

**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:

LCDR Michael Scott Fulkerson

Current Address:

██████████
██████████
(w) CACO/REDCOM MIDLANT

Date of Interview:

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Place of Interview:

Navy Annex

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One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

Subject Terms/Key Words: Pentagon; Terrorist Attack; 11 September 2001; CACO; Family Assistance Center; Dover Mortuary

Abstract of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

LCDR Fulkerson was born in ██████████, VA in 1967. His father was a Naval Officer so they moved around quite a bit. He considers the Washington, D.C. area home since he was in high school while his father was stationed here for 6 years. He attended Villanova University on a NROTC scholarship, majoring in computer science and graduating in 1989. He then entered the Surface Warfare Officer program. He spent four years on active duty from 1989 to 1993 as a SWO on the *USS Dayo* (DD989) as a Damage Control Assistant for 2 years and then the Combat Information Center Officer for 1 year. He left active duty in 1993 and went to graduate school. He spent the next 7 years of his life getting his PhD in Computer Science from Duke University, receiving this degree in 2000. He affiliated with the Reserves shortly after leaving active, with a 6 or 7-month break. He had tried to affiliate immediately but because of the draw down was put on hold for a while. He began drilling in Reading, PA and then worked his way down to drill in Washington, D.C. with the BUPERS unit. He went to another unit in the D.C. area and then joined his current unit with the REDCOM MidAtlantic staff where he has worked on the IT staff for three years. In 2000 he moved back to the Washington, D.C. area from Durham and began working with Resource Consultants Inc., primarily a defense contractor where he works with Navy manpower.

He is currently part of the REDCOM Mid Atlantic staff that owns all the reserve centers in the region. Most of the staff are TARs with about 10 TAR officers; and another 15 SELRES officers, mostly O-6's of specialty corps. His job on the staff is Information Technology.

Topics Discussed:

On 11 Sep LCDR Fulkerson was on his AT at the Washington Naval Yard in Building 200 at REDCOM MidAtlantic. There was a 0900 meeting to discuss the upcoming Commanding Officer's Conference that was coming up. They weren't aware of the World Trade Center incidents. About 0930 someone came in to tell them about it. LCDR Fulkerson went to find out more about the incidents. He investigated on the radio what was going on and went back to tell them it was a real incident. The meeting disbanded.

They locked down the Navy Yard so they couldn't leave. Around 1600 the Naval District Washington staff was forming up what they needed in Building 200. They were looking for Casualty Assistance Officers (CACO's) and LCDR Fulkerson offered to help. They were just looking for CACO's to get out to families at that point. They tried to get CACO's gathered. Their organization sort of fell apart because the CACO organization is not set up for mass casualties with all the victims from one area. There were chaplains everywhere because they know when there's a problem to just come, but for CACO's it's not that formal. Around 2100 names started to come in from the Pentagon. They were organized by where they worked in the Pentagon. Around 2330 they got to the point where they were ready to send people out. They got people together and went over the standard things they tell a CACO before they go. It was very little, they assumed all the CACO's knew what they were doing and had recent training, which was not the case. LCDR Fulkerson hadn't had CACO training for 10 years, and had never had the NDW training. They weren't provided many of the forms they needed because it was assumed that they had the forms from the training.

When they assigned names it was haphazard. Rank was really their only criteria. They tried to put officers with officer, but in some situations chiefs had officers and officers had enlisted. LCDR Fulkerson was assigned to LCDR Robert Elseth's family. LCDR Fulkerson was assigned Chaplain Bruce Kahn as well as a command rep, Capt Eileen Roemer. They were given a government vehicle and they all met in the parking lot of Lake Braddock High School.

They arrived at the Elseth home between 0100 and 0200. LCDR Fulkerson had a script to read provided by the CACO organization, the Personnel Command at Millington. There was a lot of issue about what their status actually was. Technically their status was DUST 1 – Duty Status Destination Unknown that means they are on active duty; there is reason to believe their status might have changed but it is unknown so they are not classified as missing. Jim Elseth, Bob's brother who is Major in the Marine Corps Reserve, answered the door. Most of the family was there. LCDR Fulkerson told Mrs. Elseth about her husband's status. He read the script, which included the DUST 1 status, the fact that the search was being conducted around the clock, a toll-free number to call and other things.

Jim, Bob's brother wanted to go help in the search. He also wanted LCDR Fulkerson's help getting Bob's mom, Berta, back to Virginia from Germany where she was tending to her sick, elderly mother.

Bob's sister, Nancy, works in New York. Bob had actually called her after the first plane hit the World Trade Center. This caused some hope because a person can't use a cell phone from where the Navy Command Center is, so he was probably not in the Command Center when he called her.

LCDR Fulkerson left the Elseth house around 0330 and went back to the Navy Yard. He started making phone calls to try to get somebody in Germany to talk to Berta. The Navy CACO organization was no help. LCDR Fulkerson ended up calling her. She was very upset.

Jim wanted to get involved. LCDR Fulkerson asked the CACO folks, but they were inundated and any request made to them they would tell the person there was not much they could do. The people manning the CACO Command Center had little to no training and were just pulled in to man the center. On Wednesday morning Jim got in his uniform, drove to the Pentagon and actually touched it right next to the hole. He talked to some chaplains. LCDR Fulkerson called a friend of his who works in the Navy Annex and is a retired Navy Captain, Tom Till. Tom told him to call the Marine Corps Command Center, which he did. The Marines told LCDR Fulkerson to send Jim to them at the Command Center. Jim stayed at the Marine Corps Command Center for a while and it made him feel good.

LCDR Fulkerson was trying to get someone in Germany to talk to Berta. Chaplain Kahn got a chaplain in Germany to call Berta. That afternoon Jim and Curtis (Mr. Elseth – Bob’s father), really wanted Berta back. Unfortunately commercial air traffic was shut down in the United States. LCDR Fulkerson tried the airlines and travel agents but no one could help. The CACO organizations at Naval District Washington and Millington couldn’t help. During a conference call that Captain Fitzgerald, the REDCOM SIX deputy, had with one of the senior Captains in the Naval Air Reserve, the senior Captain noted that this is what NALO (Navy Air Lift Organization) does, and they should check with them. On Thursday morning LCDR Fulkerson talked to the Captain again who told him NALO had a plane in Lithuania and maybe they could make something happen. He put him in touch with the Operations Officer of that squadron, who was at Andrews. The Operations Officer told LCDR Fulkerson if he could get Berta to an airbase they would put in a flight path. They decided they could get her to Ramstein.

When the decision was finally made to divert the plane to Ramstein, she couldn’t get a ride. Berta had no idea how to get to Ramstein. LCDR Fulkerson has a friend, named Steve Ruby, who is a very resourceful person. He asked him to research getting her from Berlin to Ramstein. One half hour later Steve Ruby called LCDR Fulkerson with all the train times. It would be a six-hour train trip. She would arrive in Ramstein late Thursday. No one at Ramstein would help. LCDR Fulkerson called Capt Giles, the Reserve Liaison Officer for CINCUSNAVEUR to try to find a reservist in Ramstein to help him with Berta. Capt Giles’ first class petty officer gave him the name of reservist. When he called the reservist was on AT in Stuttgart, but his wife who is an active duty Air Force Major, Major Claudia Sands, agreed to help with Berta. In Europe dependents by themselves can’t get on the bases, especially at Force Condition Delta. Two Navy Chiefs put Berta in a medical status and got her a room on base. Major Sands picked Berta up, fed her dinner and brought her on the base. They brought Berta to the Base Operations building. Major Sands gave Berta a large winter jacketed and fur-lined boots to keep her warm aboard the C-130. They had to resolve other issues about getting her on the plane legally. She arrived Saturday evening around 1130 at Andrews after stops in the Azores and Norfolk. Adm Totushek, the Director of the Naval Reserve later told LCDR Fulkerson at the burial that what he did was the right thing to do.

The last line of the script he read to the family on 11 Sep said that one of the Navy’s highest priorities was to get the families up to date information. LCDR Fulkerson says that what that meant was only status, either missing, presumed dead or dead or whatever. They never got any information from the Pentagon officially at all, including about the search status. On Thursday

night, 13 Sep, LCDR Fulkerson found out about the Joint Family Service Center (JFAC) from the CACO organization. He went to check out the brief on Friday morning with Jim Elseth, Annette Elseth and about 10 others. No one had yet been officially announced dead. Someone asked a question about remains and General Van Alstyne responded that they had transferred 55 bags to Dover. This was upsetting to the family. The next day General Van Alstyne noted they couldn't use the term bags anymore because the term bags didn't correspond to bodies.

At noon on the Friday of the first brief there was a National Prayer Service. The Elseth family wanted to attend a prayer service, but it was 1155, they were at the JFAC and the services started at 1200. The Sheraton bellman drove them to a service in the Sheraton van.

The family also wanted to meet with someone who had been in the Pentagon and knew Bob Elseth. Capt Roemer suggested DM1 Gaston who had been in the Pentagon that day and was also in Bob's reserve unit. They got a room at the Hampton Inn in Springfield where everyone could meet. Curtis, Jim and one of Annette's sisters were there, along with DM1 Gaston, a chaplain, Capt Roemer and LCDR Fulkerson. DM1 Gaston told them the story of what happened to him. It was clear to them after speaking to DM1 Gaston that Bob was probably not going to be found alive. As the family left the meeting Jim told DM1 Gaston he was glad that he had made it out.

On 18 Sep, Nancy, Bob's sister was going to go back to New York for a day. They decided to go to the Pentagon first. LCDR Fulkerson got a call to report to the CACO shop at the Navy Yard. They told him that Bob's remains had been identified and gave him the form he had to read. He called Nancy's boyfriend and asked him if he would go back to the Elseth house to check to see if he left anything. They returned to the house to double check and within 10 minutes LCDR Fulkerson arrived. He notified Annette that Bob's body had been identified.

The following Sunday, they planned a memorial service at their church. LCDR Fulkerson's wife's best friend was getting married in New York on the Saturday prior to this in St. Patrick's Cathedral by Cardinal Egan, the Archbishop of New York. When the wedding party walked out the back of the church there were 2 or 3 thousand people there to see the Cardinal and the wedding participants. LCDR Fulkerson got to talk to the Cardinal at the reception about the Pentagon. This was a good experience for LCDR Fulkerson. After the wedding reception LCDR Fulkerson drove back to Virginia for the Elseth memorial.

The Elseth memorial was very well attended. About six people eulogized him. They discussed what a great dad he was and how good with children he was. It was a very uplifting service. Most of his reserve unit was there as well as ADM Cotton and ADM Drew (SELRES Flag Officers). He was buried in Arlington a couple of weeks prior to Thanksgiving.

He was under impressed with the CACO organization. The organization is not set up to handle what happened regardless of how competent they are. There was very little senior involvement there. They needed a flag officer or a senior Captain who would sit in on the conference calls with the CNO and other senior decision makers.

The information that was being put out by the Family Assistance Center was very helpful and exactly what the families wanted to know. The Navy CACO organization did not work well with the Family Assistance Center, nor did they put out the kind of information that the families wanted to know. The CACO organization had trouble with continuity between their watch

sections. One of the roots of the problem was that there was one CACO coordinator who is fairly junior. They needed someone who was the CACO coordinator who had the horsepower to make things happen.

The Family Assistance Center's attitude was if there is information it should be given to the families. The Navy's attitude was if you want information you can go sit at the Family Assistance Center. The big question the families wanted to know was what was the status of the search. The Navy kept saying it was search and rescue for two weeks following, even though OSD and the Army were saying it was search and recovery. Much of this was caused because there was no senior person keeping the big picture; everyone was focused on the small things. LCDR Fulkerson suggests establishing a system similar to FEMA. If there is a big emergency the regional coordinator doesn't handle it, they bring in someone with more seniority and horsepower to handle major events.

It was difficult to get a lot of answers pertaining to LCDR Elseth's benefits because he was a SELRES. IT was good that LCDR Fulkerson was assigned to LCDR Elseth's case because he knows the SELRES organization as well as the Navy Manpower organization.

Dover didn't have LCDR Elseth's medical record. LCDR Fulkerson called the Reserve Center to see if they knew where it was. The medical record for LCDR Fulkerson and two other reservists from the Pentagon were sitting at the Reserve Center. Someone had called looking for them but never picked them up and they had been left sitting there. LCDR Fulkerson went to pick them up and took them to the CACO organization. They weren't sure what to do with them. He then took them to the Joint Family Assistance Center where the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology was set up. They told him they could courier the medical records to Dover the next day. LCDR Fulkerson didn't like that so he found two chiefs who were LCDR Vauk's CACO's. They drove the medical records to Dover. The next day both LCDR Elseth and LCDR Vauk were identified.

LCDR Fulkerson stopped interacting with the Navy CACO unless he had to and just interacted with the Family Assistance Center because he got information there. The Navy CACO system should have moved over to the Family Assistance Center. The Navy had a person assigned to the Joint Family Assistance Center, CDR BrownWahler. She viewed herself as a joint person and did nothing to try to involve the Navy CACO organization or get them information. At one point ADM Weaver said they should move the Navy CACO organization to the JFAC, but it never happened.

In his experiences in this case when things went well it was because of heroic effort. The Navy relies on heroic effort in too many cases. He was very proud of the actions of our senior leadership, but disappointed in the actions of the middle leadership.

The standard answer in the CACO organization was "I don't know". It should have been "I'll find out the right answer". He feels the Navy wasn't prepared to do this, but they told people they were. They don't use the lessons learned effectively or to the extent they should to fix the problems that have occurred in the past. Individual people did as much as they could but from a leadership standpoint at the CACO level and Millington level they did not do a good job. The senior people, CNO, etc., were all at the JFAC. The leadership at the CACO level did not spend much time at the JFAC at all.

People who made things happen for the families include Chaplain Kahn, NALO and VR-53 personnel who brought Berta back, Major Sands in Ramstein, Steve Ruby (the person who found out about the ITO that allowed Berta to get on the C130 to come home), and DM1 Gaston. (After the interview was over he added to this list Captain O'Brien who was the Navy Liaison Officer at Dover Port Mortuary.

Abstracted by:
CDR Carol O'Hagan
11 Mar 02

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He is currently part of the REDCOM Mid Atlantic staff that owns all the reserve centers in the region. Most of the staff are TARs with about 10 TAR officers; and another 15 SELRES officers, mostly O-6's of specialty corps. His job on the staff is Information Technology.

Topics Discussed:

Q. Let's move to 11 September and just walk us through that day if you would. Starting in the morning, wherever you were, wherever you found yourself in the morning that day and walk through the day from there.

A. I was actually on my AT down at the Washington Naval Yard in Building 200, I think is our building, at REDCOM Mid Atlantic, and I think we had a nine o'clock meeting scheduled. I forget what the subject was. Oh, the Commanding Officers Conference that was coming up, the Unit Commanding Officer's Conference was coming up and I just happened to be there so they asked me to come in. I wasn't really that involved with the conference. I went in and was sitting there. Anyway, we're just talking about just random things for, and then I guess, I'm actually not sure what time it was.

Q. (07:03) But the conference was scheduled for 0900?

A. Started at 0900.

Q. Had you known what was going on into your –

A. No, we didn't know. So we were sitting there. I guess it was probably around nine – what time did the plane actually hit the Pentagon?

Q. (07:14) About 9:36.

A. So I think it was probably about nine, about 9:30, somebody came in and said, "Just so you aren't the last people to know, two planes have hit the World Trade center."

So, CAPTAIN FITZGERALD who's our deputy said something like, you know, "Is this serious?"

I said, "I'll go find out," and I walked out and went, and we don't have TVs. We rigged up a TV but the coverage was horrible. So I turned on the radio, in the back listening to the radio. As I was flipping through stations trying to find the news station, somebody said - I was going through a rock station. I don't know what station it was, and somebody said, "An f-ing plane," on the radio, a phone call, "an f-ing plane just hit the Pentagon," on the radio.

I said, "Ok," you know, "if people are cursing on the radio this must be real." So I got all the way up to the WTOP, whatever it is, and heard them saying, heard that they had heard a commotion near the old executive office building. That something was going on there. So I went back in and told them that it was, that it sounded like it was real. So the meeting sort of disbanded and for the next, I don't know, four or five hours, we just, we didn't do much. They locked down the Navy Yard so we couldn't leave. So we just, yeah we sort of ran through what steps that we knew we were going to, you know that we might need to take and I guess probably around four o'clock in the afternoon - basically, did not do very much for that six hours, watched a lot of TV and listened to the radio, and then about four o'clock the NDW, the Naval District Washington staff, was forming up what they needed down on the floor directly beneath us.

They needed - I go down there a couple of times to say that I was available to help if they needed help, and initially they had told me at one point that they were going to try to get me to come help. They were trying to rig up some temporary computers and stuff. I think for the CNO's staff that had relocated down to the Navy Yard. But then they didn't need my help. Then they were looking for Casualty Assistance Officers. I had been a Casualty Assistance Officer years ago on active duty. So I said you know, "It's kind of hard for me to be a CACO as a Reservists, but you know I certainly can do what you need today or for the next couple of days."

They said, “What we’re looking for right now is just CACOs to get out to families”

I said, “I certainly can do that.” So I guess that was probably around five o’clock and then – so I stayed down there and sort of helped out, processing paper, and trying to get, making phone calls trying to get the CACOs in. You know their organization sort of fell apart, because you know, they were, the CACO organization is set up to handle, you know, the occasionally car crash or, it’s not, it wasn’t expecting to get you know, potentially hundreds of people in this, you know, in one area that quickly.

So they were trying to get you know, lots of people. The Chaplains, there were Chaplains everywhere. Chaplains just sort of came because that organization knows, where there’s a problem, just come. But for CACOs it’s not, it’s not that formal. You know you get tagged for being a CACO maybe once in four or five years. It’s not like, oh I’m a CACO and you go through the training and your command gets assigned one maybe once a year, and you happen to get it. But for this it was, so there were Chaplains everywhere, but they didn’t have enough CACOs.

So then the, I guess it was probably around nine o’clock and I don’t have a good sense of the time. Probably around nine o’clock, the names started to come in and we started. So then there was a question about how to organize them. We ended up organizing them by where the people were, so if they were in the Command Center, or if they were in, whatever spaces they were in, and then there was a big, they put up a big piece of paper on the wall and started writing out, you know, the information that we knew we needed on people.

Then I guess around, probably around maybe eleven thirty-ish we got to the point, to the point where we actually started to send people out. We were at the point where we were ready to send people out. So they got people together and just basically went over the standard stuff they tell a CACO before you go out. Not - they did very little, I know it was actually I think, a big sort of

flaw with the system. They really sort of assumed that all the CACO's knew what they were doing and had had recent training, which was not the case. I mean, you know, I hadn't been a CACO in - you know I told them and they said, "Oh don't worry," you know, "this will be fine." I hadn't been a CACO in nine years, ten years, and had never been through NDW's training up here. It's not that different but like for example I didn't have, a couple of times they had relied on us having our forms that we had gotten during the training class you know. Some of these people hadn't had a training class in three years, but they relied on, they didn't did give us the forms. They relied that we had forms and some weird things like that.

Q. (12:45) How many CACOs were there that night?

A. When I left, there were about twenty, so when I went out to, so there were nowhere near enough yet. I think when I left there were probably maybe thirty, maybe thirty names on the list and they knew more were coming in. But there were a lot, I mean a lot from NDW, a lot of people from NDW. There were people, we had a bunch from REDCOM. I think we had four, I think four of us were CACOs from REDCOM. Then I think, I would guess there were probably twice as many chaplains there.

So the other thing that they do, well what they did when they assigned names there was really, it was sort of haphazard. I mean it wasn't like they, they didn't really try to match people with casualties. They just you know –

Q. (13:47) You mean like by rank or something they did?

A. They tried a little bit, but rank was really their only criteria I think, and that was just, they were going to put you know, officers with officers. Even though that did not hold, that was the initial plan. So I got an officer, but I know there were situations where Chiefs had officers, and

there were situations where officers had enlisted. I think officers can always have enlisted, but I think they really wanted officers with officers. But I know that broke down in at least a couple of places where there were chiefs with officers.

So I got assigned to LCDR ROBERT ELSETH's family and –

Q. (14:26) was that just coincidence?

A. Yes.

Q. (14:27) OK.

A. When they were giving out – it wasn't complete coincidence in a sense that it was from Burke. ELSETHs live in Burke and I know that area very well. So when they were going sort of going through the names, I did not know BOB. I didn't know BOB was a Reservist and when they were going through names, there were like two of us standing there and they said, "Does anybody care," "Do you care which of these you get?"

I said, "Well, if I have a preference," you know, "I would take the one in Burke." The other one was in Rockville or somewhere which I didn't know as well. So I said you know, I'd rather take the one in Burke.

They assigned CHAPLAIN BRUCE KAHN as the Chaplain that went with me, and they assigned us a, what they call a Command Rep, which is somebody from the organization, so like the Navy Command Center assigned reps. In this situation because it was a, and I didn't realize this, initially I did not realize this. The Command Rep that I got was CAPTAIN EILEEN ROEMER who was also SELRES, and I didn't realize that she was a SELRES until probably the next, I don't know, not that night, it was probably the next day before I realized she was a SELRES.

So we, they really wanted us all to come in one car together. So we had a government vehicle. We met, I think we met that night. It was one o'clock in the morning by the time we actually met. Oh, we met in the parking lot, I think, of Lake Braddock High School out in Burke and then drove over together in the car.

Q. (16:11) Now do you know, did the ELSETH family know you were coming?

A. Yes, they knew we were coming. They didn't know who was coming, or exactly when we were coming, but they knew that someone was coming.

Q. (16:20) How did they know? Who had, who had told them?

A. I - CAPTAIN, I think CAPTAIN ROEMER had talked to them.

Q. (16:24) OK.

A. I think, I'm not actually, I'm not a hundred percent sure, but I'm – the command rep, because they were mustering, I mean they were, you know, the whole, the whole, because there was such chaos. I mean the Pentagon in some ways treated the thing like a snow day. I mean it was just, "OK, everybody go home." Which, in a lot of ways, really surprises me. I mean I think military people in general should have had more training than that. People should realize hey, you know, a plane hit the building. We need to figure out who's here, and they didn't. I mean people just got in their cars and drove home. Or walked home or you know, my wife drove home and she actually gave an Air Force sergeant a ride for five exits, because he was, you know, they were walking down the side of 395.

So, I think as a, during the muster when it was obvious that Bob you know, wasn't home and hadn't called in, and they knew the Command Center got hit hard, so they knew somebody was coming that night. I don't know the specifics of how they knew or who talked to them.

So we got there, I think we probably got there and I'm not sure, probably maybe 1:30, between 1:30 and two probably in the morning. I had a script to read and I went so it was –

Q. (17:51) And that was provided by -?

A. That was provided by the CACO organization.

Q. (17:52) And that was actually one of the reasons that we were late. We could have gone out earlier and we were waiting for that script to come from Millington, from the personnel command. There was a lot of issues and from my civilian job, I understand the issue, but there was a lot of issues about what their status officially was, because lots of legal ramifications of what – so technically their status was DUST 1, Duty Status, Destination Unknown, and which in theory basically means that you know, they're on active duty. Like there's no, there's reason to believe their status might have changed, but they haven't done anything official yet. It's just they're unknown. So you know they were not classified technically as missing.

So we, you know, we knocked on the door and JIM ELSETH, BOB's brother answered. Who's a Major in the Marine Corps Reserve and a big imposing guy. He's probably six, five and probably, and a big guy. He opened the door and there were, most of the family was there. Bob's parents had come up. Annette, his wife's parents had come up both from New York. Jim had come up from North Carolina. Annette's sister Sue, and her husband were there. There was a big group of people there.

I went in and Annette, it was obvious which one Annette was. I mean there was sort of a circle around Annette. So I went in you know, you don't know what to say at that point. You don't, do you, you don't just want to dive in and read some formal script. So I said something about, I said, "I'm LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MIKE FULKERSON," and I introduced the other people. I said you know, "We're here obviously about," – I didn't know what to call him. I said, "LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT ELSETH." I said, "He's officially listed," "He's in a" – I forget how I said – I didn't want to say you know, the Duty Status Destination Unknown thing. I said, "He officially is in a status, he's not officially missing, but" you know, "Currently we don't know where he is."

And then Jim said, "Well, he's missing!"

I said, "Well, you know, he's missing but there's a legal issue and technically he's not classified as," I said, "I'll explain it to you." I knew, it was obvious he was in the Marines at that point.

(Chuckles)

He might have said that. I said, "I'll explain it to you." I said, "Why don't I read the script I have here?" So I sort of read through it and I sort of you know, my voice cracked the whole time. It was so bad. I'm normally pretty good in front of a group of people, and I didn't do a very good job with reading that.

Q. (20:49) What kind of thing did this script include? What kind of information?

A. You know I wish - I actually have it. I don't know why, I left the house this morning, I have a big folder, I should have brought. It included things like the fact that he was DUST 1. The fact that the search was continuing around the clock. The fact that the CACO and the Chaplains were here. There was a toll free number that they could call if they had any other questions. I mean that kind of stuff.

So I asked them if there was anything I could do and they – it was two o'clock in the morning, and so it wasn't like this was a great time to do much. It was clear that, you know, that she didn't want to talk about – I mean, before we left they made sure we had all the benefits information. Like you know, I can't imagine anybody's going to want to talk about benefits at two o'clock in the morning. But I said, "Is there anything we can do?"

Jim said, "I'd like to talk to you."

I said, "OK." So the chaplain stayed, CHAPLAIN KAHN stayed, who's great. He's a – if you're looking for a good Chaplain interview he's a great guy, and we went to, so JIM and I went out. I guess initially in the kitchen and then actually I moved him out on the back porch because he was pretty loud.

And he said – there was two things he wanted. One he wanted to go help, you know, he's a Marine. He said he had his uniforms. He wanted to go help, and two his, mother, BOB's mother was in Germany. She's a –BOB's dad, CURTIS, is a retired Army E8, and met BERTA in Germany in the sixties and they got married and she's been here. She's a US citizen now, but her mother who's ninety-ish had had, I think it was a stroke. She had a medical issue. I think it was a small stroke, but she had, she'd been losing her mental capabilities. So BERTA left, I think Sunday night. Got to Germany on the tenth, or maybe it might have been, she might have gotten there on the eleventh. She was only there for you know, less than a day.

He said that her mom was in Germany. They wanted somebody to call, somebody to get in touch with BERTA in Germany. So I said I would see what I could do.

He said they also wanted to try to get BERTA home, and I said you know I wasn't sure what I could do, but I would see what I could do. So you know, Annette wanted nothing. I mean she just said, you know, "There's nothing I really need now."

So we stayed for a little while. I kind of stayed in the back and let the Chaplain, the Chaplain led them in prayer. He's a Rabbi and they're United Methodist, and he led them in a prayer.

Q. (23:43) Why did that happen, if they had so many chaplains?

A. Because it, it –

Q. (23:50) They didn't know.

A. Well in a crisis sort of, a Chaplain's a Chaplain. So they –

Q. (23:51) OK, Great.

Q. (Another) Multi-dimensional.

A. That's right. I mean they really made, they made no distinction. If there was somebody who was probably obviously Jewish, they would probably would have gotten the Rabbi there, but we didn't know much about the people at all, except their names. So they you know they hooked them up with, they hooked the Rabbi up with the ELSETHs and it was great. I mean, I think, you know, I think they would probably say that they're very glad they got RABBI KAHN, but then -. So I sort of stayed in the back. I talked a little bit to CURTIS who was, BOB's dad. He's hard of hearing and asked me to, he wanted to read the script I had read, because he couldn't hear very well. He mentioned his wife. He mentioned the fact that BERTA was in Germany, and that their, BOB's little sister – her name just popped out of my head. It'll come back to me – was, works in New York. She works for Ernst and Young in New York, and the family was worried about her. As a matter of fact BOB called her on her cell phone after the World Trade Center was hit and there was some, there was some hope for BOB, because when we found this out, the family was encouraged by it, because you know, you can't use a cell phone, you typically can't use a cell

phone from where the Navy Command Center is. I mean it's just too deep. You probably couldn't use it in the Command Center. But it's just too deep in the building. So, you know, to call her, he, you know left. He probably was not in the Command Center when he called her, and must have made it back into the Command Center, I assume. I actually don't know that his body was found in the Command Center, but every assumption, I assume that it was.

But they, and they talked to BERTA and BERTA apparently had been in panic about the daughter, not concerned that BOB might have been in the Pentagon at the time. So we left. We drove back, I guess we probably left, I'd guess around maybe three-thirty-ish.

We drove back and dropped off CAPT ROEMER at the high school and then the Chaplain and I drove back downtown to the Navy Yard. Going out, we had passed the Pentagon, but it was, we were sort of heading southbound, heading northbound going back. You know, the road was closed. The police let us through, but they had closed, 395 was closed, but they let us through because of what we were doing, and you could see that, it was the first time I really you know, saw the Pentagon and obviously you know it was still smoking. It was still flames on the top. So we got back to the, we got back to REDCOM, to the Navy Yard, and I walked up to the REDCOM place and said, well you know, "I can't do anything. There's not much I can do at four o'clock in the morning, but I can probably get somebody in Germany."

So I started making phone calls. This was still Wednesday morning. I started making phone calls to try to get somebody in Germany so that the Navy CACO organization got no help, because – I don't know why. I would, there's primary and secondary CACOs, so for the primary and secondary next of kin, and there was a secondary next of kin assigned in New York to the family, but the family was here. I talked to him a couple of times. He was the CO of the reserve center. I forgot the name. A reserve center I've never heard of up in New York somewhere. So the, I tried

to call, after it was clear that the CACO organization wasn't going to get somebody in Germany, I started calling, well I tried to figure out, you know, who over there I had to call. So I called her.

Q. (28:11) What city was she in?

A. She was in Berlin. So I called her at one point, and the conversation didn't go very well. She was incredibly upset. At this point, I was sort of calmed down. She was incredibly upset, and now, like upset in a weird way. Like she wasn't hysterical, but it was obvious she wasn't even, like she was barely listening to what I was saying. I mean she was, it was obvious that her mind was just elsewhere. So I said who I was and where I was and then she said, "Now, are you here?" I said, "I'm in Washington, D.C."

She said, "Well, why are you calling me?"

I said, "Well, I'm just calling to tell you, you know that if you need anything I'll give you my phone number."

Q. (28:54) Had her family called her?

A. Yes, the family called her.

Q. (28:56) You weren't breaking the news to her?

A. No, no, no, no. Yeah, I wouldn't be, yeah the family had talked to her. And then the other thing that I tried to do, was do - did I do this now - at the time - I don't remember when I did some of the things I did. The one thing was JIM wanted to get involved, which to me seemed like a bad idea, in the sense that, you know, who the heck do I call to find out if he can go down and help. So I called the Marine Corps - for the life of me I can't remember how this connection got made.

I asked the Navy Command, the CACO folks and they were, I mean, they were sort of inundated, so you know any kind of request you made to them, you know, they sort of said you know, “There’s not much we can do.”

You were, in some cases, talking to you know a Chief who had no training in what, in sort of this kind of thing.

Q. (30:03) These are just people that were pulled in to man –

A. Yes, and some were part of the NDW, or CACO organization, but they were just you know, in some cases they you know, you’d talk to a chief who had no training in, in – their training was the paperwork. Right, how to process the paperwork coming back in, because mostly CACO they had gotten, that’s what they were. It was just you know the person got killed in South Carolina. The person got killed in Hawaii. The person might have gotten killed you know, on a jet crash, but it wasn’t, they weren’t like immediate requests. Other than, you know, benefits or and in this situation lots of people had immediate requests and so we called – so I said you know JIM wanted to do something.

I said you know the worse thing that could happen is, you know he gets in his car and just drives down there. Well, so Wednesday morning that’s what he did. He got in his car and he drove there. He parked somewhere. He walked through the uniform, he walked in. Actually walked around and touched the Pentagon. He touched like right next to where the hole was in the Pentagon. Talked to a couple, some chaplains. The chaplains – I forget how it happened. CHAPLAIN KAHN somehow talked to the same chaplains. About, sometime that morning, I had talked to JIM on his cell phone and some time that morning I called, it may have been through my civilian, TOM TILT, who’s the guy, when I couldn’t come last week when my wife was in the hospital, TOM’s the guy that came down to tell you I couldn’t come. He works here. I

called TOM to see if he had any ideas and he said, “Why don’t you check, why don’t you call the Marine Corps Command Center,” which is here at that time.

So I called. He gave me the number, I called here. I talked to a Commander, a Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, told him the situation and he said, “Tell the guy to come here. He can do something here.”

So I called JIM. JIM came here. He stayed here for a while, and he felt good here in a sense that he saw that there was lots going on and he was surrounded by Marines. But they quickly got inundated. Like the Command Center here became the Marine Corps Command Center. So they, you know, after a while, and they realized, “Hey, we don’t know what this guy’s security clearance is. He just showed up.”

(Interviewer chuckles)

So after a while he left, but he, that sort of, the combination of being here and being there sort of satisfied, you know satisfied his itch and he went back and stayed at the house.

So, in the meantime, I was trying to figure out how to get somebody initially just to talk to BERTA, and we went through CHAPLAIN KAHN. I called CHAPLAIN KAHN and he said well he’s, he’s friends with, I forget what it is, an Army Chaplain in Europe. So he called him. They had a chaplain over there call BERTA. But then the next, that afternoon, some time-ish, Wednesday, maybe I’ll say at three, I have no idea what time it was. I was back out there. They said now it’s both JIM and BERTA, I mean JIM and CURTIS really wanted BERTA back.

(Back said with emphasis)

So you know which poses a much harder problem. So I said, I’ll see what I can do, but I’m not, there’s no way I can make any promises. This is probably Wednesday afternoon at five, by the time I left. I came back to REDCOM –

Q. (33:15) For the purpose of history and for the tape, the problem was what?

A. Oh, the airfare, commercial air traffic was shut down still in the United States. At this point, I don't think any traffic, I don't know what time – I have no idea when they actually started flying again, but the, I didn't really pay attention to the news at all during this period of time. But there was no traffic flying and you couldn't get through. You could not call an airline. I mean the airlines, I assume that some of them just turned off their phones, because you know, I tried calling Lufthansa, which is what she flew over on, and the first time I was on hold for you know probably an hour and then my cell phone cut out.

I called a travel HM2 friend of mine and said is there anything that you can do, and she said, you know, there's nothing we can do. You know you can't, most reservations are locked, international reservations, who knows what's going to happen. So, I ended up talking those times, Thursday night, I finally got through and they said, she could, they would put her on a wait list, but the, they weren't really giving priority to, you know, to people who had people missing at that time, because there were so many. I assume that, you know, and the airlines I think, probably, especially international airlines probably just want to stay out of it. Like who's going to settle the pie of the thousands of people in the airport. Which ones get to go? So I think their solutions was just, if you've got a reservation you can go, otherwise you're on a standby list just like everybody else.

So the, so Wednesday afternoon I went back to REDCOM and started calling to see if there's anything that we could do. It was hard, so we called, you know, the CACO organization NDW couldn't help. The CACO organization in Arlington couldn't help. I called, I called everybody I could think of and couldn't help. In one of the conference calls that CAPTAIN FIRTZGERALD, the Deputy had, she explained that you know, we were trying to do this. That I was trying to figure out how to get this woman home from Germany, and I forget his name, CAPTAIN

STEVE something, down in Millington, who's one of the, he's one of the senior guys in the Naval Air Reserve TAR said you know this is the kind of thing that NALO, the I forget the squadron, but the NALO organization, the Naval Airlift Organization is, that's what they do. They move people around.

He said you know, you should just, we should check with NALO and see if there's anything they can do. So I called, because I called MAC, the Military, you know, MAC couldn't help. They said, "There's nothing we can do."

So I called, this is probably Thursday morning-ish, we called, I was talking to the Captain the second time, I guess that morning and he said, he said there was a plane in, I forget – Lithuania, that a Navy C-130 with a reserve, it's all reserve crew in Lithuania and he said, you know, "Maybe we can make something happen." But he said, you know, "there's no way I can promise anything."

So he put me in touch with the operations officer at that squadron which happens to be at Andrews. I called over there and talked to the guy and he said, yeah you know, "I think I can, I'll put in a flight path." He said, "Can you get her to –" She was in Berlin. He said, "Can you get her to an airbase?"

So I said, "Yeah, I think I can." This is now Thursday morning.

He said, "Well, you know, if you can get her to an airbase, " It was Thursday morning here. It might have been late, it might have been late, late, late, late Wednesday. I don't know. It was either very, very late, like you know, eleven o'clock or something Wednesday night, or it was very, very first thing Wednesday morning.

But whatever it was, it was six hours different over there. He said, "If you can get her to an airbase, I can follow through on the flight path." So I quickly scrambled, called JIM and said, you know, "What airport can she get to?"

So he talked to her dad, you know they were stationed in Germany. They knew Germany, and she said, "She can probably get to Ramstein. "

So I went back and said, "She can probably get to Ramstein." It was, this probably was Thursday morning. Like I said, it might have still been very late Thursday night, or Wednesday night, but so then he said, the operations officer said, "Well, I'll go ahead and put the paperwork in," he said, "To see if we can get into Ramstein."

Traffic in Germany was also still shut down, like Ramstein was closed except for military essential flights. So which, this was not a military essential flight. But he said, and obviously all the bases in Europe were in DELTA security. You couldn't get on and off base. Bases were locked down.

So I called back and I talked to BERTA again, at some point, and explained what we were trying to do, and told her not to get her hopes up, but just be ready and if I call and she has to go to Ramstein, to get ready to go to Ramstein. So there was some, and everybody here said, "Oh, no probably, she's going to take," I guess her cousin, it's not her brother, I think it's her cousin that she was staying with. It might have been her brother, could drive her to Ramstein.

Well then, the decision was finally made that they thought they could divert the plane, the, she couldn't get a ride and I don't know why. So now she's stuck in Berlin. She can't drive. She doesn't drive over there. So they said, "Is there anyway to get her to Ramstein?"

So, BERTA had no idea. I said you know, "Can you take a train?" She had no idea. So I actually called, I have a guy that works for me. When I left Duke I brought this guy up with me. He's a – his name's STEVE RUBY. He's a great guy, Actually, yeah he got, of all the people at Duke which is obviously a good school he got the highest LSAT score for the Law School admission score his year. He got in, he applied to fourteen law schools and got into fourteen law schools.

He got into Harvard. He got in to, you name it, he got into you know the top ten law schools in the country, he got in. Then the four other random ones he got in.

I called him. I said, “If anybody’s going to, you’re just a very resourceful person,” I said. “Find out how to get her from Berlin to Ramstein.’ Because I know, I called a travel agent. Travel agents couldn’t help. I called Steve. I said, “Steve, find out.”

So he called me back in about half an hour with like all the times of the trains.

(everyone chuckles)

And I called her and I said, “OK,” you know, “you need to be.” It was very close. I didn’t think, it’s not that far distance-wise, but the train trip, it’s a total like seven-hour train trip. She had to transfer somewhere. Maybe it is far, I don’t know, but it was the closest, it was the closest one of the two, Ramstein was the closest. What they thought would be the easiest to get her to.

So she said she would get on that train, but now the question was, she was to get there late Thursday. Yeah, she was going to get there late Thursday. I couldn’t find anybody at Ramstein that could, you know that could, the MAP people couldn’t help. I called, actually called the First Serg – the Chaplains tried to help, but the main chaplain over there wasn’t there and it was some Captain that wasn’t – didn’t sound very resourceful.

So I said you know, “I wonder if there’s a naval reservist over there?” Or there’s somebody over there that, you know, is going to understand the situation and understand you know it’s important to get this woman on the, picked up at a train station and brought onto the base. Because everybody was having, people were concerned about their jobs, more then getting her around. So I called actually, this must be, actually I must have called this person before, before we knew that she was coming I must have called because I woke her up. I called, yeah I must have called her Wednesday night, the first time. I called looking for a naval reservist commander who lives in Ramstein, who Captain, well CAPTAIN TONY GILES who was a deputy here. Who was before

CAPT FITGERALD who's there now. There's two deputies. CAPTAIN O'BRIEN is the reserve the SAR's Deputy and he's the TAR deputy.

He's the head Reservist. He's the RLO at CINCISTNAVEUR in London and controls all the reservists in Europe. So I said, "I'll call CAPT. GILES and find out if there's one, because he'll know." So I called. He was in Alabama. He was on leave, but his deputy, well his deputy was not very helpful.

So the deputy said, "I'll get back to you in an hour." Didn't call back. So about two hours later I called back and the guy was gone for the day. I talked to a First Class, this was a Commander. I said, "Do you know anything about this?"

He said, "He said something, but not much."

I say, "Here's the situation."

He says, "I'll find out."

So he called me back like in fifteen minutes with a list of names. I called those people, couldn't get any of them. I called him back and he said, "Let me try to track some people down." So he called me back and said, "Here's a name. This guy, I know this address is good. I know this phone number is good." You know, "Call this guy."

So I called him and you know I don't know what time it was, but it was Wednesday. I woke her up. I woke his wife up. He was actually on AT in Stuttgart, and I said I was, I explained I was looking for him.

She said, "What, is there a problem?"

I said, "Well I was looking for his help."

She said, "What do you need?"

I said, "Well, that's OK, I don't want to bother you with it."

She said, "No, what do you need, maybe I can help?"

I said, “Well, we have the mother of a person who’s missing in the Pentagon coming to Ramstein and need to get her on base and I was looking for a reservist that would you know, know how to make that happen.”

She said, “Well, I’m active duty Air Force.” She’s the head radiologist at the hospital. She said, “I can make that happen.”

I said, “OK.” So I talked to her a couple of times. I talked to her a lot. She hooked up, she called, turns out there’s a Navy Liaison DET at the hospital. She called there and she explained what was happening, and there was two chiefs there that were great. They got her – the one thing is where she was going to stay. Her name is MAJOR CLAUDIA SANDS. MAJOR SANDS said she could stay at her house, if she had to, but they would try to get her on base. The other issue was getting her on base, because at DELTA dependents gen – because the one that made it sort of easy was that because BERTA was an Army dependent, because CURTIS was retired Army she had an ID, a dependent’s ID card. But in Europe, dependents by themselves traveling on vacation don’t really have status. They are a dependent, but they really can’t you know, come on the bases, especially at DELTA, and the bases you know the bases were locked down.

So I couldn’t, I called to try to get her a BOQ room or a hotel room and I couldn’t get one on base, because she wasn’t eligible.

So these two Chiefs called and put her in like a medical status somehow –

(laughter from interviewer)

and got her a room on base and then DR. SANDS picked her up, gave her a, you know, took her, brought her to her house and had dinner. This was Thursday night she picked her up. Brought her to the base. She had to be there, I forget what time the plane left, but she had to be there relatively early, and they said get there incredibly early, because you know – So, and there was some other issues about where to bring her, because if they brought her to the MAC terminal, the

MACs weren't flying, If they brought her to the MAC terminal and it looked like she was going to get on a plane, they thought that was going to be a problem.

So they said bring her to, well actually this is the pilot. I talked to the pilot of the plane in Lithuania that night. I called him. I woke him up Thursday night in his hotel room, and he said, "Don't bring her to the MAC terminal because you know there will be chaos if I try to bring this woman on board. Bring her to the base OPS building, and that's where I'll go to get fuel and that's where I'll go and check in, and then I can bring her out to the plane and it doesn't have to be a big deal."

So CAPT SANDS, or MAJOR SANDS picked her up the next day, brought her you know, brought her over there. Gave her, they were really worried about temperature. It's a C-130. It's not a luxury plane. So MAJOR SANDS gave her boots, massive wool-lined boots, her own. They were about five sizes too big. Gave her a winter jacket and some other stuff for the, because the trip was cold. Then CAPT SANDS, or MAJOR SANDS took one of her people, a Sergeant that works for her in the hospital and took him over and sat with her. Left her cell phone with this guy and sat with BERTA the whole time waiting for the plane. So I was able to sort of check in every now and then.

Then we still, we had this, well there's lots of other things that sort of happened. There were the issue of trying to get her legally on the plane. Like getting her permission to be on the plane, and you know, she wasn't on, she didn't have orders. You can't just put a civilian on a military plane. She technically can't fly "space available," because "space available" you've got to be with your dependent, you've got to be with the sponsor. You can't be by yourself. All this stuff. So we actually ended up after having a few screaming matches with people, we ended up getting her – CAPT FITZGERALD – our ADMIRAL is ADMIRAL DREW is CAPT FITZGERALD to my

boss, she was down in Millington. She's Deputy, her mobilization billet, she's SELRES. Her mobilization billet is Deputy MPC in Millington.

There was this whole big issue about whether we can cut her an "invitation to travel" order. So for example, if the military was going to fly you know, me as a contractor, because we have to do that, it's called an IATO. So the question was could we do an IATO for her, and you know, the Navy travel people at the Annex said, "No, you can't," and had all these reasons why you couldn't.

But we, so we, we reached it. We got the JAGS at the, I got every bit of paper you could find about the subject. CAPT FITZGERALD read it. She agreed with me that we could cut it. We brought it to the lawyers at NDW Washington and they read it. Actually, they were having a meeting, I was wait – this was now like literally an hour or something before the plane was supposed to leave, or land in Berlin in Ramstein. So they were having a staff meeting, talking about benefits. I was out in the hallway and there was probably twenty JAGS in there. It was Coast Guard JAGS and some other people, and I was waiting, and waiting and waiting.

There was a legalman there and I said you know, "This is really important." I said, "I'm going to stick my head in and just ask."

She says, "Oh, you can't do that."

I said, "Well," I said, "Ok, I'm going to."

(laughter from interviewer)

I knocked on the door and said, "I hate to bother you," and I started going through the situation. So now there's twenty lawyers talking about it. So I passed all the papers, and there was like a roundtable for five minutes looking at it.

They said, they read everything and they said ok, their opinion was that legally you could do it.

The questions of whether it was against, and so I never, lawyers make obviously this big

distinction about what's legal and what's you know. They don't necessarily tell you what's within regulations, or within instruction. They tell you what's legal.

They said you know, "We're not going to tell you it's OK, with the instruction. What we'll tell you is it doesn't seem illegal." Or it does seem you know, it's not illegal to do.

So CAPT FIR|TZGERALD called ADMIRAL DREW, I think and ADMIRAL DREW said, "Yeah," you know, "Cut them."

So they cut the orders. And the whole idea was you know, what the folks at – it's VR53 in Andrews, they were involved, the OPS officer, and he said, "Look, if she's there, she should get on the plane." He said, "With or without orders, we'll get her on the plane."

So you know then the worse case scenario is what happens if that plane you know crashes and she wasn't on there legally and who knows what happens. So we signed the orders. We faxed the orders over. They got the orders. She got, so she flew back on that plane.

They landed, they spent the night in, oh, I forget where. It was supposed to be Shannon, Island of the Azores. The C-130s are not, it doesn't have long legs, so it spent the night in the Azores and from the Azores they flew to Norfolk and then from Norfolk they flew here.

I talked to the pilot. Each time they stopped he called me and she was apparently, you know not doing very good. They said the closer she got to home, or here, the worse it was. So, I forget, she left Friday from there, she got here Saturday. So I think we, I think she got in like eleven thirty Saturday night out at Andrews.

So we took a government car over there. So JIM and CURTIS and I went over there to get her. The folks over there were awesome. They set up a, there's a naval reserve air wing over there, and they took, the duty officer came in and they set up a VIP lounge, because they knew that – I said, "Is there a place that they could have some private time," you know like when she gets to here.

So it was cool. The C-130 you know, I don't remember the exact layout, but the C-130's supposed to park like way over somewhere else. Well, where the building, the base OPS building was where they wanted to drop her off is, you know, on the other side of the airfield. So the plane landed and then taxied over there and pulled right up in front of the building and she got off. So we all went inside, and JIM and CURTIS got her and brought her right into the room, and they were in there for I guess it was probably an hour, maybe a little more talking, and then she came out and I met her. Then we drove them home.

I didn't go in. I just left because you know we wanted to have, I didn't want to be in the way. So that was, it felt very good to get her back. It was a couple of days before you know the commercial airlines did start flying so even though, I mean, so she, you know, she probably could have come back middle of the week after, but it was good. She would not have been back by the time he was declared dead. He was declared dead on the 18th. I know she certainly wouldn't have been home by then, so it was good that she was home by then.

It was sort of frustrating, I mean being told no. What I told the family at the beginning was there was nobody's looking to say, "No." You know, people are trying to figure out how to say, "Yes." But in dealing with people, it was very clear that some people you know had the opposite mentality. You know their initial reaction is just to say no, unless they can find exactly in the book where it says to say yes.

Subsequent to this I've read, I've reread and reread and reread this stuff. I've also talked to two of the flags in this building and they both said, "Yeah," you know, "It was the right thing to do." I know ADMIRAL TOTUSHEK was at the burial and who you know, owns the Naval Air Reserve, or one step above the owners of the Naval Air Reserve and he said that he's asked if it was OK, and that you know everybody has said, "Yes it was OK." So I'm glad we didn't break any rules to get her back, but had we broken any rules I wouldn't have cared, I guess.

(laughter)

Getting her, I mean, that sort of three days of my life was, I was doing little stuff for them, but the main thing was trying to get her back, which is like I said, that's all the – there was also, I was a little worried because you know JIM and BERTA really wanted me to – I mean JIM and CURTIS really wanted me to get her back, but, and ANNETTE really wanted me to get her back, but I was worried that I was ignoring ANNETTE, because I didn't, you know, I didn't know what else, if she needed anything. It turns out she didn't. I mean whenever I asked her, "No, I don't need anything," "I don't need anything." "I don't need anything." You know, all they wanted, all they wanted was information.

The Navy did a horrible job of getting families information. As a matter of fact, the script I read the first day said, one of the lines, the last line was, "One of our highest priorities is getting you high quality information as soon as we know it..." dah, dah, dah, dah, "before it's released to the news media, "dah, dah, dah, dah.

Well, you know, in hindsight what that meant, what they, the way, what that meant was only status of, you know, legal status. Whether that's, he's missing, whether he's missing presumed dead, whether he's dead, whatever. That was the only thing that that meant. You know they never got, we never got an official update on the search status at the Pentagon. We never got, there was no information from Pentagon officially at all from the Navy, which I've actually written a couple of memos you know, to ADMIRAL DREW who's the Deputy MPC, I've written her sort of extensive memos about it. Saying you know, that the mindset of the CACO organization is something like that has to be different. I mean it has to, they have to realize that the number one concern of – the safety of their members is the number one thing, I said, and the information about that is the number one priority.

They could care less what the person's legal status is at that time. Eventually they might care, based on benefits, but at that time all they care about is, you know the information coming out of the search, and none of that, literally not one ounce of that, was given to the families.

So on Friday I think, this Joint Family Service Center that was set up –

Q. (55:24) Sheraton in Crystal City.

A. In the Sheraton, that was, that I don't know when it was set up the first time, but we found out about it on Thursday night, I guess. So I told the family about it.

Q. (55:39) How'd you find out about it?

A. Through the CACO Relations. They said there's this Family Service Center. No big deal, the Family Service Center, they can do daily briefings if you want to go. That was basically it. So I told the family about it and initially my plan was, I said I would go first to one of the briefings. There were two briefings a day. I forget what time they were, but there were two briefings a day and I said I would go to one and see what it's like. So that was my plan on Friday morning. I think Friday morning. It might have been Saturday morning, but – no, it was Friday morning, and I'll – I know it was Friday morning. But I couldn't go because I was working on the plane thing. So that afternoon, JIM and some other people wanted to go and I said you know I didn't know much about it, but you know, we would go.

So we went down. We sat there, we went into the meeting. There was lots of people there and some people stood up and sort of – we missed most of the General's briefing – actually maybe this was, no, I don't remember when it was. It was one of the nights. But thinking about it maybe, no it might have been, no it was Friday. It was the Friday morning brief. I was supposed

to go to the Thursday night briefing. It was the Friday morning brief and ANNETTE came and JIM came. A bunch of people came. We had probably twelve people.

JIM was in uniform, and a couple of things, people asked questions. We missed most of the brief, brief and they were in there for sort of questions. The people were standing up and saying you know, my daughter's missing or my husband's missing, and you know sort of more almost eulogizing the person, rather than asking a questions. Which I think was very hard on the family. The family didn't like that.

At this point nobody had been officially announced dead, so and nobody, nobody at all. Then somebody asked a question about remains and the General VAN ALSTYNE, he said, at one point, he was a you know thirty-some year infantry officer and tells it like it is, and if you don't want to hear it like it is, then you shouldn't be in the room.

He said, "Well we've so far transferred fifty-five bags to Dover." And the way he said it was I mean very blunt. Maybe it's a good thing, I mean maybe in some ways that bluntness is good, but it was not what the ELSETHs were ready to hear, in that sort of that blunt, which was better then the next day when they weren't there and he said, he said, "We can't use the term bags anymore, because bags doesn't necessarily correlate the bodies anymore." Which was probably a worst thing for some families to hear.

So the, but so, and JIM burst out of the room and there's a couple hundred people in this room. JIM, you know, this six-five Marine bursts out of the room and sort of crying. I let him go. A chaplain was going to follow him and I sort of waived the guy off. I said, "Look, don't follow him. All he's going to do is yell if you follow him."

So he came back in and, JIM and I had a very good relation. I don't want him to sound like he's a – he's a rough guy, but he's like and it was clear that he was embarrassed about crying and didn't want to be in the room and didn't want to talk to a Navy chaplain.

So he came back in in five or ten minutes and this is probably like 11:30 and at noon that day, it was one of the, it was a mass, or a national, I forget what they called it. A moment of silence or something.

Q. (59:21) The National Prayer Service out at National Cathedral with the President.

A. Yes, and we couldn't go, they didn't want to go to that, but they wanted to be at a church. So we, I asked at the front desk where was there a church and the guy said well he wasn't sure. I said any church. They just want to go to a church. If they're doing something for the service that'd be great, but they just want to go to a church.

He said, somebody a woman there said, "Oh, there's a Catholic Church on 23rd street. You can go out here, turn to your right." So I said, "OK." I told them there was a Catholic church and they said that's fine.

So we looked at, you know it's like five of noon. So I went down, I was just going to bring ANNETTE and some people in my car which was down in the basement, and a woman that was there, a Red Cross volunteer she had a, I'm not sure she was Red Cross. She had some symbol on and said, "Maybe you could use one of the Sheraton vans. I know they're available."

So there was a guy there in a bellman's uniform and I said, "Could you get like twelve of us to this Catholic Church," and he said – "by noon for the ceremony."

He said, "Yeah, let's go." He ran us in the car. I don't know what his nationality was, but his English wasn't very good. We got in the van and we're driving down and as we're driving down the street, we passed the United Methodist Church on 23rd Street, so we went into – it turned out they were having a ceremony, a service. So we went in. It was great for the family. That was a very useful thing.

That whole time while they were in there I was out working, the other thing that they wanted to do was they wanted to meet with, JIM and CURTIS wanted to meet with somebody who had been in the Pentagon and somebody that knew BOB, and very few people knew BOB. EILEEN ROEMER from his unit didn't know BOB very well.

The problem with that Unit is that they don't meet very often. They're all individual, they all drill, flex drilling, so BOB, nobody really knew BOB.

Eileen said – PETTY OFFICER GASTON, I don't know if you've talked to him yet.

Q. (1:01:23) Yeah, we have.

A. PETTY OFFICER GASTON was there. Why don't you meet – I'll call, she called him and he said he would meet with the family, but they didn't want to do it at their house. The ELSETHs didn't want to do it at their house, because there were kids everywhere and he didn't want to do it at his house for the same reason. So we were down in Crystal City, he was down in Woodbridge and they wanted to meet, it was a good time for everybody to meet. So I said well you know, "I will call". I said, "I will try to find a place."

So CHAPLAIN KAHN was at the National Prayer Service who was the Chaplain that we were working with, and you know, he had been around a lot. He had spent a lot of time with the family. More physical time than I had spent with the family, because I was at the naval yard doing all this other stuff. EILEEN ROEMER, CAPT ROEMER had been with the family, she was there the whole, all day I think on Wednesday or Thursday. One of the days, answering phones. The press called and she was doing stuff like that.

So I called, initially I called the – right at the mixing bowl area there's a Hilton Hotel and I called the Hilton and said, "Look," I said. "I need a room for an hour and a half." I said, "We've got a family..." I explained the situation you know, somebody who's in the Pentagon that

literally got dragged out of the Pentagon you know, through a hole in the wall, wants to meet somebody who's, you know, somebody that has somebody missing in the Pentagon.

The hotel said, "OK, hang on just a second." She came back and said, "Well, we can't give you a room. We can give you the day rate, which is \$109 or you can have a corner of the restaurant."

I said, "OK, now that's not going to work," and I hung up. So I called next door to the Hampton Inn, next door, and I got about a third of the way through the story and the woman said, "What do you need?"

I said, "A room for an hour and a half."

And she said, "When will you be here?"

I said you know, "An hour."

And she said, "Fine. No problem."

I said, "Well how much is it?" I said, "Does it cost anything?"

And she laughed, and just said, she laughed like "you ought to be kidding."

So we got down there and he was not there. PETTY OFFICER GASTON wasn't there yet. Oh, the other thing is they really wanted a Chaplain, and I couldn't find a Chaplain. We're down – all the chaplains were at prayer services or somewhere. I went over to, back at the Hilton, at the Sheraton, at the, downtown, Crystal City and tried a couple of chaplains, but nobody was available. So they said you know, "We'll try to find somebody. We'll try to find somebody." So I called a United Methodist Church in Springfield and there was a – talked to the pastor. Actually he's not a – I forget what they call him. He wasn't technically the pastor, he was an assistant.

Q. (1:04:20) Deacon?

A. No, he was not a Deacon, but he was a – I forget, he had a name. I forget what it was. He wasn't the guy in charge. He was the second.

Q. (01:04:31) He was Associate Pastor?

A. Associate, they just called him the associate I think. I talked to him. He was a retired Marine, and he came and the Hampton Inn had a, they set up a room. They put extra chairs in it. They put soda and water and Kleenex, and so we went in.

PETTY OFFICER GASTON showed up and we went in and sat there and the chaplain sort of said a prayer and then it was, CURTIS was there. JIM was there, and one of, I forget which one, one of ANNETTE's sisters was there. I forget which one of her sisters was there, and PETTY OFFICER GASTON, the Chaplain and me. CAPT ROEMER might have been there. I think CAPT ROEMER was there, too. I don't remember.

So JIM said you know he said, "Tell us what happened to you."

So he went, PETTY OFFICER GASTON went through this story what happened to him, and then they asked if they knew JIM and they asked where, I mean if they knew BOB and where BOB might have been and you know they talked a little bit about the space, the Command Center itself, and when they left that meeting I think it was clear to JIM and – this is now Friday, too, so it was late. But it was clear I think to JIM and CURTIS that you know that BOB didn't get out, as a result of talking to him.

They didn't know what the status was. You know the papers hadn't talked much about the building yet. But you know when PETTY OFFICER GASTON said, you know, that everything was you know destroyed, and he doesn't know, in tears saying he doesn't know how he got out and then you know as he walked out, looked back at the area he just came from and it was destroyed. He said you know it wasn't just fire, he said it was destroyed. And you know that he said incredible heat. It was clear I think to them at that point that, yeah BOB was probably not OK.

Then the, I think that was pretty, I think that whole thing was very, I think it was very therapeutic for PETTY OFFICER GASTON, and I think it was very good for them. Then JIM and CURTIS went back and sort of gave a little bit of update to the family. Some stuff they left out. Some stuff they told. But it was sort of like, I mean JIM sat in the middle of the room and they were, the whole family, maybe twenty people surround him as he sort of went through the story, The kids weren't there. They put all the kids out in the backyard, but it was a very good, I mean it was a very good thing I think for everybody.

I talked to PETTY OFFICER GASTON afterwards, because it was clear to me that, that he felt guilty. It was clear to me that there was – so I told him that, when I was on active duty, he and I stayed in the room for a second and my ship had a bad fire in 1991. And there was – I was the Damage Control Assistant. So my job was to you know, prevent fires and then fight fires if they happened. So I felt very guilty about it even though intellectually I knew there was absolutely nothing I could have done to stop that particular fire. It was you know, but I still felt guilty. We had nobody killed. We had a couple, we had three people very, very seriously hurt. Two people ended up getting discharged from the Navy as a result of it and the other guy, I forget, he never came back to the ship and I don't think he was discharged from the Navy. But I felt really guilty and I told him that it bothered me for you know years until I realized that I shouldn't feel guilty. That there was nothing I could do. He started crying and gave me a big hug and I told him I thought he should talk to somebody. He hadn't talked to a counselor yet. I said, you know that I think it's important, because you know you might not realize, I told him, "You might not realize there's stress involved with it, you know with the trauma that you've gone through, but the other side of it is, you know, that guilt is going to you know, if you have guilt that's going to ride you."

So I think he did end up talking to somebody. I saw him. We had a, at the COs conference that we had the meeting for the morning of September 11th happened down here in Alexandria. They turned what was supposed to be a sort of dining in, into a memorial, not really a memorial service, but like a – it was in November sometime I think, maybe December – it was honoring some of the victims and then they brought people like PETTY OFFICER GASTON to it. And he and I talked a lot that night and I think he, you know, he seems to be doing much better.

But that morning when we met, that Friday after the 14th or whatever, he had a big visible scar on his head. He had large scars on his legs, cuts on his legs. He had, he didn't look good and I think seeing that too, you know was probably good for the family in a sense that, well, and JIM actually, as they were leaving, as we walked out, as I walked with PETTY OFFICER GASTON and JIM – JIM had been sort of cold. Cold is not the right word, but you know, he was sort of to himself. But JIM come up to him and said, I'll tell you exactly what he said. He said, "you know thanks for your time and I'm really glad you made it out," and he hugged him, and I think that meant a lot to PETTY OFFICER GASTON, because I think there's – I think he sort of felt you know, here I'm talking to a family of somebody that didn't get out, you know, and I did get out and he was sort of stepping around that issue and he didn't want to say, so – I think JIM coming up and saying that was probably tremendously useful for PETTY OFFICER GASTON.

So then, let's see what else happened. So then that was, that was sort of it, you know, after that, those were sort of the key, I think, events. After that, they were just sort of, well the 18th was the day that he was formally declared, actually this was sort of interesting story.

I was in a sort of weird situation. JIM wanted to go, on Monday Jim wanted to go down to North Carolina to get his, to do some stuff. You know, he had sort of left work. Hadn't been back and he needed to go down there. And there was a, he said if you get any word about BOB, call me, and let me know and I'll rush back up here before you tell ANNETTE.

I told him, I said, “Look,” you know, “I’m, not sure I can do that. My first responsibility is to ANNETTE. I’m not sure I can tell you before I tell ANNETTE.”

He said, “Well, don’t tell me. Just tell me I have to get up here.”

I said, “Well, OK,” you know. “Let’s hope that nothing, let’s hope that, “ I didn’t say it to him I guess. It was I don’t want that to happen. So had that happened I’m not sure what I would have done. I don’t think I would have told JIM. I don’t think I could have called JIM first. I would have had to, maybe I would have called JIM and said, “Hey, where are you?”

So what I did that day was I called JIM anyway. So Monday morning when I knew he was gone I called him, and he said, “Should I come back?”

I said, “No, no, just called to see how everything’s going.” So I did that a couple of times during the day just in case something happened. I’d already established the calling him routine. So I could call and say, “Hey,” you know, “when are you going to get back?” Without ever asking him, and if he says you know, “Should I come back?” I’ll say, “No, No. Just when are you going to get back?” I asked him that question every time I called him.

But it turned out you know, he got back, nothing happened. Then on Tuesday his sister was going back to New York, but the same thing. She was going back to New York for, you know, a day or two days and then was planning on coming back. She was here with her boyfriend ROD BOLGER was the guys name, and I forget, they had gone, they decided to go down to the Pentagon again, before they left. Right as I – I had gone down with them to the Pentagon and then I had gone down went to the Navy Annex area, and then I had gone back to the Navy Yard. And on my way down to the Navy Yard I got a phone call that I had to go down there, so, to the CACO organization shop. So I went to he CACO place and they said that, you know, he had been formally declared dead, or deceased and I had his, the form I had to go read, but I didn’t want – I can’t believe his sisters name has just completely gone out of my head. I didn’t want

ROD and her to leave. Everybody else was here, so I called and ANNETTE was at the Pentagon, and was going back. Everybody was just sort of on their way to ANNETTE's house. So I called ROD, and said, "Hey," I had Rod's cell phone and I called him and said, "What is your plan?" He said, "We're leaving straight from here. We have our car, we're leaving straight from here." I said, "Is there any chance," I said, "did you leave your keys back at their house?" He said, - or something, or I said, "Did you leave anything important at their house?" is what I said.

He said, "No."

I said "Is there anyway you could have left something important at their house?"

He said like, "I could have but I don't think so."

I said, "Please have left something important at their house and go back there."

He said he picked up on it. It was just that he and I were talking on the phone and everyone else right there.

So he said, "OK." So he told, he told them that he left his pass for his work there and when they got there he sort of ran up and planted it somewhere and so came out and said, "Here it is."

Right after they got back, within ten, I was actually, the Chaplain, CAPT ROEMER and I were at Lake Braddock High School again waiting for – and I called and said, "Are you guys there?" I called the home phone and talked to somebody and said, "Is everybody around?"

They said, "Yes," and I said, "OK, we're just going," I was going by anyway for something. I said, "OK, I'll be over in a few minutes."

So I you know drove over and I was in whites. Most of the time I've been in khakis. So this time I – it was the first time they saw me in whites, because I should have been in whites the first time I went, but you know, I never went home. I didn't have whites. Nobody had whites. So it was the first time they saw me in whites, and I knocked on the door and walked in and ANNETTE was

sitting on the couch and looked at me, and I said, - she sort of looked like inquisitively, and I said, "This is it." Which, and then I said, "I have a," I said, "BOB's body's been identified." I sort of went through the special, you know, "on behalf of a grateful nation" spiel and then everybody sort of, everybody broke down. I sort of stepped back and the Chaplain said a prayer and ROD, ROD BOLGER came up and I said, "Does everybody think that you forgot something?"

I said, "OK," you know, "don't ever let that change." So they asked me, JIM and CURTIS asked me later, "Did ROD really forget something?" And so I didn't want to lie to them, I said, "I assume he did." I said, "Why would he, why would he lie about forgetting something?" So, because you know, I didn't tell him that I knew, but I didn't want her to leave because she was the one that, she really, really, really was close to her brother and I think the fact that he called her you know, before, right before he got killed, I think she felt some guilt. I mean in the sense that he was so worried about her, and then you know he got killed within minutes, literally within minutes after that.

Yeah, I guess they did, the week, that following Saturday, I forget, whatever the date would be, Yeah, he was declared dead on the 18th and then that following Saturday, no, I'm sorry, the following Sunday they had planned a memorial service at their church and my wife's best friend was supposed to be getting married in New York, in New York City that Saturday, the day before that memorial service, and in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in downtown Manhattan. You know within the building, this was within you know, five days of the whole thing happening. They had to sort of make a decision. Are we going to have it or not have it?

Well the other weird part of that stories is, MICHELLE, the woman getting married is named MICHELLE. Her husband, TJ, is TJ EGAN who is the cousin, I'm sorry the nephew of

CARDINAL EGAN, who's the bishop, the Archbishop of New York who was going to say the ceremony or did say the ceremony in Saint Patrick's.

So they called him on Monday morning. Hadn't talked to him. Called him Monday morning and said, you know, he had been obviously, he'd been on the national news. He was here. He flew down with RUDY GUILIANNI and sat behind RUDY GUILIANNI for the President's speech the following week.

You know he had been, he hadn't slept. They called him Monday morning and said, you know, "What should we do. Should we postpone," and he said, "No," you know, he said, "I want to have it." So they had it.

So I drove up that morning. I was supposed to be up there like from Wednesday through Saturday with lots of things planned, but none of those happened. So I drove, my wife went up. She was in the wedding. She drove up on Saturday. She went up on Friday I guess with MICHELLE and her sisters, with MICHELLE's sisters and I drove up first thing Saturday morning. Went to the wedding. Stayed that night and then got up bright and early and drove right back for the memorial service.

But the wedding was pretty neat. I mean it was, it was obviously not as joyous an occasion as you would want a wedding in Saint Patrick's Cathedral to be, but the Cardinal, I mean, handled it amazingly well. He did not mention anything about it until the very, very end, and said that, didn't really say much. Sort of said, this is the first time I've smiled in twelve days, whatever, how many days it was, and sort of went through this little speech.

As they walked out, from Saint Patrick's, when anybody would leave the wedding at Saint Patrick's, people, you know, it's right downtown. I mean people come and look, but when we walked out the back of the church there were, my guess is probably two or three thousand people there. Had sort of, had saw that there was a wedding. The rumor had spread that the Cardinal was

there, and everybody you know, he's you know the Archbishop of New York is probably the closest thing to the Pope in the United States in terms of the aura that's around him.

Like if you meet you know, the Cardinal, you know, I'm Catholic. If you meet the Archbishop of Arlington, OK, he's great. He's not an Archbishop. I guess he's just a Bishop, you know OK great, but when you see the Archbishop of New York, I mean it is, especially in Saint Patrick's so as everybody walked out I mean there were you know three thousand people out there, look, cheering, which is pretty cool.

Well, I mean you know as we were standing there, fire engines are going down and ambulances are going down and huge tow – dump trucks are going down. So the one thing they did, they had the reception at, I forget what it's called. It's in the Waldorf Hotel and it's a famous room. There are windows that open onto Fifth Avenue, like just huge windows on either end. It's really neat, but you see the skyline and you see like the hustle, bustle of Fifth Avenue, but the, there was just emergency vehicles and that's all it was.

Fifth Avenue was literally shut down and all that was going up and down were emergency vehicles. So they decided to you know, leave all the curtains shut, but the, I talked to the Cardinal that night, I don't know for about twenty minutes, because he had not heard much about the Pentagon, so I talked to him about the Pentagon, which I think was very good for me, because you know talking to him, like I said he's a – I'm not a real, real religious person. I go to church on Sunday, but I'm not a very religious person. But talking to him was sort of a religious experience. Just because I mean he's an amazing very calming influence. So it was very good for me.

So that was really sort of the last, the award ceremony – the memorial service was at his church. It was very well attended. Lots, I mean his whole reserve unit came. The place was completely packed. His family got up and did, about six people eulogized him, which was, which was very

moving. They sort of told lots of you know things about him as a dad. Everybody talked about him as a dad and how amazing he was with kids. Incredibly involved with his daughter. I mentioned, I have not mentioned his daughter yet I guess, because I had very little exposure to his daughter, but they, they really, they told [REDACTED] everything. But [REDACTED] had a very hard time with seeing me.

Q. (01:22:56) How old is she?

A. She's six. Now she doesn't. Now she likes me. Now when I come in she hugs my leg and she calls me Mike. But at the time she you know, she didn't like seeing me.

I mean at one time I knocked on the door and she answered it and she sort of stared at me and left. Now when I come in she's all happy and she jumps around, but everybody talked about you know, how amazing BOB was with [REDACTED]. He taught Sunday school. He coached a soccer team. They said, the one quote that I liked that his cousin said was that most kids wear out, a group of kids wear out adults. BOB was the only adult anybody knew that could wear out a group of kids.

I mean everybody you talked to after they would talk about, about how he loved to teach. He wanted to be a teacher. He went to ODU. I guess, while he was on active duty, and got his teaching certificate and I think then when he moved up here he had the opportunity to start his company. Well he worked for a company. I think it was all, it was driven by finances. He and some friends started a company. It was doing very, very well. But everybody said that he loved, you know, eventually they all thought he was going to go teach, because he was just a you know, they said he was a great teacher. He was great with kids. And everybody talked about his sense of humor. I mean everybody that talked about him, so his memorial service was really an uplifting kind of thing. It wasn't, it was obviously sad, but it wasn't, it wasn't too sad.

There was a lot, there was lots of Navy there. ADMIRAL DREW was there. His whole reserve unit was there. Not his whole unit, but a huge number of people from his reserve unit. Some random people were there. Some people I didn't expect like ADMIRAL COTTON, who's a SELRES flag officer, who, and somebody said he didn't have much connection to him except he was a Reservist and he came. ADMIRAL, I talked to ADMIRAL, to JAN TOTUCHEK, ADMIRAL TOTUCHEK's wife. She called me. They were going to come, but ADMIRAL TOTUCHEK had to leave and I, I subsequently heard, and I don't know if this is fact or fiction, but I know it's fact, because I've heard an NIS agent say it. That they had evidence that one of the terrorists had followed a Navy dependent around, and subsequent to that I heard that it was MRS. TOTUCHEK. I don't know if that's true or not, but I heard an NIS agent, well, it's not NIS anymore. Whatever they're called now. Naval Criminal, NCIS say in front of a big group of people that they know that a Navy dependent was tracked by one of the terrorists and was followed by one of the terrorists.

So they didn't come. It could have been, that might have been the reason why, but I don't know if that's true.

Then he was buried in Arlington I guess. Actually I don't remember the date in November. It was a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving. It was very well done. The, those guys, I don't know if you've been to a funeral with the, very impressive. I think that, it was great, I mean I was really sort of – in some ways I think initially, they knew very quickly that he was officially dead. I mean, yeah, week. Some of the families, it took you know, months. I think there's still some that officially don't have, it's still just presumed dead. But they knew officially within a week and I think that distance of almost two months before the funeral I think in a lot of ways was good. I think that that was really sort of a, it really was sort of a closing. It wasn't, you know if you go to a funeral a couple of days later. If you really, in some ways it hasn't even soaked in

yet. And I think having the memorial service and then you know and then two months and then having the burial I think was very good. I mean in terms of their sort of closure.

So since the, after I mean all I've really done is sort of, you know, administrative stuff. All the handling the paperwork, the handling the reimbursement of things. Handling you know, the administrative stuff.

So since, well if you guys are going about ten days, yeah since the, that was sort of my active involvement after that it's just been you know, administrative kind of stuff.

Q. (01:27:55) Now when you started this story, one of the first things you said to us was you thought well I'm a Reservist. I can't really be a CACO, but I'll do what I can. So how – you told us the story but when did you make the conscious decision that I'm going to stay with this. I'm going to be the CACO?

Q. (another) And were you still on active duty at the time?

A. Yes, I was on active duty. See, my AT orders ran out that Friday. Whatever that, well actually my AT was officially over on the 12th. So we extended those to the 13th and 14th. I think my ATO as tentative were out on the 14th and then to sort of fund, days I did, like the so – like the following Tuesday, the day he was declared dead, that day was a lot going on and that day I was on, I forget ETO. It's one of the nice things about being, it was one of the nice things about being on the REDCOM staff was I could walk. You know I know the training officer, the woman who controls all the IDT coupons (phonetic) for Mid Atlantic. I know her by name. I go to lunch with her, you know twice a month. I was able to walk down and say, "Hey, ROXANNE, is there anyway I can get an IDT day tomorrow?"

She said, "Sure." You know, ten minutes later I've got orders in my hand. If I was going through a Reserve Center kind of thing I think that would have been much harder. The, so I did probably,

I'd say maybe three days of AT, I mean of ADT, or whatever it is. Yeah, ADT. After that I did some Flex-drilling. Like if I did a four-hour block I would try to get, I would do that as a resched. But I was doing sort of a lot on my own time.

ADMIRAL DREW, ADMIRAL DREW has this philosophy that you pay people for what they do, which is a refreshing thing in the Reserves. She says, she expects people to, officers especially and senior enlisted to have to do things on non-drill time, but she said wherever possible we should pay people for that. That it's not fair. So she's called me a couple of times, she said, you know, "You make sure you get your, the non-drill, make sure you get non-paid drills documented for all the stuff you did," which I have not done that. I don't think I will. Just too lazy to do the paperwork for it.

Q. (01:20:28) Do you remember, like was it when you got involved with getting the mom home, you kind of decided I'm going to stay with this job.

A. Actually it was probably before that. It was probably, well I'll be honest. I don't mean to sound mean, but I was not impressed with a lot of the CACOs. There were, you know, I saw things, I literally saw things that infuriated me. I'm a pretty like mellow person and I saw a few things that literally infuriated me. At one point there was a Navy Captain who was a CACO and I said, I asked if I could talk to him for a second over at the Sheraton. I literally like, sort of got out in the hall and I yelled at him. And I said, you know, "Sir, I do not want to be rude, but I said, that was incredibly inappropriate."

He sat there looking at me with like these big eyes, and he's, and he didn't say a word. He turned around and walked away, which I interpreted meaning, "I know." Like "Now that you've said that, I realize it."

So a couple of things happened that I was very underimpressed by the CACO organization in general. The CACO organization here never thought, and maybe they did think, but they never, you know, whoever was running it, her name is BARBARA MACDONALD is a very nice lady. She's and I think she's probably very competent at what she's doing, but her and her organization aren't set up to handle what happened. I mean the, you know, the, and there was no, you know there was never, there was very little senior involvement there. And where senior, like they put some Master Chiefs there who were very good. I forget her name but the NDW Command Master Chief, I think, but the difference is you know, the Master Chiefs aren't sitting on the conference calls with ADMIRAL RYAN and with the CNO, and with the flags and Millington. So they did, in their local space, what they could but, but you know, there should have been in my opinion, either there should have been a flag officer or you know a senior, you know, a senior captain that's in those conference calls that can sit there and say what the problems are, and that didn't happen. At one point I sent, I called ADMIRAL DREW about two o'clock in the morning. She was in Millington. I knew she was on watch and told her some stuff Friday night.

Well the whole issue was the JFAC, the Joint Family Service Center, the information that was being put out there was tremendously useful information. It was the kind of stuff that families wanted, and the Navy wasn't giving them. And the Navy was making no effort to give them this information.

I said, you know and the families don't want to keep going back there, because that was a depressing place. I said you know, "Somebody from the Navy needs to be over there. Needs to take notes. Needs to parlay that information to the CACOs so we can tell the families." And I told this to one of the chiefs and I called and I said, "Look, I just came from this meeting." This was Friday afternoon and I said you know, "What, they just put out every person needs to

know,” and I forget what the piece of detail was, but it was a question that had come up at our meeting that morning. Her initial response was, “Well, I need to get that information verified. I said, “OK, well do what you need to do to verify it.” So I waited an hour and a half or something. I had not heard anything from the CACO Relations. I said, “This is the kind of thing that they should call us right away about.” So I called back. She happened to answer the phone again.

I said, “What have you done?”

She said, “Oh, I haven’t done anything. It’s not been verified.”

I said, “Well what do you have to do to get it verified?”

She said, “Well, somebody has to call and tell me.”

I said, you, I literally, I you know I railed into her, and I said, you know, “you now, I have told you that this is what they put out at the Family Service Center. Your job is to verify it. Your job is to make the phone call. Whoever you have to call and figure out, either take my word for it. If you don’t want to take my word for it, I can understand that, but you have to, you have to be the one that’s proactive enough to go out and find it.”

Her response to that was, “We don’t have enough people. We don’t have enough manpower to do that.”

So I hung up, because I was, I didn’t want to – right away I called ADMIRAL DREW and I said, “I was just told that the CACO organization here doesn’t have the manpower to get this kind of information to the families.” I said, “ and if that’s true, then – “ I got to that point and ADMIRAL DREW said, “That’s all I need to know,” and she hung up on me.

So I got a phone call that night about midnight saying that there was a meeting the next morning at the CACO office, at seven o’clock Saturday morning. So Saturday morning, seven o’clock I you know, go down there. All the senior people from the CACO organization are there.

ADMIRAL WEAVER's there. I forget her name, a Captain was there. And the CACO organization now had forty people that they'd gotten from the Ceremonial Guard across the river in Anacostia. They had taken over a series of rooms and had, you know, were in the process of setting up phones and computers and you know and they got the people. They still didn't do a good job in my opinion with getting information out. I mean you know, they patted themselves on the back and said what a great job they did and, in some ways, they did. I mean they were in incredibly hard, what they were doing was hard work. You know it was, but one time I called down there. I talked to a Master Chief and I said, "Hey, I called earlier today and requested this information. Do you know anything"

He said, "No," you know, "We haven't heard anything."

I said, "Well, what's the status of trying to find out?"

He said, "Well we don't really know. That was the last watch section." He said, "we don't have a –" He said, "I have –" This was you know a Navy Master Chief said, "I don't have a way to know what the previous watch section did. "

I said, "You know Master Chief, The United States Navy has had watch sections for two hundred and twenty years." I said, "We have solved the problem of passing down information between watch sections." I said, "You know, there are well, there's a log. There's a status board." I said, you know, "This is not a new problem to a CACO organization." I said, "We know how to solve pass down." I said, "If you go pick up a seaman, you go pick up a Petty Officer Training Manuals, if you go pick up you know, the "Blue Jackets Manuel" it will talk about how to turn over a watch." I said, "If you guys need to review that, review it," but that happened to me probably I'd say fifty percent of the phone calls I made down there got forgotten between watch sessions.

Rarely did –

Q. (01:36:55) Did they ever get it fixed?

A. No. Rarely did I get good information that - If I called with a question, if I couldn't get an answer right then, and rarely did I trust the information they gave me. I would call down and say something and the answer I would get was "Uhhh, I don't think so."

I'd say, "OK, do you know so, or do you not think so? Does your intuition tell you "no," or do you know "no"?"

"Uhhhh, I'll try to find out."

"Ok, what's your name?" Gives it. "Ok, I'm going to call you back in an hour." So I would, you know, I got in the habit I was just asking people by name, because it was the only way to - so I would call back and I assume I probably got a bad reputation down there, in the sense that you know I called and asked for people by name, because you know I mean it was crazy. Like the fact that, you know, TOM TILT, the guy up here. I called him for information. I started relying on the people I knew from my civilian job more than I would call the CACO organization and then I would find out, and I would tell the CACO organization. Lot of times they wouldn't you know, that information just got sort of lost.

Q. (01:37:56) What do think the root of that problem is, and what could be done differently to change that if we ever had another casualty again?

A. What I said in a Lessons Learned thing is you know, I think there was, I think there was a, I'm not sure you know MISS MACDONALD is like I said, I think she's very good at her job, and I think there was a, there was a sense that you don't want to you know, step on MISS MACDONALD's toes. She's the CACO Coordinator. She should be the CACO Coordinator for this, which I think was the wrong attitude. I mean she might, she probably shouldn't have been

the CACO Coordinator for this, in a sense that you know they probably should have brought somebody in who had the horsepower to call and make things happen. And she doesn't have that power. She calls and she's a, you know, she's a civilian. You know, she calls the Command Center, even if she says, "I'm in charge of the CACO organization," that doesn't mean much, right. She's MISS MACDONALD. If it's you know, if I'm Admiral X or I'm you know Captain X and I'm sitting on the conference calls with these, with the senior people – I mean every conf- and I've heard this from a bunch of people, the first thing that, you know, when the CNO had his conference calls, the very first thing he asked every single time was about the victims, every single time. Yet, and when I went at this Family Service Center, when I went over there, I saw ADMIRAL RYAN there. I saw the CNO there. I mean, I sat, I know ADMIRAL RYAN from my civilian job. You know, I talked to him one after, one morning there. You know, I saw, I saw three-stars there. I saw two-stars there. I never saw our CACO organization there. You know I mean I never saw ADMIRAL WEAVER there. I saw ADMIRAL WEAVER there once.

I didn't see the people who were supposed to be running the CACO organization. I saw, you know their boss' boss', boss, but I didn't seem them, and I think that you know, somewhere along the way there was a breakdown of, and I think you know. I think they did do a good job. I mean I think given the situation they were in, I think they did a good job and I think the families, the families I think are universally happy with their CACOs.

No that's not true. I know there's some people who didn't have a good relationship with their CACOS, but I think there was, you know if you got all the families together, right in a room and they had a timeline on their head, and they could figure out you know, who was told what when, they'd be very mad, because they would realize that you know, the information that they were given was completely, I mean, there were situations where I think CACOs were literally just making things up, or reading things in the newspaper and treating that as fact because, you know,

I was very conscious about saying, “I don’t know.” But I didn’t want to blame the Navy. I didn’t want to make the Navy the bad guy. So you know I was sort of very, and I think some people did.

At one point ADMIRAL WEAVER got up in front of the room and said, “You know you’ve got to—” he said, “CACOs,” this actually annoyed me immensely. I mean I like ADMIRAL WEAVER a lot. I think he’s a very good naval officer, but he got up in front of the room and he said, “There are,” he said, “You have to realize that when you’re in a situation you get very close to the families.” This was that Saturday morning. It was the first time that he spoke to the CACOs, was that Saturday morning.

He said, “If, so you know there are things that they,” I forget what he said. He said, you have to make sure that you’re given them you know the right – I forget how he said it, but it was basically you know, emotionally you’re going to get too close to them and you have to remember to keep stepping back. And he was blaming that on bad communication.

He said, that you know, he said, “The families are getting the information they need.” So I, at the end of that somebody said something, and I raised my hand and I said, “Sir, you know, I said, ‘ I do not agree with the statement you just made.’” And I just sort of went off and said why.

He, he looked down and then he looked over at his deputy, the Captain, and it was clear that he, that it was sort of a look of you know, he’s right, and he looked back at me and he said, he said, “Well, we’ll talk about it.”

And then within an hour or whatever it was, the thing changed and I forget, it was all about getting us information, but it still never did change. I mean, we never got you know, we didn’t and the quote I read, I actually read him a quote off that letter we read to the families. I said, he was talking about getting, you know, getting information about the Pentagon and all this stuff, and I said, “Sir, at two o’clock in the morning on September 12th, I read this to the family.”

And I read it to him. I said that tells me that the Navy's doing everything it can do to get information to the families. Not official status information, not whether the person's missing, dead. I said, "But that's information. That's any information the Navy can get to the families that tell them something about," you know, "the person missing."

And they did, you know they set up this PAO organization, but it didn't, it didn't get good information out. Well, actually, sorry I've jumped around a million times.

The stuff that they were putting out at the Family Service Center is what the families wanted to know. They were saying the status you know. They were showing pictures like this and they were saying this area's been cleared. This area's been cleared. This area's been cleared. They were telling that, and he said his reply was, actually this is the thing I disagreed with. He said, "I can't control what they put out over there."

I said, "Sir, I realize you can't control what they put out over there, but you could convey what they put out." I said, "If that's OSD, right, if that's, if the senior general in charge of OSD for Personnel Readiness is putting this information out, that whether that's Navy infor- that's got to be Navy information." I mean, "It's got to be better than any information the Navy has, and that should become the official Navy information, and we should, we should get that out to the families."

I have a friend who, I play a lot of golf, and I have a friend here who's a, I hesitate to think how much money he makes. I know his house in McClain was thirty-five millions dollars. I told him that, we were suppose to play golf that Saturday morning. I called him. I think he knew I wasn't going to play, but I called him just to tell him, and I told him this story. He's a lawyer, and I told him this story about this information didn't get out and it was tough.

He said, "Why can't you play?" He said, "We'll each take the morning off."

I said, "Look, I go over to this place and I've got to write all this information down, and I got to try to get it out to all these people."

He said, "Well, what - " He questioned me and I sort of explained it to him, and he said, "Why don't you get, why don't you hire like a stenographer to get exactly what that guy says and put it out and then give that to the people who need it and then the people can filter it to the families?"

So this is the other point I didn't agree with what the admiral said. He said something about, he didn't want to just put this information out to the families, because it might be unfiltered and it might be unpleasant.

I said, "Sir," and so in my little spiel to him I said, "What you don't understand is, by not putting it out, by not letting me filter it to the families," I said, " I know the family. I know the information. I can be a filter. That's why you have a CACO, and if the families want this, you're forcing them to go sit in the room and have GENERAL VAN ALSTYN tell them that body parts, that bags no longer correlate to bodies, because, you know, what they're shipping up there might not be a body, but it's in a bag." I said that's what you're by not letting me be the filter yeah you're making the family go sit through that."

So my friend said, " I will," he said, "how many -?" He said, "I'll have stenographers there." He said, "How many do you want?" He said you know, "If you want," you know, "How many meetings a day?"

I said, "Two."

He goes, he said, "How fast do you want the stuff."

I said you know, "There's no time."

He goes, he says, "I'll have five stenographers there in the morning, and then they'll take it and they'll dictate it and they'll get it to you."

So you know, I told ADMIRAL DREW that he had done that, that he had volunteered to do that. She kind of laughed and said, “Well, you know, I hope we don’t need that, but if we do, “ you know, “call them.”

So what they started to do, there was a woman SUSAN ROBERTS who works at OSD, or ASMNNRA, who’s very, very good. She was down there and I had talked to her a couple of times. She was sort of the senior Navy person down there, but not at all involved with the CACO organization, like did not know CACOs. Wasn’t involved with CACO organization. She was the senior Navy person. I’m not sure if she was a senior, but she was like the one that did most things. So they got some organization in place where they you know, took the notes and were putting them out on a web site they set up so we could get the stuff. But it was incredibly time-late. I mean it took two days to get. If you go look at the web site right now, you know, if you go look at the current section, it’s still got things like the September 18th briefing. So I mean, there it was a good idea, but never really worked. But the you know, the whole idea, the whole attitude, I guess the thing that would have to change is that attitude. You know OSD and the Army’s attitude was give the families whatever they want. If they want information give it to them. The Navy’s was not that. The Navy’s was, oh you need to go, you can go sit in the JFAC and listen to it, but you know that’s not what the – the difference was, the big difference was the Army didn’t have CACOs for everybody. Like their civilian, like the civilians and the contractors didn’t get a CACO. They did eventually, but you know, the following week, like you know every Navy person, and I have tremendous respect for the Navy for doing this, you know every Navy person, contractor, you know civilian and military had a CACO and a Chaplain that night. Now in some situations they didn’t know about the people and it happened later. Like they didn’t realize that there was a son of a Navy dependent on the plane and all that kind of stuff, so he didn’t have a CACO that night. But as soon as they found out about it, he had a CACO for his son.

I mean, the Army, you know, if you were a contractor for the Army you didn't get a CACO for, until you know a week later, and the Navy did it that day. I mean the decisions was made. I don't know if it was, who made that decision. It was somebody, it was either the CNO or ADMIRAL RYAN that day made the decision that everybody gets a CACO and a Chaplain that day.

Then I had tremendous respect for them. That took, that's completely, you know, if you're looking at the rule book, if the rule book doesn't say that contractors get CACOs – as a matter of fact, it probably says they don't get CACOs. So you know that was a tremendously, yeah, that took sort of a lot of guts to do I think, and it was exactly the right thing to do.

But the attitude of at least the CACO organization here of, you know, the information that has to go out was you know, just official status stuff. In one of my emails that I sent to ADMIRAL DREW, and ADMIRAL HOEWING, who was the COMMANDER of MPC, I also know from my civilian job. So and I sent them a note and said, "Look, if you're not, if the Navy's not going to giving this information out," you know, "We are not keeping our promise. Our promise was to get this information to the families, and if we're not, we're not keeping our promise." And you know, it's that simple.

So, I mean, the following week they did a better job of getting that kind of stuff out, but the big issue that a lot of families kept asking was what's the status of the search? Is it search and recovery? Is it, no is it search and rescue, or is it search and recovery? What is it?

The Navy kept saying, it's ludicrous, I mean for two weeks, the Navy kept saying, it's a search and rescue, but the Army and OSD was saying it's search and recovery and the guys at the Pentagon when they were interviewed on TV, said, "Yeah, you know, the rescue phase is probably over. We're doing search and recovery now." But the Navy you know kept saying, "Oh, we're doing search and rescue."

Call down here. "Are we still doing search and rescue?"

“Yes, tell them we’re still doing search and rescue.”

Say, “Well, that’s not what they’re putting out at the Family Service Center, and it’s not what they’re saying on the news, and it’s not what they’re saying in the paper.”

“Well, the Navy’s position is search and rescue.” And the thing was you know, I don’t think anybody ever asked. You know there was no official way to get that statement done. It was just set up on the wall, you know, “search and rescue.” So the official blurb was, “It’s still search and rescue.”

So there was I mean, that kind of coordination, and I think it was just because, you know there was not a senior person that had some of the big picture that stayed in that room and watched. In another words, people were locked in on the transactional things, you know. Where’s this form? Not what’s the big picture, you know. Nobody was sitting there thinking what does the family, what do families need right now? Not what form does the Navy need, but what do the families need, and that just was lacking.

My recommendation was that you know have, establish in that kind of disaster, establish what FEMA does, right? FEMA is set up that there are people who are, that are emergency coordinators, but if there’s a big emergency, FEMA fundamentally restructures, and the person who is the Southern Florida Command Coordinator probability isn’t the one who has to handle Hurricane Andrew, but you probably need the second highest guy in FEMA to handle Hurricane Andrew. So it doesn’t hurt anybody’s feelings when it’s something that bad.

You say, “Look,” you know, “This is your job. You’re doing a great job, but for this, this person’s going to be in charge.” But I think there was, the attitude was you know, you don’t want to hurt MISS MACDONALD’s feelings, and I’m saying that. I don’t know if that’s what they would say. But you know, leave her in charge, but I think that was the wrong decision. I think that there should have been a senior person. Whether that was you know, in this, I don’t think it

would have been unjustified to put a flag officer in that job. Because there were flag officers in Millington running the Commands at the post down there. I would, you know they gave this, I took the phone number back. The first time, the first four times I called the 1-800 number in Millington, the interaction I had was so frustrating I took the number – they had the number up on the board and the ELSETH's had it on their refrigerator and I took it off. Because if they call down there, it's going to be incredibly frustrating to them.

You know, I had instruction, somebody called me, this was when I was trying to get BERTA back, I got the guys name. I called back down there. He, I, ANNETTE was calling me on my cell phone so I said, "I'll call you back in five minutes. What's your number?" He gave me the number.

Called back in five minutes with his name. They said, "He doesn't work here."

I said, "Well," you know, "he called me. Gave me this number."

"Well he doesn't - what's his name again?"

I give them the name. People walk around.

"What was the issue?"

I gave him the issues, "Oh, yes, she can't fly back."

I said, "Well why are you telling me that? Who's telling me that?"

"Well, no, we don't think she can."

I said, "Well," you know, "who is this?"

You know, "I'm Susan."

"OK, well Susan, who" you know, "why don't you think so?"

"Well, nobody's ever heard of that."

I said, "OK. Well I need to talk to this person." Couldn't tell me who that person was. I literally called TOM TILT and said, "Does this guy have a direct line?"

“Here’s his direct line.”

He was literally in the office next door to them, literally. I said, “I just called this number. They didn’t know who you were.”

He literally, I heard him yell out the door, “If somebody calls for me,” whatever his name was, “this is my office.”

And I heard them, “OK.”

Q. (01:52:02) (Interviewers laugh derisively) Geez.

A. I said to him, “You’ve got to be kidding me.” Those guys had a really hard problem. They were not, I think they did a good job in Millington in terms of the wait. They gave it the right manpower. They ramped up right away. They had, you know, the coordination was bad, but whenever you ramp up, coordination’s going to be bad. You know they hadn’t done an exercise like this. Nobody had done a drill like this. But so people were doing what they had never done before. But you know, the I guess it’s a question of attitude. Like if somebody says – it’s very easy to say, “We don’t know who this person is.” And you know it’s a little bit harder to actually try to figure it out. So you know, and maybe if it’s there on a normal day, and somebody calls the wrong office, you know, you say, “I don’t know,” you know. “Try some other number” I mean at PO5 you get wrong numbers all the time.

But when it’s you know, when I’m telling them I’m a CACO. I’m sitting on the front porch of a family’s house on my cell phone, I need to talk to this person. Its, the attitude shouldn’t be “oh, he’s not immediately in my office, right now. I don’t know where he is.”

The attitude should be “Ok, you’re a CACO on the front porch of somebody’s house. I’ll find this person for you.” And that wasn’t the attitude.

So when I, I heard, I went down there actually for my civilian job and heard MIKE WARDLAW, who runs, talk about what a great job they did, you know, which they did, about how you know, they right away they had movies set up for the workers there on cable. That's great. Their quality of life while they're working is great. I realize that's a priority that you have to maintain their quality of life, but you know, don't brag about the fact that you had a theater set up for them that quickly. I mean, especially after I know that you know I had to call fifteen times before I got a dumb answer.

Now I still have a problem. They just passed a rule as of recently that everybody military that was killed at the Pentagon can get survivor benefit plan regardless of whether you had twenty years, or whatever. But once again, one of the problems I had with the ELSETHs was that BOB was a SELRES, and nobody can answer a question about a SELRES. Nobody, and nobody I called, you know, I literally at some points called DEFAS myself and MATHEW SANDERS who is the, he's a senior guy in DEFAS works for REDCOM as a Master Chief, so at DEFAS. So I called him a couple of times to get answers.

But nobody could answer the questions because he was a SELRES. You know, what the, you know, is she eligible for TriCare? Is she eligible for all these things that if he was on active duty he would get? And some weird things happened, that I'm not sure, for example you know he, at the end of October, so he's, you know, he's now been dead for six weeks, I got another revised set of orders for him for AT. So instead of being on seven day AT orders, he was on thirty-one day AT orders, meaning she's eligible for TriCare, which I'm glad, they would you know, that somebody did that. I think that's once again, I think it's a dumb rule that you have to be on a thirty-one day, at least active duty for 31 days to get TriCare. But that decision was made at a very low level. That was me calling the OSD, to a Navy Captain who's there on ADT, who also works at REDCOM, who called down to New Orleans. Explained the situation to a Chief down

there, and the Chief said, “Oh, I’ll just revise the orders.” And revised the orders. I mean that decision wasn’t made and they did it for all the SELRES. I mean that decision wasn’t made at a high level. It was made at a low level. I mean nobody is going to question it; change it.

But things like that. I mean nobody, the Reserve force I don’t think did a good job of stepping up for its Reserves in the sense of you know, realizing that there are – actually at one point I had a guy say, “This is not a Millington. This is a Reserve issue. You’ve got to get the Reserves to solve this.”

I said, “This is not a Reserve issue. This is a CACO. The Reserves don’t have a CACO organization. You do. You own all military personnel. You own Reservists. When it comes to CACO you own them. This is not a Reserve issue.”

“Well, I don’t deal with Reserves. I don’t know how to handle it.”

So I mean it was things like that which I was, which were very frustrating. So I’m glad that, I’m very glad that I was assigned to this SELRES, because the other CACOs for the other SELRES that I know of, I don’t think, like I knew the SELRES organization, and I knew Navy Manpower organization. If I didn’t, I certainly would not of thought the usual things that I did, if I didn’t work, you know, here a day a week. And if I didn’t have you know like TOM TILT that I could call, or people like ADMIRAL HENRY who I worked with here, who I had called and asked questions, because without that it would have been very, it would have been very hard, and I think that the – even dumb things like EILEEN ROEMER’s an FBI agent and she actually was in the Navy Command Center the couple, a couple of days later. I don’t know if you’ve talked to her already.

Q. (01:56:38) Uh huh.

A. You know she went down there, and she came back and basically told me and JIM, I think, the status of that area, and said, you know, if he was there, you know, his body's been cleaned out. His body's you know, all the body's in that area are cleaned. It's been sanitized, you know there's markers on the floor where the body's were, and if he was there his body's been recovered.

So I called up to, this is one of the other places that the CACO organization I think failed miserably. I called, they said, "CACOs don't worry about medical records. We'll get all the medical records." At one point they said ask the families if they additional medical records. So I asked. They didn't have any.

So this was on Monday morning. The week of the 17th, and I said you know, "just for my own good, I'm going to call Dover and find out if they've got his medical records." So I called Dover. They don't have his medical records.

I said, "Oh, you've got to be kidding me. What if he had it with him, because Reservists on AT, a lot of times it's in our briefcase.

Q. (01:57:38) Uh huh.

A. So I called to the Reserve Center to say, and said, "has it been checked out."

They said, "Oh, it's sitting right here."

I said, "What do you mean it's sitting right there?"

"Well, somebody called on last Wednesday to get it, but they never came to get it, so it's sitting here."

I said, "Do you have any more?"

He said, "Yeah, I've got two more." He had the two, or one more, I forget, no, two, there were three total.

So you know, this was now a week later. This Second Class Petty Officer got called on Wednesday that somebody was going to come pick up the medical records. Nobody came so he just let them sit there. Didn't make another phone call. Didn't try to track it down. Just let them sit there. So now here it is, you know, his body has been up in Dover, presumably for three days, four days, unable to be identified, because his service record is sitting at the naval, at the reserve center, HM2's desk.

So I drove down there. I said, "I'm here to pick up the SELRES medical records." He said – "From the Pentagon." And he looked at me and he said, "Sure I'm allowed to give them to you?" Which is a good, he probably shouldn't have given it to me. I mean in all right, who am I? I just showed up and he didn't ask for any ID.

I looked at him. I didn't say a word. I just looked at him and it was very clear by the way I looked at him that he should give me those service records and he gave them, to me. I drove them over to, I took them over to the CACO organization and they weren't sure what they were going to do with them.

So I said, "Well," you know, "Can we find out?"

"Uhhh, we're not sure. Well you can just leave them here."

Well, there was not way in the world I was going to just leave them there. So I drove over to JFAC, because that's where AFIPs, Armed Forces, I forget the name –

Q. (01:59:07) Institute of Pathology

A. Was set up there. And I asked, there was a guy there, and I said you know, "What's the," this was now like noon, I said.

He said, "Well what we can do is, I will - "

I said, "What's going to happen to this if I give them to you?"

He said, "I'm going to put them in this box and tomorrow morning, they're going to you know be couriered up there."

I said, "When will they get up there?"

He said, "Well, it's probably not going to be until tomorrow morning."

And I said, this was like maybe eleven o'clock I guess on Monday, and I said, "OK, I'm not sure I want to wait that long, because," I said, "These should have been up there last week." And I said, "Because they were told, one thing we told the family was they were doing these runs hourly."

And then he tells me that they're not going to do it you know, until tomorrow morning. So I found there were two chiefs that were the CACO at the time for VASIC –

Q. (01:59:58) VAUK?

A. VAUK, VAUK, yeah. I told them that I had VAUK's service record they were from, I forget, they're NSA at Fort Mead, you know, almost halfway to Dover and they had a government car, and the one chief said, "We'll drive it there right now. We'll drive it to Dover."

So I called CAPT O'BRIEN who was up there as the, and I said you know, "If these chiefs drive it up there," and he was – I told CAPT O'BRIEN where I found it. And he didn't say much, but I could tell he was irate when I said, they were on the HM2's desk.

And he said, "Well, what are the Chief's going to do?"

I said, "They will drive it there. Where do they go?" And he told me how to get them there and so I gave it to the Chiefs and they drove it up there, and they got it there. And then VAUK and BOB were identified the next day. But that kind of thing –

Q. (02:00:43) Did anybody follow up with the Commanding officer at the Reserve Center in Anacostia?

A. I hope so. I hope they did, because well, indirectly I'm sure they did, because when I told ADMIRAL DREW about it, she was less than thrilled. And she's not the kind of person that doesn't follow up on things. So I'm sure that he heard about it. And I'm sure the HM2 heard about it.

Like what I said, was you know, in some ways it's not the HM2s fault. Like if I was the Commanding Officer and I told this to ADMIRAL DREW and I would tell it to him if it was resolved, if I'm the commanding officer and I know that I have three of my SELRES that are you know killed or missing in the Pentagon, you can be damn sure I'm going to know where their medical records are, and you can be damn sure they're not going to be sitting on an HM2's desk for a week waiting to get picked up. I mean the first thing is, if I, I'm going to find out, is where are that person's records? And that didn't happen.

Q. (02:01:37) The whole senior leadership there should have bundled everything –

Q. (another) Do you think the HM2 was aware of what those service records were?

A. He knew exactly. They were labeled, "Pentagon." They were labeled, "Pentagon." Yeah he knew. Yeah, that was frustrating. And I know Al DIVADERES (phonetic) the XO down there, pretty well. He's actually, he was a CACO and yeah the fact that he didn't do something else surprised me I guess. But it was –

Q. (02:02:12) Did they provide the CACOs with any kind of, not actually counseling, but just someone to talk to?

A. Yes, they made a couple of offers. The folks over at the JFAC did. I don't remember if the CACO, I don't remember if the Navy CACO did. I stopped interacting with Navy CACO except when I had to. I mean I just went through the people at the JFAC, because I actually got answers there.

I guess the other thing is, in that situation, the decision, whoever made the decision to not move, or maybe it was just a lack of decision, you know the Navy CACOs should have relocated over there, the CACO Organization. You know BARBARA MACDONALD's folks should have picked up and moved over there, right away. Like, because that's where all the good information was. That's where GENERAL VAN ALLSTYNE was. He was the guy making the decisions. You know, the fact that the Navy didn't have, well the other thing is the Navy had a Navy Commander and I forget her name.

Q. (02:03:06) BROWN-WAHLER.

A. BROWN-WAHLER, who was assigned to you know, but her job was a Joint job. She works for GENERAL VAN ALLSTYNE. She didn't see herself being, in my opinion, being a Navy person. So she wouldn't call over to the Navy organization. You know, I'd say, you know, I would say, one time I actually said to her, "So do you know if the Navy CACO organization knows this?"

And she said, point blank, "I don't, I'm not involved at all with the Navy CACO organization." Which is true, she's not, but you know, she was somebody who was probably the closest person who could have said, "Look, the Navy's making a mistake, you know, the fact that there's no Navy people here." You know, the fact that there is, you know, actually TOM TILT works for my company, he was over there one day. TONY CUNNINGHAM was a GS15 here, who we work with closely. They had heard that nobody was over there from the Navy, so they went over

to see if they could help, because TOM has been, he was, he's a retired Navy Captain. He was CO EPMAC (phonetic) He handled, he's handled lots of like the, he was the watch officer for like *Missouri*, for the *Iowa* explosion. He's been the watch officer for big things, and he knows the Navy system better than anybody. Like if they're trying to find something about somebody, he knows where to find it. So he's a you know, he's a guy that literally knew the problem. They, like when the *Cole* was hit, ADMIRAL RYAN called for him by name. Said, "Let's get TOM TILT down here, " as a contractor. You know, not on a contract to do that, but they just bring him in because he knows. So TOM was down there and you know was – they didn't think they could do much because they weren't involved with the CACO organization, but you know the fact that nobody really from the Navy got there. It took, you know, it took a week or ten days. The people that, SUSAN BROWN and stuff, SUSAN ROGERS were very good, but their concern was the stuff like you know, the memorial service, and you know, not stuff like you know getting CACOs help. I think that was – there were a couple of other you know CACOs and I lamented these issues.

Q. (02:05:00) Did any of the Navy CACO people move to the Family -?

A. No, nobody from the CACOs. No.

Q. (02:05:04) No, they didn't. OK.

A. Which like I said, it's a non-decision, but the fact that it was never made is I think – and ADMIRAL WEAVER said at one point, we are going to move a lot of infrastructure over here. He was, we were at, he had a meeting at the JFAC, the one time I saw him there. He said we're going to move a lot of our room structure over here. This is where the information is. So again

you know, “I’ve been telling you that for a week that this is where the information is.” But it never happened. I mean they never actually did.

But they did a lot of good things when they got – you know I don’t mean to slam them. They, except they had a very hard problem. But ADMIRAL WEAVER’s main concern wasn’t CACOs, right? ADMIRAL WEAVER’s main concern is security of his bases. You know, security of, you know getting the things running again, getting to go back to work. You know the fact that there wasn’t really, I mean sitting in on the conference calls, sitting in on the video conferences with the leadership and you know making sure – I mean the CNO lives, the CNO lives two doors away from him and the CNO’s security is you know, he’s responsible for the people who are responsible for CNO security. That’s probably a bigger issue. That kind of stuff, so, but the fact that you know there was, there were people available. I mean you know, like the one thing I said is ADMIRAL DREW had somebody tasked her, she would have been phenomenal at that. I guarantee that, she was in Millington. Had she of been here, I guarantee that was, you know, she would have just done that. That would have been, you know, she would have been perfect for that kind of role, or any you know ADMIRAL COTTON, or any of the SELRES that are looking for sort of things to do, or even, it doesn’t have to be a flag officer. It could have been, it could have been a senior captain. Anybody who you know know, you have to know the system. You have to know, not just the CACO system, you’ve got to understand the Navy and so somebody who understands the Navy in that job, or it could have been somebody here. I mean it could have been you know, one of the flag officers here, or you know one of the CO Captains here. That, you know just, that never happened.

Like for the *Cole* and stuff, this organi – this shop does run things. The other problem was I guess in Millington for big disasters like the *Cole* or where people are disbursed, Millington runs that, and they’re really the hub. But for this in fact, this was really the hub. I mean, the CACO

center here was really the hub for stuff to do with the families. Because like, the secondary next of kin all came here. Right, so people drove everywhere, so you know, it was very quickly that the secondary CACOs didn't do anything, because all, I mean, like I had everybody here. The whole family was here. So you know there was very, the coordination, and the other thing that completely let down was that information that I was getting from these folks, the JFAC, we were, if there was kin, next of kin, primary or secondary who weren't here, they didn't get any of that. You know they didn't have access, you know, they couldn't get that information. So you know, the fact that some of the families were getting it and some weren't getting it. Like if you weren't local, you weren't getting it. There was no feed, you couldn't have gotten it. If your CACO wasn't here going to the meetings, there's no way you could have gotten it. Because you know, I would get calls from the secondary CACO asking me questions, you know, some cases two days later.

"OK, I just got a call from my folks," that they need this.

"Yeah, you can tell them that I did that two days ago," and he would call back and say, "Yeah, it's done."

Pretty soon, he would just, he was a good guy, but you know, he would, there was nothing he could really do. He tried very hard and he went to the family's house. He called the police. When the family was here, he called the police and had the police set up, you know, sitting by their house, because you know, the newspaper up there printed the fact that BOB was missing, and the address of his parent's house, in the paper. So you know, and he saw that and called the police. He did a lot of good things, but there's not much he could do, because he didn't have the information and there was no infrastructure set up to support that.

I think they're working on this now, and they're working on the infrastructure issues now.

Q. (02:08:50) Right, Senior Chief, do you have any questions? I'm sure you do, you were writing lots of stuff down.

Q. (another) That was for afterwards.

Q. (02:09:00) Now?

Q. (another) No.

Q. (02:09:00) How did this change you?

Q. (another) He's not so mellow. (chuckle)

A. Actually I think it's probably the opposite. I think little things don't, well I think, this is like the second time. I mean the fire that was on my ship in '91 was the first time, the fire on my ship changed me more than this changed me, since I was more directly involved with you know, with what I thought you know, could have ended my life. In the, I think the result of that was, the result of that fire, I was very, very, very disappointed with some people that I thought a lot more of. I saw some junior people making incredibly wise and brave, like strong decisions and I saw some senior people and some you know very good friends of mine make horrible decisions. I mean in one situation the one guy that got very seriously hurt was a direct result of one of my friends doing something that literal – I mean, no exaggeration, if you asked me what's the last thing in the world you would do, that's about what this guy did. I mean it was, to this day I can't figure out what he was possibly thinking to do what he did. I mean I just, I can't figure it out. I think, I mean those assignments, I always thought, I wonder if he was thinking, "What should I not do?" and said that, because I can't imagine that he would tell the guy to do what he did. I just can't imagine.

So the, I mean this, so I think I was sort of more critical of people in the sense that, I think that probably was part of the direct reason that I got out of the Navy. I left active duty, in the sense

that, I didn't love, you know, having to do that. There were things that I really want to, you know, I liked, I really wanted to go get my Ph.D. and I didn't have that option on active duty. At least not at a place like Duke. I think that was one of my main, but I think you know sort of disappointment in, was another one. I was, I don't want to say I was cynical, but I was, sort of hardened. I mean I did not want to go through something like that again, and I didn't want to sort of go through and I didn't want to serve with some of the people, like with I mean, people I work with at command say, "stick around you know, you might go to another ship and love it." So you know if I go to another ship and I get somebody like you know the XO I had at the time, that would really bother me. So in this situation I was incredibly impressed with some aspects of it. Like I was incredibly impressed with like I said the decision to handle contractors the same way as military. Some things like that I think were just you know, the Navy talks about core value. I mean that was a hundred percent in keeping with the Navy's core values. That's exactly the right decision, and the fact that the Army did do it for a week, you know, I hope sort of is shameful to the Army. That's exactly the right decision, and stuff like that I was very proud of. But other I mean other incidents that happened I was, I look back at some of my conversations over the phone with people in this building, you know people that I, or with people down there, people in Millington and it's frustrating.

I mean like I look at like the crew, I look at the way the crew treated BERTA coming back from Germany. You know they treated her like a princess. I mean, she still, literally, when she talks about that crew, she cries. Her eyes don't tear up, she cries. But when I think about how hard it is, you know how hard that was to do, that should not have been, I didn't have to – like what ADMIRAL DREW has said, she said, "If I wasn't the CACO, that wouldn't have happened." And that shouldn't have been you know, it shouldn't have taken an extraordinary effort for me to get her home.

I mean if it wasn't be, in hind sight there's one other guy that I think that I worked with as a CACO, I don't know them all obviously. But there's one or two other guys I think you know, might have done that. But I look at a lot of them and I know they wouldn't of. I know the other folks that I've, the other CACOs from REDCOM that I work with they certainly wouldn't have. You know, they would have said from the beginning it's impose – we can't do it, it's impossible. I know that.

So you know that and that makes me sort of proud that I was able to do that, but it also bothers me. You know it shouldn't take that. Anyway, the, I've studied I have studied sort of Management Theory and one of the things that, you know, good companies have, good organizations do things that are repeatable, but you don't rely on heroic effort from one person. A company that relies on heroic effort typically fails, because you know, you're not going to get heroic effort from people all the time.

I think that you know, in this there was, where things went well, it was because of heroic effort. It wasn't because our processes worked well, and the Navy relies on that. We rely on having, the way you win battles for example, is because of heroic effort. That's probably, so we rely on that probably I think, and holds you as a cop out. That we assume our people are good, and that we assume our people would do the right things, but I think you know, I can, you know I can probably tell you twenty times in this that people did the wrong things.

In some situations, I think you know, I know of situations where families got the wrong information. I know of situations where families were lied to. I know of situations where, where you know, CACOs were lazy or not, didn't follow through on something, or didn't you know, gave the easy answer. And I think that's, you know, I think that's wrong, and I saw a lot of it. You know I saw too much of it.

So you know that, and I don't know how to change it. I mean the way things - I, I talked to ADMIRAL DREW about it afterwards that the, seeing, you know, having people just give me an answer on the phone, just saying, "Yes." You know, I literally started asking people for the instruction and you know I hate, you know, I'm not that kind of person to, I'm not the kind of person that says, you know, "prove it to me," but I got to the situation you know I was asking people to send me the, "What instruction," you know. "How do you know this?" Because people just give you the easy answer, and they wouldn't give the easy answer honestly. They wouldn't say, "I think, yes." They would just say, "Yes." So who, you know, "Why are you saying yes?" Or "Why are you saying no?" What's your motivation to say that? And nine times out of ten it was just that that was you know what they thought. I think that was. That was sort of - I mean, I see that in my civilian job too when working with the military. We're working with not just the military, we're working with lots of organization. I think, I can tell you since that I've, yeah, I've thought a lot about, yeah. I guess I have eleven years in the Reserves, and I've sort of you know thought a lot about sort of my future in the Reserves. You know, there's a lot in the Reserves I don't want to do. I mean, the, and I look at and say you know, I'm not sure that, I'm not sure I want to stay necessarily in the Reserves. If, so, yeah it's hard to explain it in so finite amount of time, but the, yeah, I guess, like I say, I was very proud of a lot of things that happened, but I was also, I think - I was very proud with actions of a lot of people, but I was also sort of disappointed with the action of a lot of people. And I think I was, I was very, very proud of some of the actions of some of our senior leadership, but I think I was, you know, I was unhappy with the actions of our sort of middle leadership.

And now you know, seeing people going around slapping themselves on the back for doing such a great job, bothers me in the sense that you know I think - we should do that, I mean we should thank the people who did great jobs, but we also should sort of intelligently look back at what we

did and realize we made mistakes in not, not rosy, and look back and say you know, “How could we do this better?” I think that lessons learned process was way too abbreviated and too much reliant on personalities. It shouldn’t be “Who’s the person doing it?”

Like it should, it should be whether it’s MRS. MACDONALD or somebody else. It should be, is that the right thing to do? Is it the right thing to do to leave the current organization and just beef it up with junior people? Or is, you know, people answering the phones.

Because I mean the person that answered the phone, the seaman who would answer my phone when I called, was my direct liaison to getting the answers. And when I say you know, “I need to know something about TriCare and he doesn’t know what TriCare is, and he writes down you know, T-Care on a piece of paper and asks somebody about it, and they say, “I don’t know what that is,” and I call back and he says, “Yeah, we don’t know what that is.”

I said, “Well you know, I guarantee somebody there knows what TriCare is, you know, I’m pretty sure that somebody in the, -“

He says, “They don’t know. I asked MRS. MACDONALD, she doesn’t even know.”

Yeah, she doesn’t know when you bring her a piece of paper that says T-Care, but she does know what TriCare is. So and stuff like that just, and the fact that that was, the seaman, it’s not his fault. It’s the leadership’s fault. That was the wrong person to answer the phone, but it’s who they had, but you know, when that person doesn’t know, there should be a system in place to find that out. It shouldn’t just be walk to MRS. MACDONALD. She says, “I don’t know,” and the guy tells me he doesn’t know.

I mean you know that, if the Navy Command Center functioned that way, or if you know CINCLANTFLT Command Center functioned that way – Yeah, one analogy I did when I was talking to one of the Chiefs on that one day, I said, “You know, if you’re you know, in Tampa at Special Forces Command, and somebody was, you know an operator in Afghanistan calls you on

the satellite phone and says, “I need to know “X””, you don’t say, ‘Oh, we don’t know.’” you know, and granted it’s not quite that dire when you’re a CACO, but it should be close to that. I mean the Command Center where you call, should have intelligent enough people there to answer the phones. Like you know, I guarantee, literally, I mean, OK, you’ve always read your first stories about you know the Granada Invasion and stuff where they call and they say, “Hey, I’m standing at this, do you have a map? I’m standing and I’m looking at a railroad bridge. There can’t be many railroad bridges in Granada. Where am I?” And they call on a map and somebody goes and digs up a map of Granada, finds a railroad bridge. Tells the guy where he is and how to get to, you know back to the landing point. You know, that is the right mentality for a Command Center. You know, it’s not, “we don’t know.” And that’s the standard answer and I think that was, you know, that was, that bothered me.

Yeah, so like I said, I think the, I was very, I’m glad that I was with the family I was with. I think that, they, I’ve told my wife it’s sort of a – to the side of me it says, the first time I was a CACO, the family was not a great family. It was, it was obvious that the kid didn’t have you know, a happy home life. It was obvious that the kid, his family didn’t care much about him. They didn’t care much about each other and in a way that was hard to know how that kid lived. But it was also easier in a sense that you know, there wasn’t a lot of grief with the family. There wasn’t, it was disturbing to me personally, but it wasn’t – this is sort of you know a mixed blessing in a sense. It’s a great family. I mean the, it’s just an awesome family, which is, was easy for me to deal with them, because they were such great people, but it also makes it a lot harder, in a sense that it makes their loss harder to bear, in the sense that you know like I said, hearing all the stories about BOB. Hearing all the stories about he loved Maggie Moos Ice Cream, and I love Magee Moos Ice Cream. He went there you know, five times a week. I don’t go there five times a week, but I go there probably three times a week.

So hearing stuff like that you know, and we're, if he - makes it hard, but it also makes it you know, so its sort of a double edged sword that, it makes it harder to deal with, but it makes it easier to deal with at the same time.

Yeah, So I'm not sure, the short answer is I don't know how it changed me, but I think it, I'm not sure it, I don't think it has raised my opinion of the Navy. At least of the Navy bureaucracy. It was the same feelings I had on my ship that a lot of times I didn't feel we were prepared to do things, but we told everybody we were. And I feel this is the same situation here. I don't think that we, we said, we all use lessons learned, but if it happened tomorrow I don't think things would be different. I think things would be the same.

Because I mean, I heard them "Oh, yeah we had the same problem for *Cole*. Oh yeah we had the same problem for this. We had the same problem for that."

OK, well you're having the same problem for every time you have a major problem, then maybe you should realize that it's time to fix it.

And yeah that was just, and I guess the other side of it, I don't know if you, I did not know this, when I was trying to get BERTA back, I called one of the transportation people and he said, "We had this same problem with, we had the same problem with P3 in China.' All the families wanted to go to Whidbey Island and we couldn't get them all out there."

And so do you guys know how they got the families out there?

Q. (02:22:39) We actually went out to Whidbey Island and interviewed the whole crew.

A. Oh, did you? That's cool. So you know Ross Perot paid for it?

Q. Yes, yes.

A. My OK, so who made that phone call? Right who's the person that thought to call Ross Perot and say, "Hey, we need to get five hundred and fifty people to Whidbey Island." You know and that happened, but why didn't that happen here? Like that wasn't, anybody, that's the other thing I, when the chief told me, at one point when somebody told me they didn't have enough people, you know I said, you know, I said, it can't be true. I said, you know "Have you picked up the phone. Have you picked up a military phone book and found a name and called that person" on a Saturday morning to do the transcription over at the Family Service Center. I said, "Have you picked up a phone book and called one person that you know," that and said, "Will you help?" And I guarantee you no one's going to say "No." Everybody wants to help and everybody wants to help the families. I mean, it's just, you know, if people don't know how, that's a leadership problem. All right. That's not a problem with the people it's a problem with the leadership. I said, "If you're not telling people how to help, then that's you know, you've got to recognize that very quickly as a leadership problem, and that's whatever happened.

I mean, the - as I they kept getting complaints, you know they got lots of complaints about CACOs. Families called and complained about information or CACOs or and people got Senators involved. They got Congressman involved. You know, they, somebody should have realized that it's not the intial - it might have been the CACO. You might have had a bad CACO, but if it gets to the point where it's more than one or two, it's just probably a leadership problem. That it's probably, it's hard to blame the individual people, and that's what bothered me, that you know, no one's ever said that. No one's ever come back and said, "You know, we didn't think we did a good job, from the leadership standpoint."

It's clear to me they didn't and nobody said that. I mean I think individual people did as much as they could and you know some people made bad decisions, but I think from a leadership standpoint at the lowest level, I mean at the, you know, the CACO level, here level or the

Millington level, and I think, I guess it's popular that they think they made good decision. Like the fact the CNO asked every time for updates on the people and their families. That was his, and the fact that I saw him at the Service Center Saturday morning, and in fact I saw ADMIRAL RYAN at the Service Center on Friday. And the fact I saw lots of flag officers come through there, told me that the senior people you know, care and knew that they needed, and they wanted to try to help us on this. But the fact that you know, the people executing never thought to go over there bothered me, and the fact that nobody told them to. I mean no one said, "Yeah, we need to go."

Q. (02:25:08) Go!

A. Yeah you need to go. You need to go over there and hear. And so I think that, I guess I got, I've been re-jaded some.

Q. (02:25:21) Who would be your top heroes out of all this?

A. As in people who –

Q. (02:25:28) Made things happen for the families.

A. So I really like, CHAPLAIN KAHN, I really, really liked. I still, we've talked about getting together for dinner which I want to do.

I think the folks at NAHO and the VR53 who brought her back. I don't know if you have him, the pilot to talk to, MARK BAILEY, if he's on your list, but he'd probably be a very good person to interview. LTCDR MARK BAILEY.

He and his crew, MAJOR SANDS, the Air Force Radiologist in Ramstein, STEVE RUBY, the guy that works for me. Yeah works for me for another twelve days or something, before he, he's

going back to law school in the fall. He's taking all summer off. I was very glad for him, but I told you the one thing he did, but he did, I used him all the time. He was the guy, he was the person that should have been at the Command Center, because I called him and asked him dumb questions and he got me the answers. Like I mean military questions. I called him and said 'Hey I need you to find the Navy,' and he's not a Navy, he's never been in the Navy. He's worked with the Navy indirectly with my company. But I called him and said, "I need you to find a Navy instruction that covers, " "X". You know, "I need you to look for," this, you know, something that talks about this.

You know, he's the one that found me all the stuff on the JTFR to find out about how to do them the travel letter to bring, the invitational travel letter to bring BERTA home. I said, IT, its ITO, to bring that, to bring her back. He did all that. He's the one that found it all and then emailed it to me and I would you know dial up my laptop every now and then and get all the stuff he sent me, and that's how, and then I'd read it all. But he's I mean you know, this twenty-three year old kid who's never been in the military, from Sod, West Virginia, is the guy that found all this stuff for me, because I couldn't get it from the Navy.

So he, and he's never met the family, but he I think he's one. I think PETTY OFFICER GASTON. I think that you know, his, him talking to the family when they, when he did was a tremendously useful thing for them and the fact that you know, he was still you know emotionally you know a wreck and sort of understood it was important enough to you know, to leave his house for the first time and drive down and talk to them, which was, it had to be incredibly, I mean it was way harder for him than them. They were just listening. He had to tell them all this, and the fact that he willingly did that was tremendously important for them. There's probably a lot I'm forgetting but, I think those are the, yeah those are probably the highest, the highest.

Q. (02:28:55) Do you have anything else you want to add for the historical record that you'd just like to have here in the archives?

A. Yeah, I'm not sure I want all this in here.

(Laughter)

No, I don't think so. I, yeah I think for the last half of this I've probably been very negative, which is not necessarily the image I want to leave. I guess, though I think the, I mean you know, I haven't talked much about BOB. Just little bits, but you know I wish, I never met him. And after working with his family, you know I wish I had. I think it's clear from what I know of him and from what everybody else has told me, that he and I would have been friends, so it would have been, yeah. That's probably the thing I'd like to leave.

Q. (02:29:56) OK, thank you very much for your time.

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