

**Naval Historical Center
Oral Interview Summary Form**

Interviewers:

CAPT(s) Michael McDaniel
LNC Jeff Luthi

Interviewer's Organization:

Navy Combat Documentation Det 206
Navy Combat Documentation Det 206

Interviewee:

HMCS Tyrone Green

Current Address:

Date of Interview:

25 Oct 2001

Place of Interview:

Navy Annex

Number of Cassettes:

One

Security Classification:

Unclassified

Name of Project: Pentagon Terrorist Attack Incident

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

Abstract of Interview:

Interviewee Information:

Born in ██████████, SC, which is a Navy town. HMCS Green came into the Navy in 1982. He was influenced to go into the Navy and the medical rate because his brother was in the Navy and his sister and mother were in medical fields. He went to boot camp at Great Lakes and then attended "A" school in San Diego, CA. He completed Field Medical School and then worked at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital. He had tours with the Marines overseas then transferred to Naval Areomedical Research Lab in Pensacola, FL for aviation research. He had sea duty on a ship and then instructor duty. Picked up Chief on his first time up. Was promoted to Senior Chief during another tour with the fleet Marines. Current assignment is at Armed Forces Institute of Pathology at Walter Reed as a medical examiner.

Topics Discussed:

1. September 11th was a typical day. Heard about the Trade Towers being hit and then got to a TV and watched the coverage, watched the second plane hit the second tower. Immediately knew something was very wrong. While watching the towers coverage got a phone call that a plane had hit near the Pentagon. Then they heard from the news that the Pentagon was actually hit. They stood by to get a call on what they should do.

2. At Walter Reed there was a lot of chaos. Some civilians were leaving the base. He mustered all the military personnel to let them know what was going on and to tell them they were not

secured to go home. It was a matter of standing by to get direction on what to do. They finally got directed to help beef up security and assigned military personnel to stand watches. They stood up an Emergency Operations Center. They never got any further direction that day to help at the Pentagon.

3. On Wednesday they got the word to help as medical examiners at the Pentagon. Before they got to the Pentagon it had been decided to take the military bodies to Dover, Delaware for identification. At first it was thought that they would take the remains to a refrigerator truck and then drive the truck to Dover. Since the Pentagon was designated a crime scene it was important to have a "chain of custody" for the remains. The "brass" finally decided that the remains would be removed from the Pentagon, put into a refrigerator truck, the refrigerator truck drove to another side of the Pentagon and the remains put into a second truck. The second truck took the remains to Ft. Myer where they were transferred to a helicopter. The helicopter then flew the remains to Dover.

4. HMCS Green ended up assisting with removal of the remains from the Pentagon by accident. As armed forces medical examiners they were going to assist only with the transportation of remains. CDR Nordholm, who was the Navy rep on site, saw him and asked him to help remove the remains, that he really needed his assistance. He cleared it with his chain of command at Walter Reed.

5. The Army 54th engineering group from Ft. Lee was in charge of removing the remains from the Pentagon.

6. To remove remains from the site first a team named "construction support team" would go into the crash site and shore up the building. Once an area was deemed safe the FBI would go in looking for evidence. After the FBI completed their search they would allow the remains to be removed. HMCS and his group were basically litter bearers for the remains. Before they went into the crash site a Sergeant Major Butt of the Army would give them a briefing. Sergeant Major Butt was in direct charge and was a no nonsense leader. He was perfect for the job. No one moved unless he told them to move. The crash site was very dangerous and they wanted everyone to be safe.

7. When they entered the crash site sometimes the FBI had already put the remains into the body bags, most times they had to put the remains in the bags and then the FBI "tagged" the bags and recorded the information where the bodies were found. Most of the time you could not tell if the remains were male or female. They did find two remains that were Navy Petty Officers that they could easily identify.

8. Due to his medical experience and background seeing and picking up the remains did not bother him as much as it did others. Most of the bodies were burned beyond recognition. He could not see a face and he made a point not to become attached. He saw remains - not a Navy Chief or a Navy Commander, he avoided making the connection with the remains. That is how he handled it. He did not focus on specifics of the remains, just put them into the bags.

9. After they finished removing bodies in a section the cycle would repeat. The "construction support team" would go in and shore up another section, the FBI would go in looking for

evidence and then have the litter teams go in. There was a lot of waiting around for the construction teams and the FBI to finish their part.

10. The damage to the site was so extreme that debris were everywhere, filing cabinets, broken pipes, wires, personal effects, bookcases etc. Due to the fire and damage it was hard to find remains, you could be standing next to a body and not realize there was a body there. Removing some remains became very difficult. Some remains were so badly burned that they were only bones. The bones, when placed in a bag, would rip the bag. Sometimes they had to re-bag the bones to take them out of the site.

11. HMCS felt the Navy personnel were a great asset for the removal of the remains. LCDR Nordholm, HMC Hamiltotn and HM1 Powell had medical backgrounds and were older – more experienced. The Army personnel did not have the medical background, where generally very young. He felt the young Army soldiers did a great job under very difficult circumstances. As corpsman they were able to identify body parts which assisted in grouping remains in the correct bags.

12. In the crash site HMCS expected to see parts of the plane. A tail section, part of an engine, something identifiable. There was absolutely nothing left of the plane. Only small parts.

13. Of all the remains only the two Navy Petty Officers were identifiable. They probably died from smoke inhalation, there was not a lot of physical damage to the bodies. Everyone else they removed were not identifiable. After HMCS left the crash site he mentioned to his boss that the dental people were going to be very busy along with the DNA people.

14. One time he was bothered by what he saw. They went to remove 8 remains from an area. The bodies were only 20 feet from a door. They were so close to a door that would have taken them out of the building. By the condition of the remains the explosion must have killed them. They never had a chance. One of the remains, a female, was balled up like she was trying to protect herself

15. It is impossible to train people to handle mass casualties and this level of destruction. All you can do is to tell them what they will see, see if they think they can handle it and then keep your eye on them. It is nothing you can imagine. No one was ordered into helping remove the remains, everyone was told what to expect ahead of time.

16. HMCS did not want to deal with the victim's families who were at the Family Assistance Center at the Sheraton Hotel. It was because he had helped remove the remains and he did not want to answer any questions about what he saw. It would have been too emotional.

17. Lessons learned:

- It is impossible to train people to handle mass casualties and this level of destruction. All you can do is to tell them what they will see, see if they think they can handle it and then keep your eye on them.

-All the services wanted to be involved at the Pentagon. Too many people wanted to be in charge and give orders. Sometimes groups need to step back. You need worker bees and not everyone can be in charge. It's just as important to be a support person.

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Topics Discussed:

Attack interview begins (11:20)

Q. (11:20) Tell us about the day leading up to the 11 September incident. You know, your day that day. Just kind of walk us through that day.

A. That day, you know, came, you know Tuesday. Typical day, you know. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, you know, I usually have meetings so Tuesday's one of my favorite days.

Tuesday and Friday, there's no meetings, you know. So it was a —came in did my PT. Nice relaxed, normal routine. Let me catch up on some issue that personnel have, which wasn't a lot, so I was just basically going into my email, you know. Just answering people, you know.

Answering calls and answering people's concerns, and the CO's secretary, Penny Rodriguez, came in and said, "Senior, hey a plane just plowed into one of the Trade Towers," you know.

And immediately, of course, we have a room there that we call the war room where we do a lot of our discussions and we turned on the TV, and there it is, you know. So we're watching, because we know OK we are medical examiners. We may be involved. We don't know. So we're watching, you know.

Q. (12:24) What were your first thoughts when you saw that.

A. Yes, I'm like, actually my first thought like was, "What happened? How a plane screw so far off of Kennedy or La Guardia?" You know, I'm like gosh something, you know, that's just so weird. Something happened there, you know, very wrong, you know. So that was my initial thought, you know. "What happened? Why did that plane stray off his course so bad?" You know. So we're watching it you know. Just sitting, the Director and myself and the Secretary watching and seeing the events as they talk about it. Then as everyone else saw, then the second plane came you know, and that's when we went "Whoa!" You know, that was very unusual, you know. We started looking at each other like "What is going on here?" You know. No way is two planes going to, you know, square off course, you know, same day, you know, and hit two different, the World Trade Towers. Something's wrong! That's what we were thinking, you know. Something is wrong you know.

I can't say immediately we were thinking terrorism, but we know something is not right here, you know. This is highly unlikely, you know. So we are still watching events unfold, and then we, you know, I don't know if it was the same report watching TV. Was saw, we heard it on TV and then we also got a call. I think it kind of happening simultaneously that a plane hit a building near the Pentagon, you know. So I, OK, it didn't hit the Pentagon. It happened, a little building near it. That's the report we got. Then we heard it clarified on the news, on CNN, a plane had actually hit the Pentagon, you know.

At that point we're saying, "Whoa, here!" We know we're going to be involved. We've got casualties. You know DoD facilities, so at this point we're standing by, waiting for the calls, you know, and because of the calls, you know, because of the issue of who's going to handle what, you know, jurisdiction, you know. So we're just basically sitting, waiting, you know. Watching the news like everybody else.

In between that it was a lot of chaos at the command, you know, because people were concerned, you know. We're at the military base. We got to get out of here, you know. We've got to get out of here, and at the same time, I was on the intercom telling everyone, at one point, "Hey, we are not secured. Just relax. When I get further word from the director, we will pass it to you as soon as possible," and at the same time I'm saying that, you know, some people are walking out the building, you know, which we cannot stop, you know. Civilian personnel we can't stop, you know.

So I'm, you know, I muster all the military folks, "Hey, muster up front." Explain to them what happened. This is what's going on. No one's going home yet, you know. Standby until further notice, you know.

So I'm between, you know, the director's office and the personnel office, you know, answering everyone concerned, you know. What's going on? What do we got to do? Just standby right now until we get further Instruction.

Q. (15:07) The command is physically located at Walter Reed?

A. Walter Reed, right on Walter Reed complex, and, you know, all that's happening real quick, the security guy came up, Mr. Reeder (phonetic) who's responsible for security, you know. I guess he got to worrying, hey, they going to be closing all the gates? You know you have to beef up your security, and that's when he summons me. "I see we're going to need some military help. We've got several exits throughout the building that we need to maintain and man." And that's why I had those military people standing by, so I wouldn't have to go throughout the building looking for them.

At that point, we started setting watch. You know how you have this watch. This is what you have to do. You need to watch this door. This is what we're looking for. This is what we expect, and the same time touching base with the director, you know. We don't have a direct, a CO, we call him the director, you know. But it's a naval captain, Captain Wagner, you know. He's sitting there confidently watching the TV and standing by the phone, you know. Just waiting for his marching orders and somewhere he'd gotten there to just standby, wait, but we knew we were going to be involved in some capacity, you know, because this is a DoD facility, you know. You have military there. You have civilians, and so we just basically waiting. Simultan—you know the Army call it the EOC, you know, Emergency Operation Center. We stood one of those up, for, because, you know, we was getting calls at that time from different—mainly the Surgeon General in the Army. You know General Peake. Getting calls and answering, you know, just standing by basically to see what's going to happen next, you know.

Q. (16:37) Tell us about the watches, just briefly.

A. The watch was only, you know, we have several entrances into that building. AFIP is in Building 54. It's a bomb proof building, built in 1954, established in 1954 by President Eisenhower. You know, so it's a bomb proof and actually, the story is told you know, it was the shelter for the President back then, you know. Supposedly, I don't know, you know, there's suppose to be tunnels that run from 16, where Sixteenth Street runs to the White House. OK? They tell me this story. I don't know if that's true or not, you know. But it's a bomb proof, so, a lot of our doors, you know, you don't have windows. You don't have anything. You don't have visual on it, you know, it's tucked away and this is the north lot. Another door tucked over here, you know, and it can easily be accessed and come in and people could come in. You just don't know who's coming in, you know. So we felt we had to fit people on those doors to monitor the traffic, you know, as who's coming in, because at that time the media was saying it's suspected terrorists. It's terrorists, you know, so we said let's put people on these doors to monitor the traffic. Who's coming in. Look for this badge. AFIP badge, you know. If anyone comes in that doesn't have the badge, direct them around the front, you know, and things like that. So we just manning those watches just for security reasons, because if your at AFIP, you can see that, you know, you have a lot of blind spots. You just, you know, people could come in from several directions and you wouldn't have no idea and they could wander through the building from several—you would never see any of these individuals, you know. We have people that work there that you don't see everyday, that I've never seen before unless you get around. So that was the issue with those watches until we decided to lock some doors permanently for security purposes, but at the same time we had to maintain, you know, fire, you know, fire

safety. So we had a design where people could get out, but not come in, you know. So that was the purpose of watching those doors.

Q. (18:35) That was all services?

A. Yes, all services.

Q. Equally.

A. Tri-services of the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines, we mustered and we had working as a team and that was the purpose. And I must say, that day you know, the military troops, you know, understood exact—Once you explained to everyone what’s going on and why we got to do this, everyone fell right in place, you know. There wasn’t no complaints or anything. Hey, this is what we got to do. We cancelled all leave immediately, you know, and we were—some people that was, kind of was off already and going home, had to summon them back. No problem, but we told them, “Hey, take your time.” You know, “We know traffic will be bad.” “When you,” you know, “get the opportunity to come back in,” you know, “take your time. We don’t want you rushing there.”

Some people did and a couple of people got tickets, and that’s just what we didn’t want. So we were telling them, “Hey, just take your time.” You know, “When the traffic’s clear, come back into work.” You know, and we’ll man this place as necessary. And that was everyone, officer and enlisted. Everyone came back and we’re just standing by ready to support, you know, and that’s basically what the rest of the day went like. We were getting calls, you know, from the different agencies you know. The medical examiners were calling the director you know. You know, because they wanted to get word from him you know. Have you heard anything? Of course, this is all new, you know, and the director’s take was on it, you know, “We’re standing

by until I get further word,” and that’s basically what we did. We stood by until we got further word, and we never did get any word that day. You know, hey you guys going to be involved, you know.

We knew we were going to be involved with the military on it when they were going to transfer it out from the Pentagon and give to Dover. If that was the case we knew that, but it was a jurisdiction thing. We didn’t know if the medical examiner of Northern Virginia was going to take over all this you know. Or they was going to send them to the Pentagon. So we knew if they’re coming to Dover, then we’re involved here. If not then we standby. The medical examiners may just go and assist the Northern Virginia medical examiners, and all the medical examiners know each other throughout, you know, the country and the world. So we were just, we were just standing by waiting for the word. We knew we were going to at least work in that capacity, you know, and I think that word didn’t come until the next day. And that’s when I was down at the Pentagon.

We had the medical examiners at the Pentagon, and you know so the Chief of Staff was told to go down there you know. You know, let’s do some more coordinating, administratively, because you had the Surgeon General from the different ag — you know different services, and so he asked me, “Hey, Senior come ride with me,” you know. “Come ride with me. I need you to go with me.”

Q. (21:21) This was the Chief of Staff.

A. Chief of Staff, which is LtCol. Shaw, OK. He says, “Senior, please come ride with me,” you know.

Q. Army?

A. Army, exactly. “Come ride with me down to the Pentagon.” You know, and “Let’s see what’s going on. What’s the coordination? How they’re going to do that.”

Because I think, before we got down there, honestly, it was already established that hey, that they’re going to take at least all the military to Dover, you know. We know that, and OK, we’ll see how this transportation is going to take place. That was the purpose of that. So we went down there, and we went –

Q. (21:56) Which is what you all would normally be a –

A. Exactly.

Q. A part of, that’s part of your jurisdiction.

A. Exactly, we had Col. Marzouk on there who is the Medical Examiner for AFIP Armed Forces, and he had a Major Ensign with him, which is one of his assistance. They’re already down there. So we met with them and “What’s the story?”

They had a rep from the Surgeon General’s office from the Army. Don’t know his name. We had a rep from Mortuary Affairs for the Army. You had several different—some Casualty Assistant Calls people there. Two Majors were there that was representing LtGen Peake you know from his office. So we were always just kind of right there in the yard, just, you know, a round circle, discussing transportation. And with the medical Exam, and the Mortuary Affairs guy, I believe name was Mr. Roth. You know, that was his last name, Roth, and him and Col Marzouk had thought it was better that, you know, we have refrigerator trucks. We’re going to put the remains in refrigerator trucks, and you know, transport them directly to Dover. Reason being chain of custody, all right, because this is a crime scene, now they think was already established. So we don’t want, you know, remains going from this point to that point to that point. You’ve got to

maintain chain of custody here for this investigation now. So we, you know, that's what they wanted to do, thought that would be best, you know.

Put in a refrigerator truck. Immediately transport, two and a half hour, three-hour drive and it was always about chain of custody here. We don't want others—and that seems to have been the plan. And then there was an occurrence there with Major David that came over. He worked at the Pentagon, I knew that, and then actually his story is, talking to him, where the plane hit, that's—his office was in that area. He happened to be outside taking a smoke you know, when that happened. OK? So it was just a fortunate thing for him, but he was working with the Command Operations Center right out there with all the brass. Heavy brass, all the generals and everybody from different organizations you know, Army, Navy and Air Force. And he came and said, "No, that's not going to be the case. We're not going to transport in trucks," you know. They want to put, you know, "We're going to take them out. We're going to put all the remains in a transfer case," you know. Put them on a helo, you know, take them to Meyer, put them on the helo and then fly them to Dover.

And of course, that was some discussion. They thought that was too much transferring you know. You've got to put them in here. Drive them and we had, there was a truck, a refrigerator truck right next to one of the exit's where we were bringing out the remains. OK? So you had to put them in there, drive around to the other side, take them, you know, then take them to Meyer and then put them in a helo. They thought that was too many, you know, transfer of custody. But, however, that was the word from the top brass. This is how we're going to do it. Therefore that was the plan, you know, so, therefore—and that was decided, then everyone kind of backed off. OK, the generals and admirals are saying this. This is what they wanted to do. They made their mind up. That's they way it's going to be, you know.

I cannot think of the key persons who were in that tent at the time, some of the names. But, I referred, we referred to them as the heavy brass. At that time this is the decision they made. How they want to do it. That's what will be done. So at that point we kind of just all agreed like "OK." You know, and at this point Col Shaw and myself was ready to go back to the command with our report.

Q. (25:43) That was the way that they ended up being transferred?

A. Right. That was the way.

Q. So it was—go through that procedure now.

A. Yeah, that they would come up and build, we had to rebuild like a twenty-four foot refrigerator truck. They would take them around the Pentagon on the opposite end, you know, and transfer them into another truck, OK.

Q. (26:00) From one truck to —

A. Yes, to the other. That's where all this chain of movement, right, that's what they didn't, the medical examiner and the mortuary guy didn't want. And we would put them in another truck, because the truck that we were putting them in immediately from the building had to come back, you know, each time, to reload.

So they would put them in another truck and then that truck would go to Meyers, you know, because there was a helo pad out there, and then they would transfer the remains on helo, and then they would fly to Dover.

Q. (26:25) In helo.

A. In helo, and that was –

Q. (26:30) So tell us, when you first came down from Walter Reed to the Pentagon, how did you get into the Pentagon arena.

A. Arena, good question. Actually, you know, we, amazing, you know, we thought, you know. This is going to be a good question, Chief. We thought, God we're going to have to show a lot of credentials here to get in, but we were coming up. Of course they had the South Parking lot to the Pentagon blocked to all traffic. We got in that lane. We saw the police cars up there, blinking lights and we just kind of thought, we'll go up here and see. You know explain to them who we are and then why we are here. And so we're driving up there and there was a black truck, Suburban, it was FBI, and the guy got off the truck and said, "Who are you guys, and what -?" We said, "Hey, we're from Armed Forces Institute of Pathology," you know. "We have our medical examiners here. We're trying to coordinate the transportation of the remains." All right, "Fine," he said. "Perfect, come on in. Follow me." You know, so that was easy.

So when we got to the gate where the guards, a police car there where the police were at, up there on the highway, we told them who we are, and I'm assuming that FBI guy told him who we are. He waived us right in, you know, and so it was really this simple badge right here, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, you know. Everyone was saying, "Hey, they have to have some type of plan here."

So we got in. We parked, but actually where the plan hit, they had that area gated off to, you know, but so, our medical examiner, Dr. Marzouk was in that area, and again we got out to the gate and explained who we are and why we're here. The security on the gate understood, you know. OK. We had the identification and credentials, and they let us in and fortunately, our

people was right, you know, about a few feet away from where we needed to be, you know, and that's where we kind of congregated at, and got to discussing the mess.

So that part was shocking to us. God, we got in you know, it wasn't no hassle you know. We got in pretty simple, you know, because we explained who we are. We were in uniform, what we were there for, and everyone understood, you know, like "Absolutely, come on in." You know. But they were pretty strict on who they were letting in the gate, you know. That's a good question. They were very tight, you know. Once we explained who we were, "Come on in," you know, and we went in.

They had two sections of it, you know, the general area where the FBI, Red Cross, everybody was working out of. Then you had security in another little section of the building, a little corner there, where they were putting the remains at, right there. So we needed to show ID to get in that one. The medical examiners and all the people from the different agencies were all talking and we decided to walk on that area, you know. Closer to where they were bringing the remains and by the truck and to explain why we wanted to do things the way we wanted to do it, and that's kind of where we ended up at, talking and discussing and that's where the final word came out, that hey, we're going to put them in trucks, take them around the building, transfer them to another truck, take them to Meyer, put them on a helo, fly them out, you know.

Q. (29:32) Why was the second truck? Why not -?

A. Because we had, yes, you know, that was a good question, you know, and that's was really a kind of a sour plain with the medical examiner, because it was just too many, like, you know, why are we going to take them on a truck, you know. Just give us another, we'd just rotate the two trucks, but, you know, honestly speaking at that point, you know, once it was decided on, I go, "Ok," you know. I did ask Col Marzouk you know, "You're the medical examiner, you do

this all the time,” you know. You know “why aren’t they listening?” You know, and he says, “Senior, I don’t,” you know, “I don’t know. This is the way it is, it’s the way it is.” So at that point I was like, you know, this is, I know this is totally out of my hands so I’m basically just recording some information you know, saying, whatever they said, I’m like, “OK, this is what ya’all going to do.”

So I never did get into, I never did understand, but I—the decision was already made, this is how we’re going to do, so I just followed through. I’m just doing my part in recording the information for the Chief of Staff. OK? So I don’t know why all the trucks and the transfer. I knew the mortuary affairs guy and the medical examiner was, you know, just like a little upset, because it wasn’t necessary in their mind, you know, because the chain of custody, you know. But again, they fall right into real quick. OK, this is the way they’re going to do it, and understood.

But yes, all the transferring, I never got the gist of it, you know, I just thought, I just fall into place and said, “Hey, if that’s the way they’re going to do it —”

Q. (31:09) Were you there when they were trying to make the decision of where to put the mortuary? Said there was, the original, the initial mortuary where they’re bringing the remains? There’s some of that changed places about four times in the course of that first day.

A. You know, -

Q. Before you got there.

A. I know that when I got there, and they were moving, and the truck was just pulling out, I know they were taking them around—I don’t how familiar you guys are with the Pentagon, OK. The crash on the south, you know, I guess that’s the south side. And we were at one end of the building and the mortuary’s set up just on the opposite end, you know, and that’s all I knew

Where it was initially, you know. At that point I knew it was right there. I didn't know if they moved it again or not.

Q. (31:54) OK.

A. Yes, I really didn't know that. I just knew it was on the opposite end of the building.

Q. (31:58) So when you arrived, they were already bringing remains out?

A. Yes, they were starting to bring them in, God, I see when we were talking there, they were bringing a couple out, you know, just as we were talking you know. Loading them up in the refrigerator truck as we were discussing the plan, you know, with the medical examiners and all the people was right on the scene, was right there. I mean, we were standing right here talking, and it was just about, just, you know, fifteen, twenty feet from us, bringing them out.

Q. (32:26) Tell us how you got involved with CDR Nordholm.

A. Exactly, I—he—I had on cammies that day, because I knew I was coming out in the field. I said, I'm coming out there, and change my uniform real quick, because I don't know how it is out there. Let me change so, you know, I saw him, Chief Hamilton, and HM1 Powell and it was the Army's 54th Engineering Group was there in charge of that from Fort Lee, you know, in charge of bringing the remains out.

Commander Nordholm saw my rank. Saw I was Navy and it was great, you know, "I've got another Navy guy here. I have another Navy guy to help me."

And I actually said, "No Sir, I'm not here for that purpose." That was my first question. I said, "Sir, I'm not here for that purpose. I'm from AFIP and this is why I'm here."

And he said, "While I could use your help. I really can," you know.

I said, "Well, I understand," you know. "If you need my help, I'll be more than happy to help you because of the situation," you know. "I'll help you."

He said, "He was directed to be there by his boss."

I says, "Sure, if you need my help, I'll help you, but that's not why I'm here." You know.

Well, he says, "you know, I could really use your help, Senior Chief, helping us. Get on our team, the three of us. We can use a fourth man, while we," you know, "bring the remains out."

I said, "Well fine, sir, no problem. Just let me clear it out with my boss, because I have to clear it up, because I'm not here for that purpose."

I told the Chief of Staff what was going on and he was like, you know, "Well, call the director, because we're not here for that purpose. We don't want to look like we're showboating," you know. We've got people in there. So, hey, we called the director and he says, "Sure, if Senior wants to help them, then that's fine if they need his help and he wants to help them, that's fine."

You know, we're not going to in this situation tell them, "Hey, no way," you know, go away. So the director says sure, that's fine. It's all right, if he needs him and Senior wants to help him, let him stay and help him, you know.

And I said, "Well, OK sir, I can help you out," you know. Immediately he started to give me the equipment and protective gear, you know.

Q. (34:34) This is -?

A. Command –

Q. (34:35) Still the 11th?

A. Yes, still the 11th. No actually this, I'm sorry, this is the 12th. This is the 12th, you know.

Q. (34:41) You had come back?

A. Yes, actually yes. No, actually, the day we went out to the Pentagon. That was the 12th.

Q. (34:38) OK.

A. OK, let me get that right. That was the 12th.

Q. (34:48) Ok, I'm going to just write that down.

A. Yes, the 11th was all still in the AFIP coordinating security measures and things like that.

This was the 12th when we decided to go out there. This was about one o'clock we left. We got there maybe about a quarter to two. All this was the 12th, and that's how I got involved with them.

And soon as he—immediately, “Well, come over here. Let me get your equipment.” They got me all the equipment, immediately, you know. The protective gloves, the suit, the boots, you know. The mask and everything, you know, and there I was at that point, I told the Colonel, “Hey, hopefully I will see you tomorrow. “ You know, “I don't know how long it's going to be, but as long as you're here for me, I'm here for the long run,” you know. I just passed along with him that I have a Master Sergeant Harrison, a Master Sergeant Williams there, perspective, two service senior enlisted. I said, “Just tell them to take over on all enlisted matters with me, that involves me.”

And he said, “No problem, Senior,” and that's when we part company. I was officially with Commander Nordholm and we were, our team is going in the building, you know, extracting, you know, the remains once the FBI finds them. And that's how I got involved with them.

Q (35:58) Did they, did they instruct you or prepare you in anyway –

A. Exactly.

Q. (36:02) For what you were going to see?

A. Exactly. Each time, you know, we were—and how that process would work, you know, of course you know, the plane hit the building so the plane—the building was not structurally sound. OK? So how it worked, the, you know if you've been on a ship, I keep referring it to shoring team, you know, but was that these guys had a name on the uniform. That was the purpose, but I think it was Construction Support Team. They would go in first, and make sure that whatever section we were going in, make sure it was deemed safe to go in to search for remains. They would go in first and it was a slow process, you know.

You know, there was a lot of sitting around, because they had to make sure the place was structurally sound for people to move around and search for remains. So they would go in first and say, "OK, yes, you can come in this section. This is safe." At that point then the FBI would go in, because it's considered now as a crime scene. The FBI and their search and recovery folks, they would go in, because they were—I was amazed I didn't know that different, excuse me, I didn't know of the different types law enforcement agencies that we have in this country. There were all of them. People I never heard of. You know, like "Who are you guys?" You know. "Who are you?" You know, just all kinds of letters. I'm like, "God, we have all these actually," I said, "right here in the United States." So there were all types of law enforcement folks there. So I was amazed at that.

But that was the process, you know, the construction support team would go in, make sure the place is deemed safe. FBI would then give—a search and recovery team would come in and OK, you can start searching for remains in this area right here, and they would come in and they would search, you know. Then we were actually, simply litter bearer teams. OK? And then we

would come in and actually, once they find a remains, put the remains in bags and the FBI would tag them.

But, yes, every time a section was deemed safe, where they would come out there was a Master Sergeant, a Sgt Maj Butt, from the Army, you know, and this guy was the right man for the job. I'm telling you. He was no nonsense, you know. He was not only yelling, "I'm in charge. Listen to what I am saying, because this thing is unsafe," you know. "We've got to get these people out of here safe and you listen to what I'm saying because any sudden moves," you know, "We don't want anyone else to get hurt." You know?

So he would give us a brief on what to do. What to look for, you know. What's expected, you know. What you might see, you know. And if you decide that, you know, this is too much for you, please, because we had on our filter mask, you know. Please raise your hand, you know, and we'll get you out there immediately and get someone else in there, you know. And he was very firm, and he was yelling and everyone understood completely.

So people took it a little offensive, but I knew, hey, this guy has to be this way, you know, because he was, he had his own people there and there were a lot of sergeants and PFCs and this was younger folks who really didn't deal with this type thing, you know. And initially some of them had some trouble, you know, and he saw our team, Commander Nordholm, myself and Petty Officer Powell and Chief Hamilton and we described who we were, and we are medical, you know. So, you know, I've dealt with this before, and I have, you know. Not on such a massive level, but you know, on the ship I had, you know, shipmates that die violently, you know. So I said, you know, "I've dealt with this. I've seen some destruction so I'm fine," you know, I—you know, "you can count on me." I basically was telling him, "But I understand why you have to be the way you are." You know, "you have to yell," and that was necessary, you

know, because we had these—I think it was called the 54th Engineering, you know, out of Fort Lee. OK?

We were the Navy folks there, you know, representing the Navy and they also had some volunteers. They're just civilian, you know, Red Cross, you know. Going in there, and this was early in the day, all right. So he very firmly explained this is what you do. Listen to what I tell you. Move when I tell you to move and that was important because when we were going in there you know, of course everything was a mess. Somewhere you had a desk, you still had water in there, you know from putting out the fire. So that was high. You had water, a lot of dust. You know, just a mess, and you were just plopping in everything, and you could easily slip and, you know, injure yourself. So he was very firm, so "Listen to what I tell you. Move when I tell you," and we were doing just that when we'd go in the building.

They would call in the litter team, we were going in. Wait, you know, it was, sometimes it was working both ways. When we were going in there, you had a group of FBI officials in there and they would find the remains and they would already have them in the bag, you know. And then there were times where we would find a group, you know, then they would call us in and we'd have to, you know, do the bag and tag it. Not bag it, we were just basically putting them in the bag and the FBI was recording all the information, you know. And then we just simply were recording by a letter and a number.

The letter was "A" meaning we find, "A" was the particular area that we found the person in, and "1", the first person we found. It was that simple. Then when we moved into another area, it would be "B" and this we know this is "B" area and B1 and B2, this is the first, fifth, second or fourth person, and that's the code they were using because and this was, this is where it gets gory because you know, you can't identify anybody. You can't see if it's a male. Some you can't see if it's male or a female. OK. You didn't know what, you know.

Initially, we, you know, in one section we knew that we found two remains and we knew it was two Navy Petty Officers. We knew that because the uniform, you know, and there wasn't a lot of, you know, phys—you know, physical damage so we knew like, OK, these are two Navy Petty Officers. Had their nametags on. Had their wallet in their pocket. Had ID, all that was in tack, so that was the only two, pers—you know, you can see that who these people are. They were Navy Petty Officers, but the rest, that's why they were describing the B, you know, it was unidentifiable, you know, so you know. (Editor Note: These were Petty Officer Earhart and Petty Officer Flocco).

To me everyone was asking me, like you guys are, "How was it?" You know, how—like I said, in 1993, I had shipmates that I ate breakfast with one morning. Then I went off the ship to go do some training, preventive medicine training PMU, for galley inspection. I came back that afternoon about two o'clock. I was putting in—that same shipmate I ate breakfast with, in a body bag. Because he had fell off the flight deck on a forklift, onto a barge and the forklift landed on top of him, you know. So that was—and I instantly— a lot of, you know, very traumatic, you know.

So I was telling everyone in there, it was not, because everyone was pretty much burned beyond recognition. I said, so the only thing you're dealing with that you see, for me you know, I see just charred remains, you know. Completely charred down to the bone. Some instances, you know, very bad third degree burn is—so my thing, what I was telling everyone, you know, I can't see a face here, you know. I'm seeing a skull, so I, you can't identify. You can't get attached, you know, and that's how I handled it you know. I know this is a human, you know. I don't see a face so I can't get attached and say, "Oooo, you know, this is a Navy Chief," or "Oooo, this is a Commander," you know. And that's how I was handling it, you know, it didn't bother me at all, because I'm just dealing with charred remains. You know, and that's how I handled it.

Chief Hamilton pointed out to me one remains we were putting in the bag, you know, and we were zipping it up, and he said, when we came out, he said, “Did you see that was at least, that was at least a Navy chief or an officer?”

I said, “No, how do you know?”

He said, “They had on a beige khaki shoe.”

I said, “Ok no, I never even noticed that.” I said, “See, I wasn’t focusing on those things. I was just focusing, hey, this piece here-”

And then he said to him, you know, that had kind of bothered him, because he knew it was someone in Khaki. Either was a chief, or was an officer. He said, “I saw the shoe.” I like, I never, I never really looked at it that way, you know. My focus was just, hey, put them in the bag and let’s get them out, you know. And that’s how I was working the whole time.

You know, like we would go in one section and there would be five, six, seven eight, you know.

Then we’d move again and there may be three or four. And that’s pretty much how we were doing it, you know, a section at a time, until we figure we got everybody in that section. Then we would come out. Actually we would come out, and then the shoring team would go back in and move into another section. “All right, sir –“ Then we would go back in that section and do some more, you know, remove the remains and put them in bags and there was that process.

Every time we’d go into a new section of the building there was a waiting process, because we’d have to wait. Make sure it’s safe. So we’re sitting out in the meantime, waiting you know, when this is happening. And when they said, “OK, It’s safe.” FBI comes in. “Yes, we have some in here. Get ready. Let’s go.” We all get—“Get you gear on. We’ve got some more,” and that pretty much was your routine all day up until nine o’clock that night, you know, when I left. When they—because we got into one section. Actually they went as far as they can go, basically, for that day, you know, because at that point we were going deeper in the building where things

were a lot more shambles. So at that point, they're like, "Hey, this is going to take a while. You guys might as well get comfortable, because we really—" It's dark, you know, we didn't have lights and everything, so, "This is going to be a while so just standby."

But pretty much that was the routine. Go in, like I said, the FBI would have some in the bags sometimes. Sometimes when there was more than we would put them in the bag, and of course, if you want to get into the real details. It was like I say, pretty gory. There was times, you know, we were bringing remains out, and I'm trying to stick to the word remains, because that's what we were using. That's the term. We would bring the remains out, and "Hold up!" You know, "Hold up!" Because what? We found a foot, or we found an arm or something like that. Let's see if, and I remember this story vividly, you know.

We were bringing out one of the remains and we were walking out. 'Hold up!' And, Sgt Maj Butts brought a foot, you know. Said, "Has this person got this foot?" That's the atmosphere. We were talking like that, and I had the foot in my hand. "Let me see," you know. So I unzipped the bag and looked. I knew this for the fact, that remains and that body was a female, because it had some hair, you know, long hair remaining, you know. And so I looked and from the look at it, it looked like a left foot, you know. You know, to deny it, how, the anatomy of it. I looked in the bag and said, "Well, no, this individual has its left foot," you know. "So this is not this individual's left foot." OK, it's somebody else and they were saying, "Well, we do, and that's when I tell them, "Hey, we got our bags." We had our body bags with just parts, you know. I would tell them, "Hey, just put them in the bag." And that's what they'll do at Dover, basically, I'm telling them. "Hey, let's not try to figure this out, because it's not," you know, "We could be here all day."

You try to get them all together, "I said, "We just put them in a bag." And we had a body bag with just parts, you know, and I said, "Dover will decide."

(sounds of changing the disk)

You want me to stop?

Q. (47:50) Yes. Good.

A. So I was telling them, “Hey, we put them in the bag.” And FBI was doing that. Putting them in the bag, different parts. So that it, that was some of the scene. “Hold up,” you know, “We found an arm,” or whatever, you know. So it was like that.

I can identify—I can remember putting some, I know it was a guy because it was a pretty big finger, you know, and it was pretty heavy, you know. Desks and file cabinets all over the place, you know. Like I said, we were in water. I remember, I put this bag on the desk, and it went, just like this desk here was tilted in an angle, you know, and my guy says, you know, “It’s over here.” You know. So I come over there and I’m like, “Ok, where?” You know, and he’s standing over it. You know, it was just that type, because there was so much mingled stuff, you really couldn’t identify.

I’m like, “Oh,” you know. It was, you know, my God, you know, because it’s just pis—everything all over, water—you really can’t identify with nothing. So I guess that’s why those guys do what they do. They were the experts, you know.

So I’m standing there, and he says, “Right here. You’re right over them.”

“Ahhh, OK” so you know. And another thing was of concern, you know, a lot of destruction.

Burned down to the bone. So you know you’ve got bone sticking out, and I ‘m telling everybody, “Hey, be careful, because you can get cutted.” You know. And that was the thing with us handling the remains. We would grab a lot of just bones, you know, charred bones, and ‘Hey, be careful.” And we would pick, you know. Of course, you know, these remains were stiff, you know. So a lot of them that we put in the bag, you know, we’re putting them in the bag and the

bag was ripping, you know, from the bone you know. So a lot of times we had to stop and you know, de-bag them, you know. And that was a slow-up process. And so, I never, it never bothered me, because I can identify with any face. I just knew from figure and anatomical shape. This is a guy, you know.

One guy I was standing over, I knew it was Army because I recognized the green uniform, you know. Like OK, this is an Army guy, don't know who he is. Officer or enlisted, don't know, but I knew it was Army, because I got a little piece of the green uniform, you know. So, you know, hey, just bag them and do whatever, put them in a bag. Let's move them on then.

That process continued and many times we were, like I said, on our way out, you know, and "Hold up!" You know, we'd find another part, you know. Bits of bone fragment, this and that. Hands, a little finger, and the thing is, we'd have to look and see, "Yeah, he's got both hands." "Well no, he doesn't have both hands," or he does or she doesn't or this remains does not, you know, and so that process was—we were talking like that, and that process was going on and off, you know. Because this is the nature of the business.

Q. (50:53) So it was analytical.

A. Yes, right.

Q. (50:54) A very clinical approach to it.

A. Exactly, you know, and that's where we were, I believe were an asset to them, that the Navy group, because they were all, we were all medical, you know. Well, maybe Nordholm wasn't in the medical service. He was psych, he was a psychologist, I'm not exactly—Chief Hamilton, a corpsman, Petty Officer Powell, a corpsman, you know. So we were speaking, you know, the language. We know, we were using the medical terms, and the young guys from the Army, those

guys were just simply, you know, engineering guys. They didn't have any—and those guys did great actually I thought, you know, for the circumstances. They did real great, but you know, we were talking in those terms, you know. Hey, this is—you know, I can remember looking at one bone I had in my hand and it was actually the tip of a femur, you know. I would say, 'This is the tip of a femur,' you know. This is not, you know, what is this? Because Sgt Maj. Butts, again, like I said, he was bringing up a lot of parts, he's holding this up. "What's this?" You know. Then when he realized these guys are medical so he was asking us a lot of questions like that, you know, "Hold up, what's this?"

We would look, "oh, no that's a right foot." "No that's the tip of a femur," you know. It looked like "that might be part of a radial ulna," and that's the type of questions, things we were going through, you know, as we—so I thought we were a great asset to them in that way, you know, at least the Navy part, you know. He realized that real quick, you know, and like, OK, these guys, you know, they know terms. They're using terms, you know, anatomy, physiology. They know what they're talking about there. And he seemed to appreciate that, you know.

Q. (52:32) Was there any effort to distinguish remains from Pentagon people versus the airplane?

A. Well, at that time, it was all Pentagon. They hadn't even got to the plane yet. I thought that was amazing, too. You would walk out there, and this plane, I can't remember what size it was, but you walk out there and first thing I'm looking for is plane parts, you know. There's this big hole in the building, you know. I may see a part of a fuselage, part of a tail wing, part of the wing. Absolutely nothing. No identifiable parts, obvious part of the plane, you know.

Now you had the FBI, I take it was Evidence Team, you know. I can see parts of the plane that they were bringing out. Very little small pieces, you know, that they were collecting and putting

in the bag. But that was my question. I asked that question several times. “Where’s the plane?” There was no obvious sign that a big plane hit that building. Like you’ve seen in some plane crash, you can see big parts of plane. That wasn’t the case and I was asking, “Where is this plane.” You know.

So we, we never got, the plane was parts of it. The main body was buried deep inside that section that it went into, and the rest, I guess it just shattered, you know, into, you know pieces. So we never got, there was never that part, you know, to identify people on the plane and personnel. It was all personnel from the Pentagon, but they hadn’t got to that point yet, you know.

The plane, that was still in the middle and if you remember on the 13th, you know, it caught fire again because there was fuel there, so it was a while before they even got to that section, you know. So we were only pulling out Pentagon, military and DoD Navy, DoD, you know Army, whatever. So we’re dealing with that. We never got to the plane. We never did.

Q. (54:30) Were most of the remains from the explosion, the building collapse, all of the above?

A. Right, were most of the remains from that direction. Exactly, you know.

Q. (54:39) But from the explosion?

A. From out, obviously you –

Q. (54:42) The crash?

A. Obviously, yes, from the crash, you know, like I, and again here you know, I’m speculating, you know. Right, just from my knowledge, you know. Like I said, the two petty officers that came out, obviously identifiable, you know, was a lot of physical damage and this is, I didn’t reveal this to anybody, my speculations was those guys probably got hit and got maybe knocked

unconscious, and maybe died of smoke inhalation, because they were obvious. But the rest was physically, you can tell, from the explosion, from fire, you know, and so, but those two I know, these guys probably just, you know, just smoke inhalation. Just didn't make it. They didn't have a lot of physical damage.

But the other set I was involved in picking out, there was a lot of physical damage. I recognized Boyle (phonetic) because of, when I went back to work the next day, I told the director, I said, "The dental people's going to be very busy." OK, because, I said, "Very few people that we brought out was not identifiable by any features." I said, "Dental's going to be busy, and DNA. You're going to need a lot of DNA." And that was the case, you know. It was a lot of that type of remains left from the fire and explosion. And they're really sure, because we moved from one section to the other, to another section that we were attacking from both angles, because there was a hole in the building, you know. And then we were working from both sides of that hole, you know.

And we went on one side, if you facing, it was the left side. We went in that section and there was a door there. There was a door that we could go in. It wasn't a window, and as soon as we walked in that section, and this is where it got to me a little bit, you know. We're walking that section and I remember, I think we found, it was like, it was like eight remains and we had a lot of parts. And in that section where we found those remains, there was like twenty feet from the door.

So those people did not have really a chance. They were that close to an exit, not to run into a hall and get away, but to run outside. You see what I'm saying. They were that close, but they did not make it, you know. So that was obviously from the explosion. Those people didn't have a chance. Hit immediately, impact, everything exploded. Because I remember vividly walking in there, and you know, one team was removing more remains and I was waiting for them to

remove and as I walked a little further, I just looked back at the door and saw how close I was and where these people were, you know, lying and I said to myself, “Damn, they couldn’t even get out!” They really didn’t have a chance. So that’s how disruptive it was. They didn’t, at least in that section, they didn’t have a chance and they were that close to the door. Like I said not to get in the hall, but to actually run outside. They could have just got outside, but I guess, you know, it happened so quick, so fast, so violently, they never had a chance. They never had a chance.

Q. (57:52) Did it look like they were trying to get out?

A. Huh?

Q. Did it look like they were trying to get out? Or they just happened, where they happened to be?

A. This just happened –

Q. (57:56) They never knew what hit them.

A. Yes, see, I really, you know, from the way it looked, it just happened where they were trying to be you know. Then again, like I tell you this too. One remains that we found, and that’s what I just said, it didn’t look like they were trying. One remains that we found, you know, you can tell in the positions that the remains in, how actually—what—how people did die. This individual was balled up like in the fetal position, like trying to protect face, arm and legs. So we—right then, that tells me that person didn’t look like he was trying to get out, you know. OK, like it just happened and that individual, arms and everything were like this, you know, and covering up his

head, knees and everything bent. So it's like it happened, and that individual was trying to protect himself. So it looked like that individual did not have a chance, you know.

Again, I'm not an expert, but that's what I saw, because I actually picked this individual up, you know, put him in the bag, you know, and that's another thing that I remember vividly, you know. Like, God, actually, it was the female. As I said. I kind of noticed the hair in the back, was balled up, was in the fetal position. Maybe she was trying to get out and at some point got over taken, but she died in this position right here. Her hands trying to cover her head and balled up, you know. And we found that remains around a bunch of desks and everything. So, she may have made an attempt, and didn't make it but, and then again, it looked like it just happened and she just tried to cover up. So it's kind of hard to tell if they were trying to get out, you know, because they were that close to the door. So that's an indication they have, they were that close, but they didn't make it.

Q. (59:57) From your experience as a corpsman is there anyway to train people to prepare them for what you had to do, or is it just one of those being at a place at a certain time.

A. Anyway to train. Good question. I –

Q. (01:00:14) Obviously, you wouldn't want someone to experience this.

A. Right, right, you know, and so in my opinion, no. Other than just explaining to people, you know, in a situation like that what you might see. What's going to go on, because when I came back the next day, you know, I told CDR Nordholm, if you guys need me again, just call me. We'll go back, you know, but it was decided that no, we're not going to go back up there, as you know. But when I got back at my command, everyone was saying, "Hey, we want to go with you, We want to go back." And I was telling them, just everyone, you know, a lot of these people

are not medical, you know. They're YNs and personnel. A lot of lab techs, you know, and I said, "Well, if they call us back," you know, "I would ask, but this is nothing that you have experienced in your life." I said, "You say right now," and at the time it happened everyone wanted to do something. Everyone wanted to help, and so that was understood. And I was cautioning. I said, "This is nothing that you would expect," you know. And I gave them some examples of what I saw, you know, and I was like, "Do you think you can handle this? You're saying yes," you know.

Some people was immediately saying, "No way. I don't want to do that." Some people were, "Yes," you know, "I can handle that." So I was there just explaining to people. You've got to be detailed and very graphic. "This is what you're going to see," you know. "You think you can handle this," you know. And so other than just telling them, explaining to them, you know, that's the only training I could see.

Now being in the medical field, I've seen some, even with, with kids, you know, we've had, had a few kids die on me, you know, newborns, and Pedi—so I've been around it, you know, and because that's the nature of the business, you know, and so I'm not saying I—because there's a lot of medical people don't like that stuff either, you know. So I—it's kind of—I'd say, no, it's kind of hard to train someone, you know.

Hopefully, we want no one to live this, you know, but, you know, that's where you're going to get your experience, you know. And that's why it'd never phase me, you know. You know my past experience in dealing with death, and seeing it. And, so it never—because I—Ok, this is the nature of my job sometime. I have to deal with death and destruction. I don't think you can train someone, you know, other than telling them and taking them in a situation. Seeing how they react, you know. Really explain it to them. This is going to be very tough, you know, and some people may come in, because that's what the case with those Army folks. Those guys didn't deal

with that stuff, so they really got a good visual. “This is what it’s like in there. You guys going to see some things. This is not normal, OK. This is very violent. Very graphic,” you know, and that was explained to them and they were going in. They seemed to adapt.

We had a couple of guys got sick, you know. Expected, no problem. Pull that person off. We had a chaplain person on, right there on the scene, you know. Individual got sick they went immediately to the chaplain. Chaplain would pull him off and talk to him, and if they felt they were ready to go back, and wanted to help they did. If not they, you know they assist from the outside.

So, no, other than seeing it and experiencing it, and like I said, those young army guys saw it. The majority of them handled it real well. We had a few that got sick, so you just explain it to them and then you take them in the scene and that’s going to be the determining factor, you know.

I had everyone in my command say, “We want to go. We want to help.” And I was like, “this is nothing that you can imagine,” OK? And I had to give some examples, like, “Do you think you can handle this?” Then immediately people would say “No. Oh, my God,” you know. “No way. Are you serious?”

You know, they’ll start reactions. “Yes, that’s what it’s like in there.”

Like “Oh, God, no. I don’t want to do this.” You know, some were saying—I had my histo-techs, those guys assisted doctors in autopsies so, you know, they could, you know, they were pretty much, “yes, we can do this,” because all the remains that we brought out went to Dover and all those histo-techs were right there, you know. So they saw

Q. (01:04:45) Histo-tech?

A. Yes, Histo technician, you know.

Q. (01:04: 48) What is that?

A. They do biopsies. They assist the medical examiners and pathologists in autopsies. That's what they do. They cut tissues for –

Q. (01:04:56) How do you spell -?

A. Histo-technician. H-I-S-T-0. Histology is histo, you know, so that's their job in the Navy; that's with AFIP. You know, they cut and stain tissues, research to determine cause of death, and things like that, which is, you know, pretty neat. So they saw everything I saw, you know, on the tables as they were being examined. Those people, because that's part of their job, part of their class for Histo School is to see a couple of autopsies. You know, so those people were pretty much prepared, and those were the ones were saying they wanted to go and at that time the mission had already been decided that hey, you guys going to have to go to Dover. So they, you know, they were set for that, you know. But no, I can't say you can ever train other than explain it to them

Q. (01:05:46) How about some identification of someone. Like let's say that you were on a scene, how would you tell who would be the type of person you would send in for that kind of recovery. Its sounds like, OK, we had Nordholm, LCDR Nordholm PO Powell, Chief Hamilton, yourself. All had some medical background. You guys were all HMs.

A. Right.

Q. (01:06:11) But obviously HMs don't all experience this kind of stuff so, not every HM might handle it like the others. But is there a way of —it sounds like you all were there, because you

happen to be there. Were available, and stepped in, but is there a way that you with your training where you've been, you're experienced, if you'd be able to identify someone that –

A. Could handle something like that?

Q. (01:06:32) Handle something like that.

A. No, actually, I would go right on that, on that basis. Someone with, you know, some medical background, you know. I don't know if this is the right term, you know, the average Joe, or if I see a group of people, yes, you, you can pick this, you know. That would be my starting point, you know. Have you ever dealt with something like this before? And if the person, for example, are medical, are EMT, are—work volunteer fire, rescue something like that, you know. Those would be my picks, you know.

Someone that's not in that type of deal initially, you know, in this case, type of thing, I probably will not pick them, you know. You see what I'm saying?

Q. (01:07:15) Yes.

A. Because, like I said, immediately when I found out who those Army guys were, who they were, I was saying to myself, "oh, why these guys are here?" You know, "can these guys," you know, "do this?"

But their job was engineering, you know, so I went "Why are they here?" You know. So that wouldn't have been my first choice, you know. I was thinking more or less of fire and rescue people. That was, you know, out there, you know. These people that deal with these things and see these things. Not on a regular basis, but have dealt with them constantly. That would be my choice, you know. How I would search. Any person, you know, without that kind of background,

you know, I would suggest, you know, we ask questions, you know. Hey this is what you expect to see. This is what it's going to be like. Can you handle this?

And for the couple of volunteers, you know, that, those questions was asked, you know. "This is what you're going to see. This is what you got to expect," you know. "Do you think you'll be able to handle this?" And a couple of those volunteers were like "Sure," you know, "I can handle this." And of course, they did, you know. But I would just never –

Q. (01:08:19) If I remember correctly, too, I think you gave some of that incite to Petty Officer Powell, and Hamilton.

A. Right.

Q. Is that correct?

A. Exactly, exactly, you know, because, you know like you said they're corpsman but they never, you know, you know, dealt with that stuff and I did, you know. This is, "it's going to be pretty gory, you guys," you know. "If you think you can handle it, come on. If not," you know, "stand," you know," stand back, but this is going to be pretty tough."

Q. (01:08:46) I was part of the team that went down and interviewed the crew of the *USS Cole*.

A. OK.

Q. And it was pretty much the same, very informal people that were chosen to go in and help.

A. Right.

Q. Bag some of the bodies of casualties and help with some of the injured etc, and it pretty much call on the spot, which you can't prepare for something like that.

A. Exactly.

Q. (01:09:04) But there was an OS2 that was one of the ones that was chosen, because he has an EMT background, but he also rose to the occasion, and had experience and things.

A. Exactly.

Q. But I get the—it's an awareness of what they would experience.

A. Exactly, and that's what you pretty much putting out there to some of the volunteers and those young Army guys. This is pretty rough, you know. "This is what you expect," you know. "Can you handle this?"

No one was forced to go in that building, you know. Everyone was told what to expect. "Do you think you can handle this? If you think you can, come on, let's go forward," you know. "If not, step away right now and there will be nothing against you." And that was to the Army guy, that was supposed to be able to do that purpose. Even those guys were told that. No one was forced to go in. So that process, I guess, with the *Cole* and here, it was pretty much, you know, like that, you know. This see, "You here, can you handle that?"

But that would be my guideline, people who got that type of experience. Maybe dealt with that type of destruction. If not explain to the individual, this is what you're going to expect see. Do you think you can handle it?

They probably won't know until they got in there, you know. And I got to admit, he will not admit this, OK? Sgt Maj Butt, you know, he was in there constantly, you know, but I remember at one point we were picking up a couple and I heard him, you know, he had his face mask on,

and you know, he was in there so much, I heard him grunting and you know, just kind of getting, you know, should have been getting overwhelmed, you know. And I quietly grabbed him by the waist and said, “Hey look, are you all right?” You know, “I understand,” you know. “You’ve been in here a lot,” you know. He was, “no, no, I’m fine,” you know, “I’m fine.” Of course he’s a Sgt Maj, but I’ve heard that, you know. I didn’t put him in a spot in front of his guys. I quietly grab him by the waist and whisper into his—“I’m hearing you over here. You’re grunting and you’re moaning a lot.” You know, “Are you all right? Do you need to take a break?” You know, and he was kind of just pacing, you know, in a little circle and he said, “No, I’m fine. I’m fine.” You know. “I’m fine.” And shortly there after we had to take a, we took a break, you know. So even for him, a guy with twenty-something years experience, you know, it got to him a little bit, you know. But he didn’t you know, fall apart, but I observed that while we were in there, you know, so it was pretty much, and I would do that with you two, you know.

“Hey, Chief, this is what you expect. “ You take, you know, “Well, come on. Let’s go.” You know. And you will determine when you get in there, OK, I can handle this, or no, I can’t handle this, and then you back off, you know.

Q. (01:11:41) After you finished, you were there for one day.

A. Right.

Q. Did you do any sort of personal debrief or go through a coping process or go seek pastoral counseling or -?

Q. (01:11:56)) (another questioner) SPRINT Teams, or -?

Q. (01:11:57) (first questioner) SPRINT Team.

A. No, I didn't. CDR Nordholm told me, you know, it was available. He gave me his number and he said, "See your Chief, if you feel you need to," you know, "Talk to someone. Let me know." My Chief of Staff Col Shaw, same thing you know. "Senior, you think you need to go talk to the chaplain," and that was fine, because, you know, I was familiar with that process when, I was, when my shipmate died, you know, we had SPRINT Team come in, because we were there the whole time. That was pretty traumatic. So I know how that worked, you know. And that process, basically we just talked about what had happened.

But no, I did not seek, I was, you know, I felt I was fine the whole time you know, and I was you know. When I came back to command, I just kind of debriefed the director. What I saw, and what to meet out at Dover, and he also said the same thing. He calls me by my first name. He says, "Tyrone, you OK? You sure?"

I, "Sure fine," you know. And after I told him, "Sir, I want to go back." you know, and he said, "Well, that's not our mission," you know, "We've got to go into Dover," you know. And he's asking me, "Are you coming to Dover with me?" And at that time I was kind of beat and I said you know, "I'll probably catch up with you, sir, I don't know right now." Because I would have, you know, been involved with the same thing, you know. Seeing some of the same people.

So, no I did not seek any help. I felt I was fine. I still am, you know, and part of the process is this right here, too, you know. Talking to people, and you know, like when I got home that night my daughter wanted to know what's happening. She's sixteen. She knew I was there you know, because I called on my cell phone you know, "Hey I'm at the Pentagon. I'm going to be home late."

She was, "You mean, you're actually there?" You know, "What are you doing?" I told her and she said, "Oh, my God," you know. I said, "I'll be home late. Just tell your mom." You know, because I was getting ready to go in the building and then immediately, she wanted to know, and

I did not tell her anything you know, to make her, you know. And maybe someday, you know the story. I said, 'Don't worry about it.' But she's in school and I don't want her—It's still a fresh process. We still have families over at the, you know, the Sheraton, you know waiting, and I didn't want any information to get out. "Hey, well, my dad was in it, " and you know, information spreads rapidly. So I told her nothing. I said, "It was pretty rough." And she was asking me, 'Did you actually see and touch, " you know, "dead bodies?" And I said, 'Yes.' And that was the extent you know

"So what was it like?" She was really prying and I'm like "Don't worry about it," you know. And that was part of the process when I came back to our emergency command center. People was asking me you know, some, a couple of the Majors who was the Officer of the Day and I was explaining it. So talking to people makes a difference you know. Just telling them, you know, explaining to them what happened and what you see. So I never felt I needed to, you know, seek any help. And I still feel that way right now.

Not that I'm a big bad wolf, but I feel fine about the process because of prior experience.

Q. (01:15:03) Is any of that incorporated into the training. The understanding of the value of the SPRINT Team? When we went down to the *Cole*, we talked to people. This is five months after the incident then. All the way up and down the chain of command we have talked about how that really helped to hold the people together. Just from an understanding of what some of, they were going to experience, and some of the range of emotions that they would experience. To recognize this is normal.

But from your, I think your unique perspective of your field, Service Medical School.

A. Right.

Q. Instructor training.

A. Right.

Q. Is any of that incorporated into the training from the understanding that some of these folks will obviously see casualty type things in their rate, or should there be?

A. I'm not sure if I follow. You mean is -?

Q. (01:15:53) Awareness of some of what, of the arrange of emotions they may experience from what they might see.

A. Oh, I see, is that incorporated in some of the training?

Q. (1:16:00) Is it incorporated in the training. If not should it be?

A. Yes, actually I've got you now. Yes, particularly in field med, yes that is incorporated in training you know. We tell the students when you go up there, you know, some of you are going to go to the hospital. Some of you are going to go to the, you know, Fleet Marine Force. Some of you are going to go on a ship you know. And, you know things happen out there, believe it or not. You may not hear it, but you know, you are going to be involved with, you know, with death and destruction. So this is some of the things that you may see. Be prepared, and I think there was a section in one of the—I'm trying to recall here, there is a section and I think in one of our lessons there where we talk about the SPRINT Team, you know. Where you know, these people are available for you if, you know, if you need help, or anything like that.

So we—yes, to answer your question, yes we do talk about that. It's not a lesson per se. It's like a lesson that's part of the academic. That should be something that the instructors share with the students, you know. It's not directly pinpointed to the academics, but is something that

instructors do share. “This is what you expect to see,” you know. Some of our personal experience, you know. Tell them what you expect to see, death and destruction and there’s people available for help, you know. And just before you’re a corpsman, that don’t mean, you know, all of us are fit for this, you know.

Q. (01:17:21) Right.

A. You know, just see how many things, and that is very much true. I know a lot of corpsman that do not like to deal with it, you know, death and they want nothing to do with it. And that’s perfectly normal. You don’t knock people for that and because I again remember vividly on my ship, when that guy died, you know, a lot of us knew him personally. I had some young HMs there, you know, and while we were on the scene, I was telling them, “Look, if you guys, if this is too much, because we know him you know, and here we are you know, preparing him you know, to put him in the bag, go away. That’s all right. I understand,” you know. And one of my guys chose to do that you know. He was just standing off to the side. That was very understandable. And also in that incident, the SPRINT Team they did come to see us and I thought that was very necessary you know. Because it was very traumatic for the young corpsman, very traumatic, and we were just basically just like this, just talking to the psychiatrist you know. What we see. What we expect, and he was asking us, you know, our feelings, and about life and all. So at that point, definitely, I thought that was necessary. And I—definitely those Teams and those services are available and I think it’s a good thing, you know.

Like I said, I’m not touting a big bad wolf just because of my experience, you know, I—this is life, I have a rare perspective on death you know. I’m not afraid of death. People die everyday and that’s just the way it is you know. Death is just a part of, a part of life and life itself you

know. People are going to go. So I never had to— seen it to bother me, you know. I just know people die everyday you know, and that's just the way it is you know.

In my field, I may have to deal with that you know, I guess nineteen years has prepared me pretty well you know.

Q. (01:19:13) Have you learned anything about yourself from this experience?

A. Yes, well, actually just how fragile life is you know. And like all the people in the Pentagon, expect that day, expect to go to work and come home. Just like you and I expect today. But it didn't happen you know, and so at this, you know, I just, I guess I'm not going to say learned, but I just reflect a lot on how fragile life is you know. And not only the people in the Pentagon, the people in the World Trade Center. Those people went to work, as normal as you and I and they expected to come home, but it didn't happen, you know. And so, I constantly reflect on how fragile life is and I remember telling that to my daughter you know, because the day it happened, you know, was so frantic, and she had caught me by surprise. Because I called her on the phone and told her I was going to be late, and she knew what was involved here. What we do, and you know, she was very emotional. Very emotional, like 'Why is this happening? Who are these people? Why are they doing this?'" Kind of took me by surprise, honestly. Like wow, you know, I'd never think it would effect her, you know, teenager, you know. MTV, BT, what, you know. They're not thinking about —she was very emotional you know, very upset you know.

I explained to her, to make, you know, I've talked to you about this many times you know. You know, none of us are going to live forever you know. We all are going to die someday and you've got to understand that you know. That's just my perspective on death you know. I know I'm not going to be here. I can walk out this door, drive on that highway, and I'm done. No fault of my own, but I understand that, you know. So that's the way life is.

So I did a lot of reflecting and I know that, you know, life is fragile. You know, don't take anything for granted. I've been living that before this, but it really hit then you know, like I think about that a lot you know. I can be gone at any point, or any time, way beyond my control, you know, and I've accepted that. That's just the way it is.

So that's what I've done. That's what I've learned is how fragile life is, you know. And immediately, again you know, when things like this happen, I tend not to think about the victims. I think about the families you know. Those are the people who have to deal with this, so and that's just my philosophy you know. The victims, they are gone. They are dead you know. Sad situation, but I'm thinking about the wives. I'm thinking about the kids you know. And also to add to this story, I live on Bolling Air Force Base you know. [REDACTED]. There were two service members to die on that street, so it was all around me you know. A lot of us were involved there. My neighbor is an MP that works in the Pentagon you know. They knew I was office of pathology. They knew I was involved somewhere you know. So it was all around us you know. The neighbor next to him works at that Pentagon as an MP, and just about four doors down two service men what was in there, did die.

Over in the other housing area that Chief whose son was in the plane, he's in the same neighborhood. So it was all around us.

Q. (01:22:39) Chief Brown, right?

A. Yes, he lives just in another development across from us you know.

Q. (01:22:45) Do you know him?

A. No, I don't know him you know, I just, "Gosh, that guy lived right over there." You know what I'm saying, and so it was all around us, and so I just reflect on how fragile life is. The drive

home and I see family members of these victims you know. So that's what I think about the most is the wives, the kids, you know, the sons and daughters you know. God, how are they dealing with this, you know, because, the victim, he's gone or she's gone you know. And that's just life, but now we have these people back here that have to deal with this, and, and that was also a rough process that we were involved in at AFIP, because the family was at the Sheraton right out over here at Crystal City, and we had service members over there you know. A couple of, Staff Sergeant Latney (phonetic) and Chief Master Sergeant Bates (phonetic) they were assisting the family. We had to get evidence with DNA on it you know.

Do you have a comb? Do you have a brush you know. Give us something. We have to collect blood from, you know, the female, you know, the daughter, you know, the grandma, you know and things like that, because you can't get it—so, and they dealt with it, you know, from a very, you know, dealing with the families you know. And, and, and, they—initially we needed someone to go over there and the Chief of Staff, like see, “Who you think would be the best person? Do you want to go?” And I immediately disclaimed myself, because I was in the Pentagon. And I didn't want to you know. Slip that information out at all. I said, “No, not me. I can't go over there and deal with the family like that,” because, you know I was in there, and I don't want that to get out in no way, shape or form, dealing with the family.

So we, I suggested two Air Force guys and they had to deal with it from that point, and I didn't want to deal with that you know. Knowing that I was in there and I could have actually have moved one of their remains and if that had got out, you know, “What did you see,” and so I said just pushing myself from that situation immediately, you know.

Chief Grey (phonetic) I think you'll be great for this and he did, you know. So they had to deal with a lot of the emotions, a lot of the emotions, which I didn't want to deal with. You see what I'm saying?

So, it may sound a little sick, but I can deal with the death part. I didn't want to deal with all that emotion and it was very traumatic over there. Very emotional you know. I need you to bring this and bring that in you know. Give us something and that was the process for about a month and a half. You know, get the family members to bring stuff. Just a strand of hair. Bring his hair comb. Bring his brush. Bring her brush. You need a brush, we need it you know. So, you know, we were involved in the whole of that so it was pretty, you know.

Q. (01:25:29) You've been to Dover, have you been to, spent some time at Dover or no?

A. No, I have not spent some time yet. Which would have, you know, been good from a historical point of view, but I was—I kept telling myself I was going, and the director was waiting for me to come, but I just never made it you know. We were just so busy coordinating with the Sheraton, information coming in. A lot of people calling us, wanting to know numbers. How many you identified. That type of thing. We're coordinating back with Dover, getting that information. Everyone's calling us. Wants answers and again the top brass you know. The FBI, everyone calling, you know, the DNA lab wants to know this and that. So, that's what I got involved with and never got the opportunity to—well, I guess I could have just dropped everything and go, but I just, my service is needed here and that's what I concentrated on you know.

Because I would have had the full scope of everything if I went up to Dover.

Q. (01:26:26) Any other Navy personnel you can think we should talk with? Navy personnel, or civilian.

A. Oh, there's quite a few if you want to talk about this Dover thing. Awww

Q. (01:26:36) Yes, we've got some. We're going to go up there I think next week.

A. Yes, I've got quite a few of the technicians that you could talk to.

Q. (01:26:46) Could you call me and give me a—go over the list?

A. Absolutely, I can give you a list of at least fifteen people.

Q. (01:26:47) OK, that would be good.

A. Yes, OK.

Q. (01:26:50) maybe just a little blurb of who each one is, and –

A. Sure I can, I can give you that information. Quite a few, you know.

Q. (01:26:54) Any other lessons learned you can think of?

A. You know, things like this happen so fast, you know, and especially on this, on such a massive level you know, You've got a lot of death there. A lot of remains you know. I can be stepping on some people's feet here, but this is just my observation. Anyone wants to get involved. I'm talking Army, Navy, Air Force because this is a DOD facility, you know, and everyone wants to be a player here. And my lesson learned, and my advise was sometime you know, sometimes, some of us got to step back, you know, and you know, let whomever, take the con over. Take charge and let's follow that lead. His or her lead or whatever you know. And I'm just saying that from that point, from where we were at on the ground of the Pentagon you know. We were getting so many words from different people you know. Who's in charge. And that's because, very understandable, all the services want to play a part you know. Not for glory, I

don't think. Hey, we have people in there. We need to be involved here. We have people in there. We need to be involved here.

We all need, and I think sometime maybe in a situation like this, you know, some of us need to just step back, you know, and let's be an Indian and let the Chief go in and work, you know, just be supportive role, and I saw that as a lesson learned you know. Let's just step back. If he's in charge, then let's let him be in charge. Let's support him, you know, and give our advice how we deem necessary you know.

Because that kind of went a lot you know. Well, so and so's saying this. So and So's saying this, You got Colonels out there. You got Captains out there you know. And again, I'm not—no one was flexing trying to be the big bad wolf, but you know, you k now, you got a lot of brass there, you know, and so someone has to be a worker a bee. (Chuckle)

You know, some one has to set back you know. You may have two-stars, he has three, but hey you got to listen, you k now with the different service. And I see that, you know, because, you know, like I said, it wasn't a jockeying for position and notoriety. Just need to step back you know and say, "OK, what's going on here? What we got to do?" Ok, if you're in charge, let me listen to you, all right, You have two stars, I have two, but you got to just go you know. That I see as a lesson learned you know. And just sit back. Let's formulate a plan on how we're going to attack this and some of us are going to have to be in a support role, and some of us will have to take charge, That's simple. That's I would see as a lesson learned that we need to focus on.

Q. (01:29:59) Great.

A. Hopefully, this don't happen again.

Q. Anything else you'd add just for the historical record?

A. No, you know, it's something I will always remember you know. I—an unfortunate situation and I played an important part and I'm glad I served my country in that capacity, you know, that I was some service, you know, in that capacity. It was an unfortunate thing. There's a job that has to be done and I was so appreciative that I was able to contribute, you know, to this and assist in any way I can. That's from my command point of view and my point of view there. We were able to help and make a difference in such a, you know horrific situation, and I'm glad I was able to do that you know. Make a difference.

Q. (01:30:55) Well put. Thank you so much for spending time with us, Senior Chief.

A. No problem, anytime.

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