

**Naval Historical Center  
Oral Interview Summary Form**

**Interviewers:**

CAPT(S) Carol O'Hagan  
CDR Karen Loftus

**Interviewer's Organization:**

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206  
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206

**Interviewee:**

Ms. Natalie Ogletree

**Current Address:**

██████████  
██████████

**Date of Interview:**

29 Jan 2002

**Place of Interview:**

Crystal City, Arlington VA

**Number of Cassettes:**

One

**Security Classification:**

Unclassified

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

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

**Abstract of Interview:**

**Interviewee Information:**

Ms. Ogletree is a native of ██████████ FL. She started her civilian career there in 1982; she is an aeronautical engineer by profession and a mechanical engineer by degree. She has worked helicopter issues all her life. Her husband is a retired Corpsmen. She works for the Naval Air Systems Command as a branch financial manager for several different weapon systems. She currently lives in Waldorf, MD.

**Topics Discussed:**

She had been working on closing out issues raised during the summer FMB hearings prior to Sept 11<sup>th</sup>. The morning was typical and she came in to download the authorization e-mail report that had been posted which would outline changes that might affect her programs.

On Sept 11<sup>th</sup>, she commuted in on the Metro as usual, made herself a bagel, turned on her computer and started to download the report. While it was downloading she decided to do some other work. She left her desk, got some coffee and went to the admin assistant's desk looking for a copy of the reorganization chart to see where they would be moving. They were located in Corridor 4 of the B Ring, facing the C Ring. She went to the copy machine to make a copy of the org chart. While standing there with her coffee, making a copy, she saw the C Ring explode in front of her. She screamed "oh my God" and due to the construction, thought a worker had hit a gas pipe. She said the corridor was in flames and smoke and the admin assistant yelled "it's a bomb, everybody get out!" Everyone gathered together and due to a fire drill they had just had a couple of weeks before, knew to gather on the A Ring side of the room and proceed out the door.

As they opened the door, SN Marsh saw that the ceiling tiles in the corridor had collapsed and told everyone to turn around as it was blocked. Although she wondered what other exit there might be, they turned back around. She noticed CAPT Phillips, who's very tall, now in the front of the line, and that the men were in the front and back of the line, protecting the women in the middle. CAPT Phillips started leading them to the back of the space where there was a stairwell. He directed them down the stairwell. At every floor, they tried to exit but the doors were all locked. They finally exited onto the mezzanine between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> corridor. She was surprised that all the doors were locked but did not panic as she knew the courtyard doors at the bottom would be open. When they entered the mezzanine, they started to see victims from what she believes to be the C Ring coming out. She saw one woman who looked like she was starting to have a heart attack and some people helped her lay down for a minute. She then saw a man who was very badly burned and something told her that she needed to pray for this man. So she left the group and sat down with him to pray. After looking at his badge, she noticed his name was Brian Birdwell and said "Brian, we're gonna pray" to which he replied "Okay Ma'am." She held his hand and they recited the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and the Lord's Prayer. He said he was in so much pain but she told him it was going to be all right. They did not see any medical personnel around. So they kept praying. He would shake because of his burns to his face, arms, hands and legs. But they prayed together and she remembered she had her Bible with her so she took it out and started reading from Psalms 91. She told him the Lord was looking after him and it would be all right, he just had to hold on. He said he knew he had to but to just keep praying for him. When the medics showed up about a half an hour later, they cut away his clothing, placed him on a gurney and whisked him away.

She realized that having only been at the Pentagon for 8 weeks, that she had no idea how to get out. She knew how to get to the courtyard, however, so she went there and asked the guard where she should go. He directed her to the 8<sup>th</sup> Corridor, past the dispensary, and she exited there. She saw a lot of Army personnel so she thought it must be an Army section. When she got outside, she saw they had set up a triage and that there were a lot of people getting oxygen, etc. This further confirmed her belief that it was a gas explosion. She then saw Brian Birdwell and went to him. He asked that someone please call his wife and tell her that he was alive. So she asked him for her number and wrote it in her Bible. Some of his coworkers then physically carried the gurney away from the building because they were directed to get farther away. So she held his hand and went with him to pray. They were joined by a Chaplain and continued to pray. No ambulance had yet arrived and he was beginning to shake badly. They were afraid he would go into shock. A female medical officer then suddenly came up, evaluated him and said he needed to be sent to a hospital immediately. She commandeered an officer's Ford Explorer that was driving by and told him to take Brian to Georgetown now so they loaded him right there without hesitation. She told Brian that they would call his wife and the Explorer drove off.

After Brian left, she looked for and found her coworkers and discussed how they were to get home. She knew her church was the closer than her home so she asked God to help her walk the 7 miles to her church. On her way she was able to talk to her husband finally, who started out as soon as someone told him the Pentagon was on fire. She asked him to do two things. First, call Brian's wife and let her know that her husband was injured but alive and on his way to Georgetown hospital and second, call her Mamma and let her know she was fine. She told her husband to meet her at the church and she walked down Route 1 with hundreds of other people. Route 1 looked like a parking lot. On her way she spoke to several people she knew who wanted to know if she was okay. As the children's director at her church, she had a number of her fellow church members who wanted to make sure she was okay.

She called a woman she knew from NAVSEA, who was with a woman whose husband worked in the Pentagon. They prayed together on the phone even though she did not know that woman at all, she felt she needed to help her. She told her everyone had been evacuated and were standing around outside the Pentagon and that the best thing to do would be to wait for him to call and try not to worry too much. When she got off the phone she had reached the top of Braddock Rd and someone from her church saw her, picked her up and drove her over the hill. Her husband was having trouble seeing her with all the people, but she could see him. When they met he took her in his car to their church office to let them know she was okay and then headed to see her children at school. Her youngest was very excited to see her but said he was okay and would take the bus home. She then went to see her oldest boy who started to cry when he saw his mother. That's when she finally started to cry having not cried all day. He said he would stay in class as well now knowing that his Mom was okay. After that she felt very exhausted and wanted to head home at last. She got home around 2pm and that's when she finally learned that the Pentagon had been hit by a plane, not a gas explosion. That's when the shock of what had happened really hit her. She cried for the rest of the night. She had heard some talk while walking of the WTC being hit by a plane but hadn't connected the two because she had been convinced that it was an explosion. Everything she had seen seemed to indicate an explosion and even when she had overheard some talk about a second plane coming, it did not dawn on her that they had already been hit by one. She cried many times over the next few days every time she turned on the TV. She's glad now that she didn't know it was a plane as she thinks it allowed her not to panic at the time. She's not sure she would have walked to the church if she thought there was danger from another plane. But as it was just an accident, she felt no further danger.

She called the hospital many times over the next three weeks to check on Brian Birdwell and was always told he was still in ICU and could not have any visitors. Finally on during the first week of November, a nurse answered and said Brian was there but could not speak. Natalie told the nurse she had helped him on the 11<sup>th</sup> and just wanted to make sure he was all right. She asked the nurse to leave a message and number for his wife to call, who she still did not know. Brian's wife [REDACTED] did call her back and wanted to know just who she was and how she knew her husband as Brian had said he had no idea who she was or why she was calling. Natalie explained some of what happened and they spoke and cried together for about an hour. [REDACTED] said her husband was her best friend and she was so thankful. Natalie told her she just wanted to make sure he was okay. She has not met with him personally since the attack but has seen him on TV.

At Christmas time she reminded herself to send a card to Brian. She was at home watching a story on injured survivors and saw stockings on a stairwell. One of the stockings had the name Melva on it and she realized it was Brian's home and then saw him. He had compression gloves on and she said he's lucky to still have hands as they were so badly burned. They had bled so much that when they found him they thought he must have other lacerations as he was resting them on his stomach with so much blood around. Fortunately he didn't.

She knows he received his Purple Heart and was visited by Pres. Bush. She doesn't know why God led her to Brian that day and she decided to go pray with him as she didn't know him at all. She had never done that before. She still has not spoken to him yet and doesn't know if she will get a chance. She just thanks God that she was there that day and could help. She was surprised

to see how alert and talkative he is on TV. Not at all the impression she got that day. She is very grateful that he is recovering so well.

She did not really know what award she was to receive. She called and was told it was the Superior Civilian Service Award and it would be awarded at the Pentagon. Although she had earned other personal awards, this was her first medal. She was surprised that she would be given the medal as she knew that other members of her office, mostly military, had run back toward the fire and helped pull people out. She hadn't done that much. When they pinned it on her, she was amazed. She had to call someone to find out what it meant and was told it was the second highest award a civilian can earn, which surprised her even more. She said she knew it was important, as Secretary Gordon had presented it to her, but she did not realize it was that important. After the ceremony, her relatives started to call and tell her she had been on television, which also surprised her. Everyone bothered her so much about it that she was finally convinced to buy a copy of the tape from C-SPAN and give it to her mother. She was also later asked by a San Antonio TX television station to come down for an interview and she went along with CAPT Sam Perez and SN Sean Whitmarsh and appeared on the San Antonio Living show, a local morning talk show. She was so nervous that she did not talk much and, as she was sitting on the end, held on to the end of the couch for dear life. But she said all of the people were very nice and the callers were wonderful to them. After they returned from the show, she later received a package from one of the viewers with a hand-blown crystal Christmas ornament inside. They did not sign their name so she has not been able to thank them for the gift. She was truly thankful for the generosity.

Sept 11<sup>th</sup> did change her outlook on life. She, by nature is a workaholic and has always spent too many hours away from her family. The demands of her DC job had only made things worse. After what happened, she has come to truly realize the value and importance of quality time with her family and has tried hard to make time for them. She now knows that at any time, one of them may not come home or that she may not come home. She has refocused her life to do more things with them and be truly grateful for what God has given her. Too many people went to work at the Pentagon and the World Trade Center that morning and never came home. She tries to make sure that the last words she says to her children each morning are positive ones and prays that God keeps them safe until she returns.

She will never forget that day.

Abstracted by  
CDR Rob Sawyer  
27 Feb 02

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**Topics Discussed:**

Q. (02:35) Tell us a bit about your assignment at N76 right now and what issues you were working on prior to September 11th.

A. I came there July the 11th of last year and I came over to be a Branch Financial Manager. Had never worked the surface side. It's all new to me, but I wanted to stretch. I needed to stretch, and so I'm over there prior to September the 11<sup>th</sup> working as a financial manager for about six

weapons systems, Tomahawk, land attack surface missiles, a couple of small munitions programs. That's probably about it, and the Naval Five Network Program, and so I was just learning the budget arena, went through the summer review process, went through the FMB hearings, and we were actually closing out the FMB issues Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>. On that particular morning I was pulling down one of the authorization reports to see on how the marks and the pluses, how the markups and the pluses were effecting our programs.

Q. (03:36) Ok, can you start out with the beginning of your day on September 11<sup>th</sup> and tells us what happened.

A. Got up, I'm a commuter from Waldorf, so I commuted in on the Metro train that particular morning, came in. I was trying to be healthy up here so I put a bagel in the toaster, had dumped some cereal and had not talked to my sister in a couple of days. Thought about her, and booted up my computer. Booted up the computer and sure enough a new email authorization report is out. Everybody needed to take a look at it to see how it impacted their programs. Determine whether or not whether we were going to have to do reclammas (phonetic) and it was a huge report. Takes a while to download and it was Acrobat Adobe so I said, "OK, let me just go do some work while this report downloads." So that's what I was actually doing. I had done some filing and we were in the process of reorging, and I needed to know what the organizational structure was looking like to see where I was going to be moving. So I got up from my desk and poured a cup of coffee and went over to the admin assistance desk and said, you know, "Do you have a copy of the proposed organizational chart? I'd like to take a look at it," and she gave it to me and we were actually in the affected wedge. We were in corridor 4 in the B ring and so we

were facing the C ring. I went over to the copy machine, commenced to making the copies and standing there with my coffee and the C ring explodes. And I screamed, "Oh my God!"

I'm an engineer and there were a lot of construction people in the Pentagon and so my natural assumption was that it was a gas explosion. I thought, "Oh God, some worker has hit a gas pipe." The corridor is in flames. There's smoke. There's fire. The admin assistant whom I borrowed the papers from screamed, "It's a bomb! Everybody get out!" She jumped up. She screamed. We all kind of gathered together, and we'd just done drills like two weeks earlier, we had done fire drills. So everybody immediately walked to the opposite side of the, of the ring facing the A ring, and headed for the door. And when we got to the front door, I think it was SEAMAN MARSH opened up the door and the ceiling had begun to collapse, the materials, the overheads. So we could not get to the escalators.

So they said, "It's blocked. Turn around."

I'm like, "What do you mean turn around? We don't have an exit." But everybody turned around so I turned around and one of my co-workers was really, really nervous, and so I just held, I grabbed her arm, and I said, "It's going to be OK. We're going to get out of here." And I held her arm, and CAPT PHILLIPS is like six, five. He was at the end of the line. The men were really conscientious. They got in the front of the line. They got in the back of the line and the ladies kind of got in the center. So CAPT PHILLIPS was the tallest person. He's at the end of the line. They say, "We can't get out! You need to turn around."

So he turns out, and immediately heads for the back of this office. Well I was new and I had never been to the very, very back. "Where is he going?"

And sure enough there's stairwells, I found out. There's exit stairwells. And so he runs there. Opens up the door, you know, and "Get out, everybody get out!" So we immediately start

heading down the stairs and as we reach each floor we're trying to exit out of the stairwell and all of the doors are locked until we got to the mezzanine. So we got to the mezzanine of what I believe was the 5<sup>th</sup> corridor, that door was open. So that door opened and we all actually ran out into the central corridor between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup>, the mezzanine between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> corridor.

Q (07:19) Let me ask you this. As you were doing that, and you kept getting to these doors that were locked did it occur to you, we might be trapped in here?

A. Actually no, because I knew where the courtyard, I knew the doors to the courtyard were always open. Our last option is we would of eventually just gotten to the bottom stairwell and we would have just got, gone to the courtyard. So I really didn't panic, it was, I was just surprised that they were locked, you know, and I didn't know that. So we all ran out into the mezzanine and by this time victims from I guess the, I'm going to assume had to be the C ring. I just can't imagine it was A. The victims are being brought out, you know military people are bringing out co-workers. One lady fell in front of me. I think she had, was beginning to have a heart attack and so they were trying to calm her down and they laid her down. Then they brought out a gentleman. He was burned really, really bad.

I'm a burn victim. I've got scars from, I was burned at four, and I still have scars and I mean I looked at him and I just, something in me said, "You need to pray for this person." And I had Visers (phonetic) arm and so I found one of the guys and I said, "Michael, please take her out. Make sure she gets out OK. I need to pray for this man."



So I left the group and I went back and I didn't know him and I sat down and I just begin to pray, and he was in, he was just in so much pain, and so I looked at his badge and his name was BRIAN BIRDWELL. I said, "BRIAN, we're going to pray."

He said, "OK, Ma'am." I held his hand and we began to recite the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, and after we recited the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, then we said the Lord's Prayer, and we did that, and then he would go, "Oh, I'm in so much-"

I said, "It's going to be OK." Because there was no medical staff. So we prayed and we recited the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, and he would shake a little because his hair was singed, his fingers were burnt. His forearms were burned. His legs were burned. His shoes had been blown off I'm assuming, because he had no shoes when they laid him down. They cut his pants off and we were still waiting on medical personnel, and I remembered I had a Bible. So I took out my Bible and my mother, something in me said, she just always says, you know, you need to recite the Psalms 91. So I opened up my Bible and I went to Psalms 91 and then I started reciting Psalms 91. It says something about he that dwelleth in a secret place of the most high, and then I just started reading that and I told BRIAN, you know, "The Lord is watching you. The Lord's going to take care of you. You just need to hold on."

And he says, "I know Ma'am. I know Ma'am," he says, "Just pray for me. Please pray for me." So he and I prayed until medical people finally got to him and they cut his clothes off and they got him on a gurney. Well this has been about a half an hour, and then I looked up and they rushed him out and then I realized I haven't a clue how to get out of the Pentagon.

So I'm looking around and people are running and so I went to the courtyard, because I had, I liked the courtyard at the Pentagon. I would go there when I was really tired and just sit in the chair and so I ran to the courtyard and I ran into a guard. I said, "Sir, I am only eight weeks new

here. I have no idea where my office people are. I just need to know what's the directions for exciting?"

So he led me to the 8<sup>th</sup> corridor beyond the dispensary. I exited with people who were exiting from the 8<sup>th</sup> corridor, and sure enough we got out and people were setting up triage and I suddenly realized it had to have been an Army corridor, because there were a lot of Army people who were needing oxygen, who were burnt. So that only confirmed what I believed was a gas explosion. I still mentally had it in my mind this was a natural gas explosion, and so I run out to where you could catch the buses out beyond the 8th corridor and lo and behold who do I see again, BRIAN BIRDWELL.

He had said, "Someone please call my wife. Please call my wife, and tell her I am OK." And so I said, "What's her number?" So I wrote her number in my Bible. I didn't know her name, and we stayed and prayed with him. By this time several of his co-workers were carrying the gurney, because they had to get him away from the Pentagon. So everywhere that they had to, every time somebody would come and say, "Get farther back," you know, six or seven men would literally pick his gurney up and so I held his hand, and then a Chaplain joined us and we just all prayed, trying to wait for an ambulance, and an ambulance just never came. Then he began to shake and so we were afraid he would go into shock, because he was burned bad.

So, you know, I'm saying, "Well, what are we going to do? What are we going to do?" And a medical, a female medical officer ran up and she said, "We have to get him to the hospital." And they sequestered a military officer, was driving out of the Pentagon who was in North Parking with an X4, and they said, "we need to get him to Georgetown, " and he flipped his seats. Never said, "He just flipped down his seats and they lifted up his gurney.

I said, "BRIAN, we will call your wife." And that was the last time I saw him, and so then I looked around and I saw my office. So I went with them. We mustered and they said, you know, "We need to find rides home." Well I didn't have a ride home, so I've worked in Crystal City, and I go to church in Alexandria, so the church was about seven miles from the Pentagon. I said, "Oh Lord, I can walk seven miles." So that's what I did. I crossed 395 and I began to walk toward my church and by that time my husband, either I reached him or he reached me. I think I was finally able to reach him.

"Where are you? What are you – what are you -?"

"I am fine. I am fine." I said, "Where are you?"

"I'm on my way."

He was halfway, he works at PAXTON and said someone had run down and said, "Why are you still here?"

"What do you mean?"

"The Pentagon's on fire."

So he said he jumped in his car and he just started driving. I said, "Well MARK, I need you to do two things for me." I said, "I don't know her name," I said, "But this guy is burnt really bad," and I said, "He's not dead, but his wife needs to know that he's going to Georgetown. Would you please just call. His name is BRIAN BIRDWELL. Just ask for his wife, and let her know that he is injured, but that he is OK. And after you do that, call my mamma, because I know she is concerned, and have-

He said, "Well, I talked to your aunt and she's going to call everyone."

I said, "You call my mother." I said, "If you don't reach anybody else, my mother needs to know that I'm OK." I say my mother, because my father died early this, earlier last year.

So he said, “OK, I’ll go home and call Mom.” He said, “I’ll call my mom and I’ll call my sister and then I’ll be over.”

I said, “That’s,” I said, “I’m walking.” I said, “If you reach,” I said, “If you cross the bridge,” I said, “I’m headed to the church.” So I just, there were hundreds of us walking down Route 1. Route 1 was a virtual parking lot. You couldn’t

Q. (14:40) With people.

A. I called him back and said, “Don’t come into Crystal City. Just stop at the church. You can’t get out, if you get in.” So I just, I walked and so by this time several people have called me. I’m the children’s director at my church and so my Youth Pastor had called and said, “Where are you? Are you OK?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Have you talked to anyone?”

I said, “No.” I said, “But the side of the Pentagon is gone is on, I know that Brother Joe doesn’t work there. We were listing people.”

He says, “Well I’ve talk to this person and I’ve talk to this person.” He said, “Well where are you going?”

I said, “I’m headed to the church. I’m OK.” So I had several other girlfriends to call. Then I had a young lady from NAVSEA to call, named Tonja (phonetic) and she’s got the wife of someone who’s in the Pentagon, and she’s really up set and so I said—and she said, “Well she doesn’t know what’s happening.”

I said, “Listen,” I said, “We have all been evacuated,” I said, “and most of the people are standing outside waiting for directions.”

She said, "Well what are you doing?"

I said, "I'm walking to my church." And so we talked and prayed with whoever was on, I don't even know who was on the line, and told her, "It's going to be OK. Just wait for him to call you."

So I hung up with Tonja (phonetic) and must have gotten to the top of Braddock and someone from my church saw me and actually drove me over the hill to my husband. By this time my husband is "Where are you?"

"I'm here. I'm at Braddock. "

"I can't see you."

I said, "There are hundreds of people. How are you going to see me?" Said, "I'll see you." So sure enough when I crossed the top of the hill, I said, "I can see you. I'll get out of the car."

So I immediately went by the church. Let the church office know that I was OK, and then I said, "We need to go see our boys." So I went to my youngest one, who's more of a happy go lucky, so he runs out, "You're OK! You're OK! You're OK!"

"Yes, I'm OK." I said, "Are you going to be OK?"

"Yes, I'm fine."

"You want to catch the bus home?"

"Yes, I'll catch the bus home."

Well, my oldest one is more like me. He's more sensitive, well maybe not like me, but he's more sensitive. Sure enough I went to the school and he's coming down the stairway and he just bawls, he cries, cried. Then of course, "I cried all day."

Then I cried." I said, "Are you ready to go home?"

“No, I just didn’t know if you were OK.” So we talked about that. I just waited there and let him cry ‘til he was tired and when he got through I said, “Are you going to be OK?”

“I’m OK.”

He’s red by then. I said, “Well, you sure you want to go back to class?”

He said, “I’ll be OK.” So they went back to class and I said, “██████, I’m really tired.” It was hot that day. I’d had on I think a kind of a warm suit because it was cold that morning and so I was just exhausted. And so I went home and I sat down and I turned on the television and it wasn’t until two o’clock that I learned that we had been hit by a plane.

Then I’m really in shock, you know, and so then I cried the rest of the night, you know.

Q. (17:42) You didn’t know anything about the World Trade Center, either?

A. I heard that in all of the talking. There was enormous amount of talking as I’m walking to 395, but I think I just, I had fixed in my mind, that it was an explosion and everything that I visually saw, confirmed what I believe that what I had already sensed had happened. I saw the aircraft circling and I heard someone say they’re suspecting an airplane attack, but it never dawned on me that we had already had one.

It just, and so the next few days was just tears. You know, every time you turned on the TV, I cried. But I think I’m actually grateful that I assumed it was a gas explosion, because it allowed me not to panic, I just, you know, I just never panicked. I thank God for that. I might have been, I might not have walked to the church had I thought it was a plane crash. I don’t know if I would have, but you know thinking it was just a man-made explosion and there was nothing I could—I just walked on to the church, because I knew that if I got there, I’d be OK.

Q. (18:59) Did you ever try to see BRIAN BIRDWELL in the hospital?

A. I called for three weeks, and he was in intensive care. The fourth week which was the first week in November, I actually called. I came in that morning and called, to say—because I had some things, I had, the kids at my church had made him cards and I had a lot of booklets. And I called, well sure enough, they don't tell me, because when he was in ICU you could not see him. He could only have immediate family and so, and I didn't, still didn't know his wife. Didn't know her name. We just, we called her, we gave her the message and we didn't—well that particular morning the nurse answered and she says, “MR. BIRDWELL's here but he cannot talk.”

I said, “OK, I'm NATALIE OGLETREE.” I said, “I met him on September the 11<sup>th</sup>. I just wanted to make sure he was OK. If his wife comes in, would you give her my number?”

And so, sure enough, she called me back. Her name is [REDACTED], and she says, “Who are you, and how do you know my husband. He says he has no idea who you are. All he knows is he's laying on the floor and this lady runs over and starts praying with him,” he said. “He, do you work in his office?” And she said, “And how did he get-?”

She didn't know any of the story and she said, “I looked at that plane go in,” she said, “I knew,” she said, “I just figured he had gone home to be with God.” She said, “Your husband is my best friend. I've never, “ She says, “He's just my best,” she said, “That was the best voice I could have heard.” Because she thought he was dead, and so I sat there for an hour six o'clock one afternoon and then we both cried, because we talked about it.

She said, “I needed to hear that.” She said, “I just thank you.”

I said, “I just wanted to make sure he was OK.” So I have not physically seen him, but he's been on television. In fact I've got some more cards for him. I'm sitting at home Christmas. I sent

myself an email before Christmas, “You need to send BRIAN a card.” Because I still don’t have a phone number and they’re talking about Pentagon people who have survived the attack and are coming home. “And we’re in the home of one of the survivors,” and they go down the stairwell and on the stairwell are Christmas stockings and one of the Stockings says, “██████████.”

I said, “That’s BRIAN’s wife!”

My husband says, “BRIAN?”

I said, “That’s the man.” I said, “He’s home.” So sure enough when they came back, it was him. He’s home, but he’s been really injured. He has compression gloves, because his hands, I mean, you know, it’s just nothing but the grace of God, that he even has hands, because his hands were a bloody—they thought he had internal injuries, because his hands had bleed so much and he had laid them on his stomach.

When the medical team got there, they cut his shirt open and they’re looking, you know, and they can’t find blood, but it’s because his hands were so bloody. So he has compression gloves and he got a Purple Heart, and President Bush actually went to see him. But I haven’t talked to him since then.

Q. (22:12) You have to.

A. But I –

Q. (22:15) I think that he would probably, that you are probably the person that he would want to see.

A. I don’t know. I just, I told his wife, I said, you know, “I don’t know why God led me to BRIAN that day, “ I said, “But I thank God.” Because, I, I will pray for people that I know, you



know, I'm a Christian, but I have never just rushed and just impromptu prayed for anybody, and, and, and, that also helped me to be calm while we sat there and talked. So, I said, "I don't know why God led me to BRIAN that day," I said, "and I don't know if I'll ever see BRIAN, but I thank God," I said, "That I was there."

She said, "You have no idea how much we are grateful." She said, "BRIAN didn't even have a clue who you are." He says, "Here's a black lady, just stood over me and she prayed for me."

Q. (23:03) He probably thought you were an angel.

A. And so, he had, he's recovering. I don't know, I looked at him and I have third degree scars, but he was burnt far more severe than I ever was, and I looked at him and I told my husband, I said, "He's probably going to have to take a medical, because he's burned pretty," He can't use his hands and he's got, apparently they have some sort, they had a wrap around his face, you know. But he's very talkative, I mean he was so alert on the TV, and I'm like, "Oh my God, this is not the same man I saw."

But he's really an outgoing person. He said, "Lord, I'm back with a vengeance now." So he's going, he's recovering and he's healing and I'm grateful for that.

Q. (23:55) He's the one Presidents Bush, he saluted him when he went to visit him.

A. Yes, and it took him a long time to raise his hand. That's right.

Q. (24:03) So you received an award.

A. I did.

Q. (24:07) What award did you receive?

A. I had to call and ask that question too. They said it, it's the Superior Civilian Service Award.

I've gotten a lot of personnel awards, but I've never gotten a medal so I got back to the office.

That's another story. They said, "well they put you in for an award." And then they called me and they said, "You need to be at the Pentagon on Monday morning."

I said— well I get in later then I had to be there. I said, "Well I'll just get off the metro." So I get there. We didn't know, none of us knew what kind of awards, and so we get there and they pin us, and I go, "God, a medal," you know.

You know, there were a lot, because we had people in my office, but then a lot of guys in offices rushed to the fire. We had five people who ran down there and pulled people from the fire. A lot of military people, just no thought to their lives, ran the other way, but the rest of us, they ran to the fire. So there were like eight of us there, and that kind of helped.

But I had to go back to the office and call back to PAXTON, asked the personnel lady, "what does, I don't understand what this award means. It's the Superior Civilian Service Award. "

She says, "Natalie that is the second highest award a civilian can get in government.

"Oh my God." I said, "Well you know, Secretary Gordon (England) presented this. I know it was an important award, but I didn't realize." So I thanked her for that and of course my uncle was watching C-SPAN and he's called, you know, he's called everyone. He saw me, apparently go across the stage.

"That's my niece!" He runs outside telling my aunt, "NATALIE's on, she's on the TV, she's —" So sure enough I get back to the office and my mother calls me, "Are you on television?"

I said, "No ma'am."

"Where you were this morning."

I said, "Oh," I said, "A few of us went over to the Pentagon," I said, "We got pinned with an award." I said, "I got a medal."

She says, "You did?" She says, "Well you were on television."

I said, "Are you sure?"

She says, "[REDACTED]" and then someone else from where I used to work called.

"Do you know this guy?"

I said, "No, ma'am."

"Well he called his wife, he is so proud of you."

Well, you know, then I had to, she finally just bugged me to the point, I had to call C-SPAN last week and say, "Do you have the tape? Can I buy it?" So I subsequently bought, I'm buying the tape from C-SPAN, and –

Q. (26:39) So you're mom can have it?

A. Oh, yes. And I've actually, someone from a news station from San Antonio actually came and interviewed a few of us and called back and asked would three of us come down for a news story. So myself and CAPT, well he's now CAPTAIN, he was CAPTAIN select, CAPTAIN SAM PEREZ and SEAMAN SEAN WHITMARSH, all went down to San Antonio in November to a show called "San Antonio Living." We didn't know what it was about, but it was a morning talk show, where people call in, you know. We get, we leave on Thursday night. We go down for the show. They just said, "We want you to come down. People want to meet you." So we went down and sure enough we were on television, and I am so nervous, because I didn't know what to say. I go, "Live TV, oh my God."

And SEAMAN WHITMARSH, of course, is just, he says, “I’ve done this a couple of times. I’m going to let you all talk.” He’s a pro now. But I was so nervous I couldn’t talk. CAPTAIN PEREZ did all the talking. I was sitting there on the sofa, holding, good thing I was on the end. I was holding the end of that sofa for dear life. (laugh) But the people were actually wonderful. They called in, you know, they asked a couple of questions and they were just very, very warm and we got on the plane after the show, and came home and sure enough, one of the listeners, three weeks ago, I get a box, and she made us the prettiest little Christmas ornaments. It’s a hand-blown crystal ornament, and inside of it is a picture of the firemen when they raised the flag.

Q. (28:26) Oh my goodness.

A. It is awesome. And I have no name or anything. She just, they said she called and said she saw the show. She was so proud of us. She just wanted us to, and the thing, it’s on its own stand. And so I have it on my desk. They were just wonderful. So it’s, it’s been interesting. And that’s my story.

Q. (28:50) Wow! What a story.

A. I can’t believe I still remember all that.

Q. (28:53) Has it changed you?

A. My biggest change is I by nature was a workaholic, before September the 11<sup>th</sup>. Guilty of putting off, I love my children I love my family, but because I’m an engineer, I worked long hours and coming here just made it much harder, and I think September 11<sup>th</sup> made me focus that

it will be there tomorrow. You know I was always concerned about getting the tasks done, and so I think sometimes I spent more hours here than I should have. And I can't take that back, but I'm consciously now trying to plan some really, my kids were very active and we always supported them in their sports and they're very smart, but to plan some additional extra QT, because we just, we run all the time.

September the 11<sup>th</sup> made me realize, is that you don't know when they may not come home, or I may not come home. So like this weekend, me and my boys went skating. We've never done that. I can't even skate, you know, (laugh) But I only fell once in three hours. I only hit the wood floor once and so I'm trying to focus energy on trying to get in some more quality stuff that in the past if we got to it it was OK. You know, but I'm trying to focus more of my energy on that and I'm extremely grateful. I think I'm trying to work on being far more grateful for what God gives you because you don't know. You just don't - too many people came to work September the 11<sup>th</sup> and didn't go home and went to the World Trade Center and didn't go home and you just, you can't bring them back. Nothing that you can say, and that's why I'm cautious with that. I try to pray in the morning with the boys. Only if it's two minutes, you know, grab their things, and running out the door, you know. Ask God to protect them and to keep them and I love them, because I don't want the last word from me when I leave the home, the last word that they ever hear to be a harsh word in the morning. I'm a tyrant in the evening, but I try to be better in the morning (laugh) when I run out the door.

That's you know, those, I don't call those drastic changes probably something I should have been doing all along, but September the 11<sup>th</sup> made it, you know, physically clear that I was lacking in those areas.

That's it.

Q. (31:32) Do you have any other, anything else you want to add for the historical record.

A. I just, I won't forget, I can't forget. That's all I want to say.

Q. (31:46) Thank you MISS OGLETREE.

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Ethel Geary  
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