

ALEX LUCHSINGER

Assistant Professor of Communications

WAR IN IRAQ
(2003 - PRESENT)
LUCHSINGER SERVED - 2005

Marine Corps Security Battalion

The challenge and discipline of the Marine Corps led to Alex Luchsinger's enlisting in the military at age 18.

Within three years, Luchsinger was deployed to al-Anbar Province, Iraq, as a soldier in a Security Battalion. It was his mission to protect the convoys traveling throughout the province.

"From day one in Iraq it was very intense," Luchsinger said. "It was a very violent year ... we would have IEDs on every single convoy."

In 2005, during a security patrol in the city of Khan al-Baghdadi, Luchsinger's vehicle was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device. The explosion resulted in a traumatic brain injury, the effects of which he still feels today.

"I still have some lingering effects like headaches and dizziness," Luchsinger said. "But overall the recovery has been fine."

For his injuries, Luchsinger was awarded the Purple Heart. He then retired from the Marines in 2006, but that was not the last time he would be in combat. After earning his undergraduate and master's degree, Luchsinger was hired by CBS News.

As a journalist embedded with the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines, Luchsinger was deployed to Helmut Province, Afghani-



Above: Alex Luchsinger speaks to students in his "Television News Reporting" class Nov. 6.



Left: Luchsinger stands on top of a Iraqi police station in al-Anbar Province during a security patrol in 2005.

stan, in 2011. This deployment caused him to reflect on civil-military relations.

"There is a big gulf between the veteran and the civilian populations," Luchsinger said. "A sociologist at school once said to me, 'When a democracy goes to war, everyone should share the burden.' And that has just not

been the case."

After Afghanistan, Luchsinger returned to the United States where he is currently finishing his first semester at Elon University as an assistant professor of communications.

"I've really liked Elon so far," Luchsinger said. "It has been a good fit for me here."

1984

1990

2005

2011

2017

RODNEY PARKS

University Registrar

GULF WAR
(1990 - 1991)
PARKS SERVED - AUG. 2, 1990 - FEB. 28, 1991

Navy Hospital Corps

As the son of a Vietnam veteran and a lead miner, Rodney Parks was faced with two choices at the age of 18 — the mines or the military. The Sunday after his high school graduation in 1988, Parks was on a train to boot camp.

In the Navy, Parks became a hospital corpsman specialist and was deployed to Italy where his tour was cut short by the start of Operation Desert Storm in 1990. Parks was redeployed to Egypt where he served throughout the majority of the Gulf War.

At the end of the conflict, Parks was sent to an army hospital in Germany to aid the wounded coming directly from the frontlines.

"We didn't have a lot of casualties from the fighting, but we had a lot of injuries," Parks said. "The wounds were pretty vicious — especially the gunshot wounds. We would do the best to piece them back together and send them on their way."

While serving in the hospital led to long hours of stress and focus, Parks knew he was making a difference.

"Being there and just helping really made you feel that you were performing a good duty for the work that you were doing. It was valuable," Parks said.

Following the end of the Gulf War, Parks taught at the school of health sciences at the Naval Acade-



Top: Rodney Parks speaks to his "Wilderness and Adventure Therapy" class around a bonfire at the ropes course Nov. 6.

Bottom: Parks waves in front of The Great Pyramid Cheops (also known as The Great Pyramid of Giza) in Egypt in 1991.

my and later went on to work in the registrar's office at the University of Georgia. His work at UGA led him to Elon University, where he now works as the university registrar, assistant to the provost and an assistant professor.

WILL MCGOWEN

MBA student

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN
(2001 - PRESENT)
MCGOWEN SERVED - 2011 - 2012

Army 4th Infantry Division

Will McGowen had always felt the call to serve in the military. And after 9/11, he knew it was a call he needed to answer.

"I was at a very pivotal age for Sept. 11, but really for the long drawn out wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," McGowen said. "I felt the country needed as many people as they could get, and I would rather go then someone else go. I was young, I was able-bodied, I was single. It just made sense to me."

As a captain with the 4th Infantry Division, McGowen was in charge of a combat outpost in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. For nine months he faced the dangers of insurgency.

"It was crazy. We would do daily and nightly patrols to try to reduce the hold that the enemy force had on the local population," McGowen said. "We worked a lot with the police and the Afghan National Army, training them to take a lead in everything we were doing."

After returning from Afghanistan, McGowen began his job search and found Glen Raven, a fabric manufacturing and marketing company where he now works as a manufacturing manager.

On top of work, family and his reserve service, McGowen is also pursuing a Master in Business Administration at Elon.

"I chose Elon because I wanted the in-person learning," Mc-



Top: Will McGowen listens during his MBA "Management and Organizational Behavior" class Oct. 30.

Bottom: While deployed in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, McGowen poses in full combat gear.

Gowen said. "I've had some really good classes, good professors, learned from other students and am looking forward to continuing my education."

McGowen is aiming to graduate from Elon with his MBA in May 2019.