

UNITED STATES ARMY
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW OF
CPT MIGUEL ARROYO

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CONDUCTED BY

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The Center of Military History

AT

1/69 IN Armory
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TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 **SGT JENNINGS:** This is SGT Patrick Jennings of the
3 126th Military History Detachment interviewing CPT
4 Miguel Arroyo. Sir, can you tell me your name and
5 spell it out, please?

6 **CPT ARROYO:** My name is CPT Miguel Antonio Arroyo.
7 M-i-g-u-e-l, A-n-t-o-n-i-o, Arroyo, A-r-r-o-y-o.

8 **SGT JENNINGS:** And your current assignment?

9 **CPT ARROYO:** I'm the commander of Company A, 1st
10 Battalion, 69th Infantry.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you, sir. What were you
12 doing when you first heard of the attack on the World
13 Trade Center?

14 **CPT ARROYO:** I was driving north on FDR Drive on
15 my way to work in my civilian employment. The first
16 indication I got was a rush of southbound emergency
17 vehicle traffic going, like I said, southbound.

18 When I exited 135th Street in Manhattan, I
19 actually drove, was driving the southbound direction
20 and saw a large plume of smoke coming from the downtown
21 area and stopped at a traffic light.

1 Somebody in a SUV actually shouted out the news,
2 because I had no car radio. And that was approximately
3 0915 on the 11th of September.

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** At that time did you expect that
5 you would be called up, that your unit would be needed
6 for this operation?

7 **CPT ARROYO:** Directly, I knew that this would
8 happen since at that time the hint of terrorism was
9 actual since the second plane actually struck. I knew
10 a call-up was going to happen and I attempted to make
11 immediate phone contact with my unit.

12 **SGT JENNINGS:** Were you able to make contact?

13 **CPT ARROYO:** At the time, the phones were busy. I
14 eventually made phone contact about 15 minutes later,
15 leaving the message on the battalion XO's message
16 voicemail, which he eventually returned 20 minutes
17 later.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** How did you prepare from that day
19 to the eventual deployment of your company, how did you
20 prepare yourself and your equipment? What steps did
21 you feel were necessary?

1 **CPT ARROYO:** My OCIE was already freestaged at the
2 Armory. I had to go home and get uniforms and the
3 necessary toiletries to bring to the Armory.

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** Just an aside, sir. What does OCIE
5 stand for?

6 **CPT ARROYO:** That's Organizational Clothing and
7 Individual Equipment.

8 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you, sir. Now, how long
9 after you received an official notification or a call
10 from your chain of command did it take you to report?

11 **CPT ARROYO:** It took me approximately six hours
12 because of the closures for the river crossings and the
13 general direction. The downtown traffic was at a
14 standstill.

15 I had to make arrangements for my POV to be
16 transported back to my home of record.

17 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. As company
18 commander, can you tell me once you had your company,
19 you have the call-up and soldiers start showing up.
20 How long did it take you to get enough soldiers on site
21 so that you felt you could begin the mission at hand?

1 **CPT ARROYO:** Personally, I arrived at the Armory
2 about 1925 hours due to blockages on the city bridges
3 and the closures which made travel difficult to get to.
4 I could discuss that later on.

5 When I arrived at the Armory, my first sergeant
6 already gave us, gave me an on-the-ground count and we
7 felt reasonably ready with the manpower that we had to
8 start conducting operations and (inaudible).

9 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. In the beginning
10 of this operation when you first hit the Armory and
11 began organizing your soldiers, did you receive an
12 operation or fragment order from battalion?

13 **CPT ARROYO:** Yes, we did.

14 **SGT JENNINGS:** How soon after you arrived did that
15 happen?

16 **CPT ARROYO:** A warning order was already prepared
17 and actually given to me in my hand.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. Did you receive a
19 defined set of rules of engagement?

20 **CPT ARROYO:** I don't recall.

21 **SGT JENNINGS:** As an aside to that, does the

1 battalion have an existing set of rules of engagement
2 for civil disturbances?

3 **CPT ARROYO:** No, not to my knowledge.

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. Do you feel as if
5 you initially functioned in your military occupational
6 specialty as an infantry company commander?

7 **CPT ARROYO:** Yes.

8 **SGT JENNINGS:** As a leader do you feel that the
9 men of your company were prepared for this mission? I
10 realize, again, understanding that this is an unusual
11 situation.

12 **CPT ARROYO:** As far as being basic soldiers and
13 ready to follow any lawful order given by higher
14 headquarters, the men were ready.

15 The one fallback that we've addressed actually
16 within the chain of command was to have a contingency
17 set of clothing, undergarments and toiletry kits within
18 each individual locker. That's actually standard
19 operating procedures but this was actually the first
20 drill.

21 The 14th, the weekend of the 14th was supposed to

1 be the first drill after our annual training, so we
2 would have expected the men to restock their lockers at
3 that time.

4 The call-up was so sudden and from what I learned
5 later on was that the majority of the men heard a
6 general (inaudible) by the governor and just came
7 straight to the Armory. But the men acted within the
8 letter, the spirit of their orders.

9 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you, sir. Have you or your
10 company gone through any mobilization administrative
11 preparations such as updating the records of emergency
12 data, updating pay records, wills, since again this
13 operation is taking a longer time frame?

14 **CPT ARROYO:** At present we are in the process of
15 updating those records. We were scheduled to actually
16 do annual personnel review for the December, January,
17 February time frame.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** Do you feel as if your company had
19 a clearly defined chain of command from civil to
20 military authorities?

21 **CPT ARROYO:** Within the battalion, yes, but above

1 battalion level the chain of command and the operating
2 authorities and the liaisons were not clear.

3 **SGT JENNINGS:** I understand, sir. Were you given
4 or did you help design a communication plan both
5 between Army units and Army and civilian agencies?

6 **CPT ARROYO:** We were given a telephone alert
7 roster. In the beginning actually we were given one
8 common frequency within the entire troop command. That
9 was the entire task force. That one frequency was used
10 by all units and basically it caused a lot of
11 confusion.

12 Several days into the operation team leaders were
13 given, were issued Motorola phones, which eased
14 communications dramatically.

15 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right. Who were those phones
16 issued by?

17 **CPT ARROYO:** Those phones were issued through
18 channels down from the battalion, from troop command,
19 and they were issued down to the company commanders,
20 the first sergeants, the company XOs and the battalion
21 primary staff, commanding staff.

1 **SGT JENNINGS:** Was it made clear to you and your
2 soldiers on whatever duty they were on at the time how
3 they were to communicate or contact both within the
4 Guard post NCOIC to command post as well as Guard post
5 to civilian authorities, be it fire department or NYPD,
6 to react to a situation? Did your soldiers understand
7 the clear line of communications for the situation?

8 **CPT ARROYO:** I would believe so. The company
9 established communications methods by a runner in the
10 beginning. We eventually went to FM radio
11 communications and each post had a police department
12 presence for communications.

13 Any communications between those agencies was oral
14 and if civilian authorities needed to get involved then
15 they would radio their command.

16 **SGT JENNINGS:** So just so I understand, each post
17 was a combination of both soldiers and civilian law
18 enforcement?

19 **CPT ARROYO:** Correct.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you, sir.

21 **CPT ARROYO:** And my company command had FM radio

1 and Motorola cell phone (inaudible) to the battalion
2 command post.

3 **SGT JENNINGS:** In your own words, sir, can you
4 tell me if you could create a mission statement for the
5 New York National Guard for the events that took place
6 on September 11th, what would that mission statement
7 be?

8 **CPT ARROYO:** For the battalion I guess it would be
9 to conduct security operations in sector and aid to
10 civil authorities to prevent unnecessary authorized
11 entry into the area, into the zone of operations for
12 lack of a better word.

13 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. If you can, if you
14 know street names it would be excellent. What area was
15 your company initially assigned to cover?

16 **CPT ARROYO:** Our company was initially assigned to
17 cover the north part of the hot zone, which ran along
18 Chamber Street. Originally our company sector ran east
19 from Greenwich Street to Center Street along Chamber
20 Street.

21 Eventually our boundaries were shifted. From the

1 west, the western boundary shifted to Church Street and
2 the east boundary shifted west from Center Street to
3 Broadway. We compressed our lines and actually set up
4 a zone going north from Chamber Street through Reed
5 Street to Duane (phonetic) Street.

6 **SGT JENNINGS:** Did you have effective contact with
7 companies or units operating on your flanks?

8 **CPT ARROYO:** Yes, we had, our western boundary was
9 with Company D of 1st of the 69th. We made liaison, I
10 made daily liaison with the commander of Company D at
11 the boundary. We shared information and basically
12 passed notes.

13 My eastern boundary of the sector, we didn't
14 have contact with the military unit, but there was a
15 large police and federal law enforcement presence there
16 since that area was the city hall area.

17 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. How do you feel
18 that your troop morale has been holding up?

19 **CPT ARROYO:** The troop morale is actually pretty
20 high. It's pretty high. The men understand and got to
21 see firsthand why they were there and know what their

1 purpose and involvement in this type of operation was.

2 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. How long were you
3 on site before you were relieved?

4 **CPT ARROYO:** We were relieved on the evening of 16
5 September by elements of the 204th Engineer Brigade.

6 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. Did you have any
7 concerns concerning force protection or did you think
8 it was satisfactory?

9 **CPT ARROYO:** Initially we had concerns about force
10 protection because we went into the area without
11 weapons. The police department had not yet had a
12 strong presence in there.

13 The officers were authorized to carry sidearms
14 with ammunition loaded, not chambered. The soldiers
15 went in with flak vests and Kevlar helmets.

16 Force protection at that moment was not, didn't
17 seem to be a major issue until the police department
18 came and actually alleviated some (inaudible).

19 **SGT JENNINGS:** Do you feel that the soldiers
20 should have been armed initially?

21 **CPT ARROYO:** No. Given the situation itself and

1 the area, which was quite desolate, personally I didn't
2 see a force protection threat. The presence of the
3 military in the street itself seemed to be an adequate
4 deterrent to anybody trying to attempt any subversive
5 operations against the area.

6 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you, sir. Just as a final,
7 do you have anything you'd like to tell us, any I guess
8 you could call them stories, anything you feel is
9 significant that I haven't covered?

10 **CPT ARROYO:** Six days out there and a whole bunch
11 of stories. Let me see. We first got off the bus at
12 Battery Park and the entire area is just covered with
13 ash. It's just a gray city thing.

14 When we actually offloaded the company some
15 civilian, I guess when the entire incident happened
16 some young lady was, must have had a baby with her,
17 pushing along the carriage.

18 I guess when the entire incident happened she just
19 grabbed her child and left the carriage and the baby
20 snacks and the house keys and everything like that. It
21 seemed kind of eerie just to see an abandoned baby

1 carriage like that. That was, I think, the first thing
2 we actually saw.

3 Then marching through the destruction, first along
4 the west side and then down Broadway the following day.

5 Just the widespread destruction that the cameras can't
6 really cover in the actual dimension and scope.

7 On our initial leaders' recon I glimpsed at a
8 piece of paper that was blown out of one of the
9 buildings unknown (inaudible) was, charred at the
10 edges.

11 It was a fax cover sheet and apparently the
12 comments were directed from something else, but the
13 entire body of the paper was not intact and the more
14 legible words that were there were as follows. It
15 says, "I learned a tough lesson today. Call me if you
16 need any help. Thanks for your support."

17 It obviously was written by somebody in something
18 totally unrelated but quite, I guess, ironic for the
19 occasion. I have no other comments.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you very much, sir. This is
21 SGT Patrick Jennings with the 126th Military History

1 Detachment finishing the interview. It is September
2 29th, the year 2001. The time is 1235.

3 (The interview was concluded at 1235 hours.)

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