

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
Historical Services Branch

Interview NGB-11

INTERVIEW OF

CSM MIGUEL CRUZADO
1st Battalion, 69th Infantry

CONDUCTED BY

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National Guard Bureau

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Transcript reviewed and corrections made by MAJ Melnyk.
Editorial clarifications are indicated by brackets []

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 **MAJ MELNYK:** This is MAJ Les' Melnyk, Army
3 National Guard Historian for the National Guard Bureau.

4 I am speaking with CSM Miguel Cruzado, that's
5 C-r-u-z-a-d-o. He is the Command Sergeant Major of the
6 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry.

7 This interview is taking place on the 20th of
8 September 2001 at the Regimental Armory of the 69th
9 Infantry, which is at Lexington Avenue and 25th
10 Streets.

11 CSM Cruzado, you have read and signed the oral
12 history access agreement, stated that you have no
13 reservations about any of this material being used by
14 the Army however it chooses; is that correct?

15 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** Could you briefly begin by
17 telling me a little about your military career, what
18 you've done, how you've gotten into your present
19 assignment?

20 **CSM CRUZADO:** Sure. I am a soldier of 26
21 years of service, all of which I've spent all in the

1 69th Infantry.

2 I walked through the doors of the 69th
3 Regiment Armory in November of 1975, and here we are
4 standing in September of 2001, and I still remain here.

5 I rose through the ranks of private to now
6 being the command sergeant major, very aggressively and
7 on a fast track.

8 I am presently an AGR [Active Guard/Reserve]
9 soldier, doing a dual job of command sergeant major, as
10 well as operations. I've been AGR since September of
11 1983 and still currently hold that position.

12 **MAJ MELNYK:** Where do you live?

13 **CSM CRUZADO:** I also live on Fort Hamilton
14 Military Installation, and, also, I am the Assistant
15 Mayor for Community Affairs, in assisting in family
16 affair issues for Fort Hamilton.

17 **MAJ MELNYK:** Thank you. And Fort Hamilton is
18 located at the base of the Verrazano Bridge in
19 Brooklyn.

20 **CSM CRUZADO:** That's correct.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** So you're a fairly quick commute

1 in from Brooklyn to --

2 **CSM CRUZADO:** I am about a 30 minute drive and
3 a 45 minute train ride from this location.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** Could you take us to the events?
5 Where were you on the morning of September 11? How
6 did you become aware of the attack? What were your
7 first actions?

8 **CSM CRUZADO:** Sure. On Monday, September 10,
9 LT Flynn, who happens to be the operations officer,
10 asked me to take him to Fort Dix to conduct an on
11 ground reconnaissance.

12 **MAJ MELNYK:** LT Flynn is the AGR assistant
13 operations officer.

14 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct.

15 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yes.

16 **CSM CRUZADO:** He asked me to take him to Fort
17 Dix to conduct an on ground reconnaissance of some
18 trench lines of range 59E.

19 Approximately 8:48 in the morning, on Tuesday
20 morning, the 11th of September, we have just exited the
21 Lincoln Tunnel, when LT Flynn, looking over his left-

1 hand side, noticed that the tower was on fire.

2 At that time, we didn't know what was
3 happening. The tower was just on fire. We thought it
4 was just a normal fire.

5 However, it is a rush hour in the morning. We
6 weren't able to stop. So we continued to travel.

7 Approximately 15-20 minutes later, it appears
8 that the second tower now had some sort of explosion.
9 At this time, we have passed the toll plaza, which
10 traffic immediately came to almost a standstill.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** This is a toll plaza on the New
12 Jersey Turnpike.

13 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct.

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** To head south.

15 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct. Which we
16 noticed immediately the traffic heading north in bound
17 to New York City came almost to a standstill.

18 We didn't know it was a terrorist attack at
19 the time. We just thought that there had to have been
20 some type of fire that caused the second tower to go on
21 fire.

1 So being that the traffic was congested on the
2 opposite side, we opted to continue to go to Fort Dix
3 on our mission.

4 Halfway through our trip, listening to the
5 radio and the news, we understood that there had been
6 some aircrafts that had crashed and possibly terrorist
7 attack.

8 We continued on our trip to Fort Dix. Upon
9 getting to Fort Dix, we checked in with the 50th
10 Brigade Headquarters at Fort Dix, which was on alert at
11 the time, and the DOD police.

12 At that time, we did a quick reconnaissance.
13 We tried to gain some assistance by the DOD police to
14 try to get back, thinking that our unit would be
15 mobilized.

16 At that time, we didn't get any help or we
17 couldn't find anyone to escort us down. We took it
18 upon ourselves to head back to our units, being that he
19 is the operations officer and I am the operations
20 sergeant, thinking that if our unit was to be
21 mobilized, which we had a very good idea we would, our

1 assistance and experience of this facility would be
2 useful.

3 We made our way down through the Jersey
4 Turnpike, until we got to Exit 11, where they were
5 diverting all traffic off of the Turnpike and it was
6 shut down.

7 We talked to state troopers and all sorts of
8 police agencies that had blocked off the turnpike.
9 They were very cooperative, because we were in a
10 military GSA vehicle, as well as we had ID and
11 uniforms.

12 It took us approximately five to six hours to
13 get into New York City, because the Lincoln Tunnel was
14 closed.

15 However, we managed to use all angles, tried
16 the Midtown Tunnel, we tried the Holland Tunnel, and,
17 last, but not least, they tried to put us in Fort Lee,
18 where all the rescue vehicles were being staged.

19 We opted not to do that because we knew that
20 our job and our place and business would be at our
21 armory.

1 We took it upon ourselves to ride on mini
2 shoulders or mini patches of grass, nearly driving
3 sideways until we got to the George Washington Bridge,
4 which is right next to Fort Lee.

5 At that time, we spoke to a captain of the
6 Port Authority and we explained to him what our
7 position was and what we thought that our building and
8 our facility would be used for.

9 He was very kind to get us an escort to get us
10 across the GW Bridge, which, at that time, we followed
11 that through the Holland River Drive, FDR Drive,
12 passing through many checkpoints, and, once, again, all
13 police agencies were very cooperative, knowing that the
14 National Guard, at that time, was activated by Governor
15 Pataki.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** What time did you get back to the
17 armory, about?

18 **CSM CRUZADO:** We got back to the armory
19 approximately three p.m. in the afternoon [on Sept.
20 11th], which entering the doors of this armory, we found
21 it to be in chaos.

1 There were all sorts of people in the armory,
2 soldiers coming in. We quickly, myself and LT Flynn,
3 took control of the situation, because the commander
4 and the executive officer were down in ground zero
5 making coordination from the actual site.

6 We mustered up approximately, on that day,
7 some 200 soldiers that voluntarily heard the radios or
8 telephonically, the units were calling them up, at this
9 location.

10 **MAJ MELNYK:** When you say 200, when does that
11 count -- when did you have that count, what time?

12 **CSM CRUZADO:** That count was early that
13 evening. We had approximately 200 soldiers already
14 that had been identified that were in the building or
15 inbound.

16 However, the telephonic alert was still in
17 effect, and soldiers were being called, as well as a
18 lot of our soldiers that worked for our civil service
19 workers were involved in the crisis in one way, fashion
20 or another through their jobs.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** So they couldn't get in, because

1 they were already down there as PD or firefighters.

2 **CSM CRUZADO:** Exactly. Upon the arrival of
3 the commander, Colonel [LTC] Slack, and MAJ Obergon,
4 the executive officer, they had some good information
5 and we were definitely on alert.

6 We were told to muster up as many people, and
7 we did that.

8 Taking one step back, some of the actions that
9 we took upon arrival here were security.

10 The building was quickly secured. All exits
11 were secured. The front of the building was fortified,
12 utilizing what we had, which was two and a half ton
13 trucks, blocking the entrance of the building.

14 HRA [New York City's Human Resources
15 Administration], which we have 175 female homeless in
16 our facility, were locked down. We took over their
17 entrance, as well, and the building was basically shut
18 down.

19 No one would be allowed in the building
20 without appropriate ID or had anything to do with
21 military, that is.

1 Sometime late that afternoon, early evening,
2 Mrs. O'Keefe, that's Rosemarie O'Keefe.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** O-K-e-e-f-e?

4 **CSM CRUZADO:** That's correct. She is the
5 Commissioner for the Mayor for Community Affairs,
6 walked into the facility with her staff and said that
7 the Mayor's office was taking over the building and
8 that we had two hours to vacate the building for -- and
9 this building was to be used as the family support
10 center, and we had two hours to do so.

11 Simultaneously, we had received, first, the
12 258th Infantry, which had started to stage here as well.

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** Field Artillery.

14 **CSM CRUZADO:** Field Artillery, that is.

15 **MAJ MELNYK:** So they arrived on their buses
16 from Jamaica.

17 **CSM CRUZADO:** From Jamaica Armory, somewhere
18 around 2100 hours at this time.

19 In addition to that, we had a company, Bravo
20 of the 105th Infantry, 27th Brigade, also at this
21 location, mustering up their personnel.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** That company has a detachment
2 that is stationed in this armory.

3 **CSM CRUZADO:** They have an intact company at
4 this armory of 100 soldiers. At this time, in the
5 building with the 258 FA here, the 69th Infantry, the
6 105th Infantry, on day one, we had approximately 600
7 plus soldiers in the facility, (inaudible) had four,
8 occupying and ready for their mission.

9 Mrs. O'Keefe from the Mayor's office said that
10 she needed to use the entire first floor, the basement,
11 to set up operations command centers for the police
12 department and comfort center.

13 At that time, she gave us two hours to vacate
14 those floors. We were told that the soldiers were to
15 report and they would be staging at the Harlem Armory.

16 That's the 369th Transportation out of Harlem, located
17 on 145th Street in Harlem.

18 We made coordination with the transportation
19 bus, MTA [Metropolitan Transportation Authority] of New
20 York City to have buses here to commute soldiers up
21 there.

1 Mrs. O'Keefe gave me the latitude to maintain
2 soldiers here from the 69th to augment her operations
3 for this facility.

4 At that time, we dispatched the entire 105th
5 Infantry, [and] the 258, to Harlem Armory.

6 Together with that time, also, we received an
7 additional company, which was Charlie Company of the
8 105th, which are also located in Jamaica Armory in
9 Queens.

10 They came here and they had gotten their
11 marching orders from the 27 Brigade that they were to
12 go to ground zero and start securing that area, which
13 they did.

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** So to your knowledge, the 258
15 went to Harlem and not downtown.

16 **CSM CRUZADO:** That's correct. The 258 and
17 Bravo of the 105th went to Harlem to stage there. The
18 Charlie Company of the 105th went to ground zero. [In
19 fact, B & C Companies, 105th Infantry and 1st Battalion,
20 258 FA all deployed to the vicinity of ground zero that
21 evening - MAJ Melnyk] The 69th stayed intact at this

1 location.

2 We utilized the second floor in the annex
3 building for staging and setting up our operations, as
4 well.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** The annex building is the rear
6 drill shed, the back half of the armory.

7 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** Somewhere around 0200 that
9 morning, Charlie of the 105th was pulled. We got our
10 marching orders that we were going in to ground zero.

11 We approximately got buses to get on ground
12 zero at 0600 that morning, which we went into the
13 Battery Park area. That is south of Manhattan, by the
14 Staten Island Ferry, to secure that area.

15 **MAJ MELNYK:** Did you accompany the troops?

16 **CSM CRUZADO:** No, I did not. I could not
17 accompany the troops. The commander himself, with his
18 staff, took the troops down.

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** I have interviewed others
20 regarding events down at ground zero. I want to follow
21 what you did. You generally stayed with the armory.

1 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** You have a unique viewpoint from
3 that, if you could follow that.

4 **CSM CRUZADO:** The armory is a historical site,
5 if you will.

6 **MAJ MELNYK:** It's actually a --

7 **CSM CRUZADO:** A landmark.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** It's a registered [national]
9 landmark.

10 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct. And being that
11 the -- some of these offices here have memorabilia that
12 are priceless, the value on them cannot be priced, the
13 commander had given me a mission to make sure that this
14 facility, that we augment the Mayor's office, as well
15 as try to interact with them to assist them as much as
16 possible, but to try to keep our facility, our armory
17 protected.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** Who did you have back here at the
19 armory to carry out that mission?

20 **CSM CRUZADO:** I was given approximately 25
21 soldiers, not only to augment them, but also to secure

1 the building and loading dock, elevators, which we did.

2 Interfacing with the police department, we
3 secured the building and we started receiving
4 donations, in conjunction with the Salvation Army and
5 all the volunteers.

6 Our soldiers here served many duties. Most of
7 them were security, more of which were dealing with the
8 supplies that were being staged at this area and then
9 further sent down to ground zero to support all the
10 personnel that were digging, with all sorts of goods,
11 that being from food, to water, to supplies, boots,
12 things of that nature, respirator masks, knee pads,
13 things of that nature, clothing.

14 On a daily basis, our job were to support,
15 support in every need, the needs here, the tempo, the
16 level of stress here, the human factor of all the
17 emotional stress here was at a very high level.

18 So, therefore, there was very little time to
19 react. There was only time to execute, and our
20 execution came based on the requirements that were laid
21 on us by the Mayor's office, as well as the police

1 department based on their needs.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** So who -- did you just react to
3 Mrs. O'Keefe's orders at this time? She took over the
4 facility essentially.

5 Could you describe that relationship? Who
6 else did you have to respond to?

7 **CSM CRUZADO:** Mrs. O'Keefe, being the
8 Commissioner of Community Affairs for the Mayor's
9 office, had a deputy commissioner as well as a project
10 officer, deputy commissioner.

11 Those three individuals were my direct contact
12 and only those three individuals were my direct
13 contact.

14 Also, at this location was the chief of police
15 of community affairs as well. Between those four
16 individuals and myself, we actually worked just about
17 every issue that this facility had.

18 There wasn't an issue that we had that we were
19 unable to handle. Some of the things that we really
20 were concerned with is, one, that we be prepared the
21 following day to start receiving family members at this

1 location, which were going to be registered and exposed
2 to any list that we had of survivors in hospital, as
3 well as confirmed deceased.

4 Our concern was that not only soldiers, but
5 all civilian agencies here, is to treat it with tender
6 care and make sure that we were compassionate to treat
7 people.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** At what point was this facility
9 opened, this family support or bereavement center, as
10 some people called it, opened up?

11 **CSM CRUZADO:** At 8:00 Thursday morning, the
12 13th. The 13th of September at 0800, we had
13 approximately three to four thousand people standing
14 around the facility.

15 They started from the stairs of the armory
16 located on Lexington Avenue, wrapping around the
17 building both on 25th and 26th Street, heading towards
18 Park Avenue.

19 Once they started letting the people in, we
20 had approximately 2,000 seats staged on the drill shed
21 floor to register those.

1 By mid day on the 13th, once again, that line
2 outside grew so large that at one time, both back parts
3 of the line met at Park Avenue.

4 There was approximately four, five thousand
5 people on the outside, two thousand people on the
6 inside sitting down, not to say the least of a good,
7 five, six, seven hundred personnel, staff, police
8 officers inside the building.

9 This location had approximately, at any given
10 time, eight to nine thousand people, whether they were
11 inside or outside, either working it or getting some
12 sort of information.

13 Our job as National Guardsmen and as a senior
14 NCOIC of the building, my job was to make sure that,
15 one, the function of the building, to assist that it
16 ran smoothly, that we can secure, and most of all, that
17 all personnel were taken care of, whether they were
18 guests or family members that were here to get some
19 information.

20 Our concern was that they were very well take
21 care of.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** You also had the responsibility,
2 though, of making sure that the troops downtown were
3 supported and they also slept in the armory at night.

4 **CSM CRUZADO:** That's correct.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** How was that handoff handled?
6 How was the interaction of the troops when they came
7 back from serving down in the --

8 **CSM CRUZADO:** Our soldiers, although they were
9 on a 12 hour shift, their shifts were more like 15
10 hours, because it actually took approximately about
11 three hours to do a battle handoff between the 69th
12 Infantry and the 258 FA.

13 The 258 FA basically was supposed to relieve
14 us at 2000 hours every evening. However, because we
15 had -- strategically we were set up from -- arrayed
16 around the Battery Park area, we could not do a total
17 battle handoff at the same time, so they were being
18 done by companies.

19 Our soldiers would approximately get here
20 somewhere between the hours of 2130 through 23, 2330,
21 which, at the time, on the second floor, in conjunction

1 with the volunteers of Salvation Army, we would feed
2 the soldiers in the second floor and bed them down
3 throughout the building in any little corner that we
4 could find in cots.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** Did you have enough cots
6 beginning on Wednesday night?

7 **CSM CRUZADO:** The Salvation Army was great.
8 All agencies were great. They took care of our
9 soldiers like they were heroes. They gave us food,
10 they gave us cots, they were there to comfort our
11 soldiers.

12 Our soldiers' morale was great. Our soldiers
13 really were into this. They're all New York City,
14 native New York City people. It's their city.

15 They were a little upset that they could not
16 dig in knee deep. They wanted to be more involved in
17 the digging aspect of it.

18 However, their primary job was security and,
19 in some instances, they had some opportunity to dig in.

20 They were only hurt that they were unable to
21 do -- not do more. We have certain soldiers that have

1 lost loved ones, family members, and friends at that
2 location, but even with that, the morale stayed strong.

3 The morale stayed strong because they saw that
4 the entire city had come together and they took it upon
5 themselves as one of their jobs, aid to civil
6 authorities, one of their state missions.

7 The knew that that's one of their missions and
8 they were prepared to do so and they did it very well.

9 So their morale at no time ever was down. As
10 the days grew, they got tired, but they were being fed
11 well. People were treating them great.

12 So the morale was very good.

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** What was it like for the soldiers
14 to come into the armory with all those thousands of
15 people in it?

16 **CSM CRUZADO:** Well, the ground zero had a
17 devastating look to it. It had a look of emptiness.
18 It had a look of something missing, something missing
19 like the Twin Towers.

20 Although they knew that the entire area was
21 devastated, they were focused. They were focused there

1 for one mission, and that was to secure.

2 Their mind was basically on securing the area
3 and making sure that those that were digging were not
4 disturbed or did not have any distractions, like
5 photographers or looters and things of that nature.

6 However, here at the armory, had a different
7 role. Here we had a human factor. Here, as we had
8 family members coming to this location, they came here
9 with all sorts of photographs of their loved ones,
10 their missings, and they were posted throughout the
11 entire outside on the facade of the building, ranging
12 anywhere from Park Avenue and 26th Street, east to
13 Lexington Avenue, along the front of the armory and
14 back wrapped around 25th Street up to Park Avenue.

15 They must be and still remain outside, a few
16 thousand photos of people. Not only that, when they
17 came into the building, our entire armory is saturated.
18 It's one big shrine of pictures. It's just -- it
19 appears like a big graveyard of pictures of people,
20 dead souls.

21 Soldiers, when they enter the building, it's

1 the only sad moments that they had. They seen family
2 members in tears, they've seen all the photographs up.

3 Family members approaching some of the
4 soldiers and asking them did they see their loved ones.
5 That was very hurtful to some of our soldiers.

6 Not being able to answer those questions, they
7 would have to just walk away, or else they would break
8 in tears.

9 Our soldiers found it extremely hard to come
10 back into this armory, where they met the human factor,
11 one of which was a very sad one, still remains to be
12 so, and one of which they were not prepared to do, one
13 as to just face those that were grieving and ones that
14 had lost people.

15 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right. Describe some of the
16 things that they asked you to do specifically in order
17 to support the bereavement center operations.

18 They did a lot of things here in terms of
19 briefing families, making lists, collecting DNA
20 samples, stockpiling supplies.

21 What role did your soldiers have in assisting

1 in that?

2 **CSM CRUZADO:** Our soldiers, in conjunction
3 with some of the volunteers, were basically responsible
4 to set up the entire operations.

5 As tables and chairs started arriving from all
6 over the place, the first donor was Baruch College [a
7 branch of the City University of New York located near
8 the 69th Regiment armory], with 2,000 chairs and tables,
9 our soldiers running the loading dock, quickly, under
10 the supervision from the Mayor's office, of course,
11 took their plans, their layout, and set up tables and
12 chairs tablecloths, set up those sorts of things.

13 As computers and all sorts of electronics
14 started arriving, their job was to assist also the
15 police department and the various agencies that were
16 here in receiving those goods and assisting them in
17 setting up the various rooms that they took over.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** They also, before all this, they
19 came in and laid down carpet on the entire drill shed
20 floor.

21 **CSM CRUZADO:** That is correct. There was

1 carpeting laid on the entire drill shed floor, to
2 include air conditioning being pumped into the
3 building, because of the extreme heat that this
4 building was going through.

5 Basically, our soldiers were in the need and
6 at the reach of all the agencies that were here. What
7 they asked, we did.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** What kind of feedback have you
9 gotten? The operation has since moved to Pier 94.
10 When did that occur and what kind of feedback have you
11 gotten from the Mayor's office?

12 **CSM CRUZADO:** As a matter of fact, last night,
13 Wednesday night, I ran across Mrs. O'Keefe, not knowing
14 -- it's surprising how small this city is.

15 Mrs. O'Keefe, which is, once again, the
16 Commissioner in the Mayor's office, is a Brooklyn
17 native resident.

18 As I got off the train at 95th Street and 4th
19 Avenue in Brooklyn, I'm walking along, lost in my
20 thoughts, and on 97th Street, I run across a woman that
21 appears to be like Mrs. O'Keefe, and I yell out her

1 name and she slowly turned around and she recognized me
2 in civilian clothes.

3 She pulled out "Sergeant Major, what are you
4 doing in Brooklyn." We exchanged some information.
5 She told me that she had just come from Tiffany's
6 Diner. She wanted to just sit down and have a regular
7 plate of food.

8 She did not want to eat any more food as they
9 were being donated. She wanted to just be by herself.

10 I told her that I lived in Fort Hamilton.

11 She told me that they moved the operation to
12 Pier 94 because it's a much larger location, that a lot
13 more agencies can occupy the space in support of this
14 operation, able to receive a lot more family members
15 and do a lot of more private counseling, if you will.

16 Also, she told me that it was a good idea,
17 because the Mayor wanted to open New York City back up
18 on Monday morning and Lexington Avenue almost had come
19 to a halt, because all the double parked vehicles and
20 the media.

21 So in conjunction with that, that was the

1 decision to move it over there.

2 She actually expressed herself that she
3 couldn't have done it without the assistance of not
4 only our location, our armory, but the support of the
5 soldiers, that her heart came off and she gave me the
6 name of her assistant that should we ever need
7 something at this location, not to hesitate to call,
8 because she's never met soldiers or men like she's met
9 in this facility, that they extended to help the way
10 they did in such a short period of time.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** That's very moving. When did the
12 center move out?

13 **CSM CRUZADO:** The center started moving out on
14 Sunday evening at 2300 hours and by 0600 in the
15 morning, they already had the majority, 90 percent of
16 the action already moved throughout the night. They
17 worked moving it to Pier 94.

18 So by Monday morning, 0600 in the morning,
19 they were basically setting up at Pier 94.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** Sunday evening was the
21 battalion's last evening down on the site, too.

1 **CSM CRUZADO:** That's correct. Our battalion
2 was told to -- that they were going to be relieved and
3 by the 204th Engineers. So Sunday evening, we moved
4 the soldiers from the Battery Park area, brought them
5 back to the armory to now try to not only recap what we
6 have done, but try to restore ourselves, as well as our
7 facility.

8 On Monday afternoon or Monday evening,
9 sometime Monday afternoon to Monday evening, we started
10 transporting some of our soldiers back to our Long
11 Island units. We have three units out on Long Island,
12 Freeport, Bayshore and Huntington. That's our Bravo,
13 Charlie and Delta Company.

14 The bus company, MTA, was very helpful,
15 transporting our soldiers back. So we can account for
16 our equipment.

17 Before that happened, the battalion commander
18 met with all soldiers on the drill shed floor, sat them
19 down for a few minutes, and gave them a briefing, a
20 briefing thanking them of what they've done and how
21 they've reacted in supporting not only the city, but

1 the public and so on and so forth.

2 But the biggest message that the commander put
3 out there is that it's not over. It's not over because
4 the first mission was completed. Our mission and
5 warning order was given to us that we are to prepare,
6 prepare to support not only the city, but in the event
7 that the President did a Federal activation of
8 soldiers. [Note: LTC Slack's address to the troops was
9 recorded by MAJ Melnyk and is transcribed separately]

10 So our soldiers were sent home Monday evening,
11 to resume normal lives with their jobs, with their
12 families. However, not to forget that this is not over
13 and they need to prepare.

14 And since then, our soldiers have been calling
15 in on a daily basis, because they are eager to come
16 back, they want to come back, they want to be more
17 helpful, they feel they haven't done enough.

18 Our soldiers are ready. Our soldiers have
19 pride. Our soldiers want to do more.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** Are there any other things you
21 want to say?

1 **CSM CRUZADO:** The 69th Infantry has been in
2 many battles and most of the battles have been
3 overseas. Never has there been a battle such as this
4 one where the human factor hits home.

5 This is war for a city, one that soldiers are
6 not prepared. When soldiers are sent overseas to
7 fight, they're finding an enemy that is unknown, one
8 that does not touch their heart.

9 Part of our mission is aid to civil authority,
10 but that is to protect, secure, and help the civil
11 authority.

12 One doesn't prepare soldiers for this type of
13 emotional stress. I think the 69th, once again, the
14 soldiers of the 69th, once again, not that they have
15 proven, that they have shown themselves to be
16 professional soldiers and showed and demonstrate the
17 pride that this unit, that this regiment, the
18 historical, the background that it has, that it has not
19 been lost.

20 We fought proudly in war and still today,
21 although the unit is 95 percent minorities, they fight

1 not only for the unit, but they fight for the city and
2 they fight as proud soldiers.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** Thank you very much, Sergeant
4 Major.

5 (The interview was concluded.)

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