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CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW OF
1LT SCOTT A. KOVALCIK

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CONDUCTED BY

SFC DAN MORIARTY

The Center of Military History

AT

Battery Park, CCP
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TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

P R O C E E D I N G S

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SFC MORIARTY: 126 Military History Detachment.

Today is 28 September 2001. We're at Battery Park in New York City.

This interview is with LT Scott A. Kovalcik --

1LT KOVALCIK: Kovalcik.

SFC MORIARTY: -- Kovalcik, chaplain with the 101 Cav, 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard.

I'm going to read this statement to you now.

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. Center -- U.S. Government and may be used in any manner deemed in the best interest of the U.S. Army as determined by the chief of military history.

I also understand that subject to security classification restrictions I will be given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Army will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use, subject to classification restrictions.

1 To the best of my knowledge that -- you know,
2 you're going to be old and retired (inaudible) and
3 you'll get that transcript. Although you're a general
4 officer you normally get it within 48 hours.

5 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Right.

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Do you have any conditions or do
7 you agree to the statement?

8 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I agree to the statement. That's
9 correct.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** You were -- you were activated
11 right after the terrorist attack?

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yes, we were activated immediately.
13 Within probably six to eight hours word had filtered
14 down that we would be here as soon as possible and to
15 get there as soon possible, report to our armories.

16 The beautiful thing is the 101 Cav just sort of
17 showed up on its own. 98.3 percent of us, without even
18 a word from any of our commanders, reported to our
19 armories within six to eight hours after it happened,
20 and all of us were already on buses moving.

21 The local units here on Staten Island out of the

1 armory, the Alpha Company and the Headquarters Company,
2 (inaudible), responded within the first six to eight
3 hours. They were already on the ground, already here,
4 already asking to be used, and were put to work
5 immediately.

6 I arrived very early on the morning of Wednesday,
7 after traveling from upstate during the night, and then
8 reported for duty myself at about 4:00 in the morning
9 on Wednesday the 12th of September.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay. And where did you -- did you
11 report here to Battery Park?

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** We reported to our armories and
13 then we went to -- we were on our way to Staten Island
14 Armory, to report into the main headquarters unit that
15 was still left behind as a detachment, and we were
16 routed immediately here and needed on the job. So we
17 got off buses, we unloaded our gear, we threw up a
18 couple of hooches, and went right straight into the
19 front.

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay. Now, how were your troops
21 being deployed in this area?

1 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Our troops deployed in what became
2 known as zone 2, and when the maps are seen you'll see
3 it, and zone 4. We ran a line from the Brooklyn
4 Bridge, near Mount Sinai Hospital, along Colton Street,
5 Water Street, Wall Street, Broadway, and finally
6 Rector, along the front and all the way over to Battery
7 City, which we are responsible for.

8 We helped civilians get in and out of their
9 apartments when they needed to to get certain things
10 out, underneath the authorization by NYPD and the city
11 government, and we had at that point escorts. They
12 were allowed 15 minutes in and out of the buildings to
13 retrieve their pets, get things out of refrigerators
14 since power was turned off, collect a few items to live
15 with, toiletries, et cetera, and then they were
16 escorted back out of the building.

17 They had to provide at least two, two forms of ID
18 plus proof of residence and they had them go in and out
19 through a checkpoint.

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** And who was that going in, was it
21 the police department?

1 **1LT KOVALCIK:** The police department was the main
2 coordination point that we had. They helped us at the
3 barricades at all times. They were the only ones
4 allowed to bear weapons, due to whatever reason made by
5 city government officials.

6 The only frustrating part for us was we were -- we
7 were at a threat com charlie, and under Article 35 we
8 should have been given weapons and we were not. The
9 only problem most soldiers had is they felt defenseless
10 and did the best they could, and under the
11 circumstances they were good soldiers and did the best
12 that they could.

13 I worried for them, as their battalion chaplain,
14 and worried for my own self, with my own chaplain
15 assistant, because we walked the lines constantly with
16 a (inaudible) 77 radio, our only communication, which
17 didn't work all the time between buildings.

18 And there was a lot of holes in security because
19 of the lack of not being able to bear arms. I
20 understand the fright factor for people, but I also
21 understand the need to provide proper security.

1 **SFC MORIARTY:** How did the civilian population --
2 I mean --

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** The civilian population was unaware
4 that we weren't bearing arms, as much as I know. I
5 know the terrorists were. I'm sure they were out there
6 watching us, checking us out, knowing we were -- that
7 was the worrisome part, what were the terrorists
8 finding out.

9 **SFC MORIARTY:** You think that there are -- there
10 were terrorist intelligence (inaudible) --

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Absolutely, because we got intel
12 reports the first whole week and a half, even the time
13 when the President was here. I think it was on a
14 Saturday. I can't remember off the top of my head.

15 He was going to make some unscheduled stops
16 (inaudible) wherever he showed up and didn't want it to
17 be known, and he was stopped from coming to an area we
18 were protecting because at the last -- at the last
19 second we got an intel report of four possible
20 terrorists carrying bags, satchels. Who knows what was
21 in it. They ended up catching three and we never heard

1 a word because the FBI and the CIA took them.

2 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, took those folks into custody?

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Well -- and we helped, we helped
4 apprehend, the 101 Cav helped apprehend three of them.
5 The fourth one was, to my knowledge, never caught.

6 But there is -- there was several bomb threats on
7 Wall Street.

8 Go ahead.

9 **SFC MORIARTY:** Are you leaving?

10 **VOICE:** Yes, I am.

11 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay. I'm just going to stop the
12 tape then momentarily.

13 (A brief recess was taken.)

14 **1LT KOVALCIK:** The bomb threats came just about
15 every day on Wall Street. We were just a block away at
16 times from threatened areas. The soldiers again did
17 very well under the pressure, knowing that they were in
18 harms way.

19 EOD squads from the city police department SWAT
20 team and everything were sent in on a regular basis to
21 check these things out. Some of them were, you know, a

1 bunch of bull, some were reality. They were removing
2 bombs everyday. And we (inaudible) --

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** Where were they finding them?

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** They were finding them all over the
5 place. And what they found out is that there was
6 people infiltrating probably either Con Edison or some
7 of the other people. There was even trucks stolen.
8 Con Edison lost one or two trucks. Verizon lost one or
9 two trucks. There were GSA vehicles disappearing.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** And what kind of -- what kind of
11 bombs are we talking about, small, homemade bombs or --

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Small, homemade (inaudible) --

13 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- chemical or biological?

14 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Not chemical or biological, all
15 explosives, meant to destroy more damage -- meant to
16 scare the civilian population I think more than
17 anything. They probably wouldn't have done that much
18 destruction, but after the first one -- it's a safety
19 thing. People lose their sense of (inaudible) --

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** And who was doing the EOD function
21 here? Did we have a military unit doing that?

1 **1LT KOVALCIK:** No.

2 **SFC MORIARTY:** Or was it the --

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Not to my knowledge did we ever
4 have one. The city again basically took over. We were
5 sort of here but not here, always in the shadows. It
6 seemed to me that the mayor, or whoever runs his
7 office, or what's going on was kind of at odds with the
8 government (inaudible) go.

9 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay. Okay.

10 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And it was left up to the city, the
11 fire department, and at one point we weren't even
12 allowed at ground zero. They just said, we don't even
13 want the military up here at all and then it became --
14 I don't know, some argument happened at higher ups and
15 eventually we were right back to where we started,
16 helping again but not being allowed to do any digging,
17 not allowed to do any (inaudible). Obviously for the
18 security of the troops that's what was happening.

19 But I think it was political too. I think the
20 fire department wanted to run their own show --

21 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sure.

1 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- because their guys died.

2 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sure.

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I think the police wanted to run
4 their own show --

5 **SFC MORIARTY:** Because they lost people.

6 **1LT KOVALCIK:** They lost people too, and that's
7 understandable. At the same token --

8 **SFC MORIARTY:** And they have an explosive
9 ordinance unit here (inaudible).

10 **1LT KOVALCIK:** They have many of them from what I
11 understand, several.

12 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And so they were running the show
14 and probably that was the right call.

15 Again, though, the call comes -- where -- how do
16 we feel important enough as soldiers to carry out the
17 orders given to us and know that we're making a
18 difference, and I ran into that a lot. I ran into a
19 lot of soldiers that said, "Chaplain, we're not doing
20 anything."

21 And I had to constantly tell them, "No, you don't

1 understand. The civilians have a sense of security by
2 seeing you in uniform. The NYPD feels like you're out
3 there helping them because they're overworked,
4 underpaid and there isn't enough people to go around,
5 and you're providing bodies (inaudible) line. Yes,
6 yes, it is true. We are unarmed and we are
7 defenseless, but under the circumstances know that you
8 are making a difference." I had the same words with
9 them over and over.

10 The day that we caught the three terrorists and
11 supposedly the President was supposed to come to Mount
12 Sinai -- now, I can't confirm that. We were told by an
13 intel report he was going to make an unannounced -- you
14 know, go see some people there in the hospital.

15 We were standing a block away from this place,
16 watching it, and all of a sudden you saw FBI come in.
17 We saw snipers on buildings. I really believe he was
18 coming there. There was way too much activity.

19 When they couldn't catch the fourth guy that they
20 were looking for out of that group of three, it was a
21 man -- a woman and three people -- we saw the

1 helicopter come, we saw the helicopter go and never
2 land. We saw gun ships circle, so we know that he was
3 probably coming there.

4 It would have been an honor to be able to provide,
5 you know, the security for your commander in chief. On
6 the other hand it was a greater honor to know that
7 because you were there, and the other people with you,
8 the police department, the FBI, working together, we
9 also thwarted an attempt on the commander on chief.

10 I let the troops know. I went up and down my
11 line, one-on-one, and said, "Gentleman, you've got to
12 be very proud of yourself today. You think you haven't
13 been doing anything. Let me tell you what you did
14 today. I was there, I know."

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** What day was this, do you recall?

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** It was whatever day he was
17 scheduled to go to New York City, and I'd have to look
18 at my journal. I don't have it with me. It's back in
19 the desk, you know.

20 Days are all foggy to me now. I've been here
21 almost three weeks. I think it was a Saturday. I want

1 to say it was a Saturday, but it was the day that he
2 went to the Brooklyn Parade. It was the day he went
3 down to ground zero.

4 If I got my copies of my papers at home I can give
5 you the exact date. If you look that up you'll know
6 what day it is.

7 But he was going to make some unannounced stops as
8 well and that was -- that was to allow him to see some
9 of the actual victims who survived, who came out of the
10 ground zero, and to talk with a few families in a
11 hospital setting. And it never happened. Terrorists
12 managed to stop that from happening, but we managed to
13 stop them from getting him.

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

15 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And that was a good day. That was
16 a real good day.

17 Now, there are things that happened, though, that
18 were more tragic. I spent the first two days in the
19 morgues. My battalion commander felt I could do a lot
20 of help with some of the medical teams helping out.

21 So all of our medics were deployed forward, except

1 for one, to help to protect the troops, and they were
2 used to carry body bags in and out of the place from
3 where the fire department would lay them, and they
4 would move them into the examining rooms and the
5 doctors and stuff.

6 And then I was asked to witness what I saw, each
7 and every one, to confirm as an outside source for the
8 -- before the medical examiner could see the body, that
9 there was somebody else who was witnessing, it's not
10 just the doctor or just the nurse. And they were
11 trying to use a lot of precautions.

12 And so, unfortunately, I saw quite a bit.
13 Fortunately, though, I know the magnitude of what
14 happened because of that. I was able to help a lot of
15 the firefighters, a lot of our own troops, and a lot of
16 the police department.

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** You were talking to them?

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Comforting them, praying with them,
19 helping them to know that God had not abandoned them.
20 And I think that was my biggest mission.

21 And it -- I know I was successful because people

1 would leave saying, this will take a long time for me
2 to deal with it, but I'm thankful that people like you
3 are here. I'm thankful father, padre, even though I'm
4 not a priest you let -- you let people call you what's
5 comfortable --

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Uh-huh. Sure.

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- you let them know who God is,
8 and as a Protestant minister I'm comfortable with that.

9 And I -- you know, I would listen to confessions,
10 I would pray over them, I would bless them. I would,
11 with my own troops presence so as not to violate any
12 known ordinance as with the military, provide
13 communion, whatever I could.

14 There were many chaplains out there, many, some
15 military but for the most part you saw a lot of
16 civilian chaplains trying to do the best they could.

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** Did they just come down
18 spontaneously?

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah. The police department sent
20 theirs, the sheriffs department sent theirs, FBI sent
21 theirs, the fire department --

1 **SFC MORIARTY:** They all went to the morgue?

2 **1LT KOVALCIK:** They went to morgues or they stayed
3 around the site helping or dealing with the people when
4 they were coming off the line from fatigue, which I did
5 as well. You know, encouraging, even bringing them
6 water, bringing them anything, to let them know that
7 we're there to support them.

8 And that way I wasn't violating any of my general
9 orders, but I was walking a thin line. Let's put it
10 that way. But, then again, that's what you (inaudible)
11 do, you walk the line.

12 And so we all -- we all seemed to work together.
13 And the beautiful thing, the most beautiful thing I can
14 give people, though, is that people, even under the
15 political tensions and everything else going on even
16 within the city, still the military was able to find a
17 role and become part of what I would say is the image
18 of Christ, the image of God. You saw it in people's
19 eyes. You saw them when they were on the pile working
20 hand in hand, moving bodies gently, moving away debris,
21 holding onto one another so they won't fall.

1 When there would be a small cave-in they would dig
2 frantically to get that person right back out so as not
3 to lose another, even though that did happen a couple
4 times.

5 **SFC MORIARTY:** There -- there were other
6 casualties (inaudible)?

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah. I think there was one or two
8 other casualties. I'm not quite sure whether they died
9 or not, but I was told one of them did. But for the
10 most part a lot of bruises, a lot of, you know, broken
11 bones, small fractures and things from cave-ins, some
12 very scary ones.

13 I was almost killed with my chaplain assistant
14 near the Amex financial center, where morgue number two
15 was, on the west side, on West Side Highway. We were
16 standing outside with some doctors and nurses taking a
17 break, because the smell at some points would just be
18 so bad that if you didn't get outside you'd vomit.

19 Refrigerator trucks didn't even do it. The decay
20 was so awful already from the heat, and the burning,
21 and the smell of burning flesh and everything else that

1 even refrigeration would only dent how bad it was.

2 And doctors and nurses would come out crying
3 because you just -- you know, unable to deal with what
4 they see too. And I would be there again to try to
5 comfort.

6 And at that moment the building shifted. I will
7 never forget it. It was Wednesday, about 11:30 in the
8 morning, and glass just started coming out of the
9 building from way up high.

10 We could see it coming at us and we were running
11 for our lives. Shrapnel into the back of my leg, I ran
12 ten blocks and didn't even know it. You know, pieces
13 of flying, pieces of flying glass --

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** Did you (inaudible) chunks of
15 glass?

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- right through the -- you know,
17 the summer BDUs --

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes.

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- like it's just paper. My
20 chaplain assistant was in front of me. I did my best
21 to stay at the rear and push people, just literally

1 push people forward like a herd of cattle.

2 I had people panicking at two blocks, stopping in
3 front of a 60 story building, and I'm telling them,
4 "You can't stop here. If that building comes down it's
5 going to go six blocks. It's going to bounce another
6 four. You keep running. I don't care whether you
7 think this is -- or whatever it is. I'm telling you
8 right now, run, and you just keep running."

9 And I had people obeying my order. I even had a
10 lieutenant from the 69th stop me and say, "Chaplain,
11 you have no command authority to do this."

12 I'm sorry, I threatened him. I threatened to
13 court-martial him if I ever got a hold of him. And he
14 finally picked up his road block and moved.

15 And it wasn't anything to (inaudible). We got
16 about six blocks away and about a whole story and a
17 half of glass came right out of the building.

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, really?

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** It shifted again, and it's one of
20 the buildings that will be eventually torn down.

21 **SFC MORIARTY:** (Inaudible.)

1 **1LT KOVALCIK:** There's a hole right in the side of
2 it the size of, you know, a couple of GP larges.

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** (Inaudible) -- hit, hit by --

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Hit with debris that came flying
5 right out of the side of the building when it came
6 down. Chunks of steel went right through it and carved
7 a hole through it.

8 Liberty One, where I was supposed to have been, in
9 morgue number one, that same day the ceiling collapsed
10 right where I would have been. You talk about close
11 encounters with God.

12 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes.

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I had one -- my chaplain assistant
14 and another sergeant finally stopped me that evening at
15 dinner and said, "Chaplain, we love being with you but
16 we wish God wouldn't work so close with you some days."
17 It was a good joke. We all laughed because our
18 adrenalin was still in our throat.

19 But those are some of the -- some of the sights
20 and the sounds and the things that happened that I'll
21 never forget.

1 For me the most monumental was one of the little
2 kids that didn't make it. It was (inaudible). I think
3 there was only one or two probably on the sidewalk that
4 couldn't get away or who knows. I don't know how.

5 But I remember a 6'7" firefighter, the man was
6 huge, tears streaming down his eyes, holding what was
7 probably left of the mother and the child together,
8 bringing them up out. I remember him placing them very
9 gently in a body bag, and then he turned around and he
10 faced me.

11 He must have been prior military because the
12 minute he saw me he said, "Chaplain," and it was like
13 he recognized another soldier from before. And he got
14 right down on his knees and said, "Why? Could you just
15 help me with the why?"

16 And at that moment I couldn't say anything else,
17 but giving him the only encouraging thing that came to
18 my mind, that she is running the streets of heaven.
19 Innocent as she was, God took her home. The mother who
20 protected her or whatever else, the same thing. And
21 what you have to hold onto is that she is free of this,

1 free of the strife, free of the mourning, free of
2 everything else, but you're not and you have to hold
3 onto that image so that when you deal with it down the
4 road you will be able to one day, not now, rejoice with
5 her.

6 And he held onto me for the longest time and we
7 just hugged each other. And that was the most -- you
8 know, just -- there were so many.

9 Over 1,900 hundred bodies I was exposed to. There
10 was screaming public masses, people -- you know, could
11 you tell me something, and you cannot. There's no
12 information, official, to give out.

13 There's only maybe 150 bodies recognizable, burnt
14 beyond recognition, pieces, parts. Sometimes an
15 intestine is a person, sometimes a spinal cord, and you
16 just -- nothing can prepare you.

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah, that's -- I've heard that.

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Nothing can prepare you for that.

19 And if you don't have God at that moment, what do you
20 do? I asked myself that so many times. What does one
21 do when one does not have peace?

1 And I saw people with horror. I saw people with
2 terror. I saw people wondering what happened to their
3 loved ones, knowing they're dead but not wanting to
4 admit it --

5 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

6 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- not wanting to give up, and
7 rightfully so. Who would want to.

8 But then when they finally realize it, a week
9 later, ten days later, you see that same person again
10 at the barricade and they say to you again, "Why? How
11 come? Where was God? Was this the work of the devil?"
12 You get asked so many questions.

13 And then you hear troops who become angry and they
14 all -- they want to kill every person who's the color
15 of a darker skin, and then you have others who want to
16 somehow try to forgive but still know they need
17 justice. And you have this hodge-podge even within
18 your group and you try to weigh down the middle.

19 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes. Yes.

20 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I tried to convince everybody that,
21 again, not everyone of these people are guilty, but the

1 ones that are need to be brought to justice. God would
2 want that too. He did so in the Old Testament.

3 When you have been righteously judged for evil's
4 sake there is no hope for you anymore. But you still
5 pray and hope somehow that that person will ask for
6 forgiveness before we bring justice to them. You know
7 what I mean?

8 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes.

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Trying to do your best to walk that
10 thin line between life and death, between forgiveness
11 and judgment. And I try to tell people, whether we get
12 them or not, we'll do our best, but whether we get them
13 or not know this -- they will face the final judge of
14 the universe --

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sooner or later.

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and the commander in chief
17 literally --

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes.

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- of all the world --

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** We all do.

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- (inaudible) bring them to that.

1 And that seemed to help them, it seemed to take away
2 some of the anger.

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** Now, who do you talk to, because
4 you obviously --

5 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Right.

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- have issues yourself?

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And, you know, the -- you get
8 drained, as the chaplain you get drained and --

9 **SFC MORIARTY:** Do you have another chaplain that
10 you can go to?

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah. We're supposed to have
12 mentors and we do. And, you know, I've talked with one
13 of mine, my brigade chaplain, Don Zepshur (phonetic).
14 He's a major in the Third Brigade, 42nd Infantry
15 Division, a good man, a good listener. And he -- he
16 let me just sort of sound off. He did the same with
17 me.

18 We would meet at midnight over a cup of coffee,
19 walking the line together, and bump into each other
20 where our line met and his line met. You know, the
21 engineers, or whoever he was augmenting, and his

1 aviation unit was out here a couple of days after the
2 fact. He got here about four or five days later and he
3 was a great source of help to me the two days that we
4 did meet.

5 My own troops, though, I've only been part of the
6 101 for seven or eight months. But I evidently have
7 made some impression upon them because I had a private
8 come up to me while we were standing and waiting for
9 the Staten Island ferry one night after being awake for
10 God knows how many hours.

11 We were working 21 hour shifts the first six days.
12 No one was sleeping at all, you know, and it was
13 taking its toll mentally, physically and spiritually on
14 all of us, but we were still holding together. The
15 armor guys and infantry guys seemed to -- seemed to
16 understand that there's only -- you know, only the unit
17 to worry about too. And he said to me, (inaudible)
18 another specialist, "Sir, you're always asking us how
19 are we doing. Can I help?"

20 And it was like the fourth night we were here and
21 we were watching the Statue of Liberty go by in the

1 breeze. He said, "Sir, how are you doing?"

2 And I'll tell you, that meant more to me than any
3 other chaplain could have done, because God was
4 speaking through that young private who was genuinely
5 concerned for my spiritual well being. And I talked to
6 him for about five or ten minutes and then we prayed
7 together, and by the time we got done we had 55 people
8 gathered around saying the Our Father.

9 And there was a moment when there was -- the unity
10 that only you can understand when you walk in a pair of
11 combat boots, only when you've walked a mile with your
12 fellow soldier.

13 And there were a lot -- there were a lot of
14 special times, but more than anything under all the
15 stresses, under less than possibly good conditions, and
16 not even really being allowed to do our full duty,
17 soldiers were still soldiers, doing what they had to
18 do.

19 We only had one soldier who could not function
20 under that environment and it had more to do with the
21 fact that he wasn't functioning months before than it

1 had to do with the (inaudible). He would have been a
2 danger in a combat unit.

3 But the other 400 and some odd guys, rock-solid.
4 When I walked among other units within the division,
5 with the 42nd, I saw the same thing.

6 I saw young soldiers sometimes not having the
7 mentorship, and I would kindly and gently give them
8 that if I needed to, to bring them along. Being an
9 oldie, an old sergeant myself from the infantry and
10 active duty, I know a few things and I've learned a few
11 things from other sergeants. I've learned about how
12 you operate, still being an officer, not -- not
13 overstepping my bounds, but helping to say to them,
14 maybe we could do it this way. Maybe we could it this
15 way. Why don't you see your platoon sergeant when you
16 get home and tell him some of the frustrations you
17 have. Maybe even mention what I said. Maybe he'll
18 bring it a little further for you.

19 You know, you do what you can. You do what you
20 can.

21 And it's about -- it's about -- you want to talk

1 about selfless service, these people have shown
2 selfless service. You want to talk about that among
3 the police department, the fire department, the EMS,
4 you'll never again maybe in a lifetime ever see such
5 lack of concern for self, only for brother and sister.

6 And I've said to many of them, "You want to know
7 what the image of God looks like? Look into each
8 others eyes the next time you see the pile shifting
9 like a swing giant Caterpillar and people doing
10 everything they can, or a nurse bringing a cup of water
11 or whatever it is. You want to talk about seeing the
12 image of Jesus Christ? You saw it, because you're made
13 in that image."

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** Is it still happening now or is --
15 has the rubble gotten down to where it's --

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** The rubble hasn't even been moved.

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, no?

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I forget how many hundreds and
19 hundreds and hundreds of trucks --

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** Tons, yeah.

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- have come in and out of here.

1 Somebody told me today, and I can't even remember what
2 it was, but it's in the -- it's in the metric, almost
3 million ton ratio already and the pile doesn't even
4 look like it's hardly been scratched, but yet it has.
5 You know it has.

6 You remember the images you have and the pictures
7 you have --

8 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sure.

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and you can see that it's come
10 down.

11 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** But every time they move something
13 the oxygen reignites another fire in some little
14 traphole and they've got to put another one out. And
15 then they go at it again and they expose another void,
16 what they call a void, a space in there that's being
17 covered, and the oxygen hits it, the fire ignites
18 again.

19 **SFC MORIARTY:** Really, just (inaudible)?

20 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And you have that -- yeah.

21 **SFC MORIARTY:** Is there much heat underneath here?

1 **1LT KOVALCIK:** It's become less and less each day,
2 and the smoke is visible less and less, yet if you look
3 on the skyline you'll still see it. And if you --

4 **SFC MORIARTY:** We saw it coming down Broadway.

5 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- if you -- you can see it coming
6 up. It's probably only a tenth of what it once was,
7 but that's because they put out so many of the fires
8 and the water in the basement is so flooded that
9 there's starting to come a point where there's not much
10 room for fire, but yet there still is.

11 And the parking garage, and the Millennium Hotel,
12 and all these other buildings still need to be
13 demolished. There is just literally months, months
14 ahead of us before this thing will even begin to
15 resemble an open city square.

16 I heard one engineer, I've talked with several of
17 them -- when the buildings almost fell on me I made
18 sure I found somebody. I didn't want anybody to go
19 into those buildings.

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I didn't want anybody else to face

1 the same dangers, and maybe I was a bit of a tenacious
2 bulldog, and maybe I even overstepped, but then frankly
3 I don't care. I had police officers tell me that I
4 didn't know what I was talking about, and then I had a
5 structural engineer say, well, if it wasn't for him
6 that building may have fallen. That building may have
7 killed some more people.

8 We saw so much glass it was obvious that the
9 building had shifted. They'd do measurements on them
10 and they'd move six, eight inches, you know.

11 **SFC MORIARTY:** The buildings (inaudible)?

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** The building moved that much.

13 **SFC MORIARTY:** My God.

14 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And a structural engineer said to
15 me, "You know, chaplain, you just bite anybody's butt
16 you want to and be a bulldog as long as you want to
17 because you were right about this one, you were right
18 about that one."

19 You know, you were living there. You know what
20 happened in those morgues. People were terrified just
21 that the building moved -- we don't know -- or the

1 building lost glass.

2 **SFC MORIARTY:** So what did they do, move the
3 morgues out?

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** They moved the morgues out. They
5 shifted them to new positions. Later on they found out
6 that Liberty One became stable again and they moved
7 people back in around that building. The other side,
8 no, it's still been abandoned for quite some time. They
9 put flags on them.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Your troops, let's talk about force
11 protection here --

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Sure.

13 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- for a couple minutes.

14 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Sure.

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** Obviously they're close enough to
16 some of these zones that there's concern for asbestos
17 and --

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Well, yeah. No one really knows
19 what was in these buildings, you know. Some of them
20 were built before the 1950's, some -- like the World
21 Trade Center was built after. The World Trade Center

1 probably doesn't have a whole lot of problems inside of
2 it --

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- but the buildings that collapsed
5 around it --

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Around it, okay.

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and the facades of others were
8 built -- 1910 I think one of them, 13 another.

9 **SFC MORIARTY:** The World Trade buildings were
10 built in the 70's, weren't they?

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Well, I think the plans for them
12 were in the 50's, and there was no asbestos put into
13 them as far as I understand.

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay. Okay.

15 **1LT KOVALCIK:** However, there are other chemicals
16 in these buildings being -- you know, you've got
17 burning wire --

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- you've got burning harnesses,
20 you've got -- burning all kinds of stuff. You've got
21 burning ceiling tile, which is terribly toxic.

1 If you went down there on day one, day two, day
2 three, day -- up to day seven or eight, you would have
3 smelled something you've never smelled before. I can't
4 describe it. It's like an acrid, nasty, acid smell
5 through the air. Everything is dark. The sun kind of
6 glooms through a cloud. It's mysteriously strange to
7 see. And you --

8 **VOICE:** (Inaudible.) **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- deal --
9 you deal with a lot of really strange smells and then,
10 of course, the smell of death when you get closer. You
11 know there's rotting, corrupting bodies because you can
12 smell them everywhere, burnt flesh.

13 It all mixes together and you just get filled up
14 with crap in your nose. I don't care what respirator
15 they give you, but day -- day three we finally got
16 respirators. Before that we were dealing with paper,
17 paper garbage --

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah, I assumed you got those.

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- paper garbage. It wasn't even
20 keeping the dust out.

21 You know, I know there are troops here, including

1 myself, that digested stuff they shouldn't have. I
2 don't know what it was. I don't know what the effects
3 will be. I do know that I was sick for two or three
4 days.

5 Anyway, we had guys anywhere from vomiting to
6 diarrhea, and it wasn't just from lack of sleep. It
7 was something that was in the air those first few days.

8 There was so much dust here in Battery Park that
9 if you walked a cloud would go up over the top of your
10 head, up over the top of the vehicles. Every step was
11 like the surface of the moon.

12 There was so much debris on the ground from
13 burning paper, ash, bodies who were vaporized,
14 buildings that were vaporized by the plane, cars
15 covered with three to four inches of dust. You know,
16 the trees were all grey and white. The grass was
17 completely non-visible.

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Until you got some rain down here?

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And the first we got was nothing
20 but mud and slime and more debris. We only had one
21 rain the first week and a half. It was a good rain.

1 Thank God.

2 You know, God helped wash away much of the
3 problem. There were pigeons that died. There were --
4 you know, they -- nothing can live in that kind of
5 environment.

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** (Inaudible.)

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And you'd pick snot out of your
8 nose, pardon the expression, that was just full of
9 crap. You'd hack up grey stuff at night.

10 We finally got respirators with actual filter
11 systems from 3-M and (inaudible) and some of the other
12 (inaudible) that were giving them away. We finally got
13 adequate goggles.

14 However, we were fortunate. As tank units we all
15 have military, you know, road goggles, that protect
16 your eyes quite a bit. So we were better off than
17 some. Infantry units, like the 69th, were scrambling
18 to find them, but again our scouts, our mortars,
19 everybody has those.

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** Uh-huh.

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** So we were able to protect our eyes

1 a little bit better than some.

2 Washing uniforms, you had to wash them separately.

3 You had to run an extra wash through your washing
4 machine just to make sure (inaudible) the crap.

5 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, so there's no cross-
6 contamination?

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah, with your other clothes at
8 home. When you finally got home you had bags full of
9 dirty clothes that stunk to high heavens. It smelled
10 like smoke. It smelled like death. It smelled like --
11 you'd hit somebody on the back or give them a tap and
12 powder would just shoot up into the air again. It was
13 amazing.

14 I mean, nothing, nothing can prepare you for what
15 you saw. And if you lived here your whole life you
16 remember the skyline. You remember what it looked
17 like.

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes.

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** The first day you see smoke coming
20 up out of a hole that just should have two giant
21 buildings there. It's so weird. It's just bizarre.

1 The only thing that was really great is going home
2 on the Staten Island ferry at night and going back to
3 the armory, 12 or 1:00 in the morning, and to see the
4 Statute of Liberty. I'd see the large Old Glory still
5 flying with the light on.

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Did they have the ferry going 24
7 hours a day (inaudible)?

8 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah. All -- only for cops,
9 firefighters, EMS and military.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And we're one of the most famous
12 units besides the 69th because we've always held
13 Memorial Day services --

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

15 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and Labor Day and all kinds of
16 stuff, and St. Patrick, and if you go to Staten Island
17 101 Cav is talked about from left to right. They even
18 know us in Brooklyn.

19 And so the Staten Island ferry guys were like
20 excited to almost in some way pay back to us what we
21 were doing for them. There was a real camaraderie.

1 We'd get up on the other side and firefighters
2 would hooray and we'd hooray back, and it was
3 camaraderie between us. We'd get -- we'd get on
4 Victory Boulevard and head home up out of the ferry and
5 there would be more than a thousand people lining the
6 streets, all the way back to the armory, every single
7 night for the first week and a half.

8 **SFC MORIARTY:** Really? My God.

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And every night it would get a
10 little larger -- kids, young people, old people, flying
11 flags, waving, honking horns, coming to attention,
12 little kids, and saluting you. Those were -- those
13 were the things -- if you want to know what you're
14 fighting for, you know, there's no more questions.
15 Whether it's for a wife or family or country, whatever
16 you started with, it becomes the people who are the
17 state, the people who are the country.

18 Nobody in New York called themselves New Yorkers.
19 They called themselves Americans. It's the only time
20 I've heard that, and I live upstate, but that's the
21 only time I've ever heard that.

1 I was stationed at West Point in my younger career
2 and Fort Drum, coming from upstate Michigan where
3 people -- yeah, they're proud to be Michiganers or
4 Michigan State, University of Michigan football team
5 and stuff, but always Americans. New Yorkers are New
6 Yorkers. For them to say and to wave banners only of
7 America and not have NYC but have, you know, America,
8 is a big change for them and it's a good thing to see.

9 But there were -- there were times of
10 encouragement. We'd have church services that would
11 last five and six minutes between shifts, but more come
12 to those than come (inaudible). A pat on the back, a
13 prayer on top of a helmet, whatever it is, not getting
14 in the way of the duty but making sure you're there.

15 Counseling with soldiers, hearing confessions at a
16 checkpoint in three minutes, you know, doing what --
17 doing what it takes to be officer, chaplain, whatever
18 it takes for your soldiers. And, you know, I could go
19 on and on and on.

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** Did you -- did you have soldiers
21 come to you at all, I mean, because as a chaplain

1 you're --

2 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah.

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- you get a lot of duties.

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** All asking one enduring question.
5 You're asking me what they asked?

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** "What does this mean?"

8 And you're -- I gave them a couple of scenarios.

9 One, the Bible does talk about the end of the
10 world. Now, I didn't have to tell them that. I had
11 many of them say is this the end. It could be. You
12 know, you don't know. It could be.

13 If it is it would be linked to the idea of what
14 the Bible expresses as a woman coming into labor
15 suddenly before her time and the birth pang, the first
16 one hits her and she's unable to bear the pain, unable
17 to understand what's happened to her.

18 And then like a pregnancy, if that was the case,
19 you would expect a time of silence between the first
20 pain and the second pain, but nevertheless the second
21 one is coming. Nevertheless the second one is worse

1 than the first (inaudible) contractions are -- the time
2 -- isometric (inaudible) and they go up, up, up and not
3 ever go down, but there's periods where they release
4 and then go back.

5 Like a -- like a pregnancy I told them, and the
6 labor time you would expect the first and second
7 contractions to be farther apart than the second and
8 the third. So there's going to be a time interval and
9 there's going to be an intensity (inaudible).
10 Nevertheless, as it progresses it could go to where the
11 contractions come every second, harder and harder and
12 harder until the birth is given.

13 That's what the Bible likens it to and it's not
14 unlike Mary giving birth to Jesus the first time. The
15 world is giving birth to him a second time, and I'm not
16 very politically correct because there's one God, one
17 Lord and one Jesus Christ, and every knee shall bow in
18 every (inaudible).

19 Even the Jewish people -- well, look (inaudible)
20 here, some (inaudible), but others will say finally
21 Messiah. And so there will be grafting into the tree

1 of the ancient chosen people and the people wash the
2 white and the blood of the land.

3 And I told them, you know what, as your chaplain I
4 only have one concern -- and this is not proselytizing
5 -- you need to answer this question and you can answer
6 it yes and you can answer it no, and that's your God
7 given right, but who do you say Jesus Christ is?

8 Because he just asked the question himself, who do
9 people say that I am? And the answers are rabbi, and
10 the teacher, and the prophet, and this and that, but he
11 was always a man. Imagine how Jesus must have felt
12 knowing he was much more than man.

13 But he turned to each apostle and said very
14 privately, very personally, but who do you say that I
15 am? I put that word out to all of them.

16 I said today I want you to answer it or by
17 tomorrow I want you to pray and answer it, and I want
18 you to answer it yes or no, and I want you to answer it
19 the way you want to answer it. But as your chaplain I
20 have the responsibility to tell you that if you don't
21 answer it, I don't know, it's as good as saying no.

1 And if you want to say no, wonderful for you. God gave
2 you that right reject.

3 But how you answer it is how you will spend
4 eternity. How you answer it is how you will be able to
5 focus and help comprehend what's going on here. How
6 you answer it will be -- the days to come, when battle
7 comes and we're asked to go, we're a front line armored
8 unit, you think we're not going?

9 The minute that first line out of Fort Hood and
10 out of Fort Knox goes and they need recaps where is it
11 going to come? We're ranked number two, number three
12 or number one every year, the best in the state and the
13 best in the nation (inaudible). We're right around the
14 corner from JRTC and NTC in a train up from M-1 to M-1-
15 A-1. We're ready to go to war. In six months --

16 **SFC MORIARTY:** (Inaudible.) When are you going
17 out to Fort Erwin?

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** We're scheduled this year to finish
19 our tank table 12. We're scheduled in less than a year
20 or two (inaudible) GRTC. If we do well there we'd be
21 scheduled in a year or two to do the other.

1 Once that happens you're never going back. You're
2 on the books for ten years as being next cap, next cap.

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** But right now we're passing tank
5 table 12 and that's the only thing that has to be done
6 before they can call you up anyway. And they're --
7 it's funny that we've changed our training to go to
8 that level, knowing what.

9 Well, something was happening. Someone knew
10 something was happening or they wouldn't have changed
11 how the training was going. I've been watching it for
12 the nine months I've been a part of the battalion.
13 It's changed overnight. And I've talked (inaudible)
14 we've never done this before.

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** There's a new sense of urgency --

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** There's a new sense of urgency.

17 There's a new sense --

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- that existed even before --

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah, it existed before. The
20 government knows something is up. They're not telling
21 everything and that's okay, national security, but

1 something has been going on in the world, something has
2 been going on in the hearts of leaders and governors.

3 Thank God for President Bush. Thank God we have a
4 leader who understands what he's doing. I can't -- I
5 can't express my thanks for a commander in chief I can
6 salute with pride and a man that I know will do the
7 right thing, go after the guilty and try to protect as
8 much innocence as possible.

9 Thank God for his staff around him, former --
10 former -- you know, joint chiefs of staff, former
11 everything --

12 **SFC MORIARTY:** Uh-huh.

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- people who know what they're
14 doing.

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes.

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** You know what? God knows that and
17 God puts people in place for such a time as this. I
18 have no doubt that the United States, with all of its
19 faults, is still the one that God leads. We protect
20 Israel.

21 You -- you become a friend of the chosen people of

1 God and you're automatically the enemy of the devil.
2 You don't believe that? Osama bin Laden said himself,
3 those who protect Israel, those who continue -- this is
4 a direct quote -- but those who continue to harbor them
5 and to help them will be the target of us until
6 eternity happens, especially those from the West and
7 under the banner of the cross. That's a direct quote
8 from Osama bin Laden.

9 Now, you're going to tell me that's not -- you
10 know, tell us that's not the Christian nation that was
11 raised up for such a time as this? The Lord's will
12 will be done and no one will get in his way, and if
13 we're willing we'll be used by him right to the last
14 minute, and I believe that we will.

15 My troops also said, if it isn't the end what does
16 this mean? I said it still is the same question, are
17 you ready.

18 Tomorrow morning you can tell is no longer
19 guaranteed to you. So if your house is in order and
20 your family is in order you will be able to do your
21 duty better, you will be able to lay your head down at

1 night and not worry about tomorrow if it doesn't come.

2 You will sleep in peace and you will know that you are
3 at the center of God's will.

4 So again -- again I say, what's the answer to that
5 question?

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And I was told by senior chaplains
8 that is proselytizing. And I said, "No it's not, sir."
9 I said, "You can answer it yes or no. Proselytizing is
10 when you say if you don't answer it yes then, you know,
11 that -- you have to."

12 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And no one is saying that.

14 "Well, you're painting the picture that way."

15 I said, "Well, that's the way it is. What do you
16 want me to do not tell the truth?"

17 I was -- I was reprimanded for it. I don't really
18 care. Again, I don't care. I am here to do God's will
19 and to be a good staff officer to my troops and to my
20 commander, and that is the bottom line. Even if other
21 chaplains don't agree, it doesn't make them right.

1 **SFC MORIARTY:** Have you dealt with any family
2 issues?

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah. My wife -- my wife and I
4 (inaudible) in some of the (inaudible). We
5 (inaudible), but nevertheless my wife is without me.
6 My church is without me.

7 I have a church in Albany --

8 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sure.

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- the Church of the Nazarene, the
10 Community of God, the Family of God Community Church of
11 the Nazarene in Albany. I became their senior pastor
12 one year and three weeks ago. They've been without me
13 now nine weeks this year due to duty or due to whatever
14 and now this.

15 They are a very patriotic community. They are a
16 community that's had people in World War II, Korea,
17 Vietnam, you name it they've done that. They know the
18 value and they see their ministry of (inaudible).

19 My wife sees her ministry's (inaudible). We're a
20 unit ministry team like we practice in the Army. What
21 I do for Christ I do for her and what she does for me

1 at home she does for me. It is a joint operation.

2 However -- it's still going --

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- there still becomes the issue of
5 her loneliness and I have to deal with it.

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** How about your troops, any family
7 issues with them that they brought to you to ask for
8 help?

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Sure. There are guys who have --
10 we have one guy had a family member that died. We had
11 to send him home to take care of that, you know, his
12 uncle. He was very close to him. His dad wasn't in
13 the picture so his dad's brother raised him pretty
14 much.

15 We had people who -- we had one pregnancy issue
16 with one of the guys. His wife wasn't doing well and
17 we made sure he got help and got home to, you know,
18 help his wife. And he came back to duty once things
19 were better.

20 We had another soldier who had a terrible
21 pregnancy problem. His wife -- I forget the disease

1 that she has, but during pregnancy its magnified and he
2 could lose the child and (inaudible). We made sure he
3 got professional care and he could go home if he
4 wanted, but, you know, they had a nurse and a doctor
5 come right to the house and take of her. And the next
6 door neighbor --

7 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, that's good.

8 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- volunteered and another minister
9 volunteered in (inaudible). And he was put at peace
10 knowing that his wife was --

11 **SFC MORIARTY:** Excellent.

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- (inaudible). She said stay
13 where you are. I'm okay.

14 All kinds of things happen, you know. It seems
15 like every little thing that can go wrong by Murphy's
16 law happens when you're deployed.

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** Uh-huh.

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And the problems that people bring
19 with them are magnified. They're now -- they're now in
20 a situation they've never been in before. The command
21 puts new stresses on you. Having to deal with other

1 people (inaudible), having to deal with yourself being
2 an American and have other Americans killed.

3 There's a lot of issues people deal with and they
4 deal with them differently. Some deal with them
5 religiously, some deal with them on their own, some
6 just talk to a friend. Some are quiet and
7 internalized, but as a chaplain my job is to make sure
8 I point those out, especially to the (inaudible), and
9 say, we need to watch so and so for a couple of days
10 closely. He's no longer responding. He's no longer
11 saying hi. He's no longer doing this.

12 Even senior ranking sergeants I saw it happen to.

13 Anger levels go up. Sometimes the thought that maybe
14 mistrust is going on, when nothing is happening at all.

15 And then invariably as a chaplain you always face
16 people who never want you there anyway, and that's due
17 to their own belief system. And you run into that and
18 then you have to be extra specially careful, and
19 sometimes you're not going to be able to please them so
20 the best you can do is stay away from them and just
21 pray for them.

1 **SFC MORIARTY:** Uh-huh. Did you find yourself
2 being referee, though, among the troops? Is
3 (inaudible) --

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I saw myself as an (inaudible) most
5 of the time, or having to explain to them their
6 misconceptions of me or others, and that they weren't
7 true. And trying to reassure them that, you know, I
8 know you're stressed, I know you think things are --
9 and we get -- we get 20, sometimes 20 (inaudible) calls
10 from the police department, changes in a day. No one
11 --

12 **SFC MORIARTY:** That many?

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** There wasn't people -- there was
14 nobody who really had control of this thing for at
15 least two weeks. FEMA wasn't really getting it done,
16 this guy wasn't getting it done. There was pissing
17 contests between the police department --

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sure. Sure.

19 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and the fire department, and so
20 whenever that would happen there would be change
21 (inaudible). And you know what? It became number 73

1 the day we were relieved.

2 **SFC MORIARTY:** But those contests were all up at
3 higher echelons, they weren't (inaudible) --

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah, but they'd filter down to us.

5 **SFC MORIARTY:** But on the site itself everybody
6 was --

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Right.

8 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- cooperating, right?

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** To the best they could.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** But, nevertheless, everybody wanted
12 the final control because then they could get the
13 glory. And I hate to say it, but that's still a
14 factor. It happens to people. They're always thinking
15 about, you know, at the end this who is going to shine,
16 be the star.

17 And that was not the military. That was -- that
18 was the civilian side. That was the only thing we
19 dealt with that made our job a little more difficult.

20 The other thing is they finally did get a position
21 where they figured out how the leadership was going to

1 go. Once they did that we would get orders maybe, only
2 change once or twice (inaudible). You know, it got
3 better.

4 But for a while there we found ourselves, all of
5 us, inadequately unable to communicate and get the job
6 done the way we should have, for whatever reason, you
7 know. And that -- that really added to the stress of
8 my unit. You know, when change number 9 came during
9 the day and we had moved the line again and shifted
10 again, and do this, and pull out, and move up, and pull
11 back, and stand around for three hours while people
12 unscrewed themselves, okay, and that was nothing to do
13 with us. That's the bottom line.

14 But see, nevertheless, the younger troops, what do
15 they think? They think that the commander is not doing
16 his job.

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sure.

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** They think that they're all gagged
19 at the top, right.

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And then it's your job to go say,

1 no, no, no, you guys don't understand. I'm a staff
2 officer. I stood (inaudible). You don't understand.
3 We are facing changes from the left and from the right.

4 Even the higher echelon when they got here, the
5 aviation brigade, they would hear a story and tell us
6 and we'd be like, are you sure, because we just heard
7 this. And it was all because from the outside they
8 kept changing.

9 Finally we were given a niche. Whether the mayor
10 wanted us here or not, or anybody else other than that,
11 we were finally given our niche, and our niche then
12 came from one person that we could (inaudible) from on
13 the police department on a daily basis.

14 When the chief started getting that under control
15 with his higher echelon -- and the other thing -- one
16 of the biggest problems was that so many higher ranking
17 police officers and fire fighters were killed in round
18 one.

19 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

20 **1LT KOVALCIK:** You're like a -- you're like a
21 hydra with no, with no center head, you know, and all

1 these other heads are trying to figure out what they're
2 going to do.

3 I ran into that when buildings were falling.
4 You'd see a captain in the police department and he'd
5 be like, you know, well, I don't know if I should take
6 orders from you or not. I don't know what I'm supposed
7 to do. You know, young guys who maybe have just made
8 the rank, not been mentored enough, and they're not bad
9 people.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Learning -- learning on the job.

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** They're not bad people. They're
12 learning on the job and the OJT is (inaudible).

13 Eventually, though, they, you know, they got
14 command and authority finally figure out. When they
15 did that they started going to tighter security with
16 the badges and stuff, you know.

17 But even that became a problem. You wind up with
18 a political nightmare.

19 "Well, I need a badge."

20 "What the heck do you need a badge for buddy," you
21 know.

1 "But I need a badge. I'm so and so on city's
2 council."

3 And I think that got out of hand and now there's
4 so many badges running around we're right back where we
5 started again. Almost anybody can get to ground zero.

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah. Well, that's what we got
7 (inaudible) for, but we were also told that we couldn't
8 take photos --

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Oh, right.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- because some politicians were
11 having footage taken in front, you know, with the
12 workers in the background --

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Right. Right.

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** -- and the rest of this stuff, and
15 then using it for their political --

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Political gain.

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah, it happens. It happens.

19 There's vultures, what I call vultures on the site --

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and it's also -- it's also

1 unfortunately the media who has been pushed away quite
2 a bit. And I understand they need a story, I
3 understand they need pictures of the story.

4 On the other hand there are some people that think
5 this: This is a sacred place because so many people
6 died. Why are you violating a grave site, okay.

7 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

8 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Now, I understand that. I was
9 raised Roman Catholic. I understand that thinking.
10 Jews also have that thinking.

11 On the other hand they also have a right to be
12 there at some point. There becomes security, there
13 becomes reality, there becomes back to life --

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

15 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and that is a hard struggle,
16 okay. Yeah, sometimes I think they are so jealous for
17 a picture that it's almost disgraceful. At other times
18 I think they're just trying to do their job.

19 You know -- and we're stuck in the middle. We're
20 told, uh-uh, sorry, and all we can do at that point is
21 be as nice as we can to the public and say

1 unfortunately I cannot let you through. Unfortunately
2 I can't let you do this. And for the most part I think
3 troops have done that.

4 **SFC MORIARTY:** I've got to stop this again. We've
5 got our bucket brigade rolling through.

6 (A brief recess was taken.)

7 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay, the bucket brigade is gone.
8 I just checked the tape. It's almost gone, so I'm
9 flipping it at this point.

10 (End side A, tape 1.)

11 **SFC MORIARTY:** The Center for Military History.

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Right.

13 **SFC MORIARTY:** They have professional --

14 **1LT KOVALCIK:** People that do that.

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right, in the services.

16 Excuse me, I lost my track here for a second.

17 You're talking about, you know, being a staff
18 officer and still working the line. How -- how did you
19 balance -- because you had to come back to contribute
20 to the staff meetings, right?

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Right. I (inaudible) --

1 **SFC MORIARTY:** (Inaudible) the condition of the
2 troops and that kind of stuff?

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yeah. I knew where they were.

4 **SFC MORIARTY:** I mean, what (inaudible) for you?

5 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I knew when they were. I knew when
6 they were and pretty much I made the morning one --

7 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

8 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and I made the evening one. My
9 commander told me I need to know where you are. Keep
10 your radio, keep your RTO --

11 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right.

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- (inaudible) RTO (inaudible) and
13 my chaplain assistant who is (inaudible) --

14 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

15 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- assigned to do that job, to
16 carry a weapon if he's allowed to protect me. I'm a
17 non-combatant, et cetera, et cetera. We kept in good
18 command.

19 Day one we got a little gaggled because the
20 buildings were falling. We didn't have a radio on the
21 ground. That day did not go well.

1 After that we managed to get ourselves together
2 and we were able to communicate with higher up. If
3 something came down from higher up or they wanted me to
4 change mission they would let me know. However, for
5 the most part I was given great confidence by my XO,
6 and my CO, and the S-3 and some other people to go out
7 to do my job.

8 And my job was to comfort, my job was to give
9 compassion, and my job was to give morale, my job was
10 to support, my job was to encourage, and that's the job
11 of a chaplain.

12 **SFC MORIARTY:** Sure.

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I mean, that's pretty much that's
14 what it is. And to -- to let them know that the
15 command was doing all that they can to keep them ready
16 for the next round, and they need to be good soldiers
17 and, you know, obey those orders as they come down and
18 do the best they can to understand, even when they
19 don't make sense, because we would keep getting those
20 changes, you know.

21 **SFC MORIARTY:** And what did your commander want at

1 the staff meetings? What did you report on?

2 **1LT KOVALCIK:** He wanted to know how the troops
3 were doing, you know. "And don't bullshit with me, you
4 know. Tell me, because I'm not doing all that well
5 sometimes, so tell me, chaplain, how do you see the
6 boys? You know, what is going on with them?"

7 And I guess I should have said the girls because
8 we do have to girls in (inaudible). They're medics and
9 I was able to talk to them. They were in the rear a
10 lot, more traveling around a lot, and the things they
11 faced were just seeing the bodies, you know. So I was
12 there for them too. Great, great -- two specialists
13 that we had. Wonderful people.

14 But for the most part the men on the line, and he
15 was like, "You know, how are we doing?" Because I see
16 people -- I see people in the staff meeting not
17 tracking. Their eyes are out to lunch, a thousand yard
18 stare. You know, they're trying to process and they're
19 not able to have enough time or enough sleep to do
20 that. I'm having that. You're probably having that.

21 "Don't bullshit with me. What's going on?"

1 And I would tell him. "The boys will keep doing
2 what you ask them to do, sir. They're good. They're
3 good trained, they're hard trained, and they'll keep
4 going. However, at some point we need to figure out
5 how we're going to pull back."

6 My constant (inaudible) was, "How are we going to
7 pull back a little bit at a time (inaudible) today.
8 Somebody's going to have to do that sooner or later, as
9 soon as we get any kind of relief. I know you're aware
10 of that, I know I'm not pointing anything out to you,
11 colonel, that isn't already going on, but that's my
12 suggestion to you is that we think about a plan."

13 **SFC MORIARTY:** And when did that finally happen,
14 at what point?

15 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Like day six. I think it was day
16 six. It was like Tuesday -- well, it was a little --
17 I'm sorry, that's not true. It was Wednesday, day
18 eight --

19 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

20 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- that we began to finally get
21 some type of relief and help, and then we started

1 formulating plans immediately for Thursday morning,
2 (inaudible).

3 And what we were doing at that point then was
4 shifting all of our elements into slices. You know,
5 we'd use our giant headquarters company to slice off
6 day/night, back in the armory, back everywhere, and
7 they sort of got hodge-podge'd in between our four
8 (inaudible), alpha through delta.

9 And our four -- our four tank company line units
10 then would divide up and one would be (inaudible) for a
11 day, a whole unit. Immediately at that point, working
12 with my colonel, we had a CISM, critical intervention
13 specialist team from the Army on the ground, some great
14 people, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists,
15 Red Cross volunteers (inaudible).

16 **SFC MORIARTY:** Where were they sent in from?

17 **1LT KOVALCIK:** You know what, I don't even what to
18 tell you. I think -- I think it was 53rd troop
19 command. I believe it was 53rd troop command.
20 (Inaudible.) I wasn't too worried about their
21 credentials. I know they were real. They had real

1 badges and they were real people.

2 And the one training that I have seen in the past
3 from being a chaplain in Canada, working (inaudible),
4 is that they're valuable. Whenever you can use anybody
5 you can, use them.

6 And I told my commander, my deduction from this is
7 that we have civilian Red Cross (inaudible), people not
8 (inaudible), and (inaudible), and other chaplains,
9 chaplains, priests (inaudible) rabbi. If we can
10 augment as much as we can to allow for these people to
11 have an open-ended time when they come home
12 (inaudible).

13 So we made the briefing mandatory, which is
14 (inaudible), okay. Thirty minutes these people sit
15 down with me and tell you all the things that are
16 available to see (inaudible) except, how you're going
17 to begin to cope with this. It's the wild extremes,
18 the intermediates, what to look out for and (inaudible)
19 phone numbers.

20 I made sure they got the phone numbers and the
21 addresses of some of these people who were willing to

1 give that out, and of course always myself as the
2 battalion chaplain (inaudible). You can call me
3 anytime. That's my job. I don't care if I'm home or
4 what.

5 And we formulated a plan, some of us. Our first
6 sergeant (inaudible) calling people, checking on them
7 (inaudible) every day, you know, everyday, trying to
8 call them and say, (inaudible) information we have
9 (inaudible).

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Are they still on alert or have
11 they gone back to their civilian jobs?

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** We've gone back to our civilian
13 jobs and we were told (inaudible) during the week
14 (inaudible).

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** That -- that's what I heard.

16 **1LT KOVALCIK:** That's been going around, the
17 rumor. I think it's pretty much true. There isn't
18 enough to go around, but at some point the mission here
19 (inaudible) that's going to have to happen.

20 We were told stand down two (inaudible). Be ready
21 at a moment's notice.

1 **SFC MORIARTY:** Now, you didn't rotate out?

2 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I did for a day and a half. My
3 church again was without services. I went there, I
4 provided the services that I could. I was encouraging
5 the people, telling them what's going on, giving them
6 the heads up, and then -- and then coming right back,
7 being with my wife for two evenings. We were able to,
8 you know, be in the same room together and talk with
9 one another.

10 And then I got back here. I was gone almost 46
11 hours I think by the time I left and the time I got
12 back.

13 I finally got my first real sleep. I never slept
14 more than five hours at any time, and even that was
15 only the last couple days. It was between three and
16 four or two or three the rest of the time. Physically
17 exhausted, spiritually drained, emotionally detached.

18 **SFC MORIARTY:** Now, you're not staying here.

19 You're staying across the river (inaudible) --

20 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I'm staying at my office. I have
21 an office at Staten Island Armory where I (inaudible)

1 --

2 **SFC MORIARTY:** So you go --

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- every night --

4 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

5 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- eventually, when I know ministry
6 is done and people are bedding down. I stay for the
7 shift change between the Marines here and the Army.

8 I'm augmenting two units right now, Navy, Marines,
9 Sea Bees and a Marine detachment which is side by side
10 with the 42nd Aviation Brigade. Air chaplain, Chaplain
11 Bessick (phonetic) was here for the first two weeks and
12 then had to return to other duties of his own, civilian
13 nature and as a (inaudible).

14 And I was asked by Chaplain Goldstein, the star
15 chaplain, the head rabbi, colonel over all of us, "You
16 know, you're one of our youngest, could I depend on you
17 to do some more if I need to?"

18 And I said, "Sir, you can depend on me until the
19 job is needed. I mean, that's the way it is, but I need
20 to also take care of my civilian duties."

21 So he made a deal with me that from now until the

1 end of this I would work Monday through Friday, you
2 know, Monday morning, 4:00 a.m., Friday about 9:00
3 p.m., drive home, Saturday and Sunday with my wife at
4 home, right back again until it's over. Right now I
5 think that's going to go another week, so a total of a
6 month when (inaudible).

7 It could be longer though. My unit could get
8 reactivated the next week and then I'm automatically
9 the asset of the (inaudible).

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Right. Okay. Do you have anything
11 that you want to -- that I haven't asked you that you
12 think could be captured here during this interview?

13 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Just that it's more than -- it's
14 more than duty. It's a blessing to be counted on by
15 your superiors and by God, and I know the troops feel
16 the same way.

17 As the Bible puts it, be ready for such time as
18 this and to know that you did all you could and all
19 that you were allowed to do. For love of family, for
20 love of Army, for love of God, for love of country.

21 The chaplain's motto, Pro Deo Et Patria, for God

1 and country, probably rings more true at a time like
2 this than any other time you'll hear it or any other
3 time you'll wear it. You'll just be able to wear it
4 with pride, because I know even though you make
5 mistakes because you're human, to know that you've
6 learned, from a lieutenant becoming a captain, a brand
7 new chaplain, to know you've learned things -- you're
8 on a big learning curve -- but to know that you're
9 already ahead of the game because God is just using you
10 and your -- your commander knows it. He sees what
11 you've learned, he's not scolding you for what you
12 haven't, and he's praising you for what you did right,
13 saying we know now why you're here.

14 I followed in a chaplain's wake who was probably
15 the poorest excuse I've ever heard for a man in the
16 cloth. He would drink with the troops, smoke with the
17 troops, take them to girlie bars, violate lawful
18 orders, not show up for duty. He got pulled over for
19 gun possession.

20 You name it, this guy did it. Changed his
21 religion four times before the Corps finally got rid of

1 him. Just a disgrace.

2 And I had to follow in his wake. And I saw people
3 so disturbed by the word chaplain, so unsure of what
4 that meant, and to try to help them to re-understand,
5 to know it can be Godly and it can be (inaudible), and
6 it can be done right. Even if you don't like that I'm
7 not going to let you get away with those things, even
8 if you know that I'm going to be places that maybe are
9 little unsecure for you or unhappy right now, you'll --
10 you'll eventually thank me.

11 I can see guys who are on the fringe come to
12 church before this ever happened. To see people
13 changing their lives a little bit -- you know, you can
14 never expect it all, but to see them, knowing that the
15 God (inaudible) is important to him, to know that they
16 can look up to a chaplain and realize it's officer and
17 friend, and to also know that it's officer, and to
18 respect that again, and have respect for them, and give
19 it back to them, that is the most enduring thing that I
20 have found here while I've been in the State of New
21 York (inaudible). To my comrades, the best.

1 (Inaudible.)

2 **SFC MORIARTY:** Now, you were prior military also?

3 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yes. I was --

4 **SFC MORIARTY:** You came up as an enlisted?

5 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yup. I was E-5 promotable. I

6 would have made E-6 in three months (inaudible).

7 **SFC MORIARTY:** With whom?

8 **1LT KOVALCIK:** With whom? I was with the 10th

9 Mountain Detachment from West Point.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, okay.

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I was at West Point almost the
12 whole time. I was an instructor of cadets working in a
13 hospital situation. I was on the medical side of the
14 house, basically a glorified scrub nurse even though I
15 didn't have the RN. I had a master's degree in
16 (inaudible) and physiology --

17 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, okay.

18 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and I worked in cosmetic
19 reconstruction. We did hearing tests and hearing
20 evaluations, performed the Beast, which is summer boot
21 camp for the young recruits at the cadet structure.

1 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

2 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Went on the annual big road march
3 with the 125 (inaudible).

4 **SFC MORIARTY:** Were you enlisted or commissioned?

5 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Enlisted.

6 **SFC MORIARTY:** Enlisted, okay.

7 **1LT KOVALCIK:** Yes, E-5 promotable to E-6.

8 **SFC MORIARTY:** Okay.

9 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I had student loans.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Oh, to (inaudible)--

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** I could have -- I could have been a
12 second lieutenant with \$40,000 worth of -- six years at
13 a big ten university, at Michigan State, or I could be
14 a -- on my way out as an E-6 to become an officer when
15 I was ready with no debt.

16 And I think I took the right side. I think it's
17 more important that I found out how the Army really
18 works. I found out what enlisted soldiers go through.

19 I know their concerns, I know their fears. I know
20 what they don't like about command, I know what they
21 like about command. I know what they think of

1 officers. I know what they think of good ones and what
2 they think of bad ones.

3 I've taken the abuse from both sides. College
4 boy, it happens when you're enlisted. Professor, some
5 of it enduring, some it hated, because you go through
6 the ranks so much faster.

7 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

8 **1LT KOVALCIK:** In five years I was ready to make
9 E-6 --

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah. Same here.

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and people just really can't
12 handle that. Had I stayed my nose to the grindstone,
13 probably by (inaudible) I'd have been an E-7 and
14 probably by 12 I would have been an E-8, you know.

15 **SFC MORIARTY:** That's -- it didn't -- it doesn't
16 work in the National Guard like that.

17 **1LT KOVALCIK:** No, but I would have been active
18 duty if I'd have stayed. That would have happened.

19 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

20 **1LT KOVALCIK:** And -- and there -- instead of
21 being helpful they become somewhat jealous, but then

1 you even magnified more as an officer. So you remember
2 all that --

3 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yeah.

4 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- and when you become a chaplain
5 you try to understand what their wives go through and
6 their families go through.

7 And now you learn also -- I worked for doctors so
8 I found out what officers go through, and nurses, and
9 administrators, and very high brass at West Point. I
10 got to know -- I even ended up as a biology tutor,
11 helping the two star general's daughter get through
12 high school. I learned a lot of things about both
13 sides.

14 God given ability as a born leader, I've always
15 known that. I'm not bragging, but it's there.
16 Whatever I put my hand to God blesses and I'm able to
17 succeed. And so I knew that God would use me, I just
18 wasn't sure how. When I was a Catholic at age 14 I
19 thought it was a priest, but I liked girls too much.

20 **SFC MORIARTY:** (Laughter.)

21 **1LT KOVALCIK:** But I never forgot the fact that

1 God had called me to something very special and I knew
2 ministry was in there somehow. I thought maybe it was
3 a doctor. After six years of success, and I should
4 have been happy, I wasn't.

5 But God made it clear to me in my first couple of
6 years in the military that I would be doing this for
7 the rest of my life, and that I would be the Joshua of
8 the past for the future, and that he would use me as
9 warrior and as minister. And while the world sometimes
10 cannot understand that, a chaplain reflects that --

11 **SFC MORIARTY:** Yes.

12 **1LT KOVALCIK:** -- with his -- with his cross over
13 his heart, the most dearest is God, with his rank on
14 the left. Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's you
15 could say. Render unto God what is God's. And to know
16 the difference at times is the hardest thing, and
17 sometimes we have -- make mistakes as chaplains.

18 Sometimes other chaplains don't see how to do that
19 either. They sometimes tell younger chaplains how they
20 think it should work, and it's not always the case.

21 I have learned -- I'm the kind of person that if I

1 don't believe it, it goes in one ear and out the other,
2 for better or for worse. If I believe it, it sticks
3 right with me and I learn from it and I never forget
4 it.

5 But it's been a pleasure and an honor to speak to
6 you today. It's been a pleasure and honor to be here
7 in uniform serving our country, which is still the
8 greatest honor because God is behind it.

9 Thank you, SGT Moriarty.

10 **SFC MORIARTY:** Thank you for your time, sir.

11 **1LT KOVALCIK:** God bless you.

12 (The interview was concluded.)

13 * * * * *