming out of the second deck C ring. The fires were just really getting going in the corridor right in front of us and I thought we could douse that and we could start clearing stuff out. So we spent a brief period of time collecting fire bottles, and bringing them back over there, and then it was obvious (becomes emotional).

This is embarrassing.

Q. (22:56) No.

A. It was obviously we didn't move quick enough. The first thing we should have done was gone straight in the building. We should not have waited a second and, but we didn't know that, and then it came to me that the fire was going to get worse. That we needed to clear the debris out, not try to fight the fire. Start getting the debris out of the stairwell, because that would probably be the logical way we could get in. You know we'd have a path into the building.

The wall was blown out and so, I told, you know, "Keep trying to find a fire hose." I don't know who I said this to. There were civilians, everything from seaman and petty officers and Marines right up to flag officers. Admiral Balisle was very conscious to, you know, try to establish

communications with someone. You know, you'll have to talk to them because I don't know who and what they were trying to do, but he told me later and it was obvious to me that he was doing that, he was trying to stay just removed enough to assess it. See what we had. We had no idea what we had.

So, when I came back, then we started clearing out this one passageway and trying to bring the burning stuff out, and insulation, furniture, parts. We cleared that then a couple of guys came in there and then we—the smoke was still not terrible. It was thick. It was bad, but it was still not, not awful. We started clearing that out and we heard, that's when we started hearing people, and I have no idea how long this is. I mean I really don't. I thought, I thought the whole period of time was twenty or thirty minutes. I thought the whole time I was in there was, was very, not long at all. It wasn't until I talked to Mark a couple of days later and a couple of the other guys down there, we didn't come out of there until much later, after noon is what I understand. And I don't know that. I don't remember looking at the watch.

I do—I'll tell you a little story about my glass, and, these –

Q. (25:10) Those the same ones?

A. They're the same ones. I dropped them, and I was in such a hurry. I can't remember whether I was carrying somebody or what, but I dropped them. They fell out. I'd just gotten them. OK, I didn't have time to worry about those glasses. So anyway, we cleared that one area, and then we started hearing people and we started clearing away debris and clearing away a door. This was over to the right almost in front of the exit.

When you went to the left that was where most of the blast, I believe came out. The wall was completely blown out. We were entering there, and I don't really remember whether we were

entering another passageway or just the blown area, because so much—it seemed to be that everything in the C ring got blow to the back wall, the inner wall to the B ring. So we, at that point, we were hearing—we were going in there, “Is there anyone in here? Is there anyone here?”

We were starting to hear coughing, and crying and this and that and the other. I remember that the Navy guys almost instinctively stayed low and tried to stay below the smoke and some of them would crawl in there and crawl back out. I kept having to tell, you know, I’m not, they don’t know. They don’t practice this stuff, so the Air Force guys and Army guys, this one E-9 Army guy behind me kept, “You got to go. You can’t stay here! You can’t stay here!” He kept trying to grab me.

I said, “I’m fine! I’m fine! If you’ll get down, you’ll be fine, too.” We were, you know, we’re digging away and trying, you know, to get people out. I had breathing—we didn’t have any breathing apparatus. We had no fire fighting equipment of any kind really. So we would go in kind of taking turns. Go to the back wall of this one area and holler and we started hearing people and they seemed to be from the right. Then we started concentrating on that. The stairwell we pulled out a couple of people from there.

The big area, I want to say three or four, but I know two, because I helped carry one guy out that I thought, you know, he was so broken, I don’t know how he was, its like grabbing a bag of potatoes. It felts like there was so many pieces.

The Lieutenant we pulled out was severely burned and in shock. I don’t know who he was, but I think I’ve read his name since. There were several other guys from my office that were there.

Sam Perez who is a Captain now. Mike Lancaster, which is George Mike Lancaster. There was

Steve Hurst who was a civilian. He was recognized. Don Smiley was there; he was recognized. Denny Weatherald which was another guy that was very much in the search for other people. But then, this is where it started to get a lot worse and needed to stand down. Wasn't doing a lot of good. The smell was awful and when I walked back over to the building today, I still smell it, and I knew, I don't think, when I get over, because we've still got our meetings in the sixth corridor and I sense, it's probably my imagination, but –

Q. (28:49) Can you describe it?

A. You won't like it.

Q. (28:49) That's OK.

A. Lamb, lamb, like lamb, roast lamb, and I didn't realize until I had dinner that night. We were actually at a—my wife ordered a rack of lamb. I just know I was sitting there going, “Yes, Yes.” I started looking around.

Q. (29:10) Thought it was a fire?

A. And then, yes, and I relayed the story to a friend of mine who's an Army Ranger, Vietnam veteran, and he said, “Yes,” He said, “That's –“ And, and I think it's a combination of just the smell, the smoke and burned flesh, and I think that's what it was. And then I just, you know, I just can, I can see directly in front of me, visually, I can see, I can remember that we were, I thought we were really doing some good. We were getting some people out. We were clearing passageways. I remember I kept thinking I was hearing—the thing I really want, I don't know if I really want to know this or not, is I want to know where the people were that didn't make it.

I told the Admiral the next day, I just, we wasted too much time. I don't know what the time was, but we should have never, we should have just gone. I mean, the one thing that we learned in Atlanta if you have an event like that there's basically, you know, there's about an hour you have to make a difference, and after that it's just a recovery operation. They were really talking about more chemical, biological type agents, then I think just a fire, but we really did have a period of time where we just, we didn't know what we had. Walking home I argued with a guy that "no, it was a bomb." You know, I had no idea really until I got home and I said, I told, you know. Anyway, so we, I think the number is six that we were successful in getting out.

Q. (31:13) Can you recall that for us? Can you kind of –

A. I wish I could. I just –

Q. (31:17) Just best you can. Just for the –

A. I know, I know it was really, there was, it was so spontaneous. I mean it was so, no one had to be told. Little teams formed and just started doing. I know out of the one stairwell that we were, we pulled out, again, I remember a white uniform. I think it was a Navy guy, but it could have been, you know, I can't even tell you that. I think it was a Petty Officer. I think she was a black female. I'm not positive. I know that we pulled out a civilian that I believe was wearing green, something green, and he's the guy that I thought was so broke up. I know the Lieutenant we got out.

Q. (32:01) Male?

A. Male, and he was the one I think was severe. I think he had flash burns, I'm not sure.

Q. (32:06) Shaeffer (phonetic) maybe?

A. It could have been. There was a team, the last team that I was with there was one or two others that you know I don't remember whether I was pushing something out of the way, or pulling something out of the way; they came out. You know, we got them out. I remember one guy walking past me that had to crawl out, crawl under and crawl through. The last team—the first team was over to the right. The second team had a couple of E-9s, had an Air Force General. I remember, I don't think I'm seeing things. I think I remember him being there. I think he was a three-star General. I mean, again, I know that the guy next to me that we were clearing debris at the last was a Corporal. I know there was another Army Colonel, the Navy SEAL that was recognized the other day was also in that group for a while.

The people that kept going into one room, the bigger room, going back in there, that's, I don't know whether it was another rescue guy that came out, or it was another survivor, but we kept, you know, "Come this way. Come this way. Come to me. Come to my voice," type stuff. "Is there anyone in here? Can you hear me?" And then the two people jumped out of the windows. That's a couple more really, and I'm just, I wish I was more clear. I just, I you know, it the train, to focus on exactly this, and you know keep looking around, but exactly this, and that's what I can see. And then I can't—I remember Mark, and I remember the aide, and Chad Chadwick, Lieutenant Commander Chadwick and I remember the Admiral. I remember those guys I named. I didn't know all the other people, and it was really you know, everyone was contributing. It was almost spontaneous changes of leadership in a sense. If a task needed something and you could do it, you did it, and then you asked for help. If you were at a pause and somebody needed your

help, you went in there and did it, the debris, the firefighting. There were a lot of bottles in the end, but they didn't do a lot of good.

The last thing I remember, I remember it again, this is almost silly, but I remember when we were in the last corridor getting the last person out, who I think was a civilian. I don't remember whether a civilian came out or another military, the Air Force guy that came out. I don't remember the sequence, but I remember looking up and if you remember the movie, "Back Draft," if you remember when, and I kept honestly, consciously kept thinking about this. I remember looking up and yes the smoke was getting lower, getting lower and it was, it was down even, in an even position. It was about down to your head. We, we'd used t-shirts, dunked them in the water, and we'd wrap them back over. It really was pretty effective, I thought, I mean compared. And again I remember telling these other guys, "Stay down. Stay Down. Go get a t-shirt." Do something, and I remember this one Army staff sergeant, just "Got to get out of there. Can't stay in there. You can't stay in there. This is toxic." You know, I remember that, but I remember at the end we were still focused. And then I remember looking up and the smoke was going back in the building, around the ceiling, and if you ever see the movie "Back Draft" there's a scene where it shows that, and then I remember, I don't know who I spoke it to, I remember saying, "Guys, we don't have much longer." Then, you know, I think, I just can't be certain, I think we got the last guy out. The smoke started getting so thick. We started coming back out, and then I was coming out kind of like this (shows them a position) and I looked down and –

Q. (36:19) Bent over forward and

A. Picked them up.

Q. (36:19) Found your glasses?

A. Picked them up. Put them back in my pocket, and I remember walking back to where the gate was. Then I saw Mike Lancaster and then I couldn't see anything behind us. I lost Mark Kosnik. I couldn't see him anymore. That really worried me, because I remembered seeing him when I came out, and it turns out they went the opposite direction we went. We came out toward the mall entrance. I think they went the opposite direction and went out another, nother, nother way. By then, by the time we got to the fence—it wasn't a hurried walk, it was just a walk—the smoke had completely engulfed the area between B and C ring, and it was quite hot. It was hot a lot. There was a lot of water running off which kind of kept us, kept cool. I wish there had been—That's the thing I wanted the hose for. I wanted the hose not so much to try to fight the fire, as to cool the people, because when you got next to flame, when you got in there, we needed breathing apparatus. Again, I remember DPS coming in sometime and saying, "You got to get out of here. There's a second plane inbound."

I said, "What do you mean a second?"

"There's a plane in bound. There's a plane inbound."

And I just remember looking at him. I said, "Well, we'll leave when we're finished here." Then, then another guy came in here and grabbed me.

Q. (37:43) DPS guy.

A. DPS guy, "You've got to get out of here, now! I'm ordering you to get out of here," and I looked at him and I said, "Hey, we going to just leave these people in here?" I almost you know wasn't very polite, and you know we're leaving the job not done, you know and again, I don't

think, I'm not critical of the County Fire Department. I don't mean that, I just mean to say, I'm sure they were occupied with the D, in the D ring where the most of the fire was really raging, or what they could see of it. There was plenty of fire and smoke where we were, but I don't remember seeing them.

I walked, when I left the building finally, because of the smoke, we walked out of the mall entrance, came up right in front of the main entrance there and I didn't walk to the left to go back around to the helo pad where the plane hit. I walked to the right to—I figured, well hell I'll, you know, I'll just walk up. I mean it's ten miles, but I, you know there was no doubt, I knew I was never going to get the truck out, and there was no one. There was no one, Admiral Balisle was up there kind of counting noses of people coming out and then Mike and I walked out, and –

Q. (39:10) Mike?

A. Lancaster.

Q. (39:13) Lancaster.

A. He said he was going to head down to see if he couldn't catch a ride into North Parking, and I said, "Well, I'm going to head this way," and again another DPS guy, "You've got to get out of here! You've got to get out of here!" "You know, just "Wankum (phonetic) get out of here! Move!"

You know and this guy, I said, "Look at these guys, " I said you know. And I looked like I've been in a fire. I am covered with soot and smoke and my wife said blood. But anyway, I ended up, and I had again, no sense of time, but I walked basically, just started heading down to Alexandria, and I didn't have a phone. I figured when I got home I would call and let them know

I was all right. I kept seeing people with cell phones, so I kept asking them, “Call this number. Tell them I’m OK. Tell my wife I’m fine. Just let her know that I’m headed down Parkway. I’ll be there when I get there.”

I walked down there, and I got to National Airport on the Parkway, and walked to Crystal City. It was absolutely grid locked. You couldn’t have, no cars moving. I walked basically down Jeff Davis Boulevard for a while. There was nothing moving. All the intersections were just clogged. On the walk over I thought about going to NC1, but then you know, I decided. I know Mark Kosnik did, and I can’t say enough about the job he did. Not only during the event, but in the period after that.

So I walked down the Parkway and this guy was telling me what—all these people looking at me to and I didn’t, I’d not really consciously thought of, you know about anything. I didn’t have my cover. I remember when I walked out I grabbed my briefcase and I grabbed—I remember grabbing the leather briefcase, because I thought, just may have to use this to push against something, and I remember carrying that. So I did have, you know, I’ve got—I thought I grabbed the money book. I didn’t. I grabbed another book. When I say the money book, the budget stuff, because I kind of in my mind, you know, I said, “I’m going to need this.” I didn’t. I grabbed another similar looking white notebook that I had all the budget data in it, which really—I’ll tell you about that.

Anyway, I wanted something that was a leather that I could use if I had to lean against something or push, you know or something like that. I didn’t have to, but we came out of the exit.

Q. (41:40) Where did you get that?

A. In a small bag that I carried with me. It’s very small.

Q. (41:45) But right from the work space?

A. Oh, yes. When I was leaving, that's about the only thing I grabbed.

Q. (41:49) Where was that during the whole time you're pulling people out?

A. We had put that back over by the door, the exit that we had, and when we—the Admiral's cell phone was in the water there. His brief case was in the water. My brief case was in the water, and again it's something else I'll never get rid of. Walked on, stomped on, trampled, but it's just amazing that, you know, because that was right where people were running in and out for, you know, the whole period of time. Didn't see them and recognize what they were and just pick them up.

So I guess I can end this fairly quickly. I know you're probably getting tired of me talking, but the, I walked down the Parkway. I was arguing with this guy from the airport, one of these pilots about what had hit the Pentagon. I said, "Nay, it couldn't be. It was a bomb."

Said, "No, it was a plane." He said, "I saw it."

I said, "Lord!" and it was a guy that I was asking, he had a cell phone, I was asking him to call my wife. And so as I walked down the Parkway, my neighbor, who my wife had gone over and said, "Would you go look for George? Go up the Parkway." She had gotten word. Somebody had called.

Q. (43:00) One of the people on the cell phones along the way.

A. One of the people, and said that I was walking home. Walking down the Parkway and I was fine, and so she sent my neighbor up the street. He showed up in his Ford truck. He's a

contractor, he had a bottle of Remy Martin and a bottle of Vodka in the other and he said,
“Which would you like.”

(everyone laughs)

It was the first time I think I’d smiled in a while and he picked me up right when you start into Old Town and then he insisted on carrying me to the hospital, because I looked pretty bad. I wasn’t hurt, I mean not even, I don’t even think I was scratched, but I looked awful.

So my wife had been called back in as part of the emergency action plan.

Q. (43:47) Which hospital?

A. INOVA, Mount Vernon INOVA Hospital. So I got there, and (laugh)

Q. (44:04) To the hospital

A. I was fine, they took my blood pressure and –

Q. (44:05) Tell us about seeing her. Tell us about that moment.

A. I just did (laugh.). We got married a couple of years ago. We’d never been real good about wedding rings. I don’t think either one of us have had it on since. She’s a wonderful woman. She’s an emergency room nurse, trauma nurse, heart surgery. She is not vanity. She is not, you know, she’s tough and she’s a Navy wife. She’s tough, but this one really got to her. The thing got to everybody, I mean it’s just, pace of events around here, and I want to say I could not be prouder of the profession I chose. I could not be prouder of the people I serve with. They keep telling us, I may be the exception to the rule, they keep telling us they always send the best up to OPNAV, because the demands of the job require the best. It’s just, it’s grueling, it is, but you

know OK, you really saw it in another light. I don't think you ever get the opportunity, hopefully not one like this to see the response of these peers, these colleagues. Jesus, you know, talk about the highlight of my career, that's got to be, September 11th. I so much agree with you know one act of evil led to so many acts of compassion and bravery that you can't count them. I mean you go through the stories in our office, Natalie Ogletree that sitting there after the event. If you ever met Natalie, she's radiant. She is such a wonderful lady. Read the 23rd Psalm, these burn places in the courtyard today.

Steve Hurst (phonetic) just a reservist, you know, a civilian contractor, you know, no one, there was no "come on let's go." It was just you found yourself in the crowd walking towards the building. And it was, it was so spontaneous.

I don't know how many people were there, but I know a disproportionate number of them were from, and we were of course in a position, very fortunate, bless my God to be in a position to help, but you know there were eighty-five some on people recognized the other day and almost, I'd say a quarter of them were from our office. That to me speaks volumes of the kind of, you know, I shouldn't say this on the record, because for several years, for a while they kind of questioned Navy leadership commitment and you know contract with the sailors. But you know that speaks well of our senior officers, the people that day and the people that work at OPNAV. I don't know what kind of insight I've provided. I really don't, but I keep saying I want to go back and read the events of the day myself, because I still don't have, I don't have any idea of the timeline. I just don't. I thought we'd been in there thirty minutes and I understand we were there for several hours and it was just so compressed.

I know there's a lot of things, ever since you first called, there's a lot of things that I've thought about and I've probably forgotten that I wanted to tell you, but you know, I guess I could

summarize it three ways. Extraordinary effort with nothing, we just had nothing to fight this fire with. The Navy training I think really showed in the way that we instinctively knew that you stay low. That you use the back of your hand to check a wall. You just go to the damage control type training that you and I we've all had. That you don't do certain things. You don't grab an electrical outlet, you don't (unintelligible 48:27)

Thirdly again just the spontaneity of the response, you know, I just really I—I don't think it was lost on anyone during the day, during the, since then. You know they kept comparing the attacks to Pearl Harbor. To know that you'd, you'd been a part of something and not by choice, and no one can plan that. I mean, gosh you know I've been in the Persian Gulf several times. I've been in situations on ships by my choice and my choosing and my calling you know. That's what's so extraordinary to be in a relative place of safety in one moment doing something as mundane as a budget meeting, and then ten minutes later you know to help, being part of a team doing what we did. And I'm just so please to serve with those, that quality of people. I don't know what more I can add.

Q. (49:38) Do you relive the experience? Do you dream about it? Do you –

A. It hits you at the strangest times. I just, I can't, I can't say, a song, and not the, necessarily the ones that have been written about the event, although I think that is just a terrific song, by (unintelligible 50:01). I don't know if you've heard it.

But you see a news story, you see something and again, eating dinner that night with my wife, that was my, there we were sitting at the table. Then I don't think, I don't think we've fully come to terms with it. I don't think you do that right away, or even after a while. I've spent more time talking about it now than I have total since. I can easily tell people what I was doing when the

thing went off. I can easily tell people and kind of smile when I think about my neighbor showing up with my favorite Remy Martin in one hand and you know, something a little stronger in the other. Even the fact that he would do that, I mean he's a great neighbor.

But you know, and it's funny because it comes, like I said the other day, it did not dawn on me, until I was talking to someone over the holidays at a party, well where were the firefighters? And I never thought about it, you know, well they were fighting the fire on the outside of the building. We were in the inside of the building. They couldn't get to us and probably didn't even know we were there. Then the DPS still rankles me to this day, and it will, because several times during that effort, and I don't, I will say they probably were doing what they were told to do, clear the area, but not like we were spectators. It's not like we were not engaged in something quite serious, and so what. I mean, you're going to leave. I don't know how you not do what we did. I really don't and I mean that sincerely. I mean, the thought that I'm going to leave as long as I think someone is in there. It was a long time between the time that we finally said that's it. Time to leave, and we've heard the last voice. I am very concerned and always will be, we just should have gone, just should have gone straight in, and I think that, I think we were successful and I think we made a difference, but I don't know if I really—I want to say, I want to know where the people that didn't get out were. I mean, I want to be sure that we got everyone that was not killed right away.

Q. (52:44) You mentioned earlier about that first hour, how critical that first hour is and some of the training and some of the things that you've been exposed to in the past with the Olympics. Any lessons learned there?

A. The big lessons learned and we started to do at least in our building, is you need an evacuation plan. You need some level in today's environment, office damage control training. You need some degree of fire fighting equipment. This seems extraordinary, but I don't think it is anymore, when in any incident you could have a situation like that. You need, in, you need breathing apparatus. That seems again extraordinary, but regardless, I mean even if it's not a fire. Suppose it's something else, I mean you need something to, some respirator type thing to—these type things we never thought about. Never had to.

It's, I can say this, from the experience I had during the two years living at the Olympics, one thing, you could really stay up all night worrying about the next one and what's going to happen. But it's not from a lack of will that we don't have these types of events every day. People want to do this in the worse way. They want to do it even bigger and better than they did it on 9-11. I think it's an extraordinary statement to our efforts in the nation that it doesn't happen everyday. That these events are, as spectacular as they are, uncommon. That you know all the criticisms we hear—we're not doing this, we're not doing that—well, collectively we're doing quite a bit and collectively we are, we are keeping these people at bay. They're going to have successes. It's a horrible fact of life. I hate that for my kids. I hate that that they never know the security and the freedoms that we knew.

I remember going out to an airport and watching the planes land. Sitting at the end of the runway, back a distance behind the fence and just watching them land. I remember walking out on the tarmac. I remember one 1972, I was in the Marines, coming in and walking in the Pentagon on a Sunday. I, you know, I remember walking into the Capital early on a Sunday morning. Just walking around just, you know, just walk. No one stopped me

Those are the just—I think my kids understand that. My daughter actually went to her school principal the week after the attack and said, “Can we have a memorial service out front.” She spent almost a hundred dollars of her own money to buy flowers for the ceremony.

Q. (55:37) How old is your daughter?

A. She’s thirteen.

Q. (55:40) Wow

A. So I mean, [REDACTED]’s something else.

Q. (55:45) Tell us about your children. How old are they?

A. Well, I have four with [REDACTED] and they’re, I don’t refer to them often as my stepchildren, but for the record they are. They are [REDACTED]’s kids by a previous marriage. I have a young daughter from a previous marriage who lives in Tampa, and their ages range from 12, 13, 14, 16, 18. One just started college this year. So the oldest.

It was pretty tough on a couple of them that day, and they didn’t know how I was and West Batinment (phonetic) where my son goes to school was locked down and he had to really get someone’s attention to be able to find, because he knows enough about where I work, what I do, he pretty much surmised where I was.

Q. (56:33) What grade’s he in?

A. He's a junior this year. And then my daughter in Florida, it was real tough on her. She just couldn't get any information and they said they found her in the bathroom crying, and that just breaks my heart.

That's the sadness, but then the other side of it is, my goodness, you know, I don't think in ten thousand years that those people ever thought that we would respond as vigorously as we have. I don't think that was in the cards. I think when they shut down those airports and started rounding up those people, they prevented a lot more of this, and it might have been much worse. I have nothing to base that on, but I don't think that was the last note of their effort to that tune they were trying to write for America.

Q. (57:31) Where do you see it going. This is more of a philosophical type question, but with your background with the, and some of your insight on homeland security, what you've been exposed to with your –

A. I think the whole paragon of warfare and national events has completely changed since 11 September. I don't think there's any question of that. I think that we will, we may even change the shape of defense to where we do something in the way that the Department of Defense as we know it and the Office of Homeland Security will be very much a Homeland Security interagency from national level right down to the tactical level of response. We learned very quickly in Atlanta that you cannot respond without local authority collaboration and cooperation. It's impossible. It may be a national level response, but it's very much a local—excuse me, a national level problem and challenge, but it's very much a local response and execution issue. We don't have enough resources in the federal government to secure borders, secure towns, wherever there's an infrastructure, it's going to take infrastructure, and no one knows the ground

better than the firemen and the police. But they're going to have to be trained in a way to do that.

When we looked at Atlanta, we looked at where do we put the response, and you think about it, well wait a minute, now the fire services, where do they put their response? They're strategically located to be anywhere in a city very (snaps fingers) quickly. That's where you place the response for any kind of chemical-biological incident, with them. They only have a certain amount of resources and they're going to be needed to relieve very quickly. I even see a sense of a militia type response, a very trained, almost a volunteer fire department type of response. I don't think the front lines anymore. I think you know, again the Navy took a, somewhat of a beating in the QDR process, but I think the transformational issues the Secretary of Defense talked about prove themselves that special forces, for presence, such as our carriers, air power, precisionally executed, that may be the wave of the future. I'm not saying they don't need a standing army and professionals, but we certainly, the Navy's role in the forward ability to continuously strike. You're not going to fly two milers, thirteen thousand miles to drop seventy-five hundred pounds of bombs. What's the point of that? You know, so the Navy expeditionary warfare, the Marine Corps, I think forward operations extending on borders out is key. We have to keep these people with their heads down and isolate them.

But locally I don't know how we escape a very robust interagency top to bottom organization. Region focus, local focus and Navy and the Coast Guard have a very, Coast Guard, Navy supporting have a very significant challenge to secure ports, rivers, lakes, all of it. Any place is target. The American people, they're part of this effort. Like I said, several of us were recognized that day, but I don't think that's the last event and but I think we'll get better. And I think, again, when, I—I want to stand up and cheer, after my entire life I hear the police and fire services beat

down and criticized. What a wonderful thing. You know, we chose to go in harms way, and we have had, this happened the other day when I had a great affinity with a lot of firefighters, but we have the time to prepare as we march into harms way into a combat zone. Every time that policeman kisses his wife goodbye, every time that fireman goes out the door, hugs his kids, he doesn't know what the day holds for him. Everyday in the career! Now us, it's a little more geared, but yet you know, the people and rightfully so, a lot of sacrifice goes into one of these uniforms, we all know that. It's the fire service and the police department finally get their due, and you know, I'll say—I'm sorry to take so much time, let me make one other point.

Q. (01:01:48) No, that's good.

A. Two events happened prior to the Olympics, which would have made a huge difference in response capabilities to the Olympics. One was unfortunately the Oklahoma City bombing. Before then you had a lot of federal fiefdoms, a lot of walls were built. There wasn't a lot of, lot of interagency cooperation between FBI and FEMA, FEMA and the Department of Justice and the Public Health Service. Walls came down.

Another event happened, TWA 800, so you know, the, all these events as sad as they are, as costly as they are they lead to more improvements in our overall capabilities to deal with this new environment called terrorism.

We don't, today we're real critical of the homeland security effort and we're real critical, some of us and some of the papers, in what we're doing DOD to support that effort. They don't understand how far they've already come and they don't understand what a shift of emphasis this really is. You know, you and I are military men. We believe in a single chain of command, command and control. The federal agency doesn't work that way. It is collegial. There is a, I

want to say, rotating, “I’m in charge here,” type of event. You know the guy in charge at the Pentagon was Battalion Chief in our own County Fire Department. That surprises a lot of people and even the FBI worked through him until the crisis was over and then it transitioned to a crime scene and then it became the FBI.

So the point is, you know, there is so much work to be done and each one of these events we’ll get a little better and we’ll get a little smarter. Technology can serve us well in this regard. So you know, the other thing that I will always remember is the day I called the Fire Chief in Atlanta, because of federal posse comatatus type rules and regulations, FEMA type rules and regulations, FBI and local jurisdiction.

I remember the day I called the battalion fire chief, a guy named (unintelligible 01:03:49). He’s very famous throughout the nation. Just one of these great guys that has served his nation and his city well. He said, “I’ve been trying for two years too talk to you guys.” Then we held an exercise down at Fort Gillon in Atlanta using the sea berth (phonetic) of the Marines, using the fire services, the local emergency services, and the chemical units from the Army, and we orchestrated a response. This was just weeks and months before the Olympics in case they had an event.

One of the side notes to that, they had a country music festival at Atlanta Speedway that had a lot of heat casualties and they could never get the ambulances and the fire services to cooperate on their jurisdiction. He calls them, used to call them “the five tribes.” And that was such a goat rodeo in responding to that event that the following week we went to a meeting and we straightened it out, and if you remember, you know, the response, I don’t know if you can visually remember, I do, the response to Atlanta bombing. Do you remember the number of ambulances down there?

Q. (01:04:58) Uh huh.

A. Forty-two minutes after the bomb went off, the last victim was being treated on the table. That means, is an example of, it's so tragic these people don't really die in vain. Their death helps us. I don't want that recorded, take that off. I don't want to say that. I'm not saying what I mean. Each one of these events we get a little smarter on.

Q. (01:05:24) Do you have any interest in providing any input for that?

A. I've been working –

Q. (01:05:32) Along the lines of homeland security?

(Tape is stopped at Croy's request)

A. What I think the Navy could do and this is George Croy's position, it's not supported by N76 or N7. They're looking at it and a lot of good people are working on this. N35 has just taken over the lead from N7 on some of the policy and doctrinal issues. Combining Fleet Forces Command has been added from the Fleet perspective. Naval War College, Naval Warfare Development center are all wrestling with the issue of what is the Navy's role, and what is the command of control architecture? Now I've said previously that I really believe that it will come down to some type of interagency, I won't say roundtable, because you will need a director, if he's a civilian, or a command, if he's uniform. A deputy director or a deputy commander and you'll probably need to rotate between the primary agencies that will be involved in homeland security. You will need a director of operations, which should most always be an FBI, Coast

Guard or military kind of guy. Maybe not, but maybe it should be, because they know their, they know the response required for particular participation in a particular event.

The Navy's role in this, I think could be one of, it will be support to the Coast Guard and their mission of homeland security maritime ports and harbors. We'll have to support them with personnel. I would like to see us designate, as we used to designate ready ASW squadrons, ready air defense, ready destroyers to have a pool of resources. It would have to come through the IBTC, because it cannot impact forward operations and the missions we have forward, to be at least designated to respond in support of mission air defense, mission harbor security, mission interdiction operations.

The technical intelligence piece of this is enormous. That's being worked quite well from what I can see. That really, the technology will provide us a lot more intelligence, a lot more situational awareness, a lot more cueing than it is doing presently.

Numbers are key. I think the Navy needs to have a visible role in this and I think it could do that with its mine force, because our harbors, the threat of a mine would close LA or New York, or New Orleans in an instant. So if we use the mine force effectively, they used to be strategically dispersed. We might reconsider doing that and we could show a visible presence and also have a ready manpower pool to augment the Coast Guard when needed. I think we will have to work very much with the harbor patrols, port security, port police, and industry in a big way to help us in this. But I think if we wait and be told instead of trying to shape our future that it will make this a more cumbersome problem than it has to be.

Q. (01:08:53) Well said. Where do you go from here?

A. I go to Commander, Mine Countermeasure Squadron Two in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Q. (01:09:03) Wow, what timing. When do you go?

A. I probably will change of command sometime in May.

Q. (01:09:14) Anything else you want to add for the historical record?

A. As a historian?

Q. (01:09:22) As of now, as a historian.

A. As a historian? What a wonderful time to be an American. Once again, people underestimate Americans at their peril. This generation that we, and our generation, this young generation have criticized whether it's Gen X or Gen Next, whatever they call it, they come from solid, they're solid as an American oak. They come from solid stock. How would they, you know, it wasn't our generation that ran up the World Trade Center. It wasn't our generation that was the police, some of our generation had been at the Pentagon, but those troops over in Afghanistan, these are the young kids. This is GenX and afterwards that are doing these missions that we see with their silly haircuts, their silly clothes, their loud music, their skateboards, baggie stuff. It doesn't matter. That's an outward appearance. Inside they're as solid as an American oak and they have responded famously. I don't know what it takes the rest of the world to understand. I believe that Osama Bin Laden could probably had chipped away at America for years and at some point ten years from now, maybe have killed that many people. Maybe have done that much damage, but you know the day that he attacked the World Trade Center, he signed his death warrant. What possible, he could not have imagined the response that, that he did with that foolish act, that cowardly act.

Q. (01:11:05) Well said.

A. I don't know.

Q. (01:11:07) It's been wonderful, a wonderful session.

A. I apologize, I mean I really do, I don't, I mean, because I haven't spent a lot of time talking about this and I'm sure there's still stuff I haven't come to grips with. I just, I don't know whether it's a, something in the back of my mind that—I can't, I'm not affected by this in the sense that I'm not having sweaty moments, or teary moments, or you know, but you know you, it's amazing when it does hit you and how it hits you. I've got a wonderful wife and wonderful kids and wonderful family. I think I know better next time if it ever happens again.

Q. Thank you George.

Transcribed by:
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March 9, 2002