

IFIT-35-120 Sergeant Major [REDACTED]

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Q: I'm with the 35th Military History Detachment, and I'm speaking with Command Sergeant Major [REDACTED]. He's the CSM of the 724th Battalion. This is the 21st day of May 2003. Sergeant Major, could you please give me your name? Spell your last name for me, and your position here in the battalion.

A: I'm [REDACTED] last name spelled [REDACTED] the Command Sergeant Major of the 724th MP Battalion.

Q: Sergeant Major, can you tell me when your unit was first alerted for activation?

A: The unit was first alerted in mid-October. We were officially alerted about three weeks prior to our mobilization.

Q: And what was the actual date that you were mobilized?

A: We were mobilized on the 27th of December, 2002.

Q: And did you do anything before that period of time, as far as preparation?

A: Yes, we had a 15-day AT that we started on about the 11th of November. And we also had some members of the unit in S-1 and S-4 that spent quite a bit of time doing RSTs and some AT, and myself, I came to the unit, the Colonel and I came to the unit several weeks before the AT. So we had

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several people working prior to AT, prior to mobilization as well.

Q: And when did you report to your mobe site and where was the mobe site?

A: We left Fort Lauderdale on the 3rd of January and got to Fort Dix on the same day.

Q: And how long did you spend there?

A: It's about five weeks.

Q: And you left Fort Dix at approximately what date?

A: One group left on the seventh, and the other group left on the eighth of February.

Q: And what was your destination?

A: Arifjan, Kuwait.

Q: And Sergeant Major, what I wanted to do is talk a little bit about your preparations during your mobilization at your mobe site, as well as at your home station. Can you give me a little bit more of a detailed account of what it was to prepare the unit for mobilization, and the problems or issues you may have faced?

A: OK, one of the luxuries that we had was an alert well in advance of our mobilization, which gave us a lot of time to prepare. Our unit had never mobilized as a single unit prior to that, so we've never loaded out all of our equipment. So we didn't, we weren't trained on how to load

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our equipment. One of the problems we ran into was that we had ordered I believe it was sixteen containers for our equipment and we were given initially just eight, and then later we had a total of eleven to load and send to Kuwait. All the other equipment was loaded on flatbeds and taken up to Fort Dix, which had to be loaded into containers and sent out from there. So there was some times when, not having done this before, we had to load containers, unload them, then reload them again to make sure that we had the right spacing. And then when we found out that we didn't have the number of containers that we were supposed to, we had to take everything out and reload it again so we could get a tighter fit. So we had a lot of practice loading conexas(?).

Q: So this was a major logistical problem, then, for the unit.

A: It was. Some of the logistical things that happened in our advantage was that our RSC provided us with 11 laptops which would later be used for our processing, in the processing line, which other RSC's didn't give them the support of their battalions. So some of the logistics really worked out for us.

Q: Now, in pre-planning, you had mentioned that a lot of the equipment was loaded on flatbeds. How many flatbeds did you have to haul up to Fort Dix?

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A: I believe it was six. Not sure about that. Somewhere around there.

Q: All right. And how many -- what was the strength of the unit?

A: Prior to the mobilization, there was about 240. The authorized strength is 151. We took 151 to Fort Dix. So we took 100 percent.

Q: And the troops that you did not take, what happened to those?

A: The ones that we didn't take were assigned to another unit, to the 810th Battalion. Later, many of them were called up also.

Q: And did you have any major issues or concerns with your soldiers as to their activation? Were they ready to go? Did they have their wills done? Were they able to take care of all those soldiering skills with family readiness and so forth before you departed for your mobe stations?

A: Yeah, we did quite a bit of training before we left, also. So we were able to do that because of the time that we had. Some of the issues that we had, I'd say about 95 percent of the unit was ready to go. They contacted their employers. Their employers were pretty receptive to it. A few of us, of course, were laid off prior to that mobilization, so you have that usual thing. Some of the soldiers that have

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their own business, they were having to either give up their business or turn it over to somebody and put it in hands of someone they could trust. And so there was a lot of that. I got a lot of soldier issues on that. And I would brief them on the legality what their companies have to do, and that sort of thing. But most of the companies supported the troops. Especially at that period of time, they knew we were going to war and so they were really receptive. They had a really good family support group as well.

Q: And is that family support still continuing?

A: Yes, sir, it is. Very much so.

Q: And how are you able to stay in touch with your family support people?

A: Master Sergeant ^{b(6)-1} [REDACTED] his wife is heading that up as well as company commander's wife. They contact them both by e-mail and by voice mail quite often. There have been some groups back home that have taken us under their wings. I can't think of the name of the organization. VFW had adopted our unit, so they're doing quite a bit for our unit as well. So they sent a lot of care packages, but they've also taken care of the families back home as well.

Q: I'm sure that's helped out the morale of each of your soldiers, to know that they can get in touch with the

family members and if there are issues there's someone home that is able to take care of this for them.

A: Oh, that's extremely important. And they're were in the business before we even left. They were setting everything up, doing cook-outs and things like that prior to our (inaudible).

Q: So you have a good family support system going prior to this mobilization.

A: We did, I think.

Q: And what about your assets that you have, where you able to gather all the different things needed for your battalion? Were you able to -- did you lack in certain equipments?

A: Yeah, we were lacking some immersion(?) heaters, some of the equipment that we have. For example, the Duesome(?) has, the old Duesome(?) has, they don't have the parts that -- the Army has gone to five guns(?), and so that was an issue. But one of the advantages we had again was our operations sergeant major also works in the -- I can't think of the term. The mechanical issue, he's on that side of the house, so he was able to work issues getting our equipment up and running prior to our mobilization. The biggest issue, probably, was Class 8. We have to have a lot of supplies for DPW's in the Class 8 arena.

Q: What is the Class 8?

A: Class 8 is medical supplies.

Q: Medical supplies, OK.

A: The Army looks at Class 8 for the unit, but they don't always look for the EPW, so they didn't understand why we had to have such a massive amount of medical supplies, and so that was quite a struggle for quite a bit of time even from our home station into the mobe site, and carried over into Arifjan.

Q: So the type of equipment you have to take with you, and supplies, are not just your MP supplies. You have to bring a lot of other types of supplies with you. Medical is one. What are some of the others that you had to bring, that's out of the norm for maybe a lot of other units?

A: We carry ten-inch -- most of the supplies, for example, our cooking supplies for the EPW's, our cooks don't cook for themselves. We're dependent on one of our companies to feed us. All of our cooks are geared towards the EPW's. Our medical people are geared towards EPW's as well, although they take care of us as well. So a lot of the MOS's and a lot of the jobs that people do are geared towards the EPW.

Q: And when you've got your mobe orders, do they give you a mission statement as to what the battalion was expected?

A: Not really. It was still classified at that time. They

just gave us -- in fact, we didn't know that we were going to Iraq. The troops didn't know we were going to Iraq until the day we left, that time that we left. And it was made public, I believe, a couple days before we actually mobilized. They basically knew, they guessed, but they didn't know whether they we were going to Iraq or Afghanistan, for example. So they didn't really know. That was one of the things that I had to contend with, troops asking me, "Do you know where we're going?" Yeah, but I can't tell you. That kind of thing.

Q: So it was part of the fear of the unknown.

A: Right.

Q: And in your last days just before you left your home station, did you have a family support party, or gathering, and to (inaudible) all the information to the families?

A: We left on a Monday. That Sunday we had the ceremony. We had quite a few people who came. Great turn-out. Being the first unit to be deployed out of West Palm Beach area, and Fort Lauderdale area, we had quite a bit of media that came as well. So we had a lot of support both from our family support group, the unit, and also companies that donated quite a bit. So that was a blessing.

Q: Were there any other concerns or issues that you had as you were leaving your home station?

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A: Not that I can really think of. Of course, when we were first alerted, we were missing 11 of our critical slots. And so we were trying to cross-level those. And the RSC ended up cross-leveling all of our spots, so we went with 100 percent. Some of the other soldier concerns, I mentioned the employment aspect. Promotions, we were looking at trying to get everybody promoted that was on the standing list, and we were able to do that as well. And so I think all in all, before we left, we got to take care of most of the issues that we had on hand.

Q: So in taking care of the soldier issues, that should've kept the morale pretty high, then.

A: Oh, yeah. The morale was very high, I think.

Q: And how did you depart from your home station to your mobe station?

A: We jumped on a bus and went to the airport and flew.

Q: So you had aircraft.

A: You had aircraft.

Q: Not a bus all the way through to Fort Dix, huh?

A: No. That's quite a long way from Florida. One of the issues on morale, I want to mention, though, the fact that we were alerted early. There was a period of time when the morale started going down, because they kept delaying us and delaying us, so there was the unknown of not knowing

where we were going, and not knowing when. If we had known we were going, say, a week before Christmas, we could've done our Christmas thing. But then when we did get alerted, we knew exactly when we were leaving and the morale started rising again from there. So I wanted to mention that aspect as well.

Q: This being mobilized and being sent right after Christmas, I'm sure that had to get a lot of emotion started with the troops, and so was there any thoughts on their minds as to how to the idea that you might be mobilized at all, then, with all the different delays?

A: There was a period of time when we thought we might not be. We thought we might be taken off the list, that the war might not happen or whatever. So there was short period of time that we probably might be taken off the list to go. But then, it wasn't too long after that that we got word that we were being mobilized. The troops not knowing where they were going, they were apprehensive. They could tell their employer that they were being called up, and then I don't know when we're going to be called up, or even if we are going to be called up. So I've gotten a lot of that in my outfit as well.

Q: And did you receive much support from your RSC?

A: We did. Our RSC really took care of us. We talked a

little bit about the cross-leveling soldiers, also the equipment. But the promotions were a good aspect, also, because what they had to do is they had to look at the strength within the RSC to make sure they could promote everybody on the list. And so everybody did get slots and was able to get promoted that way.

Q: And where did they find these other 11 people for you?

A: From all over, actually. We got some from as far north as South Carolina. We got some from Atlanta area.

Q: And they're all in your same RSC, though?

A: Yes.

Q: OK.

A: Yeah, they all came from the same RSC. Up to the mobe station.

Q: And then once you left for your mobe station, and you arrived at Fort Dix, what were the troops faced with and how did you start your SRP process?

A: The first big shock for our troops, (inaudible) in Florida, was that some had never seen snow. And so they had to get acclimatized for that. That was a big issue for a few of them. But we were blessed a little bit, because it wasn't all that cold when we got there. It was maybe 35 degrees. It started snowing, you know, and so they got to see snow. And as time went on, they went through some periods of

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really cold weather, and some of them had never been through that kind of weather. So that was one issue that they had. Some other issues were the length of time that we were there, going through the SRP process, that the initial process part where you go through the personnel and the medical and things like that took about -- I think they got the whole battalion through in a couple of days. But there were a lot of medical issues that kept cropping up, and the group that was tracking didn't have a good method of tracking, and so there were times when people would miss appointments and things, because they didn't know they had the appointments. And so there was those types of issues with the SRP part.

Q: From your preparations that you had, doing your AT, for the organizational weight at Fort Dix (inaudible), running everything, did you have most if not all of your required information available to your soldiers so it went more smoothly for you?

A: Yeah. One of the things that did occur, we had an SRP with the unit. The RSC did an RSP. So we had most of our documentation together before we left. And then when we went through the SRP at Fort Dix, the personnel side went very well for us. Like I said, the medical issue was probably the biggest hit that we took.

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Q: And did they give everyone their shots?

A: Oh, yeah. That was -- we got some prior, also. So we didn't have the usual 11 or 13 shots all at one time. We had maybe four or five of them.

Q: And were there any holdbacks for that portion of the SRP for any reasons?

A: During the SRP part? Or while we were at Fort Dix. We had just in the battalion headquarters, we probably had about 30, 35 people that were medical holds or on a medical list, per se, and they encompassed everything from bad knees to having high cholesterol and needing counseling for that. So that list continually shrank until we left Fort Dix.

Q: So none of those 30 were held over. They were eventually cleared of everything, and they did catch up medically and were part of the unit as they were deployed, then.

A: All but 10. We lost 10 due to medical, in just HHP. We had, I think, I can't remember the exact number. I think we had around 30 for the whole battalion, for the different companies in the HHP.

Q: Now, when you went to your mobe station as a battalion, had the unit been together before, with all the separate companies?

A: No, they hadn't. In fact, when we first got the orders down, we were supposed to go to Fort Dix -- Fort Stewart,

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rather -- and the other three companies were going to different mobe sites. All four companies going to different mobe sites. But the decision was made to bring us to Fort Dix as a battalion, which was to me one of the best decision they made for our battalion.

Q: Had you met the other company commanders and CSMs for the other companies, and first sergeants prior to that time?

A: No. Never met them before. We talked to them over the phone, but that's the extent. And we were limited in what we could say over the phone anyway, because a lot of it was still classified.

Q: And with the -- there was no problem as far as the integration of the three units with the battalion? Did you have any growing pains as far as getting all the coordination and the assigned duties of each of your companies?

A: Yeah, we were at Fort Dix. We didn't have OPCON to any of our subordinate units. They were all separate. Mat Ops(?) considered each unit as a separate unit even though they were still under the 724th. So some of the growing pains that we had were things like when the buses didn't show up, the companies naturally thought it was the battalion not doing their job. But that was other entities that were in charge of that, so we had that aspect. But I think from

the very beginning we began a relationship with the staff, and the company staff, and the battalion staff, and so a lot of those growing pains were subsided pretty quickly.

Q: And what about with the support from the garrison command? Did they give you much support?

A: The garrison command, I believe did. But the problem with the garrison, Mat Ops(?), and the battalion -- the brigade that was in charge of our MRE training weren't connected, and so there was a lot of times when there was some communication disconnect between the garrison and the Mat Ops(?) and the MRE people. And then of course, having four different companies that are on a different track, training track, was kind of a difficulty, bringing everything together sometimes.

Q: And with the organization of bringing all three companies together, what were the styles of companies that make up the command?

A: We had -- the battalion is made up of RHHD, which is Fort Lauderdale. They had the 223, which was from Kentucky. They're National Guard. We're Army Reserve. And they had the 267 from Tennessee, which is also National Guard, and the 822 is from the Chicago area Army Reserve. The 223 is the Escort Company, which is actually a combat supporter, originally, that they'd made into an escort company. And

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the other two companies were combat support, or guard companies.

Q: And the integration of Reserve and National Guard, how did that work? Was that an easy transition? Were there certain things that the Guard does that the Reserves do not do, or in place of (inaudible)?

A: I didn't find any problems between the Reserve and National Guard. I thought we had a really good relationship from the beginning and I don't think that was really an issue. We were all being mobilized so we're active duty now. Some of the issues I've seen here, though, is promotion issues, because the Guard promotes within the Guard, so there's not a lot that I can do to help them with their promotions. I have been able to do that with the Army Reserves, though. All in all, I don't think there was really an issue between the Guards and Reserves at all.

Q: Is it common to have Guard and Reserve units under a battalion?

A: I don't know. I've never really thought about it. I guess it is. Nowadays, I guess it is.

Q: OK. During the next phase of your move station for force protection, were there any issues that you would face for that phase of your mobilization?

A: While we're at Fort Dix?

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Q: While you're at Fort Dix, yes.

A: Yeah, there was a lot of trouble with transportation. One of the problems at Fort Dix was that they weren't expecting the big influx of people that they actually got, and so we were lucky that we were one of the first units there that we got. We were put in fairly nice quarters, I guess you could call them that. But we were put together as a battalion. Some of the units that came in after us faced problems with housing and transportation as well. I don't think Fort Dix was really set up with the amount of folks that they had as far as transportation and housing and things like that. So transportation was a big issue.

Q: Did they have any other shortages for your soldiers?

A: Dining facilities, they had. When we got there, we had the dining facility right beside us was OK, but as more people came in it started becoming loaded down and they didn't have other dining facilities to open. They were rebuilding a lot of stuff, because all of the barracks that we were in were left over from basic training, 10 or 15 years prior. So there was a lot of issues. One of the issues that we had in the barracks was sicknesses. We had quite a bit of sickness because of the state that the barracks were in. There was a lot of dust and things like that, which became a problem. Some of that was because of the cold, but a lot

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of it was the state of the barracks.

Q: And with the health of the soldiers, did that interfere with getting your training done?

A: At times. Not a lot, because it was minimal sicknesses, like colds and things like that, or mild fevers. Things that mess up your stomach. That type of thing. But it was not really a show-stopper in that respect, though.

Q: During the force-protection phase, again, of your move, were there certain areas where there was more emphasis than any others?

A: The MRE, I thought, was well-planned and well-conducted. That was probably one of the things, the most positive things that came out of Fort Dix, was that we went through an MRE and it was set up for our mission. The two guard companies had never done a guard mission where they were guarding HMMVs(?). Normally, a guard company might guard something to the outside. Well, now they're guarding the inside. So I thought the MRE was a great advantage for us, because it really set them up to do their mission.

Q: So they had a whole conflict set up for that purpose, then.

A: Yeah.

Q: What about weapons qualification? Were you able to get all your people qualified in all the different weapons systems that you have?

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A: That became a problem. With the HHD, for example, mostly because they weren't used to firing in the cold. So we had 11 people that didn't qualify on M-16. Everybody got through the 9 mil. A couple of the companies, I think the 223 had trouble qualifying on their Mark 19s because they didn't have the night vision equipment that they were supposed to, the brackets that allow them to mount it onto their Mark 19s, so they couldn't night qualify. Another problem that happened towards the end of our period at Fort Dix, they started running out of ammunition, so not everybody got qualified on the 203 until the very end. So one company was getting ready to get on the plane, and hadn't qualified, hadn't finished qualifying on the 203's, and so they finally got the ammo for them and got them qualified and get them out the door.

Q: And what about with your NBC training? Was there a lot (inaudible) emphasis on NBC training this time?

A: There was. The JLIST(?) suit was hit pretty heavily. Some of us old folks had never been in a JLIST(?) suit. But the garrison had that pretty covered. I think they did a good job on training them on that. We had a few people that needed larger masks and larger suits, so that become a problem. But other than that, NBC was well taken care of.

Q: And how long did it take to get those extra suits in, and

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masks, while you were there?

A: We already had the suits. Actually, we had the suits before we came.

Q: The special-order suits.

A: Oh, the special orders. We left, I believe, two people behind waiting on either masks or JLIST suits. One of them never deployed medically. The other came probably a couple weeks after we deployed.

Q: OK, Sergeant Major. Going into your early growing pains of bringing your three companies together under the battalion, did you have any guidance or especial instruction to your senior NCO staff or any other situations that may have occurred in the development of the whole battalion under your command?

A: Yeah, one of the things that the battalion started doing when we first got there was having staff meetings with the whole staff. And so the staff got used to the companies and the companies got used to the staff. After each meeting, I would get together with the first sergeants and meet with them, and so I got to know the first sergeants. One of the companies had a problem with the first sergeant, because they had an E-7 as an acting first sergeant, and they brought in an E-8 for the first sergeant slot that ended up becoming a P-3, and so he was non-deployable, and

so they brought in another guy. Well, they ended up having three first sergeants. But I think it worked out. Through the whole time I was talking to each of the first sergeants in that company to get to know them and to ensure that the troops were being taken care of, in all three cases they had strong NCOs, so the company felt like they were taken care of with their first sergeant. I don't think there was any animosity that the guy that, the E-7 that was the original first sergeant, was not able to deploy as a first sergeant. I thought they brought in a good choice for the first sergeant that actually deployed with them. But as far as the cadre is concerned, I think just meeting with the first sergeants, having good first sergeants was advantageous to me.

Q: Sergeant Major, as the force protection(?) finished and the SRP's been finished, now we're in the stage of getting your equipment to bagged(?) and loaded, ready to ship. How did that go, and how did your equipment ship?

A: The equipment that came on flatbeds had to be loaded into conexes(?), so we had to get conexes(?) for that. They shipped those to us and we ended up having to reload some of the equipment that was in other conexes(?) into those, as well as the flatbed equipment. And so that was an issue of time and getting the troops to the conexes(?) to load.

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All of our vehicle assets were taken from us about the third day of getting to Fort Dix. They were prepared for shipping, and so we never saw our vehicles, and that's why Fort Dix had to supply all the transportation. We were able to use all our weapons for qualification, except for a few of the (inaudible) weapons, because that was late in the training cycle. And so we ended up having to crate those up to put on the aircraft. And so the 249s were the only ones that we weren't able to qualify on those weapons. That's not critical with those, because you don't have to zero with those. So that was the thing (inaudible).

Q: And in the crating of all your equipment and so forth, did that harm your training at Fort Dix?

A: It delayed some, but I don't believe it harmed the training, no.

Q: And exactly when did they ship the equipment from your remote station?

A: Most of the equipment went out several weeks before we left, probably about three weeks before we left. Some of the -- all but a couple of the containers, I believe, were shipped by ship, and then we had another container that was shipped by air. So most of it went out several weeks before we left. Our weapons were carried on the aircraft, though, that we flew on.

Q: And when you left your mobile station and were on the plane to come to Kuwait, upon your arrival did anything unusual happen in your arrival?

A: When we completed the MRE, we validated that evening. That was about the fifth of February. And we were supposed to fly, our given date was between the 11th and the 14th of February. The night that we finished the MRE and the validation, the day that we completed our validation we got a call about 1800 that told us we were leaving in two more days, so we had to scramble to get everything packed and ready for the aircraft, including our ammo that we were supposed to carry and things like that. So we were given a real short fuse to get on the aircraft and fly.

Q: And at that point, knowing that you were ready to get on the aircraft, all your troops have been in the training, you've had a chance to witness how well they've been able to perform. What was the sense of the moods and so forth when they finally got on the aircraft?

A: I think the troops were ready to go. We had been at Fort Dix a long time, and so they were ready to get out. There were a lot of people coming into Fort Dix, so space was getting tight, so the troops were ready to get out of there. They were up for it.

Q: And once the plane took off, wheels up, they knew that they

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were leaving and there was no return at that point. You're going over into what was possibly a worse situation, you know your purpose of coming over. Did the soldiers talk among themselves on what your expectations were in getting into a hostile situation?

A: Yeah. As a matter of fact, the Colonel and I got together with each of the companies individually and talked about our mission, what we were going to be going into, where we were going, and that sort of thing. We still couldn't really say that we were going into Iraq, but they knew we were coming over to deploy. They knew we were coming here, so they knew what we were doing. It's pretty obvious, because we're an IR battalion, which is EPW, so they know that they're going to be running an EPW encampment. So they know what their mission is. They just didn't know where they were going to do it. I think those talks with the Colonel and myself at the companies really gave the companies a sense that we were giving them the information that we knew. And that is something that we've carried on since we've been here, was trying to keep the troops informed. I call them my fireside chats. So honestly, we've been keeping them informed. That way, they're going to perform better for you if they know what's ahead of them.

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Q: OK. I'm going to stop just a moment. (pause) OK, Sergeant Major, you've now finished everything in your move station over at Fort Dix, and you're on your way over to Kuwait and Arifjan. Can you tell me when your arrival date was?

A: It was actually three flights from the battalion. The first one, we were the first one to leave on the 822. The commander and myself, the S3, the XO. About five of us from the battalion and the 822 left on the seventh, on the sixth actually, and we flew to Ireland. We actually got stuck there a night, because they didn't have (inaudible) to fly over Saudi Arabia, so that was pretty nice because they put us up and that was a hidden enjoyment that we got. The rest of the battalion and the other companies flew after us on two different flights, and they both arrived before we did. And so, we got to Arifjan on the seventh of February, or actually flew in to the airport, to the APOD, on the seventh at about three in the morning and then got to Arifjan later that morning. So all of us were on the ground by the seventh of February.

Q: So what kind of conditions did you have when you came to Camp Arifjan?

A: They put us in a warehouse with 1200 of our closest friends, so were basically in warehouses on cots with all of our equipment. And at the time, it wasn't really hot,

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so it wasn't that bad. They'd get cold at night, actually, so you'd have to bundle up at night. And depending, sandstorms, it wasn't that bad.

Q: And when you arrived in Arifjan, were your vehicles and all your other assets, were they already here for you?

A: They followed about two weeks after. About a week after, actually.

Q: And during that time, what did you do, as far as the different companies? What did they do as far as occupying their time while you were here?

A: After our vehicles got there, we actually took on some missions. We had one company that was starting the APOD. We had another company starting the SPOD. We had some troops that went out on a ship, guarding ammunition on a ship, I think about 10 or 15 guys that did that. We also had the TSB, the ammunition point, and some force protection. We did quite a bit, because we were the first MP battalion on the ground with equipment. The 220th Brigade hadn't got in theater yet. They were the force protection MPs, and so we were doing quite a bit of everything. We also did quite a few escort missions where we'd have to drive people back and forth to different locations. When the (inaudible) first got on ground, the 223 Escort Company escorted them to -- it was New Jersey,

one of the camps up in North (inaudible). So we were pretty occupied most of the time that we were at Arifjan.

Q: OK, when you were doing some of these patrols and some of these escort services, this was after your equipment arrived? Or did you use other equipment when you were here?

A: Some of it was before, but most of the things we did before were on Arifjan, so we didn't have to have the equipment. Everything else we did was after we got the equipment.

Q: OK. While you were at Arifjan, this was before the ground war had started in Iraq. Were there any safety precautions that you had to undertake?

A: Not really. Just you had to wear your mask with you. And if you went outside the camp, you had to have your flak jacket on, Kevlar and whatnot. They wouldn't allow you to load your weapon. You couldn't put a magazine in your weapon, so that was an issue that we ran into several times. Before the ground war started, I think they started loading weapons if you went out on an escort, but not for any other reason. So we were able to have loaded weapons, but then there was issues of learning(?) the weapons and things like that.

Q: What kind of issues would those have been?

A: We had a couple of accidental discharges. Those were the

big issues.

Q: OK. And during the discharges, where there any injuries.

A: No. There was two. One through a roof, and the other into a barrel.

Q: So after that point, then you developed a tighter security on the clearing(?) the weapons, I would imagine.

A: Yes, we did.

Q: OK. And now that you're on the ground, you're in Camp Arifjan, the companies that you're now starting to work with, were you able to formulate and get a better sense of what their capabilities were now that you're able to start seeing them in action?

A: Yes, the Colonel and I quite often would go out and observe the companies at the APOD and the SPOD and the various places they were and so we were able to observe them. And we had our staff briefings every night. We'd set up a talk right beside the...

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Q: ...performing and start seeing how the performances were, were you able to re-evaluate their performance and give them guidance and direction as to how you wanted their performance to be conducted?

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A: Yes, I noticed -- right off the bat, I noticed 223 was a really strong company, and so I didn't have to give them much guidance.

Q: And what were the 223 Company called?

A: 223 Escort MP Company. They were the escort company.

Q: And do they have a nickname?

A: Actually, they have three. One of them's the Wolf Pack. That's one of the cartoons. I can't remember what the other two are. But they were -- that unit, that particular unit was a really tight, cohesive unit. I think they had deployed together before, and so they were really good units. And it's kind of a toss-up between them and the 267. They were pretty strong as well, on their -- they're go-getters as well. 822's not far behind. I don't want to give the idea they're not a strong unit.

Q: Now, with each of the units, now, you did mention before that what their role is. Can you tell me again what the 223 and the 267 and the 822, what their main responsibilities are in their performance?

A: The 724th IR(?) Battalion itself actually runs the compound inside the DPW(?) camp. They're the ones that house, feed, and take care of all the prisoners. Then within the compound, you have two companies, the 822 and the 267, which are guard companies. Their mission is to guard

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inside the perimeter of the compound. So they're external to the -- we have individual compounds that have 500 DPW's in them. And then you have the camp, which is where the guard companies guard. So the 822 and the 267 are the two guard companies. And the 223 is the escort guard company. Their task is to go get the prisoners from the four holding areas and bring them back to the camp. Does that make it clear?

Q: Yes.

A: OK.

Q: And when they were starting their beginning missions at Camp Arifjan, you already mentioned that they were at the APOD, SPOD, shipped ASP(?). Were there any issues that they had to deal with that were foreign to them originally and that now they are learning as they go?

A: Not really, because their MPs are trained to do those types of missions. That's not the mission that they were designed to do here. But they're all trained for force detection and law and order and all of that sort of thing. So they were well-versed on how to do that, and some of the feedback that we got from these different entities said that they were really pleased with the MPs being there. The APOD in particular, the APOD and the SPOD, for example, had infantry soldiers that were doing force protection

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before the MPs got there, and the comments were that they were glad to see MPs because MPs had the force behind them, so to speak. They're aggressive and in-force protection, so they're not afraid to stop people and do MP types of things, where infantry are not used to doing that. So they were glad to see the MPs on the ground doing that sort of thing.

Q: And when your three different companies started some of the escort services, what kinds of units were they escorting, and what were they escorting them to?

A: Initially, some of the infantry, some of the maneuver units that were coming onto the ground and going to their particular camps, Camp New York, Camp New Jersey, and those types of camps which were up in the northern part of Kuwait.

Q: And do you recall what those units were?

A: One of the first was the big unit(?) that came on the ground and we had to escort up. And then there were some other escorts for log packs(?) and things like that, up to the various camps. Nothing in Iraq yet, because the ground war hadn't started yet. So, everything was around the country. But it was kind of a little bit of everything, mostly log packs(?) and some of the units that were going to different camps. And actually, from the APOD it was

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anybody that flew in. They had to be escorted to either Arifjan or wherever they were going, so that we were going quite a few different places.

Q: The SPOD, so they were providing ship support.

A: Yeah, force protection for the shipyard.

Q: Everything in the shipyard, the (inaudible) area.

A: Yeah.

Q: And how was it that you started to move up further north, then, as a company?

A: Well, the Colonel decided she wanted us to be in Coyote(?) or the northern part of Kuwait before the ground war started, because of the fact that -- our thinking was that the ground war started and we were still in Arifjan, it would be tough for us to get out. Our mission told us to go into Iraq on somewhere around D-plus-three. So a couple of days after the ground war started, we had to be ready to roll into Iraq. So the thinking was, if we could set up a camp prior to that and be ready to move, then we'd be ready to do our mission. Some of the logistical part of that was, we had 600 containers to move forward, also. So those needed to be staged up in Coyote, in order to move those forward to our theater.

Q: What was in the contents of the 600 containers?

A: The containers contained our equipment, plus all the EPW

equipment that was procured for the EPW camps. Not just the camp here, but there was originally going to be three camps. That would be up to ten or more battalions, so there was quite a bit of equipment (inaudible). That included concertina(?) wire, the 10-inch water MREs, and that sort of thing. Things to build the camp with, including...

Q: So in those 600 containers, you would basically be self-contained, everything moves with you, so that you could truly function on your own without any separate assets?

A: Well, actually not, because all of those containers had to be moved by transportation, so that was a nightmare getting them up first to Coyote. That took -- I think we went up to Coyote about three or four weeks before we actually moved into Iraq. Three weeks, I believe. I'm not real sure on that. And they began moving the conexes(?) immediately. We never got all of the conexes up there, because of the transportation issues. When the ground war started, a lot of times the transportation assets would be cut from us so they could get equipment up to the (inaudible) and things like that, so that was quite a logistical nightmare that we had to contend with, trying to get our equipment to the right place. Everything was staged in Coyote prior to -- the idea was to get everything

there prior to moving up north into Iraq.

Q: Was it one transportation company that moved gear through, was it several?

A: No, it was several. It was several, whoever we could get, basically, including civilians. Kuwaiti civilians and later Brown and Root got the mission. And when the ground war started, you could have civilian assets bring into Coyote, but anything that crossed over the border had to be military, so we were depending on transportation units to get us over.

Q: So the transportation units were all really ready at the border, then, to continue the transportation of all these conexas(?)?

A: Theoretically, they were. But sometimes they were, and sometimes they weren't. The original plan was to get 100 - - I believe it was 100 containers a day to the (inaudible). So it would take six days to get up there. Of course, when the actual war started, that didn't happen because of the need for transportation of other units and things like that. So it was a little bit different, plus we had some issues on where the camp is going to be located, and I'll get into that a little bit later. We'll see some changes in that.

Q: As far as the -- what are the size of these conexas?

A: I'm not sure what the size are. Just a standard.

Q: Is it a full trailer, 18-wheeler(?)?

A: Yeah, they can get two on a big flatbed, 18-wheeler. But they're the long containers.

Q: Long containers. So we're talking about 600 large trailers, then.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: So obviously, if they were the half-containers, you were able to take up two at a time, but in this case you can really only take up one at a time. OK.

A: Well, two trailers. Two flatbeds per truck, so two containers per truck. So you're talking about 50 trucks to get everything up there in six days. That's a lot.

Q: That's a lot. Then after you've got everything up, and you start to get up to Camp Coyote, then what did you move to from that point?

A: We went from Coyote into Iraq. Originally, the coordinating(?) parties went on D-plus-two, to a site that was on the Euphrates River between Umkasar(?) and Khalil(?). About halfway, I guess. So were were about 15 and 20 miles from the Euphrates River, right off of Annasau Kampa(?) And that was going to be our original site.

Q: And when you say that was going to be the original site, what was the means of choosing that particular location,

and what was the means for them not choosing it, or changing it?

A: Well, that was one of the things that happened. We were supposed to leave on D-plus-four, originally. We got delayed to D-plus-five, because there was some talk about moving us further north. The reason all of this took place is because originally we were going to follow the first (inaudible), and they were going to establish a corps holdingarea. The Fifth Corps was going to establish another corps holdingarea. The British were going to establish a corps holdingarea here. What had happened was, when we first went across, we were expecting up to 20,000 prisoners the first couple of days. That didn't happen. We had very few prisoners. We had a couple of thousand prisoners in the first few days of fighting. And so they talked about sending, putting the F(?) further north, like, towards Khalil Airport, somewhere up there. But that area was still hot. So the original site that we were going to be, which was that position off of the Euphrates River, is where we moved to on D-plus-six. And that was a good site, because it was nice and flat and there were already, I don't know what the berms(?) were used for, but there were already ready-made berms that we could build our camp inside of. So that was an advantage that we would've had,

because it would've knocked about a week off of the building process, and we could've had the internment facility up in less than 30 days. So that was another reason they selected that site. When we got there, that was the Marine sector. The Marines were supposed to build their corps holding area pretty close to where we were. They reneged on their agreement to build their corps holding area, and they decided to move north towards Baghdad. So the reason we had to move was because we were kind of left in the open and no protection. The Fifth Corps was to our left, and the British were further to our south. And then also, in addition to that, we were in two different bands of artillery, so we were kind of in a position of hostile area, I guess.

Q: So at the time, you were at the first camp, Buca(?), Buca(?) One. There was artillery and other explosions in your area?

A: We never saw artillery. They never fired artillery. We had some small arms. The day that we got into Iraq, we stayed at the corps holding area, the Marine Corps holding area, and went to our site the next day. I heard small arms fire at the Corps holding area for the Marines. We didn't see anything, quite literally, on that first day that we got to Buca(?), because we got hit by a really bad

sandstorm, probably the worst in years. In fact, we got there about nine in the morning, when the sandstorms started to hit. We didn't leave our vehicles for 24 hours, because it was so bad.

Q: So you went up to a full day, then.

A: Yeah. We couldn't even -- you could barely see the vehicle beside you. The sandstorm was so bad, you couldn't get out of the vehicle. Plus, thunderstorms.

Q: It was raining?

A: Raining heavily, yeah.

Q: With the dust storms.

A: On and off, yeah. You'd have blowing sand, and then rain, and then I was in a canvas vehicle at the back, and so rain would get in, sand would get in. The next morning I woke up and my eyes were cemented shut with mud. It was so bad. That was the worst night in Iraq. I guarantee it.

Q: How did this affect the rest of your troops and your equipment and everything else that you had to deal with? You're talking about some really unusual situations. Were you prepared for this kind of environment?

A: Nobody was prepared, not even the Iraqis, I don't think. So it was a lull in the war, I guess, because you know, that 24-hour period we just stayed in our vehicles. The next day, the sun came out and it was sunny for the rest of

the time. And then we got our bearings in the camp and began building the camp from there. We were there about a week. That's about the time the Marines decided that they were going to go north and they started looking for another area to (inaudible). We selected this area because it was -- the British Corps holding area was already here. They had about, let me see. They had just under 2,000 prisoners when we got here. That's about three hours from Buca(?) One to Buca(?) Two, I guess you might say. Or this is at Camp Buca now. This is about three hours south, plus it was near Umpresar(?), so the thinking was we already had four holding areas, so we could use that as our holding area, build the (inaudible) closer to the border. We were right on the Iraq border, so we're close. We had the logistical support that we need, and it was a better site as far as communication, getting signal back to the base camp.

Q: While you were at Camp Coyote, what type of missions were your soldiers taking -- what type of missions were your soldiers performing at that time?

A: At Coyote we were still doing the escorts. We had pulled out of all the other missions and the APOD and the SPOD, and the boats and things like that. So the only mission we had was some escort. We had a platoon still left at

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Arifjan from the 265 that was doing escort between Arifjan and Camp Coyote. Mostly for us. Until the war's over.

Q: And then who are you escorting from Camp Coyote? Where were you taking them?

A: Well, from Arifjan to Coyote, we were escorting the equipment. The conexas(?) were being...

Q: But once you got to Camp Coyote, were you escorting any troops or equipment from that point further?

A: No, that was all stopped prior to the war. About a week before the war. So our only mission was preparation for the war.

Q: I see. So when you arrived here at Buca(?) Two, where we are currently, what was the condition of the camp?

A: It was pretty desolate. There was quite a bit of shrubs and the ground was not flat like the first Buca(?) was. A lot of insects, a lot of flies. You didn't see flies up in Buca(?) One. You saw a lot of that here. When we initially built the camp, we had to build the latrines and things like that, so we got hit by disease. They call it the (inaudible) virus, hit pretty bad. And we had sometimes up to 30 or 40 soldiers that came down with this bug, and it would hit you for about three or four days. Several people had to have injections of fluids put in their body and things like that. So that was one of the

things that hit us pretty hard. Hit the mission pretty hard, actually.

Q: Since we're talking about the virus and the medical side, so that affected your mission. Did you have soldiers in reserve that could take those soldiers' place that -- because of how down your strength became?

A: No, not really, because we were the only battalion on the ground at the time, so everybody that came down with the virus, we had to make do with what we had. Let me go back to the Buca(?) One. What happened at Buca(?) One, they were looking at moving us, and the Fifth Corps holding area was needing protection because they were getting hit pretty hard by some of the stuff that was going on out there. So they decided to move the 822, the whole company in one platoon. One platoon of the 223 went to the Khalil Airport, and that was a pretty hot area at that time, also. So they remained up there while we came down to Buca(?) Two.

Q: And what was your function when they went up to Teril(?)?

A: They were doing force protection.

Q: Force protection. And tell me a little bit of what type of force protection were they doing?

A: Guarding the airport that they had just taken -- the third Infantry had just gone through taking the airport, so they

were just trying to establish the adder(?), the logistical support. They were already building the camp, and so they were having a lot of problems with Iraqi units up in al-Nasriye(?) and surrounding areas, and so they were trying to protect them.

Q: OK. Did your troops take on any small arms or any kind of other fire while they were up there?

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Nobody ever got hurt. Nobody ever came under fire and was ever wounded in the 724th Battalion. I believe that to be a blessing for us. They did see quite a bit. They didn't come -- I don't know if they came under direct fire from an enemy unit. They saw quite a few rockets and things like that, mortar rounds and small arms shooting at them. They were at (inaudible) so they were pretty well-protected there. We saw some when we came down here. When we first got to Buca(?) One, Buca(?) Two rather, we saw more hostile action here than we did at Buca One, even though that was considered a more dangerous area. When we first got here, we saw some RPG rounds into the camp, and mortar rounds, and small arms, and things like that. A couple of scuds, but actually, the Iraqis were really lousy shots, so they never hit anything. We had -- the day that we got here, the next morning, they shot, I think they call it a Silkworm missile flew over our head.

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And that was the Silkworm that hit Kuwait City early in the morning. So we saw that fly over our heads.

Q: So it actually came through this area, and (inaudible) to Kuwait City then?

A: Yeah, it flew right over Buca(?), Buca(?) Two, let's say 65 feet off the ground. That kind of low-flying.

Q: What time of the day was that?

A: That was about four or five in the morning. It was pretty early in the morning.

Q: And while the -- while your troops were up at Teril(?), did they return any fire?

A: I believe they did. I'm not real sure. You'd have to talk with some of those guys.

Q: While they were up there, did they also take on any prisoners?

A: Yes, they did. Actually, they had several incidences where they stopped somebody who had weapons. Most of the time they would give up, (inaudible) a bomber(?), and it's a pretty bad-looking vehicle. You don't want to deal with that kind of vehicle. So they would normally just give up and they would take them as prisoners.

Q: And while they were on that mission, do you recall how many prisoners they had taken, and what did you do with those prisoners?

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A: Most of the prisoners were taken either by the infantry or by the surrounding units, because they were guarding the camp. The corps holding area was there, so they would immediately put them in the corps holding area. And then the 223 also had the escort mission to bring them down to our camp. That didn't happen for several days, because we had to set up our camp. They had the two corps holding areas, the Fifth Corps holding area and the British Corps holding area.

Q: So at these holding areas, were your soldiers doing any guard work at those, or that was handled by the British and the Fifth Corps?

A: Mostly by the British and the Fifth Corps. They started, we took the mission for the Fifth Corps after about a week or so. The 320th Battalion came, and came into the theater without equipment. And so when we came to Buqa Two, about a couple of days after we got here, they started coming in as well. They took over the corps holding area from the British eventually. So the 724th had the force protection of the camp at that time, until the IF(?) was broken.

Q: And in building the IF(?), what exactly did you have to do? What procedures did you follow?

A: The engineers, the 46th Engineer Battalion, built the -- leveled the ground and started putting in the plumbing and

things like that, the electrical. And then we came behind them and we put up all the pickets and all the wire and the tents. We didn't put the tents up. But we put the tents in the compounds, and then when we started bringing the prisoners, they had to put up the tents.

Q: And the fortification of the camp, did you also have to take care of that, or what condition was it when you had taken it over from the British, as to what you had to do to refortify it?

A: Are you talking about Buca itself?

Q: Yes.

A: The engineers came in the same time we did, and they pushed berms up to protect us on the perimeters. We still had British patrolling, so we didn't take full -- we didn't take the perimeter guard until several days after we got here, because we were still building up our camp. We put up a few more fighting positions around the perimeter, along the berms and things like that. So basically, we had force(?) protection around the perimeter of the camp, and then the British took all the patrols and things like that when they were still (inaudible).

Q: Did you have to put up additional barbed wire, concertina wire?

A: Not at that point, no.

Q: Did you eventually do that, though?

A: We actually, it became a problem because we had civilians coming into the camp. So that's why we put up the barbed wire. The state of Umkasar(?), Umkasar(?) wasn't completely cleared when we came in, or maybe 15 miles from Umkasar(?). And Basra was still, was under fire. They were still trying to take Basra, which is about 30 to 60 miles north of here. I'm not sure how far it is. So there was quite a bit of activity in the area. So the British were pretty heavy down in this area, to protect us. The only types of things that we saw in the camp itself were mostly RPG rounds and mortar. We never -- we were never under fire as far as the unit trying to take us or anything. It was mostly harassment and things like that.

Q: So there were small individual bands of individuals trying to cause destruction.

A: Right. They did fire -- they fired, I know, two Scuds that tried to hit the camp. They were trying to make the Americans look bad, that we're supposed to protect DPWs and they were able to kill them. So basically that's what they tried to do. One of them hit in the water, out in the Gulf, and the other hit about, I think it was 200 meters or so from us. It was terribly close. I think they did that on a couple of occasions, actually. Not really that close

to us. Just those two that were close to us.

Q: As the missiles came up, then, were you give alarms? Did you have to don your NBC equipment? What was the circumstances?

A: Yeah, we were already. When we first got here, we were in hot(?) level one, already. We had the -- the British didn't mask, because their feeling was that they would mask if they got hit, because in wartime you don't really have to worry about the NBC until you're fired upon, but there may be a potential, so we were at hot(?) level one for the first couple weeks. So we never really had to mask. Hit more at Coyote than hit here.

Q: While all your soldiers where starting to face hostile fire, what was your feelings at that time?

A: The soldiers? I think some of the other soldiers were kind of nervous and things, but I think -- they'd been trained, so I think they were well and willing and able to do whatever they had to do their job.

Q: One you started to (inaudible) your defending and your fighting positions at Camp Buqa, what transpired after that? What were the other things that you were setting in place?

A: We came in, we set up our base defense and things like that. Almost immediately, we began building the camp,

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which is south of (inaudible). The IF(?) was extremely large, and originally they were going to build four IFs(?) on this camp site, four battalions to run all the APWs that we initially thought we were going to get. As time went on, it became obvious that we weren't going to take on nearly the number of prisoners that we probably were going to have. We thought upwards of 100,000 first, before the war started. As the war started, we thought as many as 20,000 to 40,000. So the original design was to have four IF internment facility camps in this site. When we didn't have the prisoners, they went to two. And since then, the second one has been scrubbed so there's only been one camp built. So we started building the first camp. The engineers had ten days to build their portion of the camp, and then they turned it over to us, and we started putting the pickets up and everything like that so we could start putting the prisoners in.

Q: OK. You'd said that you placed the (inaudible) in the different portions of the compound. What size are each of the compounds, and who (inaudible)?

A: Each of the compounds, there are 12 compounds in the IF, in the facility. Each of the compounds will hold, normally (inaudible) takes 500 prisoners per compound. We were thinking that we would have to increase that size because

of the number of prisoners we were getting. So we were thinking 740, which is 50 GP mediums in each compound. And the camps were erected by the prisoners.

Q: The prisoners themselves erect the tents. So you give them tools to put the tents up and so forth?

A: Yes.

Q: And isn't that a little bit of a dangerous situation, letting them direct their tents, handing out different tools that they can use for weapons?

A: It could be.

__: Do you want some ice?

A: No, ma'am, I'm fine. It could be, but they're inside the compound so there's only prisoners in the compound. So we give them the sledgehammers to pound the tent pegs in, but other than that, that's the only weapons that they have. They could use the poles against us, but we have armed guards around the camps, so they couldn't very well do that.

Q: As you start developing each of the different holding areas, is there certain types of separation of these prisoners, so you have different prisoners in each one of these holding areas?

A: Oh, yeah. We had, first camp that we opened up in the IF world, the officers. Separate officers, NCO, and lower

enlisted, and civilians into those types of groups. And third-country nationals, also, third-world nationals. So each of the compounds have a different group of people. The first one, like I said, were the officers. They were pretty docile. Actually, most of the prisoners that we got initially were soldiers that gave up, that didn't want to fight. So they were pretty docile and didn't cause us a lot of problems. So after we filled that camp, we started with the enlisted, and then eventually took on the civilians. And as time went on, we started picking up criminals and things like that. War criminals, and civilian criminals as well. So it's quite a mix right now.

Q: When you picked up the different war prisoners, what are the standards, or what are the guidelines of holding prisoners according to the Geneva Convention? What are the guidelines?

A: They have to be given quarters that are similar to ours. They have to be fed similar to us. They have to have latrine facilities and water and that sort of thing. So basically same thing we have, we have to give them. They have to have food and shelter while taking care of them.

Q: Are you required to give them so many meals per day?

A: Yes, two. I think we're feeding them three times a day. We are feeding them three times a day now. Initially, I

think they were feeding them two times a day.

Q: And with feeding them, did you have to give them certain types of food that are to their culture?

A: Yeah, that was all handled before we got there, actually. The British had already set up a contract with Brown and Root -- or with somebody, I'm not sure if it was Brown and Root -- that gave them some biscuits in the morning, some fruit. I'm not sure exactly what all they got in the morning. In the evening they got a soup that was made with rice and vegetables, and again, some fruit and biscuits. So they're well-fed, actually. Some of them were fed way better than they were before the war. So that's one of the things we do is measure their weight and see how much weight they gain.

Q: So you actually weighed them as they come in?

A: Oh, yeah, that's part of the process.

Q: OK, Sergeant Major, you have several different units that are in different areas which you mentioned to me. The 882, I believe you said, was up at Taril(?). You had another unit that was over in Camp Coyote. And now you have other units that are at Camp Buca(?). How are you arranging their locations, and are they eventually all coming here at Camp Buca(??)?

A: Yeah, that was a problem when we first got here. Force

protection -- in the force protection arena, we had limited folks to do the force protection, because we still had -- the 822 is still in Talil(?), the whole company. We had another platoon of 223 in Talil(?) as well. And we had a platoon of the 267 in Coyote and a platoon of the 267 in Arifjan. They were still doing -- 267 was still doing the escorts, bringing the equipment up to Coyote and then into the camp itself, so that was an important piece. The force protections of Talil(?) and (inaudible) is taxing (inaudible). Eventually, we ended up pulling the 822 back, because as time went on our mission to run the IF became more and more important, because (inaudible) Baghdad until we got rid of prisoners that were (inaudible) as in Talil(?). So we were pretty much holding up the third infantry division and the British down here. They couldn't release the British until we established the IF and started taking the (inaudible). And so those particular pieces became more important, so as that happened they got other designs(?) on the ground, and the 744th Battalion replaced our two companies up in Talil(?), and so we've got to move them back down.

Q: Here at Camp Buca(?), now that you're here and the units are all coming into line and your mission is becoming more apparent, what has actually been your mission statement

here at Camp Buca?

A: Our mission is to process all the prisoners according to the processing software that's dictated by the Department of the Army and CENECOM(?). After they're processed, they're held, they're processed into the camp and they're housed in the camp and then they're taken care of. They're protected from the enemy. They're protected from themselves. That how we separate them. We protect them, that's the mission of our large companies as well. Part of the mission is to escort the prisoners from the corps holdingareas to the camps. After they're in the camp, and the declaration of the end of the war, or hostilities, then we begin outprocessing them as well. So they have to go through interviews and tribunals to make sure that they're not somebody that we need to hold because of war crimes. In other words, we determined their status. And then we repatriate all the prisoners. And that process is still going on. At the cessation of hostilities, one of the first things we did was determine who the civilians were and started releasing the civilians. And so, basically, that's our mission, is to run a DPW camp and process all the prisoners, account for all the prisoners.

Q: And what was the highest number of prisoners that you had here at the camp at one time?

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A: I believe it was almost 7,000. 6,800-something.

Q: So it never really got to the numbers that you were expecting, then.

A: No. Our camp, the first first IF was supposed to hold as many as 8,000 prisoners. We never saw 7,000. We saw about 6,000 that one time. I'm not sure what the total number of prisoners was. Probably around, I would guess, around 10,000. We started outprocessing some, so we lost a lot of prisoners as we got until now.

Q: With the prisoners and the interior guards watching them, did they encounter any situations that may have either harmed your soldiers or maybe even harming themselves? Any circumstances come up in that manner?

A: Yes. It happened, most of that happened in the corps holding area, the holding area, actually, that we weren't guarding. That was done by the 320th. Had incidents as far as, some of the prisoners tried to attack one of the guards. So they ended up having to shoot -- they shot and killed one prisoner and wounded another. We've had similar instances, but not very many. I would say two or three of those types of instances. We had one where we had to shoot and wound a prisoner inside the IF itself.

Q: When that occurs, you may have to put violence on a prisoner in this case, actually shooting a prisoner, what

kind of procedures do you have to follow? Do you have to report the -- how is this reported, and how is this taken care of?

A: First of all, we have strict guidelines as to rules of engagement. We can't shoot and kill a prisoner just because he's attacking. It has to be a threat on our life, or they have to escaping over the berm. The reason we have to stop a prisoner from going over the berm is they can give intelligence to enemy units and they can attack (inaudible) take over the IF. The doctrine is to shoot any prisoner trying to escape. The (inaudible) barrier. Other than that, we have less than lethal weapons that we use to stop prisoners. One of the things we can not do is abuse prisoners in any way, so we have to use the minimal force in stopping a prisoner, in other words, and that's what we try to do.

Q: And when some of these prisoners come in, are they in good health? Or are they in situations where they may have problems with health? Or they have their own wounds that you have to take care of?

A: Many. We are not supposed to...

END OF TAPE

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IFIT-35-115 Chief [REDACTED] (b)-1 A11

I'm with CW2 [REDACTED] He's the CID agent of the 44th Military Police detachment CID 4 from Fort Lewis, Washington. Chief could you please state your name, give the spelling of your last name for me and where you're located from.

RENAUD: My name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm CW2 from Washington.

Q: And when were you deployed here to Camp Buka?

[REDACTED] I arrived here at Camp Buka on 3 May of this year.

Q: Chief could you please give me a rundown of exactly what your duties here are with the CID at Camp Buka.

[REDACTED] My primary duties at the CID at Camp Buka myself personally are the EPW screens, prisoner of war screenings and the conduct of the war crimes investigations.

Q: And chief, could you give me a little more of an explanation of each of the different areas. We can start with the screening of the prisoners first.

[REDACTED] All the EPWs go through a screening process conducted by the US. What we're trying to determine is there status as civilian or military. If they're civilian, we're trying to determine if they were missing civilian, unlawful combatant or criminal that was arrested for looting or a prior offense. If they're military, we're trying to

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determine what their role in the war was and any information we can get. Our main focus, the CID, is trying to determine (break in tape) and put to the right place, and if they're military if they have any information on war crimes committed by the Iraqi army.

Q: How long of a process does the screen take?

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[REDACTED] The screening itself can take anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour depending on if the individual is being honest with us, what type of information we feel the individual might have. If they are identified as a criminal, they're merely put into a hold and we'll go back to actually investigating the criminal offense at a later date.

Q: Is there a definition for what is considered to be a criminal?

[REDACTED] The definition's kind of broad. There are a lot of people that are arrested for numerous offenses like looting as the war was going on. We're mainly trying to focus on their release prior to the start of the war. When Saddam opened his prisons and let everybody out. (break in tape)

Q: OK Chief, you were explaining going through the screening process and what is the definition of a criminal.

[REDACTED] Well mainly our focus is the violent major crimes. The rapes, crimes like that. All the people who are sentences to life in jail, sentenced to death, long term

sentences were all released, given rifles and told to go fight. Of course, they dropped the rifles and just went back to their homes. We're trying to identify them to keep them from (break in tape). We're also trying to identify war criminals. This would be senior officers or senior non commission officers participating in violations of the Geneva Convention, be it this war, '91 war or all the way back to when they use chemical weapons. (break in tape) The shooting of POWs, execution of POWs, the pillaging of Kuwait, the raping of the Kuwait women, mistreatment of the American POWs during the war. Any violations of the Hague and Geneva Convention is what we're trying to concentrate on. Mainly focusing on (break in tape) And using the lower ranks, trying to get the information on who (break in tape).

Q: Okay and when you're going through the screening process, what are the ages groups of some of these--the prisoners that are coming through?

b(6)-1 [REDACTED] The majority, I mean we started--there was [REDACTED] on ^{b (2) - 3} this camp at one point and you know we're down to [REDACTED] The majority are probably males from the age of 18 to 30, the fighting age. The majority of the individuals picked up are denying being (break in tape) are claiming to be farmers. And that's where the interview process, the

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screen process, although rapid, needs to be thorough and you know in depth. (break in tape) Obviously some do get by. (break in tape)

Q: Okay Chief, when you do find a person that has been a soldier, what are some of the signs that you're looking for?

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[REDACTED] If they admit they're a soldier, we're mainly asking them pretty standard screening questions. What their job was in the army, where they were assigned, what actions they took during the war, did they receive any orders that they would take to be unlawful. Such as, killing retreating soldiers, killing any prisoners of war, using any type of chemical weapons. Quickly going through--just because they were identified as a soldier, all we're trying to do is just kind of get a focus on what happened on the battlefield and possibly identify anybody who might have been in the area of something that we might be interested in later.

Q: And, to date, for your time that you've been here, have you been able to identify any of these type of prisoners?

[REDACTED] Oh, absolutely. Obviously a big focus of CID right now is the actions of the Iraqi soldiers with our American POWs and the 507 Maintenance Company. We've identified several individuals that were in the area, that were

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witnesses to it and that participated in it and maybe more come through, but the ones we have identified have provided very good information.

Q: And could you give us an accounting, a short accounting of what exactly happened with the 507?

[REDACTED] Unfortunately I can't. That would have to be something that came out of my Commander [REDACTED] because that is a secret investigation right now.

Q: OK. With those individuals that you may have found that were connected with the 507, what will happen with those individuals?

[REDACTED] The primary individuals we're looking for are the ones that were in charge of, that were in command, that took the American soldiers after the ambush. Took them through the streets of Nasriye and put them on display, put them on the television. We've identified so far more of the side players, the people who were involved in the attack itself but not the after effect. Now, obviously the ambush on the American convoy wasn't a war crime, but it was the actions after the ambush that people are investigating.

Q: And have these prisoners, these former soldiers, have they given you additional information where to find the other soldiers?

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[REDACTED] (break in tape) Every soldier we talk to can either help us better our timeline or better our locations. So there hasn't been one soldier that's just been able to lay it all out for us but there's been numerous that have either helped with the times or locations or what units were in that area, who was responsible. There's been a lot of information gathered from the EPWs that we've spoken with. (break in tape)

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Q: If the soldier is cooperative and is willing to give you more intelligence and more information, is there a special treatment that may be given to that individual?

[REDACTED] Not really special treatment. What we try to do is that we get as much--we make every attempt to get all the information that we can from this individual and then get him released. (break in tape) we're trying to push the (break in tape) as absolutely as quickly as possible. So if we identify somebody with that information on that type of subject, we don't have to hold them here because they want to be cooperative. So we take the time, we do full interviews of them at that time, get as much information as we possibly can, and continue with their outprocessing.

Q: With the EPW soldiers that you've identified, are there certain standards that you have to follow under the Geneva Convention?

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[REDACTED] Oh absolutely, I mean they have to be treated like any other POWs which is outlined in the Geneva Convention. We don't do any (break in tape) interrogations, everything is voluntary. We make sure they understand that the information they do give us is voluntary. We don't force them to provide the information. They're just interviews, they're not interrogations.

Q: During the interviews, is there an interpreter present?

[REDACTED] Yes. We work with several interpreters.

Q: And while we're getting toward the end of the actual war right now, are you finding more soldiers that are coming in or are you finding more criminals that are coming in?

[REDACTED] More criminals now. About 50 percent of the soldiers denying they're soldiers. Because when they're initially brought into the camp, the rumor across the camp was that the soldiers were going to be kept and the civilians were going to be let go. When actually it was quite reverse. The soldiers, when they admitted to being soldiers, were released. The civilians were the ones that had to be screened, identified as either criminal or an unlawful combatant. So, we're sorting through that but the soldiers, as they're coming in, when they identify themselves as soldiers, get released rather quickly.

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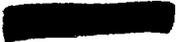
Q: Okay and with the civilian detainees that have been brought in. Can you give me an example, perhaps, a couple circumstances of how they were truly a citizen as to someone that may have been lying to you?

b(6)-1 [REDACTED] Best example would probably be when the British came up here to the Basrah area, they pretty much swept up any male that was probably within the fighting age of, I'm going to say 17 to 30 and just processed them in as EPWs, just because they didn't know. There were so many soldiers that were putting on civilian clothes. So to avoid this basically, killing, they grabbed up everybody that appeared to be a soldier and brought them in. That made it extremely difficult because you had a lot of civilians non-combatants mixed in with combatants who were wearing civilian clothes. That's why the screening was so important. A lot of them were completely innocent civilians. We've identified roughly, you know, thousands of completely innocent civilians that were captured. The British and the Americans also arrested a lot of--or detained a lot of civilians for looting and various other crimes. Murders, rapists in the camp. (break in tape) by the US or the British, either the soldiers observed them doing or based on the information they got from the public. Which is important, when they come to the camp, we have to

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know why they were brought to the camp, then we have to do a quick screening to determine are we going to keep them or are we going to release them. A lot of the looters were released because it was such a minor offense and we had a lot of the major criminals that we're dealing with. (break in tape) because there's no court system in Iraq right now, a simple charge of looting isn't something that we're going to have a POW camp for.

Q: With the people that you've identified to be criminals and they--you have proof that they are criminals. What will happen to them after that point then?

 They are going to be held, I believe until the interim government gets a little bit more control over what's going on. And they're looking for a permanent jail (break in tape) to house these people until we can turn them over to a firm government it will be up to them to either release them, retry them, reinvestigate the case. You know, whatever they decide to do with them. We're just not going to take responsibility for releasing them back out into the public where they can rape, murder and do harm again. Once the government's established, they'll decide what they want to do with the criminals that we've identified.

Q: With the EPWs that were identified as soldiers, are you looking for other identifying things about them that will

identify them as a soldier. For instance, tattoos or are there other distinguishing marks?

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[REDACTED] Oh, absolutely. Like in the states, there are (inaudible) soldiers (break in tape) the units they're with. Especially the Saddam (break in tape) or the militia group here have very distinctive tattoos. The prisoners, we can usually identify someone who's been in jail in Iraq based on what tattoos they have. So we do check their upper body and lower body to see if there are any tattoos and we've started to kind of identify what tattoos go with what units. So if someone comes in claiming they're a tomato farmer and they have a tattoo of the (inaudible), we know they're not telling the truth. (break in tape)

Q: OK Chief, could you give me a little bit of a description of what would be considered war crimes and how you investigate those.

[REDACTED] We have a--well CID's main function here in the theater is investigating war crimes. Not only committed by the Iraqi forces but any allegations of war crimes committed by coalition forces. Down in (break in tape) their entire job is gathering information on any crimes, such as the use of chemical weapons, the execution of EPWs, the '91 Gulf and the execution of the Kurds, using the gas back in (break in tape). Other crimes include just the pillaging, the raping,

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executing of your own soldiers. The way we work that is that we start off with information gathered through either the screenings or soldiers on the ground or information that we know of the history. We start collating the information and as we identify soldiers and units that are in a particular area, take for example the 507 ambush that happened in Nasriye. We know it happened on the 23rd of March, we know in the area at the time was the 11th division Iraqi, 11th Iraqi division. So using that, we can start narrowing down our scope on the EPWs that were arrested in Nasriye between say the 22nd and the 25th. We'll describe any soldiers that identify themselves as with the 11th division and we start working from there. Looking back as far as the '87 gassing, we know that your 18 and 19-year-olds aren't going to have anything to do with it, so we spend most of our time, we find all of the general officers, colonels or above that have been in the army 20-30 years. Find out what units were involved in the area at the time, where these general officers were assigned, and start working that direction. (break in tape) working hundreds of individual war crimes cases at sometime are all going to be presented to the Hague to try Saddam, probably an abstention obviously if he doesn't appear. But every information, every interview that we do

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here, is focused on trying to get more information on all these allegations. 30 years of mistreatment of these people. Crimes against humanity, crimes against his neighboring countries.

Q: And when you identified someone that falls under these conditions that you've mentioned, what happens to the prisoners at that point?

[REDACTED] We do interviews with them. At that time, we go from a screening interview to a more detailed, obviously a voluntary interview. We can't force them to tell us anything. So we sit down with them, explain to them what we're trying to do. We ask for their cooperation. About eight times out of ten, we are getting cooperation. These guys are willingly coming forward after 30 years of being oppressed and having nothing. They know they were mistreated and they're actually talking and we're gathering some really good information. Detailed information from senior offices across the Iraqi army.

Q: Are you at liberty to discuss any of these details on some of the details on some of the areas that you may have found?

[REDACTED] Some of the details, stuff such as today, I was talking to some general officers who had information. One of the big focuses is the Kuwaiti EPWs from the '91 Gulf

war. (break in tape) information that they had been alive up until the very recent, I'd say within three or four months of the war starting. Talked with a general officer today who, although couldn't confirm with any hard facts and dates, led us to believe that he knew the EPWs, the prison in Baghdad, that Saddam gave the order to execute them prior to him leaving the country. Little bits of information like that, knowing this guy's position that he was a communications officer, so he would be privy to information, we tend to take it not as fact but as pretty solid information. That maybe they were alive, maybe they were in Baghdad at the time. And that's how we've got to piece it together. With that, he gives us information on who was running the jail and then we go start tracking down him or he gives us information on some guards at the jail who we could potentially talk to. It's a long process looking at so many incidents, like I said the ambush on the 507, just hundreds and hundreds of crimes against humanity, crimes against other countries. So you have to kind of pick and choose and any information that you get, you send it back to the war crime cell at Arifjan and they pop it into the proper case file and send a request back here for further information. Because there's other camps across Iraq that might also be getting the same information and so

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my general might say, you know he was here on this date and another camp might get information that we have to go back and question him about. So it's a cooperation across the entire country right now.

Q: What does a CID agent have to do to bring the cells up to the level of each of these scenarios or circumstances as they may appear in world events?

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[REDACTED] You have to know what we're looking for, otherwise you're just going into an interview blind. You get brief time, when events happen, what kind of events, what constitutes--what crimes we're looking into, the general knowledge, you know anything this general officer might have or the soldier might have. So, it's just a lot of readings, a lot of briefings and knowing what's going on and knowing what's (break in tape)

Q: So obviously you're getting a lot of intel reports, a lot of op reports to give you a more in depth detail of what the circumstances might have been with each of these events, wherever they may occur.

[REDACTED] Correct. As information becomes available, they try to distribute it out as quickly as possible. I did three interviews with general officers today (break in tape) to Arifjan tonight and by tomorrow it should be kicked out to all the other agents so that everybody across the theater

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is reading what I'm doing, CID wise. So, if it corresponds to their investigation, they know you know, hey, before we let this guy go, ask him this question.

Q: OK, you had given me some information on one general officer you'd interviewed. But what about the other two?

[REDACTED] The other two actually, ironically, were naval officers. They were acu ((sp?)) Navy. It isn't real productive, isn't real active. They really didn't have too much information. They'd been in the navy for (break in tape) but they really didn't have too much information. We're going to hold on to them, I'm going to shoot their names down to Arifjan and if their names (break in tape) interviews, we'll probably go ahead and recommend release on both of them.

Q: Would these two individuals, since they're in the navy, have anything to do with manning any of the ports or anything?

[REDACTED] No and that was one thing we questioned them about and that's another thing we talked about their activity during this war. And both of these individuals were (break in tape) within a day or two of the war starting (break in tape), so they really had no information on this war. One of them was in Italy during the first Gulf war, he wasn't

even in the country. So there wasn't too much we could get from either one of them.

Q: And were they still held or were they released?

[REDACTED] They'll probably be released within the next day or two.

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(break in tape)

Q: OK, Chief, could you tell me a little bit more of and get a little bit more detail of the--when you have to investigate our own forces, our own military police for any of these charges.

[REDACTED] (break in tape) our own forces for more than abuse. Obviously CID's main function is felony criminal investigations for the US Army. So we handle both peacetime and wartime, all serious accusations against soldiers. Some of the main areas we concentrate on over here is obviously the EPWs. In the three weeks (break in tape) approximately five complaints from EPWs or groups of EPWs of mistreatment or abuse. We're working a very serious one right now. About 44 EPWs were assaulted by several MPs. They were unprovoked attacks. The case is still in progress right now but it seems like just for one reason or another, a group of 10 military police officers (break in tape) a group of EPWs and they roughed them up during an escort mission. Extremely serious allegation.

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The Army takes it very seriously. And unfortunately it looks like it's going to be a felony that did occur.

Q: I'm sorry could you please repeat that.

b(u)-1 [REDACTED] Unfortunately it looks like it's going to be a founded case. It looks like the allegations as initially reported are true. These MPs acted unprofessional, did assault some Enemy Prisoners of War. Obviously the CID has a charter to investigate, we investigate (break in tape) very openly. The Red Cross was made aware of it. Our reports will be floated through the chains of command. (break in tape) and very much, on the up and up everything's all (break in tape).

b(u)-1 Q: And what would happen with any of these personnel that are found guilty? What would their possible punishment be and what kind of proceeds would take place for them?

[REDACTED] Most likely they're going to be charged in the UCMJ versus the charges of standard Army offense instead of a war crime offense, which will be your assault, your maltreatment of the EPWs. (break in tape) could carry a sentence of up to ten years. I believe that most of the MPs involved are charged with three to four offenses each and numerous accounts of each of those offenses. (break in tape) jail time, jail terms, if convicted.

Q: These MPs, were they Reserve or National Guard units?

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[REDACTED] Reserve.

Q: Reservists. So, since they were in active duty for this deployment, they would still fall on under any active duty court then.

[REDACTED] Absolutely, absolutely. I believe that (break in tape) is the convening authority at this time for the entire theater. (break in tape) it would absolutely fall to a (inaudible) duty court martial.

Q: Were there any other instances that you can discuss that involve any military police, whether it be founded or unfounded charges?

[REDACTED] Some other things we've had is some shootings that we've had to (break in tape) started a fight in a camp a while back. A guard had to use the one two levels of force, had to shoot and kill the EPW. That's something we also have to investigate, obviously, to protect the Department of Defense interest and to report all the facts as they occurred. Turned out to be a justifiable homicide case. The MP did act within the rules of engagement and it showed he used the proper levels of force and unfortunately it just escalated (break in tape) where deadly force had to be used. Another case was a military police officer standing guard, observed a civilian approaching the fence, approaching the perm. (break in tape) halt, both in Arabic

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and English, the individual did not halt. He fired a warning shot. Unfortunately he didn't follow the rules of engagement (break in tape) warning shots, and fired it in a safe direction therefore (break in tape) strike the civilian, hit him in the face with a projectile. Fortunately the civilian did live, he was severely wounded. And that soldier is being charged with reckless (break in tape) and failure to follow the lawful order and rules of engagement so. All incidents that happen on the camp have to be documented and reported properly so that there can be no allegations from the international community (break in tape). Everything that happens we try to report all the facts, (break in tape) as possible.

Q: Are you finding that our forces, the military police, are acting in a professional manner in treatment of the EPWs?

 In a whole, yes. There are very (break in tape) incidents that do occur but as a whole, I think the military police, I believe they're all reservists, are extremely professional. They're very good at what they do, and they run this camp very well. (break in tape) it's not for the fault of the military police officers, it's just it was something all new. He had 7,000 people to process through a small camp and with what they had to work with, I think it went very well. I think the (break in tape) could

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have been a little a bit better because there was a lot of EPWs that slipped through the system but the (break in tape) in general handled themselves extremely professional, other than the very limited number of complaints we have had.

Q: OK and would you say that perhaps the EPWs have provoked the military police to react in certain ways where they've had to show force or react in a positive way to a squelch any kind of riot or any other kind of incident?

[REDACTED] Prior to my arrival here on May 3rd, I heard there was a lot of riots in the camp. I heard they (break in tape) so I can't really speak of that. Since I've been here, there haven't been any riots and the only assault I know of is an unprovoked assault and that's the one we're investing.

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(break in tape)

Q: Okay Chief, could you give me more information on additional investigations that you may perform, for instance, rape or soldier on soldier crimes?

[REDACTED] OK obviously our last mission here, which is probably our most important, is just protecting the troops. Both from civilians and from themselves. We've had several, be it soldier on soldier (break in tape)soldier on civilian crimes. Not war crimes, it's just normal your standard

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crimes. Your high dollar thefts, your assaults, your rapes, possibly murders if it comes to it. I believe here in Camp (break in tape) been very limited what we call general crime. We have recently had a American soldier (break in tape) who alleged that she was raped by a British which is an investigation that obviously we were joining with the British investigators. But also agents in theater worked hundreds of stolen military equipment cases, worked down at the port where vehicles being stolen, high dollar (break in tape) being stolen. It's a part of our job which we call logistic security. We basically make the army logistics less vulnerable to pilferage and thievery (break in tape). It's a very important role in a theater like this. We have just millions and millions of dollars of equipment coming in and somebody has to provide security for it. We don't provide your traditional gun and foot on the ground security. We try to find out where it's systematically being (break in tape) from. So there are huge investigations that go down to the ports to find out who's stealing our (break in tape). And most cases, abundant, unfortunately our soldier (break in tape) have been down. But that's pretty much you know (break in tape), which is enough considering we only have about

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(break in tape) the troops and war crimes, it's a lot of work. All of the CID keeps busy.

Q: And how many agents are here at Camp Buka?

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[REDACTED] Currently we have six and we're getting ready to reduce down to (break in tape) just because of manning requirements, we need agents elsewhere.

Q: Okay and here at Camp Buka with the soldier on soldier crime, you mentioned that there hasn't been too many cases. What type of cases have occurred though?

[REDACTED] Like I said, we did have a rape case. Well, an alleged rape, it was more of a sexual assault. We've had the--you know I can't even think of another one right now, in the last three weeks. All we've had is the soldier that alleged that she was sexually assaulted. So it's been pretty quiet, I mean as far as the general crimes arena, it's been okay. I think when there's a build up of troops, you have to have law enforcement.

Q: OK. Chief are there any other comments you'd like to add to this interview and, or give any opinions of your investigations?

[REDACTED] No, in general, I've (break in tape) experience working in an EPW camp. I mean, I don't know how many people ever get to (break in tape) do it, to witness military tribunals, (break in tape) to see the

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professionals, the MPs as they handle the EPWs (break in tape) worked. A limited number of the assaults on the EPWs and I think this camp is run very well. The organization initially was a little confusing but I think the US Army has done a great job here. I think we've gotten the guilty people, and I think we've let the innocent people go. And I'm very proud to be a part of it.

Q: Thank you very much for this interview. This concludes our interview (break in tape). This is the 20th of May 2003.

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