

BUMED ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEW WITH

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CAPTAIN SHEHERAZAD LENA HARTZELL, DC, USN

WITH

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I'm Colonel Richard Ginn, U.S. Army retired, with Mr. Andre Sobocinski, Deputy Medical Historian, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, United States Navy. This interview is part of the Oral History Project of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery. We are joined today by Captain David Hartzell, Captain Lena Hartzell, and Commander Karen Stokes. All three are Dental Corps officers, United States Navy, who have agreed to participate in this interview.

Q: Currently, we're putting together a chronology of your careers, and that will be filed with the transcript at some point so future readers can see where you were and what you were doing. Because we're so constrained in time, we'll skip doing the full, "this is my assignment in 1998, and this is what I did in 2004," and so forth, and go to highlights of your careers. A couple things I would hope we would focus on in the course of the interview is certainly your experience professionally, your experience of being in the United States military, and particularly in your case, Lena, in coming from another country, which is really a neat story. Actually, we've got two stories here in that regard. And then your deployment experiences, your experience in clinics stateside and aboard ship, and also, David, since you have been involved with a couple of

humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, some discussion about that. And we can talk as well, Lena, about your very unusual assignment in Iraq as a translator and political advisor.

We'll start off, first of all, David and Lena -- whoever wants to talk; what prompted you to come into the Navy?

DH: Well, we met in dental school, and I was one year ahead of Lena. When I graduated, I stayed in Chicago to practice dentistry so that she could finish her last year at dental school, and when she finished dental school we got married. That's the point where we kind of looked at each other and said, "Okay, what now?" because that one year experience that I had in private practice I didn't really enjoy, and she saw that I did not enjoy that year of private practice.

LH: Plus, you were an instructor at the school, remember?

Q: This was at Northwestern?

DH: At Northwestern.

LH: He was an instructor as well.

DH: So when we got married, we just kind of looked at each other and said, "Okay, what now?" I broached the possibility of joining military dentistry, and to my surprise she said, "Let's go for it."

LH: I don't know what I was thinking.

DH: So we went from there; that's why we joined the military.

LH: Well, what happened was: I'm from Chicago and David's from California, so we went to dental school at Northwestern in Chicago. we got married in August of '91, moved to California, where David's from. I still had to take my boards there, and all that stuff, while David had taken them the year before and passed. He started working, and I was working on my boards. I took my boards, passed, and started working for other people. So we were both working in offices that belonged to other people. I had loans from dental school, and we noticed that we weren't making much. The bulk of the money was going to the clinic owners, and we still had loans; we still had to live, so we said, "Well..."

Q: What was the size of your debt at that time?

LH: A hundred thousand dollars plus interest.

Q: Each?

LH: Just me. David's parents...

Q: What would it be today?

DH: About \$400,000.

Q: Is it more or less the same in medical school, or
veterinary school?

DH: They're about comparable.

LH: So that's when we decided to join the Navy because we were
going to have my loans deferred for three years. We said
we'd join; we'll do three years; then we'll get out and
we'll be okay and we'll go from there.

At the three year point we were in Okinawa, Japan. Our son
was born there, and we had a daughter born in Meridian,
Mississippi. Life was good. We really liked being active
duty in the Dental Corps and the people around us, because
it's really about the people, especially when you're

overseas, you become family, very tight. So we said, "Oh, we'll stay a little more; we like this." And that was 18½ years ago.

DH: Yes, this September it will be 19 years in the Navy.

Q: Okay, Karen, what brought you to the Navy?

KS: I also met my husband in dental school. We were discussing the debt load that we were taking on, and we were enticed by the scholarships that were available at that time, thankfully. We went to one of the meetings; they were offering free pizza, and we were like, "Let's go."

Q: Where'd you go to dental school?

LH: Baylor College of Dentistry.

Q: David, what was the biggest difference between private practice and the military that attracted you?

DH: Well, I didn't like the business part of private practice. I felt like I was doing dentistry just to generate money for the practice. I wasn't doing dentistry as I thought

dentistry was supposed to be done. I was put under pressure to do dentistry that I really did not want to do just because the owner of the practice, or the business manager of the practice, wanted me to do certain procedures that would generate more money, but not, in essence, a benefit to the patient. I knew that military dentistry was very similar to what we did in dental school, meaning dentistry that has to be just right and what's the best for the patient, not what's the best for the practice.

Q: Do you think that opinion is shared by your compadres in the Dental Corps of the Navy?

DH: I think so.

Q: Do you all talk about that kind of thing?

DH: Yes, I think so. People who've had private practice experience have said the same thing, that that's what drove them out of private practice as well.

Q: Karen, you and Lena share a gender thing. Your time in the military has been during a period when an increasing percentage of the military population is female, with more

opportunity, although I think the medical departments of the three services have always been ahead on that score. What's been your experience with this whole matter of diversity, of women in the military?

LH: Well, you know I think it all depends on how your bosses are raised, or how they view things. Whether a female or male, we're all expected to do a job and do it well, but for me, there was an issue when I was pregnant. I had my daughter. Then, when I got to my next command, I was pregnant; I lost the baby, and then I got pregnant again. So the XO told my husband, "Well, if Lena keeps getting pregnant like this she can kiss her career goodbye." That is not something that is right. Or, for example, when I was pregnant I was with the Marines, and they explained the fitness report; I didn't get an EP because I was pregnant and, "You're with the Marines. How could you be pregnant?"

Q: And EP is...?

LH: Early promote, which is the highest. They gave me a lower one because I was pregnant. That was the excuse, or that was what was said to me. But then I had Marine patients, females, who would get pregnant and have families and

that's okay, so that started me thinking. There are some people who are like that, but then there are others who are just wonderful, who believed in me because I could do the job, not because, "Oh, she's a female, she can't," or whatever it was. As a matter of fact, one of them gave me an opportunity to deploy with the Marines, and I'm very grateful for that opportunity because it was a great deployment. It was with the Kurdish evacuees when Saddam was doing the chemical warfare on them.

Q: Where were you?

LH: I was in Guam.

Q: So the evacuees came to Guam?

LH: They came to Guam. I was in Okinawa; I was sent with a group of Marines to Guam, and then from there they were screened and then sent to various places in the U.S. to immigrate. That was in '96.

Q: Was there an Army unit co-located with you?

LH: There were Army people.

Q: That had to be an interesting experience.

LH: That was very interesting. And you know, what's wonderful is once you go somewhere you make it your own. So instead of just taking care of emergencies for the Kurdish evacuees and the other military services that are with you, I could say, "Hey, how about cleanings? Let's start it first-come, first-served. I'll give you five cleanings a week." The Kurds would line up; the first five had an appointment for a cleaning that week. But the Kurds were not used to first-come first served; it was, "I was here at 6:30," and they were number eight or nine. I'd say, "Well, you weren't early enough, because five other people got in."

Q: Cultural difference.

LH: Cultural differences, and then they did not want to recognize me as the dental provider. They would go to my first class, who was a male, and they'd say, "This is what's happening." And he'd say, "She is the doctor, not me." I taught English at night, because I thought, "Why don't I teach them English, some of the basics, so that when they go to the U.S. they're not lost out there." I

speak Turkish and Arabic. Some of them spoke only Kurdish. Those I could not help because they solely used the translator, but the others I could help.

I was sent to the airport in the middle of the night when the planes came from (I want to say Singapore, I'm not sure, one of the orient countries), and I helped them get situated in their homes on Camp Tijan in Guam. What I want to say is, when someone believes in another and gives them an opportunity to make it a wonderful thing, I think that's a great success story. Whoever gave me this opportunity didn't say, "Oh, she's a female; she gets pregnant," or whatever. It was just those two times that I saw prejudice, and after that it's been wonderful. I think it's just the way they were raised. It's not the Navy's opinion; it was just those two individuals.

Q: What's your view of the overall situation today in terms of women in the Navy?

LH: I think wonderful. What a great time to be in the Navy.

Q: If you were to compare, let's say, when you first came in to now, how is it? Is it the same, different?

LH: I think it's more accepting. I think, especially in our corps, we are all professionals and we value each other's professionalism, the knowledge that we bring to the table. I think it's a wonderful thing. I think there were just two incidents that will always stay with me. But you know, you learn from things. You learn from wonderful mentors, and you learn from people who don't do things very well, because then you'll say, "I will not do that."

Q: Sometimes you learn more from them.

LH: Absolutely. You say, "I'm not going to do that."

Q: Karen, what's been your experience as a female?

KS: I shared what she said with pregnancy and being on active duty. I actually left the service because of one individual's comments. But you know, I grew up and I think the mentality has definitely changed. I think, like you said, accepting is the word. I returned, thankfully; I missed the camaraderie. But yes, back in 2005, I think

being pregnant then was hard, and dual military (my husband's also active duty). But, these two individuals are the focus of your interview, and I appreciate both of them, because it was the Captains Hartzell that really inspired me to come back in, and they've done so much for my career since 2009.

LH: Well, the Navy Dental Corps is fortunate to have people like Dr. Karen Stokes. We know a good thing when we see it.

Q: I would imagine your experience with the Kurdish refugees really gave you a particularly powerful insight into your subsequent actions in Iraq? How did that play into your duties later on when you were a translator and political advisor?

LH: Well, you know what's funny? Sometimes some leaders do things to their people and people don't hear about it, or maybe they say, "Oh, that can't be true; it's a rumor." So they kind of dismiss it, but when this leader's actions escalate, it's brought to the attention of the world and then things get done accordingly.

When I went to Iraq -- first of all, I never thought I'd go to Iraq or see Iraq. The Kurdish evacuees would tell me about Iraq in '96 and I thought, "Oh, nice country, Mesopotamia, the fertile crescent and everything else." But I did go there and they told me a lot of stories about what the Iraqi guards would do, or Saddam's people would do. And then for me to go back there in 2003 and see what happened, and what he'd done first hand, that was an eye-opener.

Q: David, what's been your view of these things? You also came from another country and background. How's that been in the Navy?

DH: Well, I almost consider myself American because I left Taiwan when I was very young. I was just a very little boy, and the majority of my upbringing was all here in the United States; so I'm very Americanized. When people meet me for the first time, they're surprised to see me as an Asian person, because first of all, Hartzell's not an Asian name. Then second of all, when they talk to me over the phone or something like that, they don't notice an accent or anything, so that's also why they're surprised when they first meet me that I'm an Asian person. So I really can't touch too much on what the cultural differences are,

because I almost feel like I've been born and raised here in the United States.

Q: Lena, what's been your experience in terms of cultural differences?

LH: When I came to the U.S. I was 16, and so at 16 I'm already very Lebanese, very Middle Eastern culture. And just to clarify, the Lebanese people don't consider themselves Arabs; we're Phoenicians. So we come here and people's perception of Lebanon is that it's a desert and there are camels running around, but that is so not true. That's true of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine, whatever.

Our culture is based on having family and friends around you all the time, and lots of visits; you know, your aunt's visiting you, your cousins, whatever. Then you come to the States and, "Oh, by the way, don't visit me unless you call me and check that I'm in..." -- you know? Or when you visit me, I will offer you something to eat, something to drink, the whole thing. Here, when we first came to the U.S. and we'd go to somebody's house, a church person, or whatever,

we weren't even offered a glass of water. So it's just different; life here is different.

Q: You just described Latino life because that's exactly how that is.

LH: Exactly, that's how it is. So I thought, "Oh, okay, just a lot of differences." I even see it with my kids. I tell them, "Oh, we have to bake a cake; somebody's coming."

They'll say, "What if they don't eat cake?"

I'll say, "I don't care. I'm going to still have something out so I can offer them something to eat or something to drink." So that's that.

And family support, I'd see that missing. When we first came here I thought there were a lot of lonely people, or alone people. Whereas in Lebanon, you don't have time to get depressed because everybody's going to be on top of you, everybody's visiting, or "you come over", or "let's go here". There's no time for self-pity, for example, if

you're grieving or whatever. Whereas here, there's a lot of time alone. It's easy to say, "Oh no, I'm sorry, you go ahead without me. I'm not going to come." That's unacceptable; we're just going to drag you with us.

Q: What's been the accommodation for the different cultural thing, David?

LH: He's a great man; he puts up with me.

DH: No, I'm always an admirer of that culture. But back to my Chinese culture -- we tend to be very reserved people, and we tend to be very polite and reserved. When we met we made a great couple because we were the ying and the yang.

LH: I talk and he listens.

DH: They always say, "Opposites attract." That's true. Over the years, because we are so opposite, we've come to meet each other towards the middle, and I think that it has benefited both of us. I've learned, definitely, a lot of good traits and things from Lena.

LH: He has to speak up, you see, otherwise...

Q: You are part of a melting pot. It dawned on me before this interview that the Navy is a microcosm of the melting pot phenomenon, although more so, I would think. I'd be interested in your take on this; it strikes me that the military has been especially important in that process. I see it every day in the ranks. Whatever the immigrant population is at the time will be reflected in the military and will stay that way. Has that been pretty much your observation of things?

LH: Yes, pretty much.

DH: I think the military is the stage for that to happen, just because we have overseas duty stations. So you're going to have U.S. military service members out being stationed overseas. You do see a lot of mixed marriages and things like that. Just by traveling around all over the world, you see that in the military. It's not very uncommon to see a service member married to a Korean lady or a Japanese lady, or a German lady.

LH: The military's been great for me because in Lebanon, we don't have, for example, African American people. The only ones we have are from Africa who will sit by the movie

theater and sell hot peanuts. Then you come and you work with them. For example, when we first came here, my mom was scared of black people because you see them in the movies playing the bad guys, or the thieves, or whatever it is. It's great, whether they're from Africa, or from Haiti, or from here. I have a diverse group of friends who I truly love. I wouldn't have had that had I not come into the Navy. Or maybe I would have just being in America, but it's been great.

Q: Both of you have had some deployments. What was your experience aboard ship?

DH: Which ship? Well, my first deployment was on an amphibious ship, and we did what we called back then a Cooperation Float through southeastern Asian countries. That was my first exposure to going out and visiting other countries aboard a ship, and we actually did some humanitarian missions even back then in 1995. We did some humanitarian missions in the Philippines and Indonesia, so that was a good experience or a head start in helping people around the world even back then.

My next ship tour was the *USS Ronald Reagan*, and that was, I would say, one of my favorite tours, because I was the dental department head on a brand new aircraft carrier. We did the maiden deployment in 2006.

Q: And you deployed to?

DH: To Westpac, to all the countries out in Asia and the Gulf; we went to the Persian Gulf. But at that time, in 2006, Ronald Reagan's name, just his name carried a lot throughout the country and throughout the world, so when we did our maiden deployment, every country we visited, just by the mere fact that Ronald Reagan was coming, it was just an incredible journey.

Q: Were people looking for Ronald Reagan, somehow or other they never got the word?

DH: I think just knowing that the ship was named after the man generated a lot of interest in every country we came in to. Everybody seemed to just roll out the red carpet for us when we pulled in. That was a really neat adventure.

Q: What was your duty day as the head of the Dental Department? How big was it and what was your life like on a daily basis?

DH: I think being a dental department head on an aircraft carrier was one of the pinnacles, because on an aircraft carrier you only had two captains on the ship back in those days. I know things are a little bit different now, but back in the day when I was on the *Ronald Reagan* we only had two captains, and that was the captain of the ship, the CO (the commanding officer), and the XO; they were the only two captains. The rest were all commanders and department heads. So as a department head and a commander, you're kind of up there with the captain. The aircraft carrier with the largest warship in the world, has 5,000 sailors on it. When you're with 5,000 sailors and you're looked up to as one of the top echelon officers on the ship, it just seems like people move out of your way when you're walking down the P-way. And here I am thinking, "Gosh, I'm only a dental department head." But the sailors on board see the rank; they don't see the position. They just think, "Wow, you're a commander. You must be an important person."

Q: Well, how was the dental practice?

DH: We had five dentists on board, and 20 dental technicians.

LH: And an oral surgeon.

DH: Right. One of the five dentists was the oral surgeon, and then four general dentists. And like I said, 20 dental technicians, so a department of 25 people.

Q: Part of your mission is to be prepared to take on refugee care or humanitarian relief. That kind of thing I would assume could happen.

DH: That's one of the things, but our everyday job was just to keep the sailors and the crew of the *Ronald Reagan* dentally fit. And we were busy. When you have 5,000 sailors on board you definitely have enough work to do in dentistry.

Q Well Lena, you were aboard the *Enterprise*?

LH: I was.

Q: And how was that?

LH: The most amazing experience I've ever had.

Q: How?

LH: Well, years before I was on the *Enterprise* when I saw David's ship, the *USS Germantown*. David said, "Oh come out and take a look at this ship. It's so cool." That was his first deployment. I went there and, "Oh, very nice ship, yeah, yeah, yeah, but I really don't like ships." I said, "In our career what will be nice is you can go on ships and I'll stay on shore and then we will be perfect."

And he says, "Okay, we can do that."

Because I'd look at the water and go, "Oh my gosh, I'm going to fall in there." Because there were all these ladder wells on this ship and everything else.

In 2000, I was about to finish my two-year residency in comprehensive dentistry and I was supposed to go (in my mind) to Norfolk, Virginia because that's where my husband was stationed for that year we were living apart. The

detailer called and he said, "Well, Lena, have you thought about a ship?"

And I thought, "Oh my gosh, I'm going on a ship." I said, "What ships are you thinking of?" He says, "The *George Washington* and the *Enterprise*."

I asked him about the deployment dates simply because we were all going to move down to Norfolk and I wanted to get the kids settled in school before I went on deployment for six or seven months, whatever it was. I took the *Enterprise*, based on deployment dates; it was supposed to deploy in April of 2001. So I went on the *Enterprise*. I had to get a new uniform and everything else. There's this energy around the ship and it's like, "We are happening. We are a carrier; we are the best." First you have the sea-going people, the navigator, and then the air crew comes on board; you have 2,500 sailors on the ship, and then 2,500 air crew comes on board, and you have all these little cultures-the SWO [Surface Warfare Officer] culture, the nuke culture, the air culture.

Q: What's the strangest culture?

LH: The nuke; they're very quiet; you can't have a conversation with them, although I have tried.

Q: Who are the wildest?

LH: The wildest are the weapons officers -- well, the pilots are because they command and operate this multi-billion dollar piece of equipment right? But the weapons are cool because most of them had been enlisted before, so they're very salty sailors, and then they become weapons and they have all these stories about what they've done and how they do it, and they're very good and seasoned. Their table, when you sit with them in the wardroom, is very exciting all the time. The nuke table, not much going on there.

Q: Very quiet.

LH: Very quiet. I was not a department head like David. I was one of the five dentists, and I was a comprehensive dentist, so I was out there to do whatever needs to be done. The oral surgeon would fly out to go take his boards, or whatever, and the department head felt comfortable

enough that I could take care of any surgical trauma or extractions or whatever that would present themselves. That was awesome.

I got my pin [Surface Warfare Medical Department Officer badge] from the ship as well as we deployed. We went on a MED cruise, so every few days we'd go to Cannes; we'd go to Palma de Mallorca, Greece.

Q: How could you stand it?

LH: I'm telling you, somebody had to do it and it was me. So we did that and it was awesome. The energy was so cool, these guys -- 19 years old, 18 years old -- and you had the ability to leave. Being female to me was a great plus. Why? Because I could talk to the female patients. Like one of them would come to see me at the beginning, and she's beautiful, makeup on; but then in the middle of the deployment just let herself go. She gained weight, no makeup on. When you're out to sea, you're out to sea. You can make your own fun, but it's not like now when you have all this digital stuff. There was some; we had email. I said, "Are you doing okay? You're such a pretty girl. Don't

let yourself go." I mean, her teeth were all nice and clean, but when I saw her later she had let herself go. I said, "Don't do that. You're so pretty." And then tears coming down her cheeks. So for me, you can do so much wherever you are. I'm sure Karen [Stokes] has done so much when she was on the ship.

Q: You're describing operational stress.

LH: Exactly, yes. That was before 9/11 happened. We were out to sea in September when 9/11 happened. We were about to cross the equator, which is a big shellback ceremony everybody was getting ready for. We had to turn back and go back there and our pilots were busy doing their thing. So then you saw stress, big stress.

Q: The Navy has people dealing with combat and operational stress control, what's your view of how the Navy is doing this as an institution?

LH: I was talking to a pilot. They all know what to look for in their troops for signs of stress, but nobody's ever thought of TMD, temporomandibular disorder and dysfunction. That was something that he said, because we had all these people

come in and they were all just in pain, because we didn't know when we were going home at that point. It could be rumor mill -- it could be December, could be next year -- and people were saying, "I can't do that -- my rent, my this, my that, whatever it is."

But one of the nice things that I was able to do is -- you know if you're friends with the supply department, you pretty much get what you want, right? One of his people had some crooked teeth, and I said, "Oh, it's so bad. I'm a comp [comprehensive] dentist. I could do braces, but we don't have any stuff." He said, "How much money do you need, Doc?" I went back and looked; I still had my catalogues from the comp program. I thought, "If I do simple orthodontics, I don't have to buy the big bands and the glue and all that stuff. I could do simple tweaking and by the time we got home..." You know how people come home; they're thinner, their teeth are whiter, whatever. So we did that. We whitened teeth. We straightened some teeth, seven cases. So that makes raising morale in a way that most people probably never think of.

Q: TMD could actually be a stress-causing factor.

LH: Absolutely.

Q: That's interesting. So you have to look at the physical things as well as the emotional.

DH: Well, if I could chime in. One of the best experiences that Lena had on the Enterprise was when she was called to go up to the bridge by the CO, by the Commanding Officer, one day when we had to transit through the Suez Canal, because the CO knew that Lena speaks Arabic. The captain called specifically for Lena to come up to the bridge. This was after 9/11, so everybody was on pins and needles about transiting the Suez Canal.

LH: All the guns were ready. And the Canal is pretty narrow.

DH: So they're just a sitting duck as they transit through the Suez Canal. The CO calls for Lena to come up to the bridge, because the Egyptian pilots that helped the Enterprise navigate through the canal were on board. He said to her, "We have some Egyptians on board and I want you to be next to me at all times and listen in on what they're saying, because I obviously do not want something bad to happen." This was her first experience to be incognito, because the

Egyptians did not know that she could hear and understand what they were saying. Today that captain of the ship is a four-star admiral in the Navy.

Q: What were they saying?

LH: They would talk about whatever was happening in their lives, and then they would say, "You know, we deserve Rolex watches for the job we're doing on this." And you know, they get paid, I think, a half a million per transit, and half a million back...

DH: ...for the ship to transit the canal. They get pretty good money to do this.

LH: ...and ship's store stuff. Each one of them gets a bag from the ship's store: a cap, a Zippo lighter, little things that are cool. But this guy is like, "What is that? A Rolex watch would have been OK." Their culture is you give bribes if you want anything -- your papers signed or whatever -- you bribe them.

DH: The captain asked Lena, "What did they say?" after they finished the transit and left the ship. Lena told them, "They were complaining about the gifts we gave them. They wanted Rolexes instead of a ball cap or a belt buckle."

LH: And he said, "Well, I'd like a Rolex too."

Q: You could get a Rolodex (laughs).

DH: But see, that was the first opportunity where Lena actually got to use her Arabic skills as a request from the line officer, the captain of the ship.

LH: One other time we had an Iraqi oil boat, an oiler, that had flipped and the crew was in the water. I remember, it was 1-4 or 1-5 and Sunday morning; they called my name on the 1MC and I thought, "Ooh, why would anybody do that." But it was because they had rescued them and put them in sick bay. They said, "Translate for us," because the Iraqis didn't speak a word of English. After we did the translating and all that stuff they said, "Don't leave us here," because they felt very frightened and they had aspirated some stuff. It's so good to have someone who can speak the language of wherever you are. We'd be so fortunate if we could have something like that.

Q: Well, this is similar to your experience later when your official duty was translator for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. What was that experience like?

LH: They told me not to bring any dental instruments or anything, so I was not going as a dentist. I was to be in civilian clothing in Tikrit where it's very, very tribal, and very urban. The men didn't want to even deal with me because "what's a woman doing here anyway?" We would meet with the mayor; we would meet with some of the generals of the Army that had retired that would make up some of the local councils and the provincial council. Tikrit is the capital of the province of Saleheddin, and they had all these little towns and we would visit all of them for local councils, and then the provincial council would be on a Sunday; so we worked every day. We'd go visiting all the time with all these offices and people, and there was lots of sheiks, provincial counselors, and civil officers there.

I was the only Navy person. I worked for the State Department; I had three bosses. What was interesting was the men didn't pay attention to me until one of them saw that I was carrying a gun, and all of a sudden he started respecting me and acknowledging me, just because I had a weapon on me. I had my weapon in my purse so nobody knew I had a weapon, but when we were going to a graduation of the local police an American Army guy said, "Ma'am, you have to

give me your weapon if you have one." I wasn't going to take it out, because people were behind me and they could see everything. There's no personal space there, they're all in your face. I said, "I have one, but I don't want to give it up [referring to Lena's pistol], because it's going to compromise things."

Then my boss said, "Oh Lena, just give it to them. It's okay." So I did, and that's when people started respecting me and started talking to me and telling me secrets and telling me things. Even back then they were talking about Abu Ghraib, the prison, and what was going on there way before anything hit the news about Abu Ghraib.

One of the most rewarding things is I was able to speak with the women, with the wives, and that was very rewarding. I wrote some cables for the State Department because that's how they communicate. You write a cable with a catchy title. For example, we visited Saddam's primary sheikh. We'd visit him and he'd pretend that he knew nothing of what's going on during the day. For example, a Blackhawk would be shot down that day. We'd go in and say,

"Did you hear about the Blackhawk?" And he would say, "What happened?" But I'd go next door to his wife's home and she'd say, "Oh, I heard about that. That's so horrible. I'm so sorry," and I thought, "Your husband's such a liar." But it's all about being like a fox because they would say, "Americans are way too honest, too direct. You guys should be like the English. The English have mastered the art of diplomacy -- whether it's politics or war, or whatever -- because they're like foxes.

DH: They say nothing.

LH: They say nothing, whereas, Americans are direct; they just want to see results. They just are not as cunning, maybe, but very rewarding, and made lots of friends.

Q: How were you chosen for this mission?

LH: They went through the list, and I got a call. I was at my most wonderful duty station. I was in San Diego; I was director of the ASW [Anti Submarine Warfare] Base branch dental clinic, a beautiful place, finally doing things the way I want them because I "had arrived", you know, as a clinic director. I got a call from a chief in Millington

[Tennessee] saying, "You're on the list of Arabic speaking people. Do you still speak Arabic?"

I said, "Well, I speak it, but I'm not as fluent as I used to be."

He said, "That's okay." He said, "Because we might need you to go to Iraq, but chances are you won't."

I said, "Okay." So a whole month passes by. I don't tell my husband because if I tell him he would get worried, so why worry him for nothing? So the day I had that thing, "Oh, it's been a month, they forgot." Then I get a call. "You need to get on the plane Sunday. You're going to Fort Bliss, Texas, and from there we're going to go directly to Iraq." But thank God, what was happening in D.C.? There was a hurricane or something happening weather-wise; everything stopped working, so it was delayed a week. I went, and they said, "You're going to be a POLAD; you're going to be a translator and a PAO."

One of the wonderful things that I did was I took pictures of people. My husband gave me a digital camera, which I did not know how to use, and a laptop, which I didn't care for. But he said, "Take them because you can capture things." He's so smart.

DH: I wanted her to capture everything, to capture the photos and capture the stories and write them down.

Q: Did you write a journal?

LH: I did.

Q: Consider donating that to the archives. Journals and things like that are wonderful. Very few people do that, by the way.

LH: I think I did that for my mental health, because I didn't know whether I was going to be OK. You're thrown in there, and I was a bodyguard, kind of, because we had ghurkas. But the nice thing I did was I took pictures of the locals. We would go to Ad-Dawr or Balad, or Tuz, or whatever, and we'd meet with the local sheiks, or the local council, and we'd want information about the train station or the electrical-

they had an electrical company there, and there were some issues with that. Anyway, I took pictures. And the next time we'd visit, I'd take my camera to the printer, the boss's color printer, and, "Here you go." Did they love that or what? "Take my picture by myself!" I just took their pictures and they just loved it. So it's the relationships you build. Even though I was a women, I'm not like them; they were okay with me because of what they could get from me, and I was okay to give it. It was very neat.

Q: Now you mentioned cunning. In your current job you handle assignments for Dental Corps officers. How does that go?

LH: I'm a very simple person, so I use the help from other people. I mean, I'm not as smart as I'd like to be, so I always ask people to help me to do what's best. It's a democracy right? So I just ask them, "What do you think about this? Is this okay?" Whatever, and it works out. If I have to ask someone to go on deployment, they're very gracious with me, because they know I'm not the one that says, "Oh yes, I want them out of here." And you hope that the officer benefits from wherever they go, because you

know you bloom where you're planted. We all work together;
it's one team.

Q: Are you managing all Dental Corps officers or a certain
portion?

LH: Just the portion that's in the National Naval Medical
Center. But then I do work with the dean of the Navy Post-
graduate Dental School, Captain Bob Taft, and we together,
I mean, there's a lot of give and take. We don't have
anything in writing, but we do support each other. For
example, I have a GPR program, General Practice Residency;
I have five interns, and if they can assist the school with
duty on call, or whatever, and then the same thing with the
school, they can help us. It's a give and take. We're one
team, why not help each other?

Q: I may have the terms confused. You're not a detailee, then,
per se?

LH: No, no, I'm a deputy commander for dentistry, and I do have
medical readiness under that directorate.

DH: You might be mixing her job with my job because I'm the career planner for the Dental Corps. But career planner is not the assignment officer. I'm not the detailer. I'm just the mentor, or the career guidance counselor, basically, for the Dental Corps, so if anybody out there in the Dental Corps want to reach out and ask me questions about their career in the Navy Dental Corps, then I'm the person to reach out to.

Q: How many Dental Corps officer are on active duty?

DH: There's 1,017.

Q: Do you all work with the Reserves as well, or is that totally separate?

DH: No, that's separate.

Q: Who handles the Reserves?

DH: There's a Captain Pricilla Coe; she works up on the same floor that I am on.

Q: And it's controlled out of BUMED then?

DH: Yes, she's the Reserve Affairs Officer for the Navy Dental Corps.

Q: What would be the major issues in the Dental Corps today?

DH: I would say special pays...

LH: ...and retention.

Q: And how's it looking?

DH: It's looking a lot better. We've been able to generate certain special pays for general dentists, and that has helped with retention. We weren't doing very well two or three years ago with recruiting; however, just over the last two or three years (and I think it has to do a lot with the economy). We're doing very well now.

Q: Would you hear the same thing from the Air Force and the Army?

DH: Yes.

Q: What do you think are the major issues facing Navy dental?

LH: One of the things I think about when I think about the Dental Corps, I always compare it to when I first started, so I have nothing but what I know to compare to. When we were in the Navy in Okinawa, for example, we had a lot of social gatherings, so we saw our bosses and their wives or husbands socially as well as at work. We appreciated them letting their guard down and then letting us come in, meeting us, introducing us to their kids and that sort of thing. But now, there are dental officers who come in and they get a chunk of money, big time money, and then I don't see them having a lot of social interaction outside of work. That may be where we are located, that may be it, I'm not sure. But I think they could benefit so much more when they build relationships and have that experience instead of: I come in 9 to 5, or 7 to 4, whatever it is; I do my job and I leave. I think there's that mentoring that could be so beneficial for both sides of the process.

Q: I think that's reflected as well in the Army Medical Department's experience. Karen, what's your view of that, and your experience?

KS: I agree. I mean, it's the camaraderie that brought me back in. I did not receive a big chunk of money when I came back in, though I would have accepted had it been available. But just to know people care about your career and about you and they've already forged their path and share their insights. It's just really nice to know that you're not alone. I feel that we can improve on that. That's an area that can be improved upon. But I'm very grateful to be at BUMED because I feel I'm surrounded by mentors. I just wish more of the junior officers had this opportunity.

Q: You (BUMED) all get to move, don't you? Or are you all going to get to stay here? What do you hear these days?

DH: We're going down to the Raytheon building down in Falls Church, Virginia.

Q: So that's definitely for all of you?

DH: For all the BUMED folks.

Q: What's been your most dramatic experience? When you sit around telling tales, what kinds of stories will you tell about your previous assignments?

DH: I guess I could finish my experiences off with my involvement with the humanitarian missions. I like the way that the Navy is going with the strategic planning for the 21st century, and that's soft power. And I like that we're so involved with soft power right now that other countries want to do the same thing we're doing, because they see the success.

Q: Including China.

DH: Oh yes, including China. As a matter of fact, the Chinese people came on board our ship, the *USNS Comfort* while we were in Columbia because they wanted to learn how to do soft power from us.

Q: Because they're going to launch their hospital ship...

DH: They have two hospital ships.

Q: Are they already in service?

DH: I don't know. But they wanted to do soft power, so they wanted to learn from us. I think this strategic plan of soft power is so effective because it's making the world know that the U.S. is not going to come to their country just to drop bombs on their head, but we're going to come to your country to help you out and to assist you in your time of need. So it's forging these positive relationships.

Q: You did the Continuing Promise?

DH: I did the Continuing Promise.

Q: What countries?

DH: Seven countries in Latin America.

Q: What was the experience like?

DH: I thought it was a great experience just to see that these countries look forward to having us come ashore and helping them. And then following Continuing Promise, both Karen and I were on the unified response for Haiti.

Q: Describe that. You were there too, Karen?

KS: I was.

Q: How did you like that?

KS: Well, we weren't given much notice, of course, it was a rapid buildup -- two days. Actually I had spoken with Captain Lena Hartzell. She had mentioned that her husband would be going out again, and just intuitively I thought, "I need to help." So I asked if I could, and she said, "You know, I think we've got it covered." But the next day I was in the clinic and she pulled me out and said, "Were you serious about what you said about volunteering to help?"

I said, "Yes, ma'am." I hadn't spoken to my husband about it; it was just sort of a thought. So off we went and it was just the most amazing gift to be a part of that mission, and I'm forever grateful for that.

LH: And you did it; you're the one who did it.

Q: What kind of preset plans were in place? This was a sudden thing, but did you have an in-process routine: if this happens, this is what we do on a deployment for that kind of purpose?

DH: I think it was probably easier for me than for Karen, just for the fact that I was already on that platform, so when the earthquake struck and the news talked about disaster relief. In my mind I already knew I was going. I mean, there was no doubt that I was going, because I was on the platform. So mentally and physically I was prepared to go. But for Karen to find out with only two or three days notice, she had to get a lot of things in order for her to show up in the department on the ship; but she did, she showed up, and she did a very good job.

I actually left early from the ship because I had orders to come to BUMED, so the ship released me, but it was only because Karen was able to take over when I left.

Q: What kind of patient flow were you dealing with, and what kinds of tasks were you dealing with?

DH: When we first started the trip down to Haiti everything was so up in the air; we had no idea of what we were going to be doing down there. I don't think anybody really knew what to expect until you actually hit the theater and see what's going on, and evaluate and assess and then decide on what to do. So while we were going down there, obviously we had no idea. In my mind I thought maybe we were going to go out to the sites and help the people in Haiti, but as it turned out that wasn't the case. When we got there most of the injuries were so severe that dentistry was on the bottom of their wish list of what they wanted done. Therefore, we had three dentists and we found out that there was really no need for three dentists. What we ended up doing most of our time was taking care of the crew of the ship -- dental stuff. Then as the Haitian patients started coming on board and their injuries were tended to, some of those patients had some need for dental care, and we captured those patients with dental procedures.

When the patients come onboard, they also have a family member that comes onboard as an escort for the patient. So those escorts were waiting around in the waiting rooms, in the ward, and everything while their loved one was in

surgery, and we ended up doing dentistry on the escorts as well.

Finally, we had a whole bunch of Red Cross volunteers that were Haitian-speaking that came from New York or Miami that came to the ship to be translators. So we ended up doing dentistry on those Red Cross Haitian volunteers.

We found things to do, but eventually we realized that one dentist could do that, and that's why Karen stayed behind and finished the job.

Q: And what was the experience like for you?

KS: It was my first experience to be a department head; I had eight corpsmen and a chief, and the chief was just top-notch. The corpsmen would go to the top deck and help with litter bearer duties, so we spread out beyond just being a dental crew.

I did go in-country twice, so I got to see first-hand the devastation. What an amazing people. They have reason for

hope, even though it looks like there's no hope. It was an eye-opener to see that, and I appreciate so much more what I enjoy here in America from this experience.

Q: Your corpsmen dental techs also go through corps school, I assume?

KS: Right.

Q: But then subsequent to that...?

KS: They're [NEC] 8701, so they do receive some dental training. They were all eager to provide prophylaxis [oral prophylaxis], so I'd supervise the ship's crew. That was sort of a morale booster to come down and receive a prophylaxis, a cleaning, so we were there for that and we kept readiness up. Of course, the sick call started to build up towards the end, so I was quite busy; but yes, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Q: Was that, perhaps, your most memorable Navy experience?

KS: To this point, yes.

Q: Well you had a very memorable experience. I understand you had something to do with finding Saddam Hussein?

LH: I did.

DH: Well, Tikrit is his home town.

LH: That's his home town; we were looking for him, so we would ask people, "Have you seen him?" Sometimes they'd say, "Ah, we saw him driving a taxi." Disguised, whatever...

DH: ...at the 7-11.

LH: It was very neat. we went one time to this sheik and said, "Hey, did you see Saddam?" At that time we were using a local translator who spoke more of the Iraqi dialect. I speak Lebanese Arabic, so they'd all say, "Oh, are you Lebanese? You sound Lebanese."

And I'd say, "My dad's Lebanese."

So they'd say, "Oh, we love Lebanese." That actually saved my life once towards the beginning. I was there for two

weeks, and my boss, Jon Stewart, was leaving; a new boss, Bob Silverman, was coming.

Q: And these are State Department?

LH: State Department people-they're pretty high up there. We always traveled in two cars. One was the Land Cruiser; it had a double gas tank. mine was the Ford Explorer; it had one tank. we drove up north, dropped them off; there's an airport there. Coming back I noticed my gas tank was getting low. We always had walkie-talkies, and I told the guy in front of me, who's an Army guy, "My gas tank is low."

He said, "Oh, we'll make it; we'll make it." This is a two-hour trip.

Okay, five minutes later I said, "The red light is on."

He said, "Okay, let's keep going; we'll keep our eyes open." At that time there was some gas issues. The Turks were coming, and the Iraqis were closing gas stations. The

Iraqis and the Turks don't get along, so there's a lot of stuff going on and they closed gas stations. They only opened them at specific times and they had long lines to get gas.

We're driving and there's a gas station on the right. He says, "There's a gas station on the right. I'm going to pull up; you go over there, speak in Arabic, bat your eyelashes, and tell them that you need this many liters of gas."

I said, "Okay." We pull in; it's deserted; there's nobody in the gas station. All of a sudden, this guy comes out. I rolled down my window. First of all, they're shocked to see a woman driver. That was one of the greatest things, my saving grace in the beginning, because we'd pass by checkpoints and they'd see me and their jaw would drop. I'd wave and keep going because you never want to stop at a checkpoint. You just wave nicely and keep going. The Iraqi looked, and I said, "I'm out of gas. Please help me."

He says, "We're closed."

I said, "I have to go down to Tikrit" (this is in Arabic).

"I have no gas. I need this many liters; I promise I'll pay you."

And he says, "Are you Lebanese?"

I said, "My dad is."

"Ah, you're our sister. Come to the back."

I thought, "Whew," because I thought, "What if he decided to come to the back," or whatever. So I get out of the car, they pulled it to the gas pump. I opened my wallet to give him money; we had our Geneva Convention card and had a Red Cross and everything else. He said, "Oh, are you a doctor?"

I said, "I'm a dentist."

He said, "Oh, how wonderful." He said, "If you ever need anything..."

...and I'm thinking, "I'm never going to be in this area again."

But he said, "If you ever need anything. No, no, no, you're our sister."

We left, and I thought, "Oh my gosh, I never again want to be in this situation." There was the Army guy who didn't come out of his car, because he looked very American. So I got back in. That was a nice thing.

Then there were times where I heard gunfire. I don't know what shots sound like, and I go, "What was that?"

"Huh, they're shooting at us."

So there were just a lot of exciting times. Every night when I went to bed I was very thankful for making it that day. But sometimes I thought, "I don't want to die in my bed either." I mean, that's just so not like a hero. You know, you go to war and you want to die in action because you were doing something instead of just being in your bed. But there was a lot of what they called "fireworks" and a lot of gunfire.

We were supposed to go to Samarra one day. I'm an on-time person; I like to be on time, early if you can help it. My boss at the State Department, the second guy, Bob Silverman, is always late, and I'm thinking, "Bob, we need to go. We have appointments with people." But he knows the culture. Their culture is you get there when you get there. If you say 10:00, you show up at 12:00, "Hey, I'm here. Where's the coffee?"

I was responsible for \$4 million dollars that we were going to spend in the town of Samarra building bridges, winning the hearts and minds of the people. That was a place where the Pakistanis would come; the Iranians would come and do

really bad things. Pay somebody who's unemployed \$500, "Go blow up this. If you kill people we'll give you more money." Or even \$50, they would do stuff like that.

We were going there to meet the local council in order to discuss the teachers. Teachers belonged to a certain group, and when they got rid of Saddam, they got rid of all the teachers. They made more money because they belonged to this group (I can't recall right now what it was called.) The bottom line is we were an hour late, and when we got to Samarra there were police, there were lines. And what happened is where we were supposed to meet a bomb had gone off. It created a big crater in the parking lot and killed people who were in the meeting that we were going to be in.

Sometimes I think, "That guy [Bob] is so lucky."

DH: If he had gotten up on time...

LH: ...on time like I wanted to.

DH: They would have been in the news.

Q: It pays to be late.

LH: Yes. One time we had a flat tire. He was going so fast we had a flat tire, and we were out in broad daylight on this

street. One of our Ghurkas was changing his tire, and I thought, "Oh my God." You have to be very careful when a little motorcycle passes by and the guy on the back is facing the other way. So that's why we had the AKs out, because when we went there we had to always remember that if we don't kill the enemy then we will be killed. So that was interesting. We made it alive through that, so that was fun.

Q: Going back to Saddam, what was the role that you played in his being eventually located?

DH: I think that she had an instrumental success in finding Saddam, but as we found out when she came back, whatever information she found out is all classified and she's not supposed to talk about it. But, I'll never forget that day when Saddam was captured, and then less than 12 hours later I get photos sent to me and Lena is standing inside Saddam's hole.

Q: You were in the country?

DH: She's in the hole in the country. But the thing is it amazes me that my wife was right there when history was

made, and she's one of the few Americans that actually got to go inside the hole and take pictures.

Q: You look very nice there. You had your hair done? (laughs)

LH: Yes, I trimmed my own hair and everything.

DH: The thing that was really striking about that whole thing was when she sent home pictures and she showed the little, tiny hut that Saddam was living in. It's just amazing that the man who had owned or lived in 175 palaces all around the country is all of a sudden inside this little hut in this little broken down kitchen with little broken down beds.

LH: It was just like the back of your backyard; it was just a little place. But where he was hiding had two entrances. It had a little side entrance facing the little house, and then around the house is another entrance; you could escape very easily. If somebody comes in one way, you hear about it, because he had turkeys in a cage, and turkeys, they say, are like watch dogs because if a stranger comes they start making lots of noise. So he had his turkeys that were his watch dogs.

Q: Would you say he was a truly evil man?

LH: You know, I don't know. Somebody had told me that when somebody does something bad, you're supposed to stand on the balcony and say or think, "What would make them do that? What would be the motivation behind his actions?" I think Iraq needed somebody like Saddam, a strong person, to unite all these tribes. I mean, you have to be like the way he was, the Alpha male, the Alpha dog, to get all the dogs. Because now, when he was down, everybody decided, "Hey, I'm going to be the Alpha male."

Q: He was like Tito in Yugoslavia.

LH: Exactly, so depending on what you have in front of you, that's how you have to act. This was not something where democracy was going to work, because everybody had their little agenda, and as long as they knew who the big dog is, then everything was fine. However, he did do some things that were not right. The way he grew up was very sad. His mother married this really poor guy. I don't know if they killed the man or got rid of him, but the mother ended up marrying somebody else, and this stepfather was very mean to him, hit him, did all kinds of stuff. When he was twelve

his uncle took him under his wing and said, "Here's a gun, go kill," or, go and do this. He became good at it and he was a bully, and he found his true calling in life. I don't recall all the little details, and I'm not saying that it's okay what he did, but some of the things that he did benefited the country. He had the smartest people go to MED school, engineering school, whatever in Baghdad -- a lot of smart people. He sent a lot of people overseas, and they came back. he didn't want everybody else to have Internet, or everybody else to be exposed to the news, so he had two channels in Iraq -- and it was him, and when you flipped it, it was him again. So what he did was he cut contacts to outside stuff. He made people stay in their lane, in a way.

Q: We've hit our mark on time. Are there any things you'd like to talk about that we haven't discussed? Andre's got some questions.

AS: A question I always like to ask in the interviews: if you could get into a time machine and go back to when you first joined the Navy, back in 1992, and meet yourselves, what sort of advice would you give yourselves based on all the experience you've had in 18+ years of service?

LH: Enjoy where you are, because sometimes we get into this habit of planning or looking at the next place or the next thing and not fully enjoying the people we meet or the place that we are. So I think I would say really enjoy where you are and the people you're spending time with instead of worrying about the future.

DH: Just enjoy the adventure. Nineteen years ago, or twenty years ago, my thought was I was going to come out of dental school, I was going to have a private practice and I was going to be settled in one place and all that. But nowhere did I ever envision that I would have an adventure. So because of the adventure I've had the opportunity to travel to 21 countries during this last 18½ years. And oftentimes I would just look back and think, "If I was in private practice in a small town, would I ever have had that opportunity to travel to 21 countries?" And the answer would be no, I would never have been able to do that. So that's what I would tell people if I had a chance to go back in time. Enjoy the adventure part of it.

Q: That's kind of like George Patton's speech to the troops.

AS: How has your relationship made you better officers in the U.S. Navy?

LH: Well, we have weaknesses and strengths that are complementary. For example, when we first joined the Navy, the Navy has these balls, or these gatherings, whatever, and David didn't feel comfortable talking to people, strangers, -- and me, I can blah, blah, blah, blah. So one time we went and he said, "Okay, now you talk and I'll stand right here." I think he sees me and he sees that, "Hey, it's okay to talk and laugh, and share an anecdote or whatever." So he's very comfortable talking to people now.

And me, I don't focus as well. He's very focused, a whole building could fall next to him, but when he's focused, he's focused. He will get the job done ahead of time in a perfect manner. Whereas me, I'll play around with it, I'll look at it and go, "Oh, it needs something else," or whatever. I'm not as focused as I'd like to be, and I'm learning from him how to be. We complement each other. And we encourage and support each other.

DH: If you're asking about the relationships that we've come across during our career and how has that helped us to

become better officers, then I would say (and this was brought up earlier) that in our careers we've always had good bosses and some bad bosses. Fortunately, the bad bosses have been rare, but there have been some. I think one of the best learning points from that experience is that now that we're older in our careers and we're in the position of being a mentor or a boss, is that we now know what we don't want to be as a boss, like the people that we did not enjoy as our bad boss. I think that's a great learning thing that we've experienced, developing relationships with people, or people that we are held responsible for, because we want to be that good boss, the ones that made us stay in the Navy; the ones that helped us see the plusses of the Navy. So when I go out and I mentor junior officers now, I want to be that boss that made me stay in the Navy. I want to be just like that person, and that's who I learned from.

LH: And you know, the other thing is: we not only talk to Navy- one of my very good friends is an Army guy that I met in Tikrit, and who's coming to dinner next week.

Q: Do you have a cake?

LH: I have dinner. But, what's neat is we meet people from different services, and it just makes it so much richer. It's like diversity. It's not just Navy. The world is huge, but it becomes so much smaller when you meet people from different backgrounds, corps, and services.

Q: Karen, do you have any questions you'd like to ask, or ask of you?

KS: I know Captain Lena Hartzell will be the XO in Newport.

Q: Is that the XO of what?

DH: The medical command.

Q: Congratulations.

LH: Thank you.

KS: So not just dental, but...

LH: Right, medical as well.

KS: And that's a fairly recent integration.

Q: Which unit is that? You said it's a dental command?

LH: No, it's Naval Health Clinic New England. It's comprised of four clinics, four different states.

Q: Now are these all dental, or are they dental/medical?

LH: They're medical and dental.

DH: She's going to be the executive officer for physicians, nurses, Medical Service Corps people, civilians.

LH: Which is great.

Q: Absolutely. Well, Godspeed. Enjoy your tour.

LH: Thank you, I look forward to it. Thank you for your time.

The following is additional information provided by CAPT Hartzell, 27 September 2011, on her assignment in Iraq.

Duty title: Political Advisor, PAO and translator.

- Principal Duties: managed house (responsible for 12 local employees), fueled and drove SUVs, carried weapon and acted as weapon person when in passenger seat, took pictures of sheiks and gave them the prints the next time I saw them (won points),

received all kinds of information when at meetings or at times working lunches, wrote cables to state department personnel in Washington DC about my meetings/stories, was the go to person for answers from military as well as local civilians, worked with Army civil affairs personnel, flew/drove to Baghdad for monthly meetings with US Ambassador.

- Immediate Supervisor: Initially John Stewart, U.S. State Department, who was replaced after two weeks by Bob Silverman. Also after Bob left, I had one more official. Their titles? Not sure.

- U.S. Military in Rating Chain: There was no military person in my chain. I answered to the state department official.

- Location Where Physically Housed/Based: in Saddam's compound in Tikrit. Cannot recall official name but that is where the 4th ID lived as well. [The 4th ID occupied the Tikrit Presidential Palace.] More specifically, our team lived in a smaller 2-story palace on the banks of the Tigris river.

- Major Contribution: The BSM award states: "helped build cooperation between the local leadership of Salah ad-Din and the Coalition, effectively breaching anti-American sentiment in

Saddam's hometown" I attended all the local council meetings (7 areas with the provincial meeting on Sundays held in Tikrit). We worked 7 days a week, distributing soccer balls and clothes to schools, spending money (I was responsible for \$4 Million slated for the reconstruction of Samarra-- schools, town centers, small business,...), we hosted events at the home to build bridges with USAID and others in order to have a plan forward, we bought food for Ramadan fatr [Eid al Fitr] (breaking the fast at sunset), sent some local school teachers to the US for about 2 weeks to see and learn about international politics and reconstruction. Discussed women's issues and concerns (daily as well as general) at local hospitals and worked to better their lives. Drove all over the Salah-ad Din province to make alliances and to assist in finding Saddam. Met with political leaders and military leaders to expedite operations.

END OF INTERVIEW