

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
Historical Services Branch

Interview NGB-07

INTERVIEW OF

MAJ ERIC DURR
Executive Officer
1st Battalion, 101st CAV

CONDUCTED BY

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National Guard Bureau

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Containing corrections to transcript submitted by MAJ
Durr, 24 January 2002. Editorial clarifications are
included in brackets []

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

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

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

4 Today is the 19th of September 2001, and I am
5 interviewing MAJ Eric Durr. That is D-u-r-r. He is
6 the Executive Officer in the 1st Squadron of the 101st
7 Cavalry, which is headquartered in Staten Island.

8 MAJ Durr, could you begin by briefly
9 describing where you live, what you do in your civilian
10 occupation, brief details of your military career?

11 **MAJ DURR:** Okay. I live outside Albany, New
12 York, in a suburb called Wynantskill, W-y-n-a-n-t-s-k-
13 i-l-l.

14 Currently, I am the Communications Director
15 for the Independent Power Producers of New York. It's
16 a trade association.

17 I have been in the Army for 21 years. I
18 served four years on active duty. I was a tank platoon
19 leader with the 2nd Battalion, 64th Armor. I was a
20 public affairs officer for the Schweinfurt military
21 community while on active duty.

22 I went to -- I became a Department of Army

1 civilian for a year and a half in Germany, after
2 leaving active duty in 1984. During that period, I was
3 enrolled in the 3747th USAR School for my advanced
4 course.

5
6 On return to the United States in 1996, I
7 joined the 479th Engineers, a Reserve unit,
8 headquartered in Watertown, New York, moving to the
9 Albany area in 1988. I joined the 1st Battalion, 210th
10 Armor. I commanded a tank company there, as well as
11 their headquarters company.

12 When that unit was disbanded, I joined the
13 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters as Public Affairs
14 Officer for two years.

15 I then served as an Assistant G-3, as the TOC
16 Operations Officer for about a year, and I spent three
17 years as the Deputy G-3 Plans for the 42nd Infantry
18 Division, going through division war fighter, corps war
19 fighter, that kind of thing.

20 Since March of 2000, I have been the Executive
21 Officer of the 101 CAV.

22 **MAJ MELNYK:** But given that your location is

1 in Upstate New York, you've traditionally -- you are
2 separated from the --

3 **MAJ DURR:** Right.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** -- headquarters by us.

5 **MAJ DURR:** We have -- the 101 CAV was
6 basically reorganized in 1993, as the National Guard
7 downsized.

8 The squadron -- the CAV, which had had a
9 squadron in -- a squadron on Staten Island and an
10 aviation squadron in Rochester and some other upstate
11 units, was reorganized.

12 Line companies that had previously been part
13 of the 1st Battalion, 210 Armor were assigned to the
14 101 CAV.

15 Anyway, the battalion has three companies that
16 go up the Hudson Valley. There is our Delta Company in
17 Newburg and our Bravo and Charlie Companies in Troy,
18 New York, and Hoosick Falls, New York, a small town
19 near the Vermont border, respectively.

20 So we have this division, what we normally
21 sort of refer to as the downstate units and the upstate
22 units, with Delta Company sort of neutral ground, and

1 there have been, at times past, sort of culture clashes
2 between the two elements of the battalion.

3 The upstaters came from a different unit and I
4 think the sort of 210th versus 101 thing that was there
5 for a while has started to vanish as time has gone by.

6 But there's still a sort of a difference of
7 the way people think between people who live in the
8 Albany area and those from New York City.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** If you would, take it now to the
10 events on the morning of September 11. How did you
11 find out about the attack and what were your first
12 thoughts and your first actions?

13 **MAJ DURR:** On the morning of September 11, I
14 came to work. It was just a little bit after 9:00
15 o'clock. I was getting in a little late. Normally, I
16 was in at 8:30.

17 I opened the door and the secretary at the
18 office was just hanging up the phone, saying that our
19 member company in the Brooklyn Navy Yard had called and
20 that some airplane had hit the World Trade Center.

21 She turned on the television in the office and
22 we were all watching. My initial thought was that this

1 was a freak accident, like the B-25 that hit the Empire
2 State Building.

3 So my initial reaction was, okay, I'm going to
4 call the armory and let them know I'm here, because we
5 may be needed for something.

6 So I tried to get through to the armory and at
7 that time, it was -- the phone lines were very busy.
8 So I stopped trying to call.

9 I went back and watched the television. At
10 that point, you know, shortly after 9:00 o'clock, those
11 of us watching TV watched the second jet fly into the
12 other tower. At that point, instantly, you know, it
13 hit me. I knew this was not an accident. This was an
14 attack. Somebody had done this deliberately.

15 I called the armory again, tried several
16 different extensions. I got the -- eventually I got
17 through to SSG Koch, the Headquarters Company Admin
18 Sergeant. I informed him that I had seen what was on
19 the TV. I assumed we might be mobilized. I gave him
20 my office number again, told him to let CPT Willis, the
21 full-time S-1, know that I was there, and I was
22 standing by the phone.

1 And I hung up and he said, yeah, you know, he
2 -- they had realized something was going on, as well.
3 Later on, you know, watching the news, the situation
4 progressed.

5 I tried calling the armory again to hear if we
6 had anymore word. I did not get through.

7 So I called the 42nd Infantry Division
8 Headquarters in Troy, where I had been stationed for
9 many years. I knew people there. I spoke to the
10 Operations Sergeant, said what are we hearing, what's
11 going on.

12 He said, you know, we know something has
13 happened. We have been told to be on standby, but
14 nothing yet.

15 So at that point, I called the armory. I got
16 through to CPT Willis and I relayed that information to
17 him, to pass on to the battalion commander, who I
18 understood was stuck in traffic trying to get into the
19 armory.

20 I told him, you know, this is what I have
21 learned so far, we're in a standby mode and I will try
22 to keep you informed.

1 As the events of the morning progressed, I
2 became convinced that we were going to be called up,
3 just listening to the TV, and I drove over to -- I
4 drove over to my house and -- which is about five
5 minutes away from the armory in Troy. I packed a
6 duffel bag of uniforms and stuff, threw it in the car,
7 and I went to the armory in Troy, went into the
8 operations section and announced that I was here, that,
9 you know, I was available if they needed me, because I
10 knew most of the division staff was at Leavenworth,
11 Kansas, at the war fighter seminar.

12 Normally, the 42nd stands up an EOC when
13 something like this happens and I knew they would be
14 needing officers. So I went in to volunteer my
15 services, saying, you know, because the last time there
16 had been a major National Guard event, the state had
17 tasked to organize geographically.

18 Downstate units had fallen under the 53rd
19 Troop Command, mid-state units had come under the 42nd,
20 and I was thinking that they might not call up the
21 upstate elements of the 101 CVA.

22 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

1 **MAJ DURR:** That they would just simply take
2 what was in Staten Island and maybe Newburg.

3 And at that time, I was still thinking it was
4 limited response. I mean, I called in after I saw the
5 building collapse, but I still wasn't sure of the
6 response.

7 So I went to the division headquarters, said,
8 you know, I know something is going on, I'm here,
9 again, left messages, went back to my office.

10 They called and said we're still on standby.
11 We will need somebody to man the EOC tonight, are you
12 available. I said yes, I was, I would be there.

13 I went out of the office momentarily to run a
14 quick errand. When I got back, I was informed somebody
15 had called for MAJ Durr. Tried to call back again. It
16 turned out to have been the master sergeant at the Troy
17 Armory, who was telling me that there was no need for
18 me to volunteer to come in on standby because the
19 entire Guard was being mobilized and undoubtedly I was
20 going to be going down to Staten Island.

21 Also, during one of my visits to the armory, I
22 touched base with our B Company there, which is located

1 there, and talked to 1ST Willsey (phonetic,) a full-
2 time employee, and told him I might need to go down to
3 the armory, I would need a vehicle, asked if he -- the
4 guys had been calling in. He informed me that people
5 had been checking in.

6 At this time, it was probably about 1:00
7 o'clock in the afternoon and I -- or 1:30. I left my
8 business. I went to my house. I told my wife we had
9 been mobilized. My wife is a member of the Army
10 Reserve, so she understood.

11 I went to the armory and I got there probably
12 about 2:45 and sort of established a 101 Battalion
13 North. We had very spotty communication with the
14 colonel in Staten Island.

15

16 Phones were down. You know, I was trying to
17 call him to get some direction, what do you want me to
18 do. So my initial reaction was to get telephonic
19 communication with the units in Hoosick Falls and
20 Newburg, figuring the lines were down into New York
21 City and we could at least talk among the three of us
22 and coordinate a response.

1 I spoke to the C Company commander. I spoke
2 to the lieutenant of C Company, the Bravo Company first
3 sergeant was in.

4 The soldiers were -- they had put out the
5 alert calls. The soldiers were coming in. We talked -
6 -

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** How did you find out about the
8 alert calls?

9 **MAJ DURR:** My alert call basically came when
10 the EOC operations sergeant called me and told me they
11 weren't going to need me to be in the EOC because we
12 had all been mobilized. So I just headed into the
13 armory.

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** Who was doing the alerting then?
15 Were the operations sergeants?

16 **MAJ DURR:** For the line companies?

17 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yeah.

18 **MAJ DURR:** The full-time NCOs had started the
19 alert chain, calling the company commander.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** Okay.

21 **MAJ DURR:** Calling, you know, and working
22 down. Plus, of course, I think everybody had -- there

1 was -- you know, everybody had seen what was the radio,
2 TV, people had been calling into the armory. People
3 were just coming in on their own, as well.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

5 **MAJ DURR:** So we -- you know, I was in Bravo
6 Company. The command sergeant major came to the Bravo
7 Company location, Command SGM Gilmore. He lives in the
8 area, as well.

9 And so we started trying to coordinate by
10 phone what we were going to do. I made the decision
11 that we would bring Charlie Company down to Troy and
12 consolidate the two companies, to make for a better
13 motor march.

14 So they were getting ready. I was basically
15 trying very hard to get in touch with colonel [LTC
16 Mario] Costagliola to find out what guidance he had,
17 what he wanted us to do.

18 I did talk to Delta Company, SFC Wade, the
19 master gunner and full-timer there, who told me he had
20 had indirect guidance from the colonel that if he did
21 not hear from him by 10:00 o'clock, 2200 hours, they
22 were to bring Delta Company to Staten Island.

1 And I said okay, you know, unless you hear
2 from me countermanding that because I've talked to the
3 colonel, execute that order.

4 At some point, I think it must have been
5 around 5:00 o'clock, I did talk to the colonel and he
6 said, yes, he wanted Delta Company to come south,
7 unless he heard something else. He told -- he directed
8 me to muster the two companies at Troy and to get them
9 south, as well.

10 I then began -- I then approached the division
11 and asked for bus transportation, since we didn't have
12 enough vehicles to move all the soldiers, and I didn't
13 want to throw the guys in the back of a troop truck for
14 a four hour drive.

15 Went to the division EOC, talked to the G-4,
16 said, look, my commander wants a bus; I mean, we want
17 to go south, I need a bus.

18 And then we got into this frustrating thing
19 where we were communicating with colonel Costagliola
20 via phone occasionally and we used the AOL e-mail. You
21 know, we realized we could get through on AOL.

22 So he was sending us e-mail reports that I was

1 taking and relaying to the EOC of the situation that
2 was happening with the battalion coming across from
3 Staten Island.

4 He was telling us what was going on in
5 Manhattan, the fact that so many of the firemen and
6 police officials had been killed. I don't --

7 **MAJ MELNYK:** The EOC wasn't getting this by
8 TV?

9 **MAJ DURR:** I don't think the state
10 headquarters in Latham was actually understanding what
11 was going on, because they didn't have much
12 information. I called and spoke to a sergeant there
13 who, you know, I reported to him what I had heard from
14 our colonel, and it was like this is great, we haven't
15 heard anything.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** But they didn't even know about
17 the deaths at the World Trade Center.

18 **MAJ DURR:** I think -- I think they -- they
19 knew about the deaths at the World Trade Center, but I
20 think that the fact that the fire and police
21 departments had been -- basically had their heads cut
22 off, I don't think that was general knowledge at that

1 point.

2 I think the thing is that the colonel was
3 talking to local officials down here and there are so
4 many firemen in the unit that they knew when the Trade
5 Center went down who was likely to be there, and they
6 were telling, you know, "Sir, these people, there's no
7 more leadership there."

8 So what the colonel was perceiving, what he
9 relayed to me was that there was nobody talking to the
10 State of New York to tell them what they needed.

11 The way that the response is supposed to go,
12 of course, is that the civil officials determine that
13 they cannot handle an event and then request military
14 assistance from the National Guard.

15 And I think what was happening, the sense I
16 got from talking to the colonel was that there was
17 nobody alive to do this, because what had happened was
18 my colonel -- the colonel was telling us he needed
19 these two companies down in Staten Island, because this
20 was a major disaster and he wanted everybody on the
21 ground.

22 But I was going to the division EOC and

1 saying, "Look, colonel C says he needs us, get me a
2 bus." And the division EOC G-4 worked the issue and
3 then he came back to me and said "State headquarters
4 says you don't have a mission."

5 I said, "What do you mean?" He said,
6 "Headquarters says they have no request. You know, you
7 don't have a mission. There's no request for you."

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** The state is awaiting a request
9 from the city and it's not coming.

10 **MAJ DURR:** That was my sense of what was going
11 on. The state -- before the state was going to
12 dispatch upstate Guardsmen south, they were waiting for
13 the City of New York to say we need help.

14 But my sense was that the City of New York
15 wasn't saying help, asking for help, based on what the
16 colonel was saying, because they didn't have anybody
17 who could appreciate the magnitude of the disaster.

18 I mean, I believe the EOC for the city was in
19 the World Trade Center. So the City of New York
20 disaster experts were dead.

21 The National Guard officer in the city, in
22 this case, colonel Costagliola, was making an

1 evaluation that he needed more resources and state
2 headquarters was waiting for the system to work.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

4 **MAJ DURR:** That is the sense I got. So at
5 that point, what happened then was the division staff
6 made clear to me, they explained to me, look, we --
7 right now, you come under the 42nd Division. The 53rd
8 Troop commander is responsible for what is going on in
9 Manhattan.

10 We are not going to release you until we are
11 told by state we can. It was frustrating and so I --
12 we got the phone number for the 53rd Troop Command from
13 somebody, I'm not sure who, and I wound up talking to
14 BG Klein directly on his cell phone, and he did not
15 realize this was going on. He obviously was still
16 trying to get information.

17 I explained to him that I had been in
18 communication with colonel Costagliola, that the
19 colonel had sent our medical platoon and some other
20 soldiers across the Staten Island Ferry to render
21 assistance, and that he was directing me to bring the
22 two upstate companies south as rapidly as possible, but

1 that until -- until the -- the 42nd Infantry Division
2 was not going to release me to move south and give me a
3 highway clearance number until state headquarters said
4 do it.

5 So BG Klein said, "Yes, I understand," he
6 would take care of it. I basically told him, "Sir, you
7 need to tell them to let us go."

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yeah.

9 **MAJ DURR:** So I believe he did that. I was
10 waiting for the -- he said he would take care of it. I
11 think I waited another 45 minutes. I went back, where
12 is the bus. You know, I've got guys coming in.

13 I was bringing the -- C Company was coming in
14 at 2100. They were to be at the armory in Troy, it's
15 about a 45 minute drive, at 2100.

16 We went back again, where is the bus; well, it
17 hasn't happened yet. So I called the 53rd Troop
18 Command and got BG Klein directly, this was obviously
19 his cell phone number, explained the situation again.

20 He said, "You know, this is unacceptable. I'm
21 going to take care of it." He made more phone calls,
22 and about 9:00 o'clock I got a call.

1 I went to see the division -- the secretary of
2 the general staff, who was the ranking officer.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** You physically went to the EOC.

4 **MAJ DURR:** Well, I was in division
5 headquarters. The two units, where our B Company and
6 the division headquarters are located, share the same
7 armory.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** Okay.

9 **MAJ DURR:** I'm sorry. Yes. The division --
10 in the Glenmore Road Armory in Troy, there is the 42nd
11 Infantry Division Headquarters, B Company 101 CAV, and
12 642 MI Battalion. These units share the armory.

13 So it was basically a matter of me walking
14 down to the basement to talk to the division EOC guys,
15 walking down the hall to the SGS office. And, again, I
16 had a relationship with most of these soldiers, because
17 I had been on the division staff for five years.

18 So they knew me. You know, I wasn't some
19 yahoo. They would listen to me.

20 Because COL Atwood, the SGS, had made it
21 clear, in a conversation with myself and the sergeant
22 major, that he understood what we were trying to do,

1 but until he had a clear directive, he could not
2 release us, because we were part of the --
3 geographically, part of the 42nd Infantry Division's
4 task force, as these things were normally broken down.

5

6 At some point, though, the dam broke. I wound
7 up on the phone with general Taluto, BG Taluto, the
8 ADC-M with the 42nd Division, who was driving back from
9 Leavenworth.

10 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

11 **MAJ DURR:** And he said, "Okay, Eric, I'm going
12 to let you go." At this time, I think it was almost
13 10:00 o'clock.

14 He said, "It's late now. I" -- because we had
15 been thinking, you know, we could go at nine, when the
16 other -- we were sort of anticipating the other unit
17 would roll out, there would be a 15 minute break, we
18 would get organized and we'd go south, and we would be
19 in Staten Island maybe 1:00 o'clock in the morning.

20 The advantage, we figured, was obviously the
21 roads were going to be jammed, but at 12:00, as we
22 started getting into the New York City area, traffic

1 should be very minimal and we should be able to make it
2 in.

3 As we got on towards 10:00 o'clock, though, it
4 became obvious that if we tried to move, our soldiers
5 were already tired, people had been up early for work.

6 The general said, "Okay, you can go, but I want you to
7 go in the morning."

8 So we put the soldiers to bed at about 11:00
9 o'clock, sleeping in the armory. Nobody was released
10 to go home. And then we woke them up at 4:00 o'clock,
11 formed up the convoy of about 16 military vehicles,
12 four POVs [Privately-owned Vehicles].

13 We still had not gotten a clearance on the
14 bus. We got a road clearance for the New York City
15 Thruway. We were waiting for the bus.

16 We had 40 individuals in the two companies who
17 were not -- could not fit in the military vehicles,
18 and, under the charge of 2LT Walsh from B Company, they
19 were -- we were told a bus would be arranged. He was
20 to coordinate for the bus, put the soldiers on the bus,
21 bring them down to Staten Island.

22 We kicked off the convoy and at that point, at

1 5:00 o'clock in the morning, I talked to the colonel on
2 the cell phone and he redirected us to South and Pike
3 in Manhattan, where the police had established a
4 headquarters.

5 And I was hesitant about bringing the convoy
6 into Manhattan. I figured, you know, it might be tough
7 to get all this stuff in there. He said, "No, no. You
8 do it. You can do it. Don't worry."

9 So we set off, had about a four hour motor
10 march, refueled, because we weren't sure where we could
11 get fuel, refueled commercially, reorganized at the end
12 of the south end of the Thruway, and then we went down
13 Route 17 New Jersey, Route 80.

14 The New Jersey State Police had set aside a
15 special lane for emergency vehicles. We were able to
16 get through easily. And we were down at South and Pike
17 about, I guess, 11:30, 11:00 or 11:30 we were at South
18 and Pike, with our convoy.

19 We came through the Holland Tunnel. It was
20 closed to everything but emergency vehicles, and it was
21 kind of eerie, because as we drove in on the
22 expressway, leaving the Holland Tunnel, there was just

1 this giant mushroom like cloud of smoke hanging over
2 the city.

3 It was just our vehicles, a few other
4 emergency vehicles, the road all to ourselves. So we -
5 -

6 **MAJ MELNYK:** Describe the scene when you come
7 out of the Holland Tunnel.

8 **MAJ DURR:** When we came out of the tunnel, it
9 was -- you know, there wasn't a lot of destruction,
10 but it was just quiet. I mean, obviously, everything
11 had been abandoned.

12 I was kind of expecting to see some --
13 something. And it was just the roads were -- there
14 were vehicles abandoned and everything was shut down.

15 We came down Canal Street, which, it turns
16 out, runs through Chinatown. I had never been there
17 before. And it was like everybody was out watching us.

18 There were police roadblocks up along the
19 intersections to keep people from going south, but the
20 whole community had turned out and there was no traffic
21 on the road and they just watched us as we rolled
22 through Manhattan.

1 Part of the -- I was following the convoy. I
2 was in a government sedan and I was trailing the
3 convoy, to try to round up stragglers.

4 What we had done is the outgoing commander of
5 our Charlie Company, CPT Art Govin (phonetic,) is a
6 state trooper and, in fact, he is a state trooper on
7 the Governor's security detail, and CPT Govin had
8 basically commandeered an unmarked troop car.

9 And what I did is, we made the decision, as we
10 were getting off the Thruway, that we might start to
11 hit some traffic, and I told him, "Okay, Art, you go in
12 front and if we hit some traffic, do the lights, do the
13 siren. You're not legit in New Jersey, but you know
14 what? It will get us through."

15 So that's essentially what he was doing. He
16 was using his lights and siren to get traffic out of
17 the way and expedite our movement, until we were picked
18 up by the New Jersey State Police.

19 And so anyhow, we came in. A couple of the
20 vehicles at the rear got lost. We were rerouted by a
21 New York City Police Officer, but we wound up at South
22 and Pike, which is just under the Manhattan Bridge --

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** Brooklyn Bridge.

2 **MAJ DURR:** Brooklyn Bridge. No, actually,
3 it's the Manhattan Bridge, because Brooklyn Bridge is
4 farther south.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

6 **MAJ DURR:** And we linked up with the colonel
7 there. He then directed us to Battery Park, brought us
8 into Battery Park, and that's when we started to --
9 that's when we started to see stuff happening when we
10 came down towards --

11 We came down South Street with the convoy and
12 came up around the ferry terminal and pulled into
13 Battery Park, and that's when we started to see that --
14 we saw something had happened.

15 The streets were deserted. There was dust
16 everywhere, papers everywhere, cars crushed with rocks.

17 The place was abandoned. It looked like a war zone at
18 that point.

19 And we pulled into Battery Park, where the --
20 where Alpha and Delta and Headquarters Company were
21 assembling, and pulled up and the commander put me to
22 work to go up and he wanted me to go and talk to the

1 EOC at Park Avenue and bring up some figures on what we
2 had.

3 **MAJ MELNYK:** So the EOC this time was the
4 military.

5 **MAJ DURR:** We had now -- yeah. We had now
6 come under the control of the 107th Support Group of
7 the 53rd Troop Command. They had established an EOC at
8 the Park Avenue Armory.

9 The commander asked me to go up there to make
10 a face-to-face with them, get some phone numbers. I
11 brought information, our strength, equipment.

12 **MAJ MELNYK:** Where did you hook up with your
13 battalion commander?

14 **MAJ DURR:** The commander, at South and Pike.
15 He was waiting for us there with a Humvee, when the
16 convoy from the north arrived, because I had been
17 calling him on the phone, you know, we're coming in,
18 we're getting close, that kind of thing.

19 One of the lessons learned here was the first
20 couple days, we were all living on our personal cell
21 phones.

22 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

1 **MAJ DURR:** The regular land lines were down.
2 We were operating without -- FM communication was
3 spotty. So we were using cell phones to talk to each
4 other, and that was spotty, because, especially when
5 the tower came down, because the antennas had been on
6 top of the Twin Towers.

7 So I hooked up with him at South and Pike and
8 he directed me to go up to the EOC and make a face-to-
9 face. I brought information, you know, here is where
10 we are, here is how many soldiers we have, here is our
11 equipment we have, you know, do you have any
12 instructions.

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** What was the EOCs response? How
14 did you find the 107 Support Group's response?

15 **MAJ DURR:** I thought the 107th had a pretty
16 shitty hand on it. I had been involved in EOCs and the
17 42nd Division staff and I had a good sense of how an
18 EOC is supposed to work.

19 And I found it was -- I was just shocked. I
20 walk in there. I'm right from one of the line
21 battalions. I've got information and the lieutenant
22 colonel in charge of the thing ignored me. "Sir," you

1 know, I go up, and he's too busy trying to figure out
2 how his briefing slide is going to look.

3 I couldn't believe it. I was appalled. I'm
4 like, "You know, I have information here. I'm here to
5 tell you what our capabilities are and what do you want
6 to know? I'll go see the G-4."

7 I was so pissed. I couldn't believe it. I
8 thought this is just -- this guy is an idiot. This is
9 absolutely unprofessional. So I gave the -- and when I
10 went to see the G-4, they pawned me off on some, you
11 know, E-5.

12 I mean, you know, I just couldn't -- you know,
13 this is information -- information flow is what an
14 emergency operations center is all about.

15 You have to know what's there, what are they
16 doing, what are their capabilities, so you have a sense
17 of what you can task them for.

18 And quite frankly, I don't think the 107th --
19 they weren't interested at the time. I was appalled,
20 and I think part of it was, you know, they were setting
21 up here and the interesting thing about this
22 circumstance is when you went north of Canal Street, it

1 was life as usual in Manhattan.

2 I mean, not totally that day, because we went
3 up on the FDR and it was blocked off and we got up and
4 back very quickly, it was for emergency vehicles only.

5 But these guys were sitting in this plush 7th
6 Regiment Armory and I don't think they had any handle
7 on it. They didn't know what was going on three miles
8 south of them and they didn't seem to be interested.

9 That was a real falling down on the part of
10 this unit and I'm not sure if it's because they're not
11 a combat arms unit, I'm not sure if it's because this
12 is something they've never been called on to do.

13 I mean, the 42nd Infantry Division
14 Headquarters had been well practiced in EOCs. When New
15 York State was struck by an ice storm in 1999, the 42nd
16 EOC was up and running and ran a large chunk of the
17 state.

18 The EOC had been exercised in a hurricane, in
19 the blow-down in the Adirondacks. So there was a lot
20 of experience there on, you know, what had to happen,
21 and maybe the 107th didn't have that experience.

22 **MAJ MELNYK:** So you left the 107th.

1 **MAJ DURR:** Yeah. I left the 107th.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** With a --

3 **MAJ DURR:** With a bad taste in my mouth, came
4 back south, and, at that point, I just -- I needed to
5 see personally what was going on and I -- so I -- the
6 S-1, CPT Dave Willis, took me, you know, showed me
7 where our soldiers were posted on the security details.

8 We walked up along the line, saw what the
9 soldiers were doing. At that time, we had, you know, a
10 few cops, a few soldiers in intersections trying to
11 keep people away, and we went to the site of the World
12 Trade Center, where soldiers from the Support Platoon
13 were guarding the morgue and helping to carry out
14 bodies in some cases, along with our Medical Platoon.

15 **MAJ MELNYK:** Had the 107th given you any
16 guidance or instructions when you were up there?

17 **MAJ DURR:** The basic guidance had been, you
18 know, just do what you think you have to do, and that
19 seemed to be sort of the scheme from them, you know, do
20 what you think you need to do.

21 Obviously, the commander on the ground knows
22 best, but there was some frustration, I think, that we

1 didn't have any sort of guidance as to what exactly the
2 mission was.

3 I know the colonel probably told you how the
4 soldiers at Staten Island had collected digging
5 equipment, emergency supplies, and we thought we would
6 be put to work doing that. But that wasn't happening
7 and there was some frustration.

8 The other thing I think was that just
9 confusion over should we be armed, should we not be
10 armed.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** And how had you made that
12 decision with the upstate company?

13 **MAJ DURR:** What we had done is we had brought
14 our weapons with us. I told -- I talked to the
15 colonel, I said "Look, you know, we're going to bring
16 weapons. Obviously, crowd control stuff. What else?"

17 He said bring your MOPP suits, bring what you need to
18 live on.

19 So we brought weapons, riot control gear,
20 protective vests, face shields, and I thought even if
21 we didn't have a crowd control situation, the face
22 shields would be useful in a recovery situation as

1 protection.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** Did the soldiers deploy with the
3 face shields?

4 **MAJ DURR:** No. The soldiers deployed
5 basically wearing protective vests, LBE, helmets.

6 We did not arm the soldiers at that point. We
7 kept the weapons handy, though. We did not know what
8 the situation was.

9 There were some times during the course of
10 those days when we were told that there was a terrorist
11 -- you know, there was a threat of some other attack.
12 And at that point, the colonel armed some select -- you
13 know, told some selected personnel to carry weapons,
14 and we did have some ammunition that we acquired. It
15 wasn't issued, but there was some there.

16 There was also ammunition present for our
17 machine guns, which we had initially mounted on top of
18 the scout Humvees. But we were told to take them off
19 because the civil officials didn't want to, you know,
20 portray that image.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** So those instructions came from
22 the civilian authorities.

1 **MAJ DURR:** At some point, there was somebody
2 from the Governor's office was telling the -- as I
3 understand it, was telling BG Klein to tell the colonel
4 to get those weapons off.

5 What had happened was, of course, a Humvee
6 with a .50 on top is very photogenic. And so those
7 were the images that were going out to the world of
8 soldiers with .50 caliber machine guns mounted on
9 Humvees. In fact, we also -- the first day, we also
10 had an M-113 here, as well.

11 The colonel had basically come with
12 everything. We had --

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** He didn't come with his tanks.

14 **MAJ DURR:** Well, we only have one tank in
15 Staten Island and, very frankly, that one couldn't get
16 off the island if it tried. It's pretty -- it was out
17 of commission.

18 **MAJ MELNYK:** Okay.

19 **MAJ DURR:** But we brought the -113, wreckers,
20 HEMMTS, fuellers, anything we thought we might need and
21 brought over. And the upstate units had brought their
22 fuellers, their wreckers, all their -- all the vehicles

1 they had.

2 We have a support slice with each of the
3 remote companies. So all that came.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** In general, could you describe
5 what liaison with the civilian authorities was like?
6 Who took charge? How was the cooperation or lack of
7 cooperation? Where did you generally get your
8 instructions from?

9 **MAJ DURR:** You know, I mostly just turned to
10 the colonel, since he was talking to people. But our
11 basic -- our basic point of contact was MAJ Bob
12 Magnanini, who is on the G-2 staff of the 42nd
13 Division.

14 He lives in New Jersey. He had responded on
15 Tuesday and was pressed into service as a police
16 liaison by the 107th. So MAJ Magnanini was going up to
17 One Police Plaza and other police headquarters to find
18 out what they wanted us to do, and that information was
19 very spotty.

20 When I arrived, the mission was set up the
21 security cordon to keep people out of the area. We
22 split that with the 69th Infantry, basically along

1 Broadway. The 69th, with greater manpower, held a line
2 on the west side of Broadway, a long array of
3 intersections, while the 101 held a line along the east
4 side of Broadway at various intersections.

5 And at night, we were spelled off by 258 Field
6 Artillery, which was beefed up with the 642nd Aviation.
7 They're an aviation support battalion. I'm not sure -
8 -

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** Division Aviation Support.

10 **MAJ DURR:** Right.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** Okay. What did you see of the
12 soldiers? How -- what was their initial reaction?
13 What was their behavior like on the ground? How did
14 you assess their morale?

15 **MAJ DURR:** Well, I think everybody knew that
16 we had been whacked. The United States had been
17 attacked. And we had guys showing up at the armories
18 we hadn't seen, guys who were going to AWOL out, they
19 hadn't come to drill. They were there. Guys were
20 there.

21 People responded. People came in. I didn't
22 hear any bitching, you know, nobody complained we got

1 to sleep on the armory floor. Nobody complained it's
2 early.

3 I mean, I think guys realized, okay, this is
4 what we're here for. This is it. This isn't AT, this
5 isn't a drill, this isn't -- you know, this isn't
6 playing. We are really committed, and there could be
7 people down there with guns and we may need to get
8 these guns we've got in the truck out, and I think the
9 soldiers realized that.

10 Everybody was really businesslike and
11 purposeful. There was, you know -- you know, you
12 usually have some guys bitching, but nobody was --
13 nobody was complaining. Everybody was there, and I
14 thought that was -- I thought the response was great.

15 **MAJ MELNYK:** What happened? Did that change
16 at all when they showed up on-site?

17 **MAJ DURR:** No. I think it -- I think it was
18 just everybody was -- I think they were just awestruck.
19 You know, as we came in, at first, it was -- when we
20 came in Canal Street, it's like look at this, the
21 streets are empty, isn't that crazy. It's New York
22 City.

1 And then we came down here to Battery Park and
2 as you moved uptown and you saw these cars crushed with
3 blocks of concrete and everything was covered with a
4 layer of dust, I mean it must have been an inch thick,
5 and it looked like there had been a volcano erupted,
6 like a pyroclastic flow had just spewn away from this
7 point.

8 And there were scraps of paper everywhere,
9 paper from the towers everywhere.

10 And I think that hit people. This is a war
11 zone, you know, and even though we didn't have weapons
12 in our troops, I think the guys realized that, you
13 know, okay, you're a soldier.

14 And the thing that I found is at AT, we always
15 have a problem keeping people in uniform. People want
16 to take off their helmet and they don't want to wear
17 their web gear because it's a pain getting up and down
18 off the tank.

19 But I think everybody was -- kept their
20 uniform on and I think they realized that it's part of
21 the psychology is that you may be Joe Schmo, but when
22 you're standing there with a flak vest on and your

1 Kevlar and your LBE, you look pretty damn intimidating,
2 and they realized this is part of the thing, to just
3 look like we mean business.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** Even if you're not carrying
5 weapons.

6 **MAJ DURR:** Even if we're not carrying weapons,
7 although I think -- you know, my feeling was, once --
8 especially once we started to get this, you know,
9 there's a terrorist in the vicinity shit, it was like
10 why won't they let us carry weapons.

11 The cops have weapons. We're being asked to
12 do the same thing the cops are. Now, obviously, I
13 realize that part of it is that, you know, a private is
14 trained what? Halt, halt, halt, shoot. And in an
15 urban environment like this, in New York City, that's
16 not going to make it.

17 But I felt we should have been able to arm,
18 and we did arm some key people. I mean, some key
19 people carried weapons.

20 **MAJ MELNYK:** But you did that without
21 instructions from higher.

22 **MAJ DURR:** We did that without -- there was no

1 real guidance. The thing was that there was -- the
2 THREATCON was D, on the order that the colonel
3 received, which means you go in armed. So that's what
4 he took it to mean.

5 The colonel was basically ready for anything.

6 He said "I want everything, bring everything. I don't
7 know what's going to happen here. We're going to bring
8 weapons. We're going to bring everything we can think
9 of." And we did that.

10 He told us bring our tanker bars, because we
11 might have to pry something off.

12 I think the biggest frustration for me as a
13 soldier was that they were not allowed to go up to the
14 site of the World Trade Center and dig. You know, they
15 -- they would see the papers and see in the news, you
16 know, the story about Joe Schmo from East Succotash,
17 Illinois, who was up there digging out people because
18 it was the right thing to do, and it was like, you
19 know, well, we're an organized unit, you know, we will
20 not be just freelancers, why aren't we up there.

21 And the only answer we had was the fire
22 department doesn't want us there.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

2 **MAJ DURR:** And it really just pissed people
3 off. I mean, it was the sense of let's just go. The
4 hell with them, let's just go. But, again, being in
5 the military is taking orders and we were -- you know,
6 our instructions were we were assisting the civil
7 authorities and we did what they wanted us to do, and
8 they did not want us on that pile.

9 At least they did not want the 101 CAV on the
10 pile, and it really frustrated a lot of guys.

11 **MAJ MELNYK:** As the executive officer, one of
12 your primary concerns is logistics.

13 Could you address what kind of logistical
14 difficulties you faced here or lack of difficulties?
15 How much of a problem was it for you to feed your men,
16 care for your men?

17

18 **MAJ DURR:** Actually, it wasn't a big problem.
19 We have a couple things. Because we had the Staten
20 Island Armory as a home base, it was cramped, but it
21 gave us a place where the soldier could be dry. There
22 are showers. There are toilets.

1 So we had a home base. There was room -- you
2 know, the two upstate companies were sleeping in the
3 mess hall. So they were crammed in there.

4 But we basically used the armory as our life
5 support center. We had maintenance assets there, we
6 had water.

7 I also am blessed with a really good S-4, CPT
8 Richard Abbott, and a really good S-4 NCO, our full-
9 timer, SFC Mike Tenneriello and they can be really
10 frustrating individuals at times, because they don't
11 want to play Army. They're like "Screw this military
12 shit. I don't need to be in the field. My job is the
13 real world. I got to get you food and fuel and all
14 this," which they do very well.

15 It's just it's always a stressor to try to get
16 them to play the game.

17 But in this instance, they had -- everything
18 was taken care of. SGT Tenneriello instantly
19 established catering contracts, so our soldiers were
20 being fed. He went -- the local dry cleaner said I'll
21 clean your clothes. He said, "No. We're going to pay
22 you, because the state will do that. If you don't want

1 the money, give it to a charity."

2 He -- you know, they immediately -- you know,
3 we had fuel on the site.

4 He went -- Home Depot, they contacted Home
5 Depot. Home Depot had said come on down, take what you
6 want. They took a HEMMT down there. They loaded on
7 generators, picks, shovels, gloves, dust masks,
8 anything we could think of, from that situation.

9 So the immediate needs of the battalion were
10 well in hand. I mean, I didn't have to worry about
11 that because I knew these guys -- I knew these two guys
12 were going to feed these soldiers and I knew the
13 soldiers were going to -- they were going to be taken
14 care of and they were going to get fed, and our mess
15 section did a -- you know, our mess section worked
16 almost round the clock making sure the soldiers were
17 fed.

18 Not to mention the fact that local merchants
19 just came to the armory and just dropped stuff off. I
20 mean, we had a contract caterer and the guy -- you
21 know, they were coming down and dropping off cakes and
22 bread and just anything.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** I would like for you to go
2 chronologically now from your arrival on the first day.
3 How did the battalion's missions change? What was you
4 daily schedule like?

5 You mentioned using the armory as a home base.
6 What was it like getting there and back? How are
7 things now eight, nine days later?

8 **MAJ DURR:** Initially, it was 12 on, 12 off.
9 We were supposed to shift off with the 258th Engineers
10 -- I mean, 258th Artillery.

11 And so at the end of the day, about 2000, we
12 were going 0800 to 2000, the 258th would come in and
13 occupy the line and we would try to do some
14 coordination with them.

15 That didn't always work. There were times
16 when we missed each other. So that first day was just
17 on these line and we handed it over to the 258th, which
18 was late.

19 Then we took all these trucks we had brought
20 from the Albany area, along with the vehicles that had
21 come across from Staten Island. We went the Battery
22 Tunnel, Expressway bears on a bridge back to the

1 armory, occupied the armory. There was chow there,
2 bedded down the soldiers from B and C Company in the
3 mess hall upstairs.

4 Very late nights. We were getting maybe four
5 hours of sleep, because by the time everything was
6 done, it was midnight, and because the mission was
7 uncertain. We were having these meetings at night.

8 Initially, the guidance was just the
9 perimeter. The commander -- the commander's concern
10 was that the fire department was getting overwhelmed.
11 The fire department was tired. There were their guys
12 down there that wanted to do something, but he was,
13 okay, we're going to go dig because we got to take over
14 for these guys.

15 So he sent CPT Kevin Riley up to do like a
16 recon and Riley came back and said they don't want us,
17 and so he said okay.

18 So that was the first day.

19 And the second day, the colonel said, "Okay,
20 we're going to go dig. Get everything together."
21 Again, they didn't need us.

22 Again, it was just a security detail. We were

1 doing other missions, though. There was a mission on
2 Wednesday to -- they brought equipment across the
3 Hudson River to a ferry docking port, jackhammers, and
4 those were loaded on our trucks and taken up to the
5 site.

6 Again, our soldiers, on Tuesday night, our
7 medical platoon was working in the morgue.

8 On Wednesday, our support platoon was guarding
9 the morgue. We got rid of that mission, though, when
10 everybody was afraid that the building, One Liberty
11 Plaza, would collapse.

12 **MAJ MELNYK:** And that's where the morgue was
13 initially, right there.

14 **MAJ DURR:** That was where the morgue was
15 initially. And I remember being up there that
16 Wednesday to check on the soldiers and find out what
17 was going on and heading back, when, you know, suddenly
18 the call went out that the building was coming down and
19 to run like hell.

20 So I think I ran a block and then ducked
21 behind another building, and we started making our way
22 back.

1 That was one thing we learned very rapidly on.

2 This happened on Wednesday, Thursday, these concerns
3 about a building, and the soldiers there on the site
4 would just, you know, run like hell.

5 And we realized early on we had to set rally
6 points, places where people would go. You know, you
7 come to this corner. So that was a lesson learned
8 after the --

9 (Tape change.)

10 **MAJ MELNYK:** So continuing on, you learned
11 right way that rally points were --

12 **MAJ DURR:** We needed rally points, because
13 what had happened was this first time that there was
14 the run like hell, there's a building coming down, we
15 lost track of where people were.

16 So we established -- we started to require the
17 companies to establish rally points, let the battalion
18 know where they were, you know, where is everybody.

19 I remember that first night, we were still
20 where is such and such, where is this guy, trying to
21 get accountability of everybody.

22 The next days it got better because we kept

1 control of that better, I think.

2 But the first day, the mission was -- well,
3 Tuesday, the mission for the battalion, I wasn't here,
4 was, you know, go to try to recover. They were
5 prepared for casualties, and they never came.

6 **MAJ MELNYK:** Actually, your medics and
7 generator crew got in on Tuesday and --

8 **MAJ DURR:** Yes, they did.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** -- your first day was Wednesday.

10 **MAJ DURR:** Our first full day, yeah, with
11 everybody, my first day was Wednesday.

12 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

13 **MAJ DURR:** That was the security mission and
14 manning the morgue.

15 On Thursday, we still had the security mission
16 and then the mission changed Thursday evening.

17 We also moved our expandable van up South and
18 Pike. We had been down in Battery Park.

19 And the battalion, through innovative NCOs,
20 has acquired a divisional command post expandovan,
21 which was a headquarters.

22 We were asked by the 107th to relocate that to

1 South and Pike at a Pathmark Supermarket, where the
2 107th was going to run a liaison with the police
3 emergency operations center.

4 We did that.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** So you became the -- your
6 battalion had to provide that.

7 **MAJ DURR:** We provided that facility.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

9 **MAJ DURR:** And that facility, we put a staff
10 in there during our day shift and the 258th used that
11 during their night shift. So it became like a focal
12 point.

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** And there were people from the
14 107th there, as well.

15 **MAJ DURR:** Well, again, the 107th really
16 dropped the ball. They wound up with, like, I was told
17 the first day there was going to be a colonel -- a MAJ
18 Gimm (phonetic) and a colonel whose name I -- it starts
19 with a P, I can't remember his name [COL Pete
20 Pietrowski].

21 And I remember getting the cell phone numbers
22 and calling this colonel and he said -- I said, "Sir, I

1 understand you're going to be the liaison with the
2 police. We've got our TOC set up. We're ready for
3 you." He said, "I'm not going there. I've been up for
4 36 hours. BG Klein told me to go to bed. I'll be
5 there in the morning."

6 So it was like, you know, why are we doing
7 this. We got it there. Instead, there was a CPT
8 Lynch, who was working hard to talk to the police, and
9 the interface just was awful.

10 The 107th was set up on Park Avenue,
11 insulated, I think, from everything, you know, nice
12 conference rooms.

13 We were down at Battery Park, which looked
14 like a combat zone. The 258th was living up in Harlem.

15 The 69th was operating with us out of Battery Park.

16 And we had this TOC over at the Pathmark
17 Supermarket, next to the police EOC and the police
18 logistical center.

19 So what kind of evolved from Wednesday, when
20 we put this TOC there, to Saturday, when we pulled it
21 out, was that our TOC was sort of taking -- it became
22 like a logistics coordination center.

1 The cops would come and say can you do X and Y
2 and move something, and we'd do it for them.

3 And one of our -- the soldiers that had
4 volunteered with the battalion, LT O'Buckley
5 (phonetic), who is part of the 1st Battalion, 127th
6 Armor, formerly a 101 CAV guy, he wound up sort of
7 shotgunning the organizing of all these donated goods
8 that were being dumped there by companies.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** So he became the depot officer.

10 **MAJ DURR:** Yeah. He sort of was the czar of
11 the depot, yeah. And we provided some forklift
12 operators to move stuff around.

13 And at one time, they asked for a food service
14 expert. So one of our cooks came over to do that.

15 But the 107th didn't really -- they put in a
16 high frequency antenna so they could talk from there to
17 Park Avenue and they just didn't seem to operate out of
18 there too much when I was there.

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** And did things finally enter into
20 a routine?

21 **MAJ DURR:** Yeah.

22 **MAJ MELNYK:** When did that happen?

1 **MAJ DURR:** I think things entered into a
2 routine probably on Saturday, because we had -- the
3 42nd Aviation Brigade assumed the mission of command
4 and control down here.

5 **MAJ MELNYK:** On Saturday.

6 **MAJ DURR:** Yes. And I think we started
7 getting in a routine, because I'm not sure how -- two
8 battalions during the day, one battalion during the
9 night, obviously, more people during the day, but the
10 12 on-12 off battalion shifting thing was not working
11 real well.

12 We were coordinating with the 1st and 69th,
13 but when we handed it over to 258, they would miss us,
14 we would miss them, you know, and there was a little
15 bit of, you know, it's 8:00 o'clock, we're getting our
16 guys on the bus, because otherwise they'll never get
17 some sleep.

18 And I think the 42nd Division Aviation
19 Brigade's commander, COL Meskill, he and his staff had,
20 I think, the best idea, which is what we should have
21 done.

22 They realized that we were disjointed, because

1 we were three battalions, and it was kind of working.

2 And I remember we had this meeting with them
3 and in many ways, the sense was that they were Christ
4 come to cleanse the temple here.

5 You know, you guys have obviously not got this
6 thing organized and, by God, we're going to get it
7 organized.

8 So I remember this meeting with myself, I then
9 representing the colonel, colonel [LTC Geoffrey] Slack
10 of the 1st of the 69th, and colonel [LTC Frank]
11 Candiano from the 258th, and colonel Costagliola came
12 after it started.

13 And these guys are telling us, well, here is
14 what we think we ought to do, and we're telling them
15 all this stuff like, well, here is what's going on, and
16 you know the buildings are falling down and if you hear
17 three horns of the siren, run like hell.

18 And I remember the colonel was like kind of
19 laughing, you know, these guys had this planned, and
20 we're like telling them, well, this and this and this,
21 and we're bombarding them with sort of ground truth.

22 Here is why this is and why we're doing this.

1 But they had a good plan, which was -- I think part of
2 it was the police department was finally getting
3 organized. The police department had originally been
4 all of Manhattan south and that was a little disjointed
5 in this kind of situation.

6 So they reorganized into five zones in
7 Manhattan and their plan -- the 42nd Aviation Brigade's
8 plan was to give each battalion responsibility for his
9 own, which -- and that battalion would run at 24 hours
10 a day, which meant we would no longer have the
11 difficulty of essentially doing an exchange of
12 positions with another battalion.

13 We controlled it internally, and I think that
14 -- the only thing we were worried about was, you know,
15 well, you know, that's great and we like the idea, but,
16 you know, we're all beat and if somebody's got to go 24
17 hours around the clock, we're going to die.

18 So what did happen was, though, that --
19 obviously, the activity at the site had changed from
20 rescue and frantic and uncertain to more of a recovery,
21 and so we realized we could start sending people to
22 sleep so we could transition into the 24 hour

1 operation, and we did that on Saturday.

2 And that really has worked better. I mean,
3 it's just, you know, we now are responsible for a zone.

4 **MAJ MELNYK:** What is your zone?

5 **MAJ DURR:** Zone 2, which runs from Battery
6 Park up to Rector Street.

7 And this is good, because, you know, we're
8 handling the changeover internally. We've got positive
9 control. We're not looking -- I mean, it worked a
10 little bit when I would go up to -- we would go up to
11 the Pathmark to link up with the 258th, but it's better
12 because the guys in the unit know each other by sight
13 and you basically went up and did the shoulder tap,
14 you're relieved, and we filled it in.

15 Essentially, what we've come to at this point
16 is the line companies operating during the day and
17 headquarters company operating with a reduced presence
18 at night when there are fewer people.

19 The other significant mission we took on was
20 the -- for a few days, the battalion was responsible
21 for security of the pit.

22 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right.

1 **MAJ DURR:** The World Trade Center. I was not
2 there at the time, but I understand from the colonel
3 who was on the scene that they were erecting a crane
4 and the fire department and the firemen and the
5 policemen, there were just too many of them.

6 They were well meaning, and not to mention
7 lots of people wanting to volunteer, but it had become
8 the place to be. Everybody wanted to be there either
9 because there was a buddy under the pile or because it
10 was just the place to be.

11 So the fire chief requested the National Guard
12 to come in and kind of restore order, sort it out. So
13 we sent our -- and I don't know how we got notified. I
14 mean, the colonel briefed me later.

15 I know I was doing another mission. I think I
16 was up at the Pathmark coordinating with the 258th at
17 the time.

18 But essentially I gather we sent our scout
19 platoon in there, scouts (inaudible) 26 strong, what
20 we're calling our Sabre Element, and these guys
21 basically just sort of, you know, linked arms and
22 shoulder to shoulder, kind of walked through the crowd,

1 okay, guys, you got to get back.

2 And they set up a security perimeter, and I
3 think the issue was that there's a rivalry between the
4 New York City Fire Department and Police Department,
5 and the National Guard is a neutral party.

6 If a policeman tells a fireman to get out of
7 there, the fireman will be pissed. If the fireman
8 tells the policeman to get out of there, the policeman
9 will be pissed.

10 But we were a third force. And, in fact, one
11 of the -- we now have some New York Times reporters who
12 are covering us and they're living with our unit at
13 this time, and one of the reporters told me, "Well, you
14 know, I could pretty much get in and out and I was
15 living on the site, but once you guys came in,
16 everything locked down."

17 I mean, I think the National Guard, we wound
18 up handling that Thursday night. We turned that over
19 to the 258th. I believe Bravo and Charlie Companies of
20 the 105th Infantry were also up there.

21 **MAJ MELNYK:** Right. Yeah.

22 **MAJ DURR:** Manning part of that.

1 **MAJ MELNYK:** Yeah.

2 **MAJ DURR:** But we -- you know, I guess it's a
3 testament that we did good that this reporter and other
4 people said we couldn't get in anymore. You know, the
5 site had been locked down, which is what they wanted.
6 They wanted to get the people that didn't need to be
7 there out of the way.

8 And so we handled that mission til Saturday.

9 **MAJ MELNYK:** What was your -- could you
10 describe interactions with the civilian population in
11 New York in general?

12 Did you have, for instance, the escort
13 mission? What other missions?

14 **MAJ DURR:** We had the mission of escorting
15 people to their apartments, to their businesses.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** In your zone?

17 **MAJ DURR:** In our zone, and, before that,
18 outside, we had an escort mission to run people to
19 Battery Park City, where they had been told to leave.

20 And I know, talking to some of the soldiers,
21 some of these soldiers, it was rough. You know, people
22 would cry, people were very emotional, and that

1 affected the soldiers.

2 I remember one kid talking about, you know,
3 how this lady wanted to get her cat or another kid
4 talking about all these strollers outside covered with
5 dust, and, you know, we didn't -- these guys weren't
6 seeing dead bodies, but they saw people's lives on
7 hold.

8 People had been there and they'd just, you
9 know, get the hell out, your life is just uprooted.

10 And it was a lot of walking. It was
11 physically tiring. People got blisters on blisters. I
12 got blisters. You know, we don't usually walk this
13 much. We're tankers and that shit was hard to walk in,
14 but everybody was complaining about "my feet hurt."

15 So that was one thing. It was long, tiring
16 days.

17 The people, for the most part, have been
18 great. You know, people come up to you and say "thank
19 you for being here." It's nice, because, look, you
20 know, you take your trucks out on the road and most of
21 the time it's "get the hell out of my way with all
22 those military vehicles." You're going 45 miles an

1 hour, go away.

2 And we drive up and we came in on the highway,
3 you know, truckers would honk their horns and people
4 would wave. We also used the ferry quite frequently as
5 a way to get back and forth.

6 The first week, the Staten Island Ferry was
7 closed to all but emergency traffic. So we could drive
8 our vehicles down to the ferry, put them on the ferry.

9 The commander was joking, we were -- alluding
10 to the battle of Stalingrad, we went across the Volga,
11 you know. Stalingrad was one side of the Volga where
12 the fight was, you went across the Volga to rest and
13 recuperate.

14 **MAJ MELNYK:** And the Stukas were dive-bombing
15 you as you crossed New York Harbor.

16 **MAJ DURR:** That was the only thing. We didn't
17 have the Stukas. But he would joke about that. It's
18 time to go back across the Volga, you know, which
19 relieves the tension a little bit.

20 But in a way, the ride was nice on the ferry,
21 because the guys would come out and you'd look at the
22 Statue of Liberty and, you know, it felt fairly good.

1 But you looked back and you saw this glow
2 where the World Trade Center had been and you saw the
3 smoke and, you know, and out in the harbor, there's
4 Coast Guard vessels, like the one that's going by us
5 while we speak.

6 You know, they brought in all these small boat
7 guys to pull harbor security.

8 **MAJ MELNYK:** You want to take a moment to
9 describe your reaction and your soldiers' reactions to
10 what they saw in the pit?

11 **MAJ DURR:** You know, it's just when I first
12 saw it, it was Wednesday and it was about 24 hours
13 later, and it was -- you know, it was just this
14 skeletal piece of a side of a building sticking up
15 there and there were people up there digging and there
16 was equipment moving around, and burned out buildings
17 and, you know, I didn't want to get in the way, but I
18 wanted to see it, and I just -- it was like I was drawn
19 to it.

20 I wanted to know what it was. I knew the
21 building was down. I don't think that got to me as
22 much as just watching on the streets, the crushed cars

1 and the dust, but just -- just this -- you know, this
2 whole building just fallen in, like it had been
3 collapsed like a toy, like it had been pushed down, and
4 this pile of rubble and, you know, and you just knew
5 there were people dead in there.

6 And, also, the worst thing was to think that
7 somebody is alive in there and we're not going to get
8 them out. There's somebody alive in there and we're
9 not going to get them out.

10 And you know, to watch the soldiers helping to
11 carry the bodies out of the morgue and the firemen and
12 I know one of the soldiers talked about how he kind of
13 saw this bag and he thought it was a body part and it
14 was a five year old girl.

15 And just guys talked about -- some guys saw
16 legs. The 1st of the 69th Infantry did a body check on
17 roofs for parts.

18 I talked to some guys, people who have been
19 here in Manhattan, and it was much more horrific what
20 happened to them.

21 We were here to clean up. But I think the
22 thing is we were all so busy. I just remember driving

1 in and watching the smoke rise.

2 The thing I find interesting is we -- the unit
3 has a Memorial Day event every year and I usually come
4 down with my family and we make a weekend of it, New
5 York City, it's fun for the kids.

6 And this past Memorial Day, we had taken the
7 ferry over from Staten Island and we had come to
8 Battery Park here. We walked around, look at the
9 street performers, gone to South Street Seaport, and
10 here I was setting up my goddamned assembly area in
11 Battery Park.

12 It looked like a war zone.

13 **MAJ MELNYK:** Someplace you never expected to
14 conduct a military operation.

15 **MAJ DURR:** Never expected to set up an
16 assembly area, you're absolutely right. And that was
17 kind of freaky. And, again, just a pile and
18 everything.

19 **MAJ MELNYK:** A lot of people have talked about
20 the stress, not just of conducting operations and
21 people getting tired, but of dealing with the fact that
22 there are 5,500 dead people there.

1 **MAJ DURR:** People dead.

2 **MAJ MELNYK:** What do you -- how is the morale
3 holding up in your battalion now over a week that
4 you've been here?

5 **MAJ DURR:** I think it's pretty good. We've
6 had two AWOLs at this point. Guys have just said to
7 hell with it, I'm out of here.

8 We've had a couple people -- we've had people
9 shown signs of psychic stress and I just think the Army
10 has done a great thing by sending these case workers
11 down here.

12 They sent us a team of social workers,
13 psychiatrists, counselor, because we have been using
14 them, you know.

15 Part of it is -- like I know we have one
16 soldier who is down here from the Albany area whose
17 wife has cancer. So he's dealing with that, and he's
18 dealing with this, and he's a good man and I hope he
19 makes it.

20 We've got another soldier that we kind of
21 thought was on edge before AT and he definitely cracked
22 down here this time.

1 We've got the soldiers in the unit who we got
2 -- our first sergeant, 1SG Raunauro, headquarters
3 company, as a court officer, security officer. He was
4 nearby when this happened and got covered with rubble
5 and his partner was in the building and got killed.

6 We've got firemen in this unit. A lot of
7 these guys, they didn't come in -- they didn't respond
8 to the mobilization call because they were already
9 working as firemen and police officers. But they know
10 these people.

11 So for me, it's kind of abstract, since I
12 don't know people, but I have talked to people who have
13 offices in there on the phone.

14 I remember sitting with colonel Bosco
15 (phonetic) from the 642 one night, when we went up to
16 the pit to talk about coordinating him taking over our
17 security mission.

18 He was saying, you know, "I used to sit" -- we
19 were sitting on Liberty Plaza. I sat here for lunch.
20 I worked on the 65th floor until a few months ago.

21 And every now and then, it would just sink
22 into that you we're really -- we're at war and that is

1 what's going on. This is a war and we're part of this
2 war, and this is may be a state of active duty, but
3 it's a military operation and this country is at war
4 and, goddamn it, we're part of it and that's why we're
5 here and it isn't fooling around.

6 At this point in time, we're kind of relaxed.

7 Last week, when everything was still covered in dust
8 and Manhattan was empty, it was pretty tense, just
9 because it was covered in dust and Manhattan was empty.

10 **MAJ MELNYK:** Anything you want to add?

11 **MAJ DURR:** Just that I think the soldiers have
12 done a really wonderful job. They have performed in an
13 outstanding manner.

14 No bitching, no moaning. You know, a little
15 bitching and moaning, but nothing beyond what you
16 normally get.

17 I think they're tired. I think we probably
18 have to have a better system for rotating units in and
19 out.

20 I think, you know, when the decision was made
21 to take the 69th out and not the 258th and 101, that
22 ticked a lot of people off. It's like, well, we have

1 been here just as long as they have, why are they going
2 home.

3 So that -- these are operational issues that
4 obviously have to be addressed. I think what this
5 shows is we need to have -- we probably need to have
6 like disaster COMEX [Communications Exercise] at every
7 armory, locked and cocked, full of stuff that you would
8 need for this kind of situation.

9 I think it shows that we probably need more
10 full-time manning. We need dollars for full-time
11 manning, especially if people are going to use the
12 National Guard.

13 You know, there's rumors that we'll be called
14 up to do security missions while this whatever it is
15 goes on. You know, Guard guys at airports. I don't
16 know.

17 But obviously these kind of operational
18 considerations have to happen. Now, we're not
19 federalized right now, but we need to have some
20 delineation. When are we armed, when are not armed,
21 what is our authority?

22 I think the biggest thing was -- the biggest

1 thing I found out was the cops didn't know -- knew less
2 than we did. Our guys were on street corners and
3 they'd have a question and say, well, what do we do
4 about this, and the cops there were like "I thought you
5 guys knew."

6 So we need to have definite rules of
7 engagement from the civil authorities. We finally got
8 those about on Saturday. They gave us sheets, here is
9 who goes where.

10 Obviously, part of this was them getting their
11 act together. They weren't sure how to organize it.

12 But we obviously have to have -- we need
13 direction. We need rules of engagement and we need to
14 know are we armed, are we not armed, what is our
15 authority, that kind of thing.

16 **MAJ MELNYK:** Thank you very much, sir.

17 **MAJ DURR:** Thanks.

18 (The interview was concluded.)

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