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CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW OF
MAJ JOHN FISCHER

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CONDUCTED BY

SSG DAN MORIARTY

The Center of Military History

AT

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TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

P R O C E E D I N G S

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SSG MORIARTY: This is SSG Dan Moriarty of the 126th Military History Detachment. Today is the 1st of October 2001. We're at Battery Park.

This interview is with -- if you could say your name, sir.

MAJ FISCHER: MAJ John T. Fischer, New York State Naval Militia.

SSG MORIARTY: I'm going to read the legal stuff here to keep the Center for Military History happy.

I understand that the tapes and transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. Government, to be used in any manner deemed in the best interest of the U.S. Army as determined by the Chief of Military History or his representative.

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1 restrictions. The Army will provide you that about,
2 you know, the time that you're (inaudible) commission.

3 Do you have any conditions or restrictions you'd
4 like to put on this?

5 **MAJ FISCHER:** No.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. If you could just initial
7 there and sign on this space down here.

8 (Phone ringing.)

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** Is that me or you?

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** That's actually (inaudible).

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible.) No, maybe it is me.
12 Maybe it is you. It's the one thing with cell phones
13 --

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, it's me.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Okay. (Inaudible.) I'll take it
16 (inaudible).

17 (A brief recess was taken.)

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** And we'll resume this interview.
19 I'm assuming you were at your civilian job --

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Correct.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- when this happened?

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes, I was.

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** And where is that?

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** I was at a corporate staff meeting
4 located at Asheville, North Carolina.

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, really?

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** I work for Southeastern Container
8 Incorporated and our headquarters is in Asheville, so
9 we were down there having a corporate meeting when
10 someone interrupted our meeting to tell us that a small
11 plane had crashed in the twin tower or the World Trade
12 Center. And then as things developed and we turned on
13 a television (inaudible) for a while, and we finished
14 the meeting on Wednesday.

15 Then Wednesday afternoon, since couldn't fly back
16 because of the airports being shut down, so I drove
17 non-stop from Asheville to my home in Londonberry, New
18 Hampshire. I threw on my gear the next day and then
19 came down here.

20 (Phone ringing.)

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** Sorry. I'll just turn it off.

1 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. Now, you drill with -- you
2 drill with the New York State Militia --

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes.

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- but you live in Londonberry?

5 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, I'm associated with them, a
6 New York unit so --

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** So you come down from New York for
8 your drills?

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Yeah. (Inaudible), yes.

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** Do you do this monthly or is it
11 like the Guard where you go to --

12 **MAJ FISCHER:** I'm -- I'm on call. I'm a special
13 staff officer.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh. Oh, okay. Okay.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** So I was trained (inaudible)
16 biological/chemical defense and also disaster response
17 emergency preparedness.

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, really.

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** So --

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- that's what I was doing for a

1 while. I worked, of course, with FEMA. I was trained
2 as an EPLO at Mount Weather.

3 So all this disaster response thing I'm, you know,
4 at least fairly knowledgeable about it, you know, more
5 than most people. So that's the reason why they had me
6 come down.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** So you were (inaudible), okay.
8 Were you -- have you been used in that capacity at all?

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, I was a liaison officer. I
10 understand how logistical requests should be processed.

11 I understand that, you know, how it works through --
12 OEM through CIMO (phonetic), over to FEMA or, you know,
13 back down the military side, you know, working that
14 way.

15 You know -- so that's basically the capacity I was
16 in for, you know, the first I guess week or so.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** As a liaison between --

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** The JTF, joint task force and the,
19 you know, the director that I was supporting. I was
20 working as one of his aides as the, what they call an
21 OEM forward, which was actually ground zero.

1 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. You're prior military also?

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes. I served four years active
3 duty in the Marine Corps.

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

5 **MAJ FISCHER:** In (inaudible), and then I went into
6 the reserves.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** You -- was it during that time that
8 you were in Desert Storm or were you in reserves?

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** I was with the -- I was a reservist
10 with the Second Battalion, 25th Marines.

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** And you got called up?

12 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes. Half of our battalion went
13 over to Saudi. The half I was with was (inaudible) to
14 Camp Pendleton and we were training for the -- for that
15 (inaudible) Marine expeditionary force that was going
16 to be the amphibious assaults.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** And we were training for that, and
19 then from there I took orders to Fort McClellan for
20 their nuclear, biological and chemical defense school.
21 So I went through that course at Fort McClellan. So

1 that's how I got the MOS for NBD.

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** I did that NBD defense course in
3 Connecticut. It's -- it's -- I'd like to go through it
4 two or three more times.

5 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** You know, because it's -- it's just
7 so foreign, you know, the way we do things and -- but
8 (inaudible) particular biological and chemicals are the
9 cheapest ones around.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** You know, a smart guy or a terrorist
11 group can figure it out just using industrial
12 chemicals.

13 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah. Yeah, well that's -- the
14 crop dusters and all that kind of stuff.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** What they call a poor man's atom
16 bomb.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah. Yeah, and it's a scary
18 thought. It's -- you know, you just mix that chemical
19 and that chemical so --

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** So, okay, coming -- coming back to

1 here, you were at ground zero?

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, I checked in. The first night
3 I was at the police academy where they were kind of
4 marshaling us up, and that was their temporary
5 emergency operations center.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** This was Wednesday night now?

7 **MAJ FISCHER:** Thursday.

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** Thursday?

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** Thursday evening, because the EOC in
10 the World Trade Center, you know, was destroyed.

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

12 **MAJ FISCHER:** They went and stood it up in the
13 police academy --

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- until they developed the one
16 they're in now, pier 92. And once they stood that up
17 and they dislocated everyone from the police academy
18 over there, at that point I was then assigned out as an
19 aide to a Chris Koslow (phonetic), who was working for
20 OEM.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. And what was he doing?

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, he was -- he was kind of one
2 of these mystery guys. I think they brought him up
3 from D.C. He was Department of Justice type, but he
4 was assigned to the mayor's office.

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** So, you know, he wasn't -- he was
7 kind of discrete about exactly, you know, who he was
8 and what he was doing, but all we were told was to work
9 for him.

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** Do whatever he said to do?

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** Exactly.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. And what was he having you
13 do?

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, you can see my logbook.
15 Mainly it was to (inaudible) control of the situation,
16 you know, identify where -- where the buildings were
17 housing people, where, you know, the supplies are being
18 stored, what kind of supplies were being stored, find
19 out how we were going to be able start getting the
20 buildings ready to be taken over by the landlords,
21 basically kind of an organizational strategy towards

1 the supplies, and all the volunteers, and the people
2 and try to get some kind of system to it.

3 It was basically fairly chaotic between all the
4 rescue personnel, all the deployed, you know, units.
5 You know, there was search and rescue and, you know,
6 the fire department units and all that.

7 We were trying to make sense of who was where,
8 what they were doing, and that was kind of the job
9 that, you know, he was tasked with so --

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** And I'm curious because that's
11 something I haven't thought about at all was the
12 landlords --

13 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- particularly buildings that were
15 threatened --

16 **MAJ FISCHER:** Uh-huh.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- by other buildings. Now, what
18 was their role?

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, they were standing up. I
20 guess they had Turner Contracting, a company called
21 AMEC. There was a couple of others. There was four of

1 them in total that were actually being tasked at taking
2 different areas of the zone and bringing in their
3 people and their workers to try to clean out the
4 buildings, identify structural problems, you know, do
5 some damage assessment, and then come up with a plan of
6 action to get the buildings, you know, back to, you
7 know, being useable.

8 What we found like, you know, like with the AMX
9 building, was that really the first two floors were
10 taken over by firefighters, police, volunteers,
11 different government agencies like DMAT. The disaster
12 medical assistance teams had set up shops there. The
13 fire department had like a supply depot inside.

14 And then just trying to make sense out of that,
15 figuring out where -- where should everything go to,
16 where does it really belong, because at some point,
17 like I said, the landlords, they wanted to get their
18 buildings back and, you know, fix them and (inaudible)
19 back (inaudible). So that was kind of the impetus for
20 us, to try to do it as quickly as possible.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** How about clearing out residents

1 from some of the other buildings that were not
2 necessarily damaged, but that was -- I understand there
3 was some major water line breaks and when the buildings
4 came down they just went right through the
5 infrastructure underground as well, so there was a lot
6 of outages, power outages.

7 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes.

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** There were buildings that weren't
9 initially damaged but were next to buildings that had
10 been damaged, and when those buildings collapsed --

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** Uh-huh.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- there was some concern that
13 additional buildings would be -- you know, with people
14 still in them.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right. Right. Well, when I got
16 there, which was in essence day four, when I was
17 actually in ground zero, that had all been taken care
18 of. You know, the main concern now was just safety of
19 the rescue personnel and people in the area rather than
20 the residents.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** The residents had pretty much been
2 cleared out and the zone was a lot bigger than it is
3 now. I mean, as our efforts, you know, took hold and
4 they got better control of security and, you know, kind
5 of systemized the, you know, the traffic patterns of
6 getting in and out of the zone and all that, they
7 started making the zone smaller as they, you know, they
8 were able to ascertain what was -- what was safe and
9 what wasn't.

10 And each day you would see where like this block
11 was now open to, you know, pedestrians only or
12 residents with credentials. And, you know, that's how
13 they kind of -- they walked it inward.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** So our main thing was we -- more the
16 concern of trying to clean them out so we could get the
17 people back rather than, you know, they had already
18 been evacuated. So I wasn't, you know, part of that at
19 all.

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. And when did you switch over
21 from working for Mr. Koslow?

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** Actually, it was -- to what I'm
2 doing now? Well, after we did the mission he said he
3 had some business down in D.C., which was -- I'm trying
4 to recollect, last Friday or Saturday prior, and --

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** So a week ago this past
6 (inaudible)?

7 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, exactly. And then he was
8 either going to come back or go on another assignment,
9 and from I was told was he assigned elsewhere, you
10 know, at D.C., and that my duties were basically to,
11 you know, wind down the project I was working on. And
12 then I transitioned over to Battery Park and doing what
13 I'm doing now, which is, you know, special projects,
14 assignment.

15 I kind of know a lot of, you know, (inaudible), so
16 they kind of put me on different things. So --

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. You were mentioning
18 something about a project going under, underneath the
19 Brooklyn Bridge?

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes. There was a -- there's
21 actually a supply cache there that also had Naval

1 Militia personnel that were putting together boxes and
2 things so they could, you know, kind of unitize the
3 cargo so they were able to get it on trucks and, you
4 know, better able to handle it with the size forklifts
5 that they had.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, on site here?

7 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, right -- right at the Brooklyn
8 Bridge here.

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, okay.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** So it was kind of interesting. When
11 you go underneath it you see all this kind of -- this
12 stuff there.

13 **SSG MORIARTY:** And where was all that equipment
14 going?

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Various supply caches. That was
16 another project we were working on with Mr. Koslow, was
17 to identify within the four quadrants that the fire
18 department set up a supply cache that had mission
19 essential equipment in it only, and that, you know,
20 equipment that could be shared between the four
21 quadrants rather than being transported out of the zone

1 and then back in.

2 Non-mission critical items, such as food, dog --
3 you know, like dog food, diapers, all the other stuff
4 that people seemed to have -- somehow got into the
5 zone, that was brought back to pier 36 and then
6 processed for transportation back to some of the
7 donation centers, like upstate, but trying to get it
8 out of here because it was getting in the way.

9 So that was another project we were working on as
10 well.

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** And you continued that project when
12 you came back to Battery Park?

13 **MAJ FISCHER:** I wound it down after a day. We
14 also -- we were assisting on setting up the north
15 portal and south portal rehabilitation centers, which
16 was kind of a feeding area, rest area for the rescue
17 workers, firefighters and what not, a uniform change
18 station so they could exchange dirty coveralls for
19 clean.

20 Setting up the wash down stations because -- I'll
21 say it, you know, here, because we're all in the

1 military family. The word was we do not use any hazmat
2 terminology. It's clean, it's dirty. It's not, you
3 know, contaminated with decon.

4 So that was the, you know, mind set that we took
5 forward was that it was a hygiene issue and not that
6 there was any kind of decon going on. And we were
7 setting up showers for the firefighters.

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** Was this in -- and was this
9 (inaudible) --

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** They say no. They -- I mean, the
11 whole the thing was that there wasn't anything
12 particularly hazardous other than that there was
13 elevated levels of asbestos, and that the closer you
14 got to the rubble pile, you know, the more necessary it
15 would be to have a respirator.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** I see an awful lot of folks that
17 are around here do have those respirators, the ones,
18 the industrial ones.

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** Uh-huh.

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** That the (inaudible) --

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible) cartridges, combo

1 cartridges, yeah. Yeah, we were helping also in
2 procuring those supplies, you know, and getting people
3 fitted up and getting them out there.

4 I also worked with credentialing as well, securing
5 credentials for people that need to get in. A lot of
6 people that should be -- have gotten into the zone.
7 We're having problems that -- due to the confusion of,
8 where do I get them.

9 If they didn't have the proper documentation they
10 were being kind of shunted between pier 92 and IS 89,
11 and I was kind of the person that was able to shepherd
12 them through and (inaudible), you know, put them in the
13 right format and get them the credentials they needed
14 to get on the job and, you know, you know the
15 (inaudible) crews or, you know, military personnel that
16 needed to get access to the zone. So it was pretty
17 interesting.

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** Your troops now were where? What
19 kind of missions were they being detailed to?

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, after the beginning of the
21 second week when we were able to get more volunteers

1 in, since the Naval Militia was basically working with
2 volunteers that joined, they were tasked with security
3 missions mostly, setting up checkpoints, manning
4 checkpoints.

5 Some working parties for the -- for the Naval
6 Militia personnel that have a construction background,
7 trades background, they were assigning to Governor's
8 Island to help rehabilitate the buildings out at
9 Governor's Island. That was a mission they were given.
10 The (inaudible) mission also.

11 We were providing some assistance at the pier 36
12 supply facility. which is still being manned by Naval
13 Militia personnel.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Pier 36?

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** I was given to understand that at
17 some point in time --

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** Oh, and we also had liaison officers
19 at OEM, which we still do. We have a watch set up, you
20 know, as part of a joint task force, military liaison
21 up there at the EOC. So this goes with kind of, you

1 know, most of the main (inaudible), the main missions
2 that we have.

3 **SSG MORIARTY:** Because I've seen the Coast Guard
4 there.

5 **MAJ FISCHER:** Oh, yeah.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** Is your desk right next to theirs
7 or --

8 **MAJ FISCHER:** They're across the street.

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. They're there in the
11 transportation section.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. I understand that at some
13 point in time the (inaudible) is going to be pulling
14 out of --

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** It should have been at 1100.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, today?

17 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes.

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** And that Governor's Island will be
19 the new --

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Billeting area.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes. That's operational right now.

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, is it?

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yup. (Inaudible) go over there
4 later, just catch a ferry.

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. I talked to somebody who is
6 doing the ferry stuff. He was very frustrated because
7 he basically said that the ferry was going to the
8 island twice a day, at 10:00 in the morning and at
9 10:00 at night, and it was there for about 40 minutes.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. There's been some issues.
11 They're working on augmenting the ferry schedule with
12 additional vessels, but I haven't personally had the
13 opportunity to experience it.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** I just checked in, checked back in
16 this morning.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** So this is something that evolved
19 over the weekend. So they -- I know coming in here
20 they expected to get a better handle on the ferry
21 schedule to better support what we're trying to do.

1 **SSG MORIARTY:** Uh-huh.

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** And you're right. (Inaudible) the
3 frustration of someone coming off ship, wants to come
4 back here or go out there, and hanging around for an
5 hour or two and they're not able to get transportation
6 over there so --

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, basically we were told that
8 if you missed the ferry, because it's there for an
9 hour, if you miss the ferry you wait 12 hours for the
10 next one.

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** There's a -- well, it depends on who
12 you talk to. I've also heard there's some vessels
13 available out of pier 5, which is New York Waterways so
14 --

15 **SSG MORIARTY:** You mean government vessels?

16 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, it's just a New York City
17 asset.

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** I (inaudible) -- so there's a couple
20 of ways to approach it I guess.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. We'll just wait here a

1 second for the helicopter. It's amazing, we filter out
2 all these things when we're talking. I'm sure you
3 (inaudible).

4 (Interruption to proceeding.)

5 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible.)

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** So after -- after Mr. Koslow left
7 you wound down those operations, you came over here and
8 you started what, do you -- doing (inaudible)?

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** Watch -- yeah, watch officer and
10 also, you know, on demand as the commander deemed
11 necessary for me to get involved in those things, you
12 know if he needed some (inaudible) power to (inaudible)
13 something that.

14 Like I say, this kind of -- (inaudible) this type
15 of assignment -- you know, I'm not one of the F staff
16 so I'm trained in, you know PLO and things like that,
17 you know. They want to kind of keep me available to
18 interface with different things --

19 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- as they come up.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** How did you get your orders? You

1 didn't -- obviously you didn't get an order to come
2 down. You just came down.

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** I got a verbal -- no, I got a verbal
4 from the --

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, did you?

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- deputy, the Naval Militia, GEN
7 Wolfe, BG Wolfe.

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** I called him from North Carolina and
10 said, "You know, are you standing up?"

11 He said, "Yes, we are." I told him I'd call him
12 as soon as I got close to the city, once I had my gear
13 and everything, which I did.

14 And then he told me to go to the police academy
15 and report there.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** So you never went home? You just
17 drove --

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, I did. I was home for two
19 hours. (Inaudible), slept for two hours, got up,
20 dropped the car off at the airport, went to the drill
21 center, (inaudible) gear, and then took off so --

1 **SSG MORIARTY:** And where's your drill center?

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** I also work up at -- I have an
3 affiliation with a unit up in Londonberry, New
4 Hampshire.

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, okay. With National Guard or
6 --

7 **MAJ FISCHER:** It's a Marine rifle company, a
8 reserve rifle company so --

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, okay. Okay, so you keep gear
10 there?

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** And did they have people already at
13 (inaudible)?

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, they actually had -- they have
15 full-time active duty types.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** And they went on 724 alert?

17 **MAJ FISCHER:** I don't know about that time, but
18 they were -- there was somebody there that morning
19 because it was a weekday. So I just came in and told
20 them what I was doing. They said -- you know, I told
21 them I needed some gear. They said take it.

1 **SSG MORIARTY:** Did you take a government vehicle
2 also?

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** No, I POD'd it.

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, okay. Oh, so the vehicle that
5 you dropped off was a rental?

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Yeah. Because I couldn't fly
7 home. So I did about a thousand miles in about 14
8 hours.

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Good golly.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. I mean, you've got to
11 (inaudible) -- it just, you know --

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** You were at the company
13 headquarters so you said, hey --

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. See you, you know, and they
15 said, yeah, by all means.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** Has there been a strong chain of
17 command (inaudible)? Are you getting (inaudible) and
18 updated information through your (inaudible) here or,
19 you know --

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Yeah, it's pretty, pretty
21 much delineated now. I mean, you know, what we've been

1 working with is the change over from like, I think what
2 was it, 53rd to the 42nd.

3 You know, we're actually organized under the
4 aviation brigade, the Naval Militia is as a whole. So,
5 you know, everything runs through 42nd.

6 So, you know, we're getting used to their staffing
7 and who their players are and they're getting used to
8 us as well.

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** You have folks up there at the 7th
10 regiment?

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** Correct.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah.

13 **MAJ FISCHER:** Correct. And they're, you know --
14 so I think all in all, though, it's gone pretty well.
15 I know the -- you know, GEN Cartulo (phonetic) and
16 folks have been very complimentary about what the Naval
17 Militia has done. So I think we're integrating pretty
18 well. And that's also with the Air National Guard as
19 well.

20 So there's been, like I say, a learning curve, but
21 everyone has got their missions and they're executing.

1 So I think all in all, if you want to look at it from a
2 joint National Guard type operation, it's been pretty
3 good. You know, just little glitches that, you know,
4 are the day-to-day thing that you've got to, you know,
5 work on overcoming.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** Were you armed at all? Were you
7 armed at all?

8 **MAJ FISCHER:** I brought a K-bar, which after about
9 the second week they said, oh, you don't need that
10 anymore. Put it away. So --

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

12 **MAJ FISCHER:** But right now I've got my
13 leatherman. That's what I'm carrying. It's not --

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** I was told to put mine away too.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Yeah, I didn't draw a sidearm
16 but, you know, I figured, you know, you wouldn't be
17 able to carry it anyway, which is kind of what happened
18 so --

19 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, from what we understand some
20 of the -- initially when some of the infantry people
21 came in the soldiers and NCOs didn't have it but the

1 officers did have (inaudible) weapons with ammunition,
2 which is surprising. But they were given pretty strict
3 rules of engagement type of thing.

4 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** And I'm assuming because we're not
6 armed, were there rules of engagement at all issued to
7 you?

8 **MAJ FISCHER:** Not to me personally. I know they --
9 you know, these sentries are briefed on how to properly
10 interact with the populace, you know, and, you know,
11 basically to minimize any interaction. You know, we --
12 you know, we've had some -- one case here of -- where
13 we had to, you know, implement immediate response.

14 We had a civilian that got ill on a bus right
15 outside of here that we were asked to render
16 assistance.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** That became ill?

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, ill on the bus. The bus
19 driver stopped, saw us, ran to us to say I have an ill
20 passenger. They didn't know if he was having a heart
21 attack or what.

1 **SSG MORIARTY:** You had -- you had medics here?

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes. And that we ran -- we went
3 there. I became, I guess, the ranking officer on the
4 scene. I checked to see if NYPD was notified. They
5 were. EMS was on its way.

6 I looked at the passenger. I told them don't
7 render -- right now he doesn't need assistance. It's
8 just observant, which they did.

9 And then when EMS came we retreated and turned the
10 scene over to the police and EMTs, which was the proper
11 procedure. So, you know, the bus driver thanked us
12 for, you know, helping him.

13 So we did have a positive experience there, but
14 you have to be careful in how far you go. You know,
15 there's -- that's the kind of thing that, you know,
16 immediate response indicates a particular life
17 threatening situation be relinquished to the
18 appropriate civilian authority once they have control
19 of the scene.

20 So it actually worked out pretty well. But it was
21 kind of, you know, a frantic moment or two trying to

1 figure out, you know, what was wrong with this
2 gentleman. He did not look very well, but after about
3 20 minutes, they worked him, and I was told he ended up
4 walking off the bus so --

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, excellent.

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. It was a plus for us, you
7 know.

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** Was it a heart attack or
9 indigestion?

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. What I -- what I was told was
11 two things. He had been on strong antibiotics for a
12 few weeks and just stopped taking them, and that it was
13 a reaction --

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- or it was food poisoning. But
16 they determined that --

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- he didn't have a heart attack,
19 which was good.

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** You have to be prepared for anything

1 in New York I guess.

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** Did you -- (inaudible)
3 mobilization? Do you do drills periodically like this?
4 Are all of your, you know, power of attorney, and
5 wills, and shot records, and all that stuff scrutinized
6 in any particular --

7 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, mine were, back when I -- I
8 came back into, you know, a drilling unit. The first
9 thing the corpsman did was riddle me full of needles.
10 So I'm good to go. I think I've got one more booster
11 shot and like my shot card is filled.

12 So, you know -- which is interesting because I
13 have my letter in for retirement so --

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** (Inaudible.)

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- (inaudible) months left.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, is that it?

17 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Well, it would have been, but
18 who knows --

19 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah. Yeah.

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- with what just happened. But --

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah, that's true.

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- he said it doesn't matter, sir.
2 You don't know what's going to happen, which is kind of
3 interesting. He pumps me up full of all this stuff and
4 the next thing you know I'm down here so --

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** When did that happen?

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** I think he finally -- they finally
7 tracked me down when they reviewed my medical record
8 about six months ago.

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** So, you know, I got my DNA testing,
11 you know, the TB, the -- you know, you name it, tetanus
12 boosters.

13 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, we were -- we were notified,
14 put on alert status, so it kind of -- from the Center
15 for Military History the week after it happened. And
16 so (inaudible) you know, we (inaudible) -- we were just
17 twisting in the breeze, waiting, waiting to get orders.

18 And we finally got to the point where we couldn't
19 stand it any more so we -- we just told our employers
20 that, hey, we've been activated.

21 And we started going to the drill center and

1 getting all of our equipment packed, and then we were
2 supposed to get notification, official notification,
3 orders a week from -- a week ago from this past Friday.

4 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** So it was two Fridays ago. So that
6 Thursday we all, you know, showed up in uniform, loaded
7 all of our gear up. We went up to Reading, where we
8 were going to depart from, and they said, well we --
9 you haven't got orders, but what's holding them up now
10 is you need shots.

11 So they sent us down to Hanscom (phonetic) Air
12 Base and we got -- everybody got -- the Hepatitis B was
13 the first shot. Then you get the second shot in 30
14 days.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** This would be just about
17 (inaudible) the time we're into this we'll get the next
18 shot, and then in six months you get the third one.

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** But the other thing that they were
21 giving everybody was tetanus shots, and I just got --

1 my dog and another dog in the neighborhood got into a
2 fight about a year ago, and I was stupid enough to
3 stick my hand down, grab my dog's collar, and I came
4 back up with two, two good size gashes, and each
5 required six sutures.

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** Ooh.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** The first thing they do is give you
8 a tetanus shot. And I'm (inaudible) my scars -- and as
9 I'm doing this she's -- the nurse, she's sticking the
10 tetanus shot in my arm. And I said, "I don't need
11 that."

12 And she said, "You already had it. You've already
13 got it."

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** Too late.

15 **SSG MORIARTY:** It was too late. And I had brought
16 my -- as a matter of fact it's right here. I don't go
17 anywhere without my yellow international immunization
18 thing here, and unfortunately when I went to get my arm
19 fixed (inaudible) with the dog, I forgot to bring it,
20 otherwise I wouldn't have had to get a tetanus shot. I
21 hate shots.

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. I just look the other way.

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** I looked the other way (inaudible).

3 Okay.

4 So you -- you came into this unit just six months
5 ago?

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** No, I've been a member since 1990.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** But they just caught up to your
8 records, your (inaudible) --

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** Oh, the Marine unit, two years.

10 Yeah, it took them awhile to track me down, but the
11 Naval Militia I've been since like just prior to Desert
12 Storm so --

13 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, okay. So you were activated
14 out of the Naval Militia?

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** To the Marines (inaudible)?

17 **MAJ FISCHER:** No, it's the other way around. We
18 -- we're Marines, you know, in the units, but the Naval
19 Militia is a volunteer organization. So we --

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, okay. I'm confused.

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** That's all right. It's made up of

1 different units, all right. I also have an affiliation
2 within the state as well so --

3 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

4 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- that's how -- you know, I'm a
5 special staff officer because I was trained in NBC and
6 (inaudible) response stuff and there's not too many
7 people that have that experience.

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** So they -- they -- when stuff like
10 this goes up, they said, hey, you know, can you help us
11 out.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. So when stuff in the future
13 goes up --

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. You know --

15 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- they want somebody out there
16 checking here and doing all that good stuff?

17 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, if they need it. Yeah, I
18 mean, I could provide the training. I mean, I've got
19 the MOS to provide that, you know. It's been a while
20 since I've done it. You know, just like anything else
21 but -- it's like a bicycle.

1 So I pulled all my SOPs and everything for NBC and
2 (inaudible) preparedness, liaison and officer stuff.

3 So --

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay.

5 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- these books themselves are a
6 weapons system --

7 (Interruption to proceeding.)

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** Did you have a com plan, a
9 communication plan?

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** For the Naval Militia? Not one that
11 was, you know, brought (inaudible), other than what was
12 basically briefed at the JTF. I mean, we formulated a
13 comp plan based upon the organizational (inaudible)
14 that were, you know, we were given.

15 So that's being lashed up. But, you know, they
16 have one in place now. But the first two days it was a
17 matter of, you know, who are you. You know, what are
18 you doing, okay? Well, then, what mix do you
19 (inaudible) part of?

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** Sure.

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** And, you know -- because like I

1 said, we're not organic to this, you know, to the 42nd
2 or the 53rd, so we kind of had to come -- you know,
3 they had to figure out like how to plug us in and then
4 it went from there.

5 But, you know, we've had coms with all our
6 sentries, you know, all our posts. That was one thing
7 that we, you know, we were probably the first do. We
8 made sure everyone had (inaudible) from coms back to
9 the COC. You know, we were able to keep track of our
10 (inaudible) --

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** That's (inaudible) --

12 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, all the checkpoints that we
13 were responsible for manning.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Okay. These are boilerplate
15 questions we sort of came up with --

16 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible.)

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- and I (inaudible) some of them.

18 And obviously this one I have to adjust.

19 So what -- what was the overall mission then of
20 the Naval Militia in a such situation such as this?

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, once again, this is kind of a

1 unique situation that, you know, standing up as many
2 members as we have this past few weeks, working with
3 the National Guard directly, you know, and being I
4 guess brought under the cognizance of the 42nd was a
5 different perspective as well. So what -- what we were
6 tasked with, I guess that the first -- because there
7 wasn't a lot of us, was basically working, you know,
8 like working in OEM as liaisons, standing up a watch,
9 tracking Naval Militia people as they reported in,
10 putting the calls out, getting the Naval Militia
11 people, you know, arranging for their arrival, in-
12 processing billeting, you know, standing (inaudible) up
13 so, you know, it had some (inaudible) to it that would
14 be of use to, you know, to the commander.

15 Once that was achieved then we were tasked out
16 with providing essentially, as I said, Governor's --
17 security for various locations in the zone and outside
18 the zone. Governor's Island, you know, with --
19 providing construction and, you know, assets,
20 prioritizing, you know, and that's pretty much it.

21 So we had, you know, a variety of missions, but

1 right now it's mainly focusing in on security as -- you
2 know, the construction evolution is ending and what
3 not, and as, you know, the National Guard and the 42nd
4 starts bringing, you know, makes their transition and
5 brings more assets in as they need so --

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** Have you been given any (inaudible)
7 dates?

8 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes. My orders read to 5 October.
9 The (inaudible) to extend, as many have, but
10 unfortunately, you know, like I said, I've been gone
11 from my business since the 10th. I'm a general manager
12 reporting, you know, to, you know, the executive VP and
13 the president.

14 So, you know, they figured -- they're glad I'm
15 here but, you know --

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah.

17 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- (inaudible) a little bit more
18 people anyway so, you know. I mean, I think my
19 importance simply was my ability to be able to just get
20 it here as quick as I was able to because that's when
21 they needed people, and as the crawl up is progressing

1 and they're, you know, getting a better fix on people
2 and getting them, rotating them in here, you know, I'm
3 more, you know, I guess better able to allow myself to
4 move on and go back to the civilian sector.

5 But, you know, once again, if they say, hey,
6 something has come up. We need you. You know, I'm
7 more than willing to come back because, you know, once
8 again, I can't believe that this has occurred and I'm
9 like everyone else. It's our country and you've got to
10 do, you know, what you have to do to make this thing as
11 -- try to fix it as best we can. We'll never be able
12 to --

13 **SSG MORIARTY:** Put the genie back in the lamp.

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I mean,
15 everything is changed but we have to move forward and
16 proceed with the mission. So, you know, that's kind of
17 what it's all about.

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** Now, how about the unit? Is the
19 unit going to be here indefinitely or --

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. They're looking if they can
21 extend people and, you know, keep things going they

1 will. I don't know with the extension, how many more
2 bodies they're able to get and how many they have left.

3 I know some people were here for a week, some for
4 two. I'm working on my third week. You know, they
5 said, hey, can you do another couple, but once again,
6 like I said, my company has been very generous. You
7 know, no questions asked, you know.

8 Like I said, unless there's a (inaudible) --

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- and a hard fast, you know, hey,
11 you know, Fischer we need you.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** And there may be a more critical
13 need in the future, some other --

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** Exactly. So --

15 **SSG MORIARTY:** (Inaudible.)

16 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, I might as well get back, you
17 know, in the swing, and if the balloon goes up again,
18 you know, I'll be ready to mount out again. But, you
19 know, you've got to kind of -- you know (inaudible)
20 what it is.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah. Yeah. (Inaudible.)

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible.)

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** With the Marines?

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, because (inaudible) federal
4 activation there's a very, you know, strong
5 possibility. What the mission might be, I don't know.

6 I mean, they're talking homeland defense. It could be
7 that they get, you know, (inaudible) out.

8 You know, being a rifle company I think they would
9 try to hold them back to put into maybe an active duty
10 situation or something, you know, on the other side of
11 the water. You know, Marine Corps has that tip of the
12 spear mission and that's something that, you know, the
13 Marines would, you know, probably hold those assets
14 for.

15 But, you know, once again, depending upon how
16 critical it is and how things are tasked, you know.
17 anything is a possibility.

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** (Inaudible) how many times they're
19 going across.

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Uh-huh. Exactly.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Because it sounds like there's

1 going to be several, several spears being thrown.

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Yeah, it's going to be a
3 multi-front operation I think so --

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah. And it's so funny, too,
5 because I kept on hearing that the Army was going to
6 reduce to six divisions. You know, that they had
7 abandoned the docking of the (inaudible) to --

8 **MAJ FISCHER:** Major theater, yeah.

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah. And that they were going to
10 one major theater for the (inaudible) action. Then all
11 of a sudden, you know, it's like somebody came and
12 kicked sand in their face.

13 (Inaudible) do you think of that whole process?

14 **MAJ FISCHER:** You know, it always happens. It's
15 -- you know, we always draw down. You know -- you know
16 you draw down after World War II and then you get
17 Korea. You draw down after Korea you get Vietnam. It
18 seems just as we're ready to pull the plug on something
19 something (inaudible) like this thing and, you know, I
20 don't know.

21 I mean, I think you've learned your lesson. You

1 know, you cut back on defense, you cut back on
2 personnel and then you need them so --

3 **SSG MORIARTY:** You know it --

4 **MAJ FISCHER:** Like Governor's Island, right,
5 you're standing that back up.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** It goes -- this goes all the way
7 back -- we just did a (inaudible) for Lexington
8 (inaudible) in our area. You know the --

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible.)

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- (inaudible) from the (inaudible)
11 point of view. And one of the reasons that (inaudible)
12 soldiers were over here was because they didn't want
13 (inaudible) in England. Their nobles and the gentry
14 (inaudible) else felt threatened when the king had that
15 many soldiers in uniform at one time. And so they did
16 the same thing. This is about the 16 or 1700's.

17 You know, after you got done with a war, you just
18 fired your troops. They'd go back to the fields. And
19 it's funny that, you know, even though we don't have a
20 king anymore, our gentry in Washington feel very
21 uncomfortable with having a large standing army. Okay.

1 That's -- (inaudible).

2 Is there anything you want to add to this
3 interview? Is there anything that I haven't touched
4 upon that I probably should have or anything you want
5 to contribute that --

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** No, I think -- I think we, you know,
7 pretty much hit all the major, you know, I guess things
8 that I've seen.

9 I could add that I've worked very closely some,
10 you know, police and fire personnel. You know, I ran
11 into my old battalion commander from Desert Storm, COL
12 Blatch (phonetic) who's a fire chief and --

13 **SSG MORIARTY:** What was he? Was he at ground
14 zero?

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, he was at -- at the, I think
16 what they call the command (inaudible) pen, which was I
17 think down by (inaudible) and West Streets and, you
18 know, it was kind of like one of those interesting
19 things where you're in the middle of this thing and all
20 of a sudden you see, you know, someone that you hadn't
21 seen in ten years, you know, come walking into the

1 meeting room that you have, you know, right across from
2 the -- from the, you know, the school.

3 And there was -- it was very nice to see everyone
4 working together, not only, you know, the New Yorkers
5 themselves, but I mean I was working with Teamsters
6 that were assigned to us by OEM to help put up GT tents
7 down in the zone, and the amount of, you know, effort
8 that everyone put together into making it happen,
9 working together. I mean, I've worked with LAPD cops
10 that came in. That was part of that, that mission I
11 had with that Chris Koslow.

12 And it's people you're going to probably stay in
13 touch with the rest of your life. I mean, it's
14 incredible.

15 You know, the other thing is -- and I saw
16 President Bush and they were flying -- when he came by
17 he gave us the thumbs up when we came out of the zone.

18 I guess the most striking thing for me was
19 watching and seeing F-16's fly combat air patrols over
20 New York City. It doesn't seem right. It seemed out
21 of -- you know, there's the President of the United

1 States and they're you're -- we were watching F-16's
2 just criss-crossing the skies for combat air patrol,
3 and then standing in that in devastation, looking
4 around. You know, it looked like a tactical nuke hit
5 and, you know, that's really it.

6 It -- I don't think you fully process it. I mean,
7 it's just seeping in a little bit at a time. But, you
8 know, the enormity and the magnitude of it is still
9 incredible, and I guess the main thing is, you know, I
10 feel sad for the victims and their families, and listen
11 to the stories of the police. I mean, they'd sit in
12 here and say, hey, you know, I lost a brother.

13 I met a former Marine that had lost two sons. He
14 was in the fire department and, you know, the guy was
15 on the job working. You know, all he said to me was,
16 "I hope you get him."

17 And, you know, these are the kind of stories that
18 I'll always take away and have imbedded in my memory.
19 So that's about it. It's a tragedy.

20 You know, it's something that I think this country
21 I think will -- I think it will make the world a better

1 place for it. I think that's really what should come
2 out of this, the memory of the people that died.

3 **SSG MORIARTY:** So it doesn't happen again.

4 **MAJ FISCHER:** Exactly. You know, it's got to be
5 (inaudible) -- the end of this, you know. That's
6 really, you know, kind of why I'm here, just to do my
7 small part.

8 You know, I think I would be throwing things
9 through the TV set if I had stayed home, and I wasn't
10 going to wait (inaudible) just a piece of paper to come
11 from wherever. You know, I (inaudible) -- I got a
12 verbal, I came in, you know, just to do what I had to
13 do.

14 You know, whether or not the orders ever caught
15 up, I don't care. You know, it's not a matter of
16 whether I got paid or not. It's just that I had to do
17 what I had to do.

18 So I think that's what a lot of the people in the
19 Militia, the Naval Militia and the National Guard felt.

20 I wasn't going to wait for someone to call me to say
21 (inaudible) no go.

1 You know, just like yourself, I was -- hey, I
2 drove a thousand miles, 14 hours, grabbed my stuff, got
3 down here. All right, what can I do to, you know,
4 straighten, you know, do what I can to help straighten
5 this out and, you know, put the city -- you know,
6 because I was born here, I went to school here.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** Oh, did you?

8 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Yeah, I want to Fordham up in
9 the Bronx and, you know, it's -- my family is all here.
10 My brother watched it from across the river, watched
11 the whole thing, and so it hit him, you know.

12 And never mind the stories I head of people
13 watching it from -- the two planes hit, the people
14 falling out the windows and all that. I mean, these
15 are the stories that you hear.

16 You know, so whatever we can do it's just a small
17 measure --

18 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah.

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- of what we hope to accomplish.

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** And (inaudible) computer to
21 (inaudible) to a store yesterday. He tried to get it

1 fixed because, you know, the power supply is all shot.

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

3 **SSG MORIARTY:** And the guy's looking at him and he
4 says, boy this is an old, you know, computer. It's a
5 laptop. And they said, you know, that it's -- it's
6 (inaudible) because we (inaudible) deployed to Bosnia
7 and he had it there for (inaudible), and finally he got
8 killed on the World Trade mission.

9 And the guy started sobbing. His office
10 (inaudible) across the street. And when he came out to
11 see what was going on, that's when the people had
12 started jumping out the window because of the flames,
13 the fire. And people were burning, you know, as they
14 came down. You know, the wind actually -- the terminal
15 velocity or the wind actually snuffed out the flames.

16 And this guy just broke down. I mean, and we
17 weren't -- we weren't there doing our history thing,
18 you know, because we have a computer (inaudible).
19 (Inaudible) one of the guys who was in building 7 and
20 they were doing an emergency reading, and because of
21 what happened next to them when they were told to get

1 out of that building, I mean they had just evacuated
2 and I think it was when the first tower collapsed.

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** I mean there was -- from my small
5 town in western Massachusetts, 40,000 people, we had
6 one person on (inaudible). It was the superintendent
7 of the school's daughter. She lived in Worcester,
8 about (inaudible) she grew up (inaudible). And we had
9 two guys from our community that were --

10 (End side A, tape 1.)

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** And (inaudible) was what I had to
12 do. So what I mean is that I can't -- I don't think
13 anybody in the country has not been affected. And it's
14 -- you didn't have to be witness to this horror.

15 But like you, obviously, you know, you were
16 trudging through (inaudible) and mud and that stuff
17 over there. It's just -- it's going to be a scar on
18 our national psyche for a while.

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** Oh, yeah. (Inaudible) is the, you
20 know, the toll it's going to take just on, like I said,
21 just on the survivors and the people that, you know,

1 witnessed it. I mean you're talking probably hundreds
2 of thousands of people that saw this live, you know,
3 (inaudible) here that are going to have to, you know,
4 somehow deal with that trauma.

5 And, you know -- I know I haven't seen anything
6 compared to what they did at all, and it bothers me to
7 where, you know, I can't believe it. I have a problem,
8 like sometimes I'll just wake up in the middle night
9 just --

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** Doing the denial?

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah, just like, you know, for the
12 first week that's what I was doing because I couldn't
13 believe I was actually in New York City working this
14 thing. You know, I lost perspective of where I was. I
15 was on the ships or I was sleeping in, you know, a
16 basement of a courthouse or whatever it is.

17 I just kept -- all of a sudden I just jerk awake
18 and have to figure out that, yeah, this is real. That,
19 you know, you really are asleep in the courthouse, or
20 on a ship, or in the EOC, or wherever, you know, or
21 inside that classroom down at ground zero. You know,

1 it's real.

2 So it took me about a week before I, you know, I
3 stopped doing that. So, you know, and that's just --

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** When you went home, besides talking
5 to your wife, did you talk with, you know, a priest or
6 a minister or anything like that?

7 **MAJ FISCHER:** No, it's -- you know, I mean, like I
8 said, I mean, I've been lucky in that, you know, any of
9 my business I've had in ground zero, whether, you know,
10 the recons or the walk throughs, I haven't, you know,
11 chanced upon anything, you know. I mean, I'm not there
12 to -- I'm doing my job. If it entails I go into
13 somewhere or, you know, if they tell me, you know,
14 you've got to do this, and then something, you know,
15 you come across something, fine, but I'm not there to,
16 you know -- if I can avoid it, you know, I am.

17 And so if they tell me to do it, I do it, but I'm
18 not a glutton for, you know, going in there to see if
19 you know -- poking my head in the morgue or anything.
20 You know, it's -- it's not my mission and, you know,
21 I'll leave it to the people that they have tasked with

1 that.

2 On the other hand, you know, I've gone into some
3 places where you don't know what you were going to
4 find. So, you know, it's -- especially the first
5 couple of days.

6 I've been fortunate in that regard. You know, I
7 haven't had to deal with anything, you know, that --
8 like some of these other rescuers have had to deal
9 with. But just looking at the -- just knowing that
10 people are in there.

11 I know I picked up a piece of rubble when I was
12 there (inaudible). The guy I was with, he took us by
13 the (inaudible) to look at something and, you know, I'm
14 taking notes of whatever he's yelling and stuff at me.

15 The rubble was maybe no bigger than the size of your
16 hand. That's like the biggest of it. It's pulverized.
17 And when you pick it up you can still smell the jet
18 fuel and (inaudible). It looks like a charcoal
19 briquet.

20 **SSG MORIARTY:** Really.

21 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. It was all black and charred.

1 You could smell the JP-4 or JP-5, whatever they used.
2 It was impregnated within the rubble, you know. And
3 it just gave -- it gave me the creeps.

4 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, that's one of the reasons
5 (inaudible) because they were so loaded with fuel.

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Oh, yeah, I mean, they had
7 this thing planned out. You know it's -- and I guess
8 they were insane geniuses as (inaudible) if that's what
9 you want to call it.

10 And I (inaudible) understand that, you know, the
11 Koran does not teach this kind of stuff, or it's
12 nothing (inaudible) what they (inaudible), but it's
13 still not going to stop them. So it's a tricky
14 situation. You know, it's going to be hard for the
15 country to deal with this, I guess the situation, and
16 -- I don't know.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** And I don't think it's going to be
18 a quick fix.

19 **MAJ FISCHER:** It's a very uncertain future. A lot
20 of people are nervous.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** You know, I think it's going to be

1 one of those things that -- it's going to be an on-
2 going process for years and years to come.

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. But, you know, we have to do
4 what we have to do and some -- a lot of people are
5 saying if I have to give up a few freedoms that, you
6 know, to take care of this thing, so be it.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** Just as long as we don't lose our
8 national character.

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** That's right.

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** You know, the things that have made
11 us great.

12 **MAJ FISCHER:** That's right. You know, it's
13 something that I guess, you know, you have to consider,
14 but as long as we focus on supporting the military,
15 supporting, you know, the institutions at home that,
16 you know, are going to be on the front lines to wage
17 the war against terrorism, that's the main thing, you
18 know.

19 And I think the American public will -- will --
20 they're in it for the long haul. I get that sense, you
21 know.

1 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah.

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** So I think so far, you know, so
3 good. It's -- I think they're getting intel, they're
4 getting, you know, getting troops on the ground. I
5 think they're putting stuff in place so when they do
6 light the fuse that they hit him hard and they hit the
7 right spot.

8 So I'm confident that even though it seems like
9 it's a taking a while to get in place, I think they're
10 doing it the right way.

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, you were in Desert Storm.
12 You knew that they were -- they built it for that.

13 **MAJ FISCHER:** For what, four months?

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah.

15 **MAJ FISCHER:** Before the actual --

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** (Inaudible.)

17 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- (inaudible) until (inaudible)
18 hour, yeah.

19 **SSG MORIARTY:** You know -- so I mean everybody is
20 staying low. They did it so fast in Desert Storm.
21 Well, that's because --

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** They had Desert Shield --

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

3 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- which was basically a defensive
4 build up --

5 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- until they got enough offensive
7 power to --

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** Right.

9 **MAJ FISCHER:** -- (inaudible) out.

10 **SSG MORIARTY:** And there's some -- unfortunately
11 you don't have a concentrated target. You know, it's
12 not like you have an Army sitting there where you can
13 draw a line in the sand and say, okay, we're going to
14 build our Army over here and we're going to attack
15 them.

16 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right. No, this is -- this is not
17 your basic military, classic, you know, warfare
18 situation. It's that, you know, stuff they always
19 thought about it -- you know, I guess a low level
20 (inaudible) conflict.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** Low intensity, yeah.

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** You know, but --

2 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah. I started reading Black Hawk
3 Down. It's -- you know, I bring a military book with
4 me every time I go on one of these missions. That's
5 the one I brought this time. And it's funny, too,
6 because I think a lot of those same players that were
7 in Mogadishu are going to be -- you know it's the
8 (inaudible), it's the Delta, it's the Ranger. They're
9 going to be the front line players in the Marine Corps
10 --

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- in this one here.

13 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. And then the great thing I
14 think is you're not going to see a lot of, I think,
15 joint service rivalry or any of that stuff. I think
16 everyone is going to be, you know, working well
17 together.

18 You can see it here. I mean, it's -- you know,
19 all the Army commanders I have had the privilege to
20 meet have been very hospitable and, you know, willing
21 to, you know, work with everyone to, you know, make it

1 a maximum effort. And, you know, there's no rice bowls
2 or anything that I've seen.

3 So, you know, it's -- you know, I think it's good
4 because everyone is here for the -- you know, to get
5 the job done the right way.

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, I think we've just --
7 (inaudible) here (inaudible) even the military, to all,
8 all the agencies. I'm amazed at the lack of
9 competition.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah.

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** Outside of the hotel where we're
12 billeted there's a synagogue, and there was a funeral
13 there yesterday, and they had -- a fire, a fireman's
14 funeral. They had the fire trucks and the platform
15 trucks --

16 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** -- with the platform raised and the
18 flag hanging down from it. You know, there was two of
19 those there, one on either side of the synagogue, and I
20 watched the interaction between the police officers and
21 all the firefighters who we were assembling, you know,

1 (inaudible).

2 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

3 **SSG MORIARTY:** And -- because normally there is a
4 little bit of rivalry there, you know if nothing else
5 the (inaudible).

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** You know, the cops (inaudible), the
8 firefighters, you know, all they do is they hang around
9 their stations and sleep and they get all the equipment
10 and vice a versa. That's how it is in my (inaudible).

11 **MAJ FISCHER:** Well, it's the (inaudible) DNY and
12 the PDA, and the NYPD, they clash. Who's got control
13 of the situation. Is it a fire scene, is it a crime
14 scene. I mean, I've heard it. I've worked with both
15 of them.

16 **SSG MORIARTY:** Yeah, but I have not seen that, and
17 yesterday when I was watching the (inaudible) it was
18 just (inaudible) the international brotherhood has been
19 expanded. You know what I'm saying?

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yes.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** It's --

1 **MAJ FISCHER:** I was working with Teamsters and
2 stuff, you know, and those guys are usually, you know,
3 giving you this stuff. But they were like, hey,
4 whatever you need, whatever you want, you know, we're
5 here.

6 I mean, you know, they had their hard hats on,
7 local whatever, the American flag on the back, and I'll
8 tell you, you know, I would have taken these guys into
9 combat any time. I mean, they were -- you know,
10 (inaudible) --

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** (Inaudible.)

12 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. They're -- you know, they
13 were pretty hard, but it was good just to -- hey,
14 major, what do you need. You know, we're here to --
15 they had trucks, they had people, you know.

16 And like I said, it's amazing how quickly this
17 city can pull together and -- you know, if that's one
18 of the lasting reminders of what occurred here, you
19 know, maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing. I think
20 New York gets a bum rap anyway.

21 You know, if you really know the people they're

1 not that bad. They're actually fairly, fairly
2 friendly, but you just got to get to know them.

3 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, what they do is -- there's so
4 much demand on their time, I think that they're very
5 abrupt.

6 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah.

7 **SSG MORIARTY:** They don't want you -- yeah, they
8 don't want to mess around. If you've got something to
9 say, say it.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** Yeah. Yeah. Time is money.

11 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, (inaudible) but even when
12 it's -- they're off the job it's, you know it's a
13 (inaudible) talking about that earlier. It must take
14 (inaudible) hours. You know, three hours to get to
15 work, you work eight hours, and two hours to get home.
16 You know, so what leisure time you have afterwards is
17 precious.

18 So I can understand that, that mentality. I could
19 not -- I could not (inaudible) this lifestyle.

20 I mean, I -- I work for an (inaudible) and I'm a
21 mile and a half away from the office and, you know,

1 even on a (inaudible), you know, just taking longer,
2 four or five minutes, I kind of (inaudible) to work.
3 And --

4 **MAJ FISCHER:** You didn't want to wait at one
5 traffic light?

6 **SSG MORIARTY:** I (inaudible). Seriously, there is
7 one traffic light that I can't avoid.

8 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible) no traffic light.

9 **SSG MORIARTY:** Well, in the snow situation, too,
10 it's great because that's usually my (inaudible).
11 Those are the biggest of my -- you know, because we
12 have no public transportation.

13 **MAJ FISCHER:** Right.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** We have -- because my city, I use
15 all the (inaudible) --

16 **MAJ FISCHER:** Which town?

17 **SSG MORIARTY:** Westfield, Westfield, Mass.

18 **MAJ FISCHER:** All right.

19 **SSG MORIARTY:** We're outside of Springfield.

20 **MAJ FISCHER:** Uh-huh.

21 **SSG MORIARTY:** You know, but it's -- I'm amazed at

1 this place. You know, the stores are open 24 hours a
2 day. There's people out at 3:00 in the morning. I
3 couldn't sleep last night so I got up and I went down,
4 looked outside, and there's still people walking
5 around. You know that song by Sinatra, the city that
6 doesn't sleep, he was (inaudible) right.

7 (Interruption to proceeding.)

8 **SSG MORIARTY:** If you have nothing more I can
9 conclude.

10 **MAJ FISCHER:** I appreciate the opportunity to tell
11 my story.

12 **SSG MORIARTY:** All right.

13 **MAJ FISCHER:** (Inaudible) help.

14 **SSG MORIARTY:** Let me stop this. This concludes
15 this interview..

16 (The interview was concluded.)

17 * * * * *