

Robert Morris University Oral History Center
Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Project



Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Jake Dray
Combat Medic, US Army Reserves
August 3, 2017

Dray, Jake (1986 –), Oral History Interview, August 03, 2017.

Biographical Sketch: Jake Dray joined the US Army Reserves and served with the 420th Engineer Company out of Indiana, Pennsylvania. Jake would deploy with the 420th Engineer Company as a combat Medic. Deployed to the Hindu Kush Mountain Ranges of Afghanistan, Jake would participate in route clearing missions with 4th Platoon in the surrounding areas of Combat Outpost Khilagay.

Topics Covered in Interview:

US Army Reserves

420th Engineer Combat Unit

Combat Medic

COP Khilagay

IED

Indirect fire

Interviewed by Adam Salinas

Transcribed by Adam Salinas

Edited by Adam Salinas and John McCarthy

[00:00:10]

AS: The interview is part of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Project undertaken by the Oral History Center at Robert Morris University. I am Adam Salinas and today is 3/08/2017. I am joined with veteran

JD: Jake Dray

AS: Please state your full name, we'll start with your date and place of birth.

JD: I was born January 8th, 1986. I was born in Pittsburgh, AGH to be specific.

AS: Nice, I was born January 10th.

JD: Alright,

AS: Glad you are back in Pittsburgh. Ugh branch of service, years of service and rank?

JD: I was in the army reserves, I joined in 2009 for a six-year contract to IRR (inactive ready reserve). So I just finished my IRR this year. I think those numbers are right.

AS: Place of enlistment, reason why you joined and what was the impact of 9/11 on you?

JD: Um, that's a lot, um alright first let me state my rank, I was a specialist when I left, E-4. I enlisted, at an army recruitment center in Oakland, I was going to University of Pittsburgh at the time and I sort of needed a break from college life and I went and did my basic and AIT (advanced individual training) and came back and finished my degree. Continued to drill and then was deployed later. And what was your question about 9/11?

AS: how did that impact you in your decision to join the service?

JD: Well all my family members were service members. I mean my parents were both Marines, my grandfather was in the Navy and my brother served in Iraq, So I always knew that I would serve at some point, I just didn't know when and I remember being in high school seeing 9/11 and knowing that things were going to change. I didn't join, I was going to join right after high school, somethings changed I had college, it did definitely influence my decision for sure.

AS: Just to dig a little bit deeper, so did 9/11 have an influence on what branch that you decided to go to?

JD: No, actually. it didn't really matter to me where I went. At first I really wanted to be a marine because my parents were both marines. I tried to get into the marines in senior year for some reason I was taking a medication they weren't accepting. I mean the army recruitment center just happened to be in Oakland the day I decided to go into the recruitment center and that's literally just the branch I ended up with.

AS: Luck of the draw.

JD: I guess, yea if you call it luck.

AS: Right, no. So what attracted you to military service, was it the events of 9/11? Was it a combination of both family history and the word events?

JD: Well, as a kid I like sort of idolized the idea of a soldier. Just from stories from my grandpa and stories from my mother and you know when you're young, you know, they are basically super hero's to you, these soldiers and I thought well everyone in my family seems to be service members, I think I should carry that on. So I always sort of felt like that was sort of, like I always had this sort of sense like that it was something that I needed to do. So, I mean 9/11 didn't really, I remember it having an effect on like, it made me realize that like the world was real a little bit sooner than I think it happens for other people. But I was going to join the military probably regardless if it happened or not, to be honest.

AS: That is outstanding. So what was your understanding of the current situation of the war upon entering the service?

JD: Wow, umm I don't know that I had a very clear picture of what was happening in theater in Iraq or Afghanistan and I didn't, looking back at it I don't think anybody that hasn't been there, unfortunately, really does have a clear picture. All you have is what the news tell you and you get a few images of, you know, people in middle eastern garb (clothing), shooting rockets and soldiers, you know, doing soldier things and I mean you sort of always knew, well we're fighting terrorist. So I guess there are terrorist in Afghanistan and we are not fighting afghan people we are fighting terrorist. But I didn't realize the complexities of that exchange until I was actually there. I don't know much about Iraq, just other than stories from what people had told me in my unit, things like that but, I don't think that I had a very clear picture to begin with.

AS: So, when you did get into the country, I'm assuming you deployed, your views changed, in what ways?

JD: I mean, you see how different it is from America. It's basically, ancient times of Toyota trucks. I mean it's not, it's I mean people live in huts really, I mean you think that you're going into a country and you realize everyone in this country knows that we went to the moon, there is people in that country that can't count let alone can't read, you know what I mean, they don't, some of them don't know that they're part of a country called Afghanistan. I mean they have a general idea of it but most of them are just very, they live with in a three-mile radius and that's the word they live in. They don't have internet access, they don't have a formal education, and then you get there and you realize, you're like oh wow, this doesn't seem, this seems like all these people are sort of just pons in a much broader thing and now I'm actually part of it and now I don't know where I fit.

AS: Very interesting. So if you will discuss with us your branch, your training life on base and the overall feeling of deployment.

JD: Training, like in, while we were in country (a phrase used to describe being in a warzone)?

AS: In country, or leading up to deployment.

JD: Well in the reserves it's kind of a pain doing all your pre-mobilization training. That's the stuff you have to do prior to being mobilized and that's tough on your job. I mean if you have a 9-5 occasionally the months leading up you gotta leave for a month to go to California, come back for a week. You have to leave for two weeks come to Texas come back for a week, you know what I mean?

AS: Yea

JD: So, it's sort of a drag and especially all the waiting you do, I mean people have no idea what it's like to wait in a line until they are in the army. Days, days, literal days, I mean waiting for medical I'm sanding the whole day in line and having to come back to my place the next day in line.

AS: And do it all over?

JD: And do it all over, again! But the training was, some of it was, I mean sort of anecdotally useful, but a lot of what they do just seems like busy work. I mean, the training that we did didn't seem to have any real effect on our ability to perform our job over there. We sort of just learned it as we went. I mean my medical training, for sure, was very significant and I had very good medical training through the army. Some kind of controversial things, I'd say but I had some very extensive medical training. And I also was a paramedic at the time, so the job was really, I fully understood the job that I had to do at least in my unit so I'm in that sense that training was very helpful.

AS: And so, you were a combat medic?

JD: Yea, I was a 68W. I was a combat medic with an engineering unit out of Indiana, Pennsylvania and we were route clearance. Over there we'd look for bombs, just the slow moving pickup armored trucks that would go out prior to infantry. Going and checking out lanes. Actually the German infantry, we did most of our work for the German infantry over there.

AS: Did you,

JD: yea not a whole lot with the army

AS: and so, your civilian training coincided and almost supported your military training as far as your MOS role?

JD: yea I mean, you know working 40 -60 sometimes 80 hours a week on an ambulance gives you a lot of experience for trauma that you are gonna have to treat in theater. Prior to that I didn't know how bad it was going to be. I didn't know the significance of it at the time, but I felt really prepared.

AS: What was your overall feeling during deployment?

JD: Really, if I'm being honest, it was an amazing experience, to be honest. I remember going up to it, leading up to it, about two years leading up to it and knowing we were going to go at some point, not really knowing when. I was terrified I really thought this is probably a 50/50 chance of me coming home or dying there. And the job that we were about to do, you know they take a lot of casualties, a lot, there are some horror stories about route clearance. I mean they are literally going out to look for bombs and most of the time they don't find them, they find you. And I wasn't sure, I had a lot of anxiety about it, I mean more than anxiety. But then when I got there, I realized that were are not storming the beaches of Normandy. It's a job everyone, as long as everyone does their part its fine, and once you get over there you get into a routine, it's a lot of fun actually, you're hanging out with your buddies you're working, passing the day

basically. It was boring most of the time, we, I mean it took, it was months before we found anything or engaged in any contact. You start out thinking oh please I hope nothing happens to us, then you're like four months into your deployment and you're like please let this be a bomb, please let this be a bomb, just so that you can do something. I was sitting in the back of a truck for 16 hours a day for seven days a week. But the experience was probably one of the greatest experiences of my life, I mean if it was the same unit it was the same people it was the same platoon sergeant same leadership and they asked me to go tomorrow, I'd probably just put the uniform on and go load the truck and go.

AS: That is really awesome. I can relate with the experiences of deployment being enriching. So where were you in country?

[00:11:46]

JD: We were in, they call it RC North, So we were, our company was out of the Kunduz Region, and my platoon, 4th platoon our CP-66 we were at a base called Khilagay crazy name but it's actually a former Russian base that the Afghan army used, and we actually had a spot inside of that base, where soldiers from several different countries were stationed there. A few US soldier, some German special forces and a lot of civilian contractors. And we were sort of like on the Pakistan boarder just about as far as you can go by road before you start hitting the mountains. But a little farther north of most of the real combat going on. Like down in the south it was hell for people but up in the north it was spares, I mean we saw action but it wasn't anything near other RCP and other units to deal with in other parts of the country.

AS: You take a very humble approach to your experience.

JD: well you know I hear so many, a lot of guys talking in bars and they'd start telling stories and you realize you're lying, like you're full of shit, I don't believe you. A lot of guys like to embellish and I like to be completely honest about it I mean I'll tell you exactly everything I remember the way I remember it cause it's enough I don't need to feel like a hero I don't need anyone to praise me on it, and that's all you're gonna get.

AS: And your mission was route clearance,

JD: Yes

AS: What was your time in country?

JD: We left in February of 2012 from to go to our mobilization station in Ft. Bliss, Texas. I think it was approximately a month and a half to two months before we actually left for country we weren't in country for another week and a half maybe we spent some time in Kirgizstan it was a long ride to get there, the commercial jets and then finally we didn't get the military plane until Kirgizstan. Then I'd say our time in country would be close to nine months working, maybe less maybe eight, eight to nine months working in Afghanistan.

AS: And you saw as you describe as minimal combat?

JD: Yea I mean it was real boring most days, I would be in the back of a truck and I would have to find things, I would bring books with me, put on a little weight cause I'd bring some candy with

me and stuff like that. It was months before saw anything and when you're over there you get a little spooked, the littlest thing becomes a big deal, there are a ton of Russian, Chinese munitions years old 20, 30, 40 years old, even more. We found a British rifle on base, it was like over a hundred years old, it wasn't a base it was a farm, it was just resting up, these farmers had it, we wanted to ring it back but they wouldn't let us. But they would take a lot of these old mortars and use them to make IED's, they are perfect to fill with, it provides explosives and a lot of times we'd find them, or the Afghan army would find them, and we'd go investigate 'em. They'd never end up being anything, but I mean yay it was day in and day out, we would have 5 days 6 day mission sets, sometimes close to 16 hours a day, in the truck going five miles an hour, you learn a lot about the guys in the truck cause there is nothing to talk about. Just did a lot of sleeping, a lot of reading, and waiting.

AS: So, you talked a little bit about the camaraderie, do you want to talk about that a little bit?

[00:15:31]

JD: Yea, I mean the cohesion at least in our company was something that I have never experienced ever, I mean I'm probably closer to some of those guys than I am with members of my own family. We still communicate, I thought my leadership was outstanding, our platoon sergeant, Sergeant Dewreezy is probably one of the greatest men I have ever met in my entire life. I would follow him into hell if he told me to go. Everyone, they were all real good to us. They treated us well, I mean they made us work hard but they kept us moving, you know what I mean, and that's important cause you start thinking and you start worrying. I would pretty much do anything for any of those guys at any point in time, you know you spend all that time in all that danger with the same group of people it's impossible not to become more than family with these people, just, there's a bond that, I mean most soldiers that have been deployed will recognize but it's hard to describe to someone that never experienced it.

AS: Sure yea, I would agree. Over the length of your deployment how did the moral change with in your unit?

JD: There was up's and down's. You know we kept hearing stories about, you know we got it easy and some of our other units in the south, they got guys dying, they got guys in our battalion, you know getting killed in other areas and we sort of felt guilty that we are up here. We had it pretty nice on this base I mean it was small it was out of the way, we didn't have top brass (High level authority) coming down on us. I had a little 8X10 plywood dorm room, I had my own little shack, it was comfortable, it was pretty nice, I didn't, it wasn't terrible, so I mean we had our up's and down's most of the time we just goofed off and kept ourselves up. Everyone misses their families, but you sort of, we had a lot of comforts. We had video games, we had everything you would need, but everyone gets down over there, you sort of get into this routine and you spend all this time in a truck going slow and you just can't stand looking at the same dirt and the same mud all the time and it really wears down on you. But I'd say over all the moral was high, most, a vast majority of the time, I mean we had little gripes and everything, but everyone was real, real ok with being there. Most of the time.

AS: So other than the mud becoming mundane and routine and drawn out and maybe a few issues back home amongst different individuals there was no real dip in moral or that affected you aver all mission?

JD: No, not necessarily. I mean just little stuff happens in a day, I mean the only thing I can think of and this probably isn't even a good example, is we got a little bummed out after, we got into a pretty ad combat situation where and actual IED did go off after a vehicle that supposed to find it, didn't find it. And when we got back to the base and after all that craziness happened we, our platoon sergeant the next morning got up early and dug a bunch of metal, put it into the dirt and ran this truck over it and it never found anything. We had been out there for months using this equipment and all of it was faulty. We could have been running over things that, we could have been running over command det. (trigger for enemy explosives) and couldn't, wouldn't have been able to find them. Would have been able to do or job, because of software. Guys weren't coming out to our base and updating our software or something, I don't really have a really good memory of it. But I remember it being a little, me specifically if we are gonna talk about moral, I remember being real pissed about that. That I didn't feel that anybody cared enough to make sure that we had the things that we needed.

AS: Thank you for sharing that.

JD: yea

AS: So as a specialist did you advance in rank prior to deployment, and then did you make specialist while you were on deployment?

JD: No, I went in as a PFC (private first class) and it was very long before I was an E-4. And there wasn't really a lot of room for me to get my E-5, I mean towards the end of my time at the reserves I probably could have signed an extension and went and got my E-5, it would have been nice to get the stripes but you know I spent the whole time doing that and I really didn't feel like doing any more training at the time, yea I spent the whole time as an E-4 basically.

AS: Me too.

JD: It's a nice place to be, nobody, you don't get hollered at too much and you don't have a lot of responsibility it's a nice real even place to be, I think.

AS: I would agree, so tell me about your experience as a specialist.

JD: I mean if you were to ask other guys, I probably, I didn't, people for some reason, I would, I sort of had to make myself useful cause as a medic it wasn't like, if people weren't getting hurt I was just sort of sitting around so I had to, they would holler at me they were like you got to do something, you got to get out here in the motor pool and help us clean these trucks and help us set up, and I was sort of like grumbling about it, but then I really got into it, I was out there every morning and setting up the gun, you know working the radio and it actually got to the point where I was out with a, on the ground, occasionally we'd bring out those old metal detectors like you'd see on the beach, basically something like that but for the army you know, trying to find whatever, and we also had another device for finding command wire, for like a remote detonation or something like that and I would actually run that every now and then. A very

simple piece of equipment and it got me the chance to stretch my legs and get out of the truck and walk a little bit and my wife would be like, why are you getting out of the truck, and I like cause I'm so bored, you have no idea, I have to do something so, As specialist, I mean it didn't really matter that much when you are over there, of course we followed rank, but I mean it wasn't supper, you listen to your superiors but it wasn't like you couldn't talk to them like a regular person, you know what I mean, I mean you are stuck with them, it's not, it wasn't, they weren't jerks about it you know what I mean? Everyone had their place in rank for sure but if you ask them they would probably say that I didn't do anything.

AS: So you're saying for communication purposes and relationship purposes, the rank structure was an obvious object but for job duties and descriptions you crossed trained and learned different positions?

JD: Yea I sort of, you know everybody sort of did every job. Especially in our truck, I mean I drove the truck, I ended up leaving with a motor badge which I didn't expect to do, I mean I drove a lot just to give people a spell, you know what I mean? Give the driver, close his eyes for a little while, TC (tank commander) would drive every now and then. I'd take the gun when the gunner needed a break you know. You have to do those things, you're working, I mean you don't know when you're gonna get into it, you say I'm a medic but and then what happens, but you end up working in the gun truck and you're gonna run the gun, you're gonna draw up, you're gonna do all those things, and good thing to cause it's good to be able to do that job just in case somebody can't.

AS: Absolutely, So you spoke about the average day under deployment being drawn out and long, you felt that being up north that you were out of the way of majority of the harm, what else can you tell me about deployment life in your experience.

[00:23:43]

JD: I mean it's different for everybody, we were on this tiny little base, we didn't get supplies all that often, when we got mail, we got a ton of mail. That had been sitting inside somewhere for a while. People don't realize that you get around everywhere by helicopter and the way to get a helicopter, you'd think there would be a little more structure than this, you literally go and wait for a helicopter. You go sign a sheet and you sit there until a helicopter shows up and ask them if they got enough room to take you to the next base. You get a little upset when you go to the big bases, Kunduz wasn't big but it was way bigger than what we had and they had real nice food, like that was the worst part about it, our food was not good, I got to stay at that German base, they had world class food it was fantastic and the food at Kunduz was a little bit better but you go to these big bases and they've got Starbucks and they got pizza places, and guys are like ohh I got to go to work today, I'm like I'm at work every day, like I'm out of the wire like 90% of the time, and that kind of bugs you when you are out there and your guys, that another reason I don't like to talk about it too much is because I have met people out there and they were like yay I was in Afghanistan, and I'm like oh where were you at? And they would tell me like I was at Kandahar. I was like were you at Kandahar the whole time? They were like yea, I was like ohh must have been real nice, real nice. Cause I know you didn't do anything.

AS: That was me.

JD: Well other than the occasional indirect fire but I mean, that sucks that really does, and security scares, that stuff that's the worst part about it, the civilian's workers that they have coming in you can't trust any of them, most of those shootings that happen on base are that, you know what I mean? And that stuff can be kind of scary. But we lived on a little COP, combat outpost, it was a small town living basically, you know?

AS: So can you tell me about your free time? What you engaged in to keep yourself busy and motivated?

JD: We worked out a lot we had weights there, it was 5 days a week most of us were working out. A bunch of guys had TV's, videogame systems, we spent a lot of time doing that. I remember, like the first time we had a mortar fire or indirect fire we were like terrified, we ran into the little concrete bunkers and we hunkered down and we saw other guys on the base walking, we are like what are they walking there's a... they are attacking us, and then you realize they aren't gonna hit us, they are shooting way to far away and they have no aim and have horrible equipment. Four months in we are playing Xbox and we hear indirect fire and I'm like I'm not moving I'm not giving up my controllers, we're just like... you know what I mean?

AS: That's too funny

JD: You would get so comfortable with it, you'd get out of the truck to go to the bathroom after 2 or 3 hours, 4 hours in the truck and you hear gun fire and you're like are they shooting at us? And you're like maybe? And you are like ugh... and you sort of just shake it off everything stop sort of being scary, but daily life for our free time we were working out we all had computers with a ton of hard drive space, we had a little bit of internet access, so we were real spotty, I mean I watched just hours and hours of TV shows and movies and stuff like that.

AS: So, the next question is did you feel like you were being used effectively?

JD: As a unit or specifically?

AS: As an individual.

JD: As an individual it took me a little while to find my groove because as a medic and nobody getting hurt you feel like you are kind of useless but once you start helping other guys out, I'm trying to find work to do, you feel a little bit more useful. I definite felt like I was doing everything that everybody wanted me to do and that was a big part, as I just wanted to do my job the best that I could, and I didn't want to make a lot of waves, as a unit I don't think, they talk all the time about moving us because of the low/least activity they wanted to move us to a different spot and we kept running missions and running missions just to show that we were needed up there in that area, and the Germans really wanted us there, they didn't have their own route clearance capabilities so they were sort of utilizing us through NATO or whatever agreement they had, but I mean we, you spend all this time training and they are telling you are gonna find this, you're running over IED's, there are route clearing companies and they get hit 8-9 times and you go out for 6 months and you don't see anything, you're like why am I here, Like this ridiculous, and then you end up finding something and we'd get into a couple pretty nasty combat situations and then you start to feel a little bit justified for being there, for sure. We assisted civilians quite a bit actually, we ran into a lot of civilian activity, and I did like that, the

kids over there are real nice, that's the thing that people that I don't understand, when they think about Afghanistan they think it's all just like angry Muslims and people that want to kill Americans, but a lot of time its, all those people want is they want to be left alone, kids want to go to school, they want to learn English, they want to learn math, there's tons of kids out there, and they just, everytime they see you they are asking for like candy or soccer ball I don't know why that they'd a thought that we'd have soccer ball but they would always ask for a soccer balls and pens and paper cause they didn't have it for school, so I would ask for people to send me, from home, I would ask them to send me you know little note pads, pens and paper so we could give it out. It helps a lot too when you're trying to get information, has anybody been through here that you guys don't like anybody dangerous has anybody been digging in the ground, has any... stuff. They don't really want to talk to you unless you got something to give them. And it's not a lot but it's a lot to them. So I felt useful in that sense that we were engaging with the people, that's probably where I got a lot of that feeling, but I would say as a route clearance unit for a while there it felt like we weren't being used to our full potential, which I guess is good, cause it probably would have been a lot more dangerous, but in the end I would say that we definitely did our job and we definitely needed to be there. After the whole story sort of came together.

AS: It's a really interesting aspect that you brought into this conversation, your relationship development with the local nationals and the positive-ness that you received from children or the local inhabitants.

JD: I try to tell people that I mean they are, 99 I mean thousands most of the people in that country are really good people, they just want schools, they want businesses, they want growth, they want the ability to take care of their families. I mean their family structures are little bit different, we saw some real horrible stuff that the nationals do, I've seen them beat women in the street, I've seen little girls get hit, they are very violent with each other, especially kids fighting with rocks and things like that, we actually we saw people selling little boys, probably for sex purposes, I mean they were wearing dresses wearing make-up, we saw that and couldn't do anything about it, that really wasn't our mission, and as much as we begged our leadership to stop and kick some ass it really would have just made things worse. So you do see some pretty horrible stuff, but most of the people over there are very good and a lot of people want to get out of the country, a lot of people want an opportunity that they know isn't there and I think most American's aren't aware of that, that they only get little snippets of that and I wish people knew that there is good people out there and there is children out there that suffer for no good reason.

AS: That's a very unique aspect. Thank you for sharing that, So the last question here is how did your deployment affect your family back home, your relationships?

JD: Things were good, at least, you know I called home as much as I could, at least once a week, we had the ability to call when we could and we could talk via internet and things like that, and it was hard leaving my wife we were very close, and she would find ways to distract herself from worrying about me being over there because your family they don't know that, they don't know that you are as safe as you are, you know what I mean? They don't realize that you're in a thirty-five-thousand-pound vehicle and not a lot that can touch you, I mean there are things but

there's not a lot that, and they think you're out there, you know fighting on boots on the ground and stuff like that and its, that's probably the hardest part is letting them know that I'm fine and everything is ok, you don't have to worry about me, even after, I wouldn't want to tell my wife that we got into an altercation today, some, we got hit pretty hard you know what I mean and she didn't like hearing it but she would listen you know what I mean. We didn't really have any problems with our relationship, there wasn't any like, I didn't get any letters like I'm leaving you, she didn't waiver or anything like that. Other guys had, you know those typical situations that you hear about in movies and TV and things like that you know, but our relationship was really strong, it still is and it was nice having her, you know, having her there and I don't know there's no real way to describe it, I mean it suck, I mean you're enjoying yourself over there but every once in a while you get on the phone and you realize, man I am in this shithole and I can't wait to leave. Then you sort of, you have to push that aside then you have to find the humor in the day and get back to work so you can clear these days and get this deployment over with and go home. So, it's sort of two sort of feelings, know what I mean? You almost don't want to call home cause you start missing home when you do, and that's hard for family to understand is like why don't we hear from you? Because it's just too hard to call you. It's easier for me to be this thing and just live in that, you know what I mean? So I don't have to keep trying to be two different things. If that makes any sense.

AS: When you talk about being this thing and separating yourself from who you were here, your role and responsibilities are you referring to like an alter person sort of say where you're just not able to be who you were back home?

JD: I mean no, I think, I don't think that I have like an alternate personality or anything like that and I think it was more that as long as I'm, you know they are worried about you getting hurt, and that makes you worry about getting hurt cause you want to get back to them, and when you are with your buddies, I mean you worry about them they worry about you, but you know that they have your back and when you're just with them talking and you're out on missions and stuff like that you feel safe and you feel capable and you feel like you are doing your job, and you sort of get lost in that momentum and if you get out of that momentum that can be hard, that can be really hard to start when your head starts rolling at chow and you start thinking about home and what's going on there, its real hard. That's the hardest part especially guys that have kids and things like that. They miss them every day, you know, and they want to talk to them but they will even tell you, like sometimes I don't call home because I just want to pretend that, not that they don't exist but that, that's not a thing right now. I'm just, it's just easier I guess. I don't know if I'm describing it the right way...

AS: No, you are doing a great job.

JD: Thanks I'm trying. It's just out of sight out of mind I guess. As horrible as that sounds but it's sort of what you have to do to stay focused. You realize, I have this to worry about, and I have to do it well it I expect to get back home, and I can't be thinking about both. I can't be out on a mission and worried about whats going to happen to me am I going to get home, I have to worry about doing my mission and listen to my leadership and get back to base that day. One day at a time.

AS: Well I want to thank you for your time, I am going to close up the interview now.

[00:35:38]

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