

Robert Morris University Oral History Center

Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Project



Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

Charles Giordano

nurse anesthetist, US Air Force Reserves

February 7, 2017

**Giordano, Charles (1976 –), Oral History Interview, February 7, 2017.**

Biographical Sketch: Charles Giordano is currently a Major in the US Air Force Reserves working in an Individual Mobilization Augmentie, IMA program as a nurse anesthetist. Having been bumped from rotation during Shock and Awe the first deployment opportunity, Dr. Giordano was then again removed from deployment rotation to attend anesthesia school. Finally, after initiating the process Dr. Giordano was placed on orders in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Sulu Archipelago, Southern Philippines.

Topics Covered in Interview:

ROTC

9/11

Scholarship to be a nurse at the University of Pittsburgh

Lackland Air Force Base at Wilford Hall medical center

anesthesia schools

Operation Enduring Freedom

Zambo, Philippines

forward surgical team which was in Hollo, Philippines

Abu Saif, and other Al Qaeda terrorist groups

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Transcribed by Adam Salinas

Edited by Adam Salinas and John McCarthy

[00:01:48]

JC: We are now beginning to record. This interview as part of the Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans project undertaken by the Oral History Center at Robert Morris University. I am Josh Caskey and today is 7 February 2017. I am joined by Chuck; Chuck can you please state your full name.

CG: Uh Charles Giordano, Charles David Giordano.

JC: And do I have your consent to interview you today?

CG: Yes.

JC: Excellent. Let's start with a little bit of background, um. So where were you born and when were you born?

CG: Uh, I was born in Norwich, New York. 1976. October 16, 1976.

JC: Ok, and what branch of the service did you serve in?

CG: Air Force.

JC: And what years were you in?

CG: So uh I was ROTC out of high school so that was 95 to 99. Active duty from 99 to 2004. And then I was in the reserves after that from about 2005 until now.

JC: Ok and about what rank were you when you got out?

CG: Well I'm still in, still a reservist.

JC: Oh ok you are?

CG: Ya, I'm a major.

JC: Excellent. Let's talk a little bit about why you joined the service. Obviously you were in before 9/11 and so what were some of the reasons for wanting to join the Air Force?

CG: Well, um, that's a great question. You know a variety of factors, in that time war wasn't even something that was on the radar. You knew that it was always a possibility, but you know it had been peacetime for a very long time. It had been very limited stuff so. You know my grandfather was in the military, my father was in the military, I was looking for money for school. So I said you know what I can hit two birds with one stone, I'll get some money for school, I'll join the service, I'll do my duty. I always felt a strong obligation to that. I grew up in a small town a very active American legion, you know, it was just a part of the fabric of what was going on. So I applied for scholarships in the navy and the air force and the air force gave me the best deal. And I liked the air force the most and I'm a medical person so. You look for places that are going

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to nurture that kind of, that situation, so the best fit for me was the air force. And they gave me a nice scholarship to do that. So it was a pretty easy fit. So that was what brought me to the military in the first place.

JC: OK, and what, uh, job field did you come in as?

CG: So I was, I was a nurse. I had a scholarship to be a nurse at the University of Pittsburgh. And after that I went to Lackland Air Force Base at Wilford Hall medical center and I was a nurse and then an intensive care unit nurse. And then I flew, I trained to fly, critical care ambulance.

JC: Ok. So you've obviously served for a long time. So let's kind of, talk about the impact of 9/11 and briefly sum up your career prior to your deployment overseas to the Philippines.

CG: Ok, well that's kind of the crazy thing having been around for a while. You know, before 9/11 you put your uniform on you go to work, you do your job, and you know as a medical person, you know the military aspect of it, you know it came into play coming through the gate but when you walked into the hospital in the morning, you were a nurse and you did a nursing job. You took care of veterans and active duty guys and it was pretty, you know, I really wasn't doing much different than my peers other than maintaining readiness and those kind of things. And then right before 9/11 was right when I started to train for the critical care air ambulance. And that was kind of a new program in those days. So that was exciting for me, I was 23 or 24 years old. That was a tick off from regular old mundane, nursing stuff. You know I'm in the air force, I get to fly the air craft I get to take care of patients and fly and wear a flight suit and all that cool stuff. So I was very interested in that. So I got done with, that was around year 2 of active duty, and then I got done with that, just as I was getting done with that was when 9/11 happened. So I can take you through that day in detail or I mean I don't know how deep you want me to get?

JC: No just kind of a general overview of how you felt.

CG: OK well, that was just you know, I work night shift the night before, I kept my phone was ringing off the hook, I woke up just about the time the second plane hit the tower. You know, the next thing you know were all being recalled and the reality of the situation, you know having just gone through the critical care flight training I had to go back and you know I had it in the closet, and we had to recall the entire base. We spent about an hour trying to get on base. And it was a lot of very stunned looks on people's faces because this was a whole new deal. And we didn't know what we were going to do. Now initially they were going to send several transports to MacDill? in New Jersey to set up a field hospital to catch casualties. So that's what we were waiting for, we were all waiting in an auditorium to get on a plane. The first flight had already left, so the first bunch of guys had already gone on the plane to MacDill, so we were next you know. And so we sat there for the longest time and as things started to roll out and they realized that New York city could handle the casualties because there wasn't a whole lot of, fortunately

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there wasn't a whole lot of casualties and New York city is a major city, they have a lot of facilities. So they were able to handle most of what happened there so they stood us down sometime early in the morning and we all went back home. I think I was off for a couple of days and then the next time I went in, just to do a regular shift that's when the reality started to hit. A lot of the guys that were senior to me, were gone. I was the youngest guy on the unit at the time. And all the older guys were gone. I found out later that they had, they were all in on some of the first teams to jump at Bagram and set up the field hospital and all that stuff. I didn't know at the time; nobody knew that at the time it was all secret. They got rid of all of our patients except for, like, the most critically ill. So it was basically a skeleton of a hospital. And we were all in this kind of wait and see what's going to happen next mode. Cause it was only a few days later that they jumped in. So that's kind of, then after that you know, you kind of got used to it. They called up the reserves, we had reservists coming in and getting them oriented. Business started to work as usual. We didn't get any combat casualties for a couple of months because we were so far away from it. But it was just the fact that you had friends, and I was ROTC with army guys and I had guys in Ranger units and things like that. So I knew that a lot of my friends that I just graduated from college with a few years before that were all getting ready to go. So it was all very spooky eerie feeling to know that was happening. And we were all glued to the tv just trying to see what's going to happen next. And what's going to go down. As things went along and deployment started to happen, and people started to rotate. You know we're talking a year later, and people started getting used to this cycle of people coming and going and coming back and that kind of thing. So it was I don't know how much more to say about it. Guys that were in the army that were gone for two years you know eighteen months there was a lot going on.

JC: Ya, so I would assume that you're expecting to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan and 2010 comes along I believe that's when you deployed in full. Can you hear me? Chuck can you hear me now?

CG: You're breaking up on me. Ok that's better.

JC: It happens from time to time. So what I was saying was, you're probably assuming you're going to Iraq or Afghanistan and you end up going to the Philippines in 2010 is that correct?

CG: Yes.

JC: OK.

CG: So that's kind of a unique story in and of itself. So I got orders twice, the first time I got orders was right before the first time they went into Iraq, I was going to go to Qatar or Qatar or however you want to say it.

JC: Ok.

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CG: I was going to do the run from there to Germany with the critical care ambulance. I had orders ready to go, went home with mom and dad, had the tearful goodbye, the whole nine yards. Flew back to San Antonio that's when Shock and Awe happened, they froze everyone in place, they kept the experienced teams where they were and bumped everyone back a rotation. I was a young guy with, I wanted to go I wanted to fly, I wanted to do my job. But It wasn't my turn, so I got stood down. So the next thing, the next time I get orders I had just got, I was going to get out of the air force, this was in the middle of 2003. I was going to get out of the air force go to civilian and reserves to anesthesia schools up here at Pitt. And so my commander knew that but there were stop laws happening at that time so I couldn't get out anyway, so my rotation came up again and my commander at the time knew that I had gotten into anesthesia school and switched my orders. And basically said you're not going anywhere you're going to go to graduate school, I'm not sending you overseas. So he did me a favor, in a way, I think that it would have been a valuable experience to have gone but you know he wanted to keep me home, keep me safe so I could move on with my life. Which I appreciated that. Wasn't really my choice but that's what happened. So I get done with graduate school, I'm in the reserves, I've been in the air force for over 10 years' active duty or reservist. And I really wanted to do something, you know all my friends had gone over, and either gone to Iraq or Afghanistan or whatever, and I said I got to do something I was a senior captain and I wanted to make major, and I wanted to go. Everybody I knew went. I was the only person I knew that didn't go. So I called up command and said "hey I want to go send me somewhere" so that's when they found this deployment in the Philippines. To tell you the truth, when I first got this assignment I didn't understand it, I didn't even know we were there. And I was like ok I don't know what we're doing. That's when I started to look up what was going on down there and how long the mission had been there and what was going on and all that.

JC: So this officially fell under the umbrella of Operation Enduring Freedom then?

CG: Mhm.

JC: OK.

CG: Ya I was OEF deployment.

JC: Ok so let's talk about the process of getting over to the Philippines and once you get over to the Philippines you know what were you doing?

CG: So, you know I got my orders, went down to San Antonio, to get spun up, you know get arms training and all your shots and all that good stuff. I went down in May, it took like a month or six weeks to get spun up to get ready to go because I wasn't active duty. So you know you have to get everything all squared away. So I got everything all squared away and all that good stuff, and you know go get all your deployment gear and all that. They gave me a nice big bag of winter

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CG: weather gear even though I was going to the jungle which was nice. You know it's the air force so they have to give you everything right. You were a marine right so that might be a foreign concept for you? We don't have to turn our stuff back in. Anyways so, I get, you know it's a special operations deployment. Its only me. I'm the only one going. I have to go get a special passport and special papers and all this stuff because I'm going to this place in the middle of nowhere and I'm going by myself. I get my plane ticket; be at the airport you know at this time. Get on the plane, fly to, where did we fly to? I think we flew to Detroit, and then from Detroit to Tokyo, Tokyo to Manilla. And that took about a day, took about 24 hours to get to Manilla. Land in Manilla in the midnight, again by myself, can't have anything on me that identifies me as military. All my bags have to be civilian. And I'm walking down the gate, I'm half awake. And this guy who looks very much like a marine, he was a marine, but in civilian clothes. He must've recognized me, we caught eyes, he was my liaison. Now he could've been anybody off the street to tell you the truth. Um he had some paperwork and he had some paperwork and it jived. So here I am in a city that I've never been to before, by myself. And I'm supposed to meet up with this military liaison and it was really kind of like it was kind of sketchy to tell you the truth. But everything checked out it was fine. So he got me to the hotel, told me where to be the next morning. Stayed in a beautiful hotel in Manilla but was too exhausted to really enjoy it. And then the next morning got in a cab, no they picked me up. They picked me up and took me to an airfield and that's, I boarded a military transport, like the Lear jet style that we have.

JC: OK.

CG: We flew all the way down to Zamboanga city and when I was in Zambo for a couple of weeks transitioning, just getting the right paperwork and everything else. Then waiting for the person I was supposed to replace, waiting for his orders to come through so that he could leave and I could replace him. So just getting oriented to the unit that was where the headquarters was for the whole entire theater there. So the southern Philippines I'm not, it's the Sulu Archipelago which is what butts right up against Indonesia. So there was this whole, this first group of special operations was in charge of that whole area. So you had, it was a joint task force, so you had air force medical, and some com, and some air. And then you had navy EOD, marine recon, some Green Berets there, you had some SEALs there, you know a little bit of everybody from that world. So I'm just this air force medical person who's never been deployed before, so for me it was pretty wild. To be around all these pretty high speed guys, so it was pretty cool and I thought it was pretty great. So I was at Zambo for a couple of weeks and then helicoptered to our forward surgical team which was in Hollo, which was about three islands south of Zamboanga city. And we had outposts set up on about 6 or 7 of those islands. And our medical team was a surgeon, an ERPA, an ortho PA, a scrub tech, I was the anesthesia asset and that was it, that was us. I'm not exactly sure what the number of troops was, but it was probably a few hundred and we were there first line medical asset for that. The other, the other thing that we did, and the thing that we did mostly was, we were in charge of facilitating the Philippines

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GC:     militaries medical assets which were very limited. So we were pretty much the surgical team for them as well. They had people there but they weren't anywhere near as trained as we were. Most of the time I was the only guy giving anesthesia there was a Filipino anesthesia provider but he was not there most of the time, we don't know where he was. So I was it. So myself and the surgeon were the only two who couldn't go anywhere, we had to stay put because we were the only two that could do what we did in that whole operation. Everyone else got to rotate, you know R & R (Rest and Recuperation), everything else, we didn't get to go. Which you know, whatever, it was 5 months out of my life. I didn't care. Although I would've liked to see the islands, because everyone thought that was pretty cool. So while we were there day to day, from talking to other people, it was a lot of boredom you know. And then there would be an engagement and we would be a little bit busier. So the cycle was about every 2 to 3 weeks they would put together an operation and they go out in the field and they would let us know, hey, were going out tonight. So, they would put together the, I don't know the specifics of it, they would get their team together with the Filipinos as the front-line guys and the Americans as comm (communications) and backup, because they weren't officially allowed to fight. And they would go out and do these operations against Abu Saif and other terrorist groups in the region.

JC:     Can I stop you for one second? Just for some background, Abu Saif are they Al Qaeda affiliated?

CG:     Ya they are Al Qaeda affiliated. So the whole thing, I was there in tent, the mission started somewhere around 2003-2004 right around the Iraq campaign. The Philippines had kicked us out, you know they closed Subic Bay and all that stuff. And you know after 9/11, they started to lobby to get us back because they had this big terrorist problem in their southern region which is Muslim. So the top half of the region, which is Catholic, the bottom of the Philippines is Muslim, so the further south you get the more Muslim it gets and they've had problems with extremism for a long time, and it had been really bad. So what they decided to do was give them their own state that just emboldened them, and things got even worse. Then around that time, they thought let's get the Americans, the Americans have all this money to throw at them right now, so they got us involved right there. So, there was Abu Saif, there were a couple of other ones I can't remember off the top of my head. Filipino Liberation Front, there was a few of them that were Al Qaeda affiliates, and so all those islands down through there, Filipino islands and the Indonesian islands they were doing, I mean you probably heard of a lot of this kidnap for ransom that was happening in the Philippines?

JC:     Yep

CG:     Abu Saif, that's all those guys that are doing that. They basically went down there and, I wish I had one of the posters, they had this big poster with all the bosses of the terrorist groups and x'ed them off one by one. So that started in like 2003, by the time we got there in like 2010, the



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CG: Op. tempo (Operation Tempo) was not as high as it was initially. But they were still going out every three weeks or so cleaning up these camps. And so we would get a phone call saying, hey we got guys coming back. When we were there, fortunately there were no American casualties it was all kind of bumps and bruises. There were a few Filipino casualties and we did have to do a couple of big cases on a couple of guys who got shot up pretty bad. So that was our main role was to back up the Filipino military, medical assets because they were pretty weak. Then we were also, they were using our air to get their guys to next level of care. And by the time we left, we got them up to speed using their air which was kind of our big accomplishment while we were there so that was good.

JC: Ok.

CG: They still fly Hueys. So that was kind of wild to see them flying around. It was, it was cool. I don't know how much more in depth you want than that.

JC: Can you tell us a little bit about your, I don't know if there was an average day over there but, you know what were your living conditions, what was the tempo like as far as what you were doing. Just go a little further into that.

CG: Ok. So we had, we were on a Filipino marine core base which you can probably, was pretty austere. In a jungle environment. We were right off the equator. It was 95 degrees every day, it rained twice every day. The sun rose at 6 and set at 6 every day. So it was kind of Groundhog day in that. Everything was humid. Everything was wet. We, and that was just how you lived your life. We wore modified uniforms, green shorts and khaki t-shirts most of the time unless we were doing something official, and you know boots when were on the base. So the day pretty much consisted of it was day to day if there wasn't anything going on, then we'd get up, workout, eat lunch, workout, eat dinner, watch a few movies, then go to bed. That was kind of the regular day when there was nothing going on. We did several different things when we had things to do. We would go, there was uh, we'd do a thing called uh, I hope I can say all this stuff, I think I can say all this stuff. We would do these things called medcaps, where we would take the whole medical group out into the villages and do like clinics so that we could, our information guys could collect information while we were doing the medical stuff. We'd show up in this village, you know full gear, full military escort out to a village and we'd set up shop with you know Tylenol, and Motrin, and vitamins and things like that. We would see patients; this is pretty much the only contact with medicine was us. So we went out every couple of weeks we'd go and see all kinds of stuff, third world stuff, you're not a medical person but stuff that you see in books that just doesn't even exist in America. We're talking abject poverty, I wasn't in Iraq or Afghanistan to see what their poverty was like, but what it was like in the Philippines, was something out of an old story book. Like thatch huts, and things made out of bamboo and kids running around naked and the whole 9 yards. Pretty basic jungle subsistence these people were

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living in. Very, very poor. They would take pretty much anything we would give them, food, clothes, anything. We'd go out and do these medical operations and the intel guys would get their intel and here we are in the middle of the jungle fully armed, with escorts, seeing patients and I was a nurse anesthetist, and I was doing minor suturing and all kinds of stuff you would never have me doing out in the field. But I was the closest thing they had to any kind of medical provider. And we took turns, the dentist teaching us how to pull teeth you know so we all learned how to do everything. The veterinarian was a big hit. They would bring their animals from miles to see the veterinarian because we brought the veterinarian down. So it was one of those hearts and minds thing while the intel guys were pumping the village leaders for information on where the bad guys were. So that was kind of the pointiest edge of the spear for me. Everything else I did was behind a wall. We never got shot at or anything like that. But the kids knew who Abu Saif was and who wasn't, and they liked to tell us who they were, and they would just sit there, and we would just sit there and nothing would go down. But they were around. So we would do that. We would do medical training for the Filipinos. So we taught the Filipinos CPR. You know self-aide and body care. We taught their medics how to intubate. And airway stuff. We would swap out. So EOD wanted to learn IV's and how to do that so we taught them that and they took us with them to go blow stuff up so it was kind of, we all did that kind of stuff to break that stuff up. We would go to the range do those kind of things. Then we'd have official functions where we'd go to the Filipino air force base and they have their commanders and since we were officers we would get invited to a lot of their, their formal stuff. Because my boss was a lieutenant colonel she was the highest ranking on the base wed get dragged, whenever there was a dignitary we'd get drug to whatever dinner or whatever thing was going on. It was pretty cool, pretty immersive, we worked with the Filipinos pretty closely. The people we worked with were mostly northern Filipino and they were fantastic. Just really, really good to us. You know we ate together a lot as a medical team and we really got to know them very well and worked with them very well. So it felt there was a really good will feeling to be there. They loved to play basketball I know it's something people don't realize but we played basketball a lot and they would there were some villagers who would come in to play basketball with us who were affiliated with Abu Saif. And that's when the kids would be like "oh Ya that guys Abu Saif" and we'd be like, but they knew the guards, they knew people he'd come in and play basketball with us, but on an operation, he could come back in a bag. You know one day you're playing basketball with a guy, the next day he's shooting at you.

JC: So some of the same aspects of what military personnel have dealt with in Iraq and Afghanistan. So as far as American casualties did you have any experience treating them?

CG: We didn't have any like combat casualties that were American. We had our lion share of twisted ankles and busted, guy catching an elbow and busting his lip or his tooth. That kind of stuff. Civilian contractors having heart attacks because they're not vetted. So we have this 55-year-old guy who we've got to use our assets to take out of here because he's having a heart attack in

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the middle of the jungle because he was part of the civilian drone team. But there were no American casualties while we were there.

JC: Let's talk a little about your family. How did they do, were you married or did you have any children at the time?

CG: So I was married and one of the reasons why I ended up in the Philippines instead of Iraq or Afghanistan, my wife was new to the military. I told her, I got to go somewhere. I won't go to Iraq or Afghanistan this first deployment. I'll go someplace a little bit lower key so that well just ease you into this thing. So that was one of the reasons why I went to the Philippines. I didn't know exactly what I was getting myself into when I went there. But, it was I guess, it was a decision to kind of temper things a little bit. But as I'd come to find out, I got my orders, I knew I was going to go about a year ahead of time. The wife and I were trying to get pregnant that whole time. So of course, we get pregnant, I got to go. So when I left she was three months pregnant. So I'm gone, I don't go to any of the ultrasounds I've got to talk to her on the phone about all her appointments and all this stuff. Anything that was scary or anything that was uncharted territory. We weren't living around family or anything at the time. So she kind of had to go through the whole pregnancy thing by herself while her husband was half a world away trying to manage all that by phone and the time difference and stuff. She handled it great, with skype and all those kinds of things we were able to see each other, I was able to watch her belly grow all those kinds of things. But I wasn't there, I couldn't touch it or any of those kinds of things so it was kind of bittersweet. But our relationship was strong, we didn't have any problems or anything like that. I think that the pregnancy actually kind of took the emphasis away from her and I and it kind of, our conversations were based around the pregnancy so we had kind of a distraction in a way. Which I think was probably helpful. But at the end of that I flew home on a Friday and she went into premature labor while I was in transit and I missed the birth of our first child because I couldn't get home in time. So the deployment, that part of that story is a big part of our first child's story. So that's kind of unique I'm not the only who's missed the birth of their child for deployment for sure.

JC: So as far as the media goes, we don't hear a lot about what's going on in the Philippines. There is very little coverage. Did you have any media with you while you were deployed over there?

CG: No there's no media and that's kind of, one of the things when you tell people, "oh you were in the air force", Ya, "did you deploy?", Ya, "where did you go?", the Philippines, "oh that must've been nice", that's what I hear all the time. Well you don't know where I was I'm like I'm sure Iraq and Afghanistan were no picnic but I'm sure. But I was not in a nice part of the Philippines I was not getting a tan, and if I went to the beach by myself I probably would've gotten my head cut off. I didn't see the beach, I was on an island in the middle of the pacific and I didn't see the beach the entire time I was there. Well flying in and flying out. So, there was no, very little

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media coverage. There were a couple of guys who got killed in 2009, about 18 months before I got there. That was still pretty heavy on everyone's minds. There was an IED that went off and got two guys prior to us getting there. So that was kind of a thing. We were there during an election cycle for them so I guess they were behaving themselves to a certain extent. Because the guys who are in power want to stay in power that whole kind of deal. And so, there were some Filipino media, really no American media at all. I didn't even know we were there until I got orders. So it's kind of a very hidden thing people don't know about it.

JC: Absolutely. So coming back to the states from literally a war torn area. Even though most people like you said, they think the Philippines are a nice exotic location. What was the transition like coming back from an area that was literally abject poverty to coming back to the United States?

CG: Well, you know, the perspective that you gain from being in a place where people have nothing, is a very powerful perspective. It makes you feel like people are whining about stuff that doesn't really matter at all. You know you've got people who don't have shirts on their back, don't know where their next meals coming. Basically living one branch out of the rain and then you come back and people are worried about if their cable TV goes out. So that part of it, that's something if you don't really feel or don't really see then you can't really understand how good we have it until you have seen what people have or don't have. And how people live and how happy they are with nothing. So that was a huge, it's kind of a big culture shock when you come back from something like that and you feel that everyone here is so very spoiled. And the instability of the places where we are. You know you're talking to a guy, one thing that stands out. There was a t-shirt vender on the base and he made silk screens and things like that in this bamboo hut, he's making silk screens for us. You know we'd draw it up and they would make silk screens for us and whatever else. But he lived in town, and he came on the base every day, we'd go and walk by his hooch and it's not open and were like oh what's going on with so and so. And we find out he was killed, downtown, a couple of guys with machetes, he got hacked to death because he was working with us. And here's a guy, I had done business with a couple days before that. I had just given him money to make us some shirts and now he's gone and were collecting money for him to bury him. So that kind of, when you're driving down the street and we take it for granted were going to stop at a stop light and nothing bad is going to happen and they don't live like that. It's kind of crazy, you do feel spooked for a while when you come back. And you don't, you have kind of an uneasy feeling about people and things like that but. You know for me, because I had to come back and be a new dad right away, that was a whole different set of stressors I think because I hadn't seen my wife in six-eight months. I never saw her fully pregnant. It took me a while to come home because things were so chaotic. We had a baby in the niche??, my wife had a C-section she was recovering. For me it was very day-to-day, very mechanical. And it was hard for me to reinvest in what was happening at home because I had to kind of put up this wall and I was on my own and in a different environment prior to that. It probably took a couple, three months, for me to really come home and for us to reconnect and to feel like, to feel like I

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was in my space again because the space I left was so vastly different to the space I came home to so that I think added its whole new set of challenges.

JC: Absolutely. So let's talk about what are you doing now? And I'm sorry to cut you off as far as military service, as far as education and career?

CG: So, I have, I got back and then I did several years, I got to go down to San Antonio to BAMC, the big service hospital in San Antonio. Went down there for a year for my reserve duty and did all that. Um we had another baby last year, and then after that I decided that going to Texas is probably not the best idea to keep going all the way down to Texas to do my duty. When you're a nurse anesthetist there's not a lot of opportunity in local reserve bases and stuff like that. So what we'll do, we'll link up with the major hospital and kind of attach ourselves with the active duty. It's an individual mobilization augmented, IMA program. So I've been doing that, and that kind of led me, and I work at Magee Women's Hospital at Pitt. And as a nurse anesthetist and there was some money that came up for scholarship. So right now I'm getting a doctorate in nurse anesthesia and I teach a little bit at the anesthesia school. What I'm trying to do and I've kind of come to a crossroads in my reserve career because I'm getting up on lieutenant colonel, kind of have to figure out what I want to do next. So I'm looking at trying get a IMA slot at in Bethesda to use my doctorate that I'm getting at Pitt. to teach at USUES. I'm hoping if everything goes well to ducktail that civilian and military world together again and be able to do that. So that's my plan and I might be able to work at the hospital at Wright Patterson Air Force Base which is over in Dayton, Ohio. So that's actually my back up plan. So that's all come together in the last couple of months. Because I was thinking about getting out entirely. But I just had a phone call with my commander last week. We talked about options and so I have 14 good years, you have 6 years left I'd hate for you to get out and not get your benefits. He's like not that it's a whole lot, but I'm trying to hang around and get my 20. So whether or not that happens kind of depends but I'm going to give it a good shot.

JC: Awesome. So if you have anything you want to send us as far as the project, and photographs, journals, anything you may have written over there just feel free to send that over to me.

CG: Ok I can do that.

JC: Anything else you'd like to add? Any memories that stick out about your time over there?

CG: I think we covered pretty much everything.

JC: Ok no that's fine well thank you for your service, your continued service. It's good to interview somebody else that was actually in a different theatre other than Iraq or Afghanistan. A lot of people don't realize that the global war on terror actually is global.

CG: Right and that's kind of, Ya know, that's kind of the reason why I was interested in doing the interview too. You know people should know that we were in all kinds of places, so Africa,

Philippines, all kinds of places. So, I mean I still have a lot of friends who are in the military. A lot of friends, who are, they're making major lieutenant colonel. They're all making, they're all in charge of these things now. They're all over the place so it's been a big part of my world for almost the last 20 years.

JC: Ya well thank you once again and we'll be in touch in the future here so you can get a copy of this interview.

CG: Alright well thank you it's nice talking to you.

JC: Its nice talking to you too. Have a good day.

CG: Alright you too.

JC: Alright bye.

[00:46:30]