

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

DUSTIN D. McCORMICK

CBRN Entry Team Chief, Wisconsin Army National Guard, Operation Iraqi Freedom

2012

OH
1974

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McCormick, Dustin D., Oral History Interview, 2012

Approximate length: 37 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

In this oral history interview, Staff Sergeant Dustin McCormick discusses his enlistment into the Army National Guard, his deployment as part of OIF [Operation Iraqi Freedom], and his position as a CBRN [Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear] Entry Team Chief. McCormick was deployed as part of the 829th Engineers from February 2003 to January 2004 during OIF as an engineer plumber, but quickly transitioned into doing carpentry and masonry work. He outlines his military career progression from an AIT [Advanced Individual Training] trained engineer plumber, to CBRN staff sergeant, and finally to OCS [Officer Candidacy School]. McCormick comments on his experience in college pursuing an associate's degree in Political Science at UW [University of Wisconsin]-Richland and later completing the degree at UW-La Crosse. He reflects on the difficulties of balancing both his and his wife's commitments to the military with their commitments to their family. He further provides a sketch of the daily responsibilities and emergency duties of CBRN personnel, while including anecdotes on his experiences as part of the Civil Support Team which include: monitoring for crowd safety during high-profile events or for high profile celebrities, working with federal agencies such as the FBI and ATF, and supporting local police and fire departments.

Biographical Sketch:

McCormick has served in the National Guard from 2008- present as a CBRN [Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear] Entry Team Chief. He served a one year tour as part of OIF [Operation Iraqi Freedom] from February 2003 to January 2004.

Archivist's Note:

Transcriptions are a reflection of the original oral history recording. Due to human and machine fallibility transcripts often contain small errors. Transcripts may not have been transcribed from the original recording medium. It is strongly suggested that researchers engage with the oral history recording as well as the transcript.

Interviewed by Charlotte Koshick, 2012.

Transcribed by Audio Transcription Center, 2017.

Reviewed by Matthew Scharpf, 2017.

Abstract written by Matthew Scharpf, 2017.

Interview Transcript:

[Beginning of OH1974.McCormick_file1]

Koshick: Here with Dustin D. McCormick, who served with the Wisconsin Army National Guard from the twenty-fourth of July 2001 till the present. He also served during OIF [Operation Iraqi Freedom] from February 10, 2003 to January 30, 2004. This interview is being conducted at 7:45 p.m. at [REDACTED] Wisconsin, on the twenty-first of June 2012. The interviewer is Charlotte Koshick.

So, to start out, Dusty, can you tell me about the background and your life circumstances before the military?

McCormick: I was raised with two brothers and a sister. We were in a—raised out in the country. Farm kids, a rodeo family. So, we did rodeos in the summer. Small town, with a graduating class of sixty. And my guidance counselor was in the military, and he kind of was—he made it known that he was in the military. He didn't push it, but he kind of showed it as an option. And a lot of us in high school kind of took that as a route.

Koshick: So, what were you doing at the time when you joined? Were you in college? School? What were you doing?

McCormick: I was in high school. And I had—I was in my senior year. And I was looking into the Marine Corps, and some of my friends were looking at the Marine Corps, and it just didn't end up working out for me. I didn't want to do the Marine Corps. And my father had a friend who he used to go hunting with, a Command Sergeant-Major Byrd. Well, I guess he was Sergeant First-Class Byrd, at the time. And he was a family friend, and he come over, told me about the National Guard, told me, basically, from what I can remember, it was all true. And nothing was—as far as recruiters go, they sometimes—they get this bad rap about lying, whatever. But they—he didn't lie to me. He told me everything was—the way it was going to be. And I signed up, and I became an engineer plumber.

Koshick: So, tell me about basic training, and what it was like when you first joined.

McCormick: Well, I—I went to a reception, I guess I'll start there. And they asked me where I wanted to go, or when I wanted to go. And I said in early July. I wanted to after celebrating Fourth of July. I thought that was patriotic. And so, they sent me to Fort Knox. And my AIT—most engineers go to AIT, or Advanced Individual Training in Missouri. However, I, because I was a plumber, went down to Sheppard Air Field. When I arrived for basic training, down in Kentucky, they

weren't necessarily ready for us. It was right after September 11, [2001]. So, a lot of people started coming in, around that time. A lot of people that had been in the Service, that came back, and there was a lot of logistics that the Army was trying to work out. So, roughly ten percent of our class was prior service. So that was a different kind of an environment than most people probably experienced.

And so, I spend about three weeks in reception, which was the worst part of basic training, because you just sat around and waited. Basic training was a lot of really cool, fun stuff. You know, you go through it, and you get all motivated, and you feel like that's what the Army is supposed to be all about, and then you go to AIT, and you learn your job, and then you—that was it. You know, got back to Richland Center, and I started doing plumbing.

Koshick: Okay. So, tell me about your first assignment, or unit that you were with.

McCormick: I was with the 829th Engineers. Like I said, a lot of my friends from high school were there. I went to two different high schools, towards the end of my high school career. But I had friends from both of those high schools at that unit. And my first assignment was in the plumbers' section, and when I got there, the first couple of months, I was just doing drills, and as soon as the New Year rolled around, we got news for our deployment, on February tenth. So, that was my first assignment.

Koshick: So, how did they tell you you were deploying, and what did you feel?

McCormick: I was at work. And my parents were on a, some kind of a—like a trip together, a little honeymoon thing. And my aunt was watching over the family, while they were gone.

[05:02]

And so, I came back from work, and my aunt told me that Uncle Sam had called while I was gone, and that [laughs] I was, uh, going to be serving my country for the next year. And so, I—the first thing I did was call up my buddy Terrick and talk to him. And he—his main concern was, was I going too? And we kind of hashed out what we thought it meant for us.

Koshick: Okay. So, how do you know Terrick?

McCormick: I went to high school—well, I went to elementary school with Terrick. And [laughs] we grew up together. And we joined the military together. We went to different basic trainings and different AITs. He joined the unit that I was in, because I was in that unit. He could have done anything. And he was really—he

was a real smart guy. But he decided to be an electrician, because he wanted to be in the same unit as me. He wanted to be around.

And then, we got deployed together, obviously. And when we came back from our deployment, we went to college together. And I lived with him for a while, when he had his first kid. And then, when he went through his divorce, he actually ended up moving in with me when I had my first kid. I've known him all my life.

Koshick: Okay. So, do you have any interesting stories or memorable experiences from that deployment?

McCormick: Yeah. I guess. We—[clears throat] so, we were plumber—I was a plumber. And when we first got there—first of all, it took four months to get us there, just training, and whatnot, and logistics. By the time we got there, the mission that we were supposed to have been doing got canceled, or was no longer valid. So they had to find something for us to do.

At that point, we decided to start working on barracks maintenance and improvement of your own AO [Area of Operations]. So, they gave us these old billets that had been blown up when Saddam [Hussein] invaded during Desert Storm, and then got blown up again when we kicked him out during Desert Storm, and then just got left dormant for ten years.

So, we moved into those. I fixed them up. And that was the whole, really, of our—of my plumbing duties. Once I had the running water set up, and the toilets were flushing again, when we had showers, plumbers were no longer needed. So, we ended up doing carpentry and masonry.

Funny stories, over there, I guess. Me and my buddy, Terrick, we had—they always give the briefings before you go somewhere about, “Don’t mess with the wildlife.” And me and Terrick tried to bottle up every kind of wildlife we could find. We found one of those translucent scorpions, and put it in a jar, because we thought it was a baby scorpion. Turned out it was a very deadly one. And then, we found a sand viper, and tried to step on it, and capture it, but it disappeared underneath the sand, and scared us.

On his birthday, Terrick’s birthday, we drove—we jumped in a Humvee, and we were supposed to be on roving guard, driving around the post. And we actually drove from, [laughs] we just, like, picked a point, and we drove straight, for like an hour, or whatever. I don’t know how long it was. But we realized we didn’t—we weren’t in radio range anymore. By the time we fixed that, we found a couple of dead sheep, and a couple of camels. We fed them Crunch ’n Munch, and gave them bottles of water, and took cool pictures.

And yeah, that kind of sums up our deployment. We were privates and specialists, at the time, so we got away with a little bit more, and we could be a little bit more ridiculous.

Koshick: What was the best part about your deployment?

McCormick: Deploying with my friends. And the friendship that we had, and that we've built. So, me and Terrick are still very connected to each other. And all my friends that I was deployed with, when they—they've been on several deployments now. I'm non-deployable now. My unit stays stateside. But whenever they go, I feel this twinge that I want to be there with them. And I only really got to know them over that year, outside of the friends that I grew up with. But yeah, the camaraderie.

Koshick: What would you say was the worst part about your deployment?

[09:46]

McCormick: The leadership. [Laughs] Um, my first sergeant, he was an acting first sergeant, and he was a Readiness NCO [Non-Commissioned Officer] in the National Guard. It's different, I guess. The biggest difference is that, obviously, you have people that are doing a normal job, civilian job, most of the month, and then they come in to do their Army job two days or three days a month. So, that kind of—you could be a custodian, and then come and be a first sergeant. You know, it's—it can be imbalanced.

So, you had these different types of characters in serious leadership positions, who only had to be capable of leading for two or three days at a time. And they were now going to be expected to do—lead for a year. And that was kind of a different, I think, of a hurdle for them. Also, because the full-time staff that wore the uniform twenty-four-seven, they were not the ones that were necessarily in charge during the deployment. And that was hard for them to handle.

And the leadership, they had like a business—the commander had a business background, and he was kind of a pushover. And he—they struggled for leadership the whole time, during the deployment. And we, as the soldiers, felt the—you know, we were caught in the crossfire, I guess. So, bad leadership was the problem during the deployment.

Koshick: So, what were communications like with back home, while you were gone?

McCormick: It was early in the war, so—well, I was—technically, it's after the war. We got there right after they announced mission accomplished, got—that wasn't really

the way it was. And so, we had phone banks with shoddy reception, and we had internet, that was somewhat reliable. But you had to go into post. We were stationed outside of post. And I guess it—we were at Lone Star, is what it was called. But it was a good five-minute drive to Arifjan [Army Installation], and then you could—then you'd stand in line, and you'd have to go to a phone bank. And I think there was, like, thirty or forty phones in this one room. And you just had to wait your turn, and then you got to talk to whoever you wanted. And later on, during that deployment, we ended up getting internet in our actual area of operations, and we were able to email back home. Yeah, communication was relatively good. Now they have Skype, and all that—you can videotape yourself, or whatever. So, we didn't have that.

Koshick: So, what was it like returning home?

McCormick: It was emotional. We flew into Volk Field, and we were on a kind of—I don't know what the size of the plane was. It was a huge plane, like meant for three hundred or four hundred people. And we flew—it was my unit, and then another unit, totaling like 120 people, but the plane was not half full. And then we got to, like it was—we landed somewhere on the East Coast, and they got rid of half of those people. So then it was just our unit.

And so, when we landed at Volk Field, it was this huge plane with sixty people on it. And families were all there, and it was very—very, very cold. We landed, and it was December 13th. And we got to see my family, and then we hopped on a bus, and then did our outprocessing for three days. So, it was really brief to be able to see your family, but then you've got to get outbriefed, and then get to go home for a month.

Koshick: So, what did you do, after you got back?

McCormick: Well, me and my friends debated. We could have taken—some of us chose to take unemployment for a while, because after you come back, you have about thirty—if you're gone for a year, you have about thirty days for leave. And so, you can burn those thirty days up, and then you can take unemployment. And I debated doing that. But one of my buddies had convinced me to go to college. So, while I was on leave, I basically was signing up for college. And that's what I did. I went to school. I tried it out.

Koshick: Where did you go to school, and what did you go to school for?

McCormick: I went to UW [University of Wisconsin]-Richland, just for an associate's degree, and I got—I went there for two and a half years. And then I went to

UW-La Crosse for a year and a half, and a summer. And I got my degree in Political Science.

Koshick: So, where did your military career go, after that?

[14:55]

McCormick: When I was—well, I—as soon as I was approaching the end of my college career, I knew I didn't want to go pursue a master's at that point. So, I started applying for jobs in the AGR world, Active Guard and Reserve. And I was applying for—in the Active Guard Reserve, there is a surplus of supply or training positions. So I was applying for a lot of those. It just so happened that I just happened to apply for this job that I really didn't know anything about it. It was this, you know, fifty-four Civil Support Team. And so, I penciled in the job name on the application, and put together a quick, little packet and put it in. And they called me. And I wasn't going to interview, and then I was going to interview. And I was very flakey. But I ended up making it to it.

And when I got there, I guess I somehow impressed them, and I've been on the Active Guard side, ever since, about five years now.

Koshick: So, what do you do for this team?

McCormick: I am a team chief. So, I'm a staff sergeant, and I have two people under me. And we enter areas that could contain a CBRN [Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear] threat; that's a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear threat. We also monitor for crowd safety during high-profile events. Or for high-profile celebrities, like the Dalai Lama.

Koshick: Do you have any interesting stories about your time with the Civil Support Team?

McCormick: Well, I got to meet the Dalai Lama three times. That was pretty interesting. I've been able to pull security with—so, this is from a farm-kid's perspective; someone who grew up riding horses, and chewing tobacco, who signed up in the military to be a plumber, went to school for political science; to be making entries into explosive rooms.

You know, I got to ride in a Black Hawk last year. And it was really cool. It was October twenty-eighth, and we jumped in a—there was this threat called up, and this guy was blowing stuff up, apparently, in northern Wisconsin. So, we jumped in a Black Hawk helicopter with a couple of pieces of monitoring equipment and some personal protective equipment, and flew up there, and was able to work with the ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives], and other

sheriffs and whatnot. And just be able to work with those people that are making a difference every day.

I never thought I would be doing that kind of thing. I thought I was going to be putting pipes together for the rest of my life.

Koshick: So, how does the job you have now, on this Civil Support Team, affect your family life?

McCormick: It's very busy. My wife's in the military, too. She was actually in the engineers as well, in the 829th Engineers. That's where we had met. We were just friends, and then it kind of led to other things. But my family is—kind of understands the need for the team to come first, sometimes. And she's great about that. So, she's understanding, and she sacrifices a lot to let me go and do a lot of missions. And my kids are still too young to understand that. So, we'll see, I guess in the future, what they think. But currently, my wife is pretty understanding about it, and I'm understanding when she has things. Right now, she's at drill.

Koshick: Recently, you started OCS [Officer Candidate School], right?

McCormick: Yes.

Koshick: So, how about you tell us a little bit about why you decided to go to OCS, and how it's been so far?

McCormick: I made the mistake of [laughs]—I went to ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] when I was going to UW-La Crosse, because I wanted to be a warrant officer. Because I didn't like the idea—I wanted to be a warrant officer, because I felt I could be a subject-matter expert in a field. And I didn't want, honestly, to have to move, jump around from unit to unit for the rest of my career. I didn't like that, the unsteadiness of that. And so, when I joined the CST [Civil Support Team], I saw there were captains, and there were lieutenants that could stay in a position for ten years, and retire, or leave the team as a captain after ten years. So, that showed me that you could have some stability in the military, in one location, at least for ten years. Which, to me, you know, I was twenty-four or twenty-six, at the time. And that seemed like ten years was long enough away, I could probably pursue it.

[20:00]

So, I decided to—once I was in a leadership position, I wanted to be a Staff Sergeant in a leadership position. Then I would pursue OCS. And I got promoted on October twenty-eighth. And that next couple of months, I basically prepared

for the ASVAB [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery] which I needed to retake, because I was not necessarily that intelligent in high school. I did not study a lot. So, I prepared for that test. I did well on it. And then, signed up for OCS, which is a—it's kind of like basic training. It's the same environment as anyone would expect in basic training, except instead of receiving training, you're often giving the training. And you're also still in that high-stress environment.

But it's very good, and I'd like to—I used to say that the Army has never been able to change me in twelve years. But I feel like OCS somehow was successful, over this last few months, in changing some of my mannerisms, and making me maybe a little bit more of a professional. Still not there, yet. But we're working on it.

Koshick: Can you tell us a little bit more about your position that you have now, in the military? Not the OCS, but your regular AGR job, a little more detail.

McCormick: Okay. Well, we work side-by-side with hazmat teams, police departments, fire departments, sheriff's departments, SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics] teams, FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]. We give training and receive training from multiple three-letter organizations. Basically, we just try to integrate with the civilian population, the civilian law enforcement, and agencies that can provide support.

We can—we are trained to a level in CBRN response that most civilian agencies can't afford. And the way our command tries to describe us is, we're kind of like the tool in the hip pocket of the first responder. So, whatever they need, we can provide, understanding that we have a very specific lane. You couldn't train everyone in the state of Wisconsin to know how to react to a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear event. And to train every cop, or every hazmat team to be able to do that would just cost too much money, and it wouldn't be effective.

So, they made this team of twenty-two individuals, not an elite force, but a specific force that understands that threat. And my specific role on that team is to be the person in the big, plastic suit and some kind of a respirator, and goes down-range into a possibly-contaminated area, and tries to locate and identify threats. The way it's been said in the past is, I should be able to walk into a kitchen, and I can discern whether or not if I see a certain assortment of chemicals, what they are making, or if I see flour, and vanilla, and chocolate chips, I know someone is making cookies, versus TATP [Triacetone Triperoxide], or mustard, or whatever else.

Koshick: So, what kind of training did you have to have for this job?

McCormick: The first two months of my time on the team was down in Missouri for two months. It involved a crash course in chemistry, organic chemistry. It was very broad strokes of chemistry, but it was chemistry, nonetheless. And then it was awareness ops of tech-level hazmat. So, basically making you a hazmat firefighter. You should be able to plug leaks on corrosive tankers, and that kind of stuff.

After that, there was three years of training. So, they set you up with chemical, biological warfare agent training, IED [Improvised explosive device] training, and they ask you to teach training. I got my first training thing was teaching anthrax—or not anthrax, I'm sorry. I got to teach how to purify nicotine. And I thought that was a lame lab to teach until everyone loved it, and now it's one of our—the cornerstones of our outreach program. Everyone wants to see this nicotine lab.

I guess, in the first three years of your time on my team, a good third of it, at least, is spent training in official classroom environments, to learn how to understand and dissect labs.

[25:06]

Koshick: So, what does your typical day entail?

McCormick: Well, we are either training for our actual job, or we're trying to keep up with mandatory training that's issued from us—to us from the military. So, we still have to do the typical Army, you know, what's a three-to-five-second rush? Can you qualify with your M-16, A-2, or now your M-4, or your M-9? We still have to prepare for the PT [Physical Training] test. But just go over what I did today.

When we started the day, we did some PT in the morning, followed by a little bit of PMCS [Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services], clean up the trucks. And basically, just call up some people to do some office work. But next Monday, I'm going to show up to work, and we're going to get our trucks out, and we're gonna pretend like we're responding to an incident, and we're gonna get in our big, plastic suits, and go down-range, and conduct communications and site-characterization and re-con of possible CBRN areas.

Koshick: So, what does the future hold for you, do you think, with the military? What do you see as your future?

McCormick: So, like you said, I'm going to Officer Candidate School right now. I should be graduating from Officer Candidate School next August. And from that point on, I'll have two years to find a place to go. I have an option, once I graduate, I can take my commission and lose my job. Or, I can defer my commission until I can

find a job that's a lieutenant position that's active guard. Or I could end up going active duty National Guard—or active duty actual, like in the Army. So, I have very—I'm focused on becoming an officer, but the potential still stands that I could be going to this training and nothing will come of it. But I'm planning on being an officer within the next two years. And I hope to make—be a team leader. So, have my boss's job.

Koshick: What does your boss do?

McCormick: He does all of the operational and management—operations and management of my section. So, I make sure that PMCS is done right now, by going out there and working on those things physically. He makes sure it's done by putting it on the schedule, and understanding that kind of stuff. Putting together training, and then when we're on-scene, actually responding to an incident, he's the one that's got to do all the thinking, because I'm doing all of the hands-on type stuff. So, I look forward to—I want to call the shots. I want to make decisions.

Koshick: So, depending on what happens in your future with officer, and all of that, how is that going to affect your wife's military career?

McCormick: Well, it shouldn't affect it too much. We're married, so that won't matter if I'm an officer and she's enlisted. She wants to be an officer as well. She's choosing to go the warrant officer route, which is, you're still an officer. However, you are a subject-matter expert, not necessarily managing a section so much as you are working with that section. But you're paid more, because you are expected to know more.

My wife and I, it might—we're in a—we live in a place right now; we live in Madison. So, it's a nice place to be, because this is like the central hub for a lot of those officer positions. It shouldn't affect us. She might be able to take some time off, if she wants that. It's up to her, really. Whatever—if I get my officer position, it's up to her if she wants to continue to work, or if she wants to pursue an officer position. It just gives us a little bit more elbow-room, as far as making financial decisions, and career choices.

Koshick: So, how long do you have left, until you'd be able to retire?

McCormick: I have about seven or eight years in right now of active duty time. I have about twelve years—coming up on twelve years of actual time, from when I actually enlisted. So, I guess, yeah, I have—yeah. I have a lot of time left.

[30:00]

Koshick: Okay. [break in audio] So, while you were with the 187?

McCormick: The 829th.

Koshick: Eight two ninth. Sorry. While you were with the 829th Engineers, you went to Arizona?

McCormick: Yes.

Koshick: And what did you do there?

McCormick: We had an annual training for two weeks, and we flew down there. And our mission was pretty simple. There was just a border being built up. And they had intermittent fence. It was—they called it a fence, but it was a series of three fences stacked right in front of one another, about fifty meters apart, maybe. If memory serves, this is like six or seven years ago, now. But basically, we just—we had different duties taking down the old fence which was essentially chicken wire, and putting up a proper, barbed-wire fence, and then a wooden fence, I believe it was. And then the big fence that—the impressive one, which was the steel fence that was about fifteen feet tall. And then, at the top, it's slanted towards Mexico. So, if you were climbing, you would have to go ups—

[31:23]

[End of OH1974.McCormick_file1]

[Beginning of OH1974.McCormick_file2]

Koshick: —Dustin D. McCormick, side two. And he was saying that—he was describing the fence.

McCormick: Yeah, so, one of the units that had been building the fence built it the wrong way, so that it actually sloped towards the United States. So, it was actually easier to climb. So, when we got there, we knew that kind of an issue, so we were ready for that. And we had good plans. And the two weeks that we were down there, I was a specialist at the time, and they gave me my own little crew. That's actually where I got to work with my wife for the first time. And I respected her, at that point, as another soldier, and we became friends, at that point.

But we poured a lot of concrete down there. And I got—I like to do sculpture, in the spare time, and I got to build a little—or cut out a little Bucky Badger, which is the symbol for our Wisconsin Army National Guard. And we put that up on there, too. But basically, it was the whole two weeks was just building that fence, working hard, and playing hard.

In the evenings, we played a lot of board games, watched movies, and one night in particular, we got invited by the Air Force to—I guess this is the funny story kind of thing. Whenever you get—we had—we were drinking. And the Air Force—the funny thing was, the Air Force, apparently, was allotted a certain amount of money. If they have to sleep in tents, they get a little bit more money. It's like a little bonus. And we, as the Army, had scheduled for getting hotel rooms. However, because they didn't want to spend extra money on the project, the Air Force ended up getting our hotel rooms.

We got tents. And we knew we lost our hotel rooms to this particular Air Force unit. And when we were down there, the Air Force unit was also afforded a certain amount of extra money to have MWR [Morale, Welfare, and Recreation] funds. And they used those funds to buy beer. And they invited us, not knowing that we were, uh, you know, hard partiers, or something. And they said, "Yeah, we got a keg. If you sixty engineers want to come over and have fun with us, you're welcome to come over." And we cashed that keg in about an hour.

And my good friend, Terrick, then partook of one too many buy-one-get-one-free margaritas, and maxed out his debit card, or he just—he couldn't remember his PIN [Personal Identification Number] number. Anyway, he had to get a new credit card. He ended up having to go back to the tent early. And we all climbed up on the roof, because we were stupid kids. One of the guys—an Air Force guy—was following up behind us. And he ended up being fine, later on—I guess we got reports back that he made it. But he slipped and fell, and bashed his head on the concrete about fifteen feet below. So, we were worried about him at first, but he ended up being all right.

Anyway, back to the fun part of the story. We went back to our tent that we were staying at. And we were getting bunked out, racked out for the evening. And one of the random NCOs that we didn't know from Adam, you know, he wasn't part of our unit, but he was living in our tent, went to go get into his bunk, and—our cot. We were sleeping in cots. And Sergeant Tayo—or Specialist Tayo, at the time, had gotten into his bunk instead. And the guy just, you know, politely woke him up and said, "Hey, man. You're in my bunk." And Terrick stood up, and was like, "Oh, I'm sorry." But when he stood up, the guy—[laughs] the guy saw that Terrick was completely nude. [laughs] And, uh, [laughing] I guess Terrick liked to sleep nude in other people's cots.

So the guy didn't know what to do. And he didn't overreact. He didn't get all aggressive, or whatever. But you could imagine that he was kind of, uh, awestruck. And Terrick just kind of got up naked, and walked over to his bunk, found it, and went back to sleep.

Later on the next morning, we actually saw that he probably left the tent and went out walking to go to use the latrine, because there was bare footprints in the sand. So, we like to say that it was Terrick, but we're not sure.

So, that was our stint in Arizona. It was good. It was a good deployment. Or not deployment, a good annual training. Just two weeks, but it was a chance to see a different part of the country.

And it wasn't to keep the Mexican population out, like a lot of people say. And it was—we were told, you know, we get the motivational speech that it's counterterrorism, counter-drug, that kind of thing. So, it's securing our borders from more than just people. It's terrorism and drugs. That kind of stuff.

[05:16]

Koshick: All right. Are there any other fun stories or anything you'd like to share?

McCormick: No, I think that about covers it. That's about as much as I can share.

Koshick: All right. Well, thank you for doing this interview. And if there is nothing else, we'll call it done.

Koshick: Thank you.

[05:38]

[End of McCormick.OH1974_file2] [End of interview]