

BUMED Oral History Project
Lieutenant Commander Thomas C. Shu, NC, USNR
Reserve Policy & Integration, M10, BUMED, U.S. Navy

Date and Location of Interview: October 21, 2011; BUMED,
Washington, D.C.

Interviewer: COL Richard V.N. Ginn, USA, Ret.

SYNOPSIS

Lieutenant Commander Shu was born in Buffalo, New York and grew up in Buffalo and Silver Spring, Maryland. He graduated high school in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and went on to the University of Detroit Mercy as a civil engineering major, but he wasn't prepared for academic life. At that point he decided "the thing to do is join the military and get my head on straight." He enlisted in the Navy in October 1991 as an electronics technician in the nuclear power program, but "absolutely hated it, because it was, to me, just like going to college, so I requested a drop." He was then assigned to the USS *Scott* DDG-995 in 1992 as a seaman in the deck division. He found shipboard duty to his liking, and competed for a quartermaster rating (the navigation specialty) and was promoted to petty officer 3d class. He also did a cruise on the USS *Robert G. Bradley* FFG-99 in the Mediterranean Sea before his initial enlistment ended in 1995.

Shu then moved to Cleveland, Ohio to attend Cleveland State University, and after a year and a half of pre-med, changed to the School of Nursing, graduating with a BSN in 2001. He remained in the Navy Reserves (IRR), but transferred to the Ohio Army National Guard in 2000. He completed Ohio ARNG OCS, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant, Infantry, in August 2000, with assignments in the 18th Special Forces Group and the 148th Infantry Brigade from September 2000-January 2004. During this period he also completed the Army Airborne Course and the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, both at Fort Benning, Georgia. In civilian life he worked as an ICU/critical care nurse in Cleveland, Ohio.

In 2004, Shu, a 1LT, ARNG transferred back to the Navy Reserves as a LT, Nurse Corps, and was assigned to the Operational Health Support Unit, Great Lakes. Over the next several years he attended a variety of specialized courses: Navy Recognition and Treatment of Diving Casualties; USAF Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE); USAF Flight Nurse; and USMC Mountain Warfare. From September 2005-February 2006 he was activated for duty with the Navy's Hurricane Katrina Crisis Response Team in Washington, D.C., including service on the Naval Family Task Force and appointment to the Navy Pandemic

Influenza Counsel. In October 2006 he was activated as an Individual Augmentee for a year as an ICU/Critical Care Nurse at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany. He was then recalled to active duty at BUMED in 2008 with assignment to Code M10, Reserve Policy Integration, Operations and Finance. He was recognized in the same year by the Navy Reserve as the Navy Reserve Nurse Corps Junior Officer of the Year.

During this period he deployed to Afghanistan and OEF in February 2011 as flight team leader and ICU Nurse at the Role III Multi-National Medical Unit, Kandahar, returning to Washington in September. At the time of the interview, LCDR Shu was reverting to Navy Reserve status and relocating to North Carolina, where he will resume his civilian nursing career while serving as a medical detachment OIC in a Navy Reserve medical battalion.

KEY WORDS

Afghanistan, OEF
combat casualty care
critical care
embedded news team
enroute care in theater
hospital ships USNS *Comfort*, USNS *Mercy*
Hurricane Katrina support
Influenza Epidemic of 1918
Landstuhl Regional Medical Center
NATO Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit, Kandahar Air Force Base, Afghanistan
Navy Reserve, medical
Special Forces training