

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jim Frazier

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember – War on Terror Oral History project

Interview # VRT-A-L-2019-007

James Frazier, a Gold Star father whose son Jacob was killed in a firefight 2003 while operating in Afghanistan, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember – War on Terror* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Feb 7 & Feb 26, 2019 Location: Midway Village Museum, Rockford, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: Patty Maynor, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:03 + 2:42 + 1:30 / 2.05 + 2.7 + 1.5 = 6.25 hrs.

Session 1: Jim's early life and family and work experiences through the late 1990s

Session 2: Jacob's Air Force experiences, his death in combat and the funeral

Session 3: Jim's struggles with Jacob's death, divorce and a life changing moment

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on May 21, 2019.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

© 2019 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

James Frazier, Veterans Remember, VRT-A-L-2019-007

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: James (Jim) Frazier was born in June 1949 in Elmhurst, Illinois and grew up there, graduating from York Community High School in 1967. He then enrolled in Indiana State University, but after one semester he became eligible for the draft. Frazier enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves and never deployed to Vietnam. By 1973 he was co-owner and manager of The Brassery, a bar and restaurant on Chicago's Michigan Avenue. In 1978 he and his wife Joyce moved to Elgin, where he was owner and operator of a bar. Over the next five years they had five children, the oldest being Jacob. In 1983 Jim left the high stress world of bar ownership behind and began working for Safety Kleen, staying with the company until 2002.

Jim son's Jacob graduated from high school in 1997 and enlisted in the Illinois Air National Guard the following year, joining the 169th Air Support Operations Squadron stationed in Peoria, Illinois. Jake was trained as a Tactical Air Combat Controller, and soon began taking additional training, eventually becoming qualified to serve with an Army Special Forces 'A' Team. In January 2003 he deployed to Afghanistan and joined a Special Forces 'A' team then operating in Helmand Province. On March 29, 2003 Jacob was killed during an ambush of the vehicle convoy in which he rode. Jim received a call informing him of the incident that day, and the funeral occurred several days later. Jim talks about that experience in detail, and about his subsequent struggles with his son's death. He began drinking heavily and suffered from PTSD type symptoms. During this time he also attended funerals of other Illinoisans killed in combat, often along with Lt. Governor Pat Quinn. Jim and Joyce divorced in 2008 and his despair deepened. In 2009 he attempted suicide, but then asked for God's help in curing his alcoholism, a turning point in his life. Since 2009 Jim has continued to help Gold Star families, and at the time of the interview was northern Illinois coordinator for Survivor Outreach Services. He finds great satisfaction in helping others cope with their own loss and pain.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Jacob (Jake) Frazier; Gold Star families; War on Terror; combat operations in Afghanistan; Special Forces A Team; 9-11; PTSD; Survivor Outreach Services; 169th Air Support Operations Squadron, Peoria, Illinois; attempted suicide; bar and restaurant operations; Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn; Barack Obama; Gov. Rod Blagojevich; Mayor Richard M. Daley; election night for President Obama in Grant Park; Memorial Day ceremonies; Adjutant General David Harris

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955