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IFIT-35-123 First Sergeant [REDACTED]

Q: (inaudible) of the 35th Military History Detachment. This is the 22nd of May, 2003. I'm with First Sergeant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of the 314th MP company, part of the 320th battalion. First Sergeant, could you please state your name, spell your last name for me and give me your duty position here at the unit.

A: My name is [REDACTED] I'm the First Sergeant of the 314th MP Company.

Q: First Sergeant, could you tell me a little about the original mobilization at home station, what you had to do in preparation for mobilization and when you actually left your home station to go to remote site.

A: We first got, like, a activation notice. That was probably right at the end of January, I think. Anyway, what they did is -- we knew it was coming -- the mobile work was coming. We had a few days' notice. They put us on five days AT orders, kind of help get stuff together, get people called in, and then we got the actual mobilization orders and we were probably there on mobile orders for an additional seven days. So we had about two weeks in Irvine to get everything together and ready to go, which helped us out. That extra five days really helped us out.

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Q: And how many members in the company?

A: I have some guys in Basic, in AIT. I had [REDACTED] packs, so [REDACTED] slots would have to take (inaudible).

Q: And were you able to bring all your vehicles and assets with you as well?

A: Yeah, we brought all our vehicles. MKT was an issue. We couldn't get MKT together. So we cross leveled one over. Also I was short some MP's, so they cross leveled some MP's to me. And I'm still short one lieutenant. There are just not enough officers. We actually came with all our equipment, as far as vehicles and MKT goes, and [REDACTED] soldiers.

Q: And did you headquarters from, I believe, the 63rd RSE, did they assist you or did you run into any problems as far as getting anything together with them?

A: They did, they sent this master sergeant down. She made a lot of calls and made a lot of stuff work for us. It's kind of the stuff, though, that we've already identified as being short on, you know, life sets and hard-topped vehicles, stuff that you just don't get in the Reserves, for some reason, you know? They say, oh, you'll get it, you'll get it, but you just don't get it. They got on the phone and they blitzed -- helped us get the soldiers and helped us get whatever equipment they could from other

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companies, like tool sets from the maintenance section, and this new MKT and stuff like that, so -- they did come down and they did assist -- it's just stuff we should have had already. Stuff that had been identified as shortages in the past. Reserves just don't get it.

Q: But you were able to acquire all those things, and so you had everything to meet your (inaudible) and leave your home station to go to mobile station then?

A: Well, we didn't take it all with us. Some of it met up with us in Bliss (sp?). And our life set, we just picked up here the other day, and that was on our T1E. Equipment was kind of piecemeal. It's still being shipped to us, different parts of it, you know what I mean? We got the main stuff to make missions -- soldiers, weapons, equipment, you know, vehicles, and some maintenance stuff to get us going, and everything else is still kind of trickling down to us.

Q: So your equipment has been a major issue with the unit that -- because of your different shortages that --

A: Yeah, you know, I don't if shortages -- some of the -- repair, like those Humvees, they're not the right Humvees. We need the hard-topped, not these soft-tops, and that's like a hindrance, a major hindrance. Because that's stuff you need for these missions. You know, an MKT, a working MKT with those new burners on them instead of the old ones.

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So those are the major issues. I don't know. I don't know how they're ever going to fix that stuff. Just rewrite the whole M21E, the whole new (inaudible) maybe, to get us the new stuff we need. Update us, maybe.

Q: and when you left for your mobile station, what was the morale of your troops at that time?

A: Good. I got some guys -- 71 of them just came back from Bliss (sp?), a year-long activation, about four months before. So some of those guys, they're tired, and if they had their choice, they wouldn't have come. But I told them I needed them; I told them the country needed them, and they put on their best game face, and morale was good. Morale was good. Then the guys that hadn't deployed before, they were all fired up about it, so their momentum kind of fired up the older guys, so it went well.

Everybody was ready to go.

Q: So (inaudible) was already on mobilization at Fort Bliss prior to this current deployment, what kind of a mission were they on?

A: Law and order. They were at Fort Bliss for a year after September 11, regular garrison MP duties.

Q: OK, so they were on a full year term of duty, then.

A: Correct.

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Q: And when you arrived at Fort Bliss, what was the process that you had gone through when you were there?

A: That was a different kind of a mobe site. Last time I came here, I went through two or three different mobe sites, and everywhere you went, they had people with signs, to kind of make sure you got on the right bus, the right range, make sure you didn't have to do training schedules and get your people there. All you had to do was get them in formation in the morning, and they would kind of take it from there. In Fort Bliss, I think they tried. I think those guys tried, but it just -- maybe too much for them to handle, I think. They just didn't have the staff to handle it.

Q: Now is that because of what they call the UA's, Union Administrators, they didn't know what they were doing, or were understaffed as you just mentioned, or was that the fault of maybe another process?

A: No, I think at our home station, I think we should have received a packet that said, kind of, this is what's going to happen, this is what you need to do, here are the phone numbers, here's this and here's that. So you kind of preplan. Like if you want us to go there and you want us train on MVC stuff -- nobody knew that, so I didn't take any training gear with me. I was thinking we were going to mobe site to mobe and then come over here, but they want to

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do all this training, which is good, but they didn't have the training they needed to do it, and they expected the companies to bring it. Nobody told the Companies to bring it. So it kind of -- the UA's, I'm still not really sure what their lane is. I don't know what they -- I know he worked a couple equipment issues. I still don't know what their lane is, to tell you the truth. He's a nice guy. He seemed to work hard at whatever he was working at.

Q: But you didn't see any major accomplishments to make you and your troops go through the process easier?

A: I guess he was -- my understanding is he was working some M-tel issues of stuff we were short. Then, like, when we mobbed, when we left there, I kind of think he should have picked up the ball and taken our stuff down to port to make sure it got on the train, or on the boat, and that didn't happen. Kind of like a liaison between us and the people around Fort Bliss. I'm trying to think because, as far as tracking, you know, who had what shot records, and all that, you didn't track any of that, you didn't -- I'm not sure what their lane is.

(break in tape)

Q: First I just want some -- can you tell me, during your mobilization at Fort Bliss, were you able to get through

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the different SRP in your Fort protection without any problems?

A: Well, you know, the organization was kind of screwy because you didn't, especially in that first few days, you didn't know where you were going or how to get there, and these bus drivers -- thank God they had some people at Fort Bliss reporting, to tell the bus drivers where to go. There was just a lot of lack of information and a lot of -- you go to these briefings at night. Those briefings were usually during the time you had to be going through some other briefings, so if you didn't make it, you were just out of the loop. We did get through all that process, and I think a lot of it was because I had some pretty good NCO's that were there before, and they were able to kind of beat the system, you know, tell the bus driver where to go. They knew some MP's and some other people that -- (inaudible) were there before, so they knew the program. That's what saved us. That's what got us through that thing pretty rapidly. The staff over there -- it seems like they'd identify a problem, identify a solution, but just wouldn't put it into place. Took a while to kind of get that program running smooth.

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Q: And did you have any issues on getting the equipment for clothing issues or your J-list -- did you have any problems with those issues?

A: The clothing was a major hassle. I still have people without the proper uniforms. I don't understand why that -- it seems like they'd get it, and you'd run the people through, and there was just a constant shortage of DCU's and PA50 kind of items -- goggles, stuff that we need out here, goggles were never issued. Field dressings, never forget them. Not to mention medical bags for the combat life savers, it just wasn't there. For mobe site, I always thought they had warehouses full of that stuff. Didn't have it. The J-suits? Oh, my. Yeah, you couldn't get those things. My understanding was that while at your home station, you order a week before you're supposed to leave. They're supposed to meet up with you at your mobe site. If you order any sooner than that, then it can get sent to your home station. Well I waited. Seven days before we were supposed to mobe, I ordered it. It took them -- the day we flew, you know, it took them a month and a week to get it to us, and that's because it went to a storehouse. The J-suits just were not there. Thank God I had a pretty good MVC guy that made sure everybody had the right mask before we left. We did a lot of cross-delivery there at

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our home station. Stuff like harnesses, you couldn't get those. Any MVC thing, you could not get there at Fort Bliss. You couldn't get it.

Q: You were a high profile unit. You were going to be a ETW or tech MP unit, and so they knew that you had special requirements and that you had to get all your gear in place, yet they still weren't able to get you any of those elements of what you needed before you left.

A: I know. We left without stuff the guys needed -- goggles, you know? I tried to get some night vision devices. I could never get those. I think that's what that UA was going to work on, and I don't know, he couldn't make that happen. And then the J-suits. The day we left, I had this whole shortage of J-suits. There's a warehouse full of them in Bliss. I don't know why we went through all the bases and all the stress to try to get that stuff. They had it over there. I'm not really sure what they were holding up on it. But like harnesses for your J-- for your MVC mask, you couldn't get them. Stuff that they need, you know, sunscreen, foot powder, simple soldier stuff, they didn't have it. Didn't have it.

Q: So were you acquiring this equipment in any other fashion?

A: We went out of pocket. Went down to Local Economy, and bought a whole bunch of gun cleaning stuff, bug repellants.

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Soldiers had to have it. You know what I mean? A lot of these soldiers went out on their own and bought goggles. They're all wearing like Oakley ski glasses, you know? But the Army wouldn't give them what they had to have, so they went and bought it because they needed it. (inaudible) spent a lot of money. Everything was priority ordered through the Army channels but it still would take forever. Then, during that time of RSE, this master sergeant, b(6)-1 [REDACTED] I believe is her name. Anyway, like MP was ours, and (inaudible) -- what happened at home station, before I left there was an MP told me the (inaudible) that left prior to us -- they went to Fort Lewis. Well the boneheads forgot their holsters and their magazines and their magazine pouches. So they told my Company, give up 50 of your holsters, magazines, and magazine pouches. I says, OK, but I'm mobing. I need to get it back. Anyway, I sent up to Fort Lewis at 382nd. I went out the door there at the home station, and I didn't have 50 holsters, magazines, and magazine pouches. No bazaars -- anyway, that master sergeant, when we were in there, finally made it happen, but it was a nightmare. Had to go to the range over there, you know, 111 MP's, and I had like 25 magazines. We had holsters, we were packing the guns. We were on everything. Because you know, they didn't have them there at the mobe

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site. You couldn't draw them. Then the RST had to buy it off the market. They had to do all that civilian contracting stuff to get it to super troopers. They made it work, but it was a mess. It could have been a lot easier. The mobe station, yeah, the range -- they didn't have ear plugs. No ear plugs. They were in the range and they got no ear plugs. I don't think that mobe site was ready for mobilizing. Just equipment wise, they had a lot of people out there that were trying, good attitudes, pushing soldiers, but the equipment, the logistics of it, they didn't have it.

Q: After you finished your force protection, were there any issues after that point -- how much time after that was it before you actually left?

A: First we did that SRP thing, and that was an exercise in confusion. Nobody really knew where to go to get all that stuff done. And then we did a force protection. Those instructors, they tried, and they put on a good show. My soldiers enjoyed it, but then again, they expected the units to bring all these training aids -- blanks, blank adaptors, pyro. Nobody told the units to bring the shit. So you were out there going -- it could have been so much better. So they tried to put on a good show. Then we did the metal training. We did that for about three days.

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That was good. It kind of got people thinking about their lane, and stuff. But once again, we didn't have any training aids, so it was all just kind of going through the motions. It was like, you know, drill weekend. No training aids.

Q: When -- over at the mobe station, when they said you should have brought these and you didn't have them, what did they say?

A: They said, OK. They said, you just won't use them for your training. If they would have told me, I would brought them. I don't even know if I would have brought them.

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Mobe sites should -- they're going to train my unit, why would I bring [REDACTED] practice MVC suits, [REDACTED] blank adaptors, all this blank ammunition, if I'm going to mobe site to prepare to go to war? They should have that at the mobe site if that's what their training is. You know what I mean? For us to -- to tell me to bring it?

Q: No.

A: What am I going to do with it, bring it all over here? So, yeah. Not a lot of thought.

Q: And how did you get your notice as far as times to ship out?

A: It was odd, because we got done doing all our training, but we didn't get validated, because we didn't have the MVC

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suits. So Captain [REDACTED] got a cell phone call about two weeks after we got done with all our training. Some guy from -- 800 MP brigade, I guess it was, said, hey, you guys all ready to go? And she explained, we don't have any J-suits. And he said, oh, don't worry. We need you out here. About half hour later, the battalion there at Fort Bliss said hey, you've been bumped up, you're taking this flight and it's leaving Saturday, which was about 48 hours out. So, that's about how it came down. And so that time, that's when they broke in the warehouse and got us some J-suits and other stuff we needed to go.

Q: So while they wouldn't give it to you prior to, all of a sudden, because you're ready to get on the aircraft, they came out with the suits and they gave you (inaudible)?

A: Which validated us, which kind of -- they would have gave it to us sooner and validated us sooner, that would have let the 800 MP brigade, instead of making all these frantic phone calls trying to find MP's, they would have seen a validated unit. It was there on Fort Bliss, so it kind of defeats the whole validation thing. It's kind of the tail wagging the dog. If they would have validated us with that stuff they had in the warehouse, MP brigade, I'm assuming, could have looked at a sheet of paper, said, OK, 314 is now validated, let's get them out here, you know?

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Q: And after you got on the aircraft, what was the feeling of your troops as they boarded the aircraft and their fighting wills were up, and you're in the air flying, and you knew where you were off to, because at that point, the war had already started.

A: The war started and I think -- I try to spin them up, try to get them a little bit thinking about it, because you know, these guys never been out here. And I knew, based on my past experience, the moment you hit the ground, it can all go shitty on you. So I try to get them guys thinking, try to get them thinking -- there were some guys that were kind of scared about it all, some guys that were worried, and -- Morale was high, but there was just a lot of uncertainty. I try to stress in them to trust their leadership and they'll be all right, but just be ready. We trained them. They were good soldiers, ready to go. There were some people that were nervous, worried.

Q: In your flight, did you make stops along the way?

A: Yeah, we stopped in Germany or somewhere? I don't know.

Q: So it was a direct flight from Fort Bliss to Germany?

A: I think Germany, and then from there to over here, so one stop.

Q: And how was the feeling in your female soldiers during this period of time?

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A: They were worried. Males, females, they were all -- I tried to get them thinking. I tried to get them thinking, start thinking about what you're doing, you know? Where you're going isn't AT, it isn't drill weekend. People's lives -- real people shooting real guns with real bullets, and they need to wake up and get in the game. And even at that rest stop, when we stopped in Germany, people were making phone calls and you could tell there was not a calmness but more of a focus. Leaders were talking to their subordinates to make sure they had everything ready to go, they knew where everybody was at. They knew what was going to happen when we hit the ground. They knew -- yeah, people were doing -- (inaudible) -- doing for more of a sense of purpose than before. So it was good.

Q: And when you arrived in Kuwait, where did you land in?

A: Kuwait City Airport.

Q: And when you arrived, did anything happen at that time when you first arrived?

A: Last time I was here -- I told these guys -- I saw many planes get -- (inaudible) say, hey, <sup>b(6)-1</sup> [REDACTED] had to run troops back and forth -- I saw a lot of these guys getting SCUD attacks while the plane was on the ground. I said, it's night. People are running around trying to find MVC masks and J-suits. Don't be a knuckle head, have that shit with

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you, and sure as shit, soon as we landed, I was standing in the plane, making sure the Company got out and half of them were out sitting on the tarmac, a couple of them in a bus, the other half still on the plane, they got SCUD attack. So all command and control was kind of broke down, you know? But they did what they had to do, they closed the door. Everybody on the plane got their masks on, got down low. The guys on the tarmac got on the bus, got their masks on, got their J-suits on, closed all the windows. The leadership was working, you know? And they, yeah. They were thinking.

Q: So upon landing, all the focus -- instruction and training that you gave them earlier -- this would have come home in that this is no AT, as you put it. This is real time.

A: See, a lot of these guys thought, yeah, we're going to land in Kuwait City, and it's far away from Iraq, and this is a civilian airport. We're flying a civilian plane. Shit, we're going to get up to the terminal and stroll through just like we're going back -- on vacation. I says, no, fellas. This is what couldn't happen -- this is worst case scenario. The only thing was, we landed in the daylight, so at least we could see each other, you know what I mean? Yeah, we got SCUD attacked before we even got off the plane. I got my glasses broken before I even got off the

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plane. One of them waitresses jumping all over trying to find her glasses, too, so. But anyway, it was good. The soldiers, they did what they were supposed to do and the leadership worked. I mean, even though we were all spread out in different parts of the tarmac, in the plane, on the bus, the NCO's, whoever's near them, made sure they put their stuff, got where they had to be, and got accountability of the soldiers. The soldiers were focused, listening to what they were being told to do.

Q: At that time, you said some of them were in a bus outside, and some of you were still in the aircraft when they closed the door. What about the airline crew? What did they do?

A: They tried to get their -- they had civilian gas masks. They were putting their stuff on too. And of course they closed the door. Thank God they didn't try and take it off again, because we had people on the steps. Last time I saw that, they started moving the plane, so thank God they didn't do that. So anyway, but they closed the doors. They put on their masks, and they just waited until it became all clear. It came over, I guess, the radios.

Q: OK, so when you got the all clear sign, then you de-mask, and then you exited the aircraft.

A: Right. Then we got on the bus and sure enough, there's another SCUD attack. We sat down. It took us forever just

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to get to the A-pod, or whatever they call it. Yeah, it was like two or three SCUD attacks, and everybody's sitting on this bus, hotter than heck, and everybody's looking at each other like -- but this time, the good thing -- last time the Patriots would intercept the SCUD low, so you'd feel the explosion. You could hear it and feel it. This time, I guess, there was the interception elsewhere, because you never felt it. So it was a lot more easy, you know what I mean? It wasn't so nerve-wracking as before.

Q: Did you actually hear or see the Patriots going up, being cut off?

A: Last time, yes. This time, no. Here in Kuwait, I didn't hear any. I know one time, they had, I guess, one of the SCUDs ran kind of close to Arabdar (sp?), where we were at, and it rattled those warehouses we were sleeping in. Last time, yeah, you could actually see them intercepted there, in Saudi Arabia. That was kind of nerve-wracking.

Q: And the sense of being in your month here, the idea of the threat of having a gas attack or any kind of a biological attack, I'm sure that was a very stressful period of time for your (inaudible).

A: Yeah, they got real serious real quick. You know, they figured it out. You know, you can train them and you can train them and you can talk about it, but the first time

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you put it on in a real situation because you think there's a biological or nuclear attack coming or a chemical attack, they think -- even if that attack doesn't come, they still think about it, because they know. They hear the sirens, they see -- they see workers out there wearing full MVC stuff, trying to, you know, get inside. They know it's the real deal. They got very good at putting on those suits. It's the real deal.

Q: Once you finally arrived at Camp Arifjan, what happened after that -- what was -- what were your troops doing? Did you have a mission to start off with as soon as you arrived?

A: Yes. Everything we did -- you have to remember, there were all these SCUD attacks. It would take forever just to get the mess off, because you know, first thing they drop us off, and by that time it was dark, and we were in Arifjan, and they got all these warehouses, and I've got to go meet a Sergeant Major, and blah blah. Anyway, they said drop them off in one warehouse, but there was no lights, nobody knew where -- it was just a big fluster, and you know, the whole time people are in MVC suits, and masks, and so anyway, we got inside this one warehouse, and then a buddy of mine, another NCO came up, said, hey, this other warehouse has bunks and cots, and it's a couple down. I

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said, Well, OK. So we're all dragging our stuff, our rucksacks and duffle sacks. Anyway, we got them bedded down for the night. Then they got woken up a couple times because of the SCUD attacks.

Q: In your first day in arriving, how many SCUD attacks were there?

A: Quite a few. While we were in Arifjan, it seemed, you know, in the sha-- yeah, they were, you know, all the time.

Q: Was there any --

A: I think whenever a launch -- no matter where it was, whenever there was a missile launch, then they would do the lightning, lightning, lightning, even though if it wasn't coming this way, it was going somewhere else.

Q: Did any of the SCUDs actually make it through or make it near an encampment?

A: Yeah. One, I guess, they fired from a boat off in the Gulf, so it missed the radars picking it up, so there was no lightning, lightning, but it landed somewhere around the way, and you could feel it. Like I said earlier, it shook the sides of the warehouses, and then they came around saying lightning, lightning, so by that time, people -- that was in the middle of the night. People were up, getting their stuff on.

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Q: All right, First Sergeant, as you arrived here in Kuwait, and you were waiting for your orders for moving North, when did that come, and do you remember when you actually left Arifjan to travel up to (inaudible)?

A: You know, we were in Arifjan for probably about seven days before I sent one platoon up here to Buka (sp?), kind of as an advanced party for us. So we were there about seven days.

Q: And the main body followed after that, then?

A: About five days after that. So three platoons were there, almost two weeks, and one platoon was there about a week.

Q: So that runs toward the end of the first week of April?

A: Correct.

Q: Once you arrived here at Camp Buka (sp?), what were the conditions of the camp?

A: I came up with the advance party. We spent the night, to see what we were getting into. It was just a field. It was just dirt. There was -- 724th, I think, was trying to set up. The battalion 320 was trying to set up, but there was nothing, just dirt. We had -- they told us to get some tents out of a Conex (sp?) and start setting it up. The British were still running the compound. There was nothing.

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Q: At that time, how many prisoners were here at that time, that the British had under their control?

A: I couldn't tell you. I think right around 4 or 5,000.

Q: What kind of containment area did they have and security force did they have here at that time?

A: When I came up with that platoon, I didn't get down there and look at it, but I assume it's the same as the British run -- rapidly put up kind of a holding area, rather than a long term facility. My main concern was just the soldiers, getting them up here and getting them kind of situated. But yeah, it was -- I remember that one night I stayed up here, there were several escapes. Whenever there was an escape, they'd shoot a flair. I remember seeing several escapes. They had -- it just seemed, yeah, I wasn't really sure. It was a lot of confusion up here, everybody moving around. The EPW's, all I know is they were having a lot of escapes going on.

Q: And once your main body came up, what did -- what was your mission, and what exactly did you start doing first?

A: Well, you know, (inaudible) <sup>b(6)-1</sup> (sp?) led that first platoon up here. He did a real good job, because that night, or that next day, I guess, they put down, it's starting to work now, the EPW camp after I left. But he still went ahead and got most of the tents set up for us,

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some of the main body came up. Basically, we had to just unpack, and then that night, we started working down at the Camp. So there wasn't any down time. We hit the ground, unloaded our stuff, and sent people down to start doing what they had to do down there.

Q: And what were their jobs at that time?

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A: We came up here EPW guard -- we got tasked doing everything. I had [REDACTED] people, including the Commander and myself, and I got tasks for [REDACTED] people. We were running the in-processing, the -- they had the interviews and they were coming in -- (inaudible) or something like that. We had people on the guard detail, people escorting, and people feeding EPW, so we were tasked out completely.

Q: Once you did arrive, and you started the troops working, did you have to do any special security or refortifying the Camp?

A: The EPW Camp, or our live-in camp here?

Q: The EPW Camp.

A: Yeah, the British put it together, but it was not what we were kind of used to. They used different kind of wire, and it wasn't stretched right, and EPW's were calling out, so right off the bat, we had to start moving light sets, restringing concertina wire, filling holes, stuff like that.

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Q: After you at least fortified the -- (inaudible) the holding areas, were escapes lessened at that point?

A: They were, once we kind of got control of it on the perimeter. And then I had more -- you know, I set a pretty tight perimeter. They still try and escape, but we would catch them. Because the wire they were using was not razor wire, it's like barbed wire. You and I could get through it, so, I mean, it's just -- it wouldn't keep them in.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] -- we didn't have

enough light sets, so it was darkened down there. It was very hard to control.

Q: With the very primitive way of -- it was originally set up, this had to be a definite security factor for the soldiers.

A: Oh, yeah. Then, when they were escaping, they were running over the brim, coming into the living area, so the people that were (inaudible), were always kind of on guard anyway, just in case somebody came over the brim. Once I got the MP's set up, they would try to escape, but we caught them. I'd still see the flares go off, and the whistles. Yeah, it's kind of a tense environment. Then, too, there was a

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lot of unexploded ordinance (sp?) and stuff, and so there's a lot of booms going on, and there was -- the first week when the platoons got -- when my first platoon came up and they spent that night, there was small arms fire, and stuff going on, too, so it was a different environment.

Q: So the camp was under attack at different times?

A: I don't think it was under attack. I don't know what exactly it was, but there was a lot of explosions going on outside the camp and small arms fire, kind of towards the town over there, but the British were doing most of the security patrols, and I don't know exactly what they were doing. Just hearing all that kind of wakes you up.

Q: How many soldiers would be in each of the -- excuse me, how many prisoners were in each of the holding areas, and as to how many soldiers guarding them?

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A: They had like [redacted] compounds inside the camp, and each one had around [redacted] EPW's in it, so 320 would put -- there's [redacted] soldiers on the gate on the front side, and then behind every pen, I tried to put [redacted] I didn't have enough MP's, so I ended up putting my cooks out there behind the pens, and ad men, and my mechanics, and anybody that could carry a weapon, I had to put them on point, so we were stretched pretty thin.

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Q: With each of the five kind of prisoners in each of the camps, what were their conditions when they arrived -- the ones that you had seen -- were they in good condition, were they wounded, did you have different problems with them?

A: A lot of them were sick. A lot of them were wounded. The British were handling all the medical care, and I don't think they were getting -- between you and me, I don't think they were getting what they needed. If I was one of them, I wouldn't want to be receiving the medical treatment they received. Some of them were in bad shape. They were. And then even their clothing, the stuff that they'd been wearing during the war was dirty. The hygiene -- they were out of water and stuff. It was pretty nasty.

Q: For each of the prisoners, was there a certain process that was used to give them good hygiene and to feed them?

A: I guess the first night, we helped the British feed, to see how they did that. And then, that night, at about 2:00 in the morning, our battalion said, OK, 314th, you're going to feed them from now on. You saw how the British did it, so you guys just do it. The British, the way they did it was pretty fierce. There was a lot of chaos, people getting manhandled pretty rough. So it wasn't a learning -- it wasn't something to watch and learn how to do it. I put -- first day, I made two teams,  people in each team, to go

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in and figure that stuff out. I put some strong NCO's in there, and some aggressive soldiers, and they got them fed. The first couple days, it took them 6:00 in the morning to about 10:00 at night, but they got them fed two meals. It was -- yeah. Something like that, you don't train on. Something like that was just a task you have to accomplish.

Q: What was the process, did they just get a serving line to get the food? What was the process on that, do you recall that?

A: The whole thing was a process, you know, even getting the food to them, because they didn't have enough cooks, so I had to pull my cooks out of the MTT, which raised all sorts of hell, but I put them down there to cook for these EPW's, and they have these big tents, and they cook in these big garbage cans filled with food -- rice and soup and cheese and all this stuff, but then they give them the tents down at the camps and have to haul it in the back of these pickup trucks, and then there, once they got there, they'd unload it. They'd pick out four or five EPW's to drag it inside the compound, and they'd kind of put it in a line, and then they'd get those same four or five EPW's to dish it out. And my MP's would go in there and they would control the crowd, have them all sit down and try and make it fair. Because EPW just wanted fair. They wanted

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everybody to be fed the same. They didn't want a weak guy to get less and strong guys to get more. That was what was happening when the British were getting it. Guys weren't getting fed. So that was trying to get that control. That's what they wanted. That's what the majority of that pen wanted, and that's what we finally ended getting the captives. It's all a process.

Q: When they were getting the food, if one person got more or less than another, did anything occur during that period of time?

A: Oh, yeah. First off, they were all trying -- it was weird. Looking at the pen, you have a group of [REDACTED] <sup>b(2)-3</sup> You have them all sit down, and you try to get five or ten at a time, and you try to keep the line in order so everybody wasn't pushing and shoving, trying to fight their way to the front of the line. And then we'd check their ID card, their tag, and then we'd issue them the food and then they'd go back to their tents to eat it, and we'd have to keep them back by their tents rather than come back up towards the group. So it was all about control and making sure, no matter who you were, you got the same portion of food as everybody else.

Q: And did anything else go on within the compounds on a daily basis?

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A: A lot of fighting, fighting amongst each other, fighting with MP's.

Q: Why were they fighting amongst each other?

A: They wanted -- the little guys wanted food too. They wanted to be treated equal, and a lot of times, when they put them in there, they didn't categorize them properly. They put civilians in with soldiers in with Shiites, in with different religious backgrounds, kids in with adults. It was just <sup>b(2)-3</sup> people and there was no rhyme or reason for it. It's like putting the Bloods and the Crips together in the same pen. It just didn't work.

Q: So it brought out -- among themselves, because of the different sects that they came from?

A: I think, and then just the different backgrounds and different educational levels. They had the officers in there too, and they were trying to raise hell, because that's their job, you know what I mean? It just wasn't categorized properly.

Q: While you were trying to keep control, at any time did this get out of control, where maybe a riot might have occurred?

A: To be honest with you, the riot, that was more controlled than just a routine day. A routine day was out of control. There was no control. A riot, at least you know it was a riot. There were other stuff, I mean, they were -- yeah,

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it was brutal. We did have a couple major riots, and one time I thought they were going to lose the camp. They were out in the middle aisles, they were outside their pens. I had all my security around the sides, just trying to contain it.

Q: So they actually got out of the pens themselves.

A: Yeah. They had the camp. I thought we were going to lose the whole camp. I thought they were just -- yeah. It was a bad day. We did lose the day. They were outside the pens. We had no control of that camp.

Q: How did you get them back in? How did you -- how were you able to stop the rioting?

A: You know, Sergeant Major **[REDACTED]** <sup>b(6)-1</sup> took about **[REDACTED]** <sup>b(2)-3</sup> of my guys, and I took about **[REDACTED]** <sup>b(2)-3</sup>. He started at one end and I started at the other end, and just went into each pen and tried to take over each pen, while other pens were throwing rocks at us, throwing stakes at us, throwing anything they could find at us, and that pen fighting us. We shot a couple guys that day, and we fired a whole lot more rounds, hit them, got them back in their pens, though. We finally got some canine down there too, and that kind of calms it, and then we got every MP that's on this post, I think, and it must have been -- by the end of the day, there's probably

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around 500 MP's down there to help us out. They lost the pen -- they lost the compound that day, I think.

Q: During that period of time, you said there were a couple of shootings. What were the circumstances of that, and what was the outcome of the two?

A: They were all justified. One of my fellows -- they were swinging a stake at him -- a tent stake, a big one, you know, a pole with a nail on the end of it. And he shot him in the arm. And another guy, they were trying to get a pistol belt, and they thought it was a pistol in it, (inaudible), anyway, he shot a guy in the leg. Dropped the pistol belt.

Q: So he (inaudible) actually got the pistol belt?

A: Yeah, what it was was -- I think it was a 320th soldier, they were guarding the middle aisle, and for some reason, they left their pistol belt there when they -- they took off, because EPW's were all running outside the cage. We only had perimeter security, the individual pens. They were out and about, and they took off out of them. When they took off, they left their pistol belt with the holster on it, so an EPW was grabbing that, and they shot him, thinking there was a pistol there inside that holster.

Q: Were there any other injuries?

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A: That day? I think one MP broke his arm. Wasn't my guy.  
Few people hit with rocks, a few EPW's hit with batons, but no life-threatening injuries.

Q: Did you get to bring out your [REDACTED] and your other styles of riot control equipment?

A: Yeah, we had limited [REDACTED] because we were using the British [REDACTED] the British riot control equipment -- we didn't have any, so -- then my guys, they got in there. Before this all happened, the Sergeant Major put his arm (inaudible) -- with the rules of engagement, you're not supposed to shoot warning shots. He put his arm around me, said, you need to fire some warning shots. Fire them, whatever it takes to get this thing back. So I had my -- I was with my team. It was about five guys, it was -- all they had was shields, and they were stuck in the middle of this pen. I felt for them. They were about ready to run out of that pen, I tell you. They were just getting overwhelmed with people hitting them, hitting those [REDACTED] with 2x4's, so I went in there and started shooting my gun a few times. And we held the line. Then [REDACTED] shot one of them, and we were able to push them back. That was one of the major pens we were having trouble with.

Q: In that particular pen, were there more criminals than soldiers, or was it, again, just a whole mixture?



A: Just a whole mixture. They had civilian criminals, civilian soldiers, the officers were right across from them, and they were starting it off. They started it off (inaudible) personally, so -- !

Q: What about the following day, did anything occur the following day?

A: That day-- there was a riot like a day, or two days before that. Same thing, we went in there, but we didn't shoot anybody that day. A lot of warning shots. But after we took control of that pen that day, we got the officers out of there, sent them over to the new (inaudible), and took out some of the instigators from the individual pens, put them --

END OF SIDE

A: There you go. I think those EPW's figured it out, especially when they saw all those MP's at the end of the day. We beat them. And they knew they were beat, and they knew they better behave themselves. I think that's when the camp finally came under order.

Q: Were there any fatalities?

A: No. One of my guys on perimeter, a few days later -- my guys were inside feeding, and one of my perimeter guards, I bring them down to cover the guys inside the fence feeding,

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[REDACTED] All they had were

[REDACTED] A guy came out of the tent, charging him, one of my MP's, with a 2x4, and one of my guards shot him in the chest and killed him. That was probably about three or four days after the big riot.

Q: When that shooting occurred, was there any type of special procedures that you had to follow when someone is killed like that?

A: Yeah, you know. I'm surprised we didn't shoot more. I tell you what, I told that story (inaudible). We're lucky. Anyway, yeah. What happens is, of course, they pull them off duty, and then -- sits in a tent and then CID comes and interviews him, and they do a 15-6 and it's la, la, you know. He was justified; he saved a soldier's life. I'm going to put him in for a Bronze Star. Hopefully, somebody back at headquarters will figure it out. A second grade schoolteacher took somebody's life and he had a hard time dealing with it. But he made the right call. He made the right call. A good soldier.

Q: How did that soldier feel after that shooting?

A: He was kind of tore up on it for a few days, and I talked to him, I had the chaplain talk to him. Some of the other soldiers talked to him. I think the turning point, though, when -- (inaudible) [REDACTED] (sp?), he's the guy that almost

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got hit by that 2x4 -- and he pulled out a picture of his wife and his kids, and he told that soldier, hey, this is my wife and kids, this is my family. Thank you. I think that was the turning point. That's when he figured it out, that he did the right thing. He did what he was trained to do and had to do.

Q: Was this -- during these couple riots that occurred, was this also another wakeup call, for all your soldiers, again, this is real action. This is no playing around. You have to take the job seriously.

A: Well, here's the thing. You know, you got them guys. You spin them up at home station, and then you go to the mobe station. You're ready to go and then we sit around at mobe station for two weeks, and they go flat on you. Spin them up again, you get into Arifjan, you're ready to go, and then we sit around for a couple weeks and go flat on you. So you know, the emotional ups and downs of a deployment -- it's hard to keep them peaked for any period of time, because they start losing jobs, they get bored and they go flat on you. But during that period, while we were down there, every day was -- I'm telling you, every day was out of control. So they were spun up for a good six weeks while we were down there. Every day they were focused, ready. They were on the point, ready to do what they had

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to do. I've got some good soldiers, I'll tell you what. I was worried about putting that one back there that killed that guy, but I put him back on the point, and I tell you, I think today he'd make the same decision that he made that day, take the same shot.

Q: During the same period of time -- you said you had your female soldiers that are also guarding your prisoners -- did they experience anything that was out of the ordinary with the Iraqis, since they don't treat their women quite the way the U.S. treats their women?

A: Right or wrong, I don't know, but the battalion said they didn't want women going in and feeding the EPW's. I can see their reason, but I can tell you, I've got some fine female soldiers. (inaudible) EPW's, though, they were hard on them, so they probably made a good call telling me to keep them out of there. Yeah, they -- the hygiene, first off, down there. They had one pisser/shitter for boys, girls, it didn't matter. So just staying down there on point during a 12-hour shift was hard on them. And then the EPW's would constantly show them their private parts, just disrespecting them in our society. They were being very disrespectful, in a way that would be criminal back in our states, you know? But my female soldiers -- tip top. Not a one of them complained. Not a one of them refused to

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do it. I got some -- in this whole deployment, I've got some very good soldiers, and those females, they showed me something. They really did. I was concerned before we left, because I knew it was going to be tough out here. I knew about this culture, and they really --

Q: Did you warn them, or did someone else in the command or at the Camp here give them any kind of heads up as to what they may experience?

A: Oh, I told them. I told them. Day one, you know, because based on what I saw last time, and they beat me. They were smarter than me. They were better prepared than I prepared them for. They -- I got a couple MP5 -- female E5's, sharp. And they took those females -- there's <sup>b(2)-3</sup> of them altogether, and those female NCO's I got -- took those enlisted in and they just fixed them. Got them to make sure they had all the right sanitation equipment for there, told them all about the culture here, they really got them spun up well. Yeah. Very happy with those females, very happy.

Q: Up to this point though, your deployment, and being here at Camp Buka (sp?), have there been other situations that have put your soldiers at risk?

A: Yeah. Just last night I had -- a couple of my guys were transporting somebody in the back of a Douce (sp?). A guy

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stood up and started trying to slash his wrists with a Coke can, in the back of the Douce (sp?). I don't know why there was a Coke can in the back of a Douce (sp?), but there was, and (inaudible) was trying to slash his neck. My driver put the -- slammed on the brakes. Female MP grabbed the guy, slammed him into the back of the wall there, where the cab is, and subdued him. A lot of these guys are mental cases or on types of drugs, mental stability type drugs. There are some criminals, some murderers, some rapists, some real bad people, and any moment -- they're not just, you know, EPW's, there's some bad mix in there. So at any moment -- they've got to stay alert.

Q: So with the mix of some deranged or mentally offset individuals, or EPW's, are there certain special holding areas for these individuals?

A: Yes. We ran out of the holding areas, though, that was the bad thing, because we would just take them out for about a day and then put them back in the pen, because we ran out of them. Those guys I sent in to feed those EPW's, every day, had to deal with same jackasses, same mental cases, same trouble every day. The guys sitting on the fence, every day, had the same mental guy exposing himself to him every day. They did have some Conex (sp?) to set out.

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They filled those up and (inaudible) kind of reserved for the worst of the worst.

Q: Now that the Camp is starting to have less prisoners -- at one time there was as many as [REDACTED] prisoners, and now, I believe, we're closer to around [REDACTED]. How have you been able to keep your soldiers active, and has your mission changed since you originally arrived?

A: Yeah. They -- the Camp we were guarding actually plowed it down. Kept it going -- I don't -- Echelon's above me. They finished off that brand new EPW camp after the war was done, when we were down to about [REDACTED] EPW's, and I don't know why they did that, but -- the engineers did that, and we've got a lot of soldier issues on the ground here where we were living. This was a spearheaded operation and my soldiers did fine. I'm not complaining about it. But now, once again, they're going flat on me. You know, the peaks and valleys, right now. I got about -- they task me with [REDACTED] a shift and I've got three shifts working up with that in-processing, but I can see my in shields are taking care of it with probably about a dozen, because there's just nobody coming in. So to try and find things for them to do, I got some MWR runs going on. I've got my ship burning detail going on. I've got jazzercise in the morning for

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people that want to come. I've got a weight room set up with tv's. But they're going flat on me.

(break in tape)

Q: First Sergeant [REDACTED] can you related to any stories of your soldiers that may have risen to the occasion, that maybe excelled during this deployment?

A: Actually, I'm proud of all of them. They all did a good job. Company Commander on down. Those Army values, loyalty, number one. They were loyal to each other. I've got to hand it to Sergeant [REDACTED] (sp?). He figured out this feeding thing. I said here's what you've got to do. Figure out how to do it, and he did. He put together these teams, supervised them, got them working. Sergeant [REDACTED] Staff Sergeant [REDACTED], I knew that guy as an E5, and I was like, eh. I tell you what, though, he really pulled up his boots and he was pushing soldiers out here and making stuff happen. Some of these younger -- it's kind of neat, because some of these younger E6's I had, when they deployed at Texas, they were E5's. And now they're teaching those E5's what to do as E6's. The E4's are now E5's, and they're teaching these guys that haven't deployed before what to do. All my NCO's have done a real good job. Specialist [REDACTED] (sp?), the guy that actually shot and killed that EPW, that was a hell of a thing for him to

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do as a person. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] For him to make that call is good stuff. Staff Sergeant [REDACTED] -- what a guy. He's another one. I always thought he was just kind of -- you know, everybody's buddy, but he gets them privates going. He gets right in their face and he tells them what to do and he makes things happen. My NCO's, yeah. As far as the E4 and below, I see some of them guys just working point and squad. You have to watch them squad leaders and them Platoon Sergeants, who they -- because I know some of them guys have risen to the occasion. I know they have. They've done some good stuff out here. Very good stuff.

Q: First Sergeant, as you see the changing of the way -- the amount of prisoners that are here at Camp Hookah, and as you said, you're trying to keep the morale of the troops going, what have you done in your own coding area to bring up the morale of the troops as to when you first arrived?

A: In my living area?

Q: Yes.

A: When I first arrived, we didn't have anything. The first thing I did was to put up a shade tent so these guys didn't have to sit out in the sun and eat hot MRE's. Now we've got -- Sergeant [REDACTED] (sp?) actually, he and Sergeant

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[REDACTED] (sp?) went out and bought a TV and DVD player, and we set up a tent so people can watch movies at night. At the end of the day, they'll hold a raffle, and whoever wins it will get the TV and the DVD set, and that way, they'll recoup the money for what they purchased out of hock. We brought a weight set with us. We finally got our conex (sp?) in and we set that up. I had a chess tournament -- one of my specialists sponsored a house-wide chess tournament, and that was kind of good. One of my females is a black belt in karate, and she's going to do this jazz -- or tai bo? Tai bu?

Q: Tai bu.

A: Yeah. She's going to start that up tomorrow. I think they've got a little puppy dog in there, and I'm not going to raise too much hell about that, if they want to raise that dog. I tell them, fellas, I make them wear their uniform, and I tell them, they can be proud of what they're doing. They can be. I've got to get on them every now and then, but whatever I can do. I built them showers. I remember the day I got plastic seats for my toilets. Everybody smiled that day. It's the little things, in this environment, the little things. That's the spirit of operation, so everything -- everything's a better day, you know?

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Q: So when you arrived, you didn't even have toilet seats for your soldiers, or --

A: We didn't have toilets.

Q: You didn't even have toilets.

A: We had a slit trench dug in the back. You know, I started working right away as soon as I got here, so as soon as I could pull off a couple people, the first thing I'd do is build me a couple wooden shitters. Actually, my battalion built me those. I couldn't pull my people off. My battalion built me those shitters. And then the showers came later on, once I could pull some people off to build those for me.

Q: I understand also, shortly after you arrived here, you had some soldiers that started to become ill, and they kind of called it the Buka (sp?) virus. How many of your people went down during that?

A: I'd say about 2/3 of my company, probably about 70 soldiers. Yeah, we were in those EPW's tents, we were living -- using the rest room in open pits. You know, I had my guys down there, 12 on, 12 off, not a day off for about six weeks, and they were constantly exposed to that, the flies, going in the tents, doing searches, touching EPW's when they were transported. So they -- I got sick. It was everybody -- some days I had up to eight people in

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some form of throwing up, diarrhea, but in the sick  
(inaudible) of the hospital.

Q: That had to affect your mission as well, I'm sure.

A: Oh, yeah. I couldn't give anybody days off. The only time they got a day off was when they got sick on me. Yeah, then we run out of people. The whole thing's about rotation, you know what I mean? Trying to get a guy in out of the sun. So if you've got, you know, eight people out of 28 assigned, you can't -- yeah. It affects the mission.

Q: And how is that now? Has the virus gone through its cycle? Are you still having soldiers getting sick?

A: Honestly, as soon as they (inaudible) over that damned EPW camp, it stopped. About that same time, they put in this D-pack (sp?) and they put in plastic bathrooms, and yeah, now I haven't had a soldier sick that I'm aware of in about three, four, five days.

Q: And also, just the health and welfare of your troops -- is there one thing that you could say they crave the most in this hot environment?

A: Ice. Ice has been -- they started giving us ice about a week ago. I don't know why it took them so long to get ice. They knew when we got here. But now they keep running out. They bring it, they don't bring it. It's like you give a kid a sucker, then you take it away from

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him every couple of days, then you give it back.

(inaudible). Not just for morale, but the actual health of the soldier. It cools him off, improves morale, so ice is a huge thing. If I can keep getting them ice -- they ran out of ice these past few days, I was going to go off post and buy it myself. I said, I got no ice, I've got to cool them off.

Q: And what kind of future do you see happening to your company in the weeks and months ahead?

A: I see if they leave us -- this is too much dirt. The soldiers are going to start thinking about home, and they're going to get homesick. Morale's going to plummet. Retention's going to be affected. I hope they do something good with this. This a good company. I hope they do something good. Send us home. That's a good thing. Send us further north to do a mission. That's a good thing. Whatever. Don't just leave us idle, not in this environment. It's no good for them. It's no good for me.

Q: OK, First Sergeant, are there any other comments you'd like to add to the end of this interview, with any aspect of your deployment?

A: I was just talking to some of the fellows, if we were sitting back home, we would have been pissed off because we're not over here doing this. Even on a bad day, at the

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end of the day, they look back and say, wow, I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. This is what I joined for. This is what I'm supposed to be doing. They're going to be proud of this. A couple years after they get home, they're going to be very proud of what they've done. It's good stuff.

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Q: I thank you, First Sergeant [REDACTED], for your interview. I'd like to keep the dialogue open with you so that as time goes on, I could, perhaps, re-interview you for additional information as to what your company has done and your accomplishments. Is that OK with you?

A: Sure.

Q: Thank you. This ends this interview on the 22nd of May, 2003.

END OF INTERVIEW

END OF TAPE

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