

BUMED Oral History Project
Oral History Interview, Synopsis,
Captain Michael D. McCarten, D.O., MC, USN
Deputy Director Medical Resources, Plans and Policy
Division (9N931)
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, The Pentagon

Date and Location of Interview: 19 December 2011, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Washington, D.C.

Interviewers: COL Richard V.N. Ginn, USA, Ret. and Mr. André B. Sobocinski

SYNOPSIS

CAPT Michael D. McCarten, D.O., MC, was born and raised in Rhode Island. He completed his undergraduate studies in psychology at Providence College, followed by a master's degree in pharmacology at the University of Rhode Island. He completed medical school under the USPHS program at the New England College of Osteopathic Medicine from 1979-1983. He was commissioned as an ensign, USN, in 1979 and attended the Navy Officer Indoctrination School in 1980.

CAPT McCarten completed a rotating internship in 1984 at the Naval Hospital, Oakland, California, and then served as a general medical officer aboard the USS *Denver* and the USS *Jersey*. This was followed by a residency in family medicine at the Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton, California from 1986-1988. He was then stationed as a family medicine physician at the Branch Medical Clinic in Holy Loch, Scotland from 1988-1990. This was followed by assignment to Newport, Rhode Island, initially as a family medicine physician at the Naval Hospital from 1990-1995, and from 1995-6 as a student at the Naval War College where he earned an M.A in national security and decision making. A tour in Okinawa as Group Surgeon, 3d Force Service Support Group, US Marine Corps was followed by a residency in aerospace medicine from 1998-2001, which included a master of public health from Harvard University.

In 2001 Captain McCarten was assigned as the Senior Medical Officer aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, which included OEF support from July 2001-March 2002, and OIF support January - May 2003. He was then stationed in Iceland as Executive Officer and later as Commanding Officer of the Naval Hospital, Keflavik from 2003-6; during this time he married Kathleen Marra, who had been his girlfriend in college. From Iceland he went to Yokosuka, Japan in 2003 as Surgeon, U.S. Seventh Fleet.

He returned to the States in 2009 as BUMED Chief of Staff, and from 2010-2011 he deployed to Afghanistan as the Commander

of Task Force Medical South and the NATO Role III Multinational Medical Unit at Kandahar. Since 2011 he has been stationed in The Pentagon as Deputy Director, Medical Resources, Plans and Policy division (N931), Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

KEY FIGURES

Cullison, Thomas R., M.D., RADM, MC, USN 1972-2010, Ret; currently Senior Advisor, Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine; Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, MD.
Hagan, Donald F., M.D., VADM, MC: Surgeon General, USN, 1991-1994.
Hanley, Christine, HM1, USN; Navy corpsman at the Role 3 Hospital, Kandahar
Krulak, Charles C., GEN, USMC, Commandant USMC 1995-1999; son of LTG Victor H, Krulak, USMC, Ret.; currently President, Birmingham-Southern College, Alabama.
Robinson, Adam M., M.D., VADM, MC, Surgeon General, U.S. Navy; retired 1 Jan 2012
Rumsfeld, Donald H.: Secretary of Defense, 2001-6.

KEY WORDS

aerospace medicine
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED)
Harvard School of Public health
combat and operational stress
Combat Knitters
combat trauma surgery
Individual Augmentee (IA)
Joint Theater Trauma Registry (JTTR)
jointness, U.S. military
Kandahar Air Field
medical support aboard ship
NATO Role III Multinational Medical Unit at Kandahar
Navy flight surgeon
Navy Medicine
OEF
OIF
salvage surgery
Surgeon General, U.S. Navy
Surgeon, Seventh Fleet
transfusion

GLOSSARY

8404 Corpsman; Navy Enlisted Code HM-8404-FMF, Hospital Corpsman (Field Medical Service Technician); hospital corpsman subspecialty for service with the Marines; requires completion of USMC training at Camp Lejeune, NC or Camp Pendleton, CA.

acidotic: abnormal increase in acidity of body fluids

BUPERS: Bureau of Naval Personnel, located principally in Millington, TN and Arlington, VA. Serves as the parent command for the Navy Personnel Command (NPC).

Harvard article: Ruder, Debra Bradley, "Saving Lives in the Heat of Battle," *Harvard Public Health Review*, fall 2022; www.HSPH.edu/news/fall-2011/alumni

coagulopathy: blood clotting disorder

Combat Knitters: group founded by LCDR Jennifer Almy, MC, USN, as a recreation for nurses, corpsmen and physicians assigned to the Level 3 Hospital in Kandahar.

Das Boot: 1997 film, drawn from an autobiographical novel by Lothar-Guenther Buchheim based on exploits of the German submarine U-96 in WWII.

fleeted up: promotion within an organization to a higher position

Horn of Panjwaili: Taliban stronghold in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan

HPSP: Health Professions Scholarship Program, a Department of Defense program.

Hypothermic: abnormally low body temperature

IA: Individual Augmentee; Sailors who support or "augment" another Navy, Marine Corps or Army command. Sailors usually go to their IA assignment on temporary or TAD orders and return to their current or parent command once they complete their assignment. Assignments vary in length from a few months to a year or more. In January 2011, the Navy IA program on its Facebook page stated there were 9,532 Navy IAs (4,793 Active Duty and 4739 Reserve).

ICU: intensive care unit

IED: improvised explosive device

JTTR: Joint Theater Trauma Registry, developed by the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research in 1996 in response to lessons learned in Operation Desert Storm. The USAISR serves as the repository for JTTR data, which is the largest combat injury data base in existence. In May 2004, the three military surgeons general, the USAISR and the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma established the Joint Theater Trauma System (JTTS) for tracking casualty information in Iraq and Afghanistan; the JTTR is the backbone of the JTTS.

kaylee: Gaelic folk social gathering with folk music and dancing; from *ceili* or *celidh*

Kevlar: high strength synthetic fiber developed by Dupont in 1965 and used in a variety of applications, including the Kevlar helmet adopted by the Army in 1983.

LCC: amphibious command ship

Naval Flight Surgeon Course: Phase I, Pre-Flight Indoctrination; Phase II: Flight Training; Phase II, Academics - Environmental Physiology, Naval Aviation Medicine, Operational Medicine, and Aerospace Otorhinolaryngology, Ophthalmology/Optomety, Psychiatry, & Internal Medicine/Neurology.

NIACT: Navy Individual Augmentee Combat Training; course conducted at Fort Dix, New Jersey; Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and other Army posts.

OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)

OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom

OIS: Officer Indoctrination School (later renamed Officer Development School One-to-One to One: optimal ratio of transfusions for massive trauma of 1:1:1 units of PRBC (packed red blood cells) to FFP (fresh frozen plasma) to platelets

PCFLT: U.S. Pacific Fleet, headquartered at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Ravelry: an internet website for knitters and crocheters.

salvage surgery: immediate surgery for unstable, severely injured trauma patients to control major vascular injuries and other threatening sources of bleeding; then cease surgery and immediately transfer to the ICU.

SES: Senior Executive Service, Civil Service equivalent of military flag rank

USS *Blue Ridge*, LCC-19: command ship, Seventh Fleet; commissioned 14 November 1970

USS *Cole*, DDG-67: guided missile destroyer; commissioned 8 June 1996. It was severely damaged on 12 October 2000 by an Al Qaeda attack while in the Port of Aden, Yemen with 17 KIA and 39 wounded. It was transported to U.S. for repair that was completed 19 April 2002. It returned to home port in Norfolk, Virginia and is in active service.

USS *Denver*, LPD-9: amphibious transport dock, commissioned 26 October 1968

USS *Jersey*, BB-68: Iowa class battleship; decommissioned 8 February 1991, now a museum ship in Camden, NJ

USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, CVN-71: nuclear aircraft carrier, commissioned 25 October 1986.

R. Ginn 8/19/13