

Interview with Josh McDowell March 13, 2007

Georgeann Jukuri: Would you please tell me what your birth date is?

Josh McDowell: 6-6-85

GJ: And your rank in the military is?

JM: Specialist

GJ: What kind of specialist?

JM: Just specialist.

GJ: Okay, where did you grow up?

JM: I grew up in a small town called Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

GJ: Okay, were you from a military family?

JM: Nope, just decided to.

GJ: How did you decide to get to Northern?

JM: Uhm, I don't know really. I like the area and a lot of my family is from the UP so (unable to decipher).

GJ: Okay, what's your major?

JM: History

GJ: Do you have a minor?

JM: Not yet

GJ: How did you get into the military science program? Are you in it or...?

JM: I'm not really contracted, but I kind of just do things to keep current on what's going on.

GJ: About your deployment to Iraq...when did you find out you were going and what kind of feelings did you have about it?

JM: Uhm, I found out in the spring of '05, that we should be getting ready to go. I didn't care cause I knew we would be going soon and I was just kind of waiting. In June I had my orders and in August we started training.

GJ: Where did you go to train? And what was that like?

JM: Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. I dunno, some days it was kind of boring, I guess some days were kind of exciting. I was just trying to get done with training so we could go over and start our year.

GJ: Where were you stationed in Iraq?

JM: A place called Camp Taji. It was a little town called Taji, so we just called it Camp Taji.

GJ: What was that like? Was it dangerous there or...?

JM: Uhm, not really. A few times there'd be mortar attacks but, it just depended on the time of the year it was, seemed like there was more during Ramadan than anything else.

GJ: What kind of daily routines do you have?

JM: It varied because for awhile I was in tower duty, which was just sitting around the perimeter, sitting in towers, observing what was going on in my sector. And there would be a shift change every 8 hours and for a month you'd be on that shift, so it'd be like a 6-2 and a 2-10 and then a 10-6 in the morning. And then after a few months I was put on a MSR route clearance, when you go look for IEDs and that would start at 5 in the morning and done at about 10 and then do it again at 4 in the afternoon until 8 at night.

GJ: What were your living conditions there? Were they pretty good or what?

JM: It was nice because it had been a few years so they had it set up so we were staying in these old military barracks on a bed and just a little cubicle space that we had to ourselves.

GJ: Any particular events that happened that stood out to you?

JM: The elections.

GJ: What was that like?

JM: I got to sit there in my tower and watch people go and vote. They were really excited about it, it seemed like.

GJ: Okay, how long were you in Iraq for?

JM: One year

GJ: One year, okay. And when it came time to leave, how did you feel about that?

JM: I was really excited

GJ: How about your other friends in the army and stuff?

JM: We were all excited to go because we were like our times up and we get to go back and see our families and friends again.

GJ: Were you going to NMU before you got sent over?

JM: Yes, yes I was going to NMU before I got sent over.

GJ: And how is it being back now? How have things changed?

JM: Well it's a little bit different getting back in the swing of things. I guess, I don't know.

GJ: It's just different. I guess, any last comments about your time over there?

JM: No, not really.

GJ: Okay, that's it. Thanks