

UNITED STATES ARMY
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW OF

COL JACOB Z. GOLDSTEIN
42nd Division Chaplain

126-ORH-I-019

NEIT-126-019

CONDUCTED BY

SGT PATRICK JENNINGS

The Center of Military History

AT

7th Regiment Armory
New York, New York

September 30, 2001

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, conducting an oral
4 history interview. The time is 1426. The date is 30
5 September, the year 2001.

6 Sir, if you would please state your name and spell
7 your last name.

8 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** My full name is Jacob, Zevia
9 (phonetic) is my middle name. Last name is Goldstein,
10 G-o-l-d-s-t-e-i-n.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** And your rank and duty assignment,
12 sir?

13 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** My rank is colonel. My duty is I
14 am the star chaplain with the New York Army National
15 Guard, also known as (inaudible) chaplain for the
16 Guard.

17 **SGT JENNINGS:** Yes, sir. Can you tell me where
18 you were on September 11th when you found out about the
19 attack on the World Trade Center?

20 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** I actually was in, I'm assistant
21 housing commissioner for the State of New York and I

1 was, I was about to go into a staff meeting with the
2 people in my Brooklyn office with my Brooklyn staff,
3 and someone said, "There's a big fire at the World
4 Trade Center."

5 So we went to the ninth floor from where our
6 building is and we were direct sight to the World Trade
7 Center. There's nothing almost encumbering.

8 And as we're there and looking out the window we
9 saw the second plane go in. It was like unbelievable.

10 **SGT JENNINGS:** At that time did you have a feeling
11 or a thought that you'd be needed for your Guard
12 duties, for military duties?

13 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** Well, we saw the second plane go
14 in and then someone came running into the office saying
15 that there's a, that New York City is under attack by
16 terrorists. I thought, "Whoa, the Guard will probably
17 be called up real quick for a security mission if
18 anything else (inaudible) the severity of whatever was
19 going on."

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** And at that time did you make an
21 effort to call your command or did your command call

1 you?

2 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** Oh, I called. I actually made an
3 effort to call the command and the phones were busy. I
4 called directly the (inaudible) office. It was also
5 busy about 15 minutes.

6 But then right quick after I got a beep, I saw my
7 beeper went off and it was a call number and somebody
8 at EOC informed me that the Guard on a statewide level
9 was being notified they were to deploy. So it was
10 pretty quick. I'd say within an hour, probably at
11 around 11:00.

12 **SGT JENNINGS:** Now, once you received that
13 notification how long did it take you to report to your
14 appropriate duty station?

15 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** Well, that would take me four
16 hours. Given the mission as I started understanding
17 what was going to happen, that wouldn't be the place
18 I'd be needed. I'd be needed basically here in the
19 city where I live and tracking Ground Zero.

20 And my main focus was to find out what units are
21 going to be called so that I could begin focusing on

1 (inaudible) to make sure that they were all around,
2 even though I know that their units, that they would be
3 called by their units.

4 I still assumed we wanted to talk to them to find
5 out where they were.

6 **SGT JENNINGS:** When you had all of your chaplains,
7 well, first, sir, can you tell me how many chaplains
8 you have?

9 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** Okay. Well, on the mission that
10 we had, our initial mission we had 11 plus myself is
11 12. We currently have nine plus myself (inaudible) a
12 little bit less than three. And I think initially we
13 wanted to have, I wanted to have more chaplains because
14 of, you know, the situation.

15 I went down there Wednesday morning to understand
16 what I thought the mission was going to be and what
17 Ground Zero was and the pressures that would be on the
18 chaplains, I mean on the soldiers. Understandably it
19 was different than combat missions, although that was
20 the combat zone for (inaudible).

21 **SGT JENNINGS:** Right.

1 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** But the pressures are different
2 because what our soldiers are doing, what they had to
3 do in this massive as I call it graveyard that is
4 there.

5 So I needed a little bit higher ratio than just a
6 minimum of a chaplain per battalion. I also needed
7 chaplains at (inaudible) and I needed chaplains to help
8 just walk the line. No one chaplain could be at the
9 same place all the time.

10 **SGT JENNINGS:** Were you able to give your
11 chaplains a fragmentary order or an operation order
12 prior to dispatching them?

13 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** No, it was all verbal. I called
14 and spoke to (inaudible) didn't have enough time. So
15 this was show up, come down and, you know. Once we
16 knew where they were and they were going to different
17 units, it took us a little time.

18 But by Thursday we had a pretty good handle on
19 what was going on here and called people in and they
20 were issued cell phones, which was the most important
21 thing that I could have. But they had a way, I had a

1 way to maintain (inaudible) they could communicate with
2 me and they could talk to each other. So that was a
3 tremendous help.

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** If you could create for me a
5 mission statement that you feel that would be a task
6 for this mission as its currently going, and the same
7 mission statement you would give to your chaplains,
8 what would that be?

9 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** My mission statement is to say the
10 chaplain corps is here to support the welfare, the
11 morale, the spiritual needs of the troops assigned to
12 this mission, specifically to work with the soldiers in
13 their times of need as crises arise, i.e., personal
14 crises over what they see, what they feel, what they're
15 getting in touch with and to see the chaplain and/or
16 his assistant as a person that can help (inaudible) at
17 the first station of seeking help or what have you.

18 That primary, that's our mission statement on this
19 mission.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** And as the mission has fleshed out,
21 have your chaplains been able to get ahold of necessary

1 equipment they need to do accomplish their mission?

2 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** Well, they have the necessary
3 equipment. They have the chaplain kits. That's the
4 most important thing they can have. They better have
5 it. That's no different than a soldier having his
6 weapon. It's their weapon, for lack of a better word.

7 So every chaplain has his kit and they can pray
8 with a soldier, pray with a group of soldiers. They
9 can organize services and they (inaudible) organize
10 services. Chaplains (inaudible) situation before.

11 That's something else chaplains (inaudible) be
12 able to get ahold of (inaudible) phone number. If you
13 want, I'll give it to you now.

14 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir.

15 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** Not with him but through the XO,
16 Father Hill. Father Phil Hill is (703) 695-1136.

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

18 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** And Chaplain Gumpas (phonetic)
19 came and I was his, I guess, host, and took him around.

20 He went to the temporary morgue, prayed there. Father
21 Hill, Monsignor Hill prayed at Ground Zero, the main

1 site. They both did.

2 So (inaudible) and they saw the soldiers
3 (inaudible) saw our chaplains and complimented
4 (inaudible).

5 **SGT JENNINGS:** Right, sir. Can you explain for
6 me, sir, the organization of a chaplain within a
7 battalion? Does he have one assistant, does he have
8 two?

9 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** The (inaudible) organization for a
10 chaplain would be (inaudible) as chaplain assistant
11 it's called the (inaudible) team. They work as a team.
12 The assistant has his function, the chaplain in his
13 function. They work together.

14 The next level would be at the brigade level. The
15 same deal, except this time he would supervise two or
16 three chaplains. Then the next level would be the
17 mission level and they would supervise many more
18 chaplains. They can still (inaudible) in that area.

19 When you (inaudible) from the (inaudible)
20 division, i.e. the star chaplain like myself
21 (inaudible) but that's essentially where you're at.

1 Most states do not have the (inaudible) like New York.

2 New York has (inaudible) so therefore the NCO
3 grades are higher. New York (inaudible) a sergeant
4 major so it's very good for chaplain assistants. He
5 has someplace (inaudible) to. So that is (inaudible).

6 **SGT JENNINGS:** Can you tell me which faiths the
7 chaplains cover in New York?

8 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** New York, we have all faith groups
9 covered. Jewish, Catholic, Protestant.

10 **SGT JENNINGS:** And how do you rate first the
11 morale of the soldiers on the ground and then the
12 morale of your chaplains?

13 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** On both accounts I would say very
14 high. The soldiers are focused. They know what their
15 mission is. They understand the mission. They
16 understand how important it is and what they have to do
17 to accomplish the mission.

18 Everybody does their thing. Some have a little
19 work, you know, that (inaudible) further away from the
20 action so they see more buildings and less people. But
21 everybody has a mission. They're focused.

1 I've not heard, you know, "I don't care for this,
2 get me out of here." They have those cases but
3 (inaudible) personal reasons but they (inaudible).

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir. Just as a final
5 point --

6 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** And the morale is very high and
7 they're focused. And the same goes for my chaplains,
8 and that's their overall mission. Chaplains are
9 focused. I have chaplains here who have volunteered to
10 (inaudible).

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** Right, sir. As a final question,
12 do you have any comments, stories, anecdotes you would
13 like to add to the tape? Eventually, as I said, this
14 will go into some form of official history and these
15 things do --

16 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** I imagine there are plenty of
17 anecdotes. There are plenty of things out there, but I
18 want to share one particular story that I find very
19 poignant and it summarizes everything.

20 (Interruption to proceedings.)

21 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** Thursday they went to three

1 missions. One of my chaplains, Chaplain Sanbo
2 (phonetic) the (inaudible) chaplain, came over to me
3 and said, "Chaplain, I think you want this." I said,
4 "What is it that I want?"

5 He took it out of his pocket (inaudible) similar
6 to what I'm wearing. And I said, "Well, where did you
7 get this?" He told me a long story. One of the
8 searchers that night, the night before, obviously
9 understood the meaning (inaudible) going through rubble
10 and look for at that time survivors.

11 He came across this yarmulke and this person
12 turned to the soldier and said (inaudible) and that
13 soldier was a member of this unit and gave it to him.

14 And that's a pretty powerful piece, but even more
15 powerful was when I opened up the yarmulke to look at
16 it, it said, "Wedding Reception" and I can't remember
17 the name, and the date, September 9th, 2001.

18 So that's anecdotal to me because (inaudible)
19 Jewish faith. But here is a rescuer who understood the
20 importance of that, giving it to a soldier who got it
21 to a chaplain not of the Jewish faith who got it to me.

1 So that will remain with me the rest of my life in
2 terms of what happened to that small little piece of
3 (inaudible) very powerful meaning to it.

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you, sir. Your comments
5 actually raised one other question that I would like to
6 ask. That is, considering the nature of soldiers and
7 that this event could, in effect, raise the blood, if
8 you will, raise the blood of those soldiers, have the
9 chaplains made an effort to separate the activity of
10 the terrorists from the faith of the terrorists?

11 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** In talking to them about that I've
12 broached that. To my (inaudible) it seems (inaudible)
13 the faith is (inaudible) that's what they're saying.
14 We haven't seen anything different.

15 What you read or the newspapers (inaudible) I
16 think what has to be perhaps done across the board in
17 the military, they only do (inaudible) that part of the
18 world (inaudible) Islam, they should tell them that,
19 "Hey, it's not the faith. This is a bunch of people
20 (inaudible) using violent means but we're not into
21 that."

1 I've talked to them about it. You know, the
2 (inaudible) personnel. They'll say, "Oh, yes, thank
3 you, sir." But I'm not sure that changed their mind,
4 you know, especially after reading the newspapers, you
5 know, and they did some religious rite before they
6 crashed the planes. So it's kind of hard to dispel. I
7 mean, the (inaudible).

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

9 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** It's hard for any faith
10 (inaudible) I've said no faith in the world does that,
11 at least (inaudible). But that's what we see.

12 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right. Thank you very much,
13 sir, for your time.

14 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** If you need any phone numbers or
15 you want to talk to me, you know I can give you my home
16 number.

17 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right, sir, if you could do
18 that I would appreciate it.

19 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** (718) 774-6398.

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

21 **COL GOLDSTEIN:** You're welcome.

1 **SGT JENNINGS:** This is SGT Patrick Jennings of the
2 126th Military History Detachment. The interview is
3 ending. The time is 1445, September 30th, the year
4 2001.

5 (The interview was concluded at 1445 hours.)

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