

UNITED STATES ARMY
CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

INTERVIEW OF

CPT ROBERT PURCELL
SSG NORBERTO CARRASQUILLO
SSG MICHAEL GIERALTOWSKI
SFC ANTHONY MCLEAN
1-105 IN, Co. B, Company Staff

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CONDUCTED BY

SGT PATRICK JENNINGS

The Center of Military History

AT

69th 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, conducting an oral
4 history interview. It is October 14, 2001. The time
5 is 12:01.

6 I'm interviewing members of the company staff.
7 Sir, could you state your name.

8 **CPT PURCELL:** CPT Robert Purcell.

9 **SGT JENNINGS:** And could you spell your last name,
10 sir.

11 **CPT PURCELL:** P-u-r-c-e-l-l.

12 **SGT JENNINGS:** The first sergeant, would you state
13 your name.

14 **SFC MCLEAN:** SFC Anthony McLean, M-c-L-e-a-n.

15 **SGT JENNINGS:** Okay.

16 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SSG Norberto Carrasquillo, C-a-
17 r-r-a-s-q-u-i-l-l-o.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** And your duty position?

19 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Platoon sergeant.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Which platoon, please?

21 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** The 2nd Platoon. I'm also the

1 full-time readiness (inaudible).

2 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** SSG Gieraltowski. It's G-i-e-
3 r-a-l-t-o-w-s-k-i. The acting 2nd Platoon sergeant.

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** Now, Captain, can you tell me where
5 you were on September 11th when you heard about the
6 attack at the World Trade Center?

7 **CPT PURCELL:** I was at work. I work for a small
8 claims adjusting company up in Hackensack, New Jersey.
9 And I was actually on the telephone when one of my
10 secretaries came to me and said, "Hey, Bob, you don't
11 know anyone at the World Trade Center, do you?"

12 I'm like, I was on the phone and I was sort of
13 annoyed with the question, actually. And I'm like,
14 "No, I really don't." And she's like, "Well, an
15 airplane just flew into it." I couldn't believe it.

16 So then maybe 17 minutes later, I think it was,
17 the second plane flew into it. We were just sort of
18 hands in our lap, didn't really know how to really
19 react to the situation. You know, it's sort of, it was
20 incredible.

21 And at that point I pretty much knew that I was

1 going to get, going to be called in.

2 **SGT JENNINGS:** And how far is your work from the
3 Army (inaudible)?

4 **CPT PURCELL:** Let me see. We're probably about 30
5 minutes, 30 minutes away from the Armory; 30, 40,
6 something like that.

7 **SGT JENNINGS:** Sergeant first class, where were
8 you September 11th?

9 **SFC MCLEAN:** I was at work. I'm a police officer.
10 I was engaged in transporting prisoners at the time,
11 myself and my partner, at which time we saw, my partner
12 brought my attention to the fact that there was a lot
13 of smoke. Then we heard over the radio (inaudible)
14 transmission what just happened, a plane flew into one
15 of the World Trade Towers.

16 And a little while later on, the second plane went
17 into the Trade Center. And at that point in time,
18 myself and my partner realized that this was not
19 something that was just an accident, at which point in
20 time I returned back to my command.

21 After making a stop at the Promenade to take a

1 look at what was going on, we returned back to where I
2 was mobilized back at my command back in Brooklyn.

3 **SGT JENNINGS:** Readiness NCR, right? I'm sorry if
4 I don't say your name. Where were you?

5 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. I was at the
6 Armory since I work here full-time. I was in my office
7 when the admin NCO came and said, "Hey, the World Trade
8 Center just got hit by a plane." And he said, "How
9 could that happen?" And I said to him, "It's not an
10 accident. This is, I guarantee you this is a
11 terrorist."

12 And he said, "No way, it was an accident." And I
13 said, then I explained to him, "Do you remember the Y2K
14 briefing? That was one of the things that was put out
15 that was a possibility." And as we're discussing it
16 and we were watching it on TV, all of a sudden the
17 second plane hits and I told him, "It is a terrorist."

18 And we went, we grabbed our alert roster and
19 started the first line leaders notification.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Okay.

21 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** SSG Gieraltowski. I'm also

1 full-time with the Guard, the counterdrug program, and
2 I coordinate the (inaudible) drug traffic area training
3 that's conducting for the federal, state and local law
4 enforcement officers on Long Island.

5 I was in the office working out on Long Island.
6 At that time we had a (inaudible) class going on. We
7 had about a dozen NYPD officers in that class. I
8 happened to be on the phone with SSG Carrasquillo when
9 it happened. We were talking.

10 He told me that the plane had crashed into the
11 Twin Towers and I thought, he must have said it six
12 times before I believed him. I kept saying, "No way."

13 I thought he was just lying to me, joking. And he
14 finally said, "I've got to go."

15 I hung up the phone. I walked into the classroom
16 and all the officers were on their cell phones. And we
17 had turned on the TV and saw the (inaudible) burning
18 and then saw the second plane all of a sudden hitting.

19 Everybody was trying to figure out what we were
20 going to do, making calls at that time. Then shortly
21 after that I got a phone call back from (inaudible)

1 saying that we were being activated and come in and
2 contact (inaudible).

3 **SGT JENNINGS:** Now, Staff Sergeant, you said you
4 started calling the first line leaders in. Did the
5 call through the communications stuff you have work
6 fine? Were you able to reach everyone?

7 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Actually, yeah. We had gone
8 over the plan, alert, just about maybe the week prior
9 to the World Trade Center. We had rehearsed an alert,
10 you know, alerting the leaders. And it went very well.

11 For some reason, I don't know if it was the
12 situation or just a big coincidence, but as many times
13 as we rehearsed it in training, it didn't, it never
14 really worked. But in the real world situation, for
15 some reason it just, all the blocks fell in at the
16 right time. Everyone was easily accessible.

17 It was just, I guess, I guess the Army program
18 does work.

19 **SGT JENNINGS:** Okay. Captain, can you tell me, as
20 soldiers started arriving to the Armory, how long did
21 it take until you felt you had enough manpower to do

1 what you thought your mission was going to be?

2 **CPT PURCELL:** I myself got in here probably by
3 about 2:00 in the afternoon, 1400. I was waiting for
4 guys to start rolling in and I was really impressed
5 with the way guys put down everything that they were
6 doing and came right in to the Armory.

7 I'm trying to think. The time I thought it was
8 where we could deploy anywhere was probably 2000, 8:00
9 p.m.

10 **SGT JENNINGS:** And Sergeant First Class, what did
11 you think your mission was going to be as your soldiers
12 started arriving? Were you formulating what you
13 thought your mission might be?

14 **SFC MCLEAN:** Well, I would think that in the
15 situation where there was a disaster, somewhere along
16 the line we were hoping that we would be more hands-on
17 in search and rescue.

18 Because again, you have a (inaudible) force, a
19 large group of bodies and they were calling everybody,
20 so I figured somewhere along the line that maybe that
21 might have been the role for us, to go down there and

1 actually help dig out or somewhere along the line do
2 something (inaudible) rescue.

3 **SGT JENNINGS:** This is an open question to
4 anybody. With that in mind, what equipment did you
5 tell your soldiers to bring along as they started
6 arriving here and they started getting their equipment
7 ready to go?

8 **CPT PURCELL:** Made sure, CPT Purcell. Made sure
9 they had plenty of water, work gloves, Kevlar helmet,
10 flashlights. I'm trying to think. That was really it.

11 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SSG Carrasquillo. Being that I
12 was the first one here, we started getting a lot of
13 soldiers in before the actual activation kicked in. I
14 think before the activation was actually called in we
15 had already, I think, 20 soldiers on the ground.

16 The way I geared it for in the beginning, because
17 we didn't have guidance, I just, the guidance I gave
18 was full deployment. Get your rucks ready, get
19 everything ready. Be prepared to move on notice.

20 And when the company commander did arrive, the
21 first thing he worked on was getting his guidance and

1 that's when he, that's when CPT Purcell put out, "All
2 right, this is what we need. Put the rest away. Leave
3 the rest wherever it's at. Secure it. This and this
4 and this we need."

5 And a good example is by the time CPT Purcell got
6 his guidance, most of us already had our flak vests
7 out, had all our gear. And it worked out pretty good
8 that we did that right there. By the time he got his
9 guidance, it was minus rather than added to our stuff
10 because we were basically ready to go.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** Where did you receive your
12 guidance, Captain?

13 **CPT PURCELL:** It was really, I mean, everyone was
14 looking for something to do. I mean, I think everyone
15 in the city was looking for something to do. We called
16 my higher. I called COL Warneke (phonetic) and he's
17 sort of like, "Sort of stand by. We're going to wait
18 until we hear."

19 We had a liaison working down at One Police Plaza,
20 CPT Heinz (phonetic). He's actually the (inaudible)
21 company commander. He's the assistant district

1 attorney. So, you know, we had him there down at One
2 Police Plaza.

3 And so myself and another staff officer that was
4 here, CPT Pazer (phonetic), went down to One Police
5 Plaza looking for a mission, really hoping to link up
6 with him.

7 It turns out there was a National Guard liaison
8 there, someone else from state. Couldn't really get
9 ahold of him, so we wound up speaking with the
10 commissioner and a couple of other people with a whole
11 bunch of stars on their collar from police, and they
12 gave us a mission to put our personnel out on Canal
13 Street.

14 So we were working directly with the police
15 department, and that's where we got our guidance. We
16 already had transportation here (inaudible) guys down
17 and then started to mobilize and put them on Canal
18 Street, making sure that no one, no civilian traffic
19 could get south.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** So did you, were your initial plans
21 or did you deploy your soldiers armed?

1 **CPT PURCELL:** No, we did not.

2 **SGT JENNINGS:** Was that your decision or did that
3 decision come from elsewhere?

4 **CPT PURCELL:** I'm trying to think, going back. I
5 think that was our decision here. We really didn't
6 feel that there was a need for it at the time. And
7 when we got down to One Police Plaza, they confirmed
8 it.

9 And there was never, it never came to a point
10 where we thought we needed it. People saw, the
11 civilians saw the uniform. And you look at someone in
12 BDU's and the hat and it's just, it's an odd
13 appearance. We had our wet gear on, our LBE, and it's
14 for, people walking around Manhattan are not used to
15 seeing that.

16 So that was enough of a deterrent for people to
17 just walk away. No one gave us a hard time. Everyone
18 did what they were told.

19 **SGT JENNINGS:** Can you tell me the approximate
20 time, as you recall, that you went to One Police Plaza?

21 **CPT PURCELL:** 2030.

1 **SGT JENNINGS:** After 2030, Sergeant First Class,
2 can you tell me how many men you had ready when you
3 actually went onto Canal Street?

4 **SFC MCLEAN:** Okay, my actual experience did not
5 happen until later on that day because again, my police
6 function was still, they still had me locked in. There
7 was no way. Even though I got the call-up, I was in no
8 way able to be released from the PD to come up here to
9 be on the military side of the house.

10 **SGT JENNINGS:** When were you able to join the
11 company?

12 **SFC MCLEAN:** That was around zero --

13 **CPT PURCELL:** Zero six, something?

14 **SFC MCLEAN:** It was earlier than that.

15 **CPT PURCELL:** Was it?

16 **SFC MCLEAN:** Yeah, it was 0300. It was still
17 dark, so, yeah.

18 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SSG Carrasquillo. Prior to the
19 arrival of the first sergeant, I was the acting first
20 sergeant until he was released from his law enforcement
21 responsibilities at the time.

1 When we originally deployed, we deployed, we had
2 78 soldiers accounted for in various tasks, whether en
3 route or at the building. I think at the building
4 ready for deployment we had 62.

5 We had 62 and I remember that correctly because we
6 had 62 minus the commander and the XO, which we minused
7 them out of our numbers when we went to, when the
8 commander did go to Police Plaza, because we broke
9 everyone into two-man teams and we ended up holding
10 about 30 positions.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** Okay, an open question. Can
12 someone define for me using, since this is New York and
13 it's easier, cross streets, when you went on position
14 what your positions were, streets?

15 **CPT PURCELL:** Oh, from West Street to --

16 **SFC MCLEAN:** West Street all the way --

17 **CPT PURCELL:** (Inaudible.)

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** And approximately how many blocks?

19 **CPT PURCELL:** That's approximately nine blocks.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** How many posts did you fill?

21 **SFC MCLEAN:** We filled approximately 30 different

1 positions because you didn't, like, for example, even
2 though it's full length nine city blocks, on the north
3 side of Canal, even though the south side has nine
4 blocks, the north side has other little pathway blocks
5 that lead into like Little Italy and Chinatown.

6 So there were, you know, even though there was
7 only nine blocks it actually ended up being about 30
8 different corners that needed secured.

9 **SGT JENNINGS:** Initially on site, again an open
10 question, as you started deploying, first, how did you
11 get from the Armory to what was ultimately going to be
12 your deployment spot?

13 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** SSG Gieraltowski. We had the
14 MTA buses actually drove us down there. We had, I
15 guess the police department or whether they
16 volunteered, or we had a driver that was with us for 24
17 hours, actually, in one bus that we were in.

18 They took us from place to place, brought us down
19 there and they weren't letting anything stop them or
20 get in their way from getting us from here to there.

21 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. That was the

1 plan that went into effect, you know, the (inaudible)
2 plan that we were thinking was going to happen because
3 of traffic. We didn't know what was moving or not at
4 the time, whereas we were gearing up to mobilize down
5 there at first.

6 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah. I mean, only, I think we're
7 three miles away.

8 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Yeah, and plus being the light
9 infantry unit, we weren't counting on getting any
10 vehicle support, so that was why the commander said we
11 need to make sure everyone has sufficient amount of
12 water, because we're going to be walking around all
13 day, all night.

14 **SGT JENNINGS:** Were there, just in terms of
15 transit from the Armory to your position, any force
16 protection concerns or were you relying on the police
17 department?

18 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo again. The
19 force protection, we were very, a lot of us were very
20 anxious because it was, like when we got on, the
21 commander had already deployed to Police Plaza and all

1 of us got on the city bus.

2 We were all on the bus with the lights on. Just
3 everyone was waving at us because they could see us on
4 the city bus in military, and some of the (inaudible)
5 are going, "Hey, a terrorist action just happened. We
6 have no weapons and we're on a city bus, 60 soldiers."

7 I mean, guys were looking at each other saying,
8 "Hey, this is a perfect target. I would take it." So
9 even though everyone was goofing around, a lot of guys
10 were trying to, were goofing around just to get their
11 minds off the fact that there were a lot of soldiers
12 that felt, due to the fact that we did not have
13 weapons, that they weren't able to protect and defend
14 themselves.

15 **SGT JENNINGS:** And how did you, this is more of an
16 issue later on when you came on board, Sergeant First
17 Class. How did you deal with those issues talking to
18 your soldiers, that they brought up, "Why aren't we
19 armed?" I won't use the term "scared" but worried.
20 What was the response?

21 **SFC MCLEAN:** SGT McLean. One of the things was we

1 do a lot of (inaudible) with the platoon sergeants and
2 squad leaders and basically a lot of reassurance coming
3 down from one, the experiences that we've had.

4 A lot of the guys have active duty times. So
5 basically that was basically letting these guys know
6 situations that have happened to us, whether it was
7 deployment to skirmishes around the world, that this is
8 what's expected, this is what the possibilities might
9 be.

10 And again, basically saying that how this is
11 something that's happened domestically, that we do have
12 the police department which, I mean, I really
13 (inaudible) not like we counted on but is there to
14 support us or (inaudible) with them or vice versa.

15 So it was not a problem basically telling them and
16 reassuring them that this was the problem. The leaders
17 were a key thing in that area.

18 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, and I'd like to add, this is
19 CPT Purcell. When we were walking around down there,
20 there was every law enforcement agency known to man
21 that was down in that area.

1 So it never really was a big concern in terms of
2 our own safety because, you know, I mean, on every
3 corner there was at least two or three cops or FBI or,
4 you know, ESU. Every ESU service within the city was
5 there.

6 So I don't really think safety was that big an
7 issue. Maybe in my mind.

8 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Not to contradict you, but,
9 this is SGT Carrasquillo. One of the biggest problems
10 we were having when we first got to Canal Street was
11 that I would say 90 percent of the police officers that
12 I spoke to that night, and there was about maybe 300 on
13 that block on Canal Street, were saying, "Where are
14 your weapons? We can't do nothing with nine
15 millimeters."

16 Their concern was like, "Aren't you guys
17 supposedly here to help us guard this? We can't do
18 nothing with these nine millimeters if they come at us
19 with," their concern was like AK's or whatever.

20 And so basically what I was doing was trying to
21 play devil's advocate saying, "Oh, no, we're just here

1 to be go-betweens for more military movement that's
2 coming in."

3 So we were, the way I explained it to them was we
4 were the closest unit that can deploy quick and fast,
5 so that's why we don't have the weapons we would need
6 to defend. Our mission basically was to get down here
7 as quick as possible and do what we can.

8 So, you know, the law enforcement side was like,
9 "Oh, so there are more guys, there are more of you
10 coming with weapons, right?" And we're like, "Yeah,
11 yeah, but right now our mission was to assist you guys
12 with what we had."

13 **SGT JENNINGS:** Do you have a weapons vault in this
14 Armory?

15 **CPT PURCELL:** Oh, yeah.

16 **SGT JENNINGS:** Do you keep any ammunition in this
17 Armory?

18 **CPT PURCELL:** No, we do not. And that was another
19 big issue. I mean, we could deploy with weapons but we
20 have no ammo to put in. So that's, you're carrying
21 around a stick at that point. No point in bringing

1 weapons.

2 **SGT JENNINGS:** Now, did you have a, you had
3 mentioned earlier and I've heard at other interviews
4 the Y2K plan and that pretty much guided, seems to have
5 guided a lot of what initially happened.

6 Within the structure of that or even the structure
7 of what happened on September 11th, what was your
8 communications plan? This is an open question to
9 anyone.

10 **CPT PURCELL:** The plan within the company?

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** Within the company. Well, first of
12 all deal within the company and then we'll deal within
13 the Army and then we'll deal with, you know, soldier to
14 civilian authority.

15 **CPT PURCELL:** Well, I mean, this is CPT Purcell
16 speaking. And that is within the company itself for
17 the squads, the squads going into platoons, we used
18 Motorola talk-about's. They've got a pretty decent
19 range, and that's what we were relying on for within
20 the company itself.

21 In order for me to speak up to higher, you know,

1 my battalion command or anybody else, I was relying on
2 my personal cell phone at that point in time.

3 Later on, because we knew (inaudible) was going to
4 be a good (inaudible) force, we got radios from our
5 sister unit.

6 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry, sir. What type of
7 radio?

8 **CPT PURCELL:** It's a, what type of radios are
9 they?

10 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** The (inaudible) the Motorola
11 (inaudible). They're the top of the line Motorola law
12 enforcement, rescue radios.

13 **SGT JENNINGS:** So it's not an Army radio?

14 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** No, it's Army. It is in the
15 Army inventory in the sense that like the TSB programs,
16 the OC programs and like GRTC, NTC. The type of radios
17 they would use, which is radios that they can use on
18 repeat. The Army inventory is not a repeater program
19 but for those training sites the Army is authorized to
20 use repeater radios.

21 So the type of communication we used was the

1 repeater radio type radio, which helped us out a lot.

2 **CPT PURCELL:** So we actually had more
3 communication than we knew what to do with. It was
4 sort of just sorting it all out, trying to figure out
5 okay, what's going to be the best way to talk to
6 everyone.

7 So we went from using the Motorola talk-about's to
8 the repeater type radio (inaudible) and we were
9 eventually issued Nextel radio or Nextel two-way
10 walkie-talkie type cell phones.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** And how were you to communicate as
12 you were on these guard posts along Canal Street,
13 communicate from post to post? Say if one post had had
14 any issue at all and needed to contact either a police
15 officer or an ambulance or something, how were they
16 supposed to do that? What were their instructions?

17 **CPT PURCELL:** This is CPT Purcell speaking again.
18 There was a police officer on every single post that
19 we were on as well. So if there was an issue like
20 that, they had their coms on that site.

21 To talk to one another at that point we also had,

1 you know, our own Motorolas. There's also line of
2 sight as well. You know, from one point to the next
3 everyone could see down the street and see what was
4 going on.

5 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. There was
6 also three separate (inaudible) which was the commander
7 with the XO was going back and forth. Then the supply
8 sergeant with some headquarters personnel, they were
9 driving back and forth in a vehicle.

10 And myself and I think it was the (inaudible)
11 sergeant, we were just walking the whole length. The
12 whole length, we just walked up and down.

13 **SFC MCLEAN:** SGT McLean. Speaking (inaudible)
14 with the CO and (inaudible) a lot of it was NCO-driven
15 because, again, at each point we had either a sergeant
16 or a junior NCO to basically man that position. So
17 there was not a problem with somebody being able to
18 take charge if a situation occurred. It was all taken,
19 it was well in hand.

20 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Regarding communication,
21 conservatively probably 70 percent of the soldiers in

1 this unit have a cell phone and had them with them, so
2 we communicated easily as far as that goes.

3 But as the Army history goes or intel goes, these
4 126's that we have --

5 **CPT PURCELL:** That's a great point.

6 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** They're (inaudible) and we have
7 to have them, but they're useless radios. They, we
8 can't, you put a brand new battery in them and within
9 five minutes they're --

10 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, all those (inaudible) 126's is
11 the most miserable piece of equipment we've ever had to
12 deal with to the point, and I'm glad this is going to
13 the books, that our guys went out and bought the
14 Motorola talk-about's to talk from squad to squad and
15 squad to platoon.

16 So it's my guys, who only do this one week of the
17 month, went out and spent their own money to make sure
18 that when they are called upon to do a mission, they
19 can do it effectively.

20 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. The other
21 thing about that was using civilian-style radios, it

1 has lot of plus sides. The only negative side about
2 it is when (inaudible) conversation came up all that
3 became was like, when you get on the radios it was,
4 "Hey, SGT G, SGT C, can you come over here, please?"

5 That was, the only bad side about it was that it
6 was a way of telling you to come to me or I'm going to
7 you, that we have to talk about something that we can't
8 put over the air.

9 Later on after a couple of days, after the first
10 three days, we had acquired I think it was four
11 (inaudible) down there.

12 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Yeah.

13 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** But again it really wasn't,
14 nobody else was on line. We had them, but nobody else
15 was on line with them, so they were totally obsolete.

16 **SGT JENNINGS:** Sergeant First Class, just a
17 question. I ask this because you're a police officer
18 and we're dealing with an issue that again involved
19 civilian agencies and the National Guard.

20 Could you make a recommendation of what type of
21 communications equipment a guard unit should have to

1 communicate effectively with civilian agencies in an
2 incident like this, or even say something not so
3 dramatic, like a heavy snowstorm? What type of
4 communications would match?

5 **SFC MCLEAN:** The one thing that we talked about,
6 SGT K was talking about, the (inaudible) radios that we
7 were using were good, but again the same way not
8 talking out in the open to where we could switch off a
9 channel and I could talk to him, him talk to me. That
10 was one of the minuses in that.

11 And in respect to the Motorolas we use on the PD,
12 they're good, but you can switch up to another channel
13 to talk to, if I wanted to talk to, say, SGT K, I can
14 switch it to another channel and that way (inaudible)
15 that's something that we need to have both in the
16 police department, well, we have in the police
17 department, but the military and also fire need some
18 way to have a channel allocated to both PD, FD, to
19 where we have (inaudible) to everybody in regards to
20 working with civilian authorities.

21 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you. An open question for

1 the noncommissioned officers. First, did you and
2 what's the earliest time that you gave your soldiers a
3 warrant order or a frag order?

4 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Besides general information,
5 this is SGT Gieraltowski, that was going out, as people
6 were coming into the unit and asking what's going on,
7 which was very vague at the moment, everybody basically
8 knew what happened because you can see the TV and get a
9 lot of information that way with the news.

10 Just like during Desert Storm, we got more
11 information through the media than probably through the
12 units as far as what was going on.

13 We did our PCIs as guys were coming in. And, you
14 know, kudos to all the guys that came in prepared.
15 They basically knew what they were going to do or had
16 a general idea of what they might be called to do, and
17 guys came in prepared.

18 As far as orders that we gave, we gave some
19 general instructions when we got on the bus to move
20 down there until we coordinated with the captain down
21 at One Police Plaza. We took everybody there first.

1 We didn't know exactly what we were going to be doing.

2 We briefed people on general things as far as
3 maintaining professionalism when we were down at the
4 site because of what had happened, and some general
5 (inaudible) force protection issues as far as how to
6 deal with civilians.

7 Things that they knew because we had just been to
8 JRTC and did the whole, you know, civilians on the
9 battlefield thing. And so we just kind of reiterated
10 and reinforced the lesson we learned down there, things
11 that we trained in dealing with civilians.

12 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. As the
13 readiness, the one thing I did as far as communication
14 was through CNN I found out we were activated, not even
15 through the unit. So our unit, we already, I jumped
16 the gun and had already sent out the alert and called
17 people to start coming in approximately two hours
18 before we got the call.

19 But two hours before we got the call to activate
20 our unit, CNN announced that all National Guard units
21 in New York City has just been activated. And then it

1 switched over to the governor and the governor said,
2 "All National Guard units in the City of Manhattan have
3 just been activated to assist."

4 And I still haven't got the call to do it, but I
5 just heard it from the commander in chief of the state
6 and so I just went ahead and told people, "Come in. If
7 your job is saying you can go, come in. If you've got
8 another issue, I'm not telling you to come in."

9 I did that for the first couple and then after a
10 while the way the city was going, hearing all the
11 sirens and cops running into this building and
12 everything, I just said, "Come in. Come in. Come in."

13 **SGT JENNINGS:** In terms of once you were on your
14 posts on Canal Street what were the plans, especially
15 early on, for providing for the soldiers in terms of
16 food? I know you told them to take full water, a
17 supply of water, food, anything along that line. What
18 initially were your plans?

19 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** As far as food?

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Yes.

21 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** I think we had (inaudible)

1 well, we had --

2 **SFC MCLEAN:** We (inaudible) like every other --

3 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** We had one MRE apiece, plus we
4 also had what is called, I think it's three day meal
5 contingency plan that the Guard has, where each unit is
6 supposed to have enough MREs to last them three days
7 stored at their armory.

8 We had our supply sergeant, SGT Tejada (phonetic),
9 deployed to the location where we had them stored, and
10 started getting them easily accessible so that if we
11 didn't have a plan we had the MRE plan.

12 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, this is CPT Purcell. Our
13 resupply plan was really, it was also a convenient one
14 for us actually because our armory was just so close.
15 We weren't, probably at the point we were a mile and a
16 half away from the armory, so anything we needed, we
17 can shoot right back to the armory, pick it up.

18 And SGT Tejada, our supply sergeant, had a
19 (inaudible) to go and pick it up. So in the middle of
20 the night we had to bring in more water if needed, a
21 few other things. Chem lights.

1 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** We brought the chem lights
2 because we could, most of the, there was so much
3 traffic up and down that road. It's funny. Canal
4 Street was basically closed off to civilian traffic.
5 PD, FBI, the Army, construction workers were going at
6 like 60 miles an hour on that road. So the commander
7 said, "Hey."

8 **CPT PURCELL:** Flashlights, chem lights.

9 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** If one of my soldiers is going
10 to get hit by a vehicle, it's not going to be because I
11 didn't supply some kind of safety thing. So we started
12 issuing chem lights to all the posts so that they had a
13 visible light, you know.

14 **CPT PURCELL:** One of the things, CPT Purcell
15 speaking again. But I just remember from that night
16 sitting on Canal Street, it was like maybe 4:00, yeah,
17 probably 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. I was like, "If I see one
18 more blinking light or strobe light on an emergency
19 vehicle, I'm going to go crazy."

20 Like I couldn't wait for daybreak and that way the
21 sun could come up, because your eyes just hone in on it

1 and it gets really tiring after a while.

2 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** This is SGT Gieraltowski. The
3 other thing about food, water, things like that, while
4 we were deployed and these things were going on, you
5 know, our headquarters section basically coordinated
6 picking up meals and things like that.

7 Guys sitting on the ground are thinking about how
8 am I going to drink and where can I get a cup of coffee
9 and stuff. Right on the corner of Canal Street where
10 we first came in was a Red Cross vehicle, so we
11 immediately hit that up for what they had available
12 and what they could supply us.

13 We can go into more detail later about the food as
14 the thing went on. But when you're in the city,
15 something like this, there are 100,000 places to eat,
16 if not more. You can get some type of food in. A good
17 thing to do would be plan to coordinate, and obviously
18 this came out days later that I mean, the Outback
19 Steakhouse was set up on the corner right about where
20 we were serving steaks 24 hours a day to people.

21 So there were a lot of civilian places available

1 that were willing to help in a situation like this,
2 which keeps the morale up much better. Eating MREs for
3 three days is not, you know, when there are quality
4 restaurants.

5 **CPT PURCELL:** (Inaudible) has the option of
6 getting something a little bit better than what the
7 Army is supplying in a situation like this.

8 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** And a lot of people were, when
9 I called my platoon, I started telling people, the
10 first thing I told them to do, "Before you come in, eat
11 a good meal. Secondly, bring something. You know,
12 pack some power bars or anything like that you can
13 bring. And bring some money."

14 Because we don't know what, you have no idea how
15 bad the logistical system is messed up at this point.
16 Who knows what was going to continue at this point. We
17 didn't know when it was going to end, really. So I
18 told people to bring food, bring money so you can buy
19 food, and eat something good before you come in.

20 **SFC MCLEAN:** SGT McLean. The first day was really
21 the only really day that we had a problem, and it

1 wasn't really a problem because again, everything was
2 thought of. SGT Carrasquillo did a lot of footwork.

3 When I got there, things were really locked down.

4 Most of the soldiers were either, again, they had
5 boxes when I got there. They had boxes there of MREs
6 and (inaudible) already boxed.

7 So they were really taking care of (inaudible)
8 water and food. But the first day was basically the
9 only day that (inaudible) really concerned about.
10 Every day after that, basically, as SGT G was saying,
11 Gieraltowski was saying, that the city basically
12 provided food for us that, I mean, we had more than
13 sufficient food after a couple days. So it was not,
14 that was never a question.

15 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. I really
16 need to say that the city as an organization supplied
17 food. I think I would say 98 percent of our food came
18 from private industry.

19 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** That's correct.

20 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** But a part that happened on day
21 one, I mean, this was like what I call zero day, what

1 happened was that there were two precincts by Canal
2 Street. One was the underground precinct and the
3 training station and one was the 5th Precinct, I think.

4 **CPT PURCELL:** It was the 5th Precinct.

5 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** And I was, it felt very good.
6 I went to use the latrine at the 5th Precinct and the
7 desk sergeant came and he said, "Hey, we've got food in
8 the back. We chipped into our funds and we got food,
9 so you guys go get burgers."

10 And the key thing that made me feel like the city
11 just made a big turn was here are a whole bunch of
12 police officers said, "Hey, we've got food. Go in the
13 back and get it." So it wasn't about, "Hey, Army guys,
14 NYPD has food. Do you guys want to eat?"

15 The word "we," "us," was already being used like
16 it was already saying that we're in a situation and
17 already (inaudible) so to speak unpleasant that NYPD
18 was already identifying that we're in a crisis.

19 They've got food, we've got food. And that's how --

20 **CPT PURCELL:** This is CPT Purcell. I really
21 thought it was great that we were just included. We

1 were included in on everything. And like we were seen
2 as a resource, you know.

3 Whenever you're working sometimes in a situation
4 like this you don't know how the relationships are
5 going to develop. And automatically, like I felt that,
6 you know, we were absorbed into their environment, and
7 it was a great feeling. It really was a great feeling.

8 And that kicked it off. The time I spent at One
9 Police Plaza, they were looking at me as a resource,
10 something I had to offer to them. And it felt good
11 that I had enough guys here who were willing to go out
12 and help and really be utilized as a good asset.

13 **SGT JENNINGS:** On the operational side what were
14 your soldiers told constituted a positive ID check or
15 to allow someone to pass on and enter into what is now
16 called Ground Zero?

17 **CPT PURCELL:** Well, on Canal Street like that
18 first night?

19 **SGT JENNINGS:** The first night and then continuing
20 on.

21 **CPT PURCELL:** Okay.

1 **SGT JENNINGS:** As the situation developed.

2 **CPT PURCELL:** I guess it sort of went in phases.

3 That first night they had, you know, if you were a
4 police officer you had to show, you know, your ID.
5 Just about everyone was in uniform at that point.

6 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Everyone was in uniform.

7 **CPT PURCELL:** You know, you didn't see a lot of
8 plainclothes. Anyone that was in like jeans, T-shirt
9 sort of thing, had an FBI jacket, ESU jacket. You knew
10 where they were coming from. And law enforcement types
11 wore their ID around their neck.

12 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. And the
13 guidance we got was that we were allowed to let
14 agencies go through (inaudible) but civilians was
15 supposed to be diverted to NYPD and let NYPD give them
16 the spiel about, "I know you live down there and you
17 can't come in," or whatever was the situation.

18 So basically that first night the guidance was we
19 can let agencies through but civilians (inaudible) to
20 the police department.

21 **SGT JENNINGS:** Where did that guidance --

1 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** That guidance came from the
2 Pathmark Center.

3 **SGT JENNINGS:** And I'm sorry, the Pathmark Center
4 is?

5 **CPT PURCELL:** Oh, that was a command center for
6 NYPD, FDNY, everyone. So we went down there and
7 received our marching orders and then went up to Canal
8 Street.

9 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** At some point right around,
10 after the move from Canal to Ground Zero, that's where
11 basically we were getting orders and that was coming
12 from the chief, the fire chief.

13 Basically (inaudible) orders came from the chief
14 and way of identification was basically those that were
15 involved as far as FD, and again they gave us strict
16 guidelines (inaudible) allow to pass through the lines.

17 FD, the union guys that were involved in doing the
18 actual work on Ground Zero, to include also the FEMA,
19 and those were basically only the ones that were
20 authorized.

21 Later on (inaudible) that started broadening out

1 and then basically we started to have a list, basically
2 it's called a black and white list, of who is
3 authorized to come in on Ground Zero.

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry, I'm going to stop the
5 tape and flip sides because we're running out of the
6 side and we'll finish up here. This is SGT Patrick
7 Jennings. I'll stop the interview to rotate to the
8 second side of the tape.

9 (End side A, tape 1.)

10 **SGT JENNINGS:** This is SGT Patrick Jennings, 126th
11 Military History Detachment, continuing the interview
12 of October 14, 2001. The time is 12:44. Staff
13 Sergeant, you had something you wanted to say.

14 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SSG Carrasquillo. In regards
15 to what we were discussing about the guidelines and how
16 we were incorporating them, and this is to hit on
17 first, I guess (inaudible) that we talked about.

18 One of the key things that we were having problems
19 with guidelines, we were the first, Charlie Company and
20 Bravo Company, our company, Bravo, were the first
21 military unit down there. And we reported, we were

1 first supposed to report to the local agencies and get
2 guidelines.

3 And one of the big things as the days went along
4 that happened with guidelines were since we were the
5 first unit down there, the Office of Emergency
6 Management basically took us in as their puppies,
7 right. "All right, we've got these Army guys."

8 And we were getting a lot of guidelines what they
9 needed us to do. Where the conflicts came in is where
10 the National Guard units that came in afterwards, these
11 colonels and majors that came in, I think they made one
12 big error by not coming up to the first two company
13 commanders that were down there and going, "What have
14 you got?"

15 They just came there and were like trying to
16 change everything. "You guys get out of here." And we
17 were trying to, CPT Purcell was like, and CPT Heinz was
18 trying to tell them, "Hey, before you go any further,
19 sir, right now we're being controlled by the guy who's
20 running Ground Zero," who was Steve Wilson, who worked
21 for OEM. He was the guy --

1 **CPT PURCELL:** Bobby. It was Bobby Wilson.

2 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Bobby. Correction. Bobby
3 Wilson He was in charge of everything going on down
4 there. He took CPT Purcell and CPT Heinz and said,
5 "The guidelines for Ground Zero are coming from me, and
6 what better way to get them than through me."

7 And it really upset me seeing all these different
8 colonels coming in and trying to change things without
9 even asking, "Hey, company commander, you've been here
10 the whole time, right? Tell me what's going on."

11 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** SSG Gieraltowski. To back up
12 what SGT Carrasquillo is saying also. I had
13 (inaudible) security right on Church Street there. I
14 had arguments with colonels that are coming up there
15 and telling me that they're going over here and they're
16 doing this and questioning what I was doing.

17 And (inaudible) training guard duty, the only
18 person that I take orders from is the sergeant
19 (inaudible). I don't care who comes up to me and asks
20 me. He's doing it wrong.

21 And a number of high-ranking officers, light

1 colonels and above, and majors, were not operating how
2 they should have, by coming up to soldiers that are
3 doing security and questioning them and trying to force
4 their way past them by using their rank and other
5 things.

6 And questioning, you know, I have guidance from my
7 battalion XO who can come in here and who cannot.

8 "Well, you tell your battalion XO." That's not, his
9 answer should have been, "Okay, Sergeant, let me go
10 find the battalion XO and see if I can remedy this,"
11 instead of questioning the soldiers that are trying to
12 do a job down there.

13 The biggest trouble we had the first couple of
14 days was other military people. Not with civilians,
15 not with police, not with fire or construction. It was
16 other military people.

17 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Yeah.

18 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** From Navy, Marines, Air Force,
19 Army Reserve and impersonators. In the Army Times that
20 soldier that was, from what I understand, and this is
21 my own opinion, was thrown out of a unit and came back

1 and they did an article on this guy. He's
2 impersonating a soldier.

3 You know, that was the worst thing was dealing
4 with other military people.

5 **SGT JENNINGS:** Was there any, as the situation
6 shaped up, I understand the confusion of the initial,
7 say, 24 hours or so. Did clear guidance start to
8 evolve as to what the chain of command was going to be?

9 **CPT PURCELL:** Negative. CPT Purcell. We were
10 under, our task organization changed almost from one
11 day to the next. We started out being under, I'm
12 trying to think, troop command.

13 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** No, we started out under the
14 69th.

15 **CPT PURCELL:** Okay. You know what, rather than
16 trying to figure out exactly who we were, our task
17 order changed no less than five times.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** In how many days?

19 **CPT PURCELL:** In 11 days. So, I mean, trying to
20 figure out who exactly you're reporting to. So I'm
21 calling in. I'm reporting to the battalion commander

1 that I think we're supposed to be reporting to at that
2 point in time, because our own battalion hadn't been
3 fully activated; just the two companies, ourselves and
4 Charlie.

5 So it was really, the other company commander, CPT
6 Heinz and myself, looking for a mission, speaking to
7 Bobby Wilson that SGT Carrasquillo mentioned before,
8 and finding where we could best be utilized.

9 So from that night we went from moving on, we were
10 on Canal Street that first night, September 11th.
11 Charlie Company at that point in time made contact with
12 Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson said, "Listen, we need people
13 over on Church Street."

14 What we eventually did was we had people in that
15 perimeter sort of weeding out those who shouldn't have
16 been there, like this joker in Army Times who shouldn't
17 have been there to begin with sort of made his way
18 through a reporter and that's how he got the interview.

19 But it was weeding out people like that and making
20 sure that we're letting FEMA, FBI and NYPD do their
21 job.

1 And that's how our mission sort of evolved. We
2 created it for ourselves to the point where at a later
3 point in time CPT Heinz and myself had colonels asking
4 us, you know,, "Who the fuck are you to go down there?
5 You know, we've got relationships with the police.
6 We're doing this every day. And you guys are there
7 screwing it up for us."

8 Well, had they come down and said, "Listen, you're
9 the first people on the ground. What are you seeing?
10 Who are you working with? What are you doing?" You
11 know, I mean (inaudible) you know, when you're taking
12 command. Find out where security is. Where's
13 security? Where are your people at?

14 Well, had these people, you know, tried to follow
15 a few basic principles of patrolling, they could have
16 gotten the job done a lot easier.

17 **SFC MCLEAN:** I'm sorry, SGT McLean. A big thing
18 what the CO just said was again, we had all these
19 different directions to go in and everybody was trying
20 to do this, do that. And the one thing we did was the
21 coordination between the two companies, Bravo and

1 Charlie.

2 When we came in to relieve them, one of the things
3 we did was assess exactly what Charlie Company had that
4 day and then we (inaudible) what they had during that
5 day and vice versa. Whatever we had done or whatever
6 problem we ran into, we let them reassess the
7 situation. They went ahead and they figured out
8 (inaudible) what they're going to do and so forth.

9 But it was basically between the two COs and
10 basically the NCOs that basically ran that whole area.

11 And if it wasn't for that sort of coordination, I
12 think the units that came afterwards created more of a
13 havoc than what, how we already set it up. It was
14 already set up. It was running smooth.

15 But when they came on board, the other units that
16 came on board, that weren't, like I say again, I've got
17 (inaudible) an infantry unit that is used to having
18 that certain structure going, that they weren't able to
19 keep up the (inaudible).

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm going to ask you gentlemen to,
21 if you could, to construct a time line. Again, I

1 understand, as I well know, the day-to-day, it's often
2 confusing as to what day it was because of the long
3 term of this operation.

4 So as well as you can remember. If you have to
5 just reference to major events that's fine. We'll
6 start at approximately 2000 on 11 September, which is
7 about the time I understand that the company got on the
8 buses and moved into Ground Zero. How long did it take
9 you to establish positions in Ground Zero?

10 **CPT PURCELL:** I mean, when we moved in that night
11 we were on Canal Street, so that's, you know, we're
12 still well north of Ground Zero. It wasn't until the
13 12th that we actually moved down to Ground Zero down on
14 Church Street.

15 **SGT JENNINGS:** What was your mission when you
16 moved to Church Street?

17 **CPT PURCELL:** I'm trying to think. At that point
18 in time it was facilitating the operations of FEMA and
19 the fire department.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Were you relieved at Canal Street
21 by another unit?

1 **CPT PURCELL:** I'm trying to think. We were under
2 the impression that Charlie Company was going to fill
3 in there, but Charlie Company commander and our
4 battalion XO, MAJ Markie (phonetic), already went down
5 to the Ground Zero area trying to figure, okay, where
6 are we best going to be utilized, where are we best
7 going to be placed.

8 And they're the ones that actually made the
9 initial insertion into the Ground Zero area. My guys
10 were sleeping at that point because they had already
11 been up 24 hours.

12 I went down, linked up with them and I think
13 that's when our next rotation, our next shift was down
14 at the Ground Zero area. So after we did the initial
15 insertion at Canal Street, we never went back there.

16 **SGT JENNINGS:** You talked about, you mentioned the
17 word "shifts." What were your normal shifts?

18 **CPT PURCELL:** Our normal shifts ranged from
19 midnight to noon the next day.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Then where were the soldiers, where
21 were they quartered when they left?

1 **CPT PURCELL:** That's a great question. I was
2 starting to get into that. We initially quartered
3 ourselves down at the, was it Goldman Sachs?

4 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** No, initially we were at Two
5 Federal Plaza.

6 **CPT PURCELL:** No, we were in the lobby of a
7 building.

8 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo.

9 **CPT PURCELL:** Oh, okay, I know what --

10 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** The commander was at the
11 (inaudible) coordinating --

12 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry, which commander?

13 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** CPT Purcell. SGT McLean was
14 with the company. Myself and SGT Angel Rivera and the
15 chaplain, Father Champler (phonetic), were sent on an
16 advance party to Ground Zero.

17 While we were there, I linked up with First
18 Sergeant Brett (phonetic), the Charlie Company first
19 sergeant, and they were staying in the, they were
20 staying by the staircase of a building which was Two
21 Federal Plaza.

1 I walked inside to use the latrine at Two Federal
2 Plaza and the building supervisor said, "Do you guys
3 need anything else?" I said, "If you guys have beds
4 and food for us, I would appreciate that," as a joke.
5 And he said, "Well, I can't get you beds but I can give
6 you the 14th floor; it's empty. You guys can use
7 that."

8 And I said, "That's great." And he said, "You
9 guys can have the 14th floor." I went, "Right." Our
10 company was still en route.

11 I went over to Charlie Company commander and told,
12 no, Charlie Company's first sergeant and I told him,
13 "Hey, I just secured the 14th floor of this building
14 for our company, for our battalion use," battalion
15 meaning Charlie Company and Bravo Company.

16 And by the time the company actually came in is
17 when I explained to SFC McLean that I had secured the
18 14th floor of a building.

19 **SFC MCLEAN:** Okay, yeah.

20 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** That's when, now, this was
21 about, now it's about 1500.

1 **SGT JENNINGS:** Which day?

2 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Day two, which was the 12th.

3 **SGT JENNINGS:** The 12th.

4 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** It was about 1500. SGT McLean
5 linked up with us and we started moving in to the 14th
6 floor. We were moving in, which was then an alarm went
7 off at Ground Zero that One Liberty Plaza was about to
8 collapse. One Liberty Plaza is about, it's about 80
9 stories.

10 **CPT PURCELL:** A big building.

11 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** It's a big building, and it was
12 literally one block away from us. So if 80 stories
13 came down, we would be (inaudible).

14 **CPT PURCELL:** This is CPT Purcell. We had just
15 gotten the entire company up on the 14th floor. We
16 started to get everyone settled in, putting rucksacks
17 down, and that's when someone came screaming off the
18 elevator yelling, "Clear the building. One --"

19 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** One Liberty Plaza.

20 **CPT PURCELL:** "One Liberty Plaza is going to
21 collapse." So at that point we got everyone towards

1 the staircase and everyone started running down.

2 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Minus rucks.

3 **CPT PURCELL:** Minus rucks. You saw some guys
4 trying to take their rucks with them. We're like, "You
5 knucklehead, leave it there. Don't worry about it.
6 Just get downstairs."

7 We all started, we all ran down the stairs, got
8 out and started running south towards the pier. And
9 then we put ourselves on line clearing out all
10 civilians in that area, just one big sweep, and we
11 moved them all the way down to the waterfront.

12 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** We went right down Malden
13 (phonetic).

14 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah.

15 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** And chased them all the way
16 down to, we weren't right on South Street. We stopped
17 on Front Street.

18 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah.

19 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** And that's where the bomb scare
20 was.

21 **SGT JENNINGS:** How big a line were you able to

1 form? You said you formed a line.

2 **CPT PURCELL:** All the way across the street and
3 building to building.

4 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** We had sixty (inaudible) there.

5 **SGT JENNINGS:** I see.

6 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. At that
7 point when we were, so to speak, hauling ass, is when a
8 police captain came by and like just threw a frag at
9 us. "Hey, can you guys secure this major
10 intersection?" He goes, "I can do the side streets but
11 we need Malden and Water." No, was it Water and --

12 **CPT PURCELL:** It was Front.

13 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** That major intersection was --

14 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** No, that was after the bomb
15 scare. After the bomb scare?

16 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Yeah.

17 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** South Street.

18 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** South Street.

19 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** It was right under the FDR and
20 Malden because the intersection --

21 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** What was the next one, Pearl?

1 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** It was Front.

2 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Pearl, the four-lane road which
3 is the big intersection between Malden --

4 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** So it was Water.

5 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Water Street. We were told,
6 okay, can you guys just, because everyone was coming,
7 for some reason everyone was running away from Ground
8 Zero was either running down towards Chambers or
9 towards Malden heading towards South Street.

10 So they said, "You guys just make sure no one
11 comes up and if anyone is coming down, make sure they
12 run down and not walk away." So that was like another
13 frag order thrown at us. Now we're securing that area.

14 **SGT JENNINGS:** All right. So we're now talking
15 late in the afternoon, early evening on September 12th.

16 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** It was still afternoon. It was
17 still pretty light out.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** So you're about to begin another
19 shift roughly at this time. What position did you take
20 up then?

21 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Well, we had people on a number

1 of intersections watching them. We had, most of the
2 platoon was on Front Street and Malden, in that area
3 there. We just had (inaudible) accountability because
4 on a running move we started a mission for the police
5 to try to move these people down and then start
6 watching intersections.

7 We (inaudible) most of our guys back. There were
8 only a few guys that were left on those other corners
9 to direct people towards, actually to the east. They
10 were moving towards South Street to get them away from
11 that area.

12 All this movement seemed to attract a lot of
13 attention. We had civilians actually moving the other
14 way, towards us, people coming with their kids, doing a
15 lot of stupid things.

16 So we were on the corner of Front and Malden,
17 platoons in formation to do an accountability. A
18 lieutenant walked up to me and asked who was in charge.

19 This was sometime in the afternoon, 4:00 or 5:00
20 maybe.

21 **SGT JENNINGS:** Okay.

1 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** And I asked him why and then he
2 told me that this parking lot right across the street
3 from, right on the corner there, the north --

4 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry for stopping your
5 statement. You're saying that a police lieutenant
6 asked you who was in charge?

7 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** I think he was a lieutenant.

8 **SGT JENNINGS:** He was a police officer?

9 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** A police officer asking. And I
10 asked him, you know, what it was for. I looked around
11 quickly and didn't see any, I didn't see CPT Purcell
12 around. And he pointed out across the street there was
13 a van and there was some kind of a (inaudible) under
14 the van, under the gas tank.

15 And he said, "We don't know if it's a bomb and we
16 need to get it," and this is the corner that was
17 surrounded with all the civilians. He said, he goes,
18 "I don't want to alarm anybody and let them know what's
19 going on. We need to move all these civilians. Can
20 you guys do it?"

21 So I had everybody in formation. I gave them

1 quick guidance. "Get everybody on line from this
2 corner to that corner." And within probably 15 seconds
3 telling them to go and we had a line and we pushed
4 those civilians back another block onto South Street
5 then so we were another block away.

6 That's as far as you can go. We were standing
7 under the FDR Drive and the next move is into the
8 water.

9 **SGT JENNINGS:** Were you able to recover your
10 equipment off the 14th floor later on that night?

11 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** No.

12 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** No, it was two days later.

13 **CPT PURCELL:** Was it that long?

14 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Yeah, because after we did that
15 detail that we were doing the roads, then all of a
16 sudden it came out that we were going to relieve
17 Charlie Company at midnight at Ground Zero, at the
18 actual Ground Zero.

19 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah. Yeah.

20 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** So the last thing that was put
21 out was everybody try to get two hours sleep because

1 we're going to be at Ground Zero from 12:00 to 12:00.

2 The bad thing about that was that once we told
3 everybody that, the adrenalin kicked in that holy cow,
4 we're actually going to go to Ground Zero. Because
5 even though technically we were at Ground Zero, we were
6 still always a block away, two blocks away.

7 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, couldn't really get a good
8 eyes-on.

9 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Only the leaders at that point
10 have been down there to eyeball it. Most of the
11 soldiers hadn't actually been closer than a block and a
12 half away.

13 **CPT PURCELL:** And while we were trying to clear
14 Malden Street, the battalion XO spoke with the head of
15 security of the Goldman Sachs building. That building
16 had been completely evacuated and I asked if we could
17 sleep in the lobby. So we were there for a good --

18 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Which is, SGT Gieraltowski.
19 180 (inaudible) Lane. They treated us like we were
20 their kids.

21 **CPT PURCELL:** They treated us like gold.

1 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry, sir. The name of your
2 battalion XO?

3 **CPT PURCELL:** MAJ Markie.

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

5 **CPT PURCELL:** And he coordinated with them. That
6 way we could sleep there. And they were very
7 hospitable. Every civilian that we encountered
8 couldn't have been more helpful.

9 And we were there from, it was like Tuesday the
10 12th all the way through to that Sunday. I don't know
11 what the date is on that Sunday. I don't have a
12 calendar right in front of me. Whatever it is.

13 **SGT JENNINGS:** The 17th, I believe.

14 **CPT PURCELL:** We realized that, well, we've been
15 doing 12-hour shifts the entire time. I don't want to
16 go too far off the beaten path we're working on. But
17 we went from staying at the lobby of the Goldman Sachs
18 Building, both Bravo and Charlie. Then we moved back
19 into Two Federal the night of Sunday the 17th.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** Without their rucksacks, what other
21 equipment did they have with them, your soldiers, for

1 those two days?

2 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. The two days
3 that we were without rucksacks, all they had was their
4 LBE, their Kevlars, their camo packs. That's all.

5 **SGT JENNINGS:** And the camo packs are those
6 personal gear, is that --

7 **SFC MCLEAN:** SGT McLean. Camo pack is basically
8 like (inaudible).

9 **SGT JENNINGS:** I understand, but is that something
10 that the battalion and this company issues?

11 **SFC MCLEAN:** Yes, it is.

12 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. It was a
13 special issue thing just because of the JRTC.

14 **CPT PURCELL:** They make for a great pillow.

15 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. To go back
16 to one thing that was said, at that (inaudible) when we
17 first started the shifts it was not yet, we keep saying
18 12 hours on and 12 off.

19 It wasn't really established until like the third
20 or fourth day, because we ended up the first night that
21 we went to Ground Zero, we ended up being there almost

1 16 hours.

2 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, because --

3 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** When Charlie Company, when we
4 relieved Charlie Company someone told them that they
5 had to do an intersection, so they thought that when
6 the flip-flop came that they got stuck with their
7 intersection and we got stuck at Ground Zero and that
8 there was going to be them at that intersection and us
9 at Ground Zero.

10 And then as the day, we were already at like the
11 14th hour, we went and coordinated exactly what was the
12 priority.

13 **CPT PURCELL:** Part of that was that CPT Heinz and
14 myself both realized that all right, we could have guys
15 working from, you know, 1900 to 0700, but these guys
16 are never going to see daylight.

17 So we sort of, that initial shift we made it so
18 that my company would, we went back and forth on the
19 times. We were tired then and I'm sort of tired now.
20 So I don't exactly recall what our thinking was.

21 But our company would put in a little extra time,

1 then we can get off at noon. So we're working from
2 midnight to noon. We see some daylight. We get a
3 little bit off time in the day and that way, you know,
4 it won't be too miserable for us once we finally
5 recover from all this.

6 **SGT JENNINGS:** Now, starting September 13th,
7 roughly day three, what was your mission at that point?

8 **CPT PURCELL:** That was, we were on Church Street
9 by then, weren't we?

10 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Yeah. SGT Carrasquillo. Day
11 three the mission was we had already linked up with
12 FEMA, OEM and FDNY. FEMA was, the head of FEMA was
13 Norton. Then we had Bobby --

14 **CPT PURCELL:** Bobby Wilson.

15 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Bobby Wilson and Chief Spatafor
16 (phonetic). Now, this was where everything started
17 getting confused. Every colonel, every brigade
18 commander, battalion commander that was down there had
19 to report to one of those three individuals I just
20 mentioned, one of their staff members, in order to get
21 guidance from them.

1 These two company commanders, CPT Purcell and CPT
2 Heinz, were the only Army personnel that were talking
3 directly to the guys who were running the whole
4 operation, and they were not being utilized by the
5 Army.

6 Because the Army could alleviate a lot of the
7 problems that was going on with the Army, with their
8 missions, by just saying, "Hey, CPT Purcell, are you
9 going to see Bobby Wilson today?" "Yeah, I'm to have
10 coffee with him." "Can you find out what they want us
11 to do, because his secretary is telling me she can't
12 reach him."

13 Which is one of the biggest problems that a lot of
14 battalion commanders were having, that every time they
15 wanted to get orders from Spatafor or Bobby Wilson,
16 they couldn't find them.

17 **SGT JENNINGS:** Now, when you were in the position
18 on Church Street, how long did you maintain that
19 position?

20 **CPT PURCELL:** We were there through --

21 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** From the 13th to --

1 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** From the first day we were at
2 Church Street we were actually stopping civilians from
3 coming down those streets.

4 Once we coordinated with the chief of the fire
5 department we were actually working on the site, which
6 was cordoned off at that point, and stopping people
7 from entering the work site itself, not coming onto
8 those blocks.

9 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, we were on Church Street from
10 the 13th through the 20th.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** And at that point were you relieved
12 from the mission or just taken to a different location?

13 **CPT PURCELL:** Oh, CPT Heinz and I almost got
14 relieved altogether. At one point CPT Heinz was
15 relieved, which was not, for the history books, CPT
16 Heinz did nothing wrong. It was out of line from our
17 acting battalion commander to even suggest the fact.

18 It was a cluster on that battalion commander's
19 part.

20 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry, sir. Who was the acting
21 battalion commander?

1 **CPT PURCELL:** It was --

2 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. What you
3 mean by acting is not a battalion commander within our
4 --

5 **CPT PURCELL:** Within the --

6 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** It was the unit that we were
7 attached to.

8 **SGT JENNINGS:** And what unit was that?

9 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** I think it was --

10 **CPT PURCELL:** The 204 Engineers.

11 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** 204 Engineers.

12 **SFC MCLEAN:** And that was MAJ Seals (phonetic).

13 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, it was MAJ Seals.

14 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you. I'm sorry, you were on
15 that position at Church Street for nine days, roughly
16 nine days, is that right?

17 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** And at that point did the company
19 assume a new mission or did it --

20 **CPT PURCELL:** Well, what they had told us was
21 that, "You know what, you fellows are overexposed.

1 You've been in this environment too long. We need you
2 to move out. We need you to take another mission for
3 health reasons."

4 I said, "Okay, where's the mission going to be?"
5 And it turns out we're like two blocks away. I went,
6 "Listen, you're not doing myself or my soldiers any
7 favors by moving us two blocks away. We know this area
8 very intimately. We know the people working there.
9 We've got good working relationships. If you move us
10 right now, you're going to A, kill my morale."

11 And at this point I'm in a (inaudible) and I'm
12 speaking to two full bird colonels from 42nd Aviation,
13 MAJ Seals and their XO. I forget his name; a real
14 schmuck, though.

15 And so I'm pretty much selling my case on why we
16 need to be there. And they're like, you know. I'm
17 getting a little heated at this point. They're telling
18 me, "Captain, you're out of line. You're going to move
19 your people. Those are your orders. Follow them."

20 And I was saying, "Hold on a second. What you're
21 doing is you're telling me you're going to move my

1 people for their health. All right, if you're really
2 going to do me a favor, if you're really going to help
3 my guys out, get us checked out medically. And, you
4 know, by the way, take us out altogether because you're
5 right. Yeah, we have been here for a while. But what
6 was two blocks going to do us any favors?"

7 And they started telling me, "Oh, yeah, but the
8 winds are going to shift." These are people coming in
9 from Buffalo, Albany. They're not from New York City.
10 When you're down there it's, downtown New York City,
11 the wind just shifts around there. It doesn't matter
12 which way it's blowing.

13 So, I mean, for you to tell me, yeah, you're going
14 to do me some favors by moving my guys two blocks,
15 listen, no thanks.

16 So at that point when we got off shift that day we
17 had a medical team meet up with us at Two Federal Plaza
18 and they gave us a cursory physical and had someone to
19 check us out through a psychologist or a group of
20 psychologists to make sure that, you know, what we were
21 seeing every day is a very depressing environment.

1 You're seeing bodies getting taken out. You're
2 seeing the World Trade Center that has just been
3 destroyed, every single day. So we had guys checked
4 physically.

5 And at that point CPT Heinz and I had went through
6 being two (inaudible) officers who were acting on our
7 own, disrupting a brigade operation, to eventually
8 becoming two fine officers who these other officers
9 would like to have us work for them again at a future
10 date.

11 Yeah, there was a few events that occurred that
12 took place regarding NYPD and a couple other things we
13 can get into later or now, whatever you want to do.
14 And so, yeah, we went from being the dregs to being two
15 fine officers.

16 But, I mean, it was just a weird shifting of one
17 or two hours.

18 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. Seeing as an
19 outsider what my commander was going through and what
20 their commander was going through was, it was very
21 frustrating for these colonels to sit in Battery Park

1 and do nothing while they see what they thought was,
2 and can't understand how they felt.

3 They saw these two hotshot thinking captains who
4 had the power to talk to anybody they wanted to because
5 we were right there. They were pissed off that every
6 time that the mayor came or the governor came, the
7 governor and the mayor would see CPT Purcell or CPT
8 Heinz and not see the brigade commander of whatever
9 unit we were attached to.

10 And it was just, and it was very apparent. They
11 were pissed off that we were in such a limelight in the
12 sense of everyone who was in a command structure from
13 the city knew who these two companies were. No one,
14 you know, Bobby Wilson again.

15 It even got to the point one day where CPT Purcell
16 came up to us and said, "Hey, look, I've got to go to a
17 meeting. They're about to kick us out of here." This
18 was, I guess, day five.

19 The next thing you know, I'm sitting, we were
20 sitting down with Bobby Wilson and we're discussing the
21 fact that there's a bucket in front of us with a piece

1 of a head. And we were goofing around about it, the
2 fact that, "Oh, my God, why are we here dealing with
3 this?"

4 And I told him, I just remember telling Bobby
5 Wilson that, "You know, everything is going on here and
6 I can't believe they're about to kick us out of here."

7 And he went, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. You're the only
8 guys who know who anyone who is important is here. I
9 don't want to have to bring new guys here to start
10 asking me who I am. You guys know who I am. Hold on."

11 He gets on the radio and goes, "You tell those
12 guys, tell those Army guys that the unit that's here at
13 the command center is staying here. Tell them CPT
14 Heinz and CPT Purcell come back."

15 All of a sudden, we're staying. And that's what
16 happened. I just happened to tell Bobby Wilson that
17 we're being thrown out, which was like day five that
18 they told us we were leaving.

19 **CPT PURCELL:** It was probably a little bit later
20 than that, because day five was on the 16th. It was
21 probably more like on the 18th or something like that.

1 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** SGT Gieraltowski. Just to add
2 to that, from our perspective it started to become,
3 some of these senior officers and people just, they
4 wanted to get some of the attention.

5 It's almost where you see like they rotate
6 commanders through the units and get like combat time
7 or something.

8 It seemed like all these senior officers wanted to
9 have some piece of this little pie, something that was
10 going to come out of it. They were (inaudible) some
11 people that were working right down there and this was
12 their little piece of pie. That was commander
13 (inaudible) heard me talking about that and became very
14 annoyed.

15 And a different perspective to that, I work with
16 the county drug, as I said. I got called out after
17 like four days. They told me I had to report back.
18 They weren't letting us stay with our units.

19 And this, for my own peace of mind I want to bring
20 this up. They called a task force of all the county
21 drug people, the (inaudible) that are in all 50 states.

1 There was people in their regular unit, like I am
2 in this unit, Bravo 105, while my full-time job is the
3 county drug unit, which has people from all over the
4 state in it.

5 What they did is they formed a task force. They
6 convinced the chief of staff that we have a working
7 relationship with the law enforcement agencies,
8 although they're all, we only work drug enforcement, so
9 I didn't see how that had any bearing on what we were
10 doing down here.

11 But he said, "Let's maintain the county drug
12 program and create a task force," and they kept all
13 those people. What they did is they kept mostly
14 (inaudible) of the National Guard.

15 Most of the people in the county drug program are
16 platoon sergeants like myself, or first sergeants,
17 company commanders. You know, staff officers as high
18 as majors. And they kept these people out.

19 Two out of Alpha Company of our battalion, the
20 first sergeant and the company commander are in the
21 county drug program. So they decapitated that unit by

1 doing this.

2 And they put us in missions which in my, I know my
3 particular mission watching a parking lot at Kennedy
4 Airport was useless.

5 So I came out of something that was important
6 where I was needed and I was put into something that
7 was useless so that some other officers could get a
8 piece.

9 They wanted to keep the county drug unit together
10 so the commander of the county drug unit (inaudible)
11 those people would have been gone, so he kept that.
12 And he hurt a lot of the other units around the state
13 by pulling those key people out so that he can get his
14 piece of the Trade Center disaster.

15 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. To go with
16 that, I think the best thing to say was from speaking
17 to a lot of the units that were down there, we were the
18 only units, we were the only two companies to get such
19 a critical mission for that duration of time.

20 And it's now approximately 31 days after the fact
21 of when it happened, and these two companies got no

1 publicity, no recognition from anyone about what
2 happened except for one bad note that supposedly they
3 tried to say that one of our company made an accusation
4 of something.

5 The only publicity or "atta boy" that we got was,
6 you know, I mean --

7 **CPT PURCELL:** Just to add to that. CPT Purcell.
8 I mean, the entire time we were down there we were
9 happy doing the mission that we had because we really
10 felt that we were providing a service, and that's the
11 reason why we were there.

12 But again, I can see where SGT Carrasquillo is
13 coming from. That is, to see all these different units
14 showing up in the paper and, you know, that's great.
15 We're happy for them. But, you know, they're not doing
16 jack but (inaudible) front of the Army Times and, you
17 know, and that's the 24 September edition.

18 So, you know, once again, you know, we're happy to
19 be doing what we're doing, but it just seems weird
20 that, it almost seems like the critical things don't
21 get highlighted, you know.

1 **SGT JENNINGS:** That's our purpose here. Some
2 admin questions for the first sergeant. This was a
3 state activation, and still is.

4 **SFC MCLEAN:** Right.

5 **SGT JENNINGS:** And what point did you sort out all
6 the soldier pay issues? As Guardsmen they're on the
7 federal payroll but not on the state payroll, but now
8 they're on the state payroll. So what steps did you
9 take to start getting them pay?

10 **SFC MCLEAN:** Well, one of the things is with SGT
11 Carrasquillo, I know this was (inaudible) admin
12 section, when we first got what the pay situation was,
13 first of all, to me I did not have a clue in regards to
14 (inaudible) the actual set-up.

15 Basically SGT Carrasquillo was the one who showed
16 me that this was how it was going to be set up. We
17 were under the impression that the soldiers were only
18 going to get a lump-sum check and it would be given at
19 a certain time period, at which we come to find out
20 that instead of getting one lump-sum check, we got a
21 check for four days and then a check for the remainder

1 was following, which we just recently received.

2 The problem is that again, I had a lot of
3 questions about what happened to that pay because in
4 some respects we were told that soldiers of certain
5 ranks were getting a certain amount of money, soldiers
6 of a higher rank would have gotten so much amount of
7 money.

8 And in the case where we have a private to where
9 we have a spec 4 to we have a staff sergeant, the pay
10 was basically all the same along the line.

11 What we had also was that in some instances we had
12 soldiers who were on Ground Zero but the paperwork, for
13 some reason or another, was not properly done up at
14 higher.

15 We had no idea in regards to looking at our stubs
16 in regards to saying they're paying myself as a 7 or
17 they're paying, say, one of my privates as an E-1.

18 And I can say the only thing that was going on
19 that stub was a name. So really if you looked at that
20 pay stub, you wouldn't be able to tell whether or not
21 you were being paid at a one level scale or you were

1 being paid because of your rank.

2 And that was the biggest confusion, and I
3 (inaudible) to SGT Carrasquillo. He will tell you
4 probably the same thing he's been hearing from a lot of
5 his soldiers.

6 **CPT PURCELL:** One of the big heartaches, CPT
7 Purcell, was that we got called up on the 11th. They
8 didn't get their first paycheck until October 1st,
9 which was for four days. I mean, a lot of these guys
10 go week to week with their paychecks. All right, a lot
11 of these guys have jobs where, you know, they get paid
12 by the hour.

13 So for them not to have that money for such a long
14 period of time, they've got rents to pay. They've got
15 everything else. You know, these guys put down
16 everything that they were doing to help the city out,
17 and I don't think anyone here would think twice about
18 doing it again. But pay them on time.

19 **SGT JENNINGS:** This is a broader question. Does
20 state active duty in New York, does it get the soldier
21 any type of health insurance coverage, or is it just a

1 base paycheck?

2 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** No, it does not, especially for
3 their families. There's nothing. The pay is woefully
4 inadequate for people that live in New York City. It's
5 incredibly low.

6 So now we're doing this airport thing and I know a
7 number of people, I questioned a lot, couldn't take it
8 because going from, I'm full-time in the program. If I
9 took the state active duty thing, my pay would be over
10 \$1,000 less a month.

11 You know, especially (inaudible) it's okay when
12 you're AT for two weeks a year, and a lot of guys get
13 paid from their businesses on top of that.

14 Or a lot of companies will make up the difference
15 in your National Guard pay. And I worked for Gruman
16 (phonetic) for a while, which would give you the
17 difference back. So if I made \$500 less for AT, Gruman
18 would give you \$500 to make it up so I'm not losing any
19 money being in the National Guard.

20 But if you are on something for an extended period
21 of time, two weeks is one thing. You're looking at

1 guys being on active duty, you know, with this airport
2 thing maybe six months.

3 Or some type of big emergency like this, we have
4 people that are going to be rotating through here
5 every, you know, some guys in the 69th are still on
6 active duty since it started. The guys are on active
7 duty over a month now.

8 You start making \$500, \$600, \$700 a month less,
9 it's going to become a problem. People are not going
10 to do this anymore.

11 **CPT PURCELL:** CPT Purcell. So the big thing is
12 that all right, you know, it's part of the Guard. It's
13 what you're here for. All right, you might be called
14 up and that's one of the things you've got to accept,
15 and I think everyone here does.

16 But, you know, they're paying these guys their
17 base pay. They're not giving them BAH, which is a huge
18 issue. If you're on active duty, any active duty
19 soldier gets BAH. So, you know, they're clearing well
20 above their base pay to pay for their rent. Rent
21 around here is outrageous.

1 **SFC MCLEAN:** Just, I don't know if you know how
2 BAH works (inaudible) housing costs. My BAH is \$1,700
3 a month, and that's an entitlement. There's no tax
4 taken out. If you take that away, you're taking \$1,741
5 a month out of my pocket.

6 Now, the way the rules work, you have to be on
7 orders for 180 --

8 (End side B, tape 1.)

9 **SGT JENNINGS:** This is SGT Patrick Jennings
10 continuing the oral history interview of October 14,
11 2001. This is tape 2. It is 1325.

12 We were earlier discussing pay issues, state
13 active duty pay issues and the administrative issues of
14 not only getting soldiers paid but getting them on the
15 state payroll so they could get paid, as well as
16 benefits.

17 That leads to my next question. How has soldier
18 morale held out throughout this operation?

19 **SFC MCLEAN:** SGT McLean. Outstanding. No other
20 word for it. Outstanding. Some of these guys were
21 getting no sleep. Some of these guys were getting some

1 sleep. But no grumbling, no crying, no complaining.

2 Everybody pulled their fair share.

3 The motivation itself was because they had a
4 mission. They had a job to do and they felt that they
5 were needed. They felt it was a needed job, it was a
6 needed mission. And they went out there, no questions
7 asked, performed the mission superbly.

8 And like I said, if you hear any grumbling, I
9 didn't hear any. I did not hear any grumbling
10 whatsoever.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** Did you have any soldiers who were
12 hurt during the mission or reporting health problems?

13 **CPT PURCELL:** We did have one soldier who got hurt
14 but it was kind of a, you know. He was carrying in two
15 large trays and walked into a big cement column. He
16 fractured his (inaudible).

17 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. We also had
18 Private Carrasquillo got hit in the eye.

19 **CPT PURCELL:** Oh, yeah, that's right.

20 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** He got hit in the eye.

21 **CPT PURCELL:** There was one direct injury.

1 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** One of the biggest morale issue
2 things that was going on with the soldiers was here it
3 is, a light infantry unit being told by aviation guys
4 and aviation, engineer guys and all that, running
5 around questioning how they're doing their job,
6 security.

7 Number one rule in light infantry is the first
8 thing you do is establish security. We know how to do
9 security.

10 Having all these guys trying to interfere with
11 that, I mean, if you're going to deploy a unit to
12 homeland security and all that, for the first time,
13 since my career in the Guard all I ever heard was
14 people say there's no need for infantry, there's no
15 need for infantry in the Guard, there's no need for
16 infantry.

17 This was the best example (inaudible) they needed
18 infantry because half of these, even some of the MP
19 units that were sent out there, I mean, I had guys, I
20 had a situation with one of my soldier's ID card
21 expired.

1 I'm going to the MP. I go and I said, "Hey,
2 specialist, I'm active duty, you know. My card says
3 active duty on it." I said, "I'm an active duty
4 soldier. My soldier's card expired here. We need to
5 (inaudible)" and this MP is going, "I can't do that."

6 And I said, "Under what guidance?" And he's like,
7 "Uh, uh, uh." And I'm telling him, I literally told
8 him the (inaudible) manual, challenge (inaudible) I
9 said, "If you get a visual confirmation of a person you
10 can let them through."

11 I'm telling you. I'm working just the basics.
12 There was problems with certain units. They sent
13 maintenance guys down there. Like SGT Gieraltowski was
14 saying, just because some hotshot major knows who to
15 call to get his unit put in there, and they're putting
16 certain (inaudible) than what they should have.

17 What they should have done was try to get as much
18 of the 27th Brigade as they could. We had companies,
19 we had companies in Peekskill, which is about 50 miles
20 away from here, ready to deploy, and they send
21 maintenance guys from Buffalo, which was 180 miles

1 away, first.

2 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Guys that are not trained to do
3 (inaudible).

4 **CPT PURCELL:** One good point in this, you look at
5 one of our tasks, which was the defense. You can pick
6 it up and fit it right into this. Instead of having
7 interlocking sectors of (inaudible) you've got
8 interlocking lines of sight.

9 You know, making sure that one guy is looking with
10 the other guy to his left and right. It's, you
11 establish a perimeter and you establish patrols. One
12 complements the other. It was a perfect mission for
13 the infantry.

14 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Good point. I just have to say
15 that there is a big difference between what we, the
16 infantry do, compared to what the other units which
17 were not infantry, and you can see things.

18 I mean, the esprit de corps that we had carried
19 over. And again, I'm talking motivation. Motivation
20 was high. Because you'd see these other soldiers,
21 miserable, sitting down on corners, on boxes. Our guys

1 were standing up always ready to do another mission.

2 The problem was is that you have soldiers that
3 when we came to, when you came to our checkpoint, very
4 professional. When you'd go to their checkpoint, wait
5 one second, we just saw him two minutes ago. All
6 right, same person, same ID. What changed within two
7 minutes?

8 And the problem has always been to where we were
9 always knocking heads with the soldiers. That, to me,
10 I could never understand. You can never understand why
11 is it that we're knocking heads with soldiers.

12 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm going to ask each of you this
13 question and you can just answer with a quick yes or
14 no. As infantrymen, you all hold the infantry MOS.
15 I'll start with you, First Sergeant. Do you feel that
16 some of the soldiers deployed from non-infantry units
17 lacked basic soldier skills?

18 **SFC MCLEAN:** Yes, I do.

19 **SGT JENNINGS:** Captain.

20 **CPT PURCELL:** Yes, I do.

21 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** Most definitely I do.

1 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Yes, I do.

2 **SGT JENNINGS:** Thank you. To finish up with and
3 kind of wind this up, I'd like to give any of you or
4 each of you, whichever of you want to take any
5 opportunity if you have something you want to say, a
6 story you want to tell, a particular incident that
7 someone who, you know, deserves special commendation.
8 Anything along that line, put it here. If you want to
9 tell a tragic story.

10 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** We do have one soldier,
11 Specialist Feliciano (phonetic), one of (inaudible)
12 team leaders. Specialist Feliciano was on Ground Zero,
13 at which point in time one of the firefighters from
14 NYFD had an injury, a leg injury. There were no medics
15 available.

16 So Specialist Feliciano, who is a combat
17 lifesaver, took it on himself to move in and basically
18 give that fireman first aid and there was nobody else
19 available to do it. This was on Ground Zero. He did
20 do the first aid on the firefighter (inaudible) injury
21 to his leg, and that was probably one of the best

1 things that --

2 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry, did he have his combat
3 lifesaver kit with him?

4 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** He didn't have his combat
5 lifesaver kit.

6 **CPT PURCELL:** No, he did. He did.

7 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** I stand corrected. I stand
8 corrected.

9 **CPT PURCELL:** All right, I've got one. We were
10 talking before about how the days ran together.

11 **SGT JENNINGS:** I'm sorry, sir, could you say your
12 name.

13 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, I'm CPT Purcell. We were
14 talking earlier when the tape was off about how the
15 days ran together and it's hard to really pinpoint
16 exactly what happened when.

17 There was absolutely one point in time, it was
18 Thursday the 13th at approximately 3:00 a.m. where the
19 clouds just rolled in, it dropped about 20 degrees and
20 the heavens opened up. It just rained like I had never
21 seen.

1 And when you looked at that entire area it looked
2 like a circus. There was people everywhere. When that
3 rain came in, everyone scattered. Everyone took off,
4 except for my soldiers. Everyone stood their post.
5 Some guys had rain gear, some guys didn't. They stood
6 there. They got soaked, but they knew they had a job
7 to do.

8 Now, we have to rotate them out, get them dry
9 clothes, get them wet weather gear, get them the things
10 that they need, which is really, I'll take the hit on
11 that, them not having it there.

12 But it was just their professionalism was just
13 illustrated and highlighted at that point in time, and
14 I'm just so proud of them.

15 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. Just one
16 thing I want to say involves one of our soldiers. The
17 Guard is always famous for using that expression,
18 "citizen soldier."

19 And Specialist Hector Barrios (phonetic) was in
20 Tower One when it got hit, doing his regular, everyday
21 job. Doing his job, building one gets hit by a plane.

1 He was on the 58th floor. He starts helping people go
2 down the stairs.

3 He gets yelled at a couple of times by FDNY to
4 leave. But at the same time, being a soldier, his
5 security supervisor is telling him, "Stand your
6 ground."

7 He kept bringing people down, helping them get
8 down the staircase from the 58th floor of Tower One
9 when all of a sudden the fire department said, "That's
10 it, you guys have got to go. Don't worry about it.
11 We'll take care of it."

12 He leaves. On his way down the stairs, he gets a
13 phone call from his brother. "Hey, brother, my wife,
14 your sister-in-law, is in Tower Two. I can't find
15 her."

16 He runs into Tower Two, gets on the elevator.
17 While he makes it to the 65th floor, Tower Two gets hit
18 with a plane. He goes. Instead of saying, "Hey, now
19 something's wrong with this building, let me get out,"
20 he continues his way up to find his sister-in-law.

21 He finds his sister-in-law and he grabs as many

1 people as he can and tells them, "Don't wait for the
2 elevator. Hit the stairs and go." He makes it out of
3 the building.

4 He gets out of the building and tells his sister-
5 in-law to go. He starts hesitating whether to run back
6 in, run out. He gets about a block and a half away and
7 the buildings collapse.

8 All he remembers saying to himself, which is a
9 soldier's, it's part of a soldier's (inaudible) is, "I
10 can't outrun this." He hit the ground, tucked himself
11 in, and that's when he was injured and succumbed to
12 smoke and debris inhalation and he had a couple of
13 bruises.

14 And as far as I'm concerned, he's (inaudible) and
15 I asked my command, "What can I do for him?" And you
16 know what one of the, I'll never forget this. One of
17 the things they kind of told me is like, "Oh, it's
18 going to be real hard because it's --

19 **CPT PURCELL:** (Inaudible) command.

20 (Laughter.)

21 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** I'll say not at the company

1 level. At the battalion level I was kind of told,
2 "Well, there's really nothing you can do for him as
3 far as awards because it's all about witnesses and
4 yada, yada, yada."

5 And I said, you know, "He's in my platoon and he's
6 one of my best soldiers and if the guy told me he
7 jumped off a 10-story building I would believe him
8 because it's just the type of soldier he is, if he told
9 me he ran into Building One and got," he's telling me
10 these stories like not that he was a hero.

11 He's telling these stories like telling me, "Dude,
12 I didn't know what to do. I'm getting yelled at by the
13 fire department. My supervisor's telling me to stay. I
14 didn't know what to do, so I just was helping people."

15 And I don't (inaudible) and he's telling me these
16 stories and as he's telling me the stories he's telling
17 it to me that he was confused.

18 But as a platoon sergeant, I'm listening to the
19 story and in his confusion all he knew how to do was
20 his job, get those people out of there.

21 **SGT JENNINGS:** Was he able to report for duty with

1 the company?

2 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** He was in the hospital. They
3 took him to, they medevaced him to the hospital because
4 I guess he was covered with soot, and he missed the
5 whole deployment.

6 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** We actually thought he had been
7 killed, because we knew he worked there and what he
8 did, and we couldn't get in contact with him or his
9 family and we feared the worst at that time. It wasn't
10 until a couple days later that we found out that he was
11 okay.

12 **SGT JENNINGS:** Can you state your name?

13 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** SSG Gieraltowski.

14 **SGT JENNINGS:** And would you like to finish up
15 with anything along that line?

16 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** No, that's as much as I know of
17 that episode.

18 **SGT JENNINGS:** Anything you'd like to add?

19 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** Nothing specific as far as any
20 individuals. But overall, every guy in my platoon
21 showed up for this, you know, was here within hours to

1 go. I mean, active duty units take days sometimes to
2 get everybody in to get ready to go.

3 In a couple hours, they had everybody in. The
4 only people that weren't in were the people we excused.
5 One was Barrios because we thought he had been killed.

6
7 The only other guys that weren't there were
8 firemen or policemen, and a number of the policemen
9 that I work with came in because they thought they
10 could do more in their Guard unit than they could do
11 with the police department, so those guys came in.

12 Even one of the firemen was here for a day before
13 he got called back in. But overall, you know, people
14 showed up immediately. People did their job in a
15 professional manner.

16 It made me proud, and I know that a lot of the
17 training that we did go through at JRTC helped in this,
18 because these guys responded to commands, no questions
19 asked. It was like a platoon sergeant's dream. It was
20 like having a bunch of basic trainees because you said
21 something, they did it and they did it well. They did

1 an excellent job.

2 **SFC MCLEAN:** Something that he said. SGT McLean.

3 We had more people show up for this than we did for
4 (inaudible) that's the thing that was impressive about
5 it.

6 Because we could not believe that, and I read down
7 the personnel roster and I'm calling names out. I'm
8 saying to myself, "I never saw this guy before."

9 **CPT PURCELL:** You didn't even recognize them.

10 (Laughter.)

11 **SFC MCLEAN:** But the thing about it was, in time
12 of need everybody showed up. And he was saying, SGT
13 Gieraltowski was saying that yeah, it had to make you
14 proud because it was unbelievable how everybody pulled
15 together.

16 **SSG GIERALTOWSKI:** I mean, the unit should be
17 recognized, in my opinion, for what they did. And not
18 only just these companies down here, but the battalion
19 as a whole. Things (inaudible) about the battalion,
20 they were also (inaudible) well done.

21 **CPT PURCELL:** Yeah, and something that got left

1 out. I mean, our BC, COL Warneke (phonetic), was down
2 here a lot doing a lot of coordination. Our XO, MAJ
3 Markie, the same.

4 And our S3, MAJ Cleaver, always down here, always
5 asking, you know, "What can we do to make your lives
6 easier? You're not in our chain of command but, you
7 know, we can certainly do what we can to try to help
8 you guys out."

9 And I don't know if that was transparent to the
10 rest of the company, but they were certainly working,
11 you know, directly with me to try to make my life
12 easier. That way I could make the soldiers' lives
13 easier.

14 **SSG CARRASQUILLO:** SGT Carrasquillo. Just I guess
15 I remembered something that happened at Ground Zero. I
16 remember I had just almost literally got into a
17 fistfight with another National Guard NCO because he
18 did not want to leave out of the position.

19 And I remember one of my E-4's grabbed at me
20 saying, you know, "Just relax." And I was like, "It's
21 not me." But I guess what he was trying to tell me was

1 like don't get as unprofessional as them.

2 And I pulled back and I was just so pissed off.

3 And I just sat there and my E-4 came up to me and he
4 said, "You know what's the sad thing about this?" And
5 I said, "What?" He goes, "As soon as they disband the
6 27th Brigade, we're going to become just like them."

7 **SGT JENNINGS:** That's a good point. Anybody else?

8 All right, thank you very much for your time,
9 gentlemen. This is SGT Patrick Jennings ending the
10 oral history interview of 14 October 2001. The time is
11 1342.

12 (The interview was concluded at 1342 hours.)

13 * * * * *