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IFIT-35-110 Sergeant [redacted]

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Q: This is Sergeant [redacted] with the 377th Theater Support Command Historian's Office. Today's date is 19 May 2003. The time now is 15:34 local time. I'm here at Camp [Buca?] in Iraq, and I'm interviewing Sergeant First Class [redacted] b(6)-1 And Sir, Sergeant, can you please go ahead and spell out your first and last name?

A: First name is [redacted] b(6)-1 Last name is [redacted] b(6)-1

Q: And what is you unit and duty position?

A: We're the A-22nd Military Police Company, and I'm the Company First Sergeant.

Q: All right. I'm going to have a read up a little boiler plate language here if you don't mind. Do you understand that the tape and the transcript resulting from this oral history to be retained in the United States Army Reserve Historical Research Collection and/or CFLCC Military History Group, will belong to the United States Government, to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Army as determined by the Command Historian or representative? Do you also understand that subject to security classification restrictions, you may be given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in

order to clarify and expand your original thoughts? The United States Army may provide you with a copy of the edited transcript for your own use, subject to any classification restrictions.

A: Yes, I understand.

Q: Thank you, First Sergeant. First Sergeant, can you give a brief biography of your military career?

A: I enlisted in the Army Reserve in 1980. I was assigned to the 814th MP Company Reserve Unit in Chicago as an MP. I stayed with them for four or five years. Then I went, I moved up to the Battalion S-3, 327th MP Battalion. I was the Battlefield Circulation Control NCO there for a couple of years. Then I went back to the 822nd MP Company in, I think 1988, and I served there as a team leader, squad leader, a platoon sergeant. After that, I went to the 84th Division, Training Division, 3rd MP Battalion. I was the Chief Instructor for the site, the Arlington Heights site, and now I'm back in 822nd MP Company.

Q: All right. And I believe that you served in the first Desert Storm?

A: Yes, that's correct. With the 822nd MP Company.

Q: OK. Then if it's all right, let's go ahead and start. When were you first notified that you were going to be called up?

A: For Desert Storm or --?

Q: For this conflict.

A: For this conflict? On February fifth -- fourth -- third -- February second.

Q: February second. All right, now I believe the unit had already reported to Fort Dix by that time.

A: Right. I reported to Fort Dix, I think on January 3rd.

Q: All right. So could you explain how come you're the First Sergeant, but yet you weren't with the unit. Could you give a little bit of the story behind that?

A: They had problems with their first sergeants.

Q: OK.

A: The first sergeant that was assigned to the company had done a six-month tour, like six months before that, and he didn't want to come here. So after negotiations, they relieved him of his duties, and they got another first sergeant from within the 300th Military Police Command out of Ohio. And he went to Fort Dix with them, and, through the physical screening, he had a P3 profile. They caught a tumor on his neck. And so he was deemed non-deployable. So I had a relationship with the 822nd and the previous commanders, and I had volunteered for it, like a month before, so they called me up and said, "You ready to go?"

I said, "I'm still ready." And they sent the orders and a plane ticket.

Q: OK. And so that gave you, what, three days to prepare or --?

A: That gave me a weekend.

Q: A weekend. (laughs)

A: And I had to prepare my promotion package in the same weekend.

Q: Have you heard anything about the promotion package?

A: Yes. They neglected to post my position from the 88th, so it wasn't up for promotion, so I didn't get promoted.

Q: OK.

A: That happens.

Q: All right. So how many soldiers do you have in the 822nd MP Company, and how many are 95-Bravo?

A: Presently, we have [redacted] here, and [redacted] of them are MP's.

Q: OK. And how many actually went to Fort Dix? And did any have to go home? Or do you know that information --

A: Yes.

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Q: -- since you weren't there?

A: They went with [redacted] to Fort Dix.

Q: OK.

A: And I think 11 stayed in Fort Dix. Then we gained two of them. They were able to come here. And then we were given

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fillers from the regular army and the Individual Ready Reserve.

Q: OK. And how have they worked out?

A: Very well.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, they sent some good soldiers. We lucked out. But they're leaving Wednesday, now, so.

Q: How come they're leaving so soon?

A: Because I guess they stopped movement or something. They - -

Q: Stopped off.

A: No, not stopped off. The regular army had a stop movement in place, where you couldn't transfer between units, I think. So now they've looked at that.

Q: Oh, OK.

A: And I don't know what the story with the IRR's are. But they're just sending them back.

Q: OK. So they cross-leveled you with IRR and active component.

A: Right.

Q: And that's actually the first time I've heard that, so.

A: Really? We've picked up four of them, three from the regular army and one IRR, so.

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Q: OK. So [redacted]. Are you specialized in enemy prisoner of war operations or --?

A: Yes. We are an MP [Guard Column?].

Q: OK. Good deal. And what type of armament and vehicles do you all have?

A: We have M1025 Hummers. We have M998 Humvees.

Q: And how many of each type, approximately?

A: We have [redacted] of the 1025's. That's the armor-- the turtleback, they call them --

Q: OK.

A: -- the four-door, hard-shell ones.

Q: Right.

A: And then we have [redacted] of the M998's, which are the soft-tops with the -- They look like a pickup truck.

Q: OK.

A: And then we have [redacted] 2-1/2-ton trucks.

Q: So you arrived in Kuwait on February 8th.

A: Right.

Q: And that was at Camp Arifjan or Camp [Wolf?].

A: Right.

Q: All right.

A: No, it was just Camp Arifjan -- it was.

Q: Camp Arifjan.

A: Right.

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Q: So what was the process at Camp Arifjan?

A: They just -- we pulled in, and they told us what warehouse to go live into. So we took over -- We were with the whole battalion, our other two companies, and we just took over the warehouse and moved in there.

Q: OK. And what was it like? I mean, here you're getting familiar with your troops and your battalion at the same time.

A: Right. It was rough. It was very difficult. Because I only knew a handful of people in the company. So I didn't know anybody, really. And I'm still looking at names on shirts. And once in a while, I'll see a face, and I'll say, "Who's that?" I'll, you know, whisper to somebody. And they'll tell me. A lot of times, I'm correct, but -- I'd say I probably know 95% of them now. So I'm coming along.

Q: And out here at Camp Buca, we're a little bit more informal and don't always wear the DCU top, so that's got to make it more difficult.

A: That's made it worse.

Q: (laughs)

A: Because I was hoping -- Because in '91, when we were here, we always had to use the DCU top. And they haven't put

that restriction on us yet. So it's been a hindrance for me.

Q: But you just mentioned you were here in '91 --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- so I'm going to ask, the move process in '91, as compared to your mobilization for Iraqi Freedom, how would you compare them as?

A: Well, I didn't go through a full mobilization process with the unit. But I remember, in '91, it was really crazy because they had four feet of snow at Fort McCarty.

Q: OK.

A: (laughs) So. And we were doing desert training in four feet of snow, if you can figure that one out. In fact, there's a picture on my photo album has a bunch of us standing in the snow, for Desert Storm. Pretty funny.

Q: Hopefully, they let you wear winter clothing.

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we had all the winter clothing. And we left it all there too. But from what I hear, you know, talking to all the troops, I'd say it was pretty much along the same lines. You know, and they compared pretty evenly.

Q: OK.

A: Didn't prepare you for the mission you were coming here to do.

Q: All right. Then you arrive at Camp Arifjan, you're setting up. What missions are you tasked with?

A: Just convoy securities, [as that left?]. And then we were given a physical security mission over at the SPOD, which is the seaport --

Q: OK.

A: -- setting up some entry control points and traffic control points and that.

Q: All right. So approximately how many convoys do you think you all escorted?

A: Oh, boy. They were going out every day, three or four times day, so probably at least 100, I'd say.

Q: All right. And were there any incidents during that time or --?

A: No. You know, just there were a couple isolated vehicle -- Like, I don't know, I suppose you could compare it to road rage, you know --

Q: OK.

A: -- people driving up next to the Hummers and trying to run them off the road or, you know, beeping their horn, shaking their fists, you know.

Q: OK. Because they sat behind a 25-vehicle convoy --

A: Right.

Q: -- and they have to blame someone, so.

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A: Exactly. You know, you're blocking the whole highway on them. And, you know, they drive like madmen there, so.

Q: And how about --? On average, I mean, average convoy, how many vehicles would you send with them and what type of armament?

A: Usually [redacted] of the hard-shell Humvees, with [redacted] or an [redacted] mounted on them --

Q: All right.

A: -- with [redacted] people in each vehicle.

Q: Good deal. And how about the [redacted] You said they did some traffic control points and what else?

A: Entry control points.

Q: Entry control points.

A: Onto the port because it's a secure area where they're unloading all the ships coming in with equipment.

Q: OK. So how many people would you have at the traffic control points and --?

A: I mean, we'd probably have about [redacted] But we had a whole [redacted] down there, at the time, doing the mission.

Q: OK.

A: They just rotated the [redacted] through it. You know, they'd stay down there for, I think it was like [redacted] days at a time.

Q: OK.

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A: They lived down there, ate down there, every day.

Q: I'm curious. What was it like down at the SPOD, as compared to Arifjan?

A: Oh, they loved it down there. They didn't want to come back because, you know, they were in tents, and they were on their own, and -- And at the time, they had a PX they didn't have to wait in line for. So. Yeah. No, they enjoyed it down there. They had a pretty decent mess hall and -- And they were really working. You know, they were doing something, that they enjoyed and -- And it wasn't just waiting around for a convoy to come up.

Q: OK.

A: They always had something to do every day there. You know, an employed soldier's a happy soldier, so.

Q: Now approximately what hour shifts were your soldiers working, at that --?

A: Well, they would work three shifts between themselves, so.

Q: OK.

A: So they'd have a squad on at a time and then a squad in relief.

Q: So it'd be eight-hours shifts, pretty much.

A: Right. Around the clock.

Q: OK. Good deal. And what was camp life like at Arifjan? I mean, when they had the off-duty time, how would the

soldiers entertain themselves? And what would you have them do, as well, to make sure they stayed busy?

A: There was things there to keep them occupied there. They had the PX. They had an MWR tent, Pizza Hut, Subway. They'd go --

Q: I heard about the rodeo.

A: -- watch the news. They had the rodeo every Wednesday, where they had shopkeepers come in and sell their goods. And then they'd go around, you know, meeting other people from other units, trying to --

Q: OK.

A: -- get our storages filled.

Q: OK.

A: They did a pretty good job of that.

Q: And what were some of the shortages you all had?

A: Oh, we had, you know, the same ones we have today. No night vision. The Guard Company doesn't have any night vision on their own [TO?].

Q: OK.

A: They don't have -- We had to borrow mounts for the M249 SAW, to mount them on top of the vehicle.

Q: OK.

A: We didn't have those, when we came over. We had some [COML?]-- communications shortages. Batteries for the radios, antennas for the radios.

Q: Now would those be [redacted] or [redacted]

A: The [redacted] radios. Right. b(2) -3 A11

Q: OK.

A: And the -- they call them [redacted]

Q: OK.

A: [redacted] We didn't have those. And I walked into all of this cold, you know. This is all stuff they should have had.

Q: All right, so you walked into it cold. They're getting the supplies. How do they get the supplies? Was it through networking or --?

A: Networking and what they call making drug deals.

Q: That's what I -- OK. (laughs)

A: You know --

Q: They're making drug deals.

A: Making drug deals. If we had excess stuff, we'd trade it --

Q: OK.

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A: -- you know, if we had a lot of something. Sometimes a unit was short on that. So we'd trade them, you know, what they needed for what we needed.

Q: OK.

A: It's worked out pretty good.

Q: I think that's gone in the Army for (laughs) --

A: A long time.

Q: -- generations. All right. At that time, you'd been sworn -- you already knew you were doing EPW work.

A: Right.

Q: And that --

A: Just didn't know when.

Q: Now was the 822 traced to the 724, or was this the first time you all had worked together?

A: No, we were at Fort Dix together.

Q: OK.

A: So that was the whole battalion together. That was at Fort Dix.

Q: And before Fort Dix, had they ever worked together?

A: No.

Q: No. OK.

A: No, we'd never even heard of the 724th.

Q: OK. So when they gave you the mission, what did you think about the first Camp Buca, and could you describe it a little bit?

A: The first Camp Buca? There was nothing there, really. I mean, it was -- And then that storm that hit, it was a hellhole.

Q: (laughs) All right. Well, let's go back a little bit. All right. So you're at Camp Arifjan. And I believe you move up to Camp Coyote on March --

A: Oh, March -- That was about three weeks before the 24th, so I think were at Coyote about three weeks. So it might have been somewhere around the 3rd, 4th --

Q: OK.

A: -- in that timeframe, that week.

Q: OK. And at Camp Coyote, where they giving you SCUD alerts then?

A: Yes. We had a couple a day, heard a couple of them fly over. And I think March 1st we went to Mission-Oriented Protective Posture 1 --

Q: OK.

A: -- and stayed there for 32 days. And they call it Op Level 1 for short. All it is is you put on the shirt and the jacket from the MOPP suit.

Q: OK.

A: But it's heavy, and it's hot, so.

Q: And what's the temperature like at that time?

A: During the day, probably high 70's. But you could probably add 20 degrees, easy, being in the MOPP suit.

Q: Exactly.

A: Especially if you're working.

Q: And did your unit perform a lot of common task training, as well, while you were at Arifjan and Camp Coyote, or specialized MP training?

A: We started to train for the EPW mission.

Q: OK.

A: And, yeah, we covered CTT, common task testing. We went over that, and went over that almost to nausea.

Q: OK.

A: We were there for three weeks, you know?

Q: Yeah.

A: So. And we'd set up camp there because we didn't know how long we were going to be there. So they tried to make it home.

Q: At Camp Coyote or --?

A: At Camp Coyote.

Q: All right.

A: We had a couple of barbeques.

Q: Good, good. And what other things did you do to keep morale up at Camp Coyote?

A: Well, we had the perimeter mission there too, so they were working still.

Q: OK. OK, good. Then you crossed the berm on what day --

A: March 24th.

Q: -- into Iraq?

A: In Iraq.

Q: Now as I understand it, you were supposed to cross on March 23rd.

A: Twenty-third, right

Q: What happened?

A: I don't know, really. Whoever was in charge of the convoy I don't think got it organized. And then they said that we couldn't travel at night.

Q: OK.

A: I think that was the battalion commander's call, that we couldn't travel at night, so she held us over to the next morning.

Q: Because there was a lot of sniping and ambushing going on and --

A: Well, that's what I've heard.

Q: OK. (laughs)

A: That's what I've heard. But to this day, she doesn't really like people out there driving at night.

Q: OK.

A: You know, she's kind of loosened up a little bit, but she still gets nervous.

Q: So how many vehicles went out on the 24th?

A: Well, pretty much the 3rd Battalion. So it should have been, hm -- Good question. Probably around 100.

Q: OK. And how many in your company, about --?

A: Well, I had 13 vehicles total.

Q: OK. So about 13 vehicles, right.

A: Right. For my company.

Q: OK, that's right. Eight of the armored Humvees, tow unarmored --

A: Right.

Q: -- three deuce-and-a-half.

A: Right.

Q: All right. So you're driving up to Camp Buca. Have you all been given any standard operating procedure or training on what to do if you're being ambushed? Because that was a fear at that time, I believe.

A: Yes, it was. No. (laughs)

Q: OK. (laughs)

A: There was a drivers' briefing and -- Well, you know, we did that internally. It wasn't done --

Q: OK.

A: -- on a battalion level.

Q: Right.

A: We kind of [rubop?] covered it for the company, and how to react to an ambush and that kind of thing. But no, it wasn't done on a battalion level.

Q: OK. And did you all arrive at the original Camp Buca that day? Well, what time did you leave Camp Coyote at?

A: It was sometime in the morning.

Q: OK.

A: I don't remember the exact time.

Q: Let's see. So you left Camp Coyote. Now for the first night, it must have been kind of tough because I expect you're leaving on the 23rd -- hearing you're going to be leaving, and then you don't, so.

A: Right. Well, we slept outside that night. Because we were all packed and ready to go.

Q: OK. And you must have been pumped up and then kind of deflated to go, as well.

A: Oh, sure. Sure we were. And that happened to us a couple times on this deployment. It hurts you.

Q: OK.

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A: It does hurt.

Q: Then you go up to Camp Buca. How long does it take to make it to the first Camp Buca?

A: I know it was dark out when we got there.

Q: OK.

A: So it had to have been at least eight hours --

Q: OK.

A: -- an eight-hour drive.

Q: And what's the first thing you do when you arrive there? Because it's dark, so --

A: Well, it was dark. We just parked the vehicles all in like four or five rows --

Q: OK.

A: -- right up close to each other. And we set up a perimeter defense and went to sleep.

Q: OK. Was there anything out there?

A: The Marines.

Q: The Marines. OK.

A: The Marines were out there.

Q: That must have provided some comfort you all.

A: Yeah, it was good. We weren't out there alone.

Q: Exactly. And how was the perimeter? I mean, for many of your troops, this is the first time they're in combat. How do you steady them? Or were they nervous?

A: Well, I think the best way to steady them is not to see that if you're nervous --

Q: OK.

A: -- or afraid. And, you know, just make decisions and go with them. That's about all you can do, you know. Put a hand on their shoulder and, you know, tell them what they've got to do and how to do it, and go from there.

Q: OK.

A: You know, you give them a little encouragement and, you know, let them know you're there. That's all. You know. That's about all you can do, really.

Q: All right. And were there any incidents while you all held perimeter at first --

A: No. No, there weren't any incidents there.

Q: Now did you all do any convoy duty while you all were at the first --?

A: Convoy escort duty?

Q: Convoy escort duty, while you were at the first Camp Buca or --?

A: No, no.

Q: OK. So what were you all doing when you hit the ground at Camp Buca, originally?

A: We just parked our vehicles and sat there, waiting for -- Because they told us right away, when they get there, that we don't if we're staying.

Q: Oh, OK.

A: And then we were told, after the second night, that we weren't going to stay because the area wasn't secure enough to start building a [VPW?] camp.

Q: Did they tell you why it wasn't secure or --?

A: No, they didn't. They didn't want to say why. We found out later why, because they came through the area too fast, the Marines did.

Q: Oh, OK.

A: And just, you know, went through the area and didn't really secure anything, just went through the area. That's all they did.

Q: The advance was too quick? Yeah.

A: Well, the advance was too quick.

Q: All right. That's kind of a surprise. OK. So when did you leave Camp Buca, and where did you go to next?

A: We left Camp Buca, I think, on the 26th of March, and we went up to [Talil?] Airbase --

Q: OK.

A: -- which is right outside of [el Nazareen?].

Q: Right. And, actually, that's where the 507th was ambushed and probably around that same timeframe.

A: I think that was about two days before we got there, two or three days before we got there.

Q: OK. So you all had heard about the ambush there.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: So what was going through your mind and the mind of your soldiers about that?

A: We had very good map readers with us when we went up there.

Q: (laughs)

A: They were quite happy that the guys leading us did their job right.

Q: OK.

A: Because that's my understanding. They took a wrong turn.

Q: That's my understand, as well. I've heard a couple different stories. I even interviewed some soldiers who almost made that same wrong turn --

A: Really?

Q: -- because they got their directions from Yahoo!. And Yahoo! had it screwed up.

A: Yeah.

Q: And if some Marines weren't coming back, shot up and all, they would have kept on going.

A: They would have -- Yeah. Oh, no.

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Q: So.

A: That was horrible. So we pull in Talil, and we report to the 1st and the 293rd. It's an Indiana National Guard infantry battalion. They give us our in-briefing and our operations order.

Q: And what was the operations order?

A: To take over perimeter security --

Q: OK.

A: -- for Talil Airbase. And the next thing I know, I'm relieving Bradley fighting vehicles with Humvees.

Q: (laughs) All right.

A: That didn't go over too well with my guys.

Q: (laughs) I can understand that.

A: You know? And they look to me like, "What are you doing to us?" (laughs) You know. And then I'm the joker that's got to stand there and explain to them that it's not me. It's not me doing this. But we managed.

Q: OK.

A: We did the mission. And they did a hell of a job.

Q: And about how large of a perimeter were you all covering? I assume it's eight Humvees, not the full ten.

A: Right. But we had just some positions that were just manned.

Q: Oh, fighting positions. OK.

A: Just fighting positions, correct. We had the main gate to Talil --

Q: Oh, so you did the checkpoints as --

A: Right.

Q: OK.

A: And then we had two positions further out in front of that, just like observation points.

Q: And I assume they would call in and let the checkpoint know that --

A: Well, that --

Q: -- vehicles were approaching?

A: -- vehicles were coming. Right. Because they had the -- You know, one day you could drive around with headlights, and the next day, you couldn't. And the next day, you couldn't drive around with them on, and the next day you could, so. But there was a long stretch of road coming towards the main gate, so if there was a vehicle down there, you know, using black-out drive, you wouldn't see it right away. So they would radio back and say, "You've got, you know, ten vehicles coming."

Q: And was that like two soldiers at each of the observation points and --?

A: No, we had five at the observation point and then probably another ten at the main gate.

Q: And was that jointly run with the Air Force, as it is [lately?]?

A: No, we did it in its entirety --

Q: OK.

A: -- until the Air Force got there. Because some of the Air Force, in fact, came up with us in our convoy --

Q: Oh, OK.

A: -- some of their equipment. But the Air Force Police had not arrived there yet. I think, once they got this fire equipment there and some generators, then they were able to land planes, and the Air Force Police came in then --

Q: OK.

A: -- with their dogs. And I think they might have only worked a day with the Air Force Police, and then they relieved us.

Q: OK. But I think, at that point, you'd probably heard about that 3rd ID checkpoint and the suicide bomber.

A: Oh, yeah. We were getting spot reports like that all the time, you know.

Q: OK.

A: Every time we'd go to an operations meeting at the 1st and the 293rd, they would brief something along those lines.

Q: And how were you all reacting to this news?

A: As best as you can, I guess, you know? We put it out and just tell them to take the necessary precautions. That's all.

Q: And were you changing any of your tactics at the post, or did you have it [aligned there?]?

A: Well, constantly, they were changing them --

Q: OK.

A: -- changing the fighting positions. As soon as the engineer support got in there, we would --

Q: OK, yeah.

A: -- make a fighting position for a Humvee instead of a Bradley. But we were fortunate that we have an Arabic-speaking soldier in our unit.

Q: Oh! OK.

A: He was worth his weight in gold.

Q: How did he make things easier?

A: Because he could communicate.

Q: With Iraqi's --

A: With the Iraqi's --

Q: -- trying to come in?

A: -- or any of the civilians that tried to come into Talil.

Q: So there weren't any interpreters at all.

A: No, no. We were using all hand signals. You know, a lot of them are universal, so.

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Q: (laughs)

A: Everybody knows, you know, stop or, you know, if you wave your hand towards yourself, to come here. But, yeah, he worked the main gate. He worked out at the gate all the time.

Q: OK. And could you give this soldier's name and his circumstance on how he spoke Arabic or --?

A: Well, I believe his father is from [redacted] No, his mother is from [redacted]

Q: OK.

A: And his name is [redacted] He's a specialist in the 2nd Platoon.

Q: OK. And so he would be able to talk to the drivers and tell them to turn around or --

A: Turn around, get out, turn off your engine. He can't read or write Arabic, but he can speak it.

Q: And why were Iraqi's trying to get into Talil?

A: For humanitarian needs.

Q: OK.

A: They wanted to come get food and water and -- A lot of them wanted to come and give intelligence, too.

Q: OK.

A: So. Which was a good thing to have him around. Because then we'd know that, and we'd hook them up with the right folks.

Q: And would you have the MI's, the Military Intelligence people come up to the checkpoint? Or would you escort the Iraqi's to the MI's.

A: No, they would come to the checkpoint.

Q: OK.

A: We'd call them out there. And then they'd do a quick interview and decide if he was, you know, worth it or not. They did whatever they do.

Q: OK. And how many people would man the checkpoint?

A: Usually about [redacted] or [redacted] would be out there.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they slept out there. Around the clock.

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Q: OK. And they had a Humvee, I believe --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- because you mentioned the fighting position.

A: Right.

Q: So that'd be about [redacted] So you'd have, what, about [redacted] people manning the other Humvees and fighting positions?

A: Yeah, they were spread out along the -- They didn't have us manning the whole perimeter.

Q: Right.

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A: The [redacted]end of it they pretty much left unsecured but -- They just wanted the front part, towards el Nazareen, manned.

Q: OK.

A: I guess they figured that that's the way anybody'd come in. Because there was just huge amounts of ammunition and explosives in Talil. And they told us that they would try and come and get it.

Q: And what did you do to combat, you know, unexploded ordinance?

A: Well, just, if we found any, we'd just identify it any way you could and then just call out EOD.

Q: And give them the grid points?

A: Right.

Q: OK.

A: And they would come out and blow it up.

Q: OK. Good deal. And did you all --? So how long did the guard duty last? And did you all pull any convoy duty while you were --? Oh, well, were you working 12-hours shifts -- I'm sorry --

A: Right.

Q: -- at that time. OK.

A: They were working 12-hours shifts there. And no, we had no convoy escort duty. The only thing we did was, on the south perimeter, we did a little bit of a roving patrol.

Q: OK.

A: That was it, though.

Q: And would you all, I believe, escort the Water Buffalos, as well, so they could get water?

A: Yeah, that was pretty -- that was mostly four ourselves, though.

Q: Oh, OK.

A: Yeah. When they had had to go down to [ADR?], LSA ADR and get water for ourselves, we would just have to do the escort.

Q: Yeah. When you were at the first Camp Buca, I believe that there were some Iraqi's who tried to ambush you all or ambush the area, and some Marines that shot them up?

A: It could have been after we left, you know.

Q: OK.

A: And I don't know if I ever heard that story. Or it could have been a -- Because they stayed there, I think, a couple days after we left.

Q: OK. And at Talil, were there any incidents? Or what your main concerns? As First Sergeant, how are you going to

take care of your troops, and what are your main concerns, at that point, when you were at Talil?

A: Well, you know, my main concerns were that the troops were OK. I had a lot of faith in the platoon sergeants and the platoon leaders to take care of the operational end, you know. So I concentrated on, you know, making sure that we had food, water. And if they did -- They lived out on the perimeter, but, if they needed a break and had to come into Talil, I went and got them a building for us to live in.

Q: OK.

A: So we didn't put up any tents there. And, you know, made sure that the toilets were kept as well as they could be. Because we had to use all the [flu?] trenches there. And I just tried to make it as comfortable for them as possible.

Q: Now I understand that the building you occupied was a former jail or --?

A: That's the way it looked, from appearances. Because there was bars on the windows and heavy steel doors. So when I found the building, I said, "Anh, this might fit us nice."

Q: (laughs) That's what I was thinking, for an EPW mission.

A: Right.

Q: And were there any prisoners at the holding area at Talil at that time or --?

A: Yeah, there were prisoners there. It fluctuated, you know, anywhere from 50 to, you know, a couple hundred that they would have there at a time.

Q: And --

A: [But?] as fast as they could get them out.

Q: And were you tasked to handle them?

A: No.

Q: OK.

A: No, we didn't have them. No. I think that was the 18th Infantry Brigade was handling that there.

Q: OK. I was going to say, you know, they put you on the perimeter, yet you guys special in EPW operations.

A: EPW, right. Yeah, that's why the whole thing didn't make any sense there. You know, even a special forces truck stopped at the ECP, one day, and he was talking to one of our guys. And he was telling them, "Yeah, we're a Reserve unit out of Chicago." And he said, "Reserve unit? I can't believe they sent you guys this far north." He said, "I guess it was luck."

Q: All right. And when did you go back south to the --

A: To --

Q: -- current Camp Buca. We'll just refer to it as Camp Buca, here on out.

A: Six days after we got there. So it would have been the -- Twenty-fourth? Let's see.

Q: So --

A: Somewhere around the 2nd of April --

Q: All right.

A: -- 2nd or 3rd of April.

Q: Let me ask you. Going back, the war news -- I'm sure you kept hearing about convoys being ambushed. I'm sure personnel coming into Talil were bringing stories about that. What's more --? Actually, let me set back a moment. We talked about the 507th. What could you see in the surrounding area? I heard that there were explosions or something?

A: Yeah, there were three nights that they attacked el Nazareen. They had a front-row seat for it.

Q: OK.

A: So every bomb they dropped, we saw. All the firefights out there, we heard and saw. And, you know, there were some pretty hairy nights out there, where the guys didn't sleep much, and if at all. They didn't sleep.

Q: OK. And what about perimeter security? I mean, were they --? New soldiers, combat environment. Could you tell they were nervous by like the call-ins and things like that? For example, I heard one company, not this one, called in

and said there was an Iraqi coming towards them, and it ended up being a rock, so.

A: No, we didn't have any false alarms.

Q: OK.

A: You know, I'm really proud of the way everybody performed up there.

Q: OK.

A: I really am.

Q: Good deal.

A: We didn't have anybody that -- You know, nobody came to me and said, "Pop, I can't do it."

Q: Right.

A: I didn't hear of anybody saying that. You know, people expressed their concern. They were nervous. But everybody stayed on their toes, you know? They did really well. I'm proud of all of them.

Q: Yeah. So you leave on April 2nd, approximately. You don't have to pack up too much because you have the building. And so what was the rid down there? Because --

A: Well, on the way up there, when we first went to Talil, we only brought two platoons with us.

Q: OK. Where were --?

A: Because that's all the -- With our vehicles, we can't move ourselves.

Q: OK, so --

A: We always need assistance.

Q: So the third remained at Camp Coyote?

A: Right. The 1st Platoon remained at Camp Coyote. They came up a day later --

Q: OK.

A: -- with support that we made. So when it was time to leave, we had no support.

Q: OK.

A: So some of my guys went and got an Iraqi Air Force dump truck, and we threw all our equipment in that and brought that back. And it's still sitting out there in the parking lot.

Q: Do you all still use it?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: OK.

A: We've used it a couple times. That's the only way we could have moved everything, all the company assets.

Q: OK. Now, there have been ambushes on the road, main supply route Tampa, which I believe you traveled on.

A: Right. They've closed Tampa a couple times because of the ambushes.

Q: OK. Did you see destroyed vehicles along the side of the road, U.S., Iraqi?

A: Well, we saw a U.S., and we saw an Iraqi too. Most of the Iraqi ones are (inaudible).

Q: OK.

A: But the U.S. ones were -- And I don't know. It looked like a lot of them -- I don't know if a lot of them were hit by fire, or they just broke down.

Q: OK.

A: Probably a little of both.

Q: OK. And let me ask you, vehicles that get left on the highway, what happens to them, frequently?

A: They get stripped bare. If it can be hand-carried, it's taken off.

Q: OK. Thank you. I've noticed that here in Iraq, so.

A: Yup. And, you know, it's the soldiers that do it, but it's also the civilians. They can strip a vehicle in a matter of minutes, I think, with the minimum amount of tools.

Q: So you're at Talil. What did they tell you about your mission here at Camp Buca?

A: They really didn't tell us anything at Talil because --

Q: OK.

A: I know that battalion commander wanted to keep us. And he told me. He said, b(2)-1 [redacted] I'm telling you, right now. You guys are not going anywhere."

Q: Which battalion commander was it?

014059

A: The battalion commander of the 1st and the 293rd Infantry.

Q: OK. OK.

A: He said, "I'm keeping you guys for as long as I can." But --

Q: Good deal. And that must have made you feel proud.

A: Oh, yeah! He lost out. I think the guys would have rather stayed at Talil, also.

Q: Sorry?

A: The company would have rather stayed at Talil --

Q: OK.

A: -- than come back and (inaudible) EPW.

Q: So what were living conditions like at Talil?

A: Not very good. But they were getting better every day, you know, as we saw C-130's land and drop off equipment.

Q: OK.

A: Things started to get better every day. And the Air Force, they'd start coming around and talking, you know, what their plans were. So. It started to get better and better every day. When we left there -- They had hot showers, what, a month-and-a-half before we had them here.

Q: OK.

A: So.

Q: All right. So you arrived here on April 2nd or 3rd?

A: Somewhere around there, right.

Q: All right. What was the situation? Were any tents set up for you?

A: No. No. They didn't even level the ground for us.

Q: OK.

A: So we got here around noon. At about 2:00, they said, "We need you to go on duty at 6:00."

Q: All right. So, basically, within six hours, you're supposed to hit the ground running.

A: Yeah. And I yelled, complained, kicked a lot of sand around, and I think we got to work about 2000 hours.

Q: OK.

A: We were a little late, but that's life, you know? If we would have went right to work, they would have killed this company, without being able to set up any tents.

Q: Right.

A: And, you know, at least have a place to come and lay down when you get off shift.

Q: So how did you manage that during --? Because you had to simultaneously set up your camp and work at the same time, pretty much.

A: So it was a lot of hard work. And it was hot as hell that day. It was over 100 that day. That's why, when we got here at noon -- You know, we just got off a seven-hour convoy. So we just let everybody eat a meal. And that's

when they hit us with, "Yeah, we need you to go on duty at 1800 hours." And the commander, at the time, you know, he didn't try to fight it, ask for -- Finally, we talked him into going in, asking for more time. And they said, yeah, they'd give us more time. But, you know, he should have went there and said that we can't work like this.

Q: You said the commander at the time. I assume he's the commander -- when you left --

A: No, he got reassigned.

Q: OK.

A: He was the captain that they brought in from the outside.

Q: OK.

A: He deployed, and he ended up getting reassigned.

Q: OK. And when did he get reassigned?

A: Oh, it's about a month ago now.

Q: OK.

A: Just [fired off?], starting the EPW mission then.

Q: And would it be all right to ask why, or is it just one of those things?

A: No, because he was incompetent.

Q: OK.

A: I guess I'll leave it at that, for now.

Q: All right.

A: So they made Lieutenant [redacted] the new commander.

b(a)-1

014062

Q: OK. Now I expect a lot of the burden fell on you because you're expected to organize the schedules and all of that.

A: Right.

Q: What did you base your priorities on?

A: You mean that day?

Q: On that day.

A: I based my priorities on the needs of the soldiers --

Q: OK.

A: -- the needs of my soldiers. Because I knew there was not good reason why we had to go to work that night because the perimeter was manned, they had plenty of help out on the perimeter. So, you know, it could have waited until the next day.

Q: OK.

A: So -- I know they always tell you, mission first, mission first, but I couldn't do it that night. I just couldn't do it to them. So we put together a skeleton crew to go out and work the perimeter, and me and the platoon sergeants, you know, got the tents ready.

Q: All right. And how many people did you use to get the tents --? These are your own tents, I assume?

A: Right. These are our own tents that we had to pull off the trucks and put up.

Q: [Did the?] --

A: I think the first night we had to send out 30-something people, so.

Q: OK. So that kept about 60 to 70 back here.

A: Right. But it gets dark early, so.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because most of the work was all done, when they came back.

Q: OK. And that's got to be pretty hard.

A: Well, yeah. That added a lot of time to the work, in the dark. I mean, you could probably put up one of these tents during the daytime, you know, in two hours. But you're probably talking at least four, maybe closer to six, in the dark.

Q: All right. And how many tents did you all get established?

A: We put up three -- five that would be.

Q: And that five -- But you needed more tents, I assume.

A: Right. I slept outside for the first three days.

Q: OK.

A: Because there wasn't room in any tent for me.

Q: [Because?] -- All right. Now back to the mission. You're running that mission. How many people do you need to put on perimeter?

A: Well, I --

Q: And what kind of SOP had you been given? I mean, you got in at 12:00 --

014664

A: We weren't given any SOP, no general orders, no special orders, no nothing.

Q: Just, you're MP's, you're expected to know this, do the job?

A: That's right.

Q: Any verbal rules of engagement or anything?

A: Well, we had a very liberal one up at Talil. So we were still working off that.

Q: And if you don't mind me asking, what was the liberal one at Talil?

A: It was pretty much the scripture of hostile intent.

Q: OK.

A: And their description of hostile intent was, if he didn't do what you wanted, he was hostile.

Q: All right.

A: You know, regardless of the communication level there.

Q: All right. Now did you hear of any incidents out here? How long did your company man the perimeter? And about how long of a stretch?

A: We did the whole perimeter. The whole perimeter --

Q: That was the --

A: -- [redacted] check control points out on Tampa, and the main gate. b(2)-3

014665

Q: This is a pretty large post for just a company. And I'm going to assume two 12-hours shifts. So that puts it at [redacted] people. How big is Camp Buca, approximately, dimension-wise? b(2)-3

A: You know, I've heard a couple estimates. I'd have to say it's -- I don't know. Well, it was before the interment facility was built. So it's probably a couple square miles.

Q: And is it normal for an MP company to guard -- to hold perimeter defense for a --?

A: No. Because they told us our relief would be an infantry battalion. So the MP's got the short end of the stick again.

Q: Did an infantry battalion ever relieve you here or --?

A: No. No, they did not.

Q: OK.

A: Another MP company.

Q: OK.

A: And they were able to cut down the positions.

Q: OK.

A: Because they came, you know, pretty much after the hostilities ended.

Q: OK.

A: So they don't keep it as tight, to this day, as we did.

b(2)-3 A11

Q: OK. And the positions outside, it would be [redacted]?

A: Yes. [redacted] and just fighting positions.

Q: OK. And about how many soldiers for fighting positions, how many soldiers to the [redacted]

A: Well, we there are a [redacted]

Q: OK.

A: So we had a [redacted] at each check control point. And there was [redacted] there. We had [redacted] at the main gate. That's [redacted] And then they had them at some of the towers.

Q: OK.

A: Because we were short on [redacted] so we had to leave a [redacted] at some of the towers, so they could communicate.

Q: Use their [redacted]

A: Use the [redacted] radio. Right. And when you've only got [redacted] they go fast.

Q: OK. And what about Iraqi civilians coming in? Well, did you have an Iraqi soldiers try to infiltrate?

A: Well, it's funny. No, we had no Iraqi soldiers try to come through the perimeter. But we had a couple that, they'd come up, and they'd try to surrender at the traffic control point. And there was sort of a criteria. They'd either

have to be in uniform or have a weapon on them. So they were telling us. "No, we can't take you because you don't the right uniform, or you don't have a weapon." And they'd be back in a half-hour with a uniform on or with a weapon. Or a part of a weapon.

Q: And who would tell them? Would it be interpreters? Or the soldier who --?

A: It would by my specialist for the 2nd Platoon.

Q: When did you start getting interpreters? Or did you?

A: Well, no. We never really did get any interpreters. You know, they claim they're out here somewhere, and I've seen a few of them, but they're used mostly out at the interment facility or for processing.

Q: OK. And what about establishing internal security? Did you get a berm placed around your living quarters or --?

A: No. No, in fact that pissed me off a little, to put us in this position. And we were just a berm away from the holding area. And they didn't man the holding area very well. And one night, we had 40 of them come over the berm, right into our housing area. So then everybody had to come out of the tents and tackle these guys down and return them to the holding area. And another time, about ten of them came over. We caught them over in the corner. And, you

know -- Were you out here when the berm from the holding area was up?

Q: The original core holding area?

A: Yeah.

Q: No. Actually, I don't believe I was. I was here about two weeks ago, so.

A: Oh, OK. Yeah. But the holding area berm was 50 meters from [my carlus?] tent.

Q: And what if there'd been a riot or something?

A: Ssh -- They'd have come over the berm.

Q: Did you all --?

A: And they had 2,000 or 3,000 in there. And, you know, we're living here, so, you know, you leave your [redacted] b(2)3 A1 [redacted] you walk out of your tent. One of these guys could have come running in, and he had a [redacted]

Q: Did you all have a procedure in case a riot did erupt and --?

A: Yeah. They finally put one in place. Our job, since were the farthest unit out, was to go to the berm.

Q: OK.

A: If our guys weren't on duty, whoever was left in the tents had to grab your equipment and go to the berm.

Q: So there were other units closer to the berm.

A: No.

014669

Q: Or -- OK.

A: 822nd was the closest to the berm. The 223, the 223 FD Company, they're right next to us. But they're tasked to the brigade, so, if there was a riot, they would get a totally different mission, so. And the 267 was their backup. Because they have all the vehicles.

Q: OK.

A: So, since we have no trucks and -- We had to run to the berm. That was our job.

Q: OK.

A: And we had to do it twice.

Q: Did you?

A: Yeah.

END OF SIDE

A: -- day they had a riot out at the --

b(4)-2

Q: This is Sergeant [redacted], resuming the interview. And we were talking about the riots --

A: Right.

Q: -- and sending the troops to the berm.

A: One day, they had a riot out at the core holding area. They always have problems at feeding time, for whatever reason. They couldn't get the food out to them fast enough

or whatever it was. So they had had a big riot out there one day, where they had to send the quick-reaction force in to put it down. But, in fact, I think they ended up shooting three guys that day. As soon as they called for the 2RF, we knew something was going on. So I went around telling everybody, "Get your gear on. We're going to the berm." And this was before they even had that as our duty.

Q: OK.

A: Because I knew my primary concern was to protect my housing area. So that's what we did. We went up and sat up there for probably two-and-a-half hours, on top of the berm.

Q: OK.

A: Then the British sent some troops over. Then a sandstorm hits, and we're sitting up on the berm. When it clears, there's a bunch of British troops lined up in front of us. They came in during the sandstorm, didn't know we were there. So I said, well, they're in front of us now, so we can go back.

Q: But it's --

A: So --

Q: Oh, sorry.

A: So that was weird that day.

Q: What about the second time?

014071

A: Well, the second time didn't last as long. I think there was like a mass escape. Ten of them tried to get out.

Q: OK.

A: So we didn't send as many people to the berm that day, just probably half as many. And it was at night. I think we were only there may a half-hour or so.

Q: All right. And do you remember the approximate dates that both of these events happened?

A: No. No recollection on that at all.

Q: OK.

A: Probably, I don't know, a month ago.

Q: OK. Now when you have soldiers manning the perimeter, did Iraqi civilians approach them and try to find about their loved ones? Or at the traffic control points?

A: Every day, at the main gate.

Q: OK.

A: They came there. At the traffic control points, all they do -- And it's been a major fiasco. But for some reason, they decided to block off this major highway between Iraqi cities.

Q: So the road that runs between [Umkassar?] and, I guess, Basrah, I'm not sure.

A: [Saflon?], I think.

Q: Oh. Umkassar and Saflon.

014072

A: Saflon.

Q: Yeah.

A: That road. For whatever reason, the British decided we needed it to be blocked off.

Q: OK.

A: And that's been a major headache, stopping all that traffic, searching all the cars. And they're just searching the cars so they can drive by Camp Buca, and make sure they're secure enough to drive by our Camp Buca.

Q: Does it go through Camp Buca?

A: No --

Q: Oh.

A: -- it's outside the perimeter --

Q: Oh, all right.

A: -- but they figure that, [redacted] b(2)-3 All [redacted] You know, all they needed to do was make our firm bigger and put out a roving patrol. That would have cut down on manpower, and all that traffic could have moved freely. Because -- Well, anybody that is going to go and try and do something or is moving weapons back and forth, isn't going to go through the American checkpoint, especially in a desert. All they've got to do is [redacted] Plus there's [redacted]

014073

b(2)-3 A11

[redacted] So anybody that did want to get by, all the whiskey bootleggers and that stuff, [redacted]

Q: All right. The British gone. Why don't we change it? Or has anyone [done that?]?

A: We submitted the plan, they accepted it, and it's never been done.

Q: Oh, all right.

A: They said, "Good job, guys. We think this was a much better plan." But they never acted on it. Because they got tied up with the other things. You know, the press comes around and Red Cross comes around and -- You know, everything here, the priority has been the EPW's.

Q: OK.

A: Soldiers take a back seat.

Q: Now, as a first sergeant, how does that make you feel?

A: It gets me angry, very angry. Because it wasn't like that in '91. You know, EPW's, they were treated well. They were taken care of. But, you know, the Americans got a little bit better than that. Not equal to or a little less, like here.

Q: OK. Could you name some specifics where it's equal to or a little less? Well, let's just start with the camp

conditions, when you first arrived here in Buca. What were the latrines like?

A: Well, we brought our own.

Q: OK. Port-a-Potties or wooden three-holers?

A: Wooden burners.

Q: Wooden burners. All right.

A: Because otherwise, we would have never got any here. But the EPW's had theirs. I mean, it was a big priority for the EPW's to get their showers. And as you see, I got my own showers. We built our showers.

Q: Basically, showers you've had to rig up.

A: Right.

Q: The EPW's, did they get some better showers or --?

A: Well, yeah. They got showers right away --

Q: OK.

A: -- with water. I mean, they've got big huge tanks out at the EPW camp. I'm showering 117 people with a 30-gallon footlocker.

Q: That's what I wanted to know.

A: Right. A 30-gallon plastic footlocker that we have to fill, whenever you want to take a shower.

Q: Was it like that during the first Desert Storm?

A: No. We had wooden showers with tanks on top. But they had quartermasters come by and fill it. No. Soldiers were

much better taken care of during Desert Storm, [I would say?] --

Q: All right.

A: -- much better. In my opinion.

Q: Well, in Desert Storm, I heard, out in the middle of nowhere, there would be phone banks for soldiers to use.

A: Sure. Right out in the middle of nowhere would be a tent, with phones in it, a satellite dish next to it. You went in there, you got your 15 minutes, and that was it.

Q: Why hasn't that been done here? Or do you know?

A: I have no idea why. I have no idea. Same thing with fuel. Fuel has been a major pain in my ass. Because just the lack of support, on fuel.

Q: I mean, there's a quartermaster company here. Don't they supply you? Or do they ration you?

A: Yeah, now that the quartermaster is here. But --

Q: Oh. Before that.

A: -- the three months before the quartermaster was here, it's just been a major hassle. You know, any civilians they get out here, they -- or the engineers, the -- "Well, we're only going to fuel from 6:00 am to 8:00 am, and from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm."

Q: Is the --?

014076

A: So if you need fuel during the day or fuel at night, you're sure out of luck. But during Desert Storm, you couldn't drive five miles without seeing a fuel tanker on the side of the road.

Q: What about NAVSTAR? Are you able to use the resources there at all? [Be?] Kuwaiti City or the U.S. logistical point right across from Saflon?

A: I've never even heard of it.

Q: OK.

A: So I guess I'm not using it!

Q: OK. (laughs) But fuel, you only had four a day to use.

A: Right.

Q: And phone --

A: And we're running a 24-hour operations.

Q: OK. Yeah. What about phone? Well, you said there's no phone banks. It's --

b(2)-3

A: There's [redacted] phones here at Camp Buca.

Q: DSN or --?

A: Very limited.

Q: OK.

A: Very limited. I have a cell phone that I let people use occasionally.

Q: So are other soldiers resorting to cell phones, as well, or --

014677

A: Yeah, we have quite a few soldiers with cell phones.

Q: OK.

A: Most of them have the calling cards, you know, where you can --

Q: OK.

A: They don't have a service. You just use the calling card connected with it. So they can pass that phone around. Mine, I don't have a phone card service. So I either pay for the call myself or, you know, they give me some money for it.

Q: OK. Now, latrines. Has that situation improved?

A: Yeah. They brought in Port-a-Potties, finally. But, you know, with the burners, we had to go around and beg, borrow, and steal toilet seats.

Q: OK.

A: I mean, I had a lot of happy faces the day I got toilet seats on those crappers.

Q: I mean, it sounds funny, but you don't want splinters --

A: No.

Q: -- when you sit down and use the latrine.

A: No. And people don't think that, you know, a toilet seat could bring a smile to somebody's face the way it does --

Q: Oh, no.

A: -- especially the females. But we did have some portapoties that were found at Coyote that had been run over by a truck, but the faces weren't in place so they cut out the tanks, just the top part, so we were dragging those all over Iraq with us, that's when we were digging the slit trenches, the little face with the toilet seat on it for the port potty, in fact they want to bring them home with them.

Q: Oh no, you can't bring Iraqi weapons home.

A: I don't know if we can bring home Iraqi toilet seats or not.

Q: All right we talked about bombs and we had to use your cell phone, other troops use cell phones, what about mail?

A: Mail has been another pain in the butt. Again, '91, the minute I hit country I have one zip code, never changed it, never had a mail problem. Here, every time we move, we get a new zip code and then when we move for a week and come back, like when we went up to Pulel (sp?) the S3, or the S4 is closer to the 293rd, thought he was doing us a favor and had our mail transferred up there. Well I call this a major hassle, because we had to march half a dozen troops back up to Pulel to retrieve mail, that's been a huge, huge problem.

Q: All right, we talked about latrines. Can you tell me about the bootca (sp?) illness a little bit?

A: The bootca illness is diarrhea and vomiting and they don't, you know, some people say it's from not washing your hands after you use the latrine, that's what the doctor said, I don't buy it. I figure it's either the water, I think it's possibly the MKT to because most of the people that never ate over at the MKT didn't get sick.

Q: The Mobile Kitchen Trailer.

A: Mobile Kitchen Trailer is right. I think that was a big problem because I don't think they had the proper facilities to wash the pots and pans. You see those sea rations that they use? They're not supposed to open them up and put them in a can, they told us once before they're tin cans that's suppose to go right in boiling water, you open up the tin can, serve it right out of the tin can, but they weren't doing that, they were taking kitchen tin pans, opening them, empty them in a pot and then cook the pot.

Q: OK. And doing that constantly.

A: Right, they were doing that with all the meals. And I think occasionally they got a bug in them. You know, I've worked as a mechanic, I'm a policeman, a lot of times I don't have an opportunity to wash my hands and I eat. I've never gotten the bootca bug.

Q: OK.

A: Now I'm down on the second round of it. Some people are getting it for the second time now. And it's even harder the second time.

Q: About how many soldiers got hit by the bootca bug in your company?

A: Probably 50, 60.

Q: Percent or soldiers?

A: Soldiers.

Q: OK.

A: Which would actually be about 50 or 60 percent. And like I said, a lot of them are getting it for the second time.

Q: Now you mentioned the water, what about MREs, you think the heat can be doing to the MREs or the water?

A: No, they did put out a bulletin about a bad batch of MREs.

Q: OK.

A: And by the time we got the bulletin, we checked our stock numbers and we didn't have any of it, so we might have eaten it, I don't know. I just don't know. The lot numbers?

Q: And when did they open up the DFAC, pardon me, the Dining Facility Active Component?

A: Probably about two weeks ago for breakfast and dinner.

Q: And that's about the same time they opened the front of the portapoties.

A: Yeah, well once (inaudible) moved out of here, the company that's got the contract, they pretty much came together.

Q: So Brown and Root has been responsible for a lot of the improvements around here.

A: Right, they're responsible for the portapoties, the dining facility, I think they're even doing the roads now, dropping the gravel and all that.

Q: Now, why weren't they brought up here sooner?

A: I have no idea.

Q: OK.

A: All I heard was contract troubles.

Q: OK. Now, Desert Storm, I believe that the EPW Compound you worked out was south of the, or south of Iraq and in Saudi Arabia.

A: It was in a Al Satrah, Saudi Arabia.

Q: Why didn't they build an EPW compound in Kuwait and have it all set up and established?

A: I think because the Kuwait's didn't want them for one.

Q: OK.

A: And I think there's extra steps you have to take to repatriate on that.

Q: Oh, OK.

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A: Here we can just kick them out at the front gate. There was a lot of them, we had one guy in the compound he could see his house from the compound he was in because he lived in Al-Kazir.

Q: That's got to be pretty frustrating for him? Every day.

A: I bet it was.

Q: Seeing.

A: Yeah, he could see his house from the compound.

Q: How about interaction between your soldiers and Iraqis. I mean, prisoners, and again going back to the civilians as well.

A: Well, I think it's been pretty good.

Q: Let's start with the prisoners.

A: Well, we're not really supposed to interact, but being a human being, it's unavoidable. They've all been on a positive note, I think. Outside of the MPs doing their job.

Q: Right.

A: Rack them up and they have to yell at them, or whatever. But I think, there's been some friendly conversing. You know. A lot of them speak English, so there's been joke telling and stuff like that. You know. It's strongly discouraged anything personal, and for the most part they've been holding up pretty good.

Q: Now as I understand it, there's seven different compounds for different types of prisoners, like EPW or soldiers, enlisted officer, juveniles, civilian.

A: Military Intelligence holds.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, if there's a category that makes them different, we'll separate them. Officers and (inaudible), and I guess the officers are probably more educated, so they've got a lot of problems with the latrines down there. They just can't seem to get the grasp of going to the toilet on a toilet seat, through the whole. So all we can do is burn those things when they're done because there's just crap all over the place.

Q: All right and the Sharif facilities, I've been told, someone mentioned that they get, the Iraqi prisoners get two showers a day?

A: That's what I heard.

Q: OK.

A: We got plenty of water down there for it.

Q: Have they ever thought of diverting some of the stuff from the prisoners to you all?

A: I guess it was all prisoners with separate problems that it's being done.

Q: Now what about the International Red Cross. You mentioned them. Have they ever stepped in? Or have you ever had to interact with them?

A: No, I haven't but I understand that when they come through the internal facility they say it's adequate.

Q: That's something burning right there. I would get something wood first. Get something, two plugs burning.

A: Burn that thing out.

Q: It might be a good thing that we were in here.

A: Yep.

Q: All right, and the tape's still running here so. (laughter) This is camp lights at Camp Buca (sp?). They had their generator go down, they were trying to install it and it looks like it might have too much (inaudible).

A: A little bit too much juice coming through those lines. Power supply. Yeah, the Red Cross says that the camp is adequate.

Q: OK, just adequate?

A: Just adequate.

Q: What do they see as being good and what would they like to see improved?

A: I'm sure if it was up to the Red Cross it would be in (inaudible).

Q: That palace.

A: They've never been over here to look at us, to come and see how we're doing.

Q: OK. Now your soldiers, oh! What about your soldiers manning the perimeter when Iraqi civilians approach them?

A: Well, that was just a major hassle because specialists barracks can't be in every place at all times. You got to stake to, or work another post occasionally.

Q: And would you, because he has such skills, would you hold him back from some of those duties just so you can send them out to put out fires so to speak?

A: No, he'd work a regular shift.

Q: OK.

A: No, I never, we never demanded that he go out there. It's just, you know. I'll just have to handle it out there without him. I mean, if the Marines got to get an interpreter out there, then damn it, that's what they better do. We were told, oh yeah, the brigade has got 150 interpreters assigned to them. I think I've seen no more than 10 at a time. So I don't know what happened to them. But no, they've been, some big problems out there. They had 200, 300 people out there trying to get in with only [redacted] b(2)-3 or [redacted] MPs at the gate trying to keep them back. b(2)-3

Q: And that sounds close to a ride in itself.

A: Right, and the brigade has made a lot of empty promises.

Q: To?

A: The Iraqi civilians that they've never kept. Not counting who was in the can, they told them that they were going to post them on billboards, and they've never come up with a paper list out there that people can look at. So they eventually just couldn't let them through. We sent them to the Red Cross in Basrah.

Q: Basrah?

A: Right.

Q: Which is a ways away for an Iraqi civilian I'd imagine.

A: Especially, you know, we're so, we were so far back from the road, our vehicles will pull up and we'd have three or four people get out and the MP would have to run out there and try to tell them, don't let that car go because we can't get anything done here, you got to go to Basrah and the car pulled away and the people would get stranded here.

Q: OK, OK, yeah.

A: But I guess since word has got out, they haven't had people come to the gate in a long time.

Q: OK. And were your soldiers concerned, because from what I understand children bring unexploded ordinance sometimes to get candy, then there were stories about the suicide bomber with the chest vest.

A: Well, sure, there was always concern, but they really have a lot of sympathy for these people because they have fathers and mothers and brothers from all over Iraqi coming here to look for their loved ones and we couldn't give them any information, we had to keep them at arm's length and. But once we got somebody out there that spoke the language and found out what was going on, you have compassion for these people. So it's tough. It's really tough here. Have compassion for somebody and also treat them as a danger. And one day there was an explosion in In Kazar, and a little girl was killed and they brought her here looking for medical help. She had third degree burns on 70% of her body. And we couldn't do nothing for her, we couldn't do shit for her. Finally after like three hours of this girl laying in the back of a car, they got a Medivac out to the U.S.S. Hope, but that was all my guy's doing.

Q: And, all right, do we have facilities here to help handle third degree burns?

A: I don't believe so.

Q: OK.

A: Especially at that time, I know they didn't.

Q: OK.

A: I don't think they have it to this day. They have sick call and they have a support hospital, but I don't think it supports -- the support hospital is a trauma unit. I don't think they could do surgery in it.

Q: So what did your people do to help this girl get taken about the?

A: We just ran up the chain and kept rolling it up the chain, and kept running it up the chain, and bothering them at the brigade until they got something done.

Q: That's the case, so they kept calling brigade?

A: Till they did something, and it still took almost three hours.

Q: All right.

A: You know, the doctors went out and looked at here, but there was nothing they could do for her.

Q: Have you heard what happened to her eventually? Or?

A: Yeah, I think she's OK, because her mother was the only one that was allowed access to Camp Buca.

Q: OK.

A: Because they would bring her up to the park and give her a progress report on her daughter.

Q: OK.

A: So she come every other day. Just to make sure that her daughter didn't die. And we'd tell her that she was OK. I

think they eventually took her out there one day. To visit her daughter. It worked out well. I'd be lying if I said that she was released, because I hadn't heard anything and it was just one of those things where you just move on and forget. I'll have to inquire about her, I'm sure somebody around here knows.

Q: Now you've been patrolling, how long have you, from approximately, when to when have you been manning the perimeter, and when did your mission change?

A: I think we manned the perimeter for about two weeks.

Q: OK. And that'd be from about April 2nd till I guess April 16th then?

A: Right.

Q: And then what was your next mission?

A: It was taking over the guard towers in the internment facility.

Q: OK, and how many guard towers were there approximately?

A: They've gone to like [redacted] to [redacted] and there's been as high as [redacted] you know, with the amount of prisoners it goes up and down.

b(2)-3 All

Q: OK.

A: We have to man, but we always set at least two and a half size over there, I guess that's about [redacted] people.

Q: Almost [redacted] the company.

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A: Right.

b(2)-3 All

Q: And they would also do [redacted]

A: They'd do [redacted] around the compound at the internment facility.

Q: OK.

A: And they'll bring soldiers water or food, give them latrine breaks.

Q: Some of the towers are [redacted] while others are [redacted]

A: Right.

Q: Does that make a difference?

A: Not really. I suppose if you're going to be sitting on them at the base. The ones that they were concerned with are that the towers weren't [redacted] if there was a [redacted] you know, what if one of them got hit by [redacted] or something.

Q: I've heard that sometimes the [redacted] towers get hotter than the [redacted] ones.

A: Probably so, but the [redacted] ones are little bit more open than the [redacted] ones. They probably do, that [redacted] I'm sure, eats up more than the [redacted] does.

Q: About how high are these towers?

A: They're probably about, the platform's about 12[redacted]

Q: OK. As I understand it, there's [redacted] of the tower to [redacted] unless you're at the end and then you [redacted]

A: That's correct. The [redacted]

Q: OK. Exactly. And they watch as MPs, like if a compound sergeant goes in, it is there responsibility to watch and make sure.

A: Right, that he is safe. b(2)-3 A1V

Q: OK.

A: Because [redacted]

Q: Right.

A: There's only [redacted]

Q: So what are some of the other responsibilities your soldiers carry out in the compound area, the guards, you mentioned [redacted] is that in groups of [redacted] or?

A: Groups of [redacted], [redacted] and sometimes they'll put [redacted] in the vehicle.

Q: OK.

A: And they also have the QRF, Quick Reaction Force, and that's just a swat of MPs that basically all they do is sit out there and wait for something to happen. They'll do a little training, sit a little, you know, depending on how hot it is, do a little training, you know, run through some

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escape scenarios or crowd control scenarios and just sit there.

Q: So they haven't been called up yet?

A: No, we haven't had the QRF since we've gone into the compound. We never had to call them out.

Q: And the QRF do they have riot gears, I'm talking shields, face masks. b(2)-3 All

A: They have [redacted] and,

Q: [redacted]

A: [redacted] and [redacted]

Q: And what about the [redacted]

A: We never gotten any of those, there's a couple of them up at the top, but they never handed them out.

Q: The top Battalion Tactical Operations?

A: The top Battalion Tactical Operations.

Q: All right, and are you still doing that mission? You know, manning the towers?

A: Yes, that's what we're doing at the present time.

Q: Eight hour shifts, or 12 hour shifts?

A: Eight hour shifts because we have 3 MP companies going in.

Q: OK.

A: If one MP company may get pulled off, they might get another mission, then we'll have to go to 12 hour shifts.

Q: Is it likely that another MP company will be pulled off? Have you heard any rumors?

A: From what, from what, well, there's a 1,000 rumors around this place. This is rumor central. Yeah, the Battalion has briefed that the 447FB company might get pulled off because they technically belong to another battalion.

Q: OK.

A: They're just like a loaner company for us.

Q: OK. And you're talking about rumors. What are some of the more interesting rumors that may affect your command?

A: It just takes a lot of time out of my day, to stop it and to squelch a rumor. Most of them have been about going home. There was one today that says the reason we (inaudible) staying here is because General [redacted]s making too much money, the Deputy Commander. And he wants to stay. b(6)-1

Q: A rumor like that causes a lot of, you mentioned you squelched those, how do you do that?

A: I just tell them, for one, I'm sure he wants to go home just as much as everybody else. I mean, he's a Colonel in the Army Reserve, I'm sure he's a professional on the outside, I heard he's (inaudible) or something, so I don't think he's making too much money here. And then, most of the other rumors are all with dates, and I tell them, there

are no dates for us to go home. No where written anywhere is there a data next to the 822nd MP Company, a return date. I said, I try to explain to them the best I can that the mission's not over, things are just too fluid. Something comes up, plus there's a shortage of MPs, the Army's just not going to let us go home after three months. You know, I try to do it as nice as I can, I don't want to be mean about it. Because we were supposed to be already been gone by this time, according to rumor.

Q: And again that causes a lot of ups and downs I'm sure.

A: Oh yeah, I mean, there were people that were positive that we were leaving on the 17th of May. I mean, we got back to the family support board, they posted it on our website.

Q: Why were they so sure?

A: I guess probably because somebody said that they saw it on a memo. Somehow, someway they decided that myself and the commander know the return dates, but we're not telling them because we want them to stay mission focused. We don't want them thinking of home. That they'll be home soon.

Q: But you don't know the return date?

A: I have no idea. I tell them, you know, I start joking with them now, hey, even if I did know I wouldn't tell you. And then I'd tell them, didn't anybody tell you? We left three days ago. What are you going, you know, you're tired, you

get tired of telling them same old thing every day, especially with some of the bigger whiners, you know? I mean, I have guys two or three times a day come up to me, "I heard the 19th of May we're leaving". No. No. Do you think we'd be sitting here putting a new generator in if we were leaving on the 19th? Do you think we'd be dropping portapoties if we were going home next week. Although that's another big joke. As soon as they start serving lunch at the dining facility, we'd be out of here in two days.

Q: That's probably true.

A: Some of them say we'll get another mission some say no, I know, I know for a fact we're not getting another mission, we're going home. I know from experience that we could get two more missions.

Q: What about the family support group? How has that been?

A: Well, they've been wonderful. Our new commander, (inaudible) on a regular basis. The Emails do wonders. The Email has taken the place of phones for a lot of people.

Q: OK.

A: And we were fortunate enough to get to have a bunch of computer geeks in this company and we got Internet access

at every one of our tents, except the small ones in the back.

Q: I think you know how important and valuable that is. (laughter).

A: Very important, very important. We use it on a regular basis. It's worked out very well for us, especially, like I said, with the lack of phones.

Q: Family support group, they have a chain of command and they send news back and forth, news to you all, and you send news to them and they disseminate it.

A: Yeah, they have a newsletter, they know a couple of them out here every month.

Q: Good.

A: And they have a couple of functions. We just had a blood drive at the reserve center, the local VFW that adopted us in Frankfurt, IL through a big party for the family support group.

Q: What about care packages? And I don't mean just from the family support group, you said you've been adopted by the VFW.

A: Oh, they're killing us with packages. They raised like $60,000 and their sending it all in care packages for us.

Q: That's got to help somewhat.

A: I've gotten three of them. In fact, I've gotten three of them already, two of them I haven't even opened yet.

Q: Well, you know, if you guys have too many care packages, we'll help carry them for you.

A: I'll give you one when you leave.

Q: All right. (laughter)

A: And then, like I said, we went almost a month with no mail. And when that came in, it was like Christmas.

Q: There's no doubt about that, what about future improvements for Camp Buca. You mentioned gravel on the roads because it's extremely dusty here. Have you heard anything about air conditioning?

A: I think that was in the original plan, but I think that idea's been killed. I don't think it's going to happen. I just keep trying to tell people this is only Spring, and it's 118 and just wait till Summer gets here. If we're here in July and August my job is going to be very tough trying to keep morale up. A couple of the guys went into town last week and bought some air conditioners, that's the whole idea of a new generator is.

Q: OK.

A: So.

Q: Iraqi generators, I mean, Iraqi air conditioners.

A: Right. Well, Kuwait, they were Kuwait. I'm sure there's not much of a difference between the two.

Q: Would you be able to buy some Iraqi generators perhaps or with that money raised by the VFW?

A: Yes, if they send us cash, we can spend it here, I'm sure.

Q: Or get them to send a check to the Iraqi, I mean, Kuwait dealer.

A: Yeah, they could probably do that. They bought air conditioners, freezers.

Q: Those are important.

A: Everything outside of portapoties is a (inaudible) facility now, everything else we've done for our ourselves.

Q: What about water consumption, because you mentioned freezers, it's important to get cold water out here.

A: We don't have any problem getting bottled water.

Q: OK.

A: I think one day the battalion got dangerously close to (inaudible).

Q: Are they trying to cut back on bottled water?

A: You know, I heard that today and I haven't been able to get that rumor down. That would not be good, because, like Water buffalo, the water we get from the Quartermaster is like 3,000 degrees and it's real heavily chlorinated. I don't think we should be drinking that.

Q: And you know, this path traveled just a little in Baghdad, a couple of other spots, and this is the first time I've heard anyone trying to cut back on the bottled water. What would be the reason for that?

A: All I can think of is either cost or logistical problems with the transport. That's the only thing I can think of. I don't even want to think about them trying to cut off the bottled water.

Q: Well, you mentioned morale problems later on. Let's go to the end result, six months, a year down the road, what do you think the retention is going to be for this company and what can be done to improve it?

A: I think retention for this company after we've redeployed will be horrible. But I anticipate losing 50% if not more. And I think what they should do is use some of that recruiting money and spend it here on the soldiers that are here. What do they spend on recruiting every year $150, $200 million dollars. If that's what why they don't have stuff here for the soldier's it's money, and that's where they should take the money from. Because, I mean, why would you want to bring new people in and disregard the old ones? We have a whole new era of experienced soldiers in a war time environment. Why would they just want to

disregard them? I can't even think about that, it just doesn't make sense to me.

Q: What could be done to prevent it? You talked about the $150 million and how it could be spent over here.

A: I don't know what the problem is. Is it because they don't have the money to spend on the extras? You know, granted, comparing us to what they went through in World War II, the Army bent over backwards to accommodate soldiers but they have to understand that our way of life has gone way up. We're living a lot better than people did in the '40s.

Q: Yeah, they just came out of the great depression.

A: In the '50s, in the '60s, we're living a lot better than the people did, so they have to raise the standard of living for the soldier, but I think they need to do more, especially now if they're going to have the support groups just sitting out here doing nothing, I have heard very little about NWI. Very little. You know they talk about the (inaudible) palace in Kuwait, set that up, it's going to cost everybody $15 a piece, which I guess isn't bad for a day of swimming, I hope that includes food too, but you know, there's. Now I heard that Kuwait City was put off limits. I don't know if that's true or not.

Q: I've heard the same rumor, I don't know.

A: It's just craziness. If you're going to send people here, once the war's over, I don't understand why they can't go in and enjoy the culture and support the local economy. That would be good for the troops, it would make them happy. That's why I'm sure I could get in trouble for sending them into Jirrait (sp?), but I send them there anyway, they could walk through the malls, it's air conditioned. There's a Kentucky Fried Chicken there, there's a Baskin Robbins, a Hardees, a grocery store. I went and spent, I had to go and spend $65 of my own money on brooms and then I went and spent another $240 for a barbeque, because that's where (inaudible), it will be open tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow. In the mean time we work 40 days on the MREs and a certain General says you're only supposed to eat them for 21 days.

Q: That's right.

A: So. They said local command is going to expand that, but double it?

Q: Yeah, you're right.

A: People get tired of the MREs after a while. So. It brought a lot of smiles too. I get a lot of miles out of that stuff.

Q: Jirrat, where is that?

A: It's the first town south of Coyote, just off of Kuwait City.

Q: OK. OK.

A: It's not a bad town, it's real nice. Nice little town.

Q: Just might have to go there if I can't got to Kuwait.

A: They got grocery stores there, they take American money. The people are real friendly. They got a lot of little stores. That's where they bought the air conditioners and the freezers. The Army can't give them freezers, they bought three at (inaudible), they've all been junk. They won't work. So. They're getting tired of hooking up some piece of junk to find out that it doesn't work, they went out and bought new ones. I hope we can bring them back, I hope there's no custom restrictions on it. Everything's expendable when it's time to go home.

Q: That's true, that's the story we learned that during the first Gulf War, we tried to collect documentation, there weren't a lot of military history detachments out here, units going home literally burned their documents by the barrel full and that's part of the reason why we're out here now and thank God a lot of things are saved on electronic forms, so I know when you return, your unit is going to be hit up by the ADARSC to turn in the ADR intel summaries to the USCARC bit.

A: Yeah '91, when we left the UPW (inaudible) it was Easter Sunday and it was hot, people were tired, (inaudible) came by and they said, 'Hey, nice tents.', eh, it's yours, see you, got in their trucks and left, they left their tents there. They were the canvas ones, so we knew right out that there was no way we could clean those. These rubber ones, they tell me they're cleanable, but I don't know, all that Velcro on it.

(background voice: What time are you going into town?)

A: What time is it?

(background voice: I don't know.)

Q: 17:06.

A: 17:06. As soon as I'm done here.

(background voice: OK, I appreciate it).

Q: We're almost done, I'd say 10, 15 minutes left.

(Tape turns off and back on again) b(4)-2

Q: All right, this is Sergeant [redacted] I'm resuming the interview. All right, I was curious, have any of your soldiers expressed any job problems, you know, you've heard rumors that you will return home. Have any soldiers heard anything about their jobs and their job security when they return home?

A: One soldier, pretty much he lost his business. He was a self employed contractor and he really had to, I guess he

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had some type of deal worked out that someone was going to attempt to run it for him, but they weren't successful, so it's kaput now. We don't really have too many other problems. We got a lot of students. You know, a lot of kids are concerned are they going to make it back to the Fall semester. We get a lot of that. We probably got a lot of policeman. So their jobs are secure.

Q: Actually, let me ask, how many are law enforcement in your company? Approximately, percentage wise?

A: Ten percent.

Q: Ten percent?

A: Maybe a little bit more.

Q: OK. Let me ask you, what's the first thing you're going to do when you get back home?

A: Just hang out with my kids.

Q: All right. Well, I think that's a good way, well, all right, last question: What strain has been placed on you and your family, or has it improved things?

A: Well, my daughter's 12 and she misses me, but she's going to be a 12 years. It's hard on my son. When I first went my daughter was a month old, my son was 3. So they didn't really know too much then. But now my son is 15 it's really affected him. But I have to say I'm proud he has stepped up to the plate and is the man of the family. My

daughter, all she wants to do is chase boys and go to school and be the princess that she is, and doing a good job of it.

Q: And during the first one I expect it probably affected you more especially being so young too.

A: I'm much happier now that they're older and able to take care of themselves. We send Emails back and forth.

Q: You have two teenagers, I'm kind of curious what are you going to do when you get back with them, in particular? You know? Disneyworld might or might not work.

A: They're going June 1st.

Q: To Disneyworld?

A: To Disneyworld without me.

Q: (laughter). Oh, man!

A: I'll just hang out on the deck with them. I'm sure they'll have a lot of questions and I'll try to answer them for them. Hopefully the pictures will be developed and we'll go through that. Figure we'll probably be eating a lot too.

Q: OK.

A: My daughter loves to eat, I love to eat. Hopefully the weather will be good I'll be home for some cookouts.

Q: That seems like a good way to conclude this interview. The time now is 17:10 I'm going to conclude the interview, Sir, thank you.

A: Thank you.

(END OF TAPE)