1 July 2004

INTERVIEWER: This is Scott Forsythe and Glenn Longacre, conducting an oral history interview with Denis P. Paskauskas on July 1, 2004, about his service in the Naval Reserve and in Qatar during the recent military action in Iraq.

Denis, why don't you tell us something about yourself, your background, before we get into the actual experience in the service. You might want to address education, things like that.

PASKAUSKAS: Sure. My name is Denis Paskauskas. That's spelled D-E-N-I-S. And the last name is spelled P-A-S-K-A-U-S-K-A-S. I guess I could start where I was born. I was born in Chicago, Illinois, actually about a mile and a half away from the Records Center, in 1955, in an area called Marquette Park, which was predominantly Lithuanian. Prior to Lithuania's independence in 1990 it advertised itself as the largest community of Lithuanians in the free world. I don't know if that's true or not, but it certainly seemed that way to me when I was growing up.

I grew up there, and left for the Army in 1973 and spent a little over two and a half years in the Army in air defense artillery. Left the service to go ahead and continue on with my college degree.

I went to St. John's University after my stint with the Army, and received a degree in Natural Science from St. John's University.

INTERVIEWER: When you were in the Army you were an enlisted person?

PASKAUSKAS: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PASKAUSKAS: Left there. It was a tumultuous time for the United States Army. The pullout from Vietnam and then the fall of Saigon, and the resignation of President Nixon, so it was an interesting time. But didn't want to make it a career. So I left in pursuit of a college degree.

After my degree I came back to Chicago and took the PACE test, the professional/administrative/clerical examination, which used to be the national test for anyone that wanted to work for civil service, for the federal service, and got on the register for that, and waited. Got approximately three to four calls from federal agencies for interviews. One was HUD, one was Social Security, and I received one from the National Archives here. They had a management trainee program that they were advertising for, and I was interviewed by the director of the Chicago Records Center, Mr. Robert Hutchinson, who was a retired lieutenant colonel. A mustang, actually—one tour Korea and two tours Vietnam. And apparently impressed him

enough to where he decided to take a chance on me. So my National Archives career started in 1977, actually on my birthday, September 8, is when I started my civil service career.

Went through that program, the two-year program, and then was promoted to Reference Branch chief here in Chicago in 1980. And then put in for a job as the director of the Dayton Records Center and was selected for that position in 1983. I was the director of the Dayton Federal Records Center in Dayton, Ohio, from 1983 to 1998. Then, of course, NARA reorganized from individual facilities to regions, and they established a regional office and the position of assistant regional administrator, and I was selected for that and relocated back to Chicago in 1998, and I've been employed here since then.

INTERVIEWER: Now, next thing, we should concentrate on your Naval Reserve service. When did you first join, and what was your experience training background in that?

PASKAUSKAS: I was interested after the first year of President Reagan's budget—which was in 1982, I think. Let's see, he took office—actually he was inaugurated in '81, January of '81, so actually it had to be towards the end of '82, '83, where there were some severe cutbacks in funding for all agencies. It became kind of a stressful time here in the sense that we lost approximately fifty percent of our staff, which were intermittents. All we could bring on were full-time people, and the intermittent positions made up, at that time, about fifty percent of our entire staff. We had to do those jobs as well, so it was kind of a stressful time.

I became interested in going back to the Army as a reservist, just so I could play around in the woods one weekend a month as a stress reliever. I checked into it, and because I had been out of the service for a number of years, I would have had to go back in for about a six-week training—re-introductory or introductory. Whatever they called it, it didn't appeal to me. I got married in November of 1980 and this was only a couple of years later. Career was going well. I didn't have any children at the time, but I really liked married life and didn't want to go away for six weeks.

At that time there was a Navy recruiter that was sitting across the aisle from the Army recruiter, overhearing the entire discussion. And he said, after I was finished he said, "Well, why don't you step over here. I think we've got something in the Navy that you might be interested in, given your background." So I gave him an opportunity to discuss what he had, and it was the Naval Reserve Intelligence Program. So I became aware of that program in 1983.

Went up to Glenview Naval Air Station at the time—there was a regional office there for the Naval Reserve Intelligence Program—and talked to a Commander Getter. I'll never forget him. He was quite a character. He described the entire program at length and encouraged me to go ahead and apply for it. Given my family background, since both of my parents came here from Lithuania, he recognized—and at the time it was still a satellite republic under the Soviet Union—that it would be time-consuming in order for me to go ahead and get cleared in order to get into the program.

I put in the application and actually it was two years later that finally the clearance went through. It was adjudicated positively and I received my clearance at that time, but it took a long time.

INTERVIEWER: What level is the clearance? Did you receive a clearance and it continued throughout your career?

PASKAUSKAS: Yes. It was a top secret compartmentalized clearance. I affiliated with the program then in 1986, actually commissioned February 1 of 1986. By that time I was already in Dayton, and so I was sworn in there in Dayton and affiliated with a training unit. Because getting into that program as a direct-commissioned officer with no prior active duty Navy time, I was kind of behind the curve. So I had to go ahead and take some additional classes and that sort of thing during the first couple of years I was in the program.

INTERVIEWER: Were these classes offered there, or was it like something you could do through correspondence?

PASKAUSKAS: Actually, there were on-site courses during drill weekends for the entire first year. It was all classroom. In between there were two-week schools that were required for me to attend, and that took me approximately three to four years to go ahead and complete. It would have taken me longer but I doubled up my two weeks. One of the advantages of being a federal employee and being in the reserves is that there is such a thing as military leave, and you get fifteen calendar days per year, paid, so it doesn't come out of your vacation time, annual leave. So I took advantage of that and used vacation time in addition to military leave and attended all the required schools that I needed to, and then became fully integrated as a naval intelligence officer.

INTERVIEWER: Now, broadly, what kind of training was it?

PASKAUSKAS: There was specific training in certain aspects of intelligence. There was imagery training. There was briefer training. Being an intelligence officer, briefings are standard job duties. So they were specific to the career path in intelligence, because there are different career paths. You can go human intelligence and work interrogation techniques and that sort of thing, or imagery intelligence, which is a whole other area. And signals intelligence is another area. And I became operations intelligence, was the career path that I had pursued.

INTERVIEWER: And for the longer, for the classes that were, say, two weeks, were those—where were those conducted?

PASKAUSKAS: They were conducted various places, but most of them were conducted at Virginia Beach, Dam Neck. Shortly after I affiliated with the program they consolidated the Marine Corps and the Naval intelligence schools, that were in Denver or in other places for the Marine Corps, and at Dam Neck. We called it NMITC, Navy and Marine Corps Intelligence Training Center.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, in Dam Neck?

PASKAUSKAS: Dam Neck, Virginia.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, oh, that's the town.

PASKAUSKAS: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I thought we were dealing with an acronym there.

PASKAUSKAS: Across the street from Oceana Naval Air Base. Or across the road.

INTERVIEWER: Now, if you can kind of basically summarize what being in operational intelligence means.

PASKAUSKAS: Operational intelligence, basically—gathering information, assessing the information, and turning it into intelligence for senior officers' evaluation. For the most part, after I was done with schools I did a number of different things, but I got involved in joint and combined naval exercises and applied my operational intelligence skills in those areas. They were basically exercises.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So basically you were in an all-source situation where you get reports. Raw reports, or had they already been sifted somewhat?

PASKAUSKAS: Both. Both.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And it was your job, basically, analytically to pull the information together and then report to a higher authority.

PASKAUSKAS: Right. To on ships and to the naval intelligence on the ship.

INTERVIEWER: So did you have situations where you were actually at sea when these were going on?

PASKAUSKAS: Yes. Yes. In fact, one of the highlights of my career was actually participating in the Sarajevo air drop for supplies. In the reserve program, and specifically the Naval Reserve Intelligence Program, we do not go on our two-week active duty tours as a group. There are opportunities throughout the fleet—fleets, I should say, Fifth or Seventh—where there's a continual need for naval intelligence officers, and after our schooling is done we can pick and choose the time of year and the need, and based on the career pattern, things that we need to do, whatever rank we're at. And in this particular instance there was a need for the flagship of the Sixth Fleet, the USS Belknap, for a naval intel officer to work in their N-2 shop, and I selected that. And it happened to be during the hostilities in Yugoslavia. I was there for three weeks, but I extended another week, so I was on the ship for approximately a month, because of the operation to go ahead and drop food and medical supplies.

INTERVIEWER: And this was when?

PASKAUSKAS: This was, let's see, 1990?

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

PASKAUSKAS: I could be wrong. I think it was 1990. The opportunity presented itself. I was able to use my air defense artillery experience in the Army while I was on the ship, surprisingly enough. But as part of that operation I wound up becoming a personal briefer for Admiral Boorda, who was CinCUSNavEur at the time, Commander in Chief, Naval Forces Europe, and Admiral Lopez, who was the Sixth Fleet commander. Admiral Boorda later went on to become the Chief of Naval Operations, CNO, and unfortunately committed suicide while he was in office. But I did get a chance to meet him and I briefed him a number of times during my stay time in the USS Belknap. A wonderful man, wonderful officer.

INTERVIEWER: Now, was the staff large, or was it a relatively compact situation.

PASKAUSKAS: Well, necessarily on ships there's just enough staff to work sixteen-hour days. Seven days a week, two shifts.

INTERVIEWER:Yeah.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. So, yeah the N-2 shop had—actually, the reason that Sixth Fleet needed a naval intel officer on the flagship was because they were in between several officers' PCS's. So one was going back to the States, and before another one could arrive they had an immediate need for a reservist, and I filled that gap. So the shop, when I was in it we were short one officer, but there were about six people.

INTERVIEWER: So essentially in the reserve situation in this case it reflects the changes in federal government approach to using reservists in that they're more operational once you have the training and the experience.

PASKAUSKAS: Right. Naval intelligence program is known throughout the reserves—I'm not sure about the different services, but at least within the Navy—the naval intel program is noted for its close affinity with the active duty forces. In fact, we produce well upwards of sixty percent of all active duty intel products. So they rely heavily on the reservists. We were fully integrated with the active forces long before 9/11. But that's separate from the surface Navy and the air Navy and that sort of thing. It provided a number of very memorable and wonderful experiences for me in my career.

INTERVIEWER: We should mention a this point—indicate your rank.

PASKAUSKAS: Currently I'm a commander, O-5.

INTERVIEWER: And at the time—you got the promotion to commander during the period of 9/11 and everything, as I recall.

PASKAUSKAS: Well, actually it was just before that.

INTERVIEWER: Just before?

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. The effective date of rank for me was September 1 of 2001, ten days before.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Just briefly, to kind of change tack here, since obviously 9/11 is very important and part of the reason we're talking about this, the consequences of it, could you share something of your experience relative to 9/11, in terms of when you found out, where you were, kind of your reaction to the incident.

PASKAUSKAS: Sure. I was sitting at my desk, and I guess someone in the general office area got the word from someone in the stacks that had a radio, that the World Trade Center was burning. That a plane had crashed into the World Trade Centers. And right where the textural research room used to be, you guys in the office here, was the TV stand, and that was turned on. And Dave Kuehl, my supervisor, the regional administrator here, ran out of his office and he ran past my desk and said, "Come on, we've got to go watch this. It's on TV." And so we walked, whatever, fifty paces or so to get there, and we got to see—the first one had already crashed, but we did get to see the second one, the second plane that crashed into the other tower. So I was here at work. And as I recall, it was about eight o'clock in the morning, Central Time.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, early in the day. In terms of your assessment of what was going on, what was your initial sense of what it was about, and then when did you realize it was maybe something other than what people initially thought?

PASKAUSKAS: Oh, okay. Well, when the first plane hit I thought that something had definitely gone awry. But it was an accident of some kind. But then, watching the second one hit it became fairly clear that this was something more than just an accident, that this was actually planned. And Scott, you're going to remember this one, because, yeah, Osama Bin Laden was the first thing that came over your lips, and mine as well. So at that point my assessment of the situation from what I understood of world events and of terrorism at that point was that his group was the only one that was capable in the world at that time, to my knowledge, to carry out something like that. And it was, oh, I would imagine several minutes later my next serious thoughts about what was going to happen to me was that I would be recalled immediately. And that's what happened.

I wound up.... Well, actually coming home, when I got home that day my wife and children were already expecting a call that I would get mobilized. And actually I was mobilized within the next week to go up to Fort Sheridan and Great Lakes for a period of three to four days and assist their efforts. The unit that I was affiliated with at that time was a EuCom, a European Command, unit, which we support the joint activity center in Molesworth, England, which is the intelligence center for European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. And we were supporting them at the time, so we were providing as much intelligence as we could to European Command in the immediate days and weeks that followed. They were recalling, mobilizing, reservists from the unit that I was in, and Central Command was also mobilizing reserves at that point. It was just a question of whether I was going to go to Europe and support European Command, or go to

Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, and support their efforts. As it turned out, Central Command called me first, so that's how I became mobilized with Central Command.

INTERVIEWER: And when were you actually assigned there?

PASKAUSKAS: By the time I had processed out from the reserves and into active duty at Great Lakes, that was about a week and a half or so process. It was fairly lengthy. There were all kinds of legal documents that had to be signed. And not just change in pay systems, but wills had to be done, power of attorney, those things that both of you, from your military experiences, know that you had to go through at one point or another. All that paperwork, in addition to being 100 percent physically and medically qualified. So there were dental X-rays and checkups and all that sort of thing, vision and all that. So it took about a week and a half in order to go through all those hoops. And I reported to Central Command on October 23 of 2001.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And then if you'd like to address kind of what your duties were, what kind of days you put in.

PASKAUSKAS: At Central Command I was placed in the foreign disclosure office based on my previous experience in doing that in a couple of my tours as a Navy Reserve officer. So I picked up the skills and on-the-job training and a number of courses while I supported Central Command on my annual two-week tours throughout the '90s. I was there about three or four times throughout the '90s. And of course after 9/11 there was an immediate need for foreign disclosure officers because Central Command, their geographic area of responsibility includes all of the Middle East, actually from Egypt—excluding Israel—it goes from Egypt to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and then east all the way through Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. "The Stans," that's what we call those countries. We call them "the Stans."

In that part of the world Central Command is unique, because it is the only command that is not in its theater of operation. Its headquarters is on the continental United States in Tampa. Whereas all the other war commands are in their theaters of operations. So it's a little bit different, for obvious reasons. But unlike the European Command, which works with NATO, formal treaties signed with the European governments, Central Command's allies—we call them coalition forces there, it's a coalition. It's different from NATO. It's not the same thing. So that their foreign disclosure requirements—in other words, evaluating and assessing military intelligence and approving that intelligence to be shared with our coalition partners—in effect that was what I did for Central Command. And I did it there at headquarters for Operation Enduring Freedom and the attack on Afghanistan from the moment I got there until approximately eight months later, in which case our focus then shifted to Iraq.

INTERVIEWER: So by experience and training—and I'm sure there must be policy guidelines, maybe even a manual you operate by...

PASKAUSKAS: Oh, there's plenty.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, to indicate what can be disclosed and what should be retained.

PASKAUSKAS: Absolutely. Absolutely. It's all codified, and it all stems from intelligence-sharing agreements that we have with countries based on either formal treaty or agreements of expediency for whatever reason. And the levels of intelligence that can be shared with different coalition partners clearly varies. We're clearly not going to give sensitive secrets, the same level of intelligence sharing with Uzbekistan as we would with Great Britain. Clearly. Or Australia. So there are levels of intelligence sharing. And also situations dictate what type of information can be shared. Ordinarily we wouldn't but sometimes we do, given a military emergency of some kind or a special operation of some kind, in which case there's a temporary abeyance and military intelligence can be shared up to a certain level and then cut off at that point.

INTERVIEWER: Now, in terms of the types of intelligence and the categorization: Do you deal with both tactical and strategic? In other words, do you sometimes deal with situations where there's a real-time need to get the data to some unit so they can react to it.

PASKAUSKAS: Yes. Primarily tactical. Overwhelmingly tactical. And overwhelmingly time-sensitive. The strategic types of intelligence that can be shared normally would be done at the war-planning level, operational planning level. Which I got involved with later on, with Iraq. But by the time I reported to Central Command and became involved with Operation Enduring Freedom regarding Afghanistan, that was all tactical and time-sensitive. And types of intelligence varied. It wasn't just operational, but there was imagery and signals intelligence and that sort of thing that came across...

INTERVIEWER: So once again, all-source.

PASKAUSKAS: It was all-source.

INTERVIEWER: Now, while you were in this duty assignment, how many days a week were you working? How long were your days?

PASKAUSKAS: The foreign disclosure office was running 24/7 operations when I got there. So my tour of duty, because I was an O-5 commander, was to bring some rank to the night shift operations. Night shift in Tampa, but because of the time zone and the differences between where Tampa was and where the operations were it actually became just as hectic during the night hours. My preliminary shift was from 6 pm to 6 am. It was a twelve-hour shift, seven days a week.

INTERVIEWER: So a very intense duty assignment, in other words.

PASKAUSKAS: Yes. The ops tempo was extremely high by the time I got there.

INTERVIEWER: Now, since you were in the continental United States, was there any opportunity to get a break in this, to communicate with family, go visit family, or anything else like that?

PASKAUSKAS: I had two days off for Christmas. We tried to get everybody.... From October 23 until December 23, let's say, that period of time everybody was on their shifts 24/7, seven days a week. And we tried to give a break to everybody in our branch, at least forty-eight hours. And that way I was able to get on an airplane, I got back home and saw the family for forty-eight hours, and then returned.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when did things shift for you from Tampa to the Middle East?

PASKAUSKAS: It actually shifted... As the operational tempo decreased in Afghanistan for U.S. forces, and NATO forces became more predominant in operations in Afghanistan, we were able to shift our focus to other areas in the Middle East and East Africa. And in efforts to hunt down Al Qaeda operatives and leadership the focus shifted to maritime operations and other countries in the Middle East that did not have strong centralized governments and were clearly amenable to terrorists either hiding out or actually funneling money or weapons through those countries. So our focus started to shift westwards. And I would say probably around late spring 2002, summer of 2002—I was there about nine months or so, eight, nine months—started to shift to Somalia and Iraq. Actually shifted to Somalia first, and then it was shifted from Somalia to Iraq.

I use the term "shift" only because in the office that I was working in, all intelligence products that came into our office were there for a reason, in order to be shared with our coalition partners, and you could tell the difference in emphasis. When I first got there it was literally 99 percent Afghanistan. There may have been a stray cat or dog on some other kind of operation in some other part of the Middle East, but for the most part 99 percent was Afghanistan. And then as that wound down a little bit—or didn't wind down as much as the operational tempo decreased—and as we were starting to round up a lot of the Al Qaeda leadership, then we started looking at different things. And I could see the box (phonetic) as they came into the office for reviewing release. So it was about nine months. And then it started to focus on Iraq.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when did you actually get into a situation where you physically made the shift from Tampa to Qatar?

PASKAUSKAS: To Qatar, was actually in October of 2002. At that point there was all kinds of discussions within Central Command, beyond me, but they were talking about split-based operations. In other words, moving the headquarters forward into the theater of operation. And at that point discussion ensued about which country would we be in and that sort of thing, and how many of headquarters staff would go. And that was all resolved in a short period of time and wound up deploying to Qatar for the first time in October as part of the headquarters staff, the first wave of headquarters staff that deployed to Qatar.

INTERVIEWER: This is backtracking momentarily. We'll get back to Qatar. What were the conditions like in Tampa, in the sense of, were these modern structures or was it structures that had been adapted for some time? Was it a convivial working situation in terms of space for all the equipment and personnel you needed?

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. Space was at a premium, there's no question about it. The number of personnel that were needed in order to accomplish what needed to be accomplished on a daily basis far exceeded the physical space and equipment that was there. And I can see Glenn smiling already. You guys know this. You know that too, from your Vietnam experience. Yeah, it's never, yeah, you never get enough space, you know. And in this day and age, of course, we relied heavily on computers, and there's not enough computers. And then there was down time. And then you had generators that went down, and you had all kinds of issues. So it was frustrating.

But it's interesting you raised that question, because the previous times I was at Central Command I worked in the main headquarters building. The entire command was in the main headquarters building; it was a huge building. When I reported there on October 23, the parking lot which I was used to was gone and there were trailers out, actual, like double house trailers. And that's where the additional staff that was needed for the operations that Central Command was responsible for were housed. So, for example, all the coalition forces that had liaison officers at Central Command were working in trailers. It was basically, you know, what we call a trailer park. And it sat on a parking lot where we used to park our cars.

In terms of the actual physical getting around and working space and that sort of thing, they put me up in an apartment, which was nice, and the apartment was about five minutes away from the main gate. So that was nice, because the twelve-hour shifts slowly turned into fourteen-hour shifts and that sort of thing, so it was nice not to have to fight traffic, and I was back in the sack in a matter of fifteen or twenty minutes. But being in Tampa and being there in the summertime of 2002—because I got there in the fall, which was pleasant, it was nice—but by the time April and May rolled around the humidity level, you know, was just a few notches below the temperature. And because of the trailer setup for coalition forces and then the overflow of headquarters staff working in trailers, the parking lot was probably a good half mile, three-quarters of a mile, down the road, so we used to call it the trail of tears, because by the time you got there—we're in the desert, the DCUs and all that—you're soaked in sweat by the time you actually get in the trailer.

But the working space in the trailers was very limited. Difficult to move around. Difficult to hold classified discussions. And in that trailer I would say there was probably, at any given time, forty-five to fifty individuals working there in that trailer. And of course working 24/7, so it didn't matter what time of the day you were there.

INTERVIEWER: So obviously, just to clarify, you were working in a trailer rather than in the main headquarters building.

PASKAUSKAS: Yes. Yes. By that time they had moved the foreign disclosure office as part of the overflow staff into the trailer park. Yeah, worked in the trailers.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. That's interesting. I hadn't realized that they had done that.

Now, in shifting back to what we were originally talking about a few minutes ago, to Qatar. What was that shift like? What were the conditions like there? And then we'll follow on with how your duties may have changed or expanded or anything else like that.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. The duties remained the same. But there was only two of us as foreign disclosure officers, the branch chief and myself. I was the deputy branch chief for foreign disclosure. So there were only two of us. So basically when we got there we had already carved out twelve-hours shifts again, with two people, and that was to last the whole time we were there. So there were no substitutions, there were no days off.

We got to Qatar in October for the first time. The base was still under construction, for the most part. We lived in containers, cargo containers, inside warehouses. There were two to a container. And the cargo container is, what, ten feet wide by eighteen feet deep. There were two single beds, two footlockers, a TV—with cable, by the way, that was nice—and a fold-down table from the wall with two chairs. So if you wanted to write letters, that sort of thing, you had a little table you could fold down. And that was the hooch, and that's where we stayed the whole time when we were there.

INTERVIEWER: I had not realized that. So in other words, literally these are the containers like you see on board vessels or sometimes moving on trains.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. They carved them up and turned them into little hooches.

INTERVIEWER: Now, was this done just for that circumstance, or is this something they generally do?

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah, this is part of the infrastructure for housing on that base. Yes. That's how it will be, forever. But that's how they housed us.

INTERVIEWER: Now, were you really close to your actual work site?

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. The work shelter was about a half mile, about a half mile. The base was real small. And even though they did have shuttle—they had shuttles that ran 24/7—it was just faster to just walk the straight line and get to the work shelter. The work shelters were clearly reinforced and with guards and that sort of thing. Depending upon how many dust storms, sand storms there were and that sort of thing it could take anywhere from five minutes to fifteen minutes to get there walking.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like it was more of an adventure than anticipated.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. And the chow hall was kitty-corner from the work shelter. So that wasn't too far.

INTERVIEWER: So obviously, I would presume, they would have, like, in terms of showers and other types of facilities, it was in the general area of where the hooches were.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. Well, actually, yeah. That was an improving situation, let's put it that way. When we first got there the showers were in trailers too. They were in trailers. The warehouses were huge. Like a records center. And the shower facilities and beds were actually in

between the warehouses. So depending upon which warehouse you were in was how convenient the bathroom facilities were, and the shower facilities. But you had to cut across the sand and that sort of thing to get there, and wear your gas mask and that sort of thing at first, because they were in trailers and there weren't enough of them. The hot water was, depending upon what shift you were in and how many people were taking a shower at one time—it was very crowded—hot water was a luxury. That was, you know, that would have been nice.

INTERVIEWER: Now, in terms of the operational building, was that a fairly kind of put-together situation too? I mean, somewhat ad hoc?

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah, it was both. You could tell a lot of it was ad hoc. Because as the headquarters foot-based operation moved there, then there were other operational headquarters that moved out there, and so it was constantly under construction and constantly growing.

Like the hooches, there were lockable doors. And actually I had the best—I probably had a better situation than most, because I actually roomed in the hooch with my counterpart for foreign disclosure, so we were never in the hooch at the same time. For others that were working in different operations and had different shifts, or had the same shift, you know, it became pretty crowded in that hooch when both of you were trying to get around each other and trying to write a letter home or trying to get some sleep. In my situation, whenever we relieved each other, got back to the hooch and it was dark and sleeping was quiet. So it's not bad at all, for my own personal situation, but that was because of who my roomie was, my bunkmate.

But they were huge. And they were one on top of the other with catwalk, just like we've got catwalk here on Module B. There was a second deck, you know, and that was interesting because, as you know, with combat boots on catwalk it's never quiet. You can always hear somebody walking above you because of the combat boots.

It was interesting, because during the day it would be warm to hot in the hooch, because the air conditioning was going full time and of course they would break down all the time anyway. In the evenings it would be freezing, because the air conditioning would kick on and that sort of thing. But temperatures outside varied. When we got there in October it was hot. I was in Qatar the first time for about two months and we ran through a number of exercises and a number of operations. Got everything all set up, got communications, all the comms ready. And then we re-deployed back to the United States December 22.

INTERVIEWER: This is in 2002?

PASKAUSKAS: 2002, yeah. And then we deployed back to Qatar at the end of January for the operation itself, the invasion. Which is interesting, because in the twenty-one months I was on active duty, I counted it one time, I think I moved all my stuff about eight times in the twenty-one months I was there, because you're always coming and going.

We re-deployed back to the United States December 22. Got a couple of days off. As it turned out it was right before Christmas so I was able to see the family again, the second Christmas I was away. And then flew back to MacDill Air Force Base the day after Christmas,

and then proceeded to get ready to go back to Qatar. Then we deployed back to Qatar the day after the Super Bowl. I got to see the Super Bowl, which Tampa won that year, by the way. So actually in Tampa to see the Bucs win. And then we went back to Qatar for the long haul.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when you returned—let's put it this way, was it a situation where your work days began to accelerate, or did you hit the ground running at a certain pace and just remain at that?

PASKAUSKAS: No, it accelerated, yeah. The twelve hour shifts didn't change from the very beginning. But how much you got done in any particular hour did change. It accelerated a lot. When we went back and everything was gearing up, the pace was real hectic. And even though there were twelve-hours shifts in the work shelter, again we faced the same situation where there were more bodies and work to do than there were computers and places to sit. So we used to, well, we call it hot-racking in the Navy where you have to share a bunk with somebody else? Well, we did the same thing with computers and seats. The work days actually accelerated to the point of sixteen- to eighteen-hour days, to twenty-hours days in some instances, as the invasion began and then proceeded through the first six weeks.

(End of Side A)
(Start of Side B)

INTERVIEWER: So, basically, probably were occasions when both of you were there.

PASKAUSKAS: Oh, many times. Many times. And we did the hot-racking with computers. The other thing when both of us were there at the same time that we were able to accomplish was one was continually in meetings and giving briefings to the higher-ups in the food chain. So at that point, then, we'd switch and I would sit at the computer and get other things done that needed to get done for foreign disclosure, and meet with our coalition allies or partners, and that sort of thing.

Actually, what amazed me the most about that part of my Qatar experience and being part of the Iraqi operation was the colonels and the generals that were there. For the most part five to ten years older than I was. And the pace at which they worked was absolutely incredible. I was wonderfully surprised at their stamina and their dedication. Many times, I believe, after putting in my day, they were there. And I'd come back after a couple hours in the rack and they're there. In fact, there were a number of them that actually had to go to sick bay for exhaustion after a while.

It was interesting, because as the pace increased to the point where it was clear that we just couldn't keep up—so you kept rearranging priorities based on the changing situation and the scenario there—that it was totally professional. I talked with my older brother who's a Vietnam veteran on a number of issues, and while I was there, the whole time I was there in Qatar—the first time for a couple months and then the next time for about six months—that despite the fact that we had more women in the military in all ranks, being a volunteer service for so many years, and the fact that everybody that was there...

My experiences there in 2003 in dealing with our brothers and sisters in uniform were probably different than yours, Scott, during Vietnam, and perhaps yours, Glenn, when you were in Europe. Although you were part of the volunteer army. You were way past VOLAR, right? You were already in there. But we had, of all the opportunities that people had to screw off, I never once saw it. The professionalism rose with the pace of the operational tempo.

So despite the fact that it was fully integrated in terms of male and female at all ranks, in all services, and plenty of younger folks in the enlisted ranks, junior officers, all the way up to generals and colonels, as far as sexual harassment cases or drugs—there wasn't any alcohol, though they did have a cantina there. I heard rumors about that. But it didn't exist as far as I was aware. Everybody was there to do a job. You know, the military's great for that. Whatever the job is, if it takes five people you get two. And that keeps you busy, I guess. And when you're not busy you're too tired to do anything else. But it was totally professional. I was just amazed. I didn't expect anything other than that, but the consistency with which, day in and day out, the same people, and working in shelters that are way too small for what needed to get done.

Clearly people got on each others' nerves. I mean, you can't help it, you know. With the tension and the stress levels that high and exhaustion setting in, you'd kind of think that there would be a few more disagreements, but there weren't. There weren't. It was totally professional the whole time I was there. That speaks a little bit to that part of, you know, the equality of life there in Qatar.

Can't complain. It's amazing, but the military set it up so well that all you needed to do was work. That's it, you know? You didn't have to go far for food; that was all done for you. In fact, laundry was free for DCUs and underwear, socks, you know, the basics and that sort of thing, that was free. You just dropped it off on your way out the hooch hangar and it was gone. It was back in two days and you just picked it up on your way back. They were open 24/7. Chow hall was open 24/7. So you just slept in the rack they gave you and worked in the work shelter that they gave you and you didn't have to worry about anything else. No bills to pay or grass to cut, or children to take to soccer practice. So there were no distractions whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER: Now, on the base, would you have the nationals there too?

PASKAUSKAS: Yes, yeah. There were TCNs there, third-country nationals. The Qataris, interestingly enough, the men don't work. Third-country nationals do all the work in Qatar, as in, I'm sure, other Middle East countries. Primarily Filipino, Indonesian, Indian, Pakistani, and countries there in the Pacific Rim or Southeast Asia. They come to Qatar because the pay is extremely good. And they're the ones that actually did the laundry and took over the mess hall and drove the shuttle buses. They did all that. Took the trash and that sort of thing. They were all third-country nationals there.

I did see on occasion a number of Qatari officials on base for formal meetings with the general staff of the Central Command and that sort of thing. And, you know, driving Mercedes and BMWs. They dress in white robes and turbans, that sort of thing. But the work done there is all done by third-county nationals. And apparently it's a good deal for them. So they work there enough, get enough money, and then go back home, wherever that is.

INTERVIEWER: Now, did you have any sense—we're leading up to the actual beginning of the military conflict—did that come out of the blue? Had you been kind of, was there some sense that we're getting close to jumping off?

PASKAUSKAS: Oh, it varied. There was a lot of, you know, the hurry-up-and-wait aspect of it. At times it appeared as if it was a go, and at other times it appeared as if perhaps our country was going to wait for more international support. So it was stop and go. It was stop and go.

The preparation for it never ended. With your military careers you know that you never have enough time for contingency planning and you never have enough contingency plans. So as the, quote, international political situation changed from day to day and week to week we were busy doing contingency plans. And, you know, what if this, then what do we do? And so there was a lot of that going on. And countries joined the coalition, and other countries, as you recall, the Canadians refused to participate in the military aspect of the invasion of Iraq and the Germans did as well. Different countries, both NATO and outside NATO, took different approaches as to the level of their participation and the type of their participation. So in my job as a foreign disclosure officer it became fairly complicated. Because there are certain things that need to be shared if you're a military coalition partner, and then there are other things, the humanitarian side, which we at that time called phase four, which was what do we do after the invasion. So the intelligence to be shared with countries sometimes varied depending upon their level of participation at any given point during the invasion and the subsequent operations.

INTERVIEWER: How many different foreign entities were you dealing with?

PASKAUSKAS: Let's see. About eighteen. A little under twenty.

INTERVIEWER: And they had representatives on site, or would you communicate with them electronically?

PASKAUSKAS: It varied. There were countries that were part of the operation from the beginning that had liaison officers there at the split-based headquarters in Qatar. But, again, the foreign political situation dictated that they get an invitation and then an approval from Qatar. So even though they could be part of our coalition and they could have troops standing with us, boots on the ground, they still had to go get approval from Qatar in order to work there. So it sometimes became fairly complicated. With certain countries you might—you know who these countries might be. So it varied. So there were countries that were part of the operation but still maintained liaison officers back at MacDill Air Force Base, at main headquarters, or the rear headquarters.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you had mentioned that you had to, at least for a while anyway, when I guess you were outside, had to have a gas mask—on, or with you?

PASKAUSKAS: With you. Yeah. We ran a lot of drills, of course. But yeah, you had to have your gas mask with you.

INTERVIEWER: Obviously, once operations began, things began to go in ways that were not, as is usually the case in operations, were not predicted. But I'm wondering in terms of, once things began, presumably there were presumptions about what the Iraqi military would do and this kind of stuff, and then things seemed to change rather considerably. It certainly didn't seem to follow, campaign-wise, what one would have anticipated. Was there kind of an awareness that maybe things were going to be different when things started, in terms of what resistance you were going to be up against?

PASKAUSKAS: Right. It was. The operation began, actually, differently than the way it was initially planned for. And the way it started with the simultaneous air and ground assault was, actually looking back on it now, a stroke of genius. That had not been tried before to that extent. And the very limited number of friendly fire casualties was a real great positive sign to us that we can actually coordinate something like this and pull it off.

But yeah, it was, as the operation progressed on the thunder run, you know, from Kuwait all the way to Baghdad, yeah, the resistance in certain parts surprised us. There's no question about that. In other ways, we couldn't quite figure out what their intent was. Because, as you may recall, there were about three or four divisions north of Baghdad and they weren't moving, even though the southern part of Iraq collapsed rather quickly. So it was kind of interesting.

There was a lot of discussion, and this isn't classified by any means, but there was a lot of discussion that, when Turkey refused to let our military base there for the invasion, that, we suspected, probably emboldened Saddam Hussein to actually leave his divisions where they were instead of anticipating what we might do now that we couldn't go through Turkey. Thinking that perhaps the United States would balk after Turkey said no, and being a NATO member and that sort of thing, that maybe the invasion wasn't going to happen.

That's the only thing we can figure out. Because militarily, look at the way he had his divisions set up after the invasion began, and the movement of it. Actually, it didn't appear as if there was any plan to it whatsoever. And actually the division commanders, the Iraqi division commanders, probably took it upon themselves to actually go where they thought they were needed. Because it didn't appear as if there was any concerted effort to go ahead and either meet us head-on or to go ahead and outflank us, at any point.

INTERVIEWER: So it probably appeared to have been more of an internal command and control problem than actually one we induced on him. We may have had some effect attacking his lines of communication, but it looks like, in terms of tactics, it just wasn't there.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah, it wasn't there. Yeah, there wasn't a thoughtful or considered or a deliberate response to the way the operation began. We didn't see it. And just plowed through, in the south. And of course resistance got a little heavier when we got closer to Baghdad, especially on the east and the north of Baghdad.

The other thing that was of concern was the expectation that the Iraqi population in general would be perhaps a little more joyful at the fact of seeing allied troops get in and actually

liberate. Rather subdued. Rather subdued. You know, looking back on it now with all the information, all the stories in the media and that sort of thing, the interesting aspect of it is—I don't know if the American public actually remembers what happened to the Kurds in '91, when we kind of abandoned them, or when we did abandon them. So there was some hesitation as to whether, okay, we see the Americans; well, let's see how long they're going to stay this time. So I think there was a lot of reluctance.

And in addition to that the fedayeen hanging women and men that had actually waved as our troops went by and tanks went by, later found them hanged. So definitely the fedayeen still had control over the local population. You know, still using terror techniques to keep the population under control, or at least under their thumb, to the extent that they weren't going to cooperate with the allies.

INTERVIEWER: Now, your experience with the Sarajevo situation. Of course, you were in a different—you were on shipboard and everything else. However, that's a good space of time, in terms of what's available technologically and otherwise. Did you notice a big change from that experience to the one....

PASKAUSKAS: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: What were the kind of things you noticed, that had changed significantly.

PASKAUSKAS: The biggest thing was VTCs. VTCs were huge for this deployment, mobilization.

INTERVIEWER: VTCs are?

PASKAUSKAS: Video teleconferencing. That was an absolute favorite tool among all those that had stars on their shoulders. They loved it. Our VTC operation was 24/7. It was booked solid. It was interesting, because they could communicate with anybody. Afghanistan, with the command posts there. And in Kuwait and Iraq, everywhere. It was amazing, the technology. Instant method of communication. And not just faxing, which was primarily—you know, faxing and computers. And even though, for Sarajevo, yeah, we relied on computers. But, you know, the speed and the different levels of classification that you can have on the different systems and that sort of thing, all combined on one. Yeah, the technology was incredible for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

VTCs being one method to communicate between commands and different levels of command, but in addition to that the computers were outstanding. Their capabilities and the speed with which they could process information and that sort of thing was just incredible. So, yeah, all the technology that I saw that was available was heavily relied upon in order to effect operations as quickly as possible.

INTERVIEWER: Now, you had mentioned you were, for the operational phase, in Qatar for six months. Was there a certain point where there was a big drop-off, in terms of what was being demanded of you, or did it pretty much stay the same the whole time?

PASKAUSKAS: There was, yeah. There was a drop-off, as you may recall when President Bush flew the plane on the—was it an S-3 Viking or something?—on the aircraft carrier and announced that the wartime operations were over. Yeah, right around that time. It was after that, maybe it was a week or two after that, that actually, yeah, the demand started to decline for me personally, only because my job duties consisted primarily of reviewing, assessing, and releasing military intelligence. So once the major part of the invasion was over, the humanitarian aspect of phase four actually started to kick in. That wasn't why I was there. So that actually was secondary, and that's how we viewed it. So once the military part of the operation was done, as least the wartime operation of actually securing Baghdad—and even that, I shouldn't use that term, because it's not secure yet. But at least as far as the formal dissolution of the Iraqi defense forces, the formal forces, humanitarian operations kicked in, and that was a different kind of sharing with different coalition partners and wasn't something that was my primary job to do. So yeah, the demand started to fall back to the point where, all right, we don't need to keep you here anymore, we'll send you back to Stateside and you can handle it from there. And again, because of the state-of-the-art technology that we had, it was possible to do that for humanitarian intelligence-sharing. We do that from the rear.

INTERVIEWER: After the six month, okay, then you returned to Tampa?

PASKAUSKAS: Yes. To Tampa.

INTERVIEWER: And how much longer were you—let's put it this way, it sounds like you discontinued your operational duties back in Tampa, then.

PASKAUSKAS: No. Actually we didn't. We got four days off. When I got to Qatar for the second time, at the end of January or beginning of February until coming back end of May, early June.... In fact, my first day off in Qatar was May 14. That was my first day off from going to the work shelter. And it was kind of ironic, because I had the day off but there was nothing to do. So I wound up sleeping my whole day off.

From May 14 to the end of May, duty started to decrease, and slowly we got back to twelve-hour shifts again. And the pace slackened. The intensity level wasn't quite what it was. And when I got back to headquarters we each got four days off. Those that deployed forward, when they returned got four days, so I got four days off. So I hit the beaches in St. Petersburg and basically just rested. And then returned to work back to operational duties at headquarters until the end of July. At the end of July the Navy determined that my services were no longer critical to the needs of the United States Navy or Central Command and I could go home, and I did.

INTERVIEWER: During that last phase in Tampa were you still out in the trailers? Or by that time had things....

PASKAUSKAS: Yes. Yeah. We were back in the trailers.

INTERVIEWER: So that level of activity in terms of necessary (phonetic) of using space there was still as much in evidence as it had been before.

PASKAUSKAS: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: In other words, it didn't go back into the main headquarters building.

PASKAUSKAS: In fact, it was worse. And the reason why it was worse is because those that were deployed forward for the operation, they were back-filled with reservists. And many times it wasn't the complete one-to-one turnover. So the reservists that were still there, that were back-filling positions when we got back made it even worse. So, yeah. The half-mile walk from the parking lot to the trailer, the trail of tears, actually was longer when I returned from Qatar, until those that were mobilized for rear headquarters were actually de-mobed and those that were re-deployed back to the United States from Qatar actually assumed their duties. So there was an awkward gap. It was pretty damn crowded.

INTERVIEWER: Now, in terms of, now that you've completed this service, what are your conditions of future service?

PASKAUSKAS: Well, yeah, that's an interesting question, Scott. The reserves have changed completely as of 9/11. Because I was mobilized so quickly and spent twenty-one months on active duty, I didn't have time, nor was I interested in seeing how the reserves had changed in the meantime, until I got back. And actually when I returned back to Chicago and back home at the end of July or early August of 2003 I didn't need to report to my reserve unit until the beginning of the fiscal year. In effect, they gave me ninety days where I didn't have to report back to my reserve unit. And I took advantage of that, so I didn't.

And it was kind of interesting, because when I did get back I understood that there were quite a few reservists that were mobilized. In fact it was a very difficult time for commanding officers of reserve units because they didn't have enough people to get the work done that they needed to get done, because their people were mobilized to all these different commands, and it was fairly difficult for the, too.

But what was interesting is that they no longer say in the reserves that: I'm the condition that you might be mobilized. Now it's: when you get mobilized. And in fact, at least the standing doctrine now is that reservists that either get in the program or that are in the program right now and still have a significant amount of time left prior to retirement should count on actually being mobilized for at least a year once every four years. Our world operations and our operations against terrorism will continue far into the future. And intel officers will be an integral part of that. I see a heavy burden on reserves for the foreseeable future. So it has changed quite a bit.

Personally, for me, yeah, I guess I can get recalled again. But at this point it appears as if we're trying to stabilize the steady flow of reserves in order to supplement the active duty forces in the Navy. Now, in the Army it's a little bit different. For your guys' service. Those reservists,

they're going to bite the bullet. And no pun intended on that. But they're going to be gone, especially military police, intel officers, they're going to be gone for a long period of time, and often. So the impact on their civilian careers and their family life will be more significant than it will for Naval officers in the next few years.

So in terms of mobilization, yes, everybody's mobilization-ready. That's something that we spend a whole lot more time on now in the reserves on drill weekends than we ever did before. It has changed everything. 9/11 has changed the entire reserve structure, in addition to everything else that has changed in the United States, but it has. And the interesting thing about it is that there were plenty of reservists that I knew at Central Command. In fact, and perhaps I should have mentioned this earlier, well over fifty-five percent of headquarters staff at Central Command were reservists and augmentees. So that's how heavily the active duty is relying on reserve forces, and I was proud to be one of them.

But the entire focus has shifted from—and even though we were supporting the fleet in the past, we spend a whole lot more time now on administrative matters in order to be sure that you're ready to go. So that there isn't a delay. And when some headquarters or some command needs to have that and get attacked, you should be ready to go in a matter of days.

INTERVIEWER: Well, that maybe explains kind of what, somewhat, your duties are now. But do you do direct support now, on weekend duty?

PASKAUSKAS: No. No, I don't. As a commander I'm not involved in production of any kind anymore. I'm on the regional staff there like I am here. So basically I just administer personnel and manpower-type issues. So no, I'm not involved in the production end of intelligence any longer. And I don't anticipate I will, as a reservist. Now, on active duty it would be different, but as a reservist, given the structure of the reserve forces, I expect I'll just be in a management position of some kind until I'm eligible to retire.

INTERVIEWER: Which sounds like it will be a couple more years yet.

PASKAUSKAS: Actually, a year and a half. In a year and a half I'll be eligible. My twenty will be done.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I guess we've covered all the major topics we were thinking about. Glenn, anything from you?

INTERVIEWER: A couple of questions, Denis. One, when you were in Qatar, what were your opportunities like for corresponding with your family, and keeping in touch with family?

PASKAUSKAS: We were able to use—there were phone banks that were established. When we first got there, there weren't any. But again, that was a process as I mentioned earlier that was constantly improving. And they had, when we got back to Qatar, my second time in Qatar, in the beginning of 2003, they had established a number of phone banks where you could use a calling

card or whatever, and you could call back. So whenever there was free time and you weren't on your work shift, you could use the phones to call.

And they also established computer banks, towards the end. Actually the computer banks became operational there, I guess it was about a month before I left. And for those with e-mail access and that sort of thing they could communicate with their families that way. So in terms of communication, in the beginning it was rather difficult given the number of personnel that were there and the number of phones that were available. That was rather limited. But as time went on they improved that part of our quality of life quite a bit. Quite a bit. Phones were installed in the hooch hangars about two or three weeks before I re-deployed back to the States. But that was their intent all along.

But as you know, both of you, Glenn and Scott, as you know, in the military everything is in priority order and, you know, in one week if the volume of complaints reached a certain level about not having enough phones to call back, that's fine one week, but then the next week if they had to go ahead and reinforce bunkers and bomb shelters and that sort of thing, then everybody gets pulled off installing phones and they start filling sandbags. So it all depends on the priorities. That wasn't anything that, really, I heard a lot of complaints about. In fact, you know, we were in lockdown for a lot, most of the time we were there anyway, and phone access was extremely limited. It was for emergency purposes, since we were preparing for the invasion and then during the invasion. So phone lines were at a premium and access to phones was at a premium, and most of the time, as I said, we were in lockdown anyway so we weren't able to use the phones. But it was there.

And we got mail. I think I got the most mail of anybody there, and that was great. I was able to get letters from home. And it varied. They got letters home from me. It took anywhere from four days to seven days to get something from me. When they sent stuff—because you see it varied. It went through the Dover terminal, and then it could have been on some French aircraft carrier out in the Red Sea before they hauled it off to fly it the rest of the way in. It came a number of different ways, any way they could get it to us.

And there were all kinds of threats from the command there that, you know, not to have family members or friends send you any alcohol or pornography. And, of course, their definition of pornography in the Middle East is much different than ours. So there were no Sports Illustrated swimsuit issues, none of that. And every now and then, because the Qatari customs officials would check side by side with our folks, and if they did find that there was a swimsuit issue or a Victoria's Secret catalog stuffed in between some chocolate chip cookies or something like that, or a little airline bottle of vodka in a mouthwash bottle, or something along those lines, then they would just cut off mail. So, that's it; no mail today, or tomorrow. Yeah, there was all kinds of that sort of thing. And I'm sure that's familiar. You know, that's how the military handles that situation. If one person screws up, everybody suffers. Yeah. Yeah. You're all doing pushups. So, yeah, there was plenty of that.

But in terms of communication, mail was good. Sometimes I would get mail within three or four days from home. And then other times it would take two weeks. But it all appeared. It all appeared. But that was the situation with communicating with family and friends.

INTERVIEWER: I was also wondering, how did NARA, the National Archives and Records Administration, how did they support your mobilization, or your time away from the agency.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah, that's something I never had to worry about. The agency was completely supportive, in addition to the military leave benefits and that sort of thing. The leave without pay was granted immediately. And in fact the support from the employees here was really incredible to me. I received plenty of cards from all the—from you guys. And things to read.

INTERVIEWER: Keep you supplied.

PASKAUSKAS: Yeah. So the support from here was absolutely incredible. And as far as I could tell, unusual. As I mentioned earlier, I got the most mail of anybody there, and most of it from here. A lot of it from family, and a lot of it from here, and it was wonderful. In fact, I got an award, I guess, from the Archivist, some Archivist achievement award, you know, in service to our country, and that sort of thing, while I was away, so that was nice. But I guess Dave Kuehl represented me or whatever, and so he handed that to me when I returned to work.

So I didn't have to worry about employment. The agency was fully supportive of it. And some of the NARA Staff Bulletins that you all sent me when I was forward, the Archivist even states, John Carlin had written in the NARA Staff Bulletin about individuals. I was mentioned in one or two of those, as well as Tom Wiltsey, the archives(?) director in Anchorage, Alaska. He was another one that was recalled rather quickly for the Coast Guard, and I saw where his name was in some of the NARA Staff Bulletins, and what we were doing. His name was in there. And Mr. Carlin, of course, was fully supportive of it in his Archivist's messages and that sort of thing. So it was a good feeling. I didn't have to worry about that. I knew I had a job coming back, and not only did I have a job, but I had a whole lot of people that I wanted to see and thank for all their support when I came back. So it was a real warm feeling in coming back.

Not so with a lot of the reservists that were there. There were numerous reservists there that lost their jobs while they were overseas in Qatar. And many of them were.... There are legal protections and there are laws that employers have to follow, but that doesn't necessarily mean that happens all the time. In fact, those individuals that were on the lower end of the employment scale, that were making a living for themselves and their families and their children, putting food on the table by being carpenters or by working the trades, electricians and plumbers and that sort of thing, wound up losing their jobs simply, you know, the employer said, hey, I don't know when you're coming back, and you're not going to have a job.

Even though legal protections are there, it's very difficult for somebody who is just going from check to check to hire a lawyer to take their employer to court, even though the chances may be good down the line that they may be reimbursed for their court costs and legal fees, the fact of the matter is they didn't have the money up front to do it anyway.

So there were plenty of circumstances there that I became aware of that were far worse than mine. And it's amazing. Even employers—Lieutenant Colonel Ronnie Smith was the XO for the J-2 operations division of which I was a part. He was a principal, a high school principal, for the city of Tampa. And he got a pink slip once he was recalled. And of course he had the means by which to get a lawyer and he took them to court, and of course he won. But in the meantime he was serving as a mobilized reservist and then trying to deal with these other issues. So even employers that should know better, there were instances where—and there weren't a whole lot of those. But that was one story that I recall. And Ronnie Smith was a great guy, one of the best Air Force officers I've ever met. Certainly I've never seen him work a civilian job as a high school principal, but I'm sure that he's just as effective and successful in doing that as he was being my XO.

But there instances like that, few and far between, but it was much more numerous for those instances where individuals had not the means by which to fight the employer even though there were legal protections. So that was disturbing.

In addition to that the reservists that were there that were serving, many of them in the middle of their reserve careers, that had, let's say, served somewhere between, let's say, seven years to nine, ten years, and they still had over ten to maybe fifteen years to go, were getting out after they were mobilized, simply for the fact that they couldn't sustain a civilian career and fulfill their duties and their obligations as a reservist who would be mobilized again. Many of those, surprisingly enough, lawyers, accountants that had their own practices, that wound up getting mobilized and they lose their client base because they've been away for so long. And then they have to come back and try and get started all over again, and still have families and children to feed.

So the experience varies from profession to profession, and obviously from rank to rank, but there were plenty of stories where individuals were proud to do what they were doing, but recognized after it was all done that they wouldn't be able to fulfill their reserve commitment as well as their civilian employment. Fortunately for me, I didn't have to face that, and I'll be able to go ahead and put in at least twenty.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else? Anything you'd like to add, Denis?

PASKAUSKAS: I think, if I could, one of the things that I wanted to add is that the families and children of individuals that get recalled, no matter what service it is, Army, Air Force, or Navy, Marine Corps, whatever. What I saw and what I experienced the times that I could see my children, because they were able to come down and see me a number of times when I was in Tampa, is different, much more different for a recalled reservist than it is for active duty. And one of the things that I noticed when I got back from the stories that I've heard in the months afterwards, that basically we view, as a country, you know, we see what's happening on the news, but it doesn't touch everybody in the same way that it has in the past. For, obviously, World War II. I won't use that as an example, but let's say Vietnam, where there was the draft. And for the most part people knew others in the neighborhood that were either impacted by the draft or in some fashion influenced by what was happening.

Interestingly enough, now what we see is that with all the reservists getting called up you see whole communities where only one or two people get recalled, and the family support that would ordinarily be there if there was a draft or there were a whole lot more individuals that were being recalled would be a little bit different. But in talking to some of my other reservists, if you're not near a military base, the family support aspect of what's going on and....

Like for example—and, Glenn, I should have mentioned this earlier when you talked about communicating with families back home—actually, towards the end of our deployment there was actually a means where the VTC could be used for a short period of time, so that you could prearrange it with the command in the rear to have your family there, and you could actually see each other. And actually the man that I worked with had done that, because he was a civilian working in Tampa and his family lived nearby MacDill Air Force Base so they were able to arrange that. Not so with me. There's no way I could do that here. You know, my command is Great Lakes and I live fifty-five miles from there, sixty miles from there, and to set up a VTC that way with family to see them would have been impossible.

So the level of support and the level of concern and awareness of neighbors and family and friends of what's happening if someone gets mobilized or recalled and has to go forward is a little bit different than what I anticipated. So there's more a feeling of being isolated. For example, for my family, maybe feeling isolated that, oh, gee, my dad's gone but I see all the other neighbors' dads, and they're cutting the grass and having beer with their friends. But why my father? So that kind of isolationism, especially if families are away from a military base as reservists, is one of those things that we weren't prepared for. But that's it.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much, Denis.

PASKAUSKAS: Thank you. Yep. Appreciate it.