

Kent Bubel Oral History Interview

July 31, 2012

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MARRAPODE: My name is Nick Marrapode. I'm here at the Pritzker Military Library with Kent Bubel. Today is July 31st, 2012. Just to get started can you tell me when and where you were born?

BUBEL: Sure. I was born in Chicago, Illinois on June 18th, 1981.

MARRAPODE: What part of Chicago?

BUBEL: North side, Illinois Masonic.

MARRAPODE: Can you tell me a little bit about your childhood and what it was like to grow up on the North side of Chicago?

BUBEL: [I]t was, I had a great childhood, two very loving parents and they did a really good job at raising me I will say. I grew up in the neighborhood of Ravenswood just across from Welles Park, and I had a really good time with the Hawthorne Academy for grammar school and I also went to Kenwood Academy for high school and also seventh and eighth grade. Kenwood is actually on the Southside but I went to Kenwood because during that time basically there weren't too many good public school options for high school. My parents did believe in the public schools so at that point it was either Whitney Young [or] Kenwood or Lincoln Park were pretty much your three choices and I got into Kenwood at seventh grade. They had a seventh and eighth grade program so that's where I went for seventh and eighth grade, and I had all my friends were there so I was just stayed through high school.

MARRAPODE: How did you get to the school in the Southside? Did you take the L or?

BUBEL: Brown Line to the Red Line to the Jeffery Express Bus.

MARRAPODE: That's quite a commute.

BUBEL: It was a ridiculous commute, but it worked out, it worked out.

MARRAPODE: It was worth it.

BUBEL: I had a pretty good time.

MARRAPODE: Was there any military background for your parents? Anything, like that?

BUBEL: Not my parents, no. I do have two uncles that were in the military. One was in the Marine Corps. One was also, one was in the Army. Both Vietnam-era military, one, the Marine Corps Uncle was drafted actually into the Marine Corps. He went to Vietnam as I think infantry. The other uncle was a West Point grad and he was artillery and he also spent a year over there.

MARRAPODE: What was going on in the country and around the world as you were growing up and what kind of things were you paying attention to?

BUBEL: [T]hat's interesting I guess I don't really think about world events until you really get out there. I would say my first real international experience I got a scholarship actually to go over to Germany for a few weeks. It was called the Daimler-Benz Award of Excellence, and it was sponsored by the Daimler-Benz, and great program. We had a really great time over there that just showed us a little bit about German culture, German business. It was one of these international relations, so I guess that really kicked off my I guess my international awareness of things. [B]efore that it's just other countries are just things you see in textbooks and read about in school and all that, but that was definitely my, an eye opening experience for me.

MARRAPODE: How did you, I guess, come to win that scholarship? What did you have to do to get it?

BUBEL: I was taking German in seventh and eighth grade and through high school. Maybe I think, man that's so long ago. I think it was a, if I remember right it was like an essay contest type-thing. And then the teacher submitted like the top two that she thought, from the class. And they picked one from each state so I happened to be lucky enough to get it, so it worked pretty well.

MARRAPODE: I'm guessing the essay was in German?

BUBEL: I'm assuming it was, honestly I can't remember back to the entry of that.

MARRAPODE: Can you still speak or understand any German?

BUBEL: A little, how languages are if you don't talk them or think about it for a while. I've had a chance to use it, I've been, actually, to Europe probably 20 times or so since then so, I do use it occasionally, if they don't speak English sometimes they speak Germany. Usually, English is enough to get you around.

MARRAPODE: I actually speak German as well I studied it was my minor in college.

BUBEL: Oh do you really? Oh really, okay, well I can't, I'm sorry I won't be able to... Ich spreche kein deutsch, (I do not speak German) that's pretty much all I can remember.

MARRAPODE: Aber du verstehst deutsch? (But you understand German?)

BUBEL: Ja, ich verstande deutsch. (Yes, I understand German.)

MARRAPODE: Sehr gut. (Very good.)

BUBEL: There you go.

MARRAPODE: Where were you and what were you doing on September 11th, because that was a really world changing event.

BUBEL: Sure, I remember I was actually going to Physics class that morning.

MARRAPODE: What grade were you in?

BUBEL: I was an undergrad at that point, I was in, which undergrad, that would have been my sophomore year at that point. I was like every college person I got up just in time to get to class. I dashed to Physics class. I remember the guys in back of me were talking about, that some plane had flown into the World Trade Center. It was like, oh, it was probably like a Cessna or something. Then I get home, I think I was done with class for the morning. And I remember everyone was on the TV, and I basically got home just to see a replay of the towers and that was definitely a bad time.

MARRAPODE: What kind of effect did that have on you? Was that when you started thinking about a military career?

BUBEL: No, actually I already was on R.O.T.C. scholarship at that point. I was pretty...

MARRAPODE: Pretty involved.

BUBEL: Yes, I was, my path was pretty much set at that point. I knew I was going in the military. I got to the end of high school and I decided that I didn't

want a 9-to-5 job. I just, it really, didn't interest me at all. I had done a few summer jobs where I just filed paperwork and worked in my Mom's office, just as an office boy, just to run errands and stuff for them. And it bored the pants off of me. I was not into coming to an office every day and just doing the 9-to-5 thing and punching out. So, I had an interest in aviation at that point, so I decided that I should probably look in the military. And signed on, actually applied for both the Air Force and Navy R.O.T.C. and the Academies. But I ended up I decided, I wasn't going to the Academy I wanted to go to a normal college. So I applied for the Air Force R.O.T.C. and Navy R.O.T.C. I got the Air Force and gave me a three-year scholarship. I was latterly the day I was about to accept it, that Navy sent a four-year scholarship to me. So, at that point I was well. Sorry Air Force you lose. And that was that.

MARRAPODE: Where were you going to school?

BUBEL: University of Illinois, down in Champaign Urbana.

MARRAPODE: Can you tell me about the Navy R.O.T.C. program there?

BUBEL: [I]t was a good program. It certainly, it's nothing that can fully prepare you but, as far as what they can do in an academic environment. I think they prepared me pretty well, with, you have what's called Naval Science classes. Where they basically teach all the, this is an engine, this is how a steam generator works. This is the basic weapons we have, ships we have in the Navy, this is how you do your basic navigation. And what's called, your Mo Boards or Movement Boards. Those are always fun. And then you had ethics and leadership classes and things like that. It was tough, because they added another layer of things you had to do. We PT'd, we did physical training, so exercise every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at six in the morning. Which for a college student, that's pretty brutal. You have your Naval Science classes, which are another, basically another, I think they were like an hour on Tuesday and Thursday. And then you have your drill period, where you work on military training. And then of there are mandatory fun events, were for example, for our unit we would actually clean the football stadium for money. The University will pay different organizations to clean the stadium. It was our fun job to get up at six o'clock Sunday morning to go clean, which I was never fond of and we ran concessions at the football stadium. We got a slice of those profits. So, it was, I'm digressing here but yeah, it was tough to balance out. I was an Astrophysics Major, so I was not slacking in school at all. It was a lot of work, but it did prepare me for the fleet, as they say.

MARRAPODE: Since your path is already set in, and you're on this military track, then September 11th happens. As an R.O.T.C. student, I guess an officer, soon to be office candidate. What was going through your mind?

BUBEL: I think it underscored the seriousness of it. I think we're not in the Minor Leagues any more. This is when we graduate and get commissioned, we're going to be out there. It's certainly going to be a change for them. It's a dangerous world out there. We certainly saw the initial invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. I guess for the Navy folk, it was sitting on ship or sitting at 40,000 feet and dropping bombs or launching Tomahawks. I think for the Marines, because it's combined Navy and Marine Corps R.O.T.C., certainly for the Marines, it was, there're going to be there in a few years. But for all of us, it certainly underscored the point that it was pretty serious business.

MARRAPODE: Did it change the tone of your R.O.T.C. courses and things? Did it make it a little more somber?

BUBEL: I think it was on everybody's mind, but I think like I said before, we already knew it was a serious business. Even without the war. People get hurt and killed all the time, just accidents alone. I lost a classmate just from a training accident. Actually his plane crashed, unfortunately his engine cut out on final approach and he just went down. I think it did underscore the seriousness of it, but we knew. Already we were going into a pretty serious business.

MARRAPODE: When did that accident occur?

BUBEL: That was, let's see, I had already been commissioned at that point. So, it must have been 2004, I think, maybe 2005.

MARRAPODE: When did you graduate and did you?

BUBEL: December, I was commissioned December 22nd of 2003. It must have been 2005 because it was after deployment. Because I deployed in August of 2004, got back in February, then it was summertime, so it must have been summer of 2005.

MARRAPODE: You said in your questionnaire you filled out, you didn't have a basic training per say.

BUBEL: Right.

MARRAPODE: Was that kind of the R.O.T.C. providing basic training?

BUBEL: Right, they have a week of what's called new midshipmen orientation program, where they basically yell at you for a week. [T]hey compress a lot of the, they try and teach you about the uniforms and the military bearing, you basic military knowledge or general military knowledge as they call it. [R]ank structure, who to say Sir or Ma'am to, the different sailors' creed. What else is there, the general military training you have to do, there're called GMT's. It's just they're really the worst training like ever, it's like training for dummies, but they try and break stuff down like financial management, sexual harassment, and oh what else, alcohol abuse. They try and break it into the simplest terms. And they cram that all into one fun week of no sleep. And getting all that.

MARRAPODE: Almost like an introduction into the military.

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: All the legal matters and legalities.

BUBEL: Yes, pretty much, pretty much.

MARRAPODE: Are there any specific experiences from your training either with your GMTs or your R.O.T.C. that stand from your memory?

BUBEL: Well, I caught some kind of a flu bug during that week. So, I remember puking a lot. (Laughing) Trying to hold food down during that whole week.

MARRAPODE: You had an extra good time?

BUBEL: Yes, it was extra no fun. They ended up taking me to the student medical center and they ended up pumping full of something in an IV. I survived it. It was not a very fun week.

MARRAPODE: When you received your Commission, at that point did you have Military Occupation Specialty or is that...

BUBEL: I knew where I was going. I was a Surface Warfare Officer. And so, from R.O.T.C. for Navy grads, general you can go one of four routes. You can either go: Surface Warfare, which is the surface ships, which is what I did; you can go to Submarines; Aviation or Special Warfare; and then Marine Corps too if you choose that route. I know I originally said I was going to go Aviation, but at that point my eyes, eyesight had gotten pretty bad and I didn't want to be the guy sitting behind the guy trying to land on a carrier. So, I wanted to, if I was going to crash I wanted to be responsible for my

own, for my own crash and not somebody else's. I decided at that point to go to surface warfare. And that also had actually had the shortest commitment time at that point. Aviation I think because they were having trouble having keeping people in, I think the commitment was at that point, I think was seven years after you got your wings. Which to get your wings was, at least a year or year and half, so you're talking about an eight or nine year commitment at that point. Surface warfare where I could've separated after four if I wanted to.

MARRAPODE: What kind of training went into the surface warfare?

BUBEL: None. They, the surface fleets' pretty notorious for chewing their young Officers and spitting them out. Some of it's well deserved, some of it's not. It's not as bad as it used to be. [W]hen let's say, the Senior Officers now, when they were first commissioned it was pretty bad. They, it was, very, very negative environment to be in. The Captain would be all screamers. People would stab each other in the back very literally to look good in front of the Captain, or throw people under the bus. I think that's changed quite a bit. Certainly with my peers, we all worked together. We weren't jerks to one another. This is an aside, but as an example, as a, SWO, Surface Warfare Officer, S-W-O. You weren't supposed to, they didn't believe in taking leave, so you'd just work you butt off. This mentality was to work you butt off all the time, don't take leave. And that was that. And start with some of the Senior Officers I've talked to it's like, "Oh yeah, I had sixty days of," do you know how leave works? You get thirty days each year. Which rolls over to the next year, but you can only keep a maximum of sixty. The point of pride was to have sixty days and then lose the next thirty for your whole career, which that's not really a great way of doing things. But that's the way it was back then. It's changed a lot, but it's still, they can still be pretty intense sometimes. It's sometimes very much my way or the highway type of attitude.

MARRAPODE: Not everything's changed about it.

BUBEL: Not everything. A lot has, I think it has gotten a lot better. People realize that it's okay to take leave. Certainly it's not as demeaning as it, the Senior Officers, aren't as demeaning to the JO's as they used to be. But there's still a tension there. [I]t's still a pretty tough job.

MARRAPODE: What do you think caused that next cultural change within the Navy?

BUBEL: I think, one, the recognition that we don't have enough, well I don't know, that's interesting. [C]ertainly the wrong attitude before. [T]hat was, there's

no doubt in my mind that that was the way to go about business. I think it's, just call it a new Navy; you can't be demeaning your subordinates all the time. You do that and that certainly doesn't.

MARRAPODE: Doesn't help things run smoothly.

BUBEL: Doesn't help things run, exactly. And I think there's a realization that that's not a way to do business.

MARRAPODE: After you received your Commission and became a Surface Warfare Officer, where was your first assignment? What was your post?

BUBEL: The lovely town of Ingleside, Texas, population 5,000, pretty much everything you expect out of a small Texas town to be. It was at, right outside Corpus Christi, not right outside, about 45 minutes outside Corpus Christi. Three traffic light town, like I said everything you could imagine a small Texas town to be. It was pretty.

MARRAPODE: A bit of a change from Chicago?

BUBEL: It was going from 100 miles an hour to zero miles an hour like that. But, I guess the good side about being real busy on the tours, is that you don't really have time to realize how crappy it was. I'm sorry for any Texans that are listening, but Ingleside was not my cup of tea.

MARRAPODE: What were you doing in Ingleside?

BUBEL: I was on a minesweeper down there. At the time I was stationed down there. The, basically all the minesweepers in the continental U.S. were out of Ingleside, Texas. I'm sure, well not sure, but I would guess that some Congressman had a lot of pull and got this particular base put there, because it really made no sense to put these minesweepers in Ingleside. But that's where they happened to be. There like the slowest ship in the fleet. [L]iterally like ten knots is about as fast as we go. And that's downhill with the wind behind us. But for whatever reason, that's where they put them.

MARRAPODE: Slow moving ships in a slow moving town?

BUBEL: Yes! Yes exactly!

MARRAPODE: Almost makes too much sense. What was your job aboard the minesweeper?

BUBEL: I was the Auxiliaries and the Electrical Offer. [T]he auxiliaries are basically all the mechanicals of the ship, except for the main population. So, things like air conditioning, refrigerators, what else, lube oil systems, fuel oil systems, generators for the electric side, what else did I have. Yes, on the electric side, generators, switchboards, all the wiring, lights, that type of thing. [Y]ou can think I was like a maintenance operations type of guy. [M]y guys were the technicians that worked on that equipment. So, they fixed it when it did break. And it did break quite often.

MARRAPODE: Yes, I was looking up the minesweeper they're not all the most modern ships in the world.

BUBEL: No, they're the, well they're actually the only wooden ships in the Navy, minus the Constitution. They're not metal because in the mine field there are magnetic influence spines that are set off by magnetic field so they...

MARRAPODE: They're degaussed as well.

BUBEL: Yes, all the ships are degaussed in the Navy, but especially the minesweepers because of the nature of their mission. They have these, actually cast iron engines that were, because they're non-metallic, because it's non-magnetic. The results of that, was they were definitely a lot less reliable than other diesels. [M]y guys were busy, I was busy. But, the good thing about it, well good and bad, is that they were real small, as far as crew. There was only, it was billeted for six officers, usually we had about seven or eight. [Y]ou learn everybody's job really quickly, because everybody's multi-handed. On some of these bigger ships, like the cruisers and destroyers, some of the air craft carriers, there's 500 people on board, maybe 30 officers, maybe for the carriers maybe a couple hundred. Minesweepers have the same amount of requirements and tasks that a big ship needs to do, as far as like paperwork, and administrative and all these other collateral duties you need to take. On the minesweepers you're just constantly juggling these jobs.

MARRAPODE: There's much less, there's no passing the buck when there's that few people.

BUBEL: No not at all. That says a disadvantage, but the advantage is you are juggling a lot of balls, you learn a lot. I was on what's called sea and anchor details, when you pulling into port or leaving port. It's basically where you man up a whole bunch of extra watch stations, because obviously there's a better chance of you running into something. Because you're operating in shallow water and narrow quarters. For sea and anchor

detail on the bigger ships, maybe only a certain percentage of the crew is actually manning that. On the minesweeper, literally everybody's up and everybody's doing something for sea and anchor detail. Again, I learned to drive the ship, on a minesweeper, and I think that was a good thing, because I did it all the time. Whereas on the, I'll draw from the second tour, I was on a destroyer. Well, most JO's were only on every third time, every fourth time for sea and anchor. You just can't learn as well with that. Whereas with the minesweeper I was there, I was driving every time. Because of that I ended up driving every time on the destroyer too.

MARRAPODE: If you'd started on an aircraft carrier you probably wouldn't have been steering the ship.

BUBEL: Right! Right! So, I admit there were advantages to that.

MARRAPODE: Well good. There were several minesweepers that you were serving on, more than just one?

BUBEL: Yes. So the way it worked, they had actually just started this when I got there, well not started but they just had recycled this idea of rotational crews. [I]nstead of the ship driving across the ocean and going [to] its deployment, wherever it was going, [to] the Middle East, they would fly a crew out there, to meet a ship that's already out there. And then they would fly the crew that was out there, and they would basically swap hulls. The crew out there, that was out there would fly back and take the ship that we has just vacated. They had done that before, maybe ten years before I had been there. And they for whatever reason they had recycled that idea and started doing the rotational crews again. So, we got the short end of the stick here. Because our original deployment had us going up the West coast of the U.S., so through the Panama Canal, then up the West coast, up into Canada for a couple of exercises there. And that would have been our six month deployment, but we got that rug pulled out from under us. [T]hen we went to the Middle East for six months instead, which it was a good experience over all looking back at it, but compared to the West coast of the United States deployment, I think I got the short end of the stick there.

MARRAPODE: What was your opinion of the officers and sailors that you were serving with at the time?

BUBEL: Over all, very good. We had some really sharp people onboard. I had some pretty good, enlisted folk that worked for me. They always say one thing you always hear when you're getting commissioned and going through

R.O.T.C. or the Academy or anything. Get a good NCO. Make sure your NCO is going to drive the day to day routine, and lets you step back and take the big picture. And it's true, it really is. [A]re you familiar with how the military system works?

MARRAPODE: Yes, somewhat.

BUBEL: Yes, the enlisted are usually the technicians; I would say blue collar vs. white collar which is the officers and the management. The tactician, the leadership and the enlisted really get the day-to-day stuff done. I'm sorry I just completely drew a blank. What was your original question?

MARRAPODE: I was asking about the people you served with?

BUBEL: I was really lucky I had a really good 1st Class Petty Officer, so an E6. Normally you'd have a Chief leading each division, but the minesweepers are so small that I actually did not have a Chief. I had a Petty Officer 1st Class. James Du Pre was his name. He was a really really sharp guy. I was really lucky to have him. Because he kept, he kept the day to day stuff tapped down so I didn't need to worry about that. On the auxiliary side, so he was the electrician, he was an Electricians Mate. On the auxiliary side I had an EN1 Sealy and an EN1 I can't remember his name now. He was there for just a little bit before I left. And Sealy was okay, too. I don't think he was as sharp as Du Pre was. But he got the stuff done, which is what I needed. I had a really good experience with the enlisted guys. And some people certainly weren't as sharp. I had a good example. Seaman Maceus was a, one of my, my problem children I guess we'll say. He was a special case. He originally came in for as missile tech on the nuclear boats. He actually worked on the ICB's. But they found out he was dyslexic, about however many months into his tour. So, he was pretty much let go from that job as you can imagine. So in the Navy's infinite wisdom, they made him a Quartermaster, which, is the navigators of the ship. So, enter Seaman Maceus to our lovely minesweeper. [H]e was a tough guy to work with. And then I'll say he had a pretty tough background too. He came from an abusive family. I'm pretty sure his parents had abandoned him. His Grandfather had raised him, and his Grandpa was abusive, like verbally and physically. He came to Texas because Grandpa was in Houston, I want to say. Which is real unfortunate, it would've been much better if he'd been separated geographically separated from that. But, he just didn't have the life skills I guess. And the military to a certain extent will give you those. And that's why a lot of people enlist in the Navy or in

the military. Or join the military I should say. To kind of give you that structure. But, he missed ship's movement once.

MARRAPODE: Which movement?

BUBEL: We got underway without him. So other than that, that's obviously really, really bad thing when you do that.

MARRAPODE: It's kind of a big deal?

BUBEL: [H]is excuse was, "I got lost in Ingleside." Ingleside again is a three traffic light town, so probably not so much. [I]t's just he was having problems again at home. And that caused him to end up missing the movement. But I don't know the military takes all types, but overall, going back to your question. Yeah overall really good experience and the officers were good as well. I would say, by and large the officers that I served with were pretty top notch. They certainly pulled their weight. Especially the JO's, we were all pretty much willing to help each other out.

MARRAPODE: When you went to the Middle East where was your ship stationed there?

BUBEL: Bahrain.

MARRAPODE: What ship were you on?

BUBEL: At point it was the USS Gladiator.

MARRAPODE: Before that it was the?

BUBEL: USS Pioneer.

MARRAPODE: So you on the Gladiator in Bahrain?

BUBEL: Yes!

MARRAPODE: Doing much the same?

BUBEL: Yes. They keep the minesweepers out there because of the mine threat out there. There [are] always a couple of minesweepers forward deployed there. As far as real world missions, we never did any real minesweeping. It wasn't necessary. And so, what we did end up doing was a lot of was just maritime patrolling around the oil platforms up there. And a lot of just driving around, in boxes, you really see we did a lot of driving in these imaginary boxes in the ocean.

MARRAPODE: Picking coordinates on the map?

BUBEL: [T]hey'd give you coordinates to be at and tell you to keep a look out for anything that was out there. I don't know if we really did anything out there other than, just I guess presence, just showing the flag.

MARRAPODE: You never turned up any mines or anything like that?

BUBEL: No. We haven't really been any mine threats for, actual minesweeping going on for a while. Obviously during say the, what was the last ship to get hit? I think Princeton was the last ship to run into a mine. That was at least 20 years ago I want to say. Early ninety's during the whole Iran / Iraq conflict.

MARRAPODE: Now there much more worried about the terrorists and small boat threats and that kind of thing right?

BUBEL: Yes, the mines [are] always going to be threat. Mines are easy to deploy. A basic contact mine only costs a couple of thousand. You don't even need to say that you've, you don't even need to drop a mine, you can just say, you mined an area. And then, all hell breaks loose. Certainly one of the things Iran's going to do, when shit goes down is, sorry, when the poop hits the fan, one of the things Iran's going to do is mine the Straits, so.

MARRAPODE: I was about to say there's some definitely some pretty strategic

BUBEL: Yes!

MARRAPODE: Choke points around that are easy to block off. Or at least threaten to block off.

BUBEL: Yes, exactly. And however much ever percent of the world's oil flows through the Straits. So obviously, it's a pretty important. It's important to be there. But it's hard, because we just don't do that mission very often.

MARRAPODE: Did you ever sail through the Strait of Hormuz?

BUBEL: Yes we did. Not on the minesweeper, we stayed in the Gulf. For that whole deployment. But, on my second tour we went through the Straits.

MARRAPODE: What kind of armament does a minesweeper have if you're doing, setting around, doing like you said, presence?

BUBEL: The biggest thing you have is a .50 Cal., you have two, [and] they were the M60's when I was there, but I think they've all switched to the M-260's now on the bridge wing. [Y]ou have two of those and then you have two

.50 Cal's., amidships on the top deck, and then you one .50 Cal. on the fantail.

MARRAPODE: Just some kind of light defensive ...

BUBEL: Yes, hardly anything we can put some bullets in the air but we're not a destroyer or anything.

MARRAPODE: Did you get a chance to spend much time, off the ship when you were in the Middle East your first tour?

BUBEL: Yes actually, a long story. The ship was not in very good shape when we got there. So it took us probably a good month or two to get actually into sailing condition. So we were pier side in Bahrain quite a bit actually. We weren't, I would say our underway time for that whole deployment was probably about 30 percent, which for a deployed ship that's not a whole lot at all.

MARRAPODE: What kind of things were you working on? What kind of things needed to be repaired?

BUBEL: Everything. It was in real bad shape. I don't want to throw the other crew under the bus, but they just didn't do a very good job maintaining the ship. There was, like for example, the switchboards had probably six inches of dust in them, just from all the sand. There's a lot of stuff in the air in the Middle East, like between all the sandstorms and the pollution and everything else. If you don't maintain the ship it can get pretty dirty, pretty quickly because there're vents directly into the engine room. It's so hot we want to be constantly cycling air through there. The previous crew had done a very good job. There was a lot of, well just everything really. AC's didn't really work that well, it was July when we got, no, it was August when we got out there. And the AC's didn't work. So, that was a priority, like I said the switchboards had dust in them, that's a fire hazard, so we had to fix that. Just all sorts of things that, just, we were working on it for the whole deployment, just trying to fix everything up. And they did a pretty good job, but there's only so much you can do in six months with underway schedule and balance everything else out.

MARRAPODE: It's not like you were, went there dedicated just to fix the ship. You were trying

BUBEL: Right! We were trying to balance it out with real world operations. That was really tricky. It was always a challenge.

MARRAPODE: Can you to, tell me about, it's about your journey over to Bahrain, and how you got there and what arriving was like?

BUBEL: Sure. We took a, let's see how did we get there? We took a military rotator flight, where'd we meet, I think we flew, we must have flown out of Norfolk, because, let me think. [W]e flew out of Norfolk. So we flew commercial to Norfolk, from Corpus Christy to Norfolk. Then we caught the military rotator flight, which goes from Norfolk to Naples, then Naples to Bahrain. It was old, really old DC-10. *World Airlines* if you've ever heard of them. They specifically are there, this company is specifically caters to doing the troop transport thing. It's an actual airline, but it's this old DC-10 that it could barely make it off the runway. We'd liftoff and then like the runway would end, probably about a second later. We turned back, oh yeah I remember. We turned back twice because stuff broke down in mid-flight. It was not, it wasn't very reassuring. But we landed, let's see. We did that, we got away from Norfolk probably about an hour into the flight and then we start banking and turning around. The pilot comes on "Sorry folks we've had an instrument go out." So we turned around and that delayed us for a couple of days. And we finally made it over there, made it, landed in Naples. We stayed there for a couple of hours while the plane refueled, then made it Bahrain. That was my first time in the Middle East. Obviously there was a lot of tension there, because, certainly places on the news. It's pretty different when you get over there.

MARRAPODE: Pretty different from what you see on the news or pretty different from you're used to here or both?

BUBEL: Both. I mean, [I]t's a completely different culture. And you stand out. [T]here's no doubt that, you stand out. Bahrain its self has pretty good ties with the U.S. but there's always the underlying, I think tension between the cultures.

MARRAPODE: What the government relations are doesn't necessarily show what the people think.

BUBEL: Yes. Bahrainis are pretty friendly I think. They can, there can be some jerks in there, but I think that's the same across all cultures. We got there [at] two in the morning. The other ship, the other crew had already moved off. So we basically just got there and crashed for the night on the ship. Basically, had a late morning that next day, then, were ready to go from there, started the turnover process.

MARRAPODE: When did you arrive?

BUBEL: [M]id-August of 2004.

MARRAPODE: That was six month?

BUBEL: Yes. [J]ust under, six months is what it ended up being.

MARRAPODE: Were you able to take leave while you were there at all?

BUBEL: No.

MARRAPODE: Busy the whole time on the ship?

BUBEL: They gave us like overnight liberty, so we could, if we wanted to be off the ship and check into a hotel we could do that. We took advantage of that a couple of times, because after six months of being in close quarters, you really do need to relax for a little bit. And just get away. Some people took advantage of that more than others. I was trying to save money so I didn't do it more than a couple of times. Nah, you're pretty much there just to work.

MARRAPODE: Did you have much free time?

BUBEL: No, not really. It wasn't your typical deployment because, like I said because we were forward deployed there. So like for example, we would usually have a pretty light Sunday. Which is normal on deployments too, but that's a light Sunday at sea or a light Sunday, you're still doing stuff. Whereas when you're in port, forward deployed, a Sunday is a Sunday and pretty much it's a holiday. We were working the rest of the days, Saturday thru, or Monday thru Saturday.

MARRAPODE: After you got back to the United States after your first deployment, did you get to spend anytime home?

BUBEL: Yes, we had a POM period, Period of Maintenance, is what they call it. But, it's maintenance for the ship and the crew. So, I think you got like a week and a half of leave to go home. Which was really nice, it was good to get out of that. And after six months of being cooped up in the same ship everyone, you can be best friends but you're all still all ready to kill each other at that point. So, it was good I think for everybody just, to get away and get a little R&R in.

MARRAPODE: See some family?

BUBEL: Yes, see the family, flew back to Chicago. I'm trying to remember, yes it was February so we went, we did, it was like, yes we got home from the deployment and I was in the first POM period. So I think it was about 100 degree temperature shift, in like 3 days. It went from about.

MARRAPODE: I was going to say, it must have felt good to get a little cold air.

BUBEL: Yes, it was about 85 [degrees], 90 [degrees] when I left Bahrain, got to Texas it was probably 50's or 60's because it was February, then flew up to Chicago where it was like a horrible blizzard. It was pretty intense. But again it was good to see family again.

MARRAPODE: Did you know what your next assignment was going to be at that point?

BUBEL: Yes, not by the time I had gotten home. I still had, let's see, I still had about a year and a half at that point to go. And they generally don't give you orders.

MARRAPODE: This wasn't the end of your tour on minesweepers?

BUBEL: No, I still had, they did that deployment pretty early in my tour. It's a two and a half year tour for your first six months.

MARRAPODE: Your first six months were Corpus Christy.

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: Then six months were in Bahrain.

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: The rest of the time were you in Corpus Christy?

BUBEL: Yes. The rest of the time I was in Corpus Christy. At point you're just gearing up for another deployment. The way the whole training cycle works, you start your whole training cycle, and then you're just working on individual ship readiness, so just making sure you've got your drills down. Your hose teams and your damage control teams and your combat systems and everything else works. Then you basically step up to multi-ship exercises, battle group exercises, final exercise and then you deploy. And initially you lose a lot of your crew at the end of deployment, and then you get new crew and you start the whole cycle again, is how it's really supposed to work.

MARRAPODE: Is that how it worked for you?

BUBEL: For that tour, it was, I had started, I, joined the crew in the middle of the training cycle working up to deployment. And by the time I had gotten back I would say pretty familiar with the operations and we got some new folks on board. So I was guiding them and mentoring them and working all the way up through the training cycle. I didn't even remember it. I didn't actually go back to a ship originally. We had those rotational crews and the ship we actually started on, the Pioneer already had a crew on it, and the one that, the crew that took us, took the Gladiator over from us in the Middle East they actually basically put their ship in mothballs. They wrapped everything, it's not a decommission but it's a temporary storage, like a temporary permanent storage of a ship. And they're thought was, well I don't know what they were thinking, it was a terrible idea, is what it ended up being. But, I think they were thinking that maybe they could reduce the number of crews by putting these ships in mothballs. Yes, considered stuff like draining the oil out of the engines, basically running a minimum skeleton crew on board just to make sure there was no fire or flooding, but other than that. Skip basically, not doing the maintenance and not running the equipment or anything. It was pretty bad, so what we actually end up coming back to trailers, they set up these trailers, classrooms for us. That's where we reported for three or four months.

MARRAPODE: Trailers in Corpus Christy?

BUBEL: Trailers in Ingleside, Texas. Yes, Ingleside, Texas, I don't know what they were thinking. When we finally got the ship out of mothballs, it was having problems for a long time, and just mechanical breakdowns and stuff, just because the equipment had been repaired.

MARRAPODE: What were you doing when you assigned to those trailers?

BUBEL: The major push for us, we were missing a lot of required training, so for example, the Navy, big Navy requires that there be a certain number of people with certain schools on board the ships. A certain, say you have to have three sailors that have this particular type of skill. Like the ability to fix this particular type of engine, or the ability to work on this particular sonar. And you have to go to school for each of these. We were only at like 50 percent of those schools by the time we had gotten back, so what we did was we actually took that time to send everybody to the schools. Because it's really hard to balance, losing people for a couple weeks at a time to go to these schools vs. you need them to do the maintenance and be there for the training and all the deployment work up. So in that respect it worked out really well. We brought our training up all the way to 90 or

95 percent of the requirements. But in terms of, I guess for the ship it wasn't, it didn't work out very well for them.

MARRAPODE: It's like it gave you some troubles when you were able to take it out of storage?

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: Get it running again?

BUBEL: Yes, and I think, did I tell you the Gladiator in the Middle East, we were actually on the Ardent out there and the Gladiator was the one we came back to.

MARRAPODE: Pioneer to the Ardent to.

BUBEL: Pioneer, Ardent, Gladiator is what we came back to.

MARRAPODE: Your second two shifts, your both, you had some trouble with?

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: For you the technical guy on the ship that's?

BUBEL: Yes it was tough. [E]veryone, every SWO that comes on, is basically has the same job like in terms of maintenance operations. It's just different sections of it, so no one was very happy with that arrangement.

MARRAPODE: That's how the rest of your time

BUBEL: [Y]es so the rest of the time, well were starting to do the deployment work ups again once we got underway.

MARRAPODE: Did you do any fleet exercises with the Gladisator?

BUBEL: Yes, we ended up going to one of the big Mine Warfare exercises actually in Panama City, Florida. So we ended up going there. What else did we do? Just after I left they went down to Panama, so Panama which is a big multi-national exercise, about basically defending the Panama Canal. Oh! One thing we did do was post Hurricane Katrina relief. So we, let's see what did we do? There were two of them. There's Katrina and what was the other one? It was Rita, I think it was Rita. We actually got, we got chased back to Ingleside by Katrina.

MARRAPODE: You were at sea?

BUBEL: Yes, we were outside, we were out to sea actually at Panama during the Mine Warfare exercises. Katrina came through so we ran back to Ingleside, tied up the ship and basically left it. We left a skeleton crew and they had everyone go up to San Antonio, because they didn't know where, what Katrina was going to do. So Katrina hit, obviously New Orleans, and they basically scrambled us out there. So we did what's called queue routes where you're asked to survey the bottom.

MARRAPODE: Queue routes?

BUBEL: Queue routes. Yes, they're, when you're doing mine warfare it's basically just, so you have a, there's highways in the ocean where a merchant ships and everything go. And when you're in run a queue route you basically travel those back and forth looking and scanning.

MARRAPODE: Looking and scanning?

BUBEL: Right, with your sonar. Our sonar's pretty good about finding objects and it actually has pretty good fidelity. You can actually see what there was. So we were actually pretty good at being able to scan the bottom of these different highways in the sea. And making sure they were still, they were free of any large obstructions. So that was our main job after Katrina. And then Rita came through so we ran back to port again. Then again tied up the ship, went up to San Antonio and luckily it missed well, luckily or not it missed, it missed Texas and went down to Mexico. I guess that was the other highlight of our, of the tour was helping out with that.

MARRAPODE: What did the Mine Warfare exercises consist of?

BUBEL: QRFs (Quick Reaction Forces).

MARRAPODE: A lot of QRFs?

BUBEL: Yes a lot of QRFs.

MARRAPODE: Lots of sailing?

BUBEL: Yes, just practicing all your... they actually have practice mines out there you get a chance to practice.

MARRAPODE: You know what it looks like?

BUBEL: Yes. Doing your swiping and doing your mine hunting.

MARRAPODE: Do you ever practice, I guess, destroying or blowing up mines?

BUBEL: Yes. [W]e embarked EOD det, which is Explosive Ordnance Disposal. [T]hey're the ones you actually disarm the mines and the bombs and all that. So we embarked at in Panama City and drove out. We actually did, we swept a mine, so this was a moored mine, so it actually floats, it's anchored down to the bottom and has a chain. Then what your sweep does, it comes and there's an explosive cutter, it actually cuts the chain and the mine floats up to the surface. Then EOD will grab it and take it to the beach and disarm it from there.

MARRAPODE: That's a separate ship? Or is that...

BUBEL: EOD? They'll have their RIB. Which is a, it's called a Rigid hull Inflatable Boat. R-H-I-B. And they'll just tow it to the beach that way. So we actually did that full, that full mockup, where we actually did cut the chain, the mine floated and then EOD took it from there.

MARRAPODE: There's a lot of different kinds of mines, there's like...

BUBEL: Sure.

MARRAPODE: Mines that sit on the bottom...

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: Launch torpedoes, there's all kind of crazy things...

BUBEL: Yes there are.

MARRAPODE: Did you train for a lot of those different...

BUBEL: Yes, you can, I don't want to go into too much detail here. I'm not sure what's classified and what's not. Yes but you can, there're different techniques for different mines. The one we're actually pop, cut the chain and that's a moored contact mine. The minesweepers also have what's called mine neutralization vehicle, but it's basically a remote control tethered vehicle, that you can drop, put over the side. It can go out there and actually drop little charges next to whatever moored mine there is. And you can set them off and it'll theoretically destroy the mine from there.

MARRAPODE: You've got a couple of different tools?

BUBEL: Yes. [T]here's sweeping, which is, where you're basically just like a broom, you're trying to push, you're trying to basically do one wide swath and just get all of the mines out of the way. Then there's hunting were

you're actually looking for individual ones, then destroying them with your remote controlled vehicle.

MARRAPODE: We were just talking about minesweepers and all that period of your service. Once you were finished with your duties in Ingleside where were you assigned? When did you get there?

BUBEL: Sure, so my next tour was in Norfolk, Virginia on the USS Winston S. Churchill. Which was an Aegis Class Destroyer and I got there in, let's see August of, no July of 2006.

MARRAPODE: This is three years, two and a half years?

BUBEL: Two and a half years on the minesweeper, I left the minesweeper in May. And then my job on the destroyer was, what's called, the Fire Control Officer. And the actually required about two months of training. I had a two month school up in Dahlgren, Virginia and then down to, went down to Norfolk in July.

MARRAPODE: What kind of duties does a Fire Control Officer have and what kind of training do they give you for it?

BUBEL: [T]he Fire Control System is, it's not about fighting fires, [and] it's actually about shooting missiles. Fire Control System is, the main system is the Aegis Weapon System, which is probably the, one of the more advanced naval radar systems out there. It basically integrates the SPY Radar which is a phased array, super hi-tech radar. And then it also, Aegis also incorporates the missile system and also all the displays in the computer systems on the ship that go into processing all that data.

MARRAPODE: Is fire array, that's a passive radar system?

BUBEL: No, it's active radar. But's it's called a, it's a phased array, so it actually doesn't; you see a lot of radars spinning around.

MARRAPODE: Yes.

BUBEL: The Aegis Radar doesn't do it. It's actually. Did you take any physics classes in undergrad?

MARRAPODE: No, talks about radar.

BUBEL: It uses, radar it's a wave?

MARRAPODE: Right.

BUBEL: Do you know about constructive and destructive interference?

MARRAPODE: Yes.

BUBEL: [B]asically there's like a thousand emitters on each panel in the SPY and uses constructive and destructive interference to basically focus the beam, on a different direction. So depending upon when each emitter fires, you can steer the beam that way, so by using constructive and destructive interference.

MARRAPODE: It's not so much sweeping a whole broad area, it's almost like targeted radar beams out.

BUBEL: It is doing, I really can't talk too much about this. It is doing a search like regular radar but it's not a spinning one, so it is covering all the area but; just maybe not, it's not spinning.

MARRAPODE: It's got panels, 4 panels around the tower?

BUBEL: Right, it's got four you'll see it, if you recognize it. It's, octagonal panels on the superstructure. I've got a picture of it here, but. Yes, so each of those four basically cover, so you can get 360 [degree]-coverage in all directions.

MARRAPODE: There are no blind spots in your array, it's always it's just kind of...

BUBEL: No. [Y]ou can go full coverage both under the water and up high.

MARRAPODE: It's got this central it's very complicated central radar system, very sophisticated and that controls the firing, I'm guessing, surface-to-air and surface-to-surface missiles?

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: Integrates that into something into a control mechanism, something you can...

BUBEL: Yes, so it all, all the radar data, because it actually incorporates all your, all your SPY data, but it can also draw from other ships as well.

MARRAPODE: You're connected...

BUBEL: You're networked while you're out there. So you can draw from other data, other data or other sensors.

MARRAPODE: If you had like picket ships out somewhere...

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: You'd be getting their information...

BUBEL: Yes, you can get their information, you can, it also controls the fire control radars which are not search radar, but they actually illuminate a target for a missile to home in on. And then again if all of it displays in the, it's called the, Combat Information Center. It's basically where, if you ever see pictures of the ships and it's real dark and people are staring at the screens, that's, what the Combat Information Center is. It's where all your decisions are made for what the radar picture is, launching missiles, [and] shooting and that type of thing.

MARRAPODE: What is this Aegis stand for?

BUBEL: [I]t's just, it was just named after the Aegis of, it's not Zeus.

MARRAPODE: It's not an acronym? Oh wow.

BUBEL: No, it's not an acronym. It's actually not an acronym. It's hard to believe for the military.

MARRAPODE: It was a shield of one of the Greeks.

BUBEL: Shield of, I'd say Zeus' shield, but, that's what they named it for.

MARRAPODE: I guess I just assumed it...

BUBEL: Yes, that's a good assumption...

MARRAPODE: Was an acronym.

BUBEL: Yes that's a good assumption. That is a very good assumption.

MARRAPODE: You were controlling the operation of the Aegis system on your ship?

BUBEL: [V]ery similar to my first ship, I was an operations maintenance guy. Instead of this hot and sweaty and smelly engineering pit, it's darn cold, that is the engineering plant is up in the Combat Systems and so we had a nice clean cool computer room basically. Or multiple computer rooms that my guys maintained.

MARRAPODE: Did you like that environment a little more?

BUBEL: [T]he engineers are always a rough and tumble crowd. But there're good guys to work with and I would say they were good in their own respective

ways. The engineers are rough and tumble, but they work really hard. The Aegis guys are the fire control and that's their rate, they're really pretty smart individuals. So it's much more, techy, IT type guys. That work on the different radar.

MARRAPODE: Real different environment.

BUBEL: [I]t was very different but, I enjoyed them both. They certainly had their highlights from both of them.

MARRAPODE: What kind of training did you receive in order to work with the Aegis System?

BUBEL: [U]p in Dahlgren is the, is like the heart of the Aegis program. And it's, for me it was a two-month program. And they teach you, a lot about like the equipment, like the theory behind it, and all the different things and how they interact with one another. So that was the technical side. And then they also have the operator's course; which is which button to push, when basically. [T]his is how this system works. This is how you shoot missile, etc. etc. And they'll give you a bunch of scenarios to run you through the whole, the whole system.

MARRAPODE: Are they like training simulators to...

BUBEL: [Yes], there's a whole training mockup there, basically just like a regular Combat Information Center to get you familiar with the system.

MARRAPODE: Actually it sounds kind of fun.

BUBEL: It's pretty interesting, they've put a lot of money into it I'll tell you that much. And there's some pretty, there's some guys that have been there since the beginning of the program. So there's a lot of knowledge up there about the systems. I enjoy, it's a real technical thing, I really enjoyed it.

MARRAPODE: How long has the Aegis System been in operation?

BUBEL: I'd say since around the mid '80s. I can't remember. The Arleigh Burkes came out I think in '91 was the first Arleigh Burke.

MARRAPODE: That's the class of destroyer?

BUBEL: Right. That's the main workhorse of the Navy now. But the cruisers, the Ticonderoga class cruisers have been around since I think the mid 80's when they starting using them.

MARRAPODE: Imagine the Aegis System has gone through a few incantations since their...

BUBEL: Yes, they're version nine now maybe. [T]hey're just continually updating it I think right now the big Navy debate is to whether to keep upgrading that or just design a whole new system. Obviously there are benefits and benefits and costs to both.

MARRAPODE: Now is Aegis, or was your destroyer, I guess purely a defensive role? Or is it also has a strike capability?

BUBEL: Aegis is not strike. The Tomahawk system is separate. Aegis is primarily an air defense system. It can do surface warfare. But it's, it's really a through back to the old Soviet days where you had this huge image huge blue water huge fleet vs. fleet type engagement.

MARRAPODE: Aegis is a shield for the carriers, I would guess?

BUBEL: Yes, that's one of the purposes. It's originally what it was designed for. And that notes it's still a good system. That's the radar, I don't know if you saw that's one of the panels there.

MARRAPODE: There's going to be one on each corner?

BUBEL: [T]here's one on each corner and that will give you the three...

MARRAPODE: Is that the Winston Churchill?

BUBEL: Yes. That's the Churchill there.

MARRAPODE: Did the Churchill have a Tomahawk system on board as well?

BUBEL: [Y]es. They all, well they had the capability for it. They all have what's called the vertical launch system. Which is the, if you see on the late news reports when the...

MARRAPODE: The rotating turrets?

BUBEL: No. You'll see in any news report somewhere, in the Persian Gulf, where you see them launching Tomahawks, where the missile comes straight up out of the ship, that's the vertical launch system. So, all the Aegis cruisers and destroyers have that capability to carry those.

MARRAPODE: Now when you were with the Winston Churchill, how much time did you spend at sea?

BUBEL: I'd say it was anywhere; it was probably about 50 percent. I got there as we were doing our work ups. So we were out, we were out quite a bit. And then obviously when you deploy we were out for weeks at a time.

MARRAPODE: Where did you deploy to?

BUBEL: Persian Gulf again.

MARRAPODE: Persian Gulf again?

BUBEL: Yes, of course. Where else would we go? Well, it's a great place to go at this time of year.

MARRAPODE: There's seven seas if, you have need to see all of them.

BUBEL: [W]e were the lucky ones. We got to go to the Gulf again. So there was one cruiser, oh those lucky bastards, they got to go to the Med for a six month deployment.

MARRAPODE: They got to go where?

BUBEL: The Med., a Mediterranean deployment. That makes you jealous, but it is what it is.

MARRAPODE: Yes. Did you take part in any combat or anything like that in the Gulf?

BUBEL: No, we never launched any missiles. Actually I left the Churchill about two or three months into that deployment. I got my follow-on orders for that point. I was actually going back to the Middle East, to Iraq at that point. At that point I had to get back and basically take care of all the business that needed to be done.

MARRAPODE: Your follow-on orders that's -

BUBEL: Follow-on orders were to Baghdad actually. [T]he Army, because of their op-tempo, they were doing yearlong plus deployments. They actually started drawing from the other services. So Navy, Air Force was actually contributing a lot of people to the Army to fill some of their administrative positions; this position that anyone with a basic military background can do. I was one of the lucky ones selected for that.

MARRAPODE: How did you feel when you learned you were going to be leaving the Churchill for that?

BUBEL: [I]t sucked. I was not happy about that at all. [T]he middle of Baghdad was the last place I expected to be when I signed up for the Navy. I was

okay on ships; again being on the ground in Baghdad was not something I really wanted to do.

MARRAPODE: I imagine that being a little nerve racking?

BUBEL: Yes, definitely. [W]hen I got there it wasn't anything. We were on the base the whole time. Getting those orders was not good, it was not fun. Because, I was actually supposed to go back home to Chicago, I actually had orders for Great Lakes Naval Station, got those yanked. Here's your tour to Baghdad instead. Great, thanks guys.

MARRAPODE: What were you going to be doing at Great Lakes?

BUBEL: As a, I was going to be a ships' company officer, so basically managing a division of recruits.

MARRAPODE: Oh, good.

BUBEL: It was just the paperwork, pushing them through the pipeline.

MARRAPODE: Were you looking forward to that assignment?

BUBEL: Yes, it would have been a pretty good assignment. We weren't the people, like the actual Drill Instructors for the division. Recruit Division Commanders, so it was a pretty good duty station. Or a pretty good job there I think.

MARRAPODE: Plus you were close to home.

BUBEL: Yes, [this] was the main reason for doing that. At that point I knew I was probably going to separate after that tour. So I wanted to get home to do the networking and everything like that.

MARRAPODE: Why did you decide you were ready to, as you say, separate from the Navy?

BUBEL: Once I would've gotten done with the Great Lakes tour, it was back to sea again as a department head. [T]ours are pretty stressful and you're gone from home a lot. Yes, it was time to go. My service obligation was up and didn't particularly feel like going back to sea again. [I]t was a pretty stressful time in my life, so at that point it was like well I'll do this short tour and get out from there.

MARRAPODE: Stressful just because of the Navy and your job there?

BUBEL: Yes, everything. It's a little bit of all, the culture, like we talked about before. Being gone all the time 50 percent is quite a bit to do.

MARRAPODE: And being expected, to not necessarily take leave so much?

BUBEL: Right, yes it's exhausting. [I]t's mentally and physically exhausting because when you're out at sea you're, it's a 24-hour a day operation. [V]ery rarely do you get a full nights' sleep. Sometimes, you'll have a midnight watch, sometimes you'll have the red watch, which starts like at four in the morning. Midnight watch goes from like 10 or 11 at night to three in the morning, you're not sleeping. You're always doing something, there's always work to be done. It's a pretty stressful time.

MARRAPODE: Were you able to go home before heading to Baghdad?

BUBEL: [Yes]. They got, had about a month and a half before I had to report for the training. I got home, took some leave, got back from that. Basically got all my affairs in order because I was only expecting be gone for a couple of months for that deployment, for the deployment on the Churchill. But obviously with this yearlong deployment coming up, I had to get everything all set, power of attorneys, all the bank accounts straightened out. I had a condo in Virginia Beach at that point, so I had to clear that out, I got a renter for that period, to just kind of defray those costs. So there was a lot do to.

MARRAPODE: How did your family feel about the fact that you were going to be going to...?

BUBEL: They were really unhappy. I told them, I didn't tell them on the phone when I was overseas, I told them when I got back. And they just, they just were not happy at all. My Mom to this day, continually tells me how unhappy she was with that, with that deployment. And I tend to agree with her, I was not too happy either.

MARRAPODE: A bad situation.

BUBEL: Yes and I think for them, they both had siblings that had been to Vietnam, and both uncles came back with some PTSD issues. [T]hey certainly had that frame of reference when they knew I was going to Iraq.

MARRAPODE: They'd seen some of the negative effect that?

BUBEL: A lot of negative effects. My Uncle though was in the Marines. PTSD, he's had a lot of issues with that. He was a grunt so he was in the thick of things.

MARRAPODE: What kind of training were you given for your deployment in Iraq?

BUBEL: Basically a three-week crash course in Army, how to be soldier.

MARRAPODE: Weapons training?

BUBEL: Yes, which way the pointy end of the gun points toward, the bad guys and that type of stuff. They're definitely some people that handle it better than others. I was okay I thought. I was not happy about it but, I've done camping, I've done, I actually had a fair amount of weapons training. I was the boarding officer on the Churchill, so we did we had quite a bit of weapons training for that. But there are some people there that clearly had never shot a gun before. We had one lawyer that I definitely remember. She was shooting with a 9mm handgun and she was mowing the grass with her bullets, they were literally going into the ground, like not even close to the target, just remember it like, don't put her on the front line or anywhere when the shooting starts, just take her weapon away. And then there were other people that did fine. I did fine, it was more, it was run by Army Drill Sergeants, but as we would talk with them and as the Drill sergeant said, "The purpose of this program is a pump not a filter," it's meant to just give people the basic training and not hurt themselves when they're shooting.

MARRAPODE: They're not trying to produce infantrymen.

BUBEL: Right.

MARRAPODE: Just give you all the basic competence.

BUBEL: Yes, learn how to wear your IBA, which is the Integrated Battle Armor, the Kevlar, and the plate, the ballistic plates and all that.

MARRAPODE: You said you were the Boarding Officer?

BUBEL: [Yes].

MARRAPODE: If you were to board another ship?

BUBEL: If we were to board another ship I would be...

MARRAPODE: Aren't there Marines on the Navy ships that do that?

BUBEL: [T]here's a couple of different levels of boarding. There's compliant, non-compliant and opposed. And compliant is exactly what it sounds like. The master's compliant with the ships instructions. Non-compliant is they're not listening to you and there's no, they're not actively trying to kill you.

MARRAPODE: Right.

BUBEL: Opposed is they're actively trying to kill you. [W]e could do compliant and non-compliant boarding's. And then you'd call in Special Forces for opposed boarding's. [W]e were trained to take rooms and take ships like that, just enough so we could get out. And then call in the SEALs or RECON to take the ship if it became opposed. The backup from that was, in the '90s with the oil embargo going on, there's a lot of smuggling with Iraq oil going on and they just didn't have enough Special Forces to do all these boarding's. Because the Special Forces were basically taking all the boarding's, they were taking the compliant, non-compliant and opposed. And it was a waste of the training for them to do the compliant boarding's, for the non-complaints'.

MARRAPODE: It could go either way?

BUBEL: It could go either way, but certainly for the opposed, that's what they were there for. If someone was trying to shoot them they there to...

MARRAPODE: Shoot back?

BUBEL: Shoot back and take the ship. But they basically realized hey the ships have a lot of crew that could probably do these boarding's and they basically trained them up to that. So there hasn't been, well by the time I had left there're hadn't been a non-compliant boarding in the Gulf in quite a while. Since obviously when we invaded Iraq, but the sanctions were lifted. But yes, that's the background for that. The majority of what they're doing now was just reconnaissance stuff, like intelligence gathering, so you'd stop by the merchant and ask him if they'd seen anything or get data on the crew or whatever. A lot of it now is actually also counter-piracy.

MARRAPODE: Yes.

BUBEL: Counter-piracy ops, so again if it's an opposed boarding, the SEALs or RECON will be there. But if you're doing a search of a suspected pirate vessel, the boarding teams from the ships can do that too. So it gives them more...

MARRAPODE: Did you do any boarding's?

BUBEL: No, again I left, we got to the Gulf, and I was...

MARRAPODE: Going home shortly.

BUBEL: I got the orders. I was going to stay for a few more months at that point, but with the new orders coming out I had to get back and do my thing with them.

MARRAPODE: You completed the three week training Army training?

BUBEL: [Yes].

MARRAPODE: And then flew over to...?

BUBEL: Yes, flew over to Baghdad from there. They chartered a Delta flight for us. Really nice crew, they actually had, all the senior flight attendants, it was the ten most senior flight attendants on that crew had volunteered for that flight. Because they said it was all military so it was pretty relaxed. You're not, screaming babies, or screaming passengers or anything, so they all like those flights. The Captain, actually, the Captains of the plane actually kept the door open for the whole flight, so I was actually up there talking with them for about an hour.

MARRAPODE: Cool.

BUBEL: Which is pretty cool, it's not something you usually get to see.

MARRAPODE: Yes.

BUBEL: [T]hey decorated the whole plane with kitschy American paraphernalia and stuff. But as far as flights go, it was pretty comfortable. Then that took all the way to Kuwait, then we landed at Ali Al Salem, or no I'm sorry, KWI - Kuwait International, then they shipped us over to Ali Al Salem which is the Kuwaiti Air Base, where you pretty much, it's the staging point for going to Baghdad. Then we took C- 17 into Baghdad from there.

MARRAPODE: How long were in Kuwait, just shortly?

BUBEL: I actually skipped the whole Kuwait thing, [and] they actually have follow-up training in Kuwait for a week. Want to get you acclimated to the desert. Then they take you out for two days of convoy and desert training. It was pretty miserable, it was hot, dusty, and nasty and you don't take showers and everything. But whatever it is, pretty uncomfortable, but again, to just give you a broad overview of convoy operations and things to look out for in the desert.

MARRAPODE: There for a week and then on to Baghdad?

BUBEL: Yes, then on to Baghdad from there.

MARRAPODE: Tell me about your job in Baghdad, and your post and where you lived and all that?

BUBEL: Yes, sure. I was on the main base; it's called the Victory Base Complex. [I]t was an old hunting lodge that the Ba'ath Party used. Saddam had three or four palaces in that area, it was right by the airport. It was basically taken over by the U.S. and we ended up using one of their palaces, Al Faw Palace, as the headquarters for the Commanding General there multi-national force, Commanding General. And so, my job was actually what's called a trip planner. So I planned, well I planned trips. Who did I plan trips for? It was basically all the senior government and military officials that wanted to visit Iraq. So we were the local, you could think of us as the local travel agency. We had all the contacts on the ground in Baghdad that if someone wanted to visit they would work through us to get all the flights booked, get all the meetings scheduled, all the groundwork laid out for lodging, security and all that, because we had all the contacts.

MARRAPODE: Moving people around in a combat zone's got to be pretty complicated?

BUBEL: It's not like a normal straight forward, traveling in the U.S. or anything. It's certainly a lot of different factors you have to take into account. Luckily we were working with the most senior people, so they had a lot of pull and they would dedicate flights to our guys. Which made things a little bit easier, but even then sand storms would come up, meetings would change, schedules would change so it certainly took an individual working behind the scenes to work that all out and make those changes on the fly.

MARRAPODE: Did you get to meet any, I guess VIP's or?

BUBEL: [Yes], they came through, because we were on General Petraeus' staff and General Odierno later. So, we saw a who's-who come through. We saw President Obama when he was a Senator he did a trip out there. Senator McCain, Senator Graham they came out a few times, I saw them. I met Toby Keith, who else? [P]retty much anyone in the news that you see. I've seen the, I've met a lot of people that you see again and again, which is pretty cool. You see, Jane Arraf, she was the Baghdad bureau chief for CNN. I did a trip for her. And you'll see her all the time. A couple guys from the Brookings Institution, General Petraeus is really big into think tanks. Like bring think tanks out there. Oh what was his name? I can't, I'll

have to look it up but, all the Service Chiefs, so we had the Air Force Joint Chief come out. We had the CNO, the Commandant of the Marines Corps. Couple of component, or the Combatant Commanders, we got PAYCOM to come out; SECCOM obviously came out a few times, so yeah it was pretty interesting.

MARRAPODE: That's quite a few. It sounded like you were busy.

BUBEL: Yes, I am. It varied. There were times of tremendous business and there were times of just absolute punch me in the face boredom, because it just really came in waves. There were a few times that they cut all trips out. Just because there was so much violence happening, that it just wasn't safe for traveling, like when I first got there. The Green Zone was getting shelled every five minutes, so they actually cut all the trips out. And for like two weeks I had nothing to do. [T]here was absolutely nothing to do.

MARRAPODE: Did you feel like you were in danger during that time?

BUBEL: That was the Green Zone. [T]he Green Zone's actually inside of...

MARRAPODE: in Baghdad

BUBEL: And that's the, so if Baghdad's a square, the Green Zone's right in the middle. That's where all the Iraqi government buildings were. [T]hat's where we actually ended up setting our...

MARRAPODE: Troops.

BUBEL: ... our Embassy up. And also it was basically fenced off neighborhood. So you had reasonable security there. But you can still shell it. [R]ight across the river was the, what is it called? It was one of the neighborhoods that was, really bad. But the insurgents could basically launch mortars right into the Green Zone from there. So we were actually in the bottom left corner, the Southwest corner, where the airport was. And that was Victory Base Complex. [T]hat's where the military headquarters were. So they were there was a separation between the political and the military headquarters.

MARRAPODE: Was the military headquarters ever shelled or -?

BUBEL: Yes. We caught shells but, by the time I'd been there wasn't a whole lot going on. We still, there was maybe 10 or 15 mortar attacks the whole time I was there. And all of it was probably in the first three months or so.

[B]y the time I had gotten there the time been gone on it had pretty much completely settled down.

MARRAPODE: You didn't really feel that you were in to many dangerous situations?

BUBEL: There was no, there was no "Oh shit" moment, "I almost died." It was pretty calm by the time. We did have one, basically the wave before us, one of the coworkers had actually been right in back of somebody that had gotten hit by a stray .50 Cal. round and was killed. [S]he was literally standing in line and the guy, bullet came right over and just killed her, killed him right in front of her. Which I think from, obviously screwed her up badly, because that was, or shook her up pretty badly, because it was pretty bad.

MARRAPODE: Yes.

BUBEL: An unfortunate event. But, as far as our experience went it was pretty, pretty uneventful.

MARRAPODE: What did you do to cope with some of that boredom, those periods when there wasn't anything going on?

BUBEL: [T]here were all sorts of things. [We] did a Van Damme-a-thon. We had a movie Van Damme-a-thon.

MARRAPODE: Vincent Van Damme?

BUBEL: No, Jean-Claude Van Damme.

MARRAPODE: Jean-Claude that's it.

BUBEL: We had a collection of 14 of his greatest hits. Stuff like that. There was a whole bunch of pirated stuff on the shared drive actually, whole seasons of *Lost*, *The Shield*, we went through those. We PT'd every morning which was good because that keeps you sane. Yes, a lot of books, I actually ended up starting tutoring. A lot of the soldiers there were trying to improve their ASVAB scores, which is the, ASVAB the entrance exam that you take. That if you get certain scores, you're eligible for certain MOS or certain rates. [A] lot of the soldiers, some of the soldiers there were trying to improve their ASVAB so they could change from infantry to like to say an IT type of job. [A]ctually I tutored the Math portion of that a few times. And that really helped relieve some of the boredom and we would do other stuff like exchange runs.

MARRAPODE: Post Exchange?

BUBEL: Post Exchange, yes. [T]he Main Exchange was about a 20-minute drive away, so we would hop in the car we had and drive just to kill time. We'd go, the whole base was surrounded the whole airport, so we would like literally just drive the whole thing. And go to the, what's called the DFAC, or the Dining Facility. We'd go to the DFAC on the other side of the base, just to kill time.

MARRAPODE: Who were you spending most of your time with?

BUBEL: The other trip planners. Wait there was, one, two, three, there was four-to-five of us at any given time. And we pretty much hung out all the time.

MARRAPODE: Men and women?

BUBEL: What was that?

MARRAPODE: Men women?

BUBEL: Men and women, yes. [W]e started out, the whole office pretty much turned over all at once.

MARRAPODE: You worked with the same group?

BUBEL: [W]e were with the same group. But for the most part it was it was men and women. I think the main group we were in was all guys, but then the next wave had a couple of women in it.

MARRAPODE: Did you get along well with everybody that you were with?

BUBEL: Yes, actually I was surprised. We actually, everybody got along really well. I'm actually still in contact with all of them; really, really good, some really good people that we worked with.

MARRAPODE: I see you, or I saw you started a Blog while you were there?

BUBEL: Oh yes.

MARRAPODE: Is that...

BUBEL: Did you see that Blog at all?

MARRAPODE: Yes, I actually read all of it.

BUBEL: Did you? Okay. Yes that was a way to kill time. It got to the end. I had nothing more to write about. There's only so much you can write about when your routine is basically the same thing every single day.

MARRAPODE: Yes, it seemed like you started to write a little less frequently and you were stretching for things to talk about.

BUBEL: Yes, there just wasn't anything to talk about. But yes, no it was, yes it definitely was pretty tedious. That was the worst thing we to deal with. And I guess all things considered, if that's the worst thing you have to deal with in Baghdad it's not too bad of a tour.

MARRAPODE: Yes, you were still counting down the days?

BUBEL: [I] celebrated Hump Day. I had Hump Day which is a tradition in the Navy when you're half way through deployment. You have a big cake or whatever to celebrate. I celebrated Hump Day in Iraq with eating a piece of cake from the DFAC. And I don't know that you should count down, it's really makes it drag out a little bit. But, it was definitely counting down. I knew exactly when, single digits was going to hit or double digits and single digits and count down to two week leave, to two week R & R period that you get and all that.

MARRAPODE: What did you do on your two week R & R?

BUBEL: Flew home to Chicago. I put it off, I put it off as long as I could, because I didn't want to come back and have another six months to go. I took my, you could take your R & R anywhere from two month point to the ten month point. And I wanted to get to the ten month point as I could. That was pretty much the offices, feeling as a whole was that we don't want to come back and realize that we have another six months to go, because that's just going to be horrible feeling. So as a result of that not a whole lot of work got done in the 9th month because we were all burned out. Like completely burned out,

MARRAPODE: Just waiting for that R & R?

BUBEL: [Yes], it was, that was rough it was just. It was really hard to do work at that point. But coming back that was the right choice, because then you only have 60 days to go. And you can do that in a heartbeat, that's nothing.

MARRAPODE: And did you get a chance to travel outside of Baghdad or Iraq while you were there?

BUBEL: Outside of Iraq, I did. We, they also give you a four-day R & R pass to Doha. Which doesn't really sound like a good deal until you've been in Baghdad for six months.

MARRAPODE: Where is Doha?

BUBEL: Qatar. [I]t's the little; Saudi Arabia's here and Doha sticks up like right there. It's just another Army base there, because the Army Central Command, whatever Army it is, the one in charge of the Middle East. Their headquarters is there, so they just have, it's really weird, they just have shipping containers, basically stacked and they've converted those to like apartments. [T]hey'll have these big warehouses and then they put shipping containers in them that they've converted to barracks. And it's nice. It's your first four days off in the whole time and they just give you a chance to really relax. They have pool there which is just awesome. And they give you, a little pass that you can get, I think it was three beers for each night. Then they give you city tour and all that. So that was really worth it. It was good to, I took that one in, [and] I think it was July. So I spaced, I got there in February, let's see when, did I get there? Yes I got there in February, so I did four months, did my R & R, my four-day pass and did another four months, did my two weeks. And then, you actually get another one. You actually get two four-day passes but it really wasn't worth taking the second one. Just because it's one, it's a pain in the butt to get down there, two you're screwed, not screwing your buddies over but it means more work for the people that are there, so you don't really want to hurt them. Doha's really nothing to write home about, it's just you're just there to relax at that point. [B]y the time you're ready for, to go home you're taking your two weeks leave or it's time for the end of the deployment. I ended up not taking the second one.

MARRAPODE: Once your tour in Iraq was done, and I gather you were pretty excited about it and you came home?

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: Was that the end of your time in the service as well?

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: Was it pretty much up?

BUBEL: Yes, I threw in the towel after that. [T]hey gave me the option to come back to Great Lakes again, but I was pretty upset with them, so we'll just say I was upset with them. I told them to screw-off. The new GI Bill had just come out, which I was actually eligible for at that point. I decided to take advantage of that and go back and get a Master's Degree.

MARRAPODE: What did you get a Master's in?

BUBEL: Environmental Management.

MARRAPODE: Nice.

BUBEL: Did it right over here at IIT. So that was a great time. They, the GI Bill's a really great program, they basically pay you to go to school. Then they give you stipend and they pay for tuition, and books. And compared to Iraq it was pretty easy.

MARRAPODE: You said you stay in touch with a lot of the people you served with from Baghdad?

BUBEL: [Yes].

MARRAPODE: What about the people you served with in the Navy when you were on ships or duty stations?

BUBEL: [Yes], I still talk to a bunch of them. Facebook does really good for keeping in contact with people, I found. [E]ven if you're not talking to them every day, you'll still post on each other's wall occasionally. Or keep track of how they're doing and seeing what they're doing. I will say I made some pretty good in the Navy. I think it's the shared misery concept suffered together and certainly strengthens the bonds of friendship.

MARRAPODE: Was there a moment or a specific experience that you think exemplifies your time in the service that really stands out to you? Something you're proud of from your time in the Navy?

BUBEL: [O]ne of the things in Baghdad that I really appreciated was - one of the trips I'd planned was for the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs. I'm trying to remember the background for that. But I think they were finishing up, Estonia was finishing up their mission to Iraq. [T]hey were trying to lay the groundwork for future Iraqi Estonia relations. And that was one of the tougher trips. [I]t just was a very fluid trip that kept changing for whatever reason; it required a fair amount of work. But the liaison, the Estonia liaison was a real good guy and he actually put me in for an Estonian medal, which I really appreciated. And the Estonian Minister of Defense when they finally came for their closing ceremony, he actually presented me the medal. Which, I think on a couple levels that exemplifies it because the time in service, because the military is really good about recognizing the work, I think of its people, through awards and medals and public recognition. And after working with the Estonian

liaison for so long, he was a good guy. And he recognized I had been putting in a lot of work for that and he was able for finagle or do whatever he had to do to get that. I still have that medal, it's that medal is the one I actually appreciate the most out of the ones I've gotten.

MARRAPODE: What other medals were you awarded or service awards in general?

BUBEL: Yes, pretty much your normal [medals], obviously your Iraqi Campaign Medal, your National Defense Medal. We got the Humanitarian one for doing the Katrina, Couple of individual ones Navy achievement medals, which is pretty much your end of tour, as long as you don't screw it up, they'll usually put in for an award. Then I also have a, what is it? DMSM which is a Defense Meritorious Service Medal and that was for the post Iraq or for my Iraq tour that I got. Yes but I think out of all of those, I can't wear the Estonian one, which is unfortunate.

MARRAPODE: Can't wear it?

BUBEL: Yes. I think you can, but you can request to wear it through the whole awards board or something. There's some process for getting it approved.

MARRAPODE: You just can't pin it on your uniform?

BUBEL: Yes, you can't just pin it on. Honestly, it's more; at this point it's more trouble than it's worth so I'll just...

MARRAPODE: Do you had it framed or displayed somewhere?

BUBEL: I don't have it framed yet because I've been staying with my parents the last couple of years. [I] just, was obviously in grad school so I wanted to save some money. And then I, long story short, I was actually traveling last year. I was doing some international travel around the world, because I just wanted to, I had some money saved up and I just wanted to do it. So I've been transient for the last two or three years I would say. But once I settle down and get a place, then yes I'm going to get it framed and hung up on the wall. And that will be the only one, because, I don't care about the other ones. That's the one I think.

MARRAPODE: It is pretty unique.

BUBEL: Yes it is pretty unique and I do, like I said, I really do appreciate them, recognizing the work I did for them.

MARRAPODE: Cool.

BUBEL: I'm trying to think. I'm sure there's other, let me think. We'll just go from there. If I think of something else I'll let you know.

MARRAPODE: Sure. Are involved in any veteran's organizations?

BUBEL: I'm still in the Reserves. So I still do the one week a month, two weeks a year thing.

MARRAPODE: You want to get out of the service, but you weren't ready to get completely?

BUBEL: Yes it's...

MARRAPODE: Completely out?

BUBEL: It's been a, for me it's been a safety net because I haven't been employed, and actually what I did last year was I used short term assignments really to help supplement the personal travel that I was doing. [L]ast year I was in Africa, Asia, Europe, no I didn't make it down to South America. But out of those three, I probably went to Europe probably five or six times with the Navy last year. Africa was on my own and Asia was with the Navy as well. So, it's been beneficial because, they've allowed me, one, to get money which is nice and have insurance, you can get Tricare which is the military insurance program. I have insurance through them, I have a paycheck through them and it's allowed me to travel.

MARRAPODE: You do an assignment where they'll send you over there, to do something and then?

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: And after you're done you stay on.

BUBEL: Yes.

MARRAPODE: Do your own thing?

BUBEL: Yes, you're not really supposed to do it. But one: you always get the refundable tickets, so you can actually just change your flight out on the end. And you can push it back a couple of days. And you can get some, just stay in the area and get a couple of days' worth of lectures and see stuff at the end. It's worked out. I've been, like last year I've been, where did I go? Oh man all over. So with the Navy I went to Ukraine, Georgia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Italy, Malta, and Korea I think that's all of them. Little bit of Switzerland too.

MARRAPODE: Fun.

BUBEL: Yes. [I]t [has] been pretty good. It's worked out.

MARRAPODE: Staying in the Reserves has been worth it?

BUBEL: Yes so far. I don't know if I want to stay in long term. To be honest I'll have another, I'll probably get called up at some point. [A] lot of Reservists are still getting called up to Afghanistan.

MARRAPODE: Even from the Navy?

BUBEL: [Yes] even from the Navy. Same type of thing, there're chipping in with the Army's op-tempo and I've already been to Iraq, I really don't need to see Afghanistan to compare and contrast the two. If I, if it looks like I'm going to be called up I'll throw the towel at that point, but for now it's not a bad deal.

MARRAPODE: Would you recommend military service to people coming out of high school or coming out of college?

BUBEL: It's not for everybody. It's definitely not for everybody. I certainly would recommend some type of service for everybody. [W]hether it's through volunteer work, or a Peace Corps type thing. I think it certainly opens your eyes, that there's stuff out there that you don't necessarily have, you have your view of the world but then stuff, doing an event like the military or the Peace Corps or anything like that, will open your eyes and make you realize that there is other people out there, there's dramatically different ways of living. And military is really good in that it really brings people from all walks of life. [F]or me, I had a pretty comfortable upbringing. My parents stayed together and they're still married and had a stable home. I didn't want to go to college right away from high school. I was done with school at that point. But they made me go to school, which looking back that was the right thing to do. Because I don't know if I would have gone back to, I don't know if I would have gone back to school at that point. But for me, I had a comfortable upbringing. [T]here's a lot of people in the military that don't, well Seaman Maceus earlier who had that abusive background, he didn't do so well but it certainly gave him some skills. And it provided a structured environment for him, which he definitely needed. [T]here's other people like, I can think of one, let's see, I'm trying to think of who would be a good example for that. [O]n my second ship I worked with one of the trip planners, one of the trip planners I had worked with, he was a former enlisted Marine. I think he didn't have

a stable family growing up and he enlisted. That straightened him out. And he did real well and he actually ended getting commissioned as a Warrant Officer in the Marine Corps and ended up being a trip planner of all things. But it gives you a lot of opportunities that you might not otherwise have.

MARRAPODE: That's pretty much all the questions I had for you.

BUBEL: Okay.

MARRAPODE: Is there anything you wanted to add or anything you expected me to ask you about that I didn't?

BUBEL: No, I think you pretty much covered it all. Yes it was pretty much military experience in a two hours session.

MARRAPODE: Well thank you for coming in.

BUBEL: Thank you very much.

MARRAPODE: Thank you for sharing your experiences with us.

BUBEL: Thank you.

MARRAPODE: Thank you for your service.

BUBEL: Thank you, appreciate it.