

**Carleen Calypso
Veteran**

**Mike Russert
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Interviewers**

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Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and birth place please?

CC: My full name is Carleen Calypso. My date of birth is 3-28-1970 and I was born in Nyack, New York.

Q: What was your educational background prior to you entering service?

CC: College, I had attended college and have a liberal arts degree.

Q: Okay, what college?

CC: I started out in Oswego, but it was really cold, so I graduated from excelsior.

Q: Alright, why did you decide to go into the army national guard?

CC: It's a transition, I joined the army at 19 to pay for college and I was in a field hospital. I was in seven fourth field hospitals in Orangeburg, New York. When they shut down services. I then became an ambulance. A 242 ambulance. That was in the National Guard. I subsequently left that and became 8-8 mike with a 15/16 mike.

Q: What do you mean by that?

CC: Left that invoice.

Q: So, you started out in the field in the medical area?

CC: Yes, I was a medic.

Q: Where did you go for your medical training?

CC: San Antonio. Houston, Texas.

Q: Okay, and how long was that school?

CC: At the time, I think the school was three and a half months.

Q: Okay, where about did you take your basic training?

CC: I did basic at Fort McClellan, Alabama. I was one of the MP on the chemical floor.

Q: How did you like it down there?

CC: It was the first time I had been that far south. I went in December, It was warmer there in Fort Nix.

Q: Okay, at some point you went to office candidate school?

CC: After ten years of military service with no upward mobility, I was in a unit as a tractor trailer driver. It was difficult to obtain E5 and E6 slots, so my commander at the time decided that I had characteristics of a leader and submitted my package to go to OCS. I graduated in the class of 2000.

Q: And you went to Asthma, Yes?

CC: Yes, I did. I did OCS in Northdrill for I think it was 16 months.

Q: How was that training compared to your other military training? Was it more difficult?

CC: It was physically demanding because by that time I was 30. And you usually meet young Lieutenant coming out of ROTC or West Point that are 22 and I had a family so it was difficult but not impossible as you see. I had some pretty good TAC officers, who I still see today.

Q: When did you receive your bars?

C: I was the class of 2000. I actually had a problem with my security clearance which is ironic because I am now a military intelligence officer. But I had to wait to get my gold bars until I think I was March of 2001 when my security clearance came through.

Q: What was your first assignment as a Lieutenant?

CC: I worked at the 27th layout as the assistant to the assistant S3 and the recat the area of operation center in the field of war. The recat would be the rear.

Q: What did you do basically?

CC: Basically we assembled training schedule. We did attend War Fighting exercise in Grafton feeder, Germany. Where we got the feel for what an intelligence would be doing an operation center.

Q: Now how did you go over there? Did you fly commercially or?

CC: Yes, we flew commercial. I think it was Delta it was a commercial flight.

Q: How was were you in Germany?

CC: Two weeks

Q: Did you ever get to tour around.

CC: Yes, I actually had a chance to go to Czechia and Slovakia and spent a day in Prague. We got an opportunity to experience different cultures, eat different food and speak to the American soldiers that were safe in Germany.

Q: okay, where did you go after your Germany assignment?

CC: After the 273, I was with the 642 MI battalion and subsequently I went to obesity which is in Fort Huachuca, Arizona and that was about 5 and a half month of training.

Q: what were some of the things you learned to do there?

CC: As a NY officer I have to be able to plan, supervise as well as analyze intelligence both coming in and producing the same native products that we think something to tell inform the officers in charge. That is a way of informing them of enemy capabilities are how to employ our assets to win a battle.

Q: When did you know, in your form you said that a unit or a group of people that have impressed you the most was a Rhode Island unit or detachment.

CC: Yes, we had a, as a 642 MI one of our assets GAV Ray Surveillance the LRSD. And I met a bunch of individuals, 53 to be exact. Prior to us going to war. We had previously trained at War Fighter. They have excellent soldier. These soldiers are the 18th airborne ranger qualified soldiers that were attached to us and assets and there is long range

surveillance. They would be deployed deep into enemy territory and provide intelligence for us. What impressed me the most about them was their determination to get the job done, their discipline in what they do. These soldier were subject matter experts in most of the weapons that the military has. They keep themselves both mentally and physically and as an officer I don't often get a chance to deal with infantry soldiers and that's what they were, you know. 100 Percent 11 Bravo, the majority of the people not only infantry qualified but they were ranger qualified and several of them were Special Forces. Find their perseverance in the face of the battle was unbelievable. They had to do from insurmountable odds, as in where there was place to do in duty the different port operating bases that occupy or they stayed in and the different maneuvers that they had to complete.

Q: Now you ended up going in Iraq.

CC: Yes

Q: Can you talk about your deployment?

CC: While in Kuwait, waiting to convoy to Iraq.

Q: Now how did you get to Kuwait?

CC: We flew commercial airlines to Kuwait

Q: Was this from Germany or?

CC: no back in the United States.

Q: So you went out to Arizona then you

CC: came back, I went out to Arizona the summer of '03 came back the December of '03 and was activated May of '04

Q: Are you with the 42nd division?

CC: Yes, still am.

Q: So you went out to the Kuwait first?

CC: Yes, we flew out of Kuwait and during that time period it was a 15 to 21 day time period. We were acclimated to the weather for one and do specialized training, you see rules of engagement for Iraq at that time my battalion commander was alerted that they needed an officer to back them at the warehouse operation center. So I reported there. They were, they were at Kuwait City the port at foreign city and I subsequently linked up with them and Speicher which was awkward.

Q: What did you think of, what were your impressions when you got into the Middle East and what were your impressions of the area?

CC: It's not what you read in the books, as an intelligence officer one of the way I prepared for there was learning as much as I could. The language, the people, the population, the area as a whole, the weather would lines and it's defiantly different than what you learn in the books. It's an experience. Different noises and sand your hear and knowing that you are in a hostile territory. Now Kuwait wasn't considered hostile but just knowing that eventually you would go into a hostile was different.

Q: Was your base under fire at all ever?

CC: no, not in Kuwait.

Q: No, I mean when you got into tree.

CC: Yes, where spiked is a supply, main supply port, we had traps come down to the main supply port and back insurgents know why that there were friendly forces receiving supplies. We see the direct fire several times sometimes depending on the time of year. Obviously for my dog and some of their more religious holidays we received more fire.

Q: Now what were your living conditions like? Where did you live?

CC: I lived in a Choo. Which is a contained housing unit. It's a trailer cut in half. Myself and another female officer lived there. Space was limited.

Q: Where did the enlisted live?

CC: They lived there as well. The Choo's for them had more people in them. There were also hard body units. Building the enlisted occupied. Towards the end of our tour we lived in GP lodges, tents in order to turn over units to do the war.

Q: Do you know the origin of the name Spiker?

CC: Yes, as a matter of fact that was one of the things I was tasked with doing. Evidently the name spiker came from a fighter pilot that was shot down in that area.

Q: Did you ever encounter any spiders, scorpions, snakes or anything like that?

CC: Yes, I was appointed with a camelback spider, very strong looking spider not the, here were used to daddy longlegs and being in Arizona. I never saw it while attending school there. My neighbors complained of the tarantula. I was not privy to the tarantula but I did get a chance to see the camelback spider. It's scary in nature. Just its appearance is weird. It looked like it had a lot more appendages then you would think.

Q: how did you adjust to the sand?

CC: Very, very hard to adjust to the weather. I was lucky I worked at night so the minority of my time was spent indoors in the air condition and it was workable. However the heat was unbearable and I was one of the few that did not have to sit in a Humvee. So I was able to survive the heat, it is unbelievable what the average soldier out there on patrol has to put up with, with the heat. At times the temperatures did get to 230 degrees, easy.

Q: Now did you have to almost continuously consume water?

CC: Yes, we were consuming at least 2-3 liters of water a day just to stay hydrated and at some points it was the crystal lights and just water because you sweat and perfuse constantly changing our under clothes with the heat.

Q: How about the sand?

CC: The sand, I was lucky enough to be in two sandstorms, unbelievable. You think. I don't know if you've seen the movie return of the mummies, with the sand. The way they portrayed the sand exactly the way it was. It comes fast and furious, it was able to penetrate the window sills that were sealed shut and it was that coarse sand that you see on the beach. It was a fine silk sand. We had sand everywhere all sorts of unmentionable places, at times. Unbelievable.

Q: How about the food?

CC: The food was different and we had gaiters, KBR, and while I have to say they did try

to provide us with variation for menu, but at the end of the day, whether it's 21 or 14 the food gets old real quick. In all fairness their trying to feed thousands of soldiers in a short amount of their time, so many of them credit for attempting to, and they did provide us with fresh fruit and vegetables which were very important. The focus at times were overcooked and just no mom's home cooking.

Q: What about entertainment?

CC: We did have several venues of entertainment. We at the time that I was there, Jessica Simpson and her husband come, we had several celebrities as well as politicians come for a visit. We had; I think it was the playboy bunnies as well as wrestling come to provide entertainment for us. They provided movies and DVDs for us to entertain ourselves.

Q: Was there a little theater where you could watch movies or just watched them individually?

CC: I had an NWR, several NWR's within the 5 for soldiers to go in rent movies or watch movies. For the majority of us, we had laptops or portable DVD players. We were able to listen to music too. Play movies on our own.

Q: How was the TX system was that adequate or no?

CC: like everything else it's a work in progress. When it first got there, we had a small PX. And they eventually built a bigger one but again as far too accommodating the amount of soldiers that are actual on file with the PX capabilities.

Q: How many soldiers would you say was on the base?

CC: I would say at any given time there was at least 3500 to 5000 soldiers because we constantly had individuals coming into pick up supplies. Spykor was also point of deep our condition. So he had soldiers coming in flying in so that they could get flights out of the country or flights to different parts of the country. So we had a constant flack of soldiers.

Q: Now being in an intelligence unit, how did you gather intelligence?

CC: We had a Zipper net access, I was lucky, I went to our with 22 west pointers. We were active duty, who had already been in theater and some of them were currently in theater by my time, so I was able to prove an abundance of information plus the lonely civilian's detachment that I had spoken to, were able to provide me with a lot of real world human intelligence.

Q: What about American civilians over there? Did you ever encounter them?

CC: Yes, they did have many American contractors and they did provide somewhat intelligence as what they saw when they were within the population and what produces they were implementing when their on course.

Q: Now you had a family, your own family?

CC: yes, I am a widow, I have a small child. A 10 year old

Q: so he was or she I don't know

CC: She

Q: she was about 8 or so when you went over?

CC: Yes

Q: So how did she react to that?

CC: It was hard for her

Q: and you?

CC: it was difficult for us, for her, for me, for the both of us. Prior to me being deployed it was the first time we had been separated for so long, a longtime. Like I said I'm a widow, my husband passed away when she was three. So we developed a close bond with one another. I normally take her to my 80's and have her stay in another room, hotel or somewhere nearby. I took her down with me to our SI. The separation of 18 months was the deployment was difficult on us. Emotionally it was very tough.

Q: Now did you get to come home on leave at all? Like holiday through your tour?

CC: Yes, I did come home in June of '05 for two weeks

Q: Was it really difficult to go back again?

CC: defiantly difficult going into Iraq. You didn't know what to expect and while you were sad that you were leaving home it was the anticipation of actually going somewhere and making a difference. Going home seeing my family and then have to get back on a plane was one of the toughest things I had to do because I now know what I was getting back to and it was hard.

Q: now when you went back, did you go back with another group of soldiers or just got on a commercial flight? And headed

CC: we went back to another group. What they do is you fly into Atlanta and from Atlanta we all boarded a plane and flew into. In general, it was the same individuals they flew out with that you were flying back with. We all had that 2 weeks.

Q: How did you feel about the mission in Iraq?

CC: As in what?

Q: The overall mission of your unit. Do you think you were successful in your mission?

CC: I think we were more successful than the first ID or then the one on one sense that the 42nd are national guardsmen's and we were comparably older than the unit that we replaced or the unit that replaced them and I senses that the people from country studies have more respect for the religion than younger did.

Q: Did you yourself have much contact with the local people?

CC: No I did not. The closest I got was their country nationalist and the Iraqis that they deployed to clean our fobs but I was not lucky enough to be outside the fob for long.

Q: Now most of your, I shouldn't say most of them but did where some of your military intelligence staff able to speak the language? Is that now they were able to gather some of the intelligence or did most of the Iraqis that they encountered speak English?

CC: Yes and no. We were encouraged to speak or learn the language prior to our deployment. We took classes and did the intermediate learning. The majority of the Iraqis that we did come into contact with did speak English or learned enough English to speak to us. And our intelligence was driven by computer data bases, individuals inputting information. As we see the new flash report in the field, they would include it in the intelligence and I would see the data CID per.

Q: okay now you have used the term CID per a couple times now. What does that stand for?

CC: It's a secret internet access that we used.

Q: Can't talk about it right? You said one of the experiences that left the greatest impressions was briefing two generals. Tell about it and why.

CC: As a Lieutenant you dream of the day that a general would ask for your opinion and I had the fortune to brief ADC, the division commander for support. He was General Sullivan, it was his, and he was the one that I briefed every morning. And we had a guest visitor, another 1 star general. That morning as I was briefing the staff but as you come up to the podium and the staff G4, G1, G3, the general chief of the staff are standing in front of you and as a Lieutenant it's your dream because that's what you train for. You want to be able to tell the general this is what has occurred X urgent activity and this is why what I think and what had transpired was because I was getting Intel from the field. The soldiers themselves sometimes, I get to preview the information that the actual G2 over another 5 did not have yet and at one point of briefing the general says to me "well lieutenant that's not what the G2 said" I said "Well sir, this is the world according to Lieutenant Calypso". And I said how often a Lieutenant is going to be able to say that to a general. It is something I am going to remember because I said that to two one star generals.

Q: How did they react to that?

CC: They smiled because I know they were probably saying what is the Lieutenant but then about 24 hours later, the actual G2 was putting out the same information, I just lucked out because I knew the guy who had sent the information.

Q: When you returned home, to the states. What was your assignment, we know you are still with the 42nd.

CC: I am currently the assistant to combat aviation

Q: What does that mean?

CC: Basically the same thing but I am doing it for individuals who pilot aircraft as well, I'm providing the same information it's just that I'm providing in detail account information how the weather or any capable could affect the aircraft. Because I don't know if you have been watching the news but we have had several helicopter shot down, so that important.

Q: So you are now discussing how you would change tactics with helicopters?

CC: Yes.

Q: One of the, the you mention when you went to Kuwait is, I meant to ask this question earlier. You talked about learning the rules of engagements.

CC: Yes.

Q: How do you think they, How do you think they help you and hinder you during a mission?

CC: Like I said, I was not privy enough to be outside in the population. To me, the rules of engagement are very hinderous to an American soldier. You have to wait to be fired upon. The average individual to safe guard themselves is not waiting for that threat, danger would be presented from posing a threat to them.

Q: Now did you carry a weapon on you at base?

CC: At all times. Yes,

Q: Did you wear body armor and helmet?

CC: Yes.

Q: What did you carry as a weapon?

CC: I carried an m16

Q: Ok, look back you went into service at 1989, you are still in. How do you think things have changed in the guard and how do you think you have changed.

CC: Things have changed quickly in the military because women are being tasked to do different fields that was previously closed to us. I read that they are trying to get a women into combat. How it stayed the same I don't know. I don't think I have been in long enough to see how it stayed the same to me to see a big difference but women are different being promoted more and into leadership position and I have seen more female leaders which is important.

Q: How long do you think you will stay in?

CC: I'll probably stay in until my brother is done with college. Probably another 10 years. Hopefully before I'm 60.

Q: Are you looking at grad school? Are you going to use educational opportunity?

CC: Yes, I'm looking on how I can apply my daily into a degree.

Q: Do you have anything else you would like to add?

CC: No, I just think this was so cool.

Q: Ok, thank you.