

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

ARIAL KANN

Ammunition Specialist, U.S. Army, Operation Iraqi Freedom

2011

OH
1438

**OH
1438**

Kann, Arial., (b.1984). Oral History Interview, 2011.

Approximate length: 3 hours 5 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

Arial Kann discusses her service with the U.S. Army as an ammunition specialist during Operation Iraqi Freedom, including training and two deployments to Iraq in 2003 and 2005. Kann explains her reasons for enlisting and how her family and friends reacted to her decision. She details her basic training at Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri) and Redstone Arsenal (Alabama). Kann describes her struggle to meet army requirements for weight and physical training. She comments on her duties preparing for deployment at Fort Polk (Louisiana) and discusses deploying to Iraq in 2003 with the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment Fourth Squadron HHC Company 3/5 Platoon. Kann gives anecdotes about good and bad commanding officers and living with other women. She outlines her duties as an ammunition specialist and on combat security convoys. Kann describes several near death experiences including nearly missing the bombing of the United Nations in Baghdad. Kann discusses religious prejudice in the army and her own experiences as a Wiccan. She remembers returning home after her first deployment and then preparing for her second at Fort Campbell (Kentucky). Kann describes deploying with the 3101 Aviation Brigade to Iraq and serving at Camp Anaconda. She compares her two deployments. Kann then details leaving the army in 2006 and joining the National Guard, serving in Nashville (Tennessee) and then with the 32nd Brigade HHC (Wisconsin). She lastly mentions the birth of her son and using the G.I. Bill to attend University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse.

Biographical Sketch:

Arial Kann (b. 1984) enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2001. She deployed in 2003 with the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment Fourth Squadron HHC Company 3/5 Platoon to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2005, Kann deployed a second time to Iraq with 3101 Aviation Brigade. She then finished her service with the National Guard from 2006-2009 stationed in Nashville, Tennessee and then with the 32nd Brigade HHC (Wisconsin).

Interviewed by Matthew Sorenson, 2011.

Transcribed by Joshua Goldstein, 2014 and John Wendt, 2015.

Reviewed by Claire Steffen, 2015.

Abstract written by Claire Steffen, 2015.

Interview Transcript:

Sorenson: This is an interview with Arial Kann who served with the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fourth Squadron, U.S. Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This interview is being conducted at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum at 30 West Mifflin Street, Madison, Wisconsin, 53703 on March 18th, 2011. The interviewer is Matthew Sorenson. So Arial, tell me a little bit about your background: when were you born and what was your hometown?

Kann: I was born August 29th, 1984. I was actually born in Germany. My mom was in the military, but we moved to Marquette Iowa when I was two, two and a half, right around there.

Sorenson: What year did you graduate from high school?

Kann: In 2002: May.

Sorenson: So your mother was in the military. What branch, and what did she do?

Kann: She was in the Army and she was appointed to I want to say Lima but I can't remember if that's what it was when she was in. She was a secretary to the General at Joint Forces Command.

Sorenson: Oh, no kidding. You said you moved from Germany when you were two?

Kann: Two and half, about.

Sorenson: So do you remember much about Germany? Probably not--.

Kann: Hardly anything--my earliest memory of anything at all is I was actually with a sheep. Apparently, our apartment house had sheep near it. I don't know why but that's all I remember.

Sorenson: [Laughs] So was your mother enlisted or an officer?

Kann: Enlisted.

Sorenson: What was her rank?

Kann: Specialist.

Sorenson: Specialist? Okay, fantastic. Was your father in the military at all?

Kann: No he couldn't join he is--.

Sorenson: I see. So when you moved back to the States what was your family's impact on your decision to join the Army?

Kann: You mean like how did they influence me, or--?

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: Actually, I kind of made the decision myself. I was trying to figure out how to pay for college. I had spent some time with the Upward Bound Program. It's actually a program to help lower income students achieve college education. I actually teach there now. But I had done a lot of my applications and a lot of my scholarships and everything and I hadn't heard anything because you do this over the summer. And I kind of freak out about stuff like if I don't know what I am doing in advance. So I hadn't heard, so I decided to join the Army. And partially also because I don't think anybody thought I could do it. And when I told people that I was thinking about it they'd say, "Oh, you won't do that, you can't do that." And I was like, "I think it would be a good idea. It sounds interesting and it's a good way to pay for college. And I think I could use the confidence and the training." So I told my dad and he was kind of like "Okay, what are you thinking?" This was before September 11th happened; this was my senior year. And I told my mom and she was like, "What the hell are you thinking? Do not do that! It's not a place for a woman. I mean I don't look back on my training really badly but you don't want to do that!" So I talked to the Marines first actually, but I was too heavy. I thought I could probably get down to a weight close enough to join the Army and signed the papers in November after September 11th happened.

Sorenson: So November, 2001 you signed the papers?

Kann: Yup. I did the uh—I can't remember the name of the program, where you don't go until after you graduate.

Sorenson: The Delayed Entry Program?

Kann: Yes, thank you. [Both laugh.] Yeah the DEP program. And I don't know--my mom, after she cooled down a little bit and actually talked to me about my reasoning, she got behind me after that but it took a minute. Dad was just kind of--I think he was disappointed.

Sorenson: Oh really, why?

Kann: He wanted me to go to college. I had gotten really good grades; I was like top five percent of my class. And I eventually I found out--actually in February I finally got the letter from my first college—it was Grand View in Des Moines--that I actually had been accepted into their Honors Program so they were going to pay my full tuition and everything. [chuckles]

Sorenson: Oh, my goodness.

Kann: But, I already decided what I was going to do, so I did it.

Sorenson: Now you mentioned that your mother had said that the Army was no place for a woman. Did she elaborate on that at any point?

Kann: Um, not really, she just kind of, you know, she said, "Yeah, I didn't regret my time but I don't think you'll want to do that." [chuckles] I was like, "Okay, well I think I do." And of course she was really nervous because the War had just kicked off. She was in the Navy, she was in Germany but she really didn't go anywhere.

Sorenson: Yeah, peacetime in the Cold War kind of stuff.

Kann: She didn't really have to-- I think she was just more worried because she knew where I'd be going. That was probably some of it, too.

Sorenson: I see, absolutely. What did your friends have to say about your decision?

Kann: Most of my friends were older than me, so they didn't find out about it until I was getting ready to go to Basic. And then they were just kind of like, "Oh, okay, write to us?" [both laugh] They were kind of--it was too late at that point for them really to object a lot. I had one--gosh what was his name--Kelly is his name I would say, he was out of West Union and he was like, "What the hell are you thinking? You know you are going to go to Iraq, right?" No, at that time it was Afghanistan. "You know you're going to go to Afghanistan, right?" I was like, "I kind of figured that." [laughs] When I signed up it was after the attacks so I had to figure that's where I'd be going at least part of the time.

Sorenson: So what did the 9/11 attacks--how did they impact you? How did they change your world view?

Kann: Um it was kind of surreal. I had already been talking to the recruiters at that point but I don't know. I was in high school. I remember it happening during art class and we were talking about it in my English class later on that day. But I guess I just kind of-- I don't remember if I actually got the whole patriotic, you know, "Go do this". It wasn't like a World War II, you know, "I got to go fight, this is my duty" thing. I think it was more just it kind of happened and I was like, "Okay, well, I've already been talking to them." I don't know, I guess I really didn't think about it that much. [laughs] It was kind of funny: I probably should have. But I didn't. I guess it was--I don't know--I really can't, I can't explain it. But I really should have thought about it more, why do I want to go? I guess I was looking at it as an interesting event that I'd actually get to see how it played out maybe. I wasn't full of patriotic fire, "Let's go bomb them," or anything, so.

Sorenson: Oh, I see. Now you said that 9/11 had happened and then you had officially entered the military and signed the papers. Who did you think that you were going to be fighting?

Kann: Oh, by the time I actually left for Basic, I guess I figured I'd probably end up doing more, if you want to call it PR stuff. I figured if I got into a firefight it would be with terrorists. It would depend on what I was doing. I knew I couldn't do a combat enlist. It hadn't really—it crossed my mind that it could happen. I mean obviously we already had people that were killed that probably weren't even combat-enlisted so it wasn't something that I was like, "Yeah, it's not going to happen," but it wasn't necessarily something that I counting on happening either. If someone shoots at me, I'm going to shoot back, whoever it is. [chuckles] So I don't know, I just didn't really--I thought if it happened it would be some Al-Qaeda group coming through.

Sorenson: I see, yeah. Now you mentioned that you had tried to get into the Marine Corps first. What had attracted you to the Marine Corps?

Kann: Well, actually I figured if I was going to do a military I might as do all the way go pick a hardcore branch but that's really hard to get through, so—It seems, you know, I guess I've always been kind of a nosey girl. If I am going to do something I am actually going to go do it.

Sorenson: All the way with it, yeah.

Kann: And I couldn't, but, so that's why I joined the Army instead. My mom tried to talk me into the Air Force.

Sorenson: Yeah, why didn't you do that?

Kann: [Laughs] It's kind of the whole--I don't know if you want to call it like Branch Tension or whatever. I just thought it was just too easy to go into the Air Force. I was going to go into the Army because that was going to be harder than the Air Force or the Navy if I couldn't do Marines. I don't really know [laughs] if that's the case but--.

Sorenson: No, no, fair enough, absolutely.

Kann: But that was my perception.

Sorenson: Now when it came time for you to leave to boot camp did you have any second thoughts?

Kann: Um, not exactly. I was overweight again. I had spent the summer with Upward Bound and they do this whole three square meals thing, which is great if you're

trying to dodge eating, but I did not. [laughs] So, I wasn't doing enough physical activity because all my sports that I was in were done. And so I just, I'd gained like ten or fifteen pounds over the summer. So I was too heavy when I went to MEPS the first time in August so I had to lose weight and come back. And I did. I lost probably five pounds more than they told me to but it changed my tape measurements, so I was still too heavy. So I had to go back again and that was on my eighteenth birthday. [chuckles] Kinda sucked. At that point, because that was a really disappointing day, 'cause at this point I think I was 0.1 percent over the body fat and I was so mad. I'm like, "I'm going to Basic; they'll get it off!" [both laugh] It made me so angry that at that point I was like, "Okay, if you guys aren't going to actually do this I'm not going to do this. You want me to go so you better figure it out." They were like, "Come back in like seventeen more days and we'll try it again. Try to be careful." I was like, "I've been careful!" It made me kind of angry but after the 17th, I think it was, when I shipped out, I was like, "Okay, fine. We're going now." And I really do think about it more now, "I don't want to this way," it's just that I was pissed at the weight standards.

Sorenson: Oh sure, definitely. Did you go to boot camp with a chip on your shoulder?

Kann: Little bit, yeah, little bit. And especially because the first week at the in-processing center all they did was feed us. So any weight that I had dropped--you know we were doing some physical activity but I probably gained two or three--no, I probably didn't gain that many but I knew I had messed up a couple body fat composition again. So I was like, "Are they going to tape me again before I go to Basic?" I'm going to be stuck here. So I was pretty upset about that but it was fine.

Sorenson: So do you feel like your preoccupation with your weight kind of distracted you from other things that you might have wanted to focus on at the time?

Kann: Well, maybe. I really haven't-- When I waffle over decisions, I spend a good long time waffling over it. But once I make a decision I'm pretty--I don't really go back on it. Every once in while something really bad happens that I didn't see coming--that might be like "Ah I should have thought of that," or maybe, "I need to start thinking a little bit more about what I'm doing," but most of the time when I make a decision I'm pretty gung-ho.

Sorenson: That's quite common. I hear that quite a lot that women veterans--that the standards that the military puts on weight and just how ridiculously precise it is can be quite a distraction.

Kann: It is. I could not get my stripes because I was overweight. I always struggled with the running part of things. I prefer to sprint if I'm going to go anywhere. I'm not a

long distance runner. That rarely happens. So I always kind of struggled with the run. But when I was passing my run I was pretty close to maxing my PT test. But I would do the weight right afterwards and if I was running your butt gets a little bigger, so I would fail the weight because my butt was too big. And if I actually like lost the muscle tone that I needed to lose to pass the half-inch of tape test, I wasn't passing the run. So it was just kind of back and forth and it always bothered me. It was like, "I'm physically capable of doing anything you're asking me of. No one's noticing that extra half inch on my ass in my uniform so who cares?"

Sorenson: Exactly.

Kann: Why is this a big issue? I actually had a female Sergeant and I said that to her. She's the best sergeant I've ever had except for one woman on my first tour. She can't get her E6 because of her weight. She finally, I think she hit thirty and she just--all of a sudden she just couldn't pass it. She's Hispanic. She took Hydroxycut, messed up her liver. When we got back, she finally got liposuction because she couldn't figure out a way to physically do it. I mean she was getting, she was doing extended scales on her PT tests. She was running thirteen-minute two-miles. She was physically as fit as she could be, she was eating next to nothing and trying to lose the weight and she couldn't do it. She couldn't pass the tape test.

Sorenson: So there was an element of--you have to pass the physical training test, you need to maintain under a certain amount of weight, and you need to pass a tape measure test.

Kann: Well, the tape test didn't come in unless you didn't make the weight.

Sorenson: Oh, okay.

Kann: I think for me, at 5'6", I'm supposed to weight--well, at the time I was eighteen--I was supposed to weight 150, 149, or something like that and I've always hovered around 170. Even when I'm in shape I tend to hover around 150, 160. It's okay if you're over the weight as long as you pass the tape, which they measure kind of funny. I think when I was in it was the wrist, the forearm, the neck, and the widest part of the hips. And that's how they measure your body fat.

Sorenson: On the wrist--

Kann: The wrist, the forearm, and the neck and the ass. I did find out a trick later, actually--it wasn't at first. I would actually have to work out my neck to make sure it was a big as I could get it so when it came time for the tape test I could

have a little padding here and be okay. [laughs] But I mean of all the stupid things to work out just so you could pass a tape test. It's kind of ridiculous.

Sorenson: Now, I've heard--I don't know if you can verify this--that the Army, and maybe some of the services, are actually starting to pay for the liposuction now.

Kann: Oh, I don't know. I don't know. I know that when my Sergeant went she paid for it--

Sorenson: She paid for it.

Kann: --with money that she had saved from the universities.

Sorenson: I see.

Kann: So I don't know, they might.

Sorenson: Oh, okay. None of my business.

Kann: I wouldn't think it would be possible because I think you're allowed one cosmetic surgery or something. Most people do their eyes.

Sorenson: Oh, have the laser surgery?

Kann: Yeah, eyesight.

Sorenson: Oh, okay. I see.

Kann: But I don't know what the qualifications are for getting it because I never looked into it.

Sorenson: Oh, sure, yeah. So you went to Boot Camp, you had a chip on your shoulder, you felt fully capable of doing what needed to be done even if at times you were a little bit heavier than they wanted you to be. So where did you, where did you go to Boot Camp?

Kann: Leonard Wood, Fort Leonard Wood.

Sorenson: Leonard Wood: and that's in Missouri, right?

Kann: Yes.

Sorenson: Now, can you describe for me the Boot Camp experience in the Army?

Kann: [Laughs] Okay. The first week we spent in-processing. So you got all your shots, you get all your uniforms, you get assigned to whatever unit you're going to go to. They do a little entry level PT test to make sure that you're physically capable

enough. But that was the funny thing. When I went to MEPS they took my weight but they didn't check how physically active I could be. The weight was important to go. When you got there they checked how physically capable you were. And it always pissed me off 'cause my little PT test--it was like a little mini PT test, and I think for women you only had to do three push-ups, but you had to do them correctly, and the men had more. The women had to twelve sit-ups and run a mile in, God, I want to say sixteen minutes or something. It's real easy. For me, I'm sitting there going, "This is really, really easy," and there are little tiny girls that have no problem getting in that couldn't do three push-ups. And I'm like, "You're freakin' kidding me." I worked so hard to get in here and they can't even go because they're little and they can't do anything. So I was kind of like-- [both laugh] I just felt so, I don't know if you want to call it angry exactly. It was just vindictive, maybe. [laughs] I was just like, "What the hell is this?" But that's what they do in in-processing, if you pass that and don't have any physical or medical red flags--normally they get that out at MEPS. But you know, some slip through, so they check a couple things. And then you're just waiting for enough people to go to your class, your Basic. And I remember it because, yeah, I think I was there for like a week after you get everything in and I think I was there for a day or two we were waiting for one more busload to come in and get processed. Just two days or something like that. So you finally have enough people. And then getting up early but they weren't really doing anything with us—we'd done a couple jumping jacks and you know. It was just kind of real easy and I was sitting there going, "Is this it? Please tell me this isn't it. This can't be right. You can't be telling me that I did this much work for this." Then you get on the cattle trucks. That's how they move you around, is these big cattle trucks. They're packing everyone in kind of nicely; I think there are like twenty-five of us in there. Everyone's got their gear, you know big bags. We're waving to all the friends we made in MEPS. We turn around the corner and screaming at ya. We're just all like piled up in the front of the little cattle truck area. "Don't even look at me!" And I'm like, "oh my God what's going on." It's like, "What did I get myself into?" And "They're yelling at me a lot!" [both laugh] And, "Hide your face! Don't look at me!" It was just like, whoa, okay. The first three days were probably, like, the most physically grueling. I think also a certain amount of mental breakdown went into it too. I don't know, after the first few days--actually the second day I was at Basic we were doing flutter kicks. So I was down on the ground and the Drill Sergeant was standing right next to me and I was freaked 'cause I'm like God, he's looking right at me and I can't drop my legs. We're all sitting with our legs up in the air: "I can't drop my legs! I can't drop my legs!" I popped blood vessels in both my eyes. For the next six weeks my new nickname was "Eyes" because--I hadn't noticed right away. I just thought my eyes stung because I got a bunch of

sweat in them. Then we'd gotten up maybe twenty minutes later and we were supposed to stand in our bay waiting for our Drill Sergeants to come and talk to us. It was like an hour we were standing in this bay and everyone's yelling at each other, "Don't sit down; don't do anything!" And I've got this major migraine by now. So finally I just I couldn't stand anymore so I just sat down. Of course, you know like three people were like, "Get up! What are you doing? We are all going to get in trouble!" And I'm like, "I just, I can't. I've got a headache." I looked at somebody and they're like, "Oh my god, what's wrong with you?" Because all the blood had filled in in my eyes and my eyes were red, bright red, with blue irises sticking out of them. They probably looked demonic. So they're like, "We have to take her downstairs!" So they got me and took me down to the Drill Sergeants who yelled at us at first for disturbing them. They actually had forgotten that we were there. Our Platoon Sergeant had forgotten they had sent us up there. They're like, "What are you guys doing standing up there? What's wrong with her?" And I look and they're like, "Oh my god. Let's take you--yeah, we're going to take you to the hospital." So it just turned out, I think they gave me some pain killer. I don't remember what it was anymore but they're like, "There's really not a lot more we can do but check for these signs. If you start having problems with your vision you need to let us know." Obviously there was nothing they could do so it's just the rest of time it slowly faded. Finally, I just had little red patches in my eyes for a while.

Sorenson: They didn't hold you back at all? They kept you going with your platoon, huh?

Kann: Yeah. I didn't have any problems with it. It was just know that first day. And it was a little light-sensitive for a while. I mean it wasn't anything particularly debilitating after the initial migraine. But, I mean, after that--I was in this like C group for PT for a while. It was all because of the run. I could do the first mile pretty easily and if I could just keep up that second mile—I would have been fine but it was a bit of a struggle physically at first but that wasn't really the hard part for me. It was mostly dealing with other people because you're with all these females.

Sorenson: Oh yeah--talk to me about that a little bit. What's the--I lack the word--how were the interactions between women in boot camp?

Kann: Different. [laughs] We had—we actually did have, the buildings were kinda older but they had rooms so it wasn't a completely open bay like it had been when we were in in-processing. So we had eight or ten girls to a room, I think. It was different because some, you know you're kinda thrown into a situation with a bunch of people you don't know and some of them are like you and some of them aren't. I think--my battle buddy was from California and it took a while to get

used to the slang, actually. She used a lot of slang. You know, like, "sick" was just becoming popular at that time and I did not understand it like the first three times and I'm like, "what are you talking about? It's fine." So that wasn't too bad. She was pretty laid back. We did have like a 32 or a 35--I forget what the cutoff is; she was right there, it was going through. She had a really hard time but she was really sweet. We had this 31 year old divorcee from Wisconsin who was possibly the most self-centered person I've ever met. She got us in trouble a lot. She would not stop wearing eye liner and we would all get--so they find her wearing eye liner and all the girls would be taken down to tar pit. We're running around in there and we're like, "We hate you." [both laugh] I think she finally got in a fight with a girl from Chicago who she should not have. The girl was from the inner city of Chicago and what are you doing picking a fight with someone from the inner city of Chicago when you're from Wisconsin? [laughs] You know. It just wasn't--it was kind of interesting, an interesting dynamic, I guess. Honestly, Basic I didn't notice it as much. It was when I was deployed that I realized that I really didn't like hanging around women. They kinda, they back-bite a lot. I think I had more problem with rumors from other women than I did from the guys. 'Cause the guys were pretty easy to talk to. They were gonna do the whole try-and-get-in-your-pants thing but other than that, I mean. They might talk about you a little bit but most of them really didn't care. The girls--if you're seen talking to a guy you're sleeping with him.

Sorenson: Are you talking in Boot Camp now or for the rest of your service?

Kann: No, that was throughout deployments in particular. I noticed a little bit when we were Stateside but it wasn't as prevalent as it was when we were overseas. Basic, I think people just had bigger things to worry about. So we didn't really--I mean there were some rumors that flew around about certain girls, but not many--it was just kind of--the guys and girls were separated by a floor. We were, you know, out training together but you know you're kind of supervised a lot. So it's not like a lot. I mean, people found ways to do stuff but usually it was when we were out doing [inaudible] stuff.

Sorenson: I see. So things happened but it was generally pretty--didn't happen that often.

Kann: No. And so there wasn't a lot to talk about plus everybody is tired. So most of the talking that was done was, "Oh, I hate her she's such a bitch". So that was pretty much it. No nothing really noteworthy, but Deployments were a different animal.

Sorenson: Oh, absolutely. What did you enjoy most about Army Boot Camp?

Kann: Two things really. I actually really enjoyed the fact that I was physically capable of doing it. Um, I actually, I think, did really well on the shooting range the first

couple of times I went out, so that was pretty--I'd never shot a gun before so I was really excited about that. I was really excited about trying new things. I loved the obstacle courses though. Not so--the team building ones I liked pretty well if you had the right team, but just the interesting part of the obstacle courses was just trying to figure out how to get through it, get through it fast. I didn't like the running so much in between, but what are you gonna do? But actually I really liked it. It was an interesting challenge; it was different; it was fun. It was almost like being on like an adventure course or something. It's just something I still like doing when I can. Um yeah that's probably my favorite part. A lot of it was just the confidence that I got from the training and the experience.

Sorenson: That felt good. Now, you mentioned battle buddy before. Can you explain what is a battle buddy?

Kann: We had one person that you had to be stuck with--like you know if you were late for formation--if your battle buddy was gonna be late for formation you better be too, you stuck with them. It was just kind of-- that was that person that you always were with and you knew where they were and if somebody asked you where they were, you knew. It was just a person that you had to be stuck, to hang with for the whole time. You didn't do anything without your battle buddy.

Sorenson: Was that only in Boot Camp or did that battle buddy thing--?

Kann: No, that kinda went into training--or to deployments as well to a certain extent. They wanted the guys to have a battle buddy but they really were more stressing the women to have a battle buddy just because of the possible issues with sexual assault and things like that. So they always wanted to have a least a woman with somebody in case, which I always hated. [laughs] But, it was fundamentally to me to put it on one sex even though there are some very good practical reasons for it. But I was like, "If I can't protect myself from some guy who's just been out here a little too long, I shouldn't be here." It's was just wrong to me that that was a requirement and I got in trouble for it a lot so--.

Sorenson: Oh, really?

Kann: Yeah, being caught without a battle buddy.

Sorenson: Oh, I see.

Kann: They had good reasons; I just didn't like them so I didn't do it. [laughs]

Sorenson: I see, I see. Now, when you graduated from Boot Camp did your parents come to see you graduate?

Kann: My mom did. My parents have been divorced since I was ten so my mom and my step-dad came down for the ceremony and they brought my sister. Actually I remember that day. We did a parents day; I actually got to go out with them. We went to Cracker Barrel and then my sister and I went and saw the second Harry Potter movie 'cause it had just come out. And I remember it really well because we were in the theater and I'm in my Class As. It got to the point where the snakes are going through the halls--you've seen it?

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: And it's, "Blood kill and all that" and I'm like, "Wow, it sounds like bayonet training." My sister just looked at me like, "What?" [both laugh] "That sounds like bayonet training?" I'm like, "Yeah, bayonets. I remember that." So, but my mom was really proud. She came down to see me graduate. They talked to my Drill Sergeant and they said some really nice things about me, which surprised the hell out of me--I thought they hated me. My dad didn't. He never came down when I was in the military. But my mom, she frequently made visits but my dad never did.

Sorenson: What was your rank when you got out of Boot Camp?

Kann: I was a Private. I think by the time I got out of AIT, I'd gotten my P2--but I was an E1.

Sorenson: Now, where did you go after Boot Camp?

Kann: Well I signed up to be an ammo specialist so I went down to Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. I was supposed to only be there for ten weeks but they didn't have a class big enough for it. So I had to wait three more weeks to wait for enough people to start a class. And our class was small; it was like ten or twelve. Twelve, I think, when we started and a couple people got sick and dropped out. But that was a long three weeks because we had nothing to do except to shine our boots and PT. Sometimes we'd clean the barracks. That was it for three weeks. So, but yeah, Redstone Arsenal Alabama, it's actually really, it was nice. It was a nice base. A lot of the people who were there--and ammo school is one of the shorter schools there, and it was ten weeks. A lot of people--and I actually considered going EOD at that time because they were looking for—it was 55 Bravos at the time that was ammo specialist at the time, took over 55 Delta. I thought, me being me, I thought, "Bomb disposal--that sounds like fun." [laughs] Of course I called my mom and asked what she thought of it and she's like, "Don't you dare. There's a war going on. I will come down there and kill you myself." "Okay, I won't do it." But I kind of wondered what would happen if I had—probably nothing good, but I did want to. I think that's probably because it was one of the closest to

combat jobs that I could have gone to. I imagined a certain amount of equality there. So I thought that would be good. It was interesting, it was different; it was challenging. Ammo school was not challenging. No, not at all, it's so easy.

Sorenson: What was it like?

Kann: Well, the first five weeks, close to there--it was a long time we spent on just ammo identification; everything from 9 mils up through missiles. It was just so dull. The guy who taught it had a monotone voice. I'm sitting there in class--I'm usually, like in class I was always that student that sat in the front and raised their hand all the time. I was the teacher's pet everybody hated me. But, and I was still that way but he put me to sleep. So, I mean, he was just awful. It was, I mean it was so easy I was really, really bored a lot. That was one of the reasons I was thinking of going EOD; I'm like, I can't be bored at bomb school. It's not right. I couldn't possibly be bored at bomb school. That was one of the longer schools, too. It would have been different I don't know what would have happened if I had done that. But it was--my mom didn't want me to go so I didn't go. So I spent the next ten weeks being really bored. But I mean, once we got into actual ordnance disposal, I mean we didn't do a lot of disposal--

[break in recording 31:33- 31:52]

Kann: Most ammo school is pretty much, after the identification part and classification part, like what you can store with what. We're actually going out and doing more field stuff where you would actually go into an AHAHA and look around—sorry AHA-- in the holding area. Oh gosh, yeah, I think that's right. There's a couple different terms for it and I might be using the wrong one. We had an ammo area, there were a couple places that were--I can't remember what they're called. [laughs] We would go look around and see here's where this stuff is and here's where that stuff is, and here's where the little barrel of water is for the white phosphorous crap. You know things like that. Then we had to learn safety precautions for fifty feet, and two hundred feet, or some things. A little bit of--oh, what was it—I can't remember how to do it anymore--it was kind of calculations on--okay, this thing blew up and this thing caused this thing over here to blow up--what do you do? You know, stuff like that. And then we did, like, if we're to get overrun how do you destroy it? So, I mean that was actually a pretty short day. Just kinda set a ring of grenades and go from there. [laughs] So, some C4--we did play a little bit with C4, not a lot. Most of it was honestly just making sure you're counting the ammunition right, keeping track of what it is and knowing where it's at. So honestly that was pretty easy. We did have one day where we drove to the [inaudible] that was the big Tatra trucks, to haul ammo. But we didn't get licensed or anything so it was just "here's how you do it, ok were done" Actually that was

a PLS, so that was actually more advanced than I got to deal with when I got to my unit. I liked PLS's I didn't like ammo trucks, the [inaudible]. That was pretty much it. I graduated in March. I was the head of my class so I got a little award for it. And they did have me like study with a couple of the other ammo students that were having trouble with classification stuff. It wasn't too bad.

Sorenson: So you graduated in March of 2000--?

Kann: 2. 3. I'm sorry. I left for Basic in 2002. This was March 2003.

Sorenson: This ammo training--that's considered AIT?

Kann: Yes, Advanced Individual Training.

Sorenson: Now, when you got done with this school, where did you go from there?

Kann: I went in hometown recruiting for two weeks. Saw my sister and my family before I shipped out. I knew at that point that I was going to Fort Polk and I knew that my unit was leaving. I didn't know when, but I knew they had orders to go.

Sorenson: Where is Fort Polk?

Kann: Louisiana. That's where a lot of Vietnam people joined.

Sorenson: So you knew that your unit was leaving for the Middle East before you even got to your unit. How did you find that out?

Kann: One of the girls in my--she was like a class ahead of me, was going to Fort Polk--and I just got my orders where I was going and she was going as well and she had a contact down there. So she knew a couple of military people. And so that's where she was going and she knew that she was going to the same unit I was going to so she told me they already had their orders. She didn't know where but she knew they had some.

Sorenson: How did that feel to know that you were going to be deployed over to a war zone?

Kann: Well, I didn't know where I was going yet. I already kind of expected that I was going to Afghanistan. Probably not right away but I thought it was probably coming pretty fast because I only had four years and I spent six months in training. I guess I wasn't sure where we were going. I was actually--I was kind of excited, actually because I hadn't traveled at all, which sounds so silly. I'm like, "Oh I'm going to a war zone; it's like traveling." [laughs] But it was, to me. I was like, okay, this is new and I knew I was probably going to go anyway, just going earlier than I thought. I didn't know the date yet, either. So that was part of it too, I knew that we were going, I just didn't know when, so.

Sorenson: How did your family feel about knowing that you were going to be deploying to a war zone?

Kann: They were worried, they were pretty worried. My mom--she'd already figured this war was going to happen which is why she tried to talk me out of it in the first place. So she really wasn't happy to hear that. But honestly, my best friend told me that she remembered talking to my step-mother and--no, no, no, that was several months later--I had called my best friend up to tell her that I was deploying. This was when I got down there and I knew I was going to Iraq and I was going in a month. So I called her and told her what was going on. I remember, she told me later about this conversation, but I told her and there was a pause, and I was, "Why is it Iraq? That's hot. It's a desert; it's really hot there. Why can't we have a war with Russia? Again." [laughs] I was--I don't like being hot. I like summer okay but I really prefer spring and fall so it's like, "I don't want to be hot for three months, [laughs] or four months. I think it's really, really hot there." So she, she at that point was like "Ah, she'll be fine" She cracked a joke about sending me over there as their secret weapon just to annoy Saddam. Awesome powers of annoyance.

Sorenson: So you knew that you were going to Iraq. After you got to your unit you found that out?

Kann: Right.

Sorenson: Okay. How did you like your new unit?

Kann: I wasn't sure what to make of it at first. Everybody was leaving when I got there. My sergeant, Sergeant Martin, Staff Sergeant Martin, I liked her. She was a black lady; skinny, skinny woman. She'd been in the Marines before she joined the military, before she joined the Army. So she was really, she was kind of hard on her females and there was only three of us in her section out of twelve. So I mean that's kind of a higher percentage, but, she was really kind of hard on us. She wanted to make sure that we weren't "those" females that didn't do anything. Anything that we did we'd have to do twice as hard just to make sure that you knew that we were working. [laughs] So she was pretty—you know, anything that she wanted done she'd ask us to do first just to make sure that we knew what we were doing and we wouldn't embarrass her I guess. So she was pretty hard on females but she was also really protective of her squad, her section which is cool. She was definitely like--if she would come to you with something that she heard or a question that she had about something that someone told her was going on she would come to you first and ask you what your side of it was. Anybody that came after you after that, if you were honest with her, she would just go to town

on, go to bat. Later, when we were deployed we had a colonel that, a light colonel, that didn't really understand the difference between ammo and EOD, and she told him on a number of occasions that we were not EOD specialists, we do not take care of unexploded ordnance: that is not our job. We'd not been taught how to do that. And he insisted anyway, he actually went roundabout way about it, he asked for a forklift driver and he used the forklift driver to move some unexploded ordinance out of the area which was a no, a big no-no.

Sorenson: Wow.

Kann: He was really lucky nothing happened. And when she got back, when he got back with the forklift and she's like, "What did he have you do?" and we told her. She went and screamed at him, I mean, up and down. She was like, "I told you," and "You could kill them," and "I'm the one that going to have to talk to his parents". So it was--I think she got away with it. I never heard any actual repercussions from her talk with him but he didn't ask for forklifts after that unless he needed them for, you know, building stuff. So she was pretty cool. I really liked her. What was the question again?

Sorenson: How many people were in your unit?

Kann: Oh, gosh. I was part of Headquarters' Headquarters Troop? Which is the largest Troop in [inaudible]. We had Headquarters, um, we had--gosh, what were the letters? There was O Troop, P Troop, S Troop, T Troop and R Troop. They were all different sections that went with the helicopters, my first unit was a helicopter unit. We had Kiowas and Blackhawks. So I think Stetson Troop was a bunch of armament guys and they actually worked on the helicopters--I might have it wrong I know there is a difference between guys who work on helicopters and guys that actually load the helicopters with ammo but I can't remember what the difference is. [laughs] I mean they might have cross trained too so, but they--that was Stetson troop. O Troop were the Kiowas yeah those were the Kiowa guys and they had the pilots and the army guys a bunch of O Troop, and S Troop did have some pilots in it too. We had a lot of pilots [laughs]. Obviously, but Headquarters was the largest one I think we had 142 people when we deployed, in the troop. My platoon was the 3/5 platoon which is fuel and ammo and I think we were at 50; we were the largest platoon. My section was the ammo parts of that. We only had 12 people and I might be wrong there may have been less than that.

Sorenson: So walk me through; walk me through a typical day as an ammo specialist, stateside.

Kann: Stateside? Oh ok. Wow, we didn't do a lot stateside unless we were doing an exercise, um, because the ammo--unless you were actually assigned to an ammunition like area, like an ammunition platoon or squadron or something, you would end up working where the actual ammo was-- that was pretty much you'd go out--probably like, I'm assuming it was like being overseas. Because you'd have to go out and verify everything was where it was supposed to be and nobody had taken anything, any rounds and then you'd issue a an order to take ammo in depending on what's going on. I know I had a sergeant my second tour who had done that for three or four years before she came to us or maybe longer it seemed it was a lot of paperwork, I think. But when you're with a unit that actually like has some deployments and goes places, you don't do much because there's nothing, there's no ammo for you to--you don't have ammo out unless we're doing an exercise. We didn't--we were the ones who went and got the ammo whenever we had an exercise on or if we had like a shooting range, yeah if it was qualification time we got a little busier, but it honestly wasn't a lot to do so we spent a lot of time like doing cross training stuff. You know, but with my first month, we spent a lot of time doing classes on Iraq, we got like minor instruction in Arabic which was very simple. It wasn't much but most of it was like a little review of combat first aid stuff and, um, packing, a lot of packing. So, it wasn't really much to do stateside, I mean my first month was spent packing to go to Iraq, um, and then I was deployed the whole time, like for fifteen months and then I came back I had orders already to go to Fort Campbell. So when I got to Fort Campbell, I think that was--we came back in July, I left for Fort Campbell in October. I remember trying to leave Fort Polk; the base was really difficult because I didn't know where anything was. I got to know it before I left and I was gone for fifteen months, I had no idea where anything was. So I got to go home in-between coming back. I think I went home for a month of leave because I hadn't got to go the whole time I was over there. Well, it was a staffing issue, [laughs] we weren't full strength so they were only sending home people who had families. Being a single soldier I didn't need to go home I could have three day freedom rest. That was my R&R and it was in Baghdad [laughs] so I mean it was kind of sad. Later people got to go to Qatar and I was insanely jealous, but let's see, I was gone for a month, I was home for a month, and I out processed, then I had to go home again to deliver a bunch of stuff because I knew that they were down--I had heard that they were down in Texas. So I had found out--no no no wait--I had driven to Fort Campbell first, that was what I did, and I spent two or three days in-processing there before I got assigned to 3101 8th Aviation Regiment. Brigade. Brigade? I think so. Sorry I'm getting kind of lost [laughing] but yeah that was a brigade because regiment was an air squadron and that was a cavalry thing. Um so I was in 3101 and they were down in Texas doing --what

was it called—they were doing the training on their Apaches. So I was in another aviation unit and they were in Texas training for --I don't know, I think when I got down there it was for 7 months--but I knew I was going to be stuck, they told me I was going to be stuck in this little like six foot space, [laughs] you know, so there was no way I was going to be able to bring all of my stuff from my room because Fort Polk's actually very nice if you live there.

Sorenson: Yeah where is that anyway? Oh I'm sorry Louisiana.

Kann: Louisiana. Their rooms were very, very nice. They have like--I think I had one roommate--we had like a kitchenette area

Sorenson: Oh really?

Kann: It was outdoor walk up and you didn't have keys you had a little combination for your room. So it was a lot nicer than anyone gives Fort Polk credit for because they're always there to JRTC, so they all hate Fort Polk because they're all staying in the WWII barracks.

Sorenson: Oh sure.

Kann: We have the nice stuff [laughs] because we live there. So I got to Fort Campbell and they're not as nice. I hear that the infantry guys actually get some really nice areas but didn't.

Sorenson: Now where is Fort Campbell?

Kann: Well it's technically Kentucky, but it's on the Kentucky/Tennessee Stateline so if you actually go out like a different gate--well no actually the main gate that you went out of, if you went out you were technically in Kentucky-- but I know it stretches below the line.

Sorenson: No kidding. So you're like right on the line.

Kann: Oh yeah, Clarksville Tennessee was the city right outside it, so.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: But if you went out the first two northern gates the line was very small and I can't remember the, what the part of Kentucky, what town in Kentucky, it was right up

against Clarksville Tennessee. It was right on the border, so yeah that was-- I got there and I was going to go out for-- it was over, my birthday was October, mid-October. So I got assigned my unit and I went there and they were in Texas so I knew I was going to have to get my stuff home so I have to drive home. And I had a three day weekend, over Halloween, but they let me go home. So I went home and dropped all my stuff and then drove down to, back down to Tennessee. And then on November 2nd--I remember because we were supposed to be voting it was the 2004 election and I was pissed [laughs] I had an opinion and I was not happy I was not getting to vote because I hadn't thought about filling out an absentee ballots ahead of time. It was going to be my first time I was gonna get to vote and I was so mad have to miss out on voting day. We spent like two days going down to Texas and we were at a fort in Texas for like 7 months. It was yeah November 2nd we got down there and it was still --I think we're were like in Arkansas, no it was Texarkana that was it that's what I was trying to say was Texarkana; right on the Texas Arkansas border.

Sorenson: So now, um, when you, you were at Fort Polk and you had heard that you were deploying not to Afghanistan but instead to Iraq, your family was a little nervous about that understandably. Now how did you get over to Iraq? Did you take a plane?

Kann: A plane, it was too late to take a ship, I would have definitely signed up to take the ship if I could have but they had already left [laughs]. Like either--or they might have left when the advanced party left too. I'm not sure, I think they left the week at the time ahead of the advance party I knew a few people who were on that ship. They had uh, I would have signed up to do that but I couldn't so we flew and we actually went from Louisiana and we spent-- Ok this is where it gets kind of complicated. I'm not exactly sure what happened, precisely, but our unit had orders to go, and we were going to go to Iraq, Apparently at some point in that month they got deleted and we weren't supposed to go anymore, but our colonel wanted to go, so we did [laughs]. And so we spent a long time in the airport I can't remember where we flew out of I know sometime in the month we had to drive down to, had to drive over to Texas to the fort there. I can't remember where it's at but that was a three or four hour drive from Fort Cam--or Fort Polk, to that place in Texas. [laughs] I can't remember, so we had to drive the vehicles down there to get them on--we must have left after, because we needed to get them on the ship [laughs]. But I don't think we had our vehicles when we got there--but I don't know it's really weird. That was like one of the first things I did with that unit so all our vehicles were already on the way so we flew out of somewhere in Louisiana, it was still an hour drive away from Fort Polk but we

spent like three or four hours sitting on the Tarmac, didn't know what the hell was going on. People had fallen asleep, you know. We finally got on the plane; we had our weapons on the plane with us, all our gear, all our bags. I was on baggage detail because I was the newbie--both ways [laughs]. I was when we got on the plane and when we got off the plane in Kuwait. But we went from Louisiana, to New Finland, we had like a short stop there for something, I don't know what. We went from New Finland to Ireland; we were in Shannon, Ireland for about an hour just in the airport. And then we went from Shannon to Cypress, we weren't even allowed to get off the plane in Cypress. Like a couple guys had a smoke break outside, like as they're like trying to poke out the window or not the window but the door because we were there for half an hour, at least, or twenty minutes, something like that. From Cypress we flew too Kuwait City. We got to Kuwait, we got there at 7:00am or 7:20 and it was already 90 or 103 maybe, it was somewhere up there and then I got to do baggage detail in that heat. I got to take off my flak jacket and stuff which was nice but it was still really hot.

Sorenson: What month was it in 2003?

Kann: April.

Sorenson: April, okay.

Kann: We got there April 26th.

Sorenson: So how did that feel? You're flying over there, and you step out the door and it's blazing hot and you're in a strange country.

Kann: I was really excited until I stepped out the door and I was like "I'm going to die here" [laughs] "It's too hot" I mean because it was immediate like we were on an air conditioned plane, as soon as you step out the door it was like, it was like hitting a wall of air. And you know were on an airport tarmac and you know it's hotter there and its 7am and its 90 some degrees, and I'm like "Oh God, its April, its late April, its 7am and I feel like this, this is insane" So yeah that sucked I hated, I hate being hot. I always hated being hot and I don't like sand much either, so why was I there.

Sorenson: What was--what did it look like? What did Kuwait look like?

Kann: It was actually kind of nice, um, well Kuwait city was; it was near the gulf I think. We didn't really get to see the gulf but I could kinda see the sparkle of the water

but it's nice, I mean the roads are really well done. There were 3 to 4 lane highways, well lit. It's pretty--I mean it was a little different, and the place we ended up going to was not as nice [laughs] in Kuwait, because we were staying in a, we were actually staying on a Kuwaiti base before we left. I don't know how that happened it was a couple miles from Camp Victory I wanted to say in Kuwait. We had to go to Camp Victory to pick up our food. Because they had a deal worked out with the Kuwaiti--I not sure what section, the Kuwaiti something or other that we had this worked out with. I know we were staying in a building. Like my headquarters troop was camped out in an old fire station for the 2 weeks we were in Kuwait.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: And that kind of bit, because the floors were really hard. So the women were upstairs on the second floor little tier area and it was this hard metal and you could put your cot up if you wanted to but there was really wasn't enough room for everyone to have a cot up. So we were just lying on the floors in our sleeping bags and more than one stiff neck, but.

Sorenson: Yeah for two weeks huh?

Kann: Yeah for two weeks.

Sorenson: Wow.

Kann: And the guys were all downstairs and I'm sure some stuff went on there but I was in the way back so I didn't hear any of it. But I remember it because we were on a Kuwaiti base when we would go out and do PT the women had to wear full PT uniforms in 120 degree weather [laughs]. You know not the jackets, but the pants; they didn't want to see us in shorts. So after the first two or three times that we went running in these pants, my sergeant was just like "we're not doing this anymore, I don't care if they're mad about seeing our legs, this is ridiculous, we can't do this" people are going to, you know, fall over and die if we do this. So we started running in shorts and got a lot of interesting looks for it, but. [Laughs]

Sorenson: So be it.

Kann: Yeah, I didn't care.

Sorenson: What did you guys do in Kuwait for those 2 weeks, what kind of preparation did you make?

Kann: Um, we had to make up our ammunition. So we went to--I don't remember I wasn't actually on that mission, I had to stay back for some reason I was on the KP duty or something--but we mostly, it was mostly about getting all our--we still didn't know where we were going. I think, I think a lot of that had to do with the fact that we weren't supposed to be there [laughs]. We were trying, we were trying--and our advanced party had already left, like they had already left and they had been driving around Iraq for two or three weeks. I don't know what happened there. Like I heard some interesting stories from that, but I don't know how much of that was actually, you know-- I mean they just drove around Iraq for two or three weeks and I think they were missing a vehicle so they stole somebody else's, I mean, it was kind of interesting. But a lot of it was preparations like getting our rations and things we had to get you know water, we had to get our vehicles in Kuwait off the boat because the boat didn't get there exactly when we did. So I went with the first--I don't know remember how we got to the base to be honest it was kind of all a blur. Might have, I think we had to hang around Kuwait city base, I can't remember the name of it right now, um, for a while, maybe 2 or 3 days until we could get out vehicles and we drove our vehicles up there. Then we had to get, you know ammo, MREs, you know, water, and any other supplies we might need which I didn't get told about. I just had to deal with my stuff. Headquarters' troop was responsible for most of the rations and stuff like that so if I wasn't going to handle stuff, I was doing secretarial crap. Mostly, so, it was just a lot of little preparations and things. We were there for two weeks because they still didn't know where we were going. Our advanced party left; was already in Iraq driving around and we had another little advance party that left ahead of us by like 2 or 3 days. That was my sergeant, Sergeant Martin and a couple people that she selected. So they took two ammo trucks and went ahead with a couple of the fuelers so that when we got to our parkway mark we had a place to fuel up and, and some-- I don't know what they wanted the ammo for, for a while, but they, they had some interesting times too. I heard there was something about a truck being on fire at some point. I don't know I didn't get to hear the whole story, but we left shortly thereafter in a big long convoy.

Sorenson: To go to Iraq?

Kann: Yeah, we left from Navstar I think. We drove up to Navstar and we got the convoy's order and then I think we had 3, for the entire regiment, we had 3 really long convoys.

Sorenson: Oh wow, okay.

Kann: No I lied. That was for the entire, that was for the--not for the regiment that was for my squadron. For the squadron, we had three long convoys that were either like 50 or 60 vehicles each. Um I didn't have a license so I wasn't allowed to drive they had me stuck with a Sergeant Henry. Sergeant Henry was not very bright; and he was on loan from the fuelers, so he wasn't even an ammo sergeant. So he, they stuck him, we needed an extra sergeant, so we got him because they didn't want him. So we got him and he was something else. I got stuck with him because I was newest. So I, they figured I'd have a higher tolerance for him than some of the other soldiers that had to deal with him longer. Also they didn't put any ammo in his truck. So he was driving an empty truck and trailer into Iraq [laughs]. So they stuck me with him, because they figured, you know, if I didn't know what was going on, [laughs] its ok. Made me very nervous, and he made me very nervous on the drive to Texas to turn the vehicles in because he just wouldn't pay attention to the road very much, like he almost hit the guy in front of us like three or four times. It made me so nervous, and I think the second day, well actually when we were going across the border we--actually, I know we stopped. I know we had classes of some kind because, um, they were doing like you know the intelligence training and stuff and they were talking about IEDs on the side of the road and that's where I got that, was in Kuwait.

Sorenson: Oh, right.

Kann: Forgot about that sorry [laughs] and they taught us a couple basic phrases like I think "kiff" is stop, if I remember correctly, and there was others but that's the only one I really remember. It was very; kinda they talked about intelligence reports from earlier that month and things that were going on. We got there right after the whole Scud missile thing was done. So I know my advanced, our advanced party had to deal with some of that. They were in and out of their NBC suits a lot for that first couple of weeks. They, [laughs] yeah it was interesting. They gave us a report, I think, the day before or the day that we left Navistar--because I think Navistar we had classes too, it was a little bit more built up--and they were talking about going across the border and how there were kids--there was a little border town right there too and there were a lot of kids who were running out into the roads a lot and they had had a couple problems with them being like trapped or booby trap or whatever, or like setting off ambushes.

Sorenson: Yeah

Kann: So I remember sitting there going "this is not good" you know [laughs] this is going to be the first thing--I'm with this guy that I don't trust--I'd already gone to my platoon sergeant and asked whether or not anybody else could drive because I didn't have any faith in his driving. You know coming from a P2 to a sergeant was probably pretty ballsy of me, I don't know it didn't seem so at the time. I was just like "you understand he's an idiot." [laughs] He made me so nervous. They were like "you're really not supposed to talk about it" [laughs] "but yes he is and if anything happens, just let us know." So the very first thing, like the convoy started and I'm kind of nervous. I'm sitting there going "we're going into Iraq, and I have no idea what's going to happen but all the reports are really bad." And I'm with this guy I definitely don't trust, and so I've got my weapon out the window and I'm sitting there looking over at him and he couldn't even get the damn thing started. Like I mean he just, he had forgotten the air pressure in the HMETT, and these were older vehicles too. You have to like do something with the break to get it to go, at all, and I didn't know, I knew there was a trick to it but I couldn't remember what it was because I wasn't allowed to drive them. So he's sitting there and the convoy is getting farther and farther ahead of us, because we're in the middle.

Sorenson: Oh my gosh.

Kann: And I'm going [slaps her palm to her face] [laughs] "What are we going to do?" And he finally figured it out. So there's this huge gap between us and the vehicle in front of us, so of course this kid runs out in the road, and were like 30/40 feet from this kid and he's hitting the breaks. I'm going "don't slow down, don't stop!" because that's what they drilled into our heads was, "Don't slow down. Don't stop." "Don't slow down. Don't slow down! Oh he's going to get me killed!" We came like a full three second pause stop before the kid got out of the way. I almost shot that kid because he had a rock in his hand. He threw a rock at us. But I remember sitting there going, "This guy is going to get me killed, and soon." [both laugh] So I think we finally finished the rest of the day, we stopped out in the middle of nowhere, on this convoy. I think we had a couple scouts; there must have been someone from the regiment with us because there weren't any scouts in our unit, in our squadron. So we must have had somebody, with us. But we had a couple scouts that did a circle thing. At first they, I, our Major decided it would be a good idea to put the fuel vehicles around the outside which I thought was really kind of stupid. So they had to rearrange so the ammo trucks and the fuel trucks were in the middle and kind of hidden because they all go boom. That's where we slept; we all slept on cots out in the middle of--.

Sorenson: Just in the middle of nowhere?

Kann: --in the middle of nowhere, there was just nothing, just--I should have brought my--that's in my photo album. I had started to fill it out but I only had a couple of pages done so I didn't bring it [laughs] and I had that picture of the lone scout truck 50 feet outside the, our little perimeter in the middle of nowhere, I mean, there was nothing.

Sorenson: Wow

Kann: We weren't even close to a road.

Sorenson: So you were in the middle of a desert?

Kann: Yeah, for that first night and I remember going to my platoon sergeant and pleading again with him like, "Anybody else would be better to drive, I mean you got to have somebody that's in a different part of the unit that's a TC that knows how to drive this thing, you have to have it." He actually told me because we had reports already, that the next day was going to be a lot harder. They were going to be there, they had had some ambushes in some city that we were going through. You know that had had a really bad attack and like four soldiers had died, [laughs] you know. So I'm sitting there freaking out and I went to him and I told him that we stopped for that kid in the road today and I almost had to shoot a kid and I wouldn't have stopped--.

[break in recording 01:03:03 – 01:03:20]

Kann: Ok so I talked with the platoon sergeant and he said he didn't have anybody else, there was no way to move around because the one guy that he know that could drive a HMETT was the only guy that was qualified on the 50-Cal so, [laughs] I wasn't getting him. So I actually, like, sat down and wrote a bunch of goodbyes to my friends and my parents in my journal and gave it to the guy in the MO-GAS truck, of all people because I trusted him and I knew him. I though he was safer, which tells you about the guy I was with. And the next day, I remember it because I like I went back to our area and I had kind of washed up a little bit with my canteen water--which you weren't supposed to do--but I went back to our area where the ammo specialists was hanging out. He was kind of sitting there talking about how the next day he was going to kill himself an Iraqi I was like, "You couldn't even keep the truck going with a kid in the road [laughs]." I'm like--so I

just kind of looked at him, and he's like, "Okay." [laughs]. I went off in my little corner. So the next day we were on the road and he's falling asleep so I'm like starting to like really kinda freak out, I actually managed to talk him into letting me drive.

Sorenson: Oh wow.

Kann: So I finally like, it took me a minute to figure out the little thing with the button and the breaks but, the air breaks, but I did let him--he got me--I finally got him to let me drive because he was falling asleep. I put him over there and I can't remember, nothing really happened that day. We ended up like going through a really skinny area of some town, like I remember it was just like we ended up on this really weird road that was like straight up and down I don't know how the HMETTs fit through there. Fortunately I didn't have to try to turn anything around because it had a trailer on it. You know it was my first time driving the vehicle and I'm like "This is not good." [laughs] When we finally stopped for the night--because I don't think Cedar 2 was set up yet. I don't remember, I think there was an ammo, or there was a fuel area that was what Cedar 2 became I think on the main route into Baghdad, but it wasn't there yet, like it wasn't built up. Um so, it was when we came back, but there, gosh I think we stopped. I don't remember where we stopped the second night. It was somewhere also kind of desolate but we had our, we met up with our people that had left a couple days ahead of us so my sergeant was there and there was the fuel guys. So I'm in my, I'm in the truck and we finally got to a where we were stopping for the day it was like mid-afternoon or late afternoon or something. It was still light out so I pull off, I'm in line waiting for, to like get fueled up and my sergeant, like Sergeant Henry just got out of the truck. I don't know where he was going, he just go out of the truck and left me there [laughs]. And I'm like; I'm looking, like, "Okay, is he coming back? Is he waving somebody--? What's going on?" and then the guy in front of me, like the truck in front of me was done getting fueled so the guy, you know, is waving at me and he's yelling at me, 'cuz he's like "why aren't you moving forward" and I'm like "I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing." So I pulled up and they fueled me up and told me to go around so I'm out there trying to figure out where I'm supposed to park this thing, because I had no idea, my sergeant got out, and that's how my, my section sergeant found me. So, I'm out there driving around trying to turn around with this huge trailer and this huge truck, and she's like "What are you doing driving?" And I'm like "I don't know. It just kinda happened sergeant." And yeah, she finally, I think after she was done yelling at me--she was like "Okay, so what happened?" And I'm like, "What?" and she was like, "Why are you driving?" "Well Sergeant Henry was tired." She

was like "No, why are you driving? What happened?" And I told her about Kuwait and everything and I was just really worried about it and she was like "Okay, we'll switch somebody out." So I got; actually funnily enough they put me with another ammo specialist who did have a license. So I ended up in a different convoy at that point and the guy I ended up with had a bunch of Hellfires on his truck, big missiles, I was safer with him. I felt I was safer with him even though I was on the truck that went boom, that could go boom then I was with that guy. I loosened right up, I was fine after that, we drove into Baghdad and we were good. So, let's see, we got to Baghdad--.

Sorenson: What happened to Sergeant Henry when he got out of the truck? Did you ever see him again after that?

Kann: I did, I know at some point Sergeant Martin must have really yelled at him she was like "You let her drive? She's got no license; she's eight-fricken-teen, [laughs] you know, what are you thinking?" And I think she said something else to him, I don't know what happened with that but I think they switched out whoever--Loveless, that was his name--whoever Loveless's TC was they switched out. His name was [inaudible] or something like that. Somebody else ended up riding with him instead somebody that knew, you know, that if they had to drive they could. They would be more comfortable with him, way more comfortable--oh that is what I had forgotten to say--when I talked to my platoon sergeant the second, the first night, he actually told me "It's just you and him in the truck, if something happens and you need to get rid of him no one's going to ask [laughs]." I was like, "Did you just tell me I could shoot him?" [laughs] "Is that what you just said?" I don't know. "You know whatever you have to do to get out of there." And I'm like "Okay, great?" I'm not sure if that was what I was supposed to be reading into it or not, but I was like "Um, that's kind of ambiguous." [laughs] So that was the first night and the second night and that third day they switched us out. So I think that would have been May 15th or 16th maybe, I couldn't tell you. Somewhere in there; it was pretty close we got there in April, two weeks in Kuwait and then three days on the road and we ended up going to the Southeast I want to say; South of Baghdad it was pretty like far out in the outskirts of Baghdad. Um, it was this little tiny like 2 or 3 mile square base, I mean, it was like really little and it was the war college where Saddam had trained his officers.

Sorenson: Oh, okay.

Kann: So that was where we set up, [laughs] and we were stuck there for the next year. But it was about 7 miles--it's now Camp Cuervo. Yeah that's what it's called now; used to be Camp Muleskinner that's what we named because it was a regiment term. So originally it was Camp Muleskinner and then when we left, the first--I can't remember if that was the unit name it was the one with the yellow patch with the horse and the line, it's Fort Hood. I don't know, anyway, they came over and took over our base; they named it Camp Cuervo after that. So we were there and we set up in the buildings which we called the Hilton and the, I can't remember what the other was called. We were living in the Hilton [laughs] which is this like two story building that the officers would live in so we were kind of in a base. I was a base-style buildings; there was like one room on the end of each wing where I guess the higher level officers must have slept or something or whoever was in charge for that time period. I really don't know how he had things divided. So we found a bunch of lockers and we found a bunch of, um, we have our cots and everything and we tried to sweep it out a little bit because it was dusty and there were holes in some of the walls. 'Cuz they had done some bombing there, not a lot, but there was some so they were kind of broken down pretty badly. Some of the walls were broken down from whatever that had gone through I guess [laughs]. I didn't get to hear that story I know that the people that were ahead of us, our advanced part got there before we did and they, I'm told, had helped clean up some of the bodies but I don't know for sure.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: I know that when we were there were still some places where you could see the people had been shot, but I don't know.

Sorenson: How could you tell?

Kann: Blood. Blood splatters.

Sorenson: Blood splatters on the walls? I see, now you mention that you were carrying a weapon? What kind of weapon were you carrying?

Kann: M16.

Sorenson: M16, Okay not the M4s; the shorter versions, huh?

Kann: No, no, no I had an M16 the first tour, an M4 the second tour.

Sorenson: Oh okay, I see.

Kann: Yeah, this is still first tour.

Sorenson: How many, were you carrying ammunition on you?

Kann: Yeah, we had seven, uh seven round, seven; uh wow I should know the word. Magazines. Wow, that's terrible.

Sorenson: No, it's alright.

Kann: Yeah, it was I can't remember the amount, because it was thirty round magazines, seven magazines and I think we had an extra couple of rounds, you know, no more than that, so it was like one hundred and some rounds I wanna say. I don't remember. I should remember because I issued it, but I don't.

Sorenson: Wow, well still that's quite a lot so you guys were locked and loaded basically.

Kann: Yeah, we had quite a bit and then of course our SAW gunners got like two or three cans each. They didn't carry them all the time, like they had to--there must have been two cans, because they had to carry—not later they didn't carry them all the time they'd have the trucks with them, and they'd have two cans each. I know once we got there, they turned a lot, [inaudible] a lot. I think we kept the stuff in the magazines but we turned the extra stuff in. So I think the SAW gunners had like two or three magazines, like two--I think it was two magazines that they had to carry and the bandoliers when they went and everything. Which I mean was pretty much most of the time when we got there we always had to have our weapons and stuff on.

Sorenson: So when did your officers or senior enlisted people ever tell you at what point you should start thinking about firing your weapon? Were there--?

Kann: Well, at first not really, because we were on a base so we had a little bit of, you know if we started to get overrun, shoot. But it wasn't, we really didn't get much of that unless we were on guard duty. On guard duty was, you know it was you're in the tower, you know, keep in contact and report and we'll let you know if you need to start shooting. If you were actually at the gate it got a little more interesting. I didn't get out there very much though. I think the one time I did; I was on guard duty twice before I ended up on convoy security, so.

Sorenson: Oh okay, so you did guard the gate at least one once then?

Kann: Once I went out there and I don't remember I think I was only out there for half hour, or an hour.

Sorenson: What was that like? Was it pretty nerve wracking?

Kann: Not really.

Sorenson: Not really.

Kann: We were in Baghdad, but I said we were on the outskirts of Baghdad and our half of the base that headquarters troop was taking care of for guard duty was facing like nothing [laughs] there were some houses that were like a little ways away but there really wasn't anything right next to the war college because it was the war college.

Sorenson: Oh, right, right.

Kann: On the far side there was a little bit more going on down there but my particular part of headquarters didn't deal with that—or 14—we weren't the only base—we weren't the only people there either, we only took part of the base. It was 14 RSS and RSS was the headquarters--I can't remember what they did. Regimental something squad, anyway I think RSS, we had the headquarters part of RSS in our section --no that's not true, we had the ammo part, the ammo part and fuel part of RSS, I think. Anyway I can't remember because I didn't get to talk to them very often. They took the part that was actually near the city and that's where we would go out when we did convoys. That's the side of the place we would go out of because that was the only place you could get--I mean you could get on the road the other way but you would have to go all the way around and it was just kind of a hassle. So we were just literally like right out there, we were barely in Baghdad. But that side actually had the traffic and stuff and that was the more, they did have a couple like cars come through that had stuff in them that they had to catch. I don't remember if the gate ever got hit, I don't think so, but there were a couple of times where it should have or something happened; it was close to. I can't quite remember. Um, the only time we had anything really interesting happen was kinda a big mess up. Um, it was a UN Truck had come up and they were, it was a white truck and I don't think it was marked and they told them to slow down and stop, and I don't know there was a miscommunication or something so they actually shot at the UN representatives that were coming to

visit because they were coming in the wrong gate. But nothing, they didn't kill anybody they just stopped the vehicle and that was one of the things you would get on the gate. If it's a vehicle, stop the vehicle first. Don't worry about shooting people so much, make sure the vehicle stops. So you'd aim at the engine and stuff like that.

Sorenson: Oh okay, I see.

Kann: And that was usually mostly for the person that was on 50 cal.

Sorenson: Oh, right, yeah, definitely.

Kann: So I didn't really, I end up in the 50 cal. pit once, and I wasn't there for very long. I took a cool picture though [laughs]. Um that was different, like I said I wasn't out there that often. Mostly I was on ammo guard duty a lot. We had a, our little AHA. Which--oh I remember that was another thing it was lovely for Sergeant Henry--was the first day we had to go through and counting the ammo like six or seven times because we were missing rounds. What had happened was when we had did the issue of the seven magazines Sergeant Henry hadn't gotten his he had decided that he didn't need to because he was an ammo specialist at this point so he just took it later, he didn't--and it wasn't accounted for. Like he had never written down how many he'd taken. He had taken some really odd amount too, like he hadn't taken the full sized magazines and like one of his magazines was short like he had twenty-seven rounds in it or something because he just took the stuff that was loose.

Sorenson: Oh. I see.

Kann: So we were like--he went into country with three magazines and like a partial fourth magazine and didn't tell anybody, you know, or anything and so we're sitting her counting this over and over again because we were like some hundred and twenty odd or some odd number off, and she was like "That can't be right. You need to go back out and check it again." And yeah after the third or fourth time we all came back with the same number she was like "Ok what the hell is going on?" And all of the sudden, Sergeant Henry was like "Oh yeah."

Sorenson: Oh jeeze.

Kann: Yeah I took that--that was as an interesting talk as well. [laughs]

Sorenson: Oh jeeze.

Kann: Um, it's definitely not allowed, you're not supposed to be taking in ammo that you're not, you know, you're not accounting for, especially as a specialist, you know he was a specialist. It's like, "Really? You didn't think this was a big issue? How long have you been with us?" [laughs] So I would do guard duty down there because it had to be under twenty-four hour guard so we had like little shifts and sleeping was interesting. Well because, um, it was so hot during the day and we weren't in air conditioning or anything so just trying to adjust to the heat you know it was already hard to sleep. And then I was always on different shifts because we had like an odd number of people. So sometimes I'd have a night shift, and sometimes I'd have a day shift and sometimes they were like twenty-four hours apart. So it was kind of awkward and on guard duty I think we only did, we did just one eight hour shift and on my second tour they split it up differently. It was like two days in a row, two or three days in a row when we did those shifts. That was like; no one wanted the hot part of the day.

Sorenson: Sure yeah definitely not.

Kann: I think I had like an awkward time or something like that.

Sorenson: How did, describe the process a little bit of trying to sleep during the day in that kind of hot weather?

Kann: Well there were open bays [laughs] so you have, I think we had twenty-five or thirty females crowded into this room with all our cots so I think I had a six by three space and that was my space and I had my little locker with my stuff in it. Just trying to get enough space for yourself was interesting enough Because the girl next to me had staked the corner but like, I think, two or three times in the course of the first three months she decided to like rearrange and apparently that meant I needed to move over some and I'm like "bullshit" [laughs]. At one point her cooler, my cooler was partially in the way of her being able to get out of her area because you know she had her cot turned sideways so she had like moved things over a bit and someone else had put a some lockers on the other side so she had this little area to get out of which she had to turn a little and that wasn't cool so she tried to move my cooler over and I think that was the one time I actually lost it. [laughs] Because I was tired and you know all these, you had these girls and they just chatter and they were just chattering about the stupidest crap and was when all the rumors started you know flying around about so and so and so and so you know and "Oh that slut over in Stetson" and you know I mean it was just like. And they would just back and forth, I mean it was like yelling at each other across the bay because you know, each time they're bringing up a new

rumor someone else has got to get louder and you're sitting there going, "You know, I've got to sleep." [laughs] "Shut up."

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: And it didn't matter how many times you told them, "Hey, you know, I'm on night shift, you're not, shut the hell up." It didn't matter, you know, they'd be quiet for about five or ten minutes and then "Blah blah blah. Oh my god that whore." It just, god I hated women by the end of that tour. It just, it sucked, it was always like me and the girl that I had gone to AIT with that had gone ahead of me and one other girl that was a mechanic and she was in my little area and we became really good friends. There was another girl that was, gosh, she was a fueler, she was a fueler; she was a really tall girl. The four of us had kind of taken this corner area by the door and we became really good friends because we were quiet [laughs]. But yeah, after that at that point with the other girl that was on the other side of me it was just I think that was the closest I probably got to getting into a fist fight [both laugh]. Because at that point, I was just like "She moved my cooler, and I moved it back and she yelled at me", and I was like, "I'm not doing this anymore!" and then my sergeant interrupted.

Sorenson: Oh boy.

Kann: So yeah, she pulled me off to the side, she was like "What is up with the yelling?" "She has got like twenty extra feet!" or something [laughs] I was exaggerating, but. "She's got all this space and she wants me to move my cooler over because she can't figure out a way to get out of her thing without moving sideways. Give me a break!" That was probably the worst of it that was like the first month.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: It was just--yeah, I think there is an adjustment period every time you start living with some new people. It's like I think the first month if you don't kill anybody you're good.

Sorenson: Yeah, you're good.

Kann: That's the worst part of it, so.

Sorenson: How did, um, how did--did Iraq feel different than Kuwait? Was the weather different?

Kann: A little bit yeah, well okay, driving through Iraq looked different I mean because we were driving past, we were on the highway and the highway wasn't as well maintained and you know, you could see remnants on the side of the road--like we saw like a blown up tank on the side of the road that had been stripped. As soon as anything breaks down over there it stripped for whatever, like spare parts or rubber or anything. And we saw a lot of shacks on the side, they were very poor. Um and a lot of times when we would stop, you know, kids would come up and they were not wearing shoes and there on like--you know it's 110 degrees

because I think it was May. Its 110 and I can feel the hot burning asphalt through my boots and their just running around without shoes on and I'm just thinking "Oh my god." But they'd be, you know, [imitating a child] "Mister, mister you five dollar for dinner, dinner." You know, stuff like that. It was a lot poorer area. Then we got to Baghdad and certain parts of Baghdad were poor and certain parts were not, as far as what they looked like, especially the palace [??] district. When you got to the palace [??] district you were like "Oh this is really nice" [laughs]. Then of course our base was right outside of the river, and I want to say it was the Tigris but I'm not sure. So there was a lot more greenery on our base, there were trees there was grass you know in some places. And it was still pretty hot though, it was muggy. And I know Kuwait is hotter but I had left Kuwait when it was getting hotter in Iraq so it didn't really feel different. So much once we got there, it was very, it was a little dustier. All the blowing and stuff, I mean I guess Kuwait would get that too but I didn't realize that until we came back the first time to Kuwait. They would have their little sand storms that would be just as dusty; just as sandy. So but I didn't notice it the first two weeks we were there because we were kind of in a more urban area. Um, Kuwait's a little bit nicer. But yeah, it was, it was--I know, I know it's supposed to be a little bit hotter in Kuwait than in Iraq because Iraq's a little farther north.

Sorenson: Right.

Kann: It was a more humid in Baghdad.

Sorenson: In Baghdad, I see.

Kann: And you know the Tigris and Euphrates are right there so we got a lot more mosquitoes.

Sorenson: Oh yeah how were the mosquitoes?

Kann: Oh god, I remember slathering myself with deet and they would still get me.

Sorenson: Oh yeah?

Kann: I've always been a little treat for mosquitoes anyway, so even here I get--I'm always the first one to get bit so we got there and I was just like, everywhere and you couldn't really sleep under anything. Like I got my mosquitoes net out, but it was so hot, because it did interrupt the airflow a little bit. You know, I would just kind of go back and forth between having it up and getting bit up and having it down. It was always a tradeoff there were shifts between the flies and mosquitoes. During the day it was flies during the night it was mosquitoes [laughs]. So it was just back and forth and you had about a half hour when the sun was setting where the flies would go away and the mosquitoes weren't there yet, and that was kind of nice [laughs]. But yeah it was ridiculously, like just, I got bit up so bad. So I would slather myself with deet which sweats when you're stinging or stinks when you sweat, there we go, and probably not very good for me but so far none--so we're good there.

Sorenson: Did the mosquitoes feel differently over there? I've heard from people that the mosquitoes in the Middle East when they start biting you can't feel it as easy as you could the mosquitoes out here.

Kann: I didn't notice but I've always not liked mosquitoes [inaudible] so, and they've always got me [laughs] so I didn't really notice if there was a difference. I think some of them were a little, nah, I can't remember. I remember the flies were really big.

Sorenson: Oh yeah, did the flies bite?

Kann: Some of them did.

Sorenson: Some of them did, did you see any other kind of wildlife out there that interested you?

Kann: Well, actually funnily enough we did see scorpions and we did see camel spiders. I didn't, they didn't like me. It was really interesting, like I did see a scorpion once but it was already dead. Somebody had, I don't know, stomped on it or something outside I don't know what happened to it, but they stomped on it-- somebody had killed it and then they burned it.

Sorenson: Oh.

Kann: I don't know who, I remember seeing that and going "Huh, so there are scorpions here, goody." And I was really interested to see a camel spider because I had heard a lot about them. Most people are not like that [laughs] but I was like "I really want to see one" so they didn't come out.

Sorenson: Oh I see, I see.

Kann: I did manage to see one live one once, where it wasn't brought to me, cause I actually like-- When we got out to Al-Kut we'd been out there like 12 months already and got turned around. Al-Kut is over by Iran, closer. It's a really big like base land mass area away, but not like as far people there. So we had our little tent city and people got really, really bored because we really didn't know why we were there anymore. Actually, the only reason that our unit got turned around was because they needed the combat guys in the other three squadrons so our squadron just tagged along. And we're like "Okay, this sucks. Why are we here? We've got nothing to do; we're in the middle of nowhere." So people like started fighting animals that they found. Someone got a fridge; they bought a fridge from somewhere, had it shipped in or something. So we had like little, one fridge in the whole tent, or that the whole tent had to share and they would pull out the vegetable drawers and fight animals in there.

Sorenson: [laughs]

Kann: And so they would catch camel spiders and scorpions and see which one would win. It was a toss-up. Sometimes they would--sometimes one would win sometimes the other would win. So someone had actually gotten a camel spider in a piece of Tupperware and it was one of those square ones like this. Everyone else is freaking out I'm like "cool" [laughs]. You know I'm shaking the thing looking at it because it was really interesting and I knew it couldn't get out so I wasn't really that worried about it. That was the only one I saw close up. The other one was that we had gotten to Babylon--we had a small detachment that went to Babylon when we turned around--and it was; we knew it was there and to be honest I'm not sure it was a camel spider; we just think it was a camel spider because it was scurrying but that was in the tent when we got to Babylon at like 9 or 10 o'clock at night. So we were freaking out because there was really--I mean there wasn't really--you couldn't turn on the lights because we were going into somebody else's tent. And so we were just kinda putting our stuff down and my friend freaked out because there was something on her bed and it light up a little bit when you had the flash light out--you saw the flash of little tiny eyes or something. I don't really remember it that well, so [laughs] we think it was a camel spider but I'm actually not sure and that's the closest I've got to it--but I noticed that people who didn't like spiders seemed to attract them. Like it just, they'd flip they'd find them over their head in the tent.

Sorenson: Oh jeeze [laughs].

Kann: Yeah, yeah they'd freak out and by the time I'd get over there they'd be gone. I'd be like "Dammit I wanted to see that thing."

Sorenson: So you weren't really freaked out by the camel spiders then?

Kann: No, they don't, I don't know they're big but they're just spiders. I wasn't really worried. I mean if I found one like laying on me in the middle of the night I mean yeah [laughs] yeah I would've flipped but just seeing them and know what people were talking about, I'm like "It can't be that big." You know, so that's more or less what I wanted, they didn't really freak me out. Like I said I probably would have flipped out, but, if they had been on me or something but I'm that way with a lot of wild life. Most bugs, I think they're really neat until they're on me.

Sorenson: Did you ever get a chance to interact with any of the Iraqi people or the Kuwaitis or anything?

Kann: The Kuwaitis a little bit. It was mostly on the base and they didn't talk to us because we were lewd American women. But you know they'd just kind of look at us disappointed [laughs] and walk away especially when we stopped wearing the pants. But my interactions were fairly limited, we had a couple of local nationals that worked down there, and I actually got along well with them which apparently was not something they wanted me to do [laughs]. My, which I mean to a certain extent I understood but that didn't make a lot of sense to me. I just, I

didn't have a lot of, I thought a lot of our officers were a little on the--I'm not going to call it racist side or not, but it seemed like it to me.

Sorenson: Oh yeah?

Kann: Yeah, they just, well for example, um, we, I was working in the TOC area, that's the Tech Operations Center a lot when I was on convoy security because I did all their paperwork as well as go out because I was the woman [laughs]. Um so, to be fair it wasn't just because I was the woman, it was because I excel at it. So, I just got stuck there originally because I was the woman.

Sorenson: I see.

Kann: And eventually they started to change people out a little bit for shifts and things like that 'cuz I was just like "I can't do all the paperwork anymore." Um, so I would end up in the TOC a lot and I would hear them talking to them and we had local nationals that worked in there and their working in the operations center you know and I remember asking, I can't remember the officer's name, I remember asking, "Like isn't that kind of bad idea to have them working and seeing our routes and stuff up on the board, and why, I know they're here to build some things up so we can use them but we have some guys that can do that. We have some fairly resourceful soldiers that could be doing that. Why do you have them?" "Oh they can't read English." I'm like, "Okay sure, yeah, okay. I'm sure you know that. Did he tell you that?" I mean it was just kind of interesting and I mean I knew that a lot of the older generation hadn't learned English but a lot of the younger had.

Sorenson: Right.

Kann: So, and I don't know where the cut off is. So I don't know if that's a really good idea. Um, and eventually they stopped doing that but I don't know who finally said it and made them go "Oh this is really dumb." [laughs] But yeah we had a number of local nationals working there and you know they were okay and they-- We had one guy who, he referred to himself as Bobbila [sp?] [laughs]. He was Bobila, and he ran a little cantina on campus. Campus--oh my god--on the base. Um, you know he would buy little things for it you know, like, I'm trying to think of what he had, just like deodorant and local like DVDs. Not really local DVDs, but the burned stuff he got from somewhere kind of like having a little one man bazaar. If you asked him you know, "could you get a hold of such and such" he would find a way. I'm pretty sure that's how some of our people got alcohol, but I'm not positive. And we had a couple of, I think of; eventually we ended up getting stuff through the UN somehow. We had a cook that would draw up some paper work and they would give him like chickens and things. Um, that was a lot of fun. That was when I was on convoy security; we got to go to the UN a lot before it got blown up.

Sorenson: Oh right yeah.

Kann: Yeah, but it was interesting. So Bob, I talked to quite a bit. And there was one seventeen or eighteen year old kid that kept telling everybody it was his dream and he would flirt with all the girls hardcore. But you would come up--and it didn't matter which girl he was talking to--"You have the most beautiful eyes, I want to be a surgeon." You talk to him about how he wants to be a doctor but every time you talk to him it was a different kind of doctor. You know he's talking to a girl he liked the eyes--usually girls with blue eyes--he'd be like "I want to be a doctor of the eyes, you have beautiful eyes." You know if it was somebody who had brown eyes or blonde hair he didn't have anything for that but he would like be a doctor of the heart, [laughs] you know. He wants to work on hearts. Um, I guess they have like a he would tell us, I guess--oh what was it. He would talk about pleasure wives, having pleasure wives; I guess that's a new thing. I don't really know; get it, maybe he was just talking to us thinking we would get it you know maybe we would buy it I don't know. That was their way of getting around some of the marital laws. So you talk about having pleasure wives you're married for a day. I don't know how much of that was a load of crap or not so [laughs]. But he tried that on every girl that was working there. Just thought he was so charming, it was kinda funny. So he was the only one I talked to a lot he knew English pretty well. Bobila's English was okay; but most of the local nationals I didn't talk to you very much. They just went about their work. To be fair I didn't really pursue a lot of conversation with them either. At first I did and I got yelled at so [laughs] I was like "Okay."

Sorenson: Yeah, why did they discourage you from speaking with them?

Kann: I wasn't paying attention.

[break in recording 01:34:46- 01:35:05]

Kann: I think I have to go back and explain that. I had just been put on convoy security team; I was the only female on it because the other girl had backed, down she didn't want to go. And I volunteered because I was bored and I figured that's why I here right? [laughs]. So, um, what happened was that we had actually built up like a shooting range with like sand bags and stuff and had some local nationals that were filling sand bags. And we jerry-rigged our convoy, or our Humvees to have mounts and we put sand bags in their too. So we spent like two or three days filling sandbags. It was after one of those days that the local nationals were doing some kind of building project in that area and they needed someone. It was a guard shift changeover and somebody hadn't shown up so they just kind of shoved me in there and I didn't really know what I was supposed to be doing.

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: But it was like "Just watch them" and I was like "Okay, good alright, thanks. What do I do?" So I'm watching them and one of them starts a conversation and I think I had my, I had my weapon, but I just kinda had it sitting next to me I didn't have it like on you know full up or anything like that.

Sorenson: Right.

Kann: And so I'm having a conversation with them and there's like 3 or 4 of them and they're taking a break they offered me some tea but I declined because I knew they'd frown on that[laughs]. So we're just sitting there talking, and they're really nice to me but then this officer or sergeant I can't remember which came up and saw me sitting there in not particularly in a guard style [laughs] thing and he's like "You know you're supposed to be watching these guys, this is not your conversation time" you know, and I was like you know "I really didn't get any instructions, I mean but okay fine." So after that I was kind of just like "Sorry guys, I can't really talk."

Sorenson: Oh ok.

Kann: So after that I kinda just didn't bother trying to, trying to do that. Which I don't know sometimes I regret that but most of the time it was just kind of how it was.

Sorenson: I see, I see.

Kann: But yeah I just didn't look like I was guarding enough so.

Sorenson: What kind of, now you did mention there was kinda some racism toward the Arabs from Americans were there any particular situations or things that you over heard or anything like that?

Kann: Well there was the general talk, a lot of that is vibrato[??] I think. But it was the little things like them beginning to talk and just assuming they didn't know English. Um, you know just, there was some--gosh--we had a couple of I think there were some Muslim soldiers, but I don't remember it was just kind of like whenever Muslim services would be brought up there would be a lot of--if they had one on post or something or if there was a Muslim soldier, it would be a lot of "Oh my God I can't believe they're allowing that."

Sorenson: Oh.

Kann: You know it would just be little things like that. That were pretty, to me they were pretty significant so, but anyway it wasn't *just* Muslims. My second deployment they had gotten a Wiccan group going up at Camp Anaconda, and I'm actually Wiccan so I was the only one in my unit that was or if I wasn't the only one I was the only one that everybody knew was. So I had gotten like a flyer for it but it had been really difficult to get a space to actually practice because they

didn't want us there, especially because that space was used for Catholic services or protestant services. So we weren't supposed to be there. That's not cool. that was interesting too because some of the herbs and things we would bring in and some supplies to do your basic blessing were a little bit different and so you know someone had a like pocket knife that was real pretty so we would use that to bless something and that was not cool because that that's all you know--I don't know, we're evil guess [laughs]. And then we had a problem with people trying to peak in a lot too, so it wasn't just Muslim services I don't know if any Muslim soldiers experienced that or not I imagine they probably did.

Sorenson: Oh I'm sure they did.

Kann: But I knew with ours, it was definitely that people didn't like us there, they didn't want us to be there and it was kinda of difficult to keep it going and actually get a space to practice in. That was my second deployment, my first deployment didn't really do a lot of service stuff, I mean we didn't have church. We had a Chaplin that went around and would talk to people but we didn't really have--I think they had services on Sunday with our Chaplin--but he was protestant--well nondenominational. So they had Christian services, but they didn't have Jewish services and they didn't have Muslim services because we only had one Chaplin [laughs]. So and there are not Wiccan chaplains.

Sorenson: Oh now that's interesting. Did, now, were you ever--now I know you said you got the impression certainly that it was discouraged for you guys to practice there did anything ever escalate to the point? Were you ever, did anyone ever insult your faith in front of you or anything?

Kann: There was some, not really when I was over there. Actually it was interesting. Getting the space was really difficult I didn't know about that until later, I only got the flyer when I got back from leave on my second tour that it was like "Oh they're doing this and this is going to be tonight." and I was like "Awesome." I did have a little interesting time trying to arrange it, because there are no real hard and fast rules for Wiccan services so it's not like I'm going to be gone an hour. You know it was like, "Okay, I'm going to go it's at this time and we'll probably get into a conversation and three hours later I might come back [laughs] because you just, you get into that. It was really nice I had never been a part of a spiritual community I guess I had done it growing up but it wasn't my faith. So, it was really nice; I had forgotten what fellowship actually feels like. So that was cool, but I didn't know about the big struggle with it until later. And we did have, like I said, a couple times where people would try to sneak in to watch us; see what we were doing.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: Keeping tabs I guess, and we invited them in you know if they wanted to watch us, but they didn't want to do that. They wanted to look through the door. So that

kind of got interesting, but I met a lot of my friends that I hung out with in Tennessee there. So I made a lot of friends that way.

Sorenson: I see.

Kann: It was, like I said it was hard to get there because I had to have the whole battle buddy thing nobody wanted to go with me because I was the only Wiccan. And I lived on the West side and the services were on the East side so getting there was difficult so either I had to find somebody who wanted to spend however many hours on that side of post not knowing when they were going to come back--and of course you're not supposed to leave your battle buddy. Nobody wants to sit outside the church for three hours.

Sorenson: Right, Right

Kann: And, or I had to have somebody drop me off using a Humvee of something and that was inefficient too because you had to have two other people going and then they had to come pick me up and they didn't know when they were going to pick me up because I didn't know when it was going to be over [laughs]. It just got to be really interesting, so finally I just like "Look I'm not taking a battle buddy." I just kept going anyway that's how I got into trouble a lot.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: A lot of it was because I had services to go through, to go to and nobody really took that seriously I felt like. I think there is a perception that if you're not one of the main steam faiths then you're not religious at all or that you're not spiritual at all or that it's not important to you. And it is! I mean when I was in AIT they didn't have, and in Basic they didn't have services, they don't have pagan services of any kind. So I know for basic I asked for Halloween which is the Wiccan New Year to actually do my own little individual service, and that kind of got forgotten. That never happened, they told me I could and actually I was, I was really excited because my basic platoon sergeant was the EO guy so I was like "Oh he'll understand" and he brought up Wicca in the first like class because the first week of classes at basic were all about equal opportunity and the rules and the UCMJ stuff and I remember that very clearly because he had asked out of the blue about EO religious stuff if anybody was Wiccan to stand up and I stood up thinking, you know, I had read an article that Wicca was allowed in the military now and I expected there to be people. And I was the only one who stood up and I was like [makes a noise]. And then on the spot it was like "Okay, could you explain your faith?" and I'm like "Oh okay." I wasn't expecting that and then when it got to AIT they had had some Wiccan services at one point and but I guess it had kind of gotten around; there were some misconceptions about what Wiccan services entail. And so people were actually using it to go out into the woods and screw and so they weren't allowed to do that anymore. I think I had written like a memorandum to somebody on the base asking just for like a room,

an individual room where people who practice individually, could actually practice but I don't know if it actually got taken seriously or not [laughs]. I wrote it but it didn't get implemented before I left so. Then on my first deployment nobody really had services except for the Chaplain there was really no way for me to get the stuff I needed anyways, so. It was kind of regulated to prayer and that was it. I just really felt like on my second deployment; they let me go and they were the ones to let me know if there was anything really going on but I don't really think they thought I would be so adamant about going every week and that there wasn't an excuse for me to be gone for 3 hours while I'm sitting there talking with people because that wasn't you know, it wasn't something they do in their church. Because it wasn't like you know, it's not like you have the sermon and then you're done you know, I mean it's not like somebody's standing up there lecturing. For ours we had discussions about you know because Wicca's very open, so it was they were discussions about, you know, "Okay what do you think about this, alright well, how does that mesh with this?" And we'd have these like three hour discussions that were like 20 people included. And that was another thing too when they fought to get the space they really didn't think anybody would show up they only expected maybe 10 people out of the entire camp anaconda and we actually ended up having one of the largest congregations. I think we had like 35 people at one point that showed up every week. That was more than the protestant services had that showed up actually.

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: And so I think that was probably something too. And I know that after I left there were a couple people that they had trouble keeping on, holding on to the space again because there were fewer people there [inaudible]. Sorry, a little tirade there.

Sorenson: No, absolutely, it's very important. Now when you were, you were finished with your first deployment which was fifteen months you said, how did it feel to get ready to get the hell out of Iraq?

Kann: Pretty good.

Sorenson: Pretty good.

Kann: I was, I was sick of being there at that point. Um, now I'm actually--this is gonna sound interesting--I actually was really glad we got turned around because I got to spend a month in Babylon, which was really cool and you know not anything that anybody would normally get to do.

Kann: It was a really small, smaller base as well but we had a small detachment that went there and we only had two ammo specialists that ended up going at a time, so we like rotated out. But I got to live in Babylon for a month and that was really awesome. Al-Kut, I hated. [laughs] It was just, just not cool. It's a very,

very large base but it's very not, not populated well. There are just not a lot of units there and we were only there because like I said it was a Polish-ran base and they had gotten overrun at some point.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: So we were there just to support them. So really didn't have a lot to do. I was really bored. I'd been in the desert way too long and you know I came back to it when it was the really hot part again so I think we got back July sixth or seventh I want to say to America, but we'd been in Kuwait for a week or two before that. So it's June and I'm going "I want out" and we didn't know how long we were going to be there at that point and we kept hearing stories about people getting extended and extended and extended and I don't know how much of that was true. I remember I had a girl that I knew who was in RSS that I ended up getting to know in Babylon because she was on guard duty with us we didn't have enough people to guard our own ammo truck because they didn't have an AHA. So we just had the ammo truck with the ammo on it and someone had to guard the truck Twenty-four-seven.

Sorenson: Oh I see. Oh boy.

Kann: So you couldn't do guard duty alone and there were only two ammo specialists so we had to borrow people from other parts of the unit. She was an RSS and she was a--she worked on helicopters, a helicopter mechanic but she was actually a really good artist. She was drawing a comic strip called "Battles" and it was about her time in Iraq. She had this one that I loved it was all the people that was her comic strip--including her--you know and it had this little tally sheet and it had the number of deployments and how many months and it just kept going and going and going. It was like "they'll come and get us soon right?" and so they're all like in these ragged like, you know, clothes and the one guy she always makes fun of for being old was a little skull in the corner and you know that was just kinda the running gag. We didn't know how long we were going to be out there at that point. We'd been told a year we found out we weren't even supposed to be there in the first place.

Sorenson: Oh really?

Kann: The Colonel that sent us over there got relieved and he went home like two or three months in, so we were pretty bitter about that too. And so we weren't even supposed to be there in the first place and we went back out and we didn't know how long we were going to be out there then. So when we were packing to leave we were like "Really? Are you serious? For real this time? You're not going to turn us around?" because like I said we had been four weeks out from leaving in Kuwait and had all the vehicles washed actually my battle buddy and I we put the last vehicle in the lot at 3 o'clock in the morning and we had a 9 o'clock formation that day and the 9 o'clock formation was to tell us that we were going back out.

They let us finish washing the trucks knowing we were going back out. We knew that they knew that already because we'd seen the Colonel's vehicle get driven off the lot earlier that day I knew the guy that washed the truck. He was sitting near the Humvee, he's like "I just put that in there like two hours ago what they are doing? I'm gonna have to wash it again." They saw them drive it out and he was like flipping out.

Sorenson: Oh boy.

Kann: Yeah everyone's like, "Why did they take the colonel's vehicle off lot?" It was done. It had the sticker and everything, it was inspected and everything. Why is that off the lot? That's what we talked about the rest of the time while we were on the wash rack. But they let us finish washing the vehicles I was so mad. They had taken all our weapons at that point; we had already turned our weapons in and cleaned them out and everything. I think they did that for a reason.

Sorenson: Oh boy.

Kann: I think I called my mom the day before to tell, well my parents, all of them; I had called them up and said, "Okay, yeah, we're leaving on this date."--well not really on this date, you know, it was kinda, I knew we were leaving on that date, but I couldn't tell them that date so I told them the next time I called them, it would be from Louisiana.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: So after formation everybody went to call their significant, their families back home to tell them we weren't coming home and so I called them and they got really excited. They were like "Oh you're back already that was quick!" and I was like "No we're going out. We got extended again, so I'm not sure where were going and I'm not sure when I'm coming back, but I love you guys and I'll write to you soon."

Sorenson: Oh my gosh.

Kann: That's kind of, that was kind of crushing that first time. And so the day we were supposed to have gone home was the day we crossed the border to go back.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: Which is my ex-boyfriend's birthday actually; he was talking about that too. So it was an interesting day.

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: The second time I think it was just one of those things where I was just waiting to see. It was really exciting but at the same time we were like "We got screwed last time, what's going to happen? We're actually going right?" We actually heard another until had actually been on the plane and I think they had gotten to Ireland and got turned around or something like that. I don't know what happened; let's just say that was a rumor that we heard later. So I don't know if that had actually happened or not but, you know, we kept thinking nobody that was on there was like "Yeah were staying, we're going home sure." Everybody was just waiting.

Sorenson: Yeah, jeeze. So when-- You finally did, at some point make it, make it back home--

Kann: Yes it was awesome.

Sorenson: --how, how long were you home, what did it feel like and how did it feel like to tell your experiences to you family.

Kann: There were a lot of things I didn't tell them when I was there. Like I told them I was convoy security which was funny I guess my stepmother--my best friend told me--that my--she talked to my step mother about me being on convoy security and asked, you know, what did she say about it. She's like; she asked me if it was really dangerous? I was like "Well, we go 80 miles an hour, so not really" [laughs]. She was like "What?" My stepdad was really interested in what I had to say, he really wanted to talk about it a lot. He was a cop for a long time and then he had gotten out of police service when his dad died and had to take over the family business. So he still missed being a cop and he kind of equated my experiences in the military with his experiences being a cop to a certain extent. He was very, very proud of me. Everywhere I went he would be like "Yeah, this is--she's an Iraqi, you know blah blah blah" He would just go off for hours about how I couldn't drink [laughs], you know. My Dad was happy to have me back. We'd had kind of falling out while I was there. He'd found out that I was Wiccan and he was not happy [laughs]. He was very, very religious, so it was a little awkward for a bit. My sister was just really happy to have me back; she was very excited. My brother--my little brother was too, my older brother was as well. They couldn't really believe it; they didn't ask a lot of questions though. My mom wanted to talk about it a lot. She wanted to know everything that I hadn't told her; and she knew I hadn't told her stuff [laughs]. She wanted to know. Then she decided about part way through that she really didn't want to know. You know, "You know what, actually it's over, you know, and that's fine. Alright." They knew I had orders for Fort Campbell at that point too. So they knew I was leaving again and they weren't sure what that was going to bring--.

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: --either and neither did I. It was different I guess I think. They did encourage me to talk about it I think my stepmother asked--I'm in school to be a teacher right

now and my stepmother is a teacher so she had taken me into the school to see you know how things were going and they--she would introduce me a lot, you know. Maybe the kids knew that, you know, Ms. Kann had a daughter over in Iraq so they would always ask her questions, and she had this one kid that she hated because this kid would always come up and was like "I heard there was this car bombing you don't think she was in that right?" She'd always come up, I think the little kid thought she was being nice by telling Janelle about all the little things that were going on in Iraq and making sure that I was ok. But you know, I couldn't call her a lot so she was like, I guess no news is good news, I hope. You know so I guess every time she would remind her that I was there that these things were happening you know and soldiers were dying, she would kinda flip. So she didn't ask me a lot of questions about it because she was like, "You're back. That's good." They did want me to talk to their kids and the kids would ask questions a lot. Usually I just got the, you know, "Did you kill anybody?" question which was like "No, no and I'm glad." But then I think the VA--not the VA, the American Legion in McGregor asked me to speak there--so I spoke. And then I think their teachers; my grandmother and my stepmom are both teachers and they're in a-- I can never remember the name of it. It was at a sorority of teachers or a teacher's fraternity. Anyway, they have meetings like every month--it's like delta something or other. I want to say Delta Kappa Gamma but I'm not positive--they asked me to speak so I drew up a little thing of Iraq to show them where I had been and brought my pictures in. It's kind of awkward you kind of stand up and go, "Okay so this is what I did and you can ask me questions and we'll see where that goes." I got some interesting questions but it was, you know--it wasn't like I was formally speaking or anything or you know or going throughout the whole story and there were parts that I omitted quite a lot. Especially from the convoys because I went all over Baghdad in the convoys and it took me a while to actually get on a team. Like I, they wanted a woman because they had to. I guess there was some kind of [inaudible] you had to have at least one woman on these things but I didn't go for the first two weeks because they didn't want me out there. I actually had to fight to get out there, I think I had to, there was another soldier that I worked with that was very incompetent that was out on convoys and I was like, "You let him go, just let me go. [laughs]" And then once I got out there they were fine; I was just one of the guys at that point. Eventually later we had two more girls join and my sergeant actually ended up taking over the convoy security but I had to do a lot, I ended up doing a lot of driving and a lot of gunner positions. So I didn't tell them all about that. I told them some of the stuff because I have pictures from all over Baghdad. Like we went over to [inaudible] we went to the Palace Row District. My R and R was in the Palace row district of Baghdad. Yeah it was it was a pilot program. It was called Freedom Rest except when they started it was called Baghdad Hotel but it got bombed the week before so they changed the name to freedom rest. Because there actually was a Baghdad Hotel downtown that was not what they had meant it to be equated with [laughs].

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: But it was a three day thing, they dropped us off and it was the first weekend they were doing it so we got lost and it was really a big mess. We ended up at the presidential palace for four hours while they tried to sort it out. We ended up in in this Master Sergeant's office where he had all these maps. That was the only room we were allowed to be in because everything else was top secret [laughs].

Sorenson: Oh, sure.

Kann: So we had to turn in our weapons and our IDs at the gate and spend 4 hours in this room where we couldn't even go to the bathroom without an escort. It was just not the best R and R. What they had done was, they had redone a bunch of, one of UnDain Kusay's palaces I guess; like they had fixed it back up and whatever. I don't know if it was badly bombed or not; I think it was probably fine they just cleaned it up and they had these little bungalows in that area too and there was an Olympic size swimming pool. So we got to swim and hang out and eat actual food for a couple of days. It was some time in--I want to say--August or September. I'm not positive. It was fairly early on, I think we had been there three or four months at the point so that was one of the first soldiers that got to go.

Sorenson: I see.

Kann: Because they weren't letting single soldiers go home, so they were working out R and R options.

Sorenson: Right, Right

Kann: Qatar did not become available for another month and a half I think.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: So yeah it sucked. [laughs] It was kind of fun it was nice for a couple days but compared to other peoples' R and R I was kind of bitter. [laughs]

Sorenson: Sure, yeah definitely.

Kann: Especially because they didn't give us a point of contact or anything and they were still calling it the Baghdad Hotel and we didn't know the name had changed. And, you know, so everywhere we went it was like, "Well we're supposed to go to the Baghdad Hotel", "Well that got bombed last week what are you talking about?" You know so it was just a nightmare to figure it out. At one point they thought they were going to just turn us around and send us back home but they didn't know where we were going and because we were on deleted orders they had no idea what unit we were from, or what we were talking about or where we were supposed to be. So we were just like afraid of being lost in Iraq for the rest of deployment [laughs].

Sorenson: Oh my God yeah.

Kann: But we did finally like they finally figured it out. We actually were really luck that I had been on convoy security for over a month at that point because I knew a lot of the routes and where we were supposed to be in Baghdad. And I finally was like "Duh, just show them where the fricken base is." So I finally went over to the map and I'm like "We're about here." [laughs] Like, "You see that one? That's RSS and that the--I can't remember the name of that one but it was like--we were about seven miles from the UN, something like that I don't know. Trying to remember exactly where everything was laid out, like I said I think we were in the South West Corner of Baghdad but it was kind of messed up, so. But yeah we were only like a few miles from the UN. And when the, when it got bombed we actually heard the bombing.

Sorenson: Oh you did?

Kann: Yeah because it was a big one.

Sorenson: Yes, absolutely, yeah.

Kann: Yeah we heard it, and actually we were supposed to be there but we lost the paper work so we didn't go [laughs] which was really good, yeah, we were lucky we were very lucky. My convoy security team; there was a number of times where we should have been dead and we weren't. My favorite actually was this guy-- O'Dell or something like that--he was the guy that always was like the lead driver in the convoys and stuff. My sergeant had just taken over from another sergeant for the convoy security detail and we were coming back from buy-OP with supplies for our little PX area, because we didn't really have one. We'd load up a bunch of trucks with PX supplies and we were coming back from buy-OP and there was an IED that another unit was sitting on, waiting, they were waiting on EOD so we were sitting out there for about an hour in downtown Baghdad going, you know, "Can we get a perimeter?" Finally, after about an hour she was just like why don't we just go back to buy-out? We're not really doing any good out here. They've got more people coming and they still have to blow the IED why don't we just go back for like an hour or two and then try again. And that's when O'Dell piped up and was like, "Actually I think I know an alternate route." He didn't know an alternate route; he just thought that if you went over a couple of blocks went down and came back we could go around it, which is a really stupid thing to do in Baghdad. It might work in like Dallas or something like that but in Baghdad it's really dumb. So we got down this side street, and the street split off where the higher street and lower street like are one way. So there was one way here and there was like a set of steps and like a hill and the rest of the traffic going the other way. So we didn't have a way to turn around and we're on this like street and as soon as we got down there were probably like fifty or sixty feet down to our new little chosen route and were looking around and there was not a

friendly face to be seen. It was very definite; you could tell we were in the wrong part of town--

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: --to be American soldiers. So I think my sergeant like flipped and, you know, she's trying to figure out a way to get us back and I don't know what happened to that kid but eventually what happened was that we didn't have a way to turn around so, and you know it's a one way area. We knew we weren't supposed to be there. So, there was a next set of pedestrian stairs that went down the hill so we took the vehicles down that and then turned around and went back out and went back to Buy-OP. That was my favorite as far as like really stupid shit where something should have happened and it didn't.

Sorenson: Yeah, yeah.

Kann: But there were a couple of times where we got delayed by a half hour and the route we were supposed to be on, someone else got hit about the time we would have been there.

Sorenson: Oh wow.

Kann: There was one time, where--let's see--we made daily trips to our unit's headquarters because we weren't actually with our normal unit. We had to take a Capitan there to report every day. There were a number of times, like there was a gas station right at the turn off to go into the base and we always drove ridiculously fast. Like they would say convoy speed was 45 mph or something like that but we didn't do 45; we went as fast as the damn things could go. As far as that, we had a bunch of good drivers we kept good distance and pacing we didn't let other vehicles in. And I mean, if anybody would have gotten into a car accident it would have been us but we didn't we had really good drivers. Then they'd slam on the breaks last minute and make the turn all crazy like, you know, Dukes of Hazard style.

Sorenson: Oh jeese.

Kann: Which was really good because there was a gas station right there at that corner and we were actually clearing our weapons at the gate and the convoy behind us got hit. And I don't know it still took the, it still took the helicopters a half hour to get out the fifteen feet it took to get the kids out there; the soldiers. We don't know what happened to any of the soldiers, but when they brought the trucks in the trucks were pretty well, they didn't look good. They looked like little melted toy trucks kind of broken up and all kinds of torn up. But, yeah, that was right behind us, like I said we were clearing our weapons so we hadn't been in more than five minutes. So it was just a lot of things like that that should have happened that we were just, well like with the UN. We would go there every couple of

days, and I don't remember why [laughs] I know we had a reason to be there but I don't remember what it was. So we had our head cook, would go get stuff there occasionally so he could actually cook for us.

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: It was really a lot of fun we had like a, you could get like a chicken for like five bucks a whole chicken with all the fixings and everything for like five bucks at the UN; cooked fresh right there. So we would always hang out in the dining area while we waited. We had people that were stuck with trucks too because we had ammo and stuff out there. I remember it always made me nervous being at the UN because they really didn't have very good security. There was like a wall and there was only one entrance but the one entrance was just off the highway, maybe one hundred feet off the highway and they only had a couple of barriers set up and they were very poorly set up where it wasn't hard to weave through them pretty quick. And they had one stand of concertina wire and one guard--or two guards--sitting there in the shack. And we would park, and you could see where the concertina wire was. We could see out to the highway and people are sitting there without their gear on and stuff. I was like "This is kind of dumb."

Sorenson: Wow.

Kann: So I remember thinking that a lot. I remember I think we only went to the UN like 10 or 12 times, and that day we were supposed to go. We had stopped at our headquarters and we were supposed to take the cook to the UN and we had gotten part way there when he realized he had forgotten his paperwork, so he's like, "We'll just go tomorrow." So we turned over an overpass and down and went down and that was actually pretty lucky too, because I think someone--we'd seen some guys acting kind of weird over there, and we had passed them already. So we weren't too worried about it but I guess another convoy wasn't by like two hours later and grenades were dropped from there. I guess, I don't know maybe that was a different day. That was a different day, I'm sorry. I was like, "Was that the same day?" No that was a different day. Well, we had turned around and gone back to our base and I think I had just gotten back from. We'd stopped and we'd parked all our vehicles gotten the ammo.

[Break in recording 2:06:25- 2:06:42]

Kann: So I'll go back to when we were at the UN we'd always hang out in the dining area because you could get really good food they had soda too which was, you know, new [laughs]. Well you know; we missed it. So, we went there a lot, we'd always take orders too actually. I remember like people would find out we were going to the UN they'd be like "Dude can you bring back a chicken for me?" We'd have a box and put it in the back. So we always had like four or five chickens that we had to bring back; so we were very sad when it got blown up. But it was kind of, but I guess wasn't that surprised because the security there was kind of poor.

They only had a single string of concertina wire that was on the tape from before. I just told you that. You know, they had one guard shack with two guards in it and they were carrying minimal weapons, just M-16's they didn't have a 50-cal set up. I don't think they thought anybody would hit the UN.

Sorenson: I see.

Kann: So when they did hit, when the car bomb hit it, it took out a good portion of everything.

Sorenson: Right.

Kann: And I think we would have been in the dining room when it happened. So like I said we turned around went back because we didn't have the paper work we just said we'd go tomorrow. And I had--I want to say it was mid-afternoon, I think, because we always took the guy, the Captain, his meeting--he had a meeting at ten or eleven. And then we'd sit there for two or three hours while he had his meeting. Then we were gonna go after, so we just turned around so it was like three in the afternoon when it happened I don't remember I'm sure there's actually record of it somewhere [laughing] the day that the car bomb hit. But I'd just gotten back to the barracks. I remember hearing it and we found out like, I don't know, two or three hours later a car bomb, an eight hundred pound car bomb had hit the UN. Or five hundred? Five hundred or eight hundred, I can't remember which had hit the UN and we'd heard the explosion. I remember hearing it just when I got back to the barracks, I didn't end up going out. I know a couple people from my unit went and I never asked them about it because I really didn't want to. [laughs] So I never asked but that was probably the closest one that we had, besides the one right outside the gate going to headquarters because that one was only 5 minutes behind us where this one would have been oh a good half hour maybe 45 minutes possibly. Which we still would have been there if we had been there but it's a possibility we would have been right beneath it I don't know. But yeah, it was probably one of the closer ones. We did have one more convoy that I remember really well because I almost killed somebody in that convoy. We were actually out in Al-Kut. I had done my month in Babylon and they had switched us out. That also had some interesting things that happened there but we did convoys back and forth between Babylon and Al-Kut and since I was still on convoy security I went occasionally. By this time I was actually licensed and everything so I ended up driving the HMETT a lot. We only had like a five vehicle convoy, we had like three half-armored Humvees they were all bristling with our little makeshift security force and they were actually up armored, the original ones were not. We had to you know take plywood and put it under the front ratchet straps for the seats and people were SAW gunners where our 50-cals would have been and we'd taken metal and bolted it to the sides; things like that.

Sorenson: Wow.

Kann: So we'd done some makeshift stuff with it eventually like one of the guys who as a welder in the machine shop had actually made a machine gun mount for the SAW, so that was kind of cool. We did a lot of stuff like that. You know, just, we had handy people [laughs]. Showers that way too, we made showers but they--I don't remember which one I was telling you.

Sorenson: The convoy from Al-Kut?

Kann: Oh yeah the convoy from Al-Kut to Babylon. We were taking medical supplies and I think we were supposed to be picking up an SUV the colonel wanted his SUV I don't know why it was stupid, the I was mad. So we had an extra guy that was with us to drive the SUV back. So yeah we were not even off the post yet Al-Kut was very large geographically and there weren't really speed limits on the road so we were going like forty and I'm in the HMETT, you know and the HMETT is a ten ton truck so and we were laden down with medical stuff. So I'm sitting there going "What are you guys doing? These things are old and don't pick up speed that fast." So I'm trying to catch up and we're still on base, you know we're not outside yet so there was no reason to be like flying that way I think we just wanted to get there and get back because it is a long trip. It's like a three hour drive, three hour convoy one way and a three hour convoy back and I don't know remember if we were supposed to stay the night or not. I remember there were these huge speed bumps on Al-Kut they were like the size of a small child or something they were just tall, very tall. They had just taken some sandbags or something and poured cement over them. They were just horrible. So they were going forty in these up-armored Humvees and I finally catch up with my HMETT and I think I had caught up and gotten a little too close and I was starting to back off and apparently we must have had that speed bump right before you actually got outside the gate. So they slammed on the breaks in the front and the first Humvee jumped the speed bump and then stopped, they just stopped dead because they were waiting to go out. There was still some room but they just stopped because they have to wait and I remember seeing the second one start to clear--and that guy had to really slam on the breaks too because up-armored Humvees don't slow down very fast. So that guy jumped and I saw the machine gunner go you know [motions] bump over it and they just stopped. I'm just like "I'm in a HMETT this is big truck to slow down in its whole." I hit the brakes and all I hear is [screeching noises] and I just start kinda doing this like jerky thing. My TC had already fallen asleep--I've told you how good of a TC I had. But he'd already fallen asleep so as soon as I hit the brakes, he kinda wakes up and all of the sudden he's like "Oh shit I need to put my seat belt on." He puts his seat belt on because he sees what's going on and I'm like "There's no way I'm going to stop in time. I know that." I'm looking off to the left than side of the road and there's like this little ditch in the river there. So I'm like "That's not a good way to go." I look to the right hand side of the road and there's this big pile of rusted scrap metal that is probably about half the size, half as tall as the HMETT and its right by the speed bump. So I'm sitting there like freaking out because I'm like

"I'm going to kill everybody in that vehicle. The machine gunner looking at me is going to be the first guy to go."

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: And our medic was in that vehicle. So I'm sitting there going "Oh this is; I'm going to kill a bunch of people." I actually don't know how I did it but I hit the speed bump and turned the wheel at the same time and I jumped the vehicle between the pile of rusted metal and the Humvee and I know we got really close on the bottom or the underside of the HMETT--I don't know if you're familiar with what a HMETT looks like.

Sorenson: Not so much no.

Kann: The cab is up front of the front wheels.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: So there is a little window and it is kind of like a diamond--a triangular shape. The windshield kind of comes back from the front and there are some headlights and it kind of comes down, it kind of slants down in the front and its, its really easy to get close to other vehicles that way. You can kind of pull right up and there's a little window right there so you can see how close you are. Through the little window I saw the corner of the Humvee go by. I was like "I don't really know how I missed it."

Sorenson: Oh my God.

Kann: And I got probably, I ended up probably twenty or so or thirty feet in front of the lead vehicle before I got the HMETT to a complete stop. I got out and I looked around and I screamed at my Captain--who was very incredulous that I was screaming at him [laughs]. I called him an idiot you know, because he knew better he'd been our 3/5 platoon leader for a couple, like six or seven months before he'd gotten moved to a different section. So he knew that these things were slow and that they had a hard time slowing down. So I think I started chewing him out and my friend Matt--he was the guy driving the HMETT wrecker behind me. He had just managed to stop just in front of the speed bumps--that tells you he was pretty close too and he left a nice like forty foot trail of rubber, too.

Sorenson: Oh jeese.

Kann: The guy in the back didn't have any problems stopping but he'd seen the whole thing. He was like "Kann you gotta stop you know you're yelling at the Captain!" I'm like "He's an idiot the guy just about killed everybody in that truck!" I was freaking out. I remember the really funny part about it was that the guy who was the machine gunner, his name was Nelson, calm as could be. He's just sitting there

looking at me the whole time I was sitting there like "I'm going to kill you" and he's just looking at me like nothing is wrong. Apparently the medic in the back was flipping out because he could see it coming in the rear view.

Sorenson: Oh god.

Kann: You know so he's like freaking out he's not sure if he should get out of the truck. The up-armored Humvees, the doors were really hard to get open and he just. He was flipping out, trying to figure out how to get out without getting killed. The machine gunner was just looking at me like nothing was wrong [laughs]. I got out I looked at him like "How did you keep calm?" I'm like, "I could have killed you so easily?" He's like "Eh I knew you'd figure it out." I'm like [gestures] "Could have told me, I didn't know I thought you were dead." So that was another memorable convoy. The rest of the ride was fine, getting off post was apparently very dangerous.

Sorenson: Oh my gosh.

Kann: And then let's see I had another one I wanted to tell you about. Babylon, Babylon--this wasn't a convoy story but--It was me and this other girl Hannah who was the one that was a couple of weeks ahead of me in class so we were the 2 youngest and newest ammo specialists in our unit and our Sergeant, being as--I guess, I want to say feminist maybe. I don't know. She knew we were good soldiers so she sent us to Babylon for the first round because she knew we could--that we knew what we were doing and she didn't want to send Barthell, Barthell would mess things up. Sergeant Henry I had already explained, Dash had already gone home, he had gotten out he was an Ex-EOD guy he had popped hot on a test so he couldn't do EOD anymore, so they put him in ammo instead. We had a couple of--2 of the guys had gone home the two guys she would have sent. If they had been there, they had already gone home because they were advanced party and so our advanced party had already left when we got back to Kuwait and they stayed home. Like a couple of them ended up coming back out but most of them stayed home. Because, you know, technically our part of the unit wasn't actually, we were, we were up, they elected to have us stay. They didn't need us. So we were out in Babylon and we only had a small Kiowa unit out there it was just them and we were supplying them and that was it. There was one night it was just the two of us, she had stayed in Al-Kut because that was where our unit was and she told us you know "If you have any questions, if anything comes up you guys know the rules, but if you're uncomfortable with something you need to get on the radio and call us and let us know what's going on." Which you know, when you're not in charge of the radio is kind of hard to do. So one night an Apache had gotten hit with a rocket launcher and somehow the guy had landed the thing on the Babylon base. And so the unit was there and they had two armament guys that had to watch the Apache all night because it was damaged so they were on guard duty on that. But for some reason our Major had decided it would be a really good idea to help them out because he had ammo specialists that we should

pick up their ammo. Which was stupid, you never do that. As an ammo specialist there's no transfer, nobody's got paper work on it so all of a sudden we have like four or five extra Hellfires, you know missiles.

Sorenson: Oh yeah.

Kann: The things are like 40,000 dollars and they blow up a city block you know and one of them as damaged, it was cracked.

Sorenson: Oh.

Kann: So he's asking, we had, they already, like they had already had some Hellfires that had gotten fired somewhere--which I would love to know the stories behind those but, so we had a couple empty cases but we didn't have enough for all--there were four. That was it because we had two cases and then nothing. So what we had done--and we told, we told this Major, this is not how--this is illegal. We're not allowed to do this. He said that he didn't care and that we could help these people out you know and this is what soldiers helping out other units and other soldiers come first and you know he didn't really care about the legality. And I was like "Okay we're just--we have to tell you this."

Sorenson: Yeah, yeah.

Kann: He's like "just tell me what the possibility is of us picking the stuff up for them?" I was like "alright" we didn't have enough cases and they're serial numbered so you should be putting them in their case. So what we did is we went and we took the ones that had already been fired--no no they hadn't been fired. They were just on the helicopters because Kiowas can carry Hellfires. So we had a couple empty ones but they were ones that hadn't been fired and they were sitting on the helicopters. So technically those should never have been in there in the first place, but they were empty. Two of them can go in there and the damaged one should probably go in ones of the actual cases. And I had the brilliant idea of, Babylon we didn't use cots; they actually had like little beds set up so they had mattresses. They were really tall beds by they had a lot of like really thin mattresses. So I suggested--I talked it over with my friend Hannah as to whether or not she thought this was feasible-- that we get a couple of pallets and get some ratchet straps together and take a bunch of these mattresses from like one of the tents that wasn't using them or you know, if worst came to worst then we could actually sleep on the cots and just take our mattresses if we needed too. And securely wrap the Hellfires in mattresses and ratchet strap them down and that would probably work because they're delicate. They're not particularly delicate, but their about a hundred pounds, and they have like a little glass thing in the front where the fuse is and if that gets cracked, I don't know, I don't know what happens exactly but it's not good [laughs]. So, and were not really trained to deal with that so I'm sure the EOD would be having a fit if they knew we'd done this. So that's what we did, we wrapped the two Hellfires up in mattresses and ratchet

straps and put them on the vehicle and I mean, we marked the bad ones, the ones that weren't ours in every way. I mean we wrote on them in like white marker, we had gotten tape out and written "bad" in tape on the fricken cases. I mean, it should have been pretty obvious that the ones in mattresses were not ones to be used but we put signs on 'em away. I think we picked up like 27 rockets, 2.75 inch rockets sounds right which we also put on a pallet separately and ratchet strapped them down and marked and we put the unit's name on them and everything. We didn't have Apaches there was no reason for us to have, I mean they had, they took the same ammo as our Kiowas did but really there was no reason for us to have that stuff. We didn't have grenades, they had grenade, rocket propelled grenades. They're the--I can't remember the call number for them right now. Thirty Mike-Mike, 30 millimeter grenades that got shot. We didn't have those on Kiowas I don't think, so we had to figure out something to do with them too and I don't remember what we did with them [laughs]. We did something and then the next day we found a way to tell the Sergeant Martin what happen. I don't think I handled that so anyway the funny part is that later we got switched out and Barthell ended up down there [laughs]. Barthell he ended up down there with another Sergeant who was actually pretty good at it but he was on duty the night someone asked for a Hellfire. They needed to test fire a Hellfire for some general I think. He took the damaged one and gave it to them.

Sorenson: Oh gosh.

Kann: I don't know what happened with that but it wasn't good from what I gleaned. I think it didn't--that it ended up being a dud, like it didn't fire at all because the fuse was cracked--which is good [laughs]. I'm glad, but for a test fire the general was kind of curious as to why his 40,000 dollar hellfire didn't fire. We found out later that it was missing and we were like "What happened?" "Well it was dark" I was like "It was dark? You don't have a flashlight?" I was like, it was a huge thing. We ended up getting away with it actually when we got back to--I think we dropped a bunch of stuff off in Taji and then when we came back to Kuwait we dropped a bunch more stuff off. When we came back to Kuwait they weren't as worried about the paper work so we turned a lot of it in.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: And then we ended up helping out some other unit out for 6 or 7 hours because they didn't have ammo specialists and they just found a bunch of stuff they thought was part of our unit or our part of the squadron. They didn't have ammo specialists. It was just one or two guys so they just kind of dumped it on us so we spent like 3 or 4 hours sifting through a bunch of rounds that shouldn't have been in the same--they had a bag a plastic bag of rounds that they were just gonna turn in. We were like "yeah no." They do it by weight but you have to have everything separated so it was really kind of a messed up situation but I think part of the reason we got away with it was because we came in with them.

Sorenson: Oh I see.

Kann: So they had a bunch of stuff they shouldn't have had either but they were an infantry unit so I guess that's okay [laughs]. I'm not really sure how that worked out that was between my Sergeant and who was running the AHA. So I turned it in. Yeah so those are the memorable stories [laughs].

Sorenson: Did you on your second deployment, how long was your second deployment? Did you do anything differently the second time through?

Kann: Yeah, my second deployment I don't even really look at as a real deployment to be honest, as far as, in comparison with my first deployment. I was in 3101 I spent some time in Texas at that point and then we were--we got back in May and they left in August actually. The advanced party actually left the day before my birthday, my 21st birthday. That was also the day that hurricane Katrina hit [laughs].

Sorenson: Woah.

Kann: It had hit a day or two before, but the remnants had finally made their way up to Tennessee so really heavy rain. I actually was supposed to go--and I had actually if I remember correctly I might be wrong I think I was supposed to go with the advanced party this time. I ended up having to have surgery before I left. I developed like pre-cervical cancer stuff so I went in and had surgery--I found that out on my 21st birthday that I would have surgery in two days and I'd be delayed for a month going out.

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: So yeah the first party left the 28th or early the 29th and then I was supposed to leave early September I think. I didn't end up leaving until October and my Sergeant as I previously that had mentioned got liposuction when she got back. She also had the same surgery but she was coming back too. So we spent a month cleaning barracks.

Sorenson: Oh wow.

Kann: It was just, wonderful. So yeah I had--I want to say I left October the 2nd or 5th, I can't remember, it was somewhere in the first week of October. We joined them out there, but we went straight from--you know they were already in-- it was a month out so they were already at Camp Anaconda. We didn't convoy in the second time, like the first time we did convoys and I came back from the first deployment. The first time we left Baghdad we got lost actually but we had spent the night in Cedarwood. I actually that is something else I could say about the convoy coming back from Iraq the first time from Baghdad to Kuwait. You are so sleep deprived, I was so sleep deprived that I was hallucinating.

Sorenson: No kidding?

Kann: Yeah and that was new I had never been that sleep deprived and I was pretty tired a good portion of the time because of the odd sleep schedules but because they had shoved us into these little tiny rooms when Fort Hood soldiers had come in. That was actually a lot of fun too, because when the bombs would go off they would duck and cover and you'd get in front of the chow line. We knew that if was the top of the hour or bottom of the hour the EOD had set it off.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: But you know if it wasn't so most people who'd been there for a year just checked their watch when they heard an explosion. The new guys, they went and ducked for cover, and that was a good way to get in front of the chow line. We were shoved in these little tiny--the post was so full at that point--because it was a little tiny post and you know we had like an extra 3,000 soldiers at least, you know, on the post and we were in these little tiny room waiting to go. And we left at night, so we were supposed to sleep during the day which nobody did because it was hot as hell even though we had air conditioners at the time they shoved us in these little tiny rooms, but those little tiny rooms didn't have air conditioners because it wasn't normal housing. So yeah so I hadn't slept the whole day and then that night I think I had gotten maybe 2 hours of sleep before we were had to get up and get ready for the convoy and for some reason we got delayed like 3 hours before leaving. So we ended up leaving at like--we were supposed to leave at midnight but we ended up leaving at 3 and I was so tired and then we drove. We got lost on the way out of Baghdad, and we drove to Cedarwood which is a little bit longer drive and we got there at like 4 or 5 o'clock in the evening.

Sorenson: Oh wow.

Kann: And then we were supposed to sleep for a little bit and get anything you needed to done, done. Well hell, a lot of people can't sleep if they haven't had a shower and have been on the road all day in flak vests and stuff. So I showered and grabbed some food from the PX and the chow hall. I had dinner and then I think I got 2 or 3 hours of sleep and we left at 11. So I had 3 hours of sleep after being up for about 36 I want to say. So that second drive--and I wasn't the only one my friend Hannah was seeing some weird and crazy shit too and so was Sergeant Martin she was dodging things. I had Barthell as my TC so he was out cold for a lot of it. So I at one point thought that I saw one of those vehicles coming out and I dodged around that thinking it was an IED and it wasn't there. And Sergeant Martin said she thought she was seeing road blocks that weren't there she was going around barriers that weren't there. Hannah, she had though that there were UFOs because she could see the lights the tail lights from the vehicle in front of her?

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: She was for some reason her mind had disconnected and thought they were UFOs. I remember at one point the weirdest one was the bridged over the road were, I had seen men in white suites that were like really tall I thought they were like stepping over the road. That was the weirdest one [laughs]. So that was, that was a long convoy [laughs].

Sorenson: Oh jeese.

Kann: But we made it, which is more than we could say for--I guess another one of our squadron's units in front of us they--it was actually one of the saddest things I've ever seen. We passed them on the turn up to Navstar. They had jackknifed a trailer and killed three soldiers I think because the breaks had failed. So, yeah. And that was, they had actual gotten to the turn off into Kuwait they were like, the convoy was slowing down because the turn was being made and the brakes failed and the whole cab was crushed.

Sorenson: Wow.

Kann: So that was one of the saddest things I'd ever seen while I was there, but yeah that was first deployment. Anyway, you said second deployment. Sorry, I don't know why I brought that up.

Sorenson: Oh no it's fine.

Kann: My second deployment was--I left a month late because I had surgery. They flew us from--we took a helicopter--from Kuwait city to Camp Anaconda which is I think the largest base. It was the largest base over there for a while, on as far as populace was concerned. It mean it was actually--I think we had like 30,000 people there it was a small city. We lived in air conditioned tin cans, or that's what they called them those were our rooms. I had one roommate for a while then after a while I had two. I hated my roommate, my second roommate I had. She was very, interesting. But, we lived there, we had showers we had PXs there were, it was build up pretty well so they actually had some garrison rules. You saluted and you had to be in certain uniforms when you went to chow hall. There were just all these rules I hated it. Doing regular PT and everything, I mean, it was okay, I ended up being remedial PT a lot of the whole weight battle thing.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: I actually ended up getting an article 15 my second deployment because I was on night shift at the AHA for 8 hours and then I would try to sleep during the day when they had these little classes. That was how garrisoned it was they had little classes while we were there.

Sorenson: Wow, no kidding.

Kann: So they would hold all these little classes or issue stuff during the day and I can't really--I've never been much of napper--so for me, getting two or three hours of sleep after PT isn't enough because I'm going to be up the rest of the day if I have to go somewhere and then I'd have nightshift. It was very frustrating I wasn't getting enough sleep I think on average I was getting two or three hours a night. I at one point started sleeping through my alarm because I would get home at--my shift was from 2 to 12 or something like, no 4 to 12. So you get there right around sundown-ish and it was an hour long process because the place was big enough that driving from where we lived to where the AHA was because it has to be so many feet between the AHA and the air field because that's where the fuelers were at because of the helicopters. It was far enough away for safety reasons that it was actually a bit of a drive to put everything in the 5 ton and got there it was an extra hour on each side so that's ten hours.

Sorenson: Yeah, oh wow.

Kann: So my shift would end at midnight and then I'd get home at one and I'd have to be at PT at one and I'd have to be up for PT at 6:30.

Sorenson: Oh boy yeah.

Kann: And I can't go to sleep right away especially when I've been in the desert for 8 hours I have to take a shower when I got to bed. So I would take a shower and get into bed around 2, and then try to get up around 6. I wasn't getting any other sleep, so eventually I started sleeping through my alarm at 6:00. So after four or five time of missing formation or being late they finally decided to make an example out of me and gave me an article 15 for it. Which as very funny, and then eventually after my article 15 we had a new captain. I was really embarrassed because I was like this is my first impression of me was getting an article 15 for cutting remedial PT of all things so I was like "this looks great." I was on birth control at the time too so I was actually kind of depressed--I have a problem with hormonal birth control. I was on the patch and over the course of the year I just finally, I just didn't care anymore, so that was part of it too. So sometimes I didn't hear my alarm and sometimes I was just like, I was too depressed to care.

Sorenson: I see.

Kann: So I had like a checkup for my surgery and they told me--I told them about the depression and that I didn't remember why. My doctor was actually not there I was actually supposed to have a PAP and the doctor had gone home on leave and no one had told me so I showed up for an appointment that I didn't have. And for some reason actually ended up talking about depression to the lady and she actually asked if I was on birth control and I said yes. She's like "Okay, take it off for a little bit and see what happens." and I was so much better after that

happens. And it was really funny actually because it was right after I got my article 15 and whatever had happened between taking off the patch and the hormonal thing, my hormones bounced back like crazy so I was like giddy for about a month [laughs]. So I'm sitting there I'm showing up to my extra duty for my--and they gave me like the minimum amount because I had told them "look this isn't something I'm doing on purpose." I'm not just not doing it, and it was just so funny because the day I actually had to go in for my reading of the article 15 the guy who was running remedial PT held me up as an example of someone who works really hard at the remedial PT thing. I was just so mad I was just like "are you kidding me? I'm getting an article 15 for not being here, but when I come here I work harder than everybody else and you're going to bring me up as an example right now?"

Sorenson: Right? Jeeze.

Kann: It just made me so angry and then my first Sergeant was talking about how they were actually going to do that to everybody that was on remedial PT because they didn't think it was fair that the people who got on the day shift had to leave in the middle of their shift to go do PT and then come back, or that the people that were on night shift had to leave early to go to PT. So they were getting out of stuff and that was how they were going to do it. I was like "If that's how you're going to do it I going to get another one of these, I'm not, this is why, I have a shift it's going to change next month." If you're going to do that and if you're going to put everybody that's on remedial PT on that shift, move back the PT hours, because that's what the problem is. So they moved it to the afternoon so I was like "I effected change!" I was so proud. Yeah every time I showed up for extra duty for hat week I was giddy. I was like "Hey! How's it going" and they were like "You're handling this really well." [laughs] It was because the hormones. Yeah I ended up painting a lot actually while I was there. On extra duty I got the painting, because they knew I was good at painting. They'd put their emblem on everything or if they had their area, like this is their headquarters area so we're going to make this nice and pretty. All kinds of crap I actually have pictures of it in here, yeah so I had painting for extra duty which was fine with me. [laughs] I liked extra duty at that point except it was extra stuff I had to do but other than that, painting was kinda fun. But I mean the deployment wasn't the same because I was living in air conditioned houses there was a gym that was like 50 feet from where I was living I was taking Karate actually they had a karate class so I took that.

[Break in recording 2:38:06- 2:38:16]

Kann: So Camp Anaconda had, oh sorry that had to be from the [inaudible] right? Wow. [laughs] Anyway the Camp Anaconda was really built up because it was, I guess I don't know how long it had been a camp there but, I mean, after--this was 2005 at this point going into 2006--so it was really built up they had a large screen theater complex.

Sorenson: Oh wow.

Kann: Um I saw the Da Vinci Code there.

Sorenson: Oh you did? Wow.

Kann: I think it was the Da Vinci Code or one of the Harry Potter movies I forget. One of them and they had ice cream and pop-corn like you could get before you went into the theater. They had full scale bazaars that you could go and buy a bunch of crap and I did [laughs]. You could get money, you could get you know I mean it was not really like being deployed. The only thing that was like being deployed was guard duty. Guard duty was--you were usually on guard duty for two weeks--a two week rotation and your rotation for guard duty was that you had one day on and one day off. So it was 24 hours but it wasn't 24 hours straight guard it was like 4 hours on 4 hours off, 4 hours on 4 hours off, 4 hours on 4 hours off plus travel time [laughs]. So you weren't getting a lot sleep either way but you had a 24 hours break after that. I think I was on that twice the whole time I was there.

Sorenson: Oh wow.

Kann: I did not leave the FOB--they call them Fobbits [laughs]. If you don't leave the FOB you're a fobbit which I didn't the whole time I was there. And like I said, it was nothing like being deployed because like the chow hall was huge they had a short order line they had you know; you could go get like omelets made. They had a Baskin Robbins in the DFAC. I mean, it was pretty fricken ridiculous. The only thing that was different was occasionally we'd get mortared [laughs] and that was it. That was the only thing that was like being deployed.

Sorenson: Well how was that?

Kann: It was alright, like my first deployment we were on a really small base so if you hit the base you know it. This one is huge so there were times I'm pretty sure we got mortared and I didn't even know we did.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: Oh maybe I don't know, but yeah we'd get hit. There were times I think we had one that got close one night and we had to go out to the bunker but like, really, I don't know, it was kind of surreal I guess, it doesn't really-- They had a lot of equipment for getting you know either intercepting that somehow--I don't know if they would shoot them [laughs] I really don't know how that works. There was one during guard duty one day we were waiting to go out and replace the other guards and it was noon, close to noon that a mortar had hit near the fuel pits and so the artillery guys fired back within like a minute, it was pretty fast. We were right next to the artillery guys and that was loud. We were waiting in the staging

area to go out, because we had to have our briefing and everything and we had just finished the briefing and then this happened. And so we had to go into the bunker real quick then that happened and I'm like "ow that hurt" and then my guard tower was one guard tower down from where the mortar, where the artillery hit where they were coming from. So it was close so you could see the stuff out in the field--some pretty unhappy farmers out there. That's pretty much what we did for the whole guard shift my second tour was watch the guys farm, you know, they had their whole family out there. But yeah, he was pissed, but actually I'd heard some stories that they'd find some of the farmers in that area would actually bring people they found in their fields that were setting up mortar tubes. They would break their knee caps and bring them in.

Sorenson: Oh.

Kann: Because they didn't want them setting up mortar tubes in their fields, you know, because the artillery is going to fire back and that's a lot of work [laughs]

Sorenson: Exactly.

Kann: But I only heard stories about that, I never actually saw that happen. Yeah my second deployment really, other than talking to local nationals and a lot of people I think that worked on Camp Anaconda I don't think were local, I think we had some. Most of them were from the Philippines I think because they were contracted.

Sorenson: Oh okay.

Kann: The people that ran the DFAC, I can't remember what the company's name is right now but the people who ran AFIS I think were Phillipino. The people who ran the laund--they had a laundry service--that is something I forgot, they had a laundry service, we didn't do our own laundry when we were there! [laughs]. It was pretty cool actually you turn in your laundry and get back a bag it was really neat.

Sorenson: So is it fair to say your second deployment was not as meaningful for you as your first?

Kann: Oh yeah easily. I mean some things happened that were interesting like I said the mortar thing and like I said, I got to have religious services for the first time and the last time in my life. So that was kind of cool too but no, it really wasn't like being deployed in comparison. You know, I mean, I was taking karate I was watching movies on a big screen television and it was ones that were, you know, current.

Sorenson: Yeah, right.

Kann: Fairly current I don't know how current they weren't that far off. I was eating Baskin Robbins when I could--I mean, I didn't get to do it a lot because of the weight problem but--

Sorenson: It was there.

Kann: It was there every day. It was different I don't know.

Sorenson: Now how long was that deployment?

Kann: Let's see, I got there early October. I want to say October 5th and I came back, the week before my birthday, so August 22nd. Yeah, I believe, because I had a week in in-processing when I got back and then I went on leave the day of my birthday.

Sorenson: So you were deployed the second time from October 2005 to August 2006?

Kann: Yes, I actually was stop-lossed a little bit.

Sorenson: Oh you were?

Kann: Yeah because I had left September 17 and I was only stop-lossed because by the time I was out-processed I would be over the day. So I got back the 22nd, took two weeks of leave--which I still had like a ton of leave left from being gone for like ten odd months--and I mean, I'd spent a lot more time in Kuwait that trip too. I got--they sent me back early to drive buses in Kuwait--which, I don't remember how I picked for that.

Sorenson: Yeah.

Kann: I did go on leave. I went on leave too that deployment so I was home in May, got to see my brother over his birthday.

Sorenson: Oh, how long were you able to come home for?

Kann: Two weeks plus travel time.

Sorenson: Two weeks plus travel.

Kann: Because the way we did it, was you didn't include your travel time going from into Kuwait and flying back and trying to find where we were. Your leave actually started the day after you got home and you had two weeks then had to fly back.

Sorenson: I see and that was in May of 2006?

Kann: Yes, mid-May. I can't remember exactly the dates.

Sorenson: Oh that's okay.

Kann: Yeah that was actually kind of a funny story too, my brother is actually 6 years older than me and he gets carded and I don't. I was 21 and the lady did not card me but she carded him. My mom was laughing her ass off. She thought it was the funniest thing in the world. I used to always, we were talking about how people mistake me for being older, and that always pissed me off but yeah that was pretty funny actually.

Sorenson: So when did you officially leave the service then?

Kann: October 31st. There was actually big talk about that; the witch was getting put out on Halloween.

Sorenson: Oh jeese.

Kann: I had my terminal leave which actually ended up starting like a week late because I had the same problem that I had when I left Fort Polk which was I had spent 2 weeks on the post before I went to Texas. I spent seven months in Texas. We got back in May in Texas and left in October. So I didn't know where a lot of that stuff was [laughs] I had more of an idea than I did for Fort Polk. There were plenty of buildings that I had to go clear that I had never seen.

Sorenson: Oh my goodness.

Kann: That got kind of interesting, and at the same time I was trying to get my dental. You know they had all that exit stuff for deployment. So I was trying to get my dental done and my physical done and it was just a pain.

Sorenson: Oh yeah definitely.

Kann: Yeah I got to back a little bit earlier than the rest of the unit for some reason. I don't remember why.

Sorenson: Now when, now when you officially left the army in October of 2006 right?

Kann: Yes.

Sorenson: What did you do after you got out? What did you do when you--?

Kann: I joined the National Guard on my way out. I hadn't planned on it but I got out I didn't have a lot to change and I had been ammo specialist and I decided to be a [inaudible] like my mom was. Which is human resources specialist I think she was called something different, it was different at the time but pretty much the same thing. So I had to go back out to school but I didn't have a school slot slated

until a year later which as funny, because I had only extended for a year. I had only signed up for a year. I can't-- I know there was a reason I did that too. I think they were talking about the MGIB kicker and stuff at the time, getting some payment for going and it was only one weekend a month and only a year so I ended up in a unit in Nashville for a while. They loved me [laughs] they loved me there I was so handy. Also I had been deployed so, you know, they were getting ready to--they weren't getting ready to deploy but they were getting ready to--none of them had gone and there had been rumors of getting called up so they were doing some extra classes and things. So I was helping train some of them and I actually ended up--I took a couple of classes and I only enrolled half time at the campus at Austin Peay State University that only asked, they had a small set on Fort Campbell and you were considered full time if you were doing 6 credits because it was condensed. It was a Navy course. So it was kinda fast tracked so I took my college writing and my psych, my psych 101 course there. I think I, I looked around for a little bit for a job I had quite a bit of money saved up. A lot of that got sucked into a house that I wasn't supposed to stay in for a while because I was a big softie and signed a lease for somebody and then they backed out. So I kind of got stuck in Tennessee for longer than I meant to be, that happened before I got out so I knew I was stuck and that was probably one of the reasons I was like, "Well I'll just do the National Guard". By then I was completely ready to get out, but I was tired of the weight thing so yeah that was--I was there for a year and I was dead set on getting out and then all of a sudden I decided to stay in, I do that. a month before I was going to get out I decided I was going to move back to Wisconsin and my dad lives in Prairie now which is near--Marquette is right on the border there so I was familiar with Prairie so I moved back up there after that. But I had taken, when I was in Tennessee I had a couple different jobs I done a job--I was a pizza delivery driver for dominoes which made good money if you got enough hours; which I didn't. So I had taken a second job with a gas station, I was a gas station attendant for a while and that really sucked too. So about after 2 or 3 weeks working at a gas station I heard there was a human resources job open in Nashville working full time for the National Guard. So I did that. I applied for that and got it and I worked in the enlisted promotions out there, for, as a temporary. I can't remember what that's called right now, because there is actually a term for it. You get paid really well. But I was working full time for the National Guard but it was temporary so I got extra pay for that and then I was doing my one weekend up in Nashville but I was driving. Because I was living in Clarksville and working in Nashville and that was like an hour and a half one way and then coming back. It was a, it should have been an hour, but with traffic and coming back was even worse because Clarksville is terrible around five o'clock. But I'd have to be there at 7 and then I'd stay until 3 and then sometimes I would like go work out in the gym there afterwards trying to keep my weight down because I blew up again. Yeah I had stayed in to, yeah, I worked there and I ended up going to training out in Massachusetts. I finally got, I finally got my human resources training a year after I got it and that was like a month before I was supposed to get out because I got done with that in like September and when I got back, my job was gone. Like

they were doing fiscal year meetings and they couldn't even tell me if I was going to get my job back, which I was planning on doing if they would let me do it. So my leave I couldn't take leave because they were in fiscal year meetings so I just went home because I didn't have a job [laughs]. When I was home my friend, my boyfriend at the time, convinced me to move back up there so I switched. I resigned for the National Guard again to Wisconsin and I got transferred to the 32nd Brigade and their HHC, headquarters. So I did that for another year. I was dead set on getting out again. They had done a month long AT, active training, and--no it was three weeks in the summer at Fort McCoy. They wanted me to go so bad and I was kind of tired of the National Guard lifestyle because it is such a change. You go from just doing your normal thing then all of a sudden you have to remember to do all the saluting and crap. It's just hard to do and of course I was having a lot of problems with weight because I did not have the discipline to stay home and work out. I hate running, I have always hated running if I don't have to do it I don't do it. I've always been of the--you know it's like, if you see me running from anything I f'ed up. So I will be going as fast as I possibly can which is actually pretty fast, but I won't be doing it for long. It was I was pretty unhappy at the time but they really wanted me to go with them because they were slated to deploy at that point. And I just was thinking about it at the time and I found out that I--because I hadn't gone back to school yet and part of the reason I hadn't gone back was because I wasn't sure how I was going to live. I knew that they would pay for school and that was good I really didn't know how much financial aid was out there or how that worked really so I was worried about not being able to pay my bills while I was at school so I hadn't gone back yet. And I heard that the Wisconsin GI program if you go to a state school you don't have tuition, you just go. So I would have gotten, and my boyfriend was going to Richland Center. He was under--he had joined the Air Force and gotten in on that deal. He was doing his associates at the Richland center and getting paid like 1,300 a month for the school basically.

Sorenson: Oh right, that makes sense.

Kann: I was like "Oh that's pretty sweet", because that was more than what I was making working at casinos working at-- So I was like hey, that is a pretty good idea except you have to deploy or be a resident to start. I had changed my residency at that point so I could go to school but I hadn't joined in Wisconsin so I wasn't qualified unless I deployed and I thought about it and I thought about it and they really wanted me to go because I was pretty handy. Mostly because I was, I had done some of this before and not a lot of people in the unit had been deployed before. I'd done two so they really liked that and I just, I remembered a lot of stuff. I was a 50 cal. gunner my second tour--I wasn't, I didn't really do it but I knew how to do it [laughs] technically--so they really wanted me to be their 50 cal. gunner. They were going to be taking over the prison there I think. So we were getting a lot of interesting MP training. I finally learned how to search a detainee correctly because the first time I did it in Iraq--I didn't know what I was doing, which was probably really safe. I finally learned how to do it correctly--I

actually finally. I was supposed to get out again October 31st and on October 2nd, or actually the week before, I had told that I would go. They had begged me to go and actually my staff sergeant, one of the staff sergeants I had worked with, he had talked me into it over AT, over August. And I talked to my boyfriend 'bout it and we decided to split up and go our separate ways when I left. But It didn't quite work out that way. I extended for 6 months because I was fat you're not allowed to do more than 6 month extensions and I had to get special permissions to do that. My captain was overjoyed, he was so happy because I had kind of made a name for myself in the human resources section I was really good at my job. So they were all happy I was going. I just had to start going through my last, what was supposed to be my last weekend I spent going through all the preparations that I had not done the previous two or three months because I wasn't going.

Sorenson: Right, Right.

Kann: So I finally got all, I had to get all--I had to update my will and everything I got through it in that weekend and I remember because they had to do a dental x-ray because it had been a while since I had had one and they asked if I was pregnant and I was pretty sure I wasn't and I had taken a test fairly recently just in case, but it was negative. Two weeks later I had to call them back and tell them I was pregnant.

Sorenson: Oh boy.

Kann: I had to, I think over Labor Day or sometime around then in September gotten pregnant October 20th I found out for sure I was. I had to call them back and was like I can't go. They were like "Well at least we know you didn't do that on purpose because a couple of girls did." Yeah because I could have gotten out that was my one calming thing. That was a notorious thing for women over there that got pregnant. It was always assumed that if you got pregnant you had been deployed or gotten deployed, even if it was an accident you, did it on purpose because you didn't want to go. So yeah I was kind of worried about that but at least with that I knew that they knew I was getting out. I had planned on getting out I was getting the frick out of here I wasn't gonna do it anymore and yeah. So they knew that I hadn't done it on purpose they were like "We're really sorry to hear that." And so I had my options and I decided just to let my 6 month contract, finish my 6 month contract out and get out. I didn't want to--I thought about staying in, but with the way the deployments were going and at that point they weren't getting out of Iraq yet and there is still Afghanistan.

Sorenson: Oh course.

Kann: Not to mention, and actually my old unit after I got back they were deployed another two years later into Afghanistan.

Sorenson: Really wow.

Kann: And they'd already done a tour in Afghanistan, like 3101 is busy. I know the group, the girl I roomed with when I got done in Texas she's a fuel soldier she-- my deployment with her was her third deployment--and she'd been they actually had her as a female something or other working with Special Forces over there. She was there for the times they had to search a female somebody had to do it so she volunteered. She had some interesting stories too but she, yeah that was her third deployment. So they'd been to Afghanistan and they'd already been to Iraq once.

Sorenson: Wow.

Kann: And then I got there and it was her second tour in Iraq and my second tour in Iraq and then they left for Afghanistan. Eventually they got back right after I had my son, in 2009. They called me. I had a couple friends that were still in and they called me when they got back. Got a couple calls for [inaudible]. It was kinda different. But yeah it was, I was supposed to go again but I couldn't so I just turned it out. They had kept me, I was held back so I was doing a lot of weird stuff but it was actually kind of fun. They ended up sending me to the infantry unit here at Madison to help out because they needed an extra Lima so it was so funny to me because I'd done 2 deployments and, you know, I'd done the whole thing but you know they were infantry guys and I was a woman and a pregnant woman in their unit, which I was like one of the only girls in that unit and I was just there for paper work. So they got so nervous around me you know they'd like check their language and I spoke worse than they did. They'd check their language and they were just really paranoid I guess that something was going to happen. They'd send me home early to make sure I got home okay because they didn't want a pregnant soldier on the road. It was actually quite a lot of fun for me. My last weekend, I think, was in March and they had a snowstorm March 2009, yeah because I had my son in late June. So I was getting up there; six or seven months. I was big [laughs] at that point. They had kind of like a freak snowstorm coming in and I had a two hour drive to Prairie so they got me out at like 8:00 and they were like don't worry you'll get paid. I was like "Are you sure? I'm not even going to be here, I'll be fine. I'm okay, I live here" [laughs]. I know I spent some time down south but.

Sorenson: You know right. Yeah, you know the snow.

Kann: I know how to deal with it but they didn't want me possibly getting into a car wreck and going into labor on the side of the road. That was like how they thought about it I was like 6 months pregnant and they were like you're going to go into labor, any minute here. No, I'm really okay. It was just kind of interesting.

Sorenson: So where, what are you doing now? And what are your plans for the immediate future?

Kann: Well right now I am going to school to be an English--I'm an English education major at UW-Lacrosse and a minor in teaching English as a second language. So I've got a while yet because I have a son and I'm a single mother. It's really kind of impossible for me to take the credit load I need to take to get done in four years.

Sorenson: Exactly.

Kann: I did 15 credits my first semester and I don't remember how I got through it because I had a 3 month old. I really don't remember a lot of that. So right now I'm planning on just doing 5 years and seeing what happens because you know the current teaching climate I'm not really entirely sure what I'm going to do yet. I have a couple of years before I have to worry about that. I'm not going to graduate until the fall of 2015. So I've got some time.

Sorenson: Oh yeah.

Kann: Worst comes to worst I may go to china and teach there but that also takes a certain amount of finagling because of you know, baby. Custodial rights; I have to get permission to leave. Hell I have to get permission to leave Wisconsin let alone, you know, the whole country. I'd really love to spend a couple of years in china teaching. Which Liam would be 5 by the time I get done with school so if I go to teach in China, he's going to be doing some school in China. Which I mean, right now, I do speak in Chinese to him, at home when I can but he's not talking yet but I hope he's picking it up at all. I hope by the time I go if I go, if I can go that he'll actually be bilingual. It would be really neat, I think. They treat their teachers really well. Actually my Chinese professor is from China and they have the University in Beijing and they went to teach there for just a year or two. Not forever just for the experience and also they say you just don't actually get the hang of Chinese until you go there. You understand it but you don't really get it until you go. I think some people even say that if you do study abroad it should be for a year because 6 months isn't enough. Their news is even in subtitles because they have so many dialects. It's really interesting to me, I've occasionally I think about going back in, but not too often. Just because, because I have a baby. It's just, I don't know if I could handle being deployed with my baby at home. I have the utmost respect for parents that go and deal with it the way they do, because I can't. I get it now, when I was single it was kind of like "Oh great all the married people get to go home." I mean it was just married people; it was people with kids, which I understood. People with kids married people I was like I have [inaudible] too. I get it even more now it's just so hard to be away from your kids that long. I don't handle it that well when he's away from me for like four days.

Sorenson: Absolutely.

Kann: I do attend a DC trip with Upwards Bound I teach that during the summer and that's going to be hard enough because I haven't been away from him for that long. I can't imagine trying to deploy. That was pretty much why I got out and that's pretty much why I'm not considering going back in.

Sorenson: Okay.

Kann: If I do go back in I'd go back in as an officer, try to go that way. I got mistaken for an officer a lot which I don't know if I should take that as a compliment or an insult and I frequently did both. [laughs]. But yeah that's pretty much it.

Sorenson: Okay excellent. Thank you very much Ariel for participating in this oral history interview we appreciate your time. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Kann: Not really, I hope we don't go to Libya, I heard something about us going ton Libya and I'm like "No! Bad idea" [laughs].

Sorenson: Definitely.

Kann: But yeah that's pretty much it.

Sorenson: Okay, well, thank you.

[End of Interview]