

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
Historical Services Branch

Interview NGB-10

INTERVIEW OF

CPT KEVIN REILLY
S-3 Air, 1st Battalion, 101st Cavalry

CONDUCTED BY

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National Guard Bureau

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Editorial comments inserted later are indicated by use
of brackets []

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

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

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** This is MAJ Les' Melnyk, the Army
3 National Guard Historian at the National Guard Bureau.

4 I am interviewing CPT Kevin J. Reilly, R-e-i-l-l-y.

5 CPT Reilly is the S-3 Air for the 1st
6 Battalion, 101st Cavalry, Staten Island.

7 Today is the 19th of September 2001, and the
8 interview is taking place in Battery Park, New York
9 City.

10 To begin with, CPT Reilly, you have read and
11 signed the access agreement for oral history materials
12 and agreed that there is nothing that you feel needs to
13 be withheld from the Army History Department; is that
14 correct?

15 **CPT REILLY:** That's correct.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** If you could start by just
17 telling me a little bit about yourself, your civilian
18 occupation, a brief synopsis of your military career up
19 to your present assignment.

20 **CPT REILLY:** On the civilian side, I'm a
21 police officer with the Garden City Police Department,

1 out on Long Island, New York.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** The what?

3 **CPT REILLY:** Garden City Police Department.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** Garden City. Thank you.

5 **CPT REILLY:** Garden City Police Department,
6 out on Long Island, New York.

7 My military career started in 1986. I joined
8 the National Guard as an enlisted personnel, became a
9 crew chief out at MacArthur with A Company, 142nd
10 Aviation, which has changed many names since then.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** What kind of --

12 **CPT REILLY:** It was a Huey -- Huey lift
13 company. So I was crew chief on UH-1s. After I was
14 two years in the system, at age 19, I went to OCS down
15 in Fort Benning, Georgia, went through the Federal OCS
16 program down there, had my birthday while I was down
17 there.

18 At the age of 20, I was commissioned as second
19 lieutenant with the New York Army National Guard.

20 Came back, came to the 101 CAV as a second
21 lieutenant, and since then I've held almost every

1 position in the battalion up to where I am now.

2 I started out as the support platoon leader
3 for the battalion. Then I went on to become a tank
4 platoon leader, became a tank company XO in D Company,
5 101 CAV; became the D Company Commander in D Company
6 101 CAV.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** D Company located?

8 **CPT REILLY:** Is in Newburg, New York. While I
9 was the commander there, we had three activations for
10 civil emergencies. We went to Mechanicsville, New
11 York, which was hit with tornadoes about four years
12 ago.

13 We were activated for a snow storm a year
14 after that, and then the year after that, we were
15 activated for storms and tornadoes that hit the
16 Rockland County area in New York.

17 After I got done with my command, I did a one
18 year stint as an AGR S-1 officer in the battalion. So
19 that was full time. At that time, that's when I got
20 called for the police department out on Long Island and
21 I became a police officer in Garden City, New York.

1 After that, I became the BMO in the battalion.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** Battalion Motor Officer.

3 **CPT REILLY:** Battalion motor officer. From
4 that, I became the S-3 Air and, slash, the gunnery
5 officer for the battalion, and that's where I am now
6 here in good old New York City.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** If you could go back to last
8 Tuesday, the 11th, where were you when you found out
9 about the attack, your first reaction, your first
10 actions?

11 **CPT REILLY:** It was kind of ironic. That
12 morning, on the 11th, my kids -- I have two kids, four
13 and five year old, Brett and Bridget, and they were
14 watching their regular kid shows, Bob the Builder and
15 all that stuff, and we don't usually have the regular
16 news on or anything.

17 And it was about 10:30 or so, you know, look,
18 you're not going to work until 1:00 o'clock at night,
19 in the afternoon. She's a New York City police officer
20 and she goes in from the four to twelve shift.

21 So she leaves about one, 1:30 to go to work.

1 I said I'm going to go get a haircut. I hadn't gotten
2 a haircut in a while.

3 And I was getting ready to go out the door and
4 that's when my mother-in-law called and told my wife to
5 turn up the news, they blew up the World Trade Center.

6 And I was like you got to be kidding me.

7 I ran inside, turned on the TV, and, at that
8 time, both towers were already hit and the flames were
9 just coming out of it.

10 I told my wife, look, I got to go get a
11 haircut and I got to get out of here.

12 Just about that time, then they showed on the
13 news, which I didn't know that the Pentagon was also
14 hit, and all I said is we're at war, you know. It's no
15 longer -- it's no accident, it's no game, we're at war.

16 At that time, my wife got a phone call from
17 her precinct in the city, because she had to report
18 right away.

19 So I ran out and got a haircut, just for the
20 simple reason I haven't had a haircut since we went to
21 AT. So five minutes, I'm never going to see a barber

1 after this.

2 Ran and got a haircut. She jumped in the
3 shower. I got back, I jumped in the shower. Me and
4 her both just took all of the stuff we needed for like
5 a week and threw it in bags. We just didn't know when
6 we were coming back.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** Where were the kids?

8 **CPT REILLY:** The kids were still in the house.

9 My son knew something was up, because he was getting
10 upset, and at that point, he seen the towers falling on
11 the TV.

12 We were still in the house when the first
13 tower fell. I heard about the second tower falling
14 when I left the house.

15 My wife took the kids, she was dropping them
16 off at my mother-in-law's. She had to head into
17 Central Park. So she was going down, meeting up with
18 the other people from her precinct she usually car
19 pools with and they were heading in on the LIE.

20 I just took off and left to take the Sunset
21 Parkway in and it was -- it was amazing. I was just

1 thinking that I was going to be stuck in a ton of
2 traffic, but just around Valley Stream, a little short
3 of Valley Stream, east of Valley Stream, the state
4 troopers out on Long Island shut down the parkway.

5 So once you got through the checkpoint, it was
6 smooth sailing all the way into the city.

7 I got boxed up a little again, but you could
8 just see there was -- besides the thousands of cars now
9 stuck by the checkpoints, there was hundreds of POVs
10 and emergency vehicles with their four-ways on. Every
11 single military and police officer holding their badges
12 out the window, trying to get through traffic, and down
13 both shoulders of the highway was just cars trying to
14 get through.

15 And once you got through that checkpoint, and
16 there was another checkpoint right at Starrett City in
17 Brooklyn. It was right by the old landfill there,
18 there was another checkpoint by the City Highway, and
19 then it was smooth sailing all the way in again.

20 I got to the armory about 12:15, 12:30. At
21 that point, CPT Willis, the only other officer there at

1 the time, and myself showed up. We had --

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** This is the Slossen Avenue
3 Armory.

4 **CPT REILLY:** Slossen Avenue Armory.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** Staten Island.

6 **CPT REILLY:** Staten Island. We had about, I
7 would say, by the time I got there, 45 personnel
8 available. The battalion commander, we had
9 communication with him, but the cell phones went down.

10 He was stuck in traffic in Jersey trying to
11 get in. At that point, we just started -- we went to
12 THREATCON Charlie and Delta. We didn't know exactly
13 which one we were at. There was rumors on the TV.

14 We took our own initiative. We locked down
15 the armory, issued weapons, issued flak vests, tried to
16 scrounge up whatever ammo we had.

17 We sent people out to the local store to get
18 .223 ammo, since we don't have stock of ammo or
19 anything. Whatever little bit was around was people's
20 private stock that they brought in or a little stash
21 that we had.

1 I personally brought in 300 rounds of nine
2 millimeter from my house, which I had from the range
3 and from going to the range, and the police department
4 had issued that out.

5 We mounted the -113s at the gates. We used
6 them as hard blocks. The maintenance section started
7 getting every vehicle we had running.

8 By about 12:45, we pretty much secured the
9 entire area, and these are all approximate times. You
10 know, no one was really looking at a watch.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yeah. That's universal. You're
12 not the only one to say that.

13 **CPT REILLY:** At that point, CPT Willis, who
14 was in charge of the S-1 section, which ultimately
15 planning and battalion operations was responsible for
16 the medic section, got whatever medics we had together
17 and sent them into the city.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** Was the battalion commander on
19 scene yet?

20 **CPT REILLY:** No. He still wasn't on scene.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** So the medics departed before he

1 even got there.

2 **CPT REILLY:** Right. He got there -- I guess
3 it had to be like around one-ish or 1:30. It was an
4 hour, hour and a half after I got there. At that
5 point, he showed up. He said let's start counting what
6 filters and gas masks and NBC suits we had.

7 And like any National Guard unit, all we have
8 is a handful here and there for training, and I went
9 around and started counting and out of all the sealed
10 bags that we had, I came up with somewhere in the
11 neighborhood of 35 that were completely sealed.

12 **MAJ MELNYK:** That's MOPP suits.

13 **CPT REILLY:** MOPP suits. And as far as masks,
14 we had a handful of masks, maybe another 20 or 30 that
15 were still in boxes that were never issued.

16 But the key question there was is the filters
17 that were in those boxes service filters or training
18 filters.

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

20 **CPT REILLY:** They didn't say nothing on them.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** Just to interject here, because

1 who knows how long this tape will be in the archives,
2 that MOPP standards for Mission Oriented Protective
3 Posture, which is the chemical protective suits.

4 Who knows what acronym they'll be using in the
5 future.

6 **CPT REILLY:** Right.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** So you're worried -- your concern
8 is that this is potentially a chemical or biological
9 attack or toxic.

10 **CPT REILLY:** Definitely. The first thing we
11 were thinking is force protection. If we were going in
12 there, we can't have guys just going in and drop from
13 whatever might be there.

14 A coordinated effort this large, this ain't,
15 you know, a little terrorist action. This was war.
16 Three planes. At that time, they were still looking
17 for other planes that were missing.

18 The TV went down. So all we had was radio.
19 The only channel that was feeding at that time over any
20 sort of aerial was channel two. We were still getting
21 bits and parts. They must have transmitted somewhere -

1 - some place other than the World Trade Center.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** The TV went down when the World
3 Trade Center went down.

4 **CPT REILLY:** Yeah. So we were getting news,
5 and at that point, the news was basically rumor
6 control. Every news channel was reporting something a
7 little bit different.

8 Later on in the afternoon, we got a call from
9 our personnel that was down at the morgue, the medics,
10 saying that they had no power. They had light, but no
11 generators, and that's when we sent every generator we
12 had to their location.

13 At that time, our headquarters commander, I
14 think it was the first sergeant, took off to go to the
15 city with the generators in a small convoy that we sent
16 in.

17 Going back, before that happened, and I might
18 be jumping around in details a little bit, but I
19 forgot. We got a call from the VA. They were looking
20 for body bags, also, for the scene.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** This is Veterans' Administration?

1 **CPT REILLY:** Veterans' Administration called
2 saying they got a call to send body bags, but they had
3 no ability to send them. We also got a call from our
4 personnel, CPT Willis, at the scene, at they needed
5 body bags.

6 **MAJ MELNYK:** And you got a call through on a
7 cell phone.

8 **CPT REILLY:** Yeah. We were using cell phones
9 at that time.

10 We ended up going, me and SGT Hally
11 (phonetic,) by direction of the battalion commander, to
12 take one of the Humvees that we had and go and round up
13 body bags.

14 We ended up -- being a National Guard unit,
15 we're pretty unique. We got -- collected a lot of
16 equipment on the side and all around.

17 Several of our Humvees have lights, police
18 lights on them and sirens in them, and me and SGT
19 Hally, we took off.

20 The mission started out to go to the VA
21 Hospital at Fort Hamilton and pick up body bags that

1 they had there and bring them to the scene.

2 At that time, we took off, went to the the
3 Veterans Administration Building. They only had about
4 25 at their location. At that time, the city was
5 looking for hundreds or thousands. Worst case scenario
6 they were preparing for.

7 At that point, I met a Dr. Michael Simberkoff
8 (phonetic.) He is the chief of staff for all the VA
9 hospitals in the city. He needed to get to the city VA
10 hospital up on 21st Street to run his operation.

11 So we took on a mission at that point to take
12 him into the city, along with running out to St.
13 Alban's to pick up more body bags at that location.

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** Where is St. Alban's located?

15 **CPT REILLY:** St. Alban's, normally, by car,
16 normal traffic, it's about 45 minutes to 55 minutes
17 from Brooklyn.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right. So Fort Hamilton is
19 located right at the base --

20 **CPT REILLY:** The base --

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** The Brooklyn base of the

1 Verrazano Bridge and the St. Alban's is --

2 **CPT REILLY:** All the way on the Queens --
3 basically, the Queens-Nassau border.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** Queens-Nassau border. So going
5 away from the city actually.

6 **CPT REILLY:** Right.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yeah.

8 **CPT REILLY:** So off we went with the doctor
9 and raced out to St. Alban's, picked up the 20 or so
10 they had, and then headed into the city with the
11 doctor.

12 We got actually on ground zero, I would say,
13 at approximately 3:00 o'clock. At 3:00 o'clock, and it
14 was beyond words. We came through the Battery Tunnel,
15 because at that time, they mentioned that all the
16 bridges were shut except for emergency traffic, and
17 that the Battery Tunnel was still open and running for
18 emergency vehicles.

19 I'll tell you. We went into the tunnel. We
20 had the overhead lights on the vehicle on, the regular
21 police lights. We had the headlights on.

1 The tunnel had lights in it about halfway
2 through and then it went dark and it was so dark that
3 even with the police lights and the headlights, you
4 couldn't see past the hood of the vehicle. That was
5 how much soot.

6 We went from 35-40 miles an hour going through
7 the tunnel down to a three, four mile an hour crawl.
8 It was worst than the blackest night on Blackout Drive.

9 And when you came out on the other side, the
10 city was gray. It was -- everything was that same
11 slate colored gray color, like concrete, and it was
12 about an inch or two, three inches in some areas, of
13 fine dust.

14 And if you ever saw anything, any of the
15 movies like "The Day After" or "The Stand," it was that
16 empty, empty nuclear aftermath look. If anybody
17 thought what nuclear fallout would look like, this is
18 what it looked like.

19 It was covered in a gray ash that when you
20 drove through, it looked like cars driving through snow
21 and leaving the tracks.

1 It was littered with paper and dust and no
2 life, no signs of life, except a couple of police
3 officers here and there.

4 As we pulled out of the Battery Tunnel, you
5 could see where the towers were no longer standing, and
6 as you came up onto West Street, you could see the
7 destruction and all the rubble.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** You made a right and you headed
9 up West Street towards -- and what did you see ahead of
10 you?

11 **CPT REILLY:** Well, we came out of the tunnel
12 and you couldn't go right, because the rubble almost
13 came right to where the tunnel was. It was --

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** That's about four or five --

15 **CPT REILLY:** Four or five blocks down.

16 Destroyed cars, blown out windows, burnt out trucks,
17 burnt out fire trucks, the ambulances, and now whatever
18 new equipment was being pulled in.

19 At that point, we still had the doctor and had
20 to get onto 21st Street where the VA Hospital is, and I
21 think it's approximately 21st Street. The exact

1 location I don't know. I can't remember which street
2 it was really.

3 We came out and we made a left-hand turn and
4 started heading toward the FTR Drive to head up north
5 to drop the doctor off and the bags.

6 At that point, there was just cars just left
7 everywhere. No bodies. Just trucks, busses, vending
8 carts just left wherever they were when it happened,
9 middle of the intersections, just like people got out
10 of their car and ran, and it was an eerie feeling.

11 Flashing back to -- going forward a little
12 bit. It wasn't until about Thursday afternoon when we
13 finally realized that you didn't catch it, but there
14 were no animals in the city anymore, because the
15 pigeons started coming back.

16 At that point, we realized, when a bunch of us
17 sitting in Battery Park, planning the next mission for
18 us, we realized where did all the birds come from, and
19 that's when we realized there were no birds in the city
20 anymore and they just started coming back around
21 Thursday.

1 We ran the doctor up to the VA hospital at
2 that point, dropped him off, called back to the
3 battalion on my cell phone, which was very
4 intermittent.

5 At that point, most of the cell phone
6 companies, Verizon and AT&T were down. I had voice
7 stream and I was still getting reception in a few
8 different places.

9 We got back to the armory, talked to the
10 colonel and he said get back here, we got more missions
11 to plan, I need you back here now, and that's when we
12 headed back to the city, back to Staten Island.

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** You took the Brooklyn Battery
14 Tunnel.

15 **CPT REILLY:** We took the Brooklyn Battery
16 Tunnel back. We got back to Staten Island. At that
17 point, we started getting word that they started
18 needing bodies.

19 We were calling the state --

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** Needing who, just anybody?

21 **CPT REILLY:** Anybody.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** For what mission?

2 **CPT REILLY:** Basically, at ground zero, the
3 coordinated effort. They were digging and at that
4 point, there was not really a security mission yet.
5 They were looking for bodies to dig.

6 Personnel. Bodies is probably a bad name, but
7 they were looking for personnel to dig.

8 I got back to Staten Island. We had our
9 meeting. At that point, we had about a 150 other
10 personnel. We had two companies -- three companies
11 upstate, Newburg, Albany, and Hoosick Falls, our three
12 line companies.

13 The Newburg Company was already on its way.
14 They made transportation -- contact for their own
15 transportation and they were on their way down.

16 Their commander, CPT Patrick Kern, he's also
17 an FBI agent. His company were on their way down. We
18 were trying to get down our B and C units, which was
19 Albany and Hoosick Falls, and the state wasn't
20 releasing them.

21 They didn't want to send them down until they

1 had a control number and they got okay through the
2 state. Meanwhile, the battalion commander was ordering
3 his line units to come down.

4 At that time, the battalion XO was at that
5 location, since he works up there, and we were working
6 on getting our companies down here.

7 During the night, at that time, it was getting
8 dark and we were going back and forth, and the state
9 was saying don't go, don't go, you're not allowed to go
10 in.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** And what were you doing
12 specifically?

13 **CPT REILLY:** At that time, we were -- during
14 the night, I was part of the operations cell and we
15 were starting to -- where were we going to go once we
16 got there. We were starting to take calls from the
17 police department and from our own troops in there,
18 relaying what they needed, and we were also trying to
19 coordinate to get the guys that were there all day out
20 at that point and to replace them with fresh --

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** Which means the medics and the

1 generator crew.

2 **CPT REILLY:** Right. At that point, a few of
3 our employees worked for various business. One worked
4 for a pizza company. His boss called up and donated
5 food for that night.

6 I directed the S-4 sergeant, who is a full-
7 time, SFC Mike Tanarello (phonetic,) to start getting
8 us food, because we had to start feeding the troops.

9 At that point, we had another employee,
10 another soldier who was employed by the local Home
11 Depot and they called up and they opened their store to
12 us. We went down and picked up anything and
13 everything.

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** Were you specifically tasked to
15 do that or was that somebody else's mission?

16 **CPT REILLY:** The support platoon leader and
17 the headquarters XO went down with the trucks and
18 loaded up with everything that we needed, shovels,
19 picks, re-breathers, goggles, rope, wheelbarrows,
20 gloves, generators. I mean, just a ton of stuff. They
21 were like very helpful.

1 We loaded up to HEMTTs and eight boarding
2 trucks of stuff to provide supplies.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** So as part of the operations
4 cell, was the -3 [S-3] on location?

5 **CPT REILLY:** No. The -3, at that time, he was
6 at work. He's a Suffolk County police officer. So he
7 was at work, and Suffolk County Police picked up the
8 mission of transporting and escorting blood into the
9 ground zero area.

10 Since he was already at work from the night
11 before, he works the night shift, they held him over
12 there. He had a specific mission. He was running
13 blood back and forth.

14 So he waited until he got relieved that
15 evening and he was on ground late, late Tuesday night.
16 He came straight from work.

17 **MAJ MELNYK:** So you essentially were the OIC
18 in the Ops cell. And what kind of planning did you
19 conduct and what instructions were you given about when
20 you were going to deploy, where you were going to
21 deploy?

1 **CPT REILLY:** We were getting instructions we
2 weren't going to get deployed until the next day. So
3 we bedded down the battalion.

4 We still had sections working getting the
5 stuff ready, loading trucks. This was -- this was real
6 now. Everybody stepped up to the plate and took what
7 they needed.

8 Some of the big things we started doing,
9 because of the scare early that day, we had the medics
10 fill the water right away, all the water buffaloes,
11 checked that they were good, just in case there was any
12 scares with the water system or anything else.

13 The odds were that if we pumped the water
14 right down, there wouldn't be stuff coming down from
15 reservoirs or anything else, and we could check the
16 water and store it, put the guards out. That was the
17 biggest thing, for security.

18 We started checking every vehicle coming in a
19 100 percent ID, by the book. We issued out direct
20 control on Charlie and Delta, the rules and regulations
21 to every checkpoint.

1 Started pulling people by the tons, getting
2 them out.

3 The official word didn't come down through
4 channels until about 8:00 o'clock that night that we
5 were activated.

6 **MAJ MELNYK:** That you were on state active
7 duty.

8 **CPT REILLY:** But long before that, the
9 majority of the unit was there.

10 The next big thing was how are we going to get
11 out of here, where are we going to get busses from. I
12 started making phone calls.

13 I went down that night to the 120, which is
14 where the borough command for the police department is
15 on Staten Island.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** The 120?

17 **CPT REILLY:** Is the precinct.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** The 120th precinct.

19 **CPT REILLY:** Right. They call it the 1-2-0,
20 not really the 120.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** Okay.

1 **CPT REILLY:** And at that point, I met the
2 borough commander and the inspector in charge. At that
3 point, he had no missions for us right there on Staten
4 Island, but he knew we were there.

5 At that point, they also sent police down as a
6 guard at the armory, which, when the police showed up,
7 we're a little redundant at that point, because they
8 showed up with four police officers and we had about 30
9 Guards on station.

10 **MAJ MELNYK:** With -113s.

11 **CPT REILLY:** With -113s, Humvees with mounted
12 .50s and M-16s. It was still up in the air where we
13 were doing and we were trying to find out the
14 coordinated effort and who our next level of command
15 would be for the brigade.

16 We got Troop Command as our guidance, that
17 they were going to take over the operation out of
18 Valhalla, but we couldn't get no COMM with them.

19 There's an EOC for the fire department right
20 around the corner on Slossen Avenue from the armory.
21 Me, the battalion commander, and another individual, I

1 can't remember offhand who else was with us, we went
2 down and made contact with the fire chief in charge of
3 that.

4 They requested protection from us. We sent a
5 -113 over to that area with a few armed guards, because
6 they were given only one cop and a patrol car, and with
7 a big majority of the fire department missing from the
8 accident, they didn't want to start losing anything
9 else, because that was the nearest command post to
10 Manhattan Island right now and they were operating a
11 big section out of there.

12 At that time, we got back. The battalion was
13 bedded down at eleven and we got a call from Valhalla
14 saying that there's a possibility we're going to roll
15 into Manhattan at two in the morning, prepare the
16 troops.

17 At that time, we woke the whole battalion up,
18 got everybody up, was getting ready to leave, we got a
19 call back again around 1:30, saying no, you're going to
20 leave at 5:00 o'clock, roll into Manhattan at five in
21 the morning. We don't want to send you in there in the

1 dark, no one has been there before.

2 At that time, I started making phone calls
3 trying to find busses. Since the bus system wasn't set
4 up in the EOC and the World Trade Center was gone, the
5 dispatcher at the local bus station in Staten Island,
6 the bus depot, gladly sent us busses.

7 And at that time, at about 5:00 o'clock in the
8 morning, we had roughly 45 vehicles and four MTA busses
9 taking 280 troops, roughly, at that time, in the 101
10 CAV into Manhattan.

11 We went up to Verrazano through the Battery
12 Tunnel and every soldier will tell you a different
13 story and his feelings when we came out of that tunnel
14 and what they saw.

15 We came out of the tunnel. We set up at
16 Battery Park. Since we're soldiers, I guess we like
17 dirt just as much as Navy SEALs like water. So we set
18 up in here, built a command post, started operating out
19 of this point.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** How, when you came out of that
21 tunnel, had things changed from that afternoon when you

1 --

2 **CPT REILLY:** Very little. It was --

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** Visibility was just as bad.

4 **CPT REILLY:** Visibility was just as bad. I
5 would say the visibility did not change til about 6:00
6 o'clock or so.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** Six o'clock that morning?

8 **CPT REILLY:** Wednesday night.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** Wednesday night.

10 **CPT REILLY:** Right. It was thick. It was
11 still in the air. It hadn't settled yet. The building
12 was still burning by a ton. And it wasn't that black,
13 black burning smoke. It was an eerie white smoke
14 coming out of it. It wasn't a normal -- like you see a
15 building burning, I'm a police officer, I've been to
16 many house fires, it's black, it's sooty.

17 This was a very white cloud coming out of the
18 World Trade Center.

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** And the streets were stilled
20 filled with the powdery ash of pulverized concrete.

21 **CPT REILLY:** The streets were filled with

1 powdery ash until Friday or Saturday. Starting Friday,
2 New York City Sanitation started hosing down the
3 streets and street sweeping them.

4 By Saturday, a lot of the out-of-perimeter
5 buildings had their maintenance people in here hosing
6 down the streets, hosing down the buildings.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** How was it here in Battery Park?

8 **CPT REILLY:** Battery Park was -- you couldn't
9 see grass. Everything was gray. And on top of all the
10 gray was one complete sheet of papers. Every piece of
11 paper you can imagine, ledgers, checks, photos, printer
12 paper, computer paper, books, calendars.

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** Very different from what it is
14 today. In fact, from what I saw on Sunday, it looks
15 normal now.

16 **CPT REILLY:** Everything, it's back to normal
17 down -- not back to normal, but it looks normal down
18 here now.

19 It is images that everybody that's been here
20 will hold forever. I don't think -- I've seen the TV
21 and I've seen the pictures in the paper and I've seen

1 photo shots of what's gone on here so far, and there is
2 no way that a photo could ever represent what is here.

3 Photos are a thousand words. You need a photo
4 with like a million or two million words in it to show
5 what it was.

6 We came out. We set up in Battery Park. At
7 that point, the dig sites were just packed with
8 volunteers, union workers, firemen, police, rescue
9 workers from all over, National Guardsmen.

10 Once we got down here, with the headquarters
11 in Valhalla, the command and control was the three
12 battalion commanders from the city units that were here
13 from minute one.

14 The show was run at ground zero. There was no
15 time for control numbers and send it up and request
16 missions and all that stuff.

17 This was what people were trained for their
18 entire career in the Guard is what was done.

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** Okay. The formal system was
20 circumvented for --

21 **CPT REILLY:** It had to be. There was no time.

1 We started getting requests and it was things from can
2 you move some equipment here to there, we need some
3 security over there.

4 Wednesday was a pretty hectic day on ground.
5 We had soldiers working in various places. Wherever
6 they needed help, we sent help.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** What were you specifically tasked
8 to do when you got on the ground Wednesday morning?

9 **CPT REILLY:** Wednesday morning, the first
10 thing the battalion commander wanted me to do was find
11 a point of contact to coordinate our effort with either
12 the police or the fire department. And at that time,
13 there was tons of what was left of the fire
14 department's command, chiefs and battalion captains and
15 inspectors and captains from the police department on
16 the ground, on ground zero, but everybody was working
17 their little world of ground zero.

18 And there wasn't a massive coordination,
19 because there just was no EOC down here running it.
20 The state was trying to run it out of Albany and
21 Valhalla and we took up the mission.

1 We had people at the morgue. We started
2 sending more people to the morgue. We had people at
3 the crash site digging. But pretty much the digging
4 effort was overwhelming. There were just too many
5 people at the site. There were thousands upon
6 thousands of people, and only so many people could dig.

7 Our mission really took off the ground around
8 noon on Thursday. Wednesday, we were helping out. All
9 the soldiers were occupied. But by Wednesday night,
10 the police and the battalion commanders come up with a
11 perimeter guard unit.

12 We had an outside perimeter set up on various
13 streets, trying to keep control of who was coming in.
14 But the original guide points were any medical, any
15 police, any fire department, any volunteer. So --

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** Any volunteer.

17 **CPT REILLY:** So pretty much we were out there
18 manning the security perimeter, but anybody was coming
19 through. It wasn't until Thursday that the commanders
20 on site from the police department and fire department
21 started breaking up the area into four parts.

1 By Thursday afternoon, four contractors came
2 in, because of the Union Steelworkers and everything
3 else. The contractor in our area was Tully. It's a
4 huge contractor down here.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** T-u-l-l-y.

6 **CPT REILLY:** T-u-l-l-y. They had the
7 southeast corner of the operation, and that's pretty
8 much where the battalion ended up doing most of the
9 combined effort.

10 We had -- the police and the battalion
11 commanders split the downtown area into two parts, an
12 east and a west side, using Broadway as the line.

13 The 101 CAV had the east side of Broadway
14 perimeter security down Broad, out along Water, up to
15 Chambers and back. The 1st of the 69th [Infantry] had
16 the left side all the way to west side, West Street and
17 Battery Park City.

18 At night, the 258th [1st Battalion, 258th Field
19 Artillery] had the whole thing, since they had more
20 people on the ground at the time.

21 Thursday afternoon, I was stopped by Inspector

1 Ruffle, me and the S-3 were going down to coordinate an
2 effort for us, where can we send people and personnel
3 to do work. We still had some extra personnel
4 available. And Inspector Ruffle, from the New York
5 City Police Department, stopped us and said I can't --
6 I need to get control of this area down here, we have
7 too many people on top of the rubble.

8 At that time, Tully started bringing in cranes
9 and a lot of -- they brought in, I don't know how many
10 tons it is, but it's about one of those nine piece
11 cranes, where they just keep bringing pieces in on
12 tractor-trailers to set up.

13 And there was no room to set up the trailers
14 with the personnel. I told him, yeah, I can move all
15 the people, give me a half hour, and I'll be back.

16 If you look at a map, from where the rubble
17 laid, the rubble was right in front of Liberty Street,
18 in front of Firehouse 1010, and that's where the fire
19 department was operating out of.

20 Right here. Right where Building 4 used to
21 be, the south tower was laying on top of it, and that

1 was the area we were operating out of.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** And who exactly was there?

3 **CPT REILLY:** It was Chief Hill and Inspector
4 Ruffle, and with me was MAJ Mallon (phonetic,) the S-3.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** The S-3.

6 **CPT REILLY:** We were stopped by Inspector
7 Ruffle, can you move all these people out so we can
8 start getting a coordinated work effort.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** And what does he mean by all
10 these people? Is he talking National Guard people or
11 was he talking --

12 **CPT REILLY:** There was police from every
13 agency possible, fire department from every agency,
14 volunteer cops from NYPD, volunteer fire, off-duty
15 firefighters from the New York Fire Department.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** He needed the military to clear
17 out all these volunteers so the crane could be set up.

18 **CPT REILLY:** Clear out everybody, set up the
19 crane, and get it under control, work thing.

20 Chief Hill at the time that was there only
21 wanted New York City Fire Department at that location

1 right now, so he could get control of what was going
2 on.

3 Looking at it, you could stand there and the
4 personnel, the rescue workers ran from the rubble line
5 right in front of 1010 all the way back to Liberty and
6 Broadway. It was approximately two to three thousand
7 volunteers in the area.

8 I went back to the battalion down to Battery
9 Park. At that time, the only people that we didn't
10 have that were being employed was our scout and mortar
11 platoon, which was approximately, at that time, about
12 25 personnel.

13 I told them we have a mission, we have to move
14 out and set up a security mission.

15 We went back to the scene. The support
16 platoon leader got his platoon.

17 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yeah.

18 **CPT REILLY:** Got his platoon in formation in a
19 column of twos and marched through the crowd. Just as
20 you see mounted police at a crowd control scene, the
21 crowd just opened up as they marched in.

1 They went to the rubble line, went on line, 20
2 soldiers wide.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** And what street is this on?

4 **CPT REILLY:** This was right on Liberty and
5 Church, in front of the debris. I gave the order to
6 forward march, move out, and in 15 minutes, we moved
7 every single body back to a security line of one block
8 out from the rubble.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** So along Broadway and --

10 **CPT REILLY:** Along Broadway and --

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** One block down from --

12 **CPT REILLY:** The actual line that we created
13 that time was Broadway from --

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** This is Liberty.

15 **CPT REILLY:** Right. From Church and Liberty,
16 all the way to Broadway, all the way up to Day and
17 Broadway. So down and around.

18 At that point, they were able to start
19 securing the equipment.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** So with 26 men, you were able to
21 get the crowd to back off. I imagine the crowd was

1 fairly cooperative.

2 **CPT REILLY:** The crowd was fairly cooperative.

3 They all wanted to stay there. They're like, well,
4 we're here to volunteer. As we were moving, I was
5 explaining to the crowd this is by order of the police
6 chief and the fire chief, we need to get the area
7 cleared to build a crane and move the equipment in, we
8 will let the volunteers back in an orderly manner.

9 At that point, we pulled up -- we moved them
10 out to that line and that's where the main mission of a
11 good section of the headquarters troop of 101 CAV,
12 which I ran for the next three days, was out of that
13 area.

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** Keeping volunteers out.

15 **CPT REILLY:** Keeping -- not keeping volunteers
16 out, but coordinating that area so the volunteers could
17 work.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** So that kind of riot control
19 training that you would have had, civil defense
20 training, came --

21 **CPT REILLY:** Actually came in handy.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** -- in play.

2 **CPT REILLY:** It came in play very much. At
3 that point, I started requesting barricade material
4 from the police department. A day later, the barricade
5 showed up. After that, they started bringing in the
6 fence, where now you could see downtown New York is
7 fenced in.

8 The other thing is we had everybody wanting to
9 come in with their police cars and everything else and
10 park as close as possible, so they didn't have to work.

11 We stopped and we controlled all the vehicles.

12 We started ID'ing who were the construction
13 workers in there. By Friday morning, the union worker
14 effort became a union job. Tully had that area. The
15 only union workers allowed in there were union workers
16 working for Tully.

17 **MAJ MELNYK:** In the southeast corner.

18 **CPT REILLY:** In the southeast corner. The
19 other corners had four different other companies
20 working there and it was all union show at that point.

21 Basically, because you can't have a ton of

1 people just running up on the pile of debris and
2 working as a hundred different armies. This has to be
3 attacked tactically and the fire department now had
4 control of the attack on the crash site, and the police
5 were in charge of the security.

6 **MAJ MELNYK:** How did your mission change at
7 that point? Were you still located at the pile site
8 coordinating that?

9 **CPT REILLY:** We were at the pile site from
10 Thursday to 1800 Saturday afternoon, when we were
11 relieved by the 204th Engineers.

12 From the time we were there, we controlled all
13 the vehicle movement in and out. We controlled all the
14 check points, who was coming and going.

15 Every time too many volunteers built up, we
16 moved them back.

17 As the operation got more and more controlled
18 and we brought more and more cranes in, we needed more
19 and more room to operate.

20 People from NTSB, FBI, ATF were coming in
21 looking for property to set up various different

1 equipment and sites for their own people on the
2 personnel ground. We were controlling the real estate
3 for that.

4 We were making areas, saying this is their
5 area, this is this person's area.

6 We controlled -- the biggest effort and one of
7 the greatest missions that we had was there's this
8 person, all I know is his name is Jay, from the Mayor's
9 office that was running supplies in and out. If we
10 needed something, Jay got it.

11 I told him I needed six generators, because we
12 started opening up stores in the area and cleaning them
13 out. We opened up an area for the firemen to eat. We
14 opened up an area for them to provide a place to store
15 their equipment.

16 We opened a triage building. There was a Thai
17 food restaurant there that was just stinking of the
18 food rotting in there that we had to open up and clean
19 out.

20 Whatever we needed, generators, light sets,
21 this person, Jay, got it.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** And you were the primary
2 interface for the battalion for that.

3 **CPT REILLY:** For the battalion there.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** So you worked with police, fire,
5 the Mayor's office. Anybody else?

6 **CPT REILLY:** The key to that was that we were
7 the static steady command there. Every 12 hours or
8 every eight or six or so, the police and the fire
9 leadership was rotating. We were always there.

10 So when the new police commander and new fire
11 commander came in, we were the standard that -- I was
12 able to brief them and say, look, this is what we've
13 been doing for the last 12, 24, 36, 48 hours. These
14 are the key players.

15 And the biggest thing was the fire chief
16 needed the line moved back, he needed an area to put a
17 crane. The National Guard was able, I could send three
18 guys, okay, clear this area, we're putting a crane in
19 here, clear this area, we're putting a dumpster in here
20 for evidence parts, clear this area, the NTSB is
21 setting up their equipment.

1 It was just an amazing, amazing operation. We
2 had vendors coming in. Once we set up the security, we
3 knew which vendors were bringing in food.

4 At one point, they were saying we only wanted
5 food from certain people. We didn't know who was
6 handing out food, the scare started going around like
7 where's the food coming from, is it secured food.

8 At that point, by us always being there, we
9 were able to control that the same one or two vendors
10 bringing food and dropping it off.

11 We opened up the Burger King on the corner
12 there, was the first food site, and there was a group
13 of volunteers there that was acting wonderful,
14 supplying tons of food.

15 One of the best scenes, and I don't know if
16 anybody had a picture of it, but McDonald's came down
17 and donated a thousand hamburgers and chicken nuggets
18 and --

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** They're still doing it.

20 **CPT REILLY:** And you had ConEd workers handing
21 out McDonald's out of a Burger King, and it just shows

1 you that in a time of need, how many people come
2 together and what's going on.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** How long did you continue working
4 down there? Are you still working at that location?

5 **CPT REILLY:** We ended the operation 1800 on
6 Friday -- on Saturday night. We rolled over to the
7 204th and we came down and we now picked up Zone two
8 outside perimeter.

9 At that point, being there from -- soldiers
10 being there from Tuesday afternoon til Wednesday
11 morning, all the way to Friday 1800, it was a toll.

12 It's not your normal -- you know, you take
13 guys to AT, you take them to the field.

14 (Tape change.)

15 **MAJ MELNYK:** Continuing our interview with CPT
16 Kevin Reilly.

17 You were comparing how this was different from
18 previous natural disasters.

19 **CPT REILLY:** Right. Comparing it to like
20 Mechanicsville, as I was saying, we went there, we knew
21 it was going to be 11 days, we had a defined goal, go

1 down there, clean up the town, and move out.

2 Here, we have personnel that were in the
3 building when the building came down. We have
4 personnel that have a lot of family members and persons
5 that they know that died or are trapped in that
6 building right now, and just the amount of devastation
7 is beyond belief.

8 The biggest stress is for those first three,
9 four days and possibly it could have been Sunday at
10 1800, everybody has lost track of dates and times.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yeah.

12 **CPT REILLY:** The bells. In the crash zone, or
13 ground zero, as it's called here, three honks on a horn
14 or one long whistle meant the building or there was a
15 collapse going on. That was the big scare and two to
16 three times a day, having the whole place clear out
17 because of someone thinking a building was coming down
18 or one small part coming off, takes a toll on people.

19 You're working in the area that if the city
20 was going to use a crane that big, there wouldn't be no
21 one within blocks of it. You have buildings with every

1 window blown out and shards of glass hanging, and
2 people are working right underneath it, because there
3 is no option.

4 There was one point, someone from, I think,
5 one of the brigades said, you know, make sure you have
6 your soldiers do a risk assessment management card, and
7 I just thought to myself, and mitigate what?, just
8 circle, write extremely dangerous, possible death on
9 the thing, and let's just hand it in.

10 It's to the point that --

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** And this was coming down from
12 where?

13 **CPT REILLY:** This was coming down through
14 Troop Command and one of the first days we got word,
15 make sure you do a risk assessment on all the missions.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** They didn't have eyes on the
17 location.

18 **CPT REILLY:** Eyes on the location, no. A
19 couple of the big scares was a building called the
20 Millennium Hilton and One Liberty Plaza, both of which,
21 for days, everybody thought was going to come down.

1 The face of both buildings are hit pretty good and they
2 were right where everybody is working.

3 If you look at One Liberty Plaza and you look
4 at it still today, it's always like that. It's got an
5 optical illusion that looks like the whole side is
6 warped and bowed out by about a good five degrees.

7 It was checked numerous times and everybody
8 said it was safe, but still every time someone new
9 would come in there and see it, they would be worried
10 and nervous it was coming down.

11 While I was there, we personally had at least
12 three or four entire evacuations of the area. And some
13 of them just started by one person going from one area
14 to the other and deciding to run. All it took was one
15 person starting to run.

16 Everybody would look at them, look up, and the
17 next thing you know, the place would empty out like a
18 light being turned on in a bathroom full of roaches.
19 They just ran.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** A true New York City analogy.

21 **CPT REILLY:** True New York City analogy. And

1 it would just -- and the people would run to the water
2 and it would take hours to find people to get back.

3 The latest, the last scare, which had a good
4 intent, DEC came in --

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** DEC is?

6 **CPT REILLY:** Department of Environmental
7 Conservation. They're the ones that are checking the
8 air quality constantly.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

10 **CPT REILLY:** And the ground ability. They had
11 the idea to come in and start vacuuming up some of the
12 dust inside ground zero.

13 They had two big vacuum trucks. I said sure,
14 we made room for them, we moved vehicles around so they
15 could come in and start vacuuming.

16 Well, they forgot to tell us that when they
17 crank these things up, it makes an evil hiss. It would
18 wind up and made a hiss. The pigeons were back by that
19 time. The pigeons took off.

20 Every volunteer there looked up at One Liberty
21 Plaza and ran, and they ran and ran, and when you see

1 people run, the fear of death are on their faces. They
2 run like there is no running anymore.

3 At that point, they took off. Also, during
4 this time period, for better security ability, going
5 back, Wednesday afternoon, -- Wednesday night it was, I
6 coordinated with the people at the ferry terminal. We
7 took over the second floor of the ferry terminal.

8 There was a triage center there. At that
9 point, unfortunately -- and this is a big thing that's
10 hitting a lot of people -- the casualties were not the
11 numbers people were expecting. Even the people in the
12 tower that was being recovered was not the numbers.

13 We had triage facilities all over the place
14 down here and the injured just never came.

15 They shut down the triage facility on the
16 second floor of the terminal. We took it over.

17 **MAJ MELNYK:** What did you do with it?

18 **CPT REILLY:** We moved our operation to that
19 area. We set up our command post. Our TOC was in
20 there. We set up a 254 [antenna] up there for
21 communication. We were staging these troops out of

1 there when they were coming back in between missions.
2 That was someplace for them to rest. Since we were
3 moving back and forth to Staten Island by ferry every
4 night and every morning.

5 At that point, we were operating around the
6 clock, also, so it was a secure facility. Rain was
7 forecasted and it rained that day. I believe it rained
8 Thursday.

9 So this way -- we had no tents in here yet.
10 We didn't know what we were really going to set up in
11 Battery Park, because we were commuting back and forth
12 to Staten Island.

13 The soldiers were either sleeping in Staten
14 Island or they were on guard posts or working in ground
15 zero.

16 So there was no sense to bring in a huge
17 operation like that to set up tents and everything
18 else.

19 Now, as the mission extended, we're starting
20 moving several tents, mostly for the night personnel to
21 rotate through and get a couple hours sleep, that were

1 working the night shift.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** So the majority of the battalion
3 is rotating back.

4 **CPT REILLY:** Yes.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** To the armory. But you still --
6 are you rotating back, also? Are you staying to
7 assist?

8 **CPT REILLY:** Me personally, no. I'm staying
9 out here. I'm working -- after I got done with the
10 ground zero mission, which I was personally in charge
11 of, which went from scout platoon, with 20-something
12 people, to one of our companies, and it was funny. It
13 was Friday. I had my scout platoon and a company of
14 our soldiers, which came out to about 60 personnel, and
15 a unit was just coming through, and it looked like this
16 lieutenant brought his unit down.

17 It was from another National Guard unit, I
18 can't even remember what unit it was from, the number.

19 He was coming through and he had this mob of soldiers
20 -- not a mob, but a group of soldiers, about 25-30, and
21 I said what are you doing, lieutenant, and he said, oh,

1 we came down to see what ground zero looked like.

2 I said, well, now you're working. Get your
3 men in formation. I have three points for you to take
4 over and help us, so we didn't have to stretch so
5 skinny.

6 So we confiscated that unit and put them on
7 the line and started working them.

8 There is no tourism. There is no -- that was
9 one of the lines and Inspector Ruffle thought it was a
10 good analogy. He didn't -- he came down with the word
11 that they didn't want police officers in there that
12 weren't working. They didn't want all these people
13 coming down and every boss and every officer that was
14 in the area, everybody wanted to see what it looked
15 like.

16 So I'd walk up to individuals and say,
17 especially bosses from the PD, and I'd be like, you
18 know, are you here to work, because I'm looking for a
19 white shirt, which is a boss in the PD, a sergeant,
20 lieutenant, to coordinate some of you here for tourism.

21 He's like, oh, no, no, I'm not working here.

1 I'm like, oh, so you're here as a tourist, and he's
2 like, yeah, I'm just looking. I said, look, the orders
3 out you need to move along, we're keeping the area
4 clear.

5 What happened was, there's only so many roads
6 in there to get in and out. Now we've started bringing
7 in 18-wheelers and dump trucks and we needed a smooth
8 operation, come in, have the steel beams and the dirt
9 and the debris put in the trucks and moved out.

10 We couldn't have people just standing in the
11 middle of the roads. There was an area where the
12 workers were and there was an area that was clear.

13 And as this has evolved, if you go down there
14 now, which we're at, it's day plus nine or eight, there
15 is a 100 percent secure facility perimeter around it,
16 manned by National Guard and Army -- National Guard and
17 police and there is an actual checkpoint where they're
18 funneling people through, so that way the equipment can
19 move around and get in.

20 You're talking a lot of heavy, heavy beams and
21 equipment and a lot of rubble damage that you have to

1 clear out.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** What kind of progress have you
3 seen made since you started?

4 **CPT REILLY:** The progress outside of ground
5 zero has been a 1,000 percent. The abandoned vehicles
6 have been cleaned up. Ninety percent, 99 percent of
7 the dust and paper have been cleaned and gone.

8 If you walk around lower Manhattan, as Mayor
9 Rudy Giuliani said, lower Manhattan will open on
10 Monday, and it was ready to open.

11 It was a huge effort by the sanitation
12 department and the city to get it clean. That was
13 their show, and they cleaned it.

14 Inside ground zero, it was amazing. Within 24
15 to 36 hours, 90 percent of the vehicles that were
16 crushed and destroyed by the debris on Church, Liberty,
17 West Street, Rector. In front of World Financial
18 Plaza, it was towed out and moved out.

19 Some of the most disturbing scenes that you
20 could see was that the fire engine and ladder companies
21 that lost entire companies and their vehicles were

1 destroyed. The members of those companies that were
2 left were down there towing, driving, getting however
3 they could their engines out of there. It was like --
4 it was amazing.

5 You'd see an engine, like Engine 3 was one
6 that stood in my mind, and it was -- the front was
7 blown out and filled with debris and soot, not a single
8 windshield on it, the back was singed and burnt, the
9 hoses were burnt, tires were flat, and the personnel
10 wearing Engine 3 hats, which must have been other
11 firemen from that company that came down, were trying -
12 -

13 And I asked one of them, what are you doing
14 with this engine, are you towing it to the repair
15 facility, they said, no, we're bringing it back to our
16 engine house.

17 And they were getting in, goggles and a cloth
18 around their face, and the guy was sitting there on top
19 of the debris, got the engine running, and off they
20 went with their flat tires to drive it back to the
21 engine house.

1 They were collecting the equipment that they
2 could.

3 You know, this is -- those trucks and those
4 engines and the ladders, to them, is of a ship to a
5 captain. That's their ship. You know, they want to
6 take it back.

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** Were there any soldiers who work
8 for you or that you observed that what they did stood
9 out, in your mind?

10 **CPT REILLY:** I would say every single one of
11 them was -- I don't think there's one that didn't stand
12 out. Some of the ones, SGT Ruffo, at the very
13 beginning, he took up --

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** Ruffo is?

15 **CPT REILLY:** R-u-f-f-o. He's a sergeant in
16 the medical platoon. He was down there at ground zero
17 hours after it happened with the medical unit section
18 that we sent.

19 Those medical personnel probably have seen
20 things that no one will have ever seen.

21 I have been to a lot of -- I have seen fatals.

1 I have seen people who have died in car accidents. I
2 have seen people injured in car accidents. I've seen
3 people injured in fights, as a police officer. But
4 what I have seen here is no comparison.

5 You just cannot explain or realize what is
6 going on.

7 Personally, I don't think the overall has
8 affected -- has touched everybody or everybody's really
9 thought about what went on yet, because they've been so
10 busy.

11 I have been busy like around the clock, up
12 until that Sunday that we moved out, if it was Sunday
13 or Saturday at 1800. That night was the first time
14 that I got a break and started thinking about what went
15 on, and me personally, besides me being here, my wife
16 has been working 12 hour tours with the police
17 department and she's been down here.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** She's come down on --

19 **CPT REILLY:** And at her precinct. And she's
20 been going back and forth to the house, so my kids have
21 seen her. I haven't seen -- you know, I haven't had a

1 chance to go home.

2 I've seen her once or twice down here. I've
3 gone up at night to see where she's been working.

4 But it's -- you don't realize it and at that
5 time, when you start seeing her and I start thinking
6 about my kids, you realize that you never know.

7 There's 5,000 people in there and you start
8 reading the newspaper and the people on the airlines
9 leaving those voicemails and talking to people, you
10 never realize now in this new world we live in when is
11 the last time you're going to see someone or the last
12 time you're going to do something.

13 I think, if anything, definitely, the soldiers
14 here realize there's a special meaning. You never
15 know, you know, that goodbye is now something. No one
16 ever thought, oh, if I go to work, I'm not coming home,
17 you know, not in this degree and size.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** Has this incident changed you or
19 your view of being in the National Guard, your opinion
20 about your battalion, your attitude towards the
21 military?

1 **CPT REILLY:** I --

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** How do you feel now?

3 **CPT REILLY:** I have been in the military 15
4 years now, in the Guard and I've always been in the
5 Guard, and we felt -- and a lot of people in our
6 battalion felt shortchanged because we didn't get a
7 chance to go to Storm, just because of the shortness
8 and the rotation, because we're a National Guard combat
9 unit, and the politics that play into that.

10 We are now -- on the sad side, we are part of
11 probably the -- of the worst incident in American
12 history, but we were able to make a difference. Every
13 one of these soldiers here knows that they made a
14 difference by being here.

15 We don't have soldiers worrying -- you know,
16 soldiers are worrying about, you know, their families
17 at home, but no one is saying I got to leave, no one is
18 saying I don't want to be here.

19 All the training and warfighters and battalion
20 and brigade scenarios we've done and all these 50 and
21 60 and 70 page OP order -- there was no OP order, there

1 was no printing, no computers, and maybe it's that
2 training that we've done so much and we've done it the
3 long way, that now we've come out here and we've
4 operated without that and everything has been verbal,
5 and maybe that's what all the training was.

6 But I've always thought to myself, and I've
7 said it to personnel, that when it comes time for war,
8 where are we going to find all this time and hours to
9 write all these beautiful OP orders, with no changes
10 and to be determined and this is the location.

11 This is it. We came here. These soldiers
12 knew their job. Sergeants acted like sergeants.
13 Lieutenants did lieutenant work. Specialists stepped
14 up as specialists, and it really shined.

15 Soldiers that, you know, you were always like,
16 well, you know, he doesn't really have the leadership
17 qualities or, you know, whoever made him a sergeant,
18 they stepped up to the plate and they did their jobs.

19 No one ever said they were tired, no one ever
20 said, you know, I don't want to be here. The turnout,
21 the strength, the amount of people that came without

1 even calling, because the phones were down, men and
2 women of the 101 CAV knew the Twin Towers were hit by
3 two airplanes, the Pentagon was hit by a plane, I need
4 to go, and they came and they came fast and they came
5 in droves.

6 The same thing with the other battalions in
7 downstate New York. The 258th Field Artillery out of
8 Jamaica, the 1-69th out of Manhattan, these are the
9 three battalions of people and everybody in these
10 battalions knew people here.

11 Some of the battalions lost soldiers in there
12 or have soldiers missing.

13 The only thing that I, as a lesson learned,
14 the battalions were here on the ground. The
15 headquarters were here on the ground. The brigade
16 needed to be here from day one.

17 **MAJ MELNYK:** Third Brigade, 42nd Division.

18 **CPT REILLY:** Third Brigade. You have these
19 brigade elements, bring our own headquarters here.
20 Don't assign us to Troop Command, don't have Troop
21 Command operating out of Valhalla. We couldn't get

1 communications with them. The phones were down. We
2 don't -- the radios don't work.

3 This is a lesson learned. The Guard, for
4 emergencies like this, we need to go back into the
5 worst case what-if. Give us an ammunition storage,
6 like there used to be. We don't know what's going to
7 happen anymore. This is a new world.

8 Give us the MOPP suits. Give us a war stock
9 of MOPP suits and say these are the ones. Give us
10 service filters. This is the stuff.

11 Give us a plan, a national emergency plan,
12 like what we are doing, where is the command, what is
13 the responsibilities.

14 You know, we're at day eight and the brigade,
15 Aviation Brigade now took over and moved here, but
16 we're maneuver units and we don't normally work with
17 the Aviation Brigade.

18 So now you're -- on a disaster like this,
19 you're trying to OPCON people to people you have never
20 worked with.

21 WE know who all the key players are in the

1 other battalions. If I need something done in another
2 battalion, I know who to go to. You know, I don't have
3 to go up to that battalion commander or that S-3 and
4 introduce him and tell him what I can do or what I have
5 and let's talk.

6 I can walk up there and say, "Hey, colonel,
7 what's going on," and "Hey, Kevin, how you doing. What
8 do we got to do here."

9 It's what the Guard is based on. The Guard's
10 ability and its advantage, from only drilling 39 days a
11 year, is that the continuity and the comradery is long-
12 term. The people that I am now -- the command staff of
13 the 101 CAV, the colonel, the S-3, the company
14 commanders, the staff, we were all lieutenants together
15 ten years ago, twelve years ago. We've known each
16 other for years. We know how we think, we know how we
17 act.

18 That compensates for the 39 days a year
19 drilling and that's what this shows. This shows that
20 the National Guard is a viable arm of the entire Army
21 as a whole.

1 That's some of the things that, you know,
2 lessons learned and we -- how do you tell us we're here
3 on ThreatCon Charlie or ThreatCon Delta, but don't
4 bring weapons? Where is force protection? That is one
5 of the major issues, and you can't hide behind it. You
6 can't be a political game.

7 Right now, we have 405 soldiers on the ground
8 and no way to defend ourselves. The only way we -- the
9 only defense we have is the corrections, the police,
10 and the court officers that are working here, that are
11 still armed because they're allowed to be, because
12 they're law enforcement and officers of the state.

13 What is their answer going to be if we turn
14 around and four soldiers are found dead after a night
15 operation because some terrorist came in and decided to
16 slice their throats and steal their vehicle? And the
17 reality is they're out here.

18 They're running around still and, you know,
19 whether it's rumors or real, this is reality. If we're
20 here -- I've had police officers come up to me,
21 firemen, volunteers, and regular civilians, why are you

1 not armed, I thought you're here to protect us?

2 And the politicians might be thinking, well,
3 we don't want to portray that occupation force. Well,
4 you know what? When we rolled over that bridge and
5 came through that tunnel on Monday and we were all over
6 CNN and the newspapers and everything else, the people
7 were like thank God, the military is here, the National
8 Guard is here. All this money, time and energy
9 invested in it is coming to the city and we're here to
10 protect it.

11 It's not that we're here as an occupying
12 force. We're here to protect it. You know, that
13 cutter sitting off of Battery Park is not sitting there
14 with empty guns and an empty 105 millimeter cannon on
15 its front deck. Why do we put our own, more New
16 Yorkers, more New Yorkers, New York City personnel,
17 soldiers, citizen soldiers in harm's way now because
18 they cannot defend themselves if something happens.

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** That sums it up pretty well, but
20 I want to give you an opportunity, if you've got
21 anything else you want to put out before we finish up.

1 **CPT REILLY:** No. The only thing I can say is
2 the volunteers have been great. The battalion
3 commanders have been great. The soldiers have been
4 great.

5 You've heard, you know, they've called
6 Vietnam, you know, a lieutenants' war or a captains'
7 war, because everything was small unit. Well, those
8 first four or five days here, this was a captain and
9 battalion commander's job. The battalion commanders
10 ran the show. If anything, the three battalion
11 commanders are earning their money. That is, between
12 LTC C. ... LTC Castigliola, LTC Candiano, and LTC Slack,
13 they -- them and the New Yorkers that belong to these
14 units, they were here when the city needed them the
15 most, and that's about it.

16 From the security missions to the people and
17 through stage stations to the morgue, to working in
18 ground zero, it's an experience that I don't think
19 anybody will ever forget, and everyone here is a hero.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** I appreciate that, CPT Reilly.
21 Thank you very much.

1 (The interview was concluded.)

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