

**Byron Laszlo Linnehan**  
**Narrator**

**Wayne Clark**  
**Interviewer**

**Interviewed on November 18, 2010**  
**Lexington Avenue Armory**  
**New York, NY**

**Q:** Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2010, we are at the Lexington Avenue Armory in Manhattan. My name is Wayne Clark I'm with the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center in Saratoga Springs New York. The cameraman today is PFC Brought (00:22). Sir, for the record would you please state your full name and your date and place of birth please?

**BL:** Sure, full name is Brian Laszlo Linehan. I was born at Lexington Hill Hospital here in Manhattan New York.

**Q:** Did you attend school here in Manhattan?

**BL:** I did, Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and then 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in Brooklyn.

**Q:** You graduated from high school in what year?

**BL:** In 1996.

**Q:** Did you go on to college at that point?

**BL:** Yes, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore Maryland

**Q:** Were you involved in the ROTC Program?

**BL:** Yes, exactly.

**Q:** What was your field of study?

**BL:** Political Science.

**Q:** When you graduated, you were commissioned as a second lieutenant?

**BL:** Correct.

**Q:** Where did you go for your officer basic?

**BL:** I did military police officer basic course in Fort Leonard Wood Missouri. From there I went to Korea as my first assignment.

**Q:** When was that?

**BL:** Let's see, that was about 2002.

**Q:** I noticed you've got airborne wings, you went to jump school?

**BL:** I did as a cadet actually. I believe it was my sophomore year of college.

**Q:** Your first assignment was in Korea and do you want to tell us about that, what that was like?

**BL:** Sure, I was a military police platoon leader with the 188<sup>th</sup> MP Company out of the city of Daegu, which is in area four of South Korea and one of my additional duties that I enjoyed the most was working with the SRT Team, which is a Special Reaction Team, the military's version of the civilian SWAT team. Worked with some great soldiers and fellow officers there in Korea, had a great time.

**Q:** Any incidents that you can recall that you would like to record on tape?

**BL:** Sure, there was one training event that we did where we practice rappelling down like building sides and then I won't go into the details of the instance were that actually had to be used but, would've been a couple weeks there was an emergency situation on one of the bases and that training that we've just done was used by the soldiers to successfully handle the situation.

**Q:** What was your typical work day like? What did it involve?

**BL:** It was a very short commute, I lived just right around the bend from our MP company. and...

**Q:** you lived on post?

**BL:** Yes. Some friends lived off post, but it was good to be close to work. Essentially, we would go in and we were in like the red cycle and amber cycle for the majority of my time as a platoon leader.

**Q:** Do you want to explain those cycles?

**BL:** Oh sure, red amber green is just the varying cycles depending on your training or your non-training commitments. When you're an MP you also have duties of protecting the base and the base cluster in that area of Korea. For example, my platoon also went to a nearby camp...I believe it was George or might be missing that name exactly...but there was another base cluster nearby

and we went there for a while and helped do law enforcement patrolling in that area.

**Q:** How many men did you have in your command, your median command?

**BL:** Between 30 and 40. It would fluctuate based on usually being a one-year tour of duty for soldiers.

**Q:** Any problems at all? Job wise?

**BL:** No.

**Q:** What about the civilian populace, did you have much interaction with them?

**BL:** Recreationally, we did interact with the ROK Army too. Some training events when we went and saw their operations on how they would set up a detention facility. They're a very professional force and it was a pleasure to work with them. We also had KATUSAs in our platoon and in our company, which stands for Korean Augmentation or Augmentee, to the United States Army. That was a good cultural exchange program for us as well and definitely helped for nothing else, more cultural understanding and also defeats a language barrier.

**Q:** Did you learn Korean?

**BL:** No that's one regret I have, is not learning Korean. I learned functional Korean and how to order food in a restaurant and get around town, but, I do wish I had learned the language.

**Q:** Did you do any jumping over there?

**BL:** No. I was not in a jump status when I was currently in Korea.

**Q:** How long were you there for?

**BL:** One year.

**Q:** What was the weather conditions like?

**BL:** It was pretty standard except for during monsoon season. There was always a tremendous amount of rain. They have these ditches that some people call turtle ditches, there about a couple feet high and a couple feet wide, and they would just be full of water and it would be raging for maybe a couple of weeks at a time.

**Q:** where you there for the winter season, the snow?

**BL:** Let's see, yes, yes. And it wasn't that bad.

**Q:** Did you find that your equipment was adequate?

**BL:** Definitely.

**Q:** Once you left Korea, where did you go next?

**BL:** Fort Hood Texas and shortly after arriving I branched transferred to the Military Intelligence Corps.

**Q:** Why did you transfer?

**BL:** I really enjoyed my time as a military policeman but I wanted to... instead of working on a defense and force protection, kind of get more into preventative work on terrorist cells specifically. And that was while I was in Korea, is when OIF one kicked off and some of my best friends and ROTC buddies from college deployed with the first wave to Baghdad, so I wanted to catch up with them. HRC was more than willing to oblige my request for Fort Hood Texas.

**Q:** How long were you at Fort Hood?

**BL:** Several years, only interrupted by deployments to Iraq and also military training for the military intelligence branch in Fort Huachuca Arizona.

**Q:** What was your training like, what did it entail?

**BL:** The first batch of military intelligence training was the military tactician's course or more commonly referred to as the transition course. When an officer from one branch will be retrained to function in another branch. My transition course was great, was like drinking from a fire hose, but I really loved the work. The instructors at the school house at Fort Huachuca were great, it was a great opportunity. I was lucky also to have a great battalion S2 in my unit. I was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, we were a tank battalion. My battalion S2, who is now a good friend of mine, Trevor **Hasik (8:10)**. He was a great mentor and I learned a lot.

**Q:** Were you promoted while you were there?

**BL:** Yes. Yep, I pinned on Captain in Baghdad, shortly before, right around Christmas, actually, 2005.

**Q:** Do you want to tell us about being deployed to the Middle East?

**BL:** Sure, what would you like to...anything...

**Q:** Did you go over with the entire unit?

**BL:** Yes, the timing worked out really well. I got to the unit and we had about a year, year and half before we deployed together. So, we were able to build a cohesive team, who trained together, build those professional and personal relationships that helped us operate better when we were deployed, and then then we deployed together.

**Q:** When did you go overseas?

**BL:** Let's see, March, right around Saint Patrick's Day of 2004.

**Q:** Where about did you land?

**BL:** First we processed through Kuwait. Got acclimated and did some training in Kuwait, also made sure the armorers on our vehicles were supplemented at that time. We didn't have up-armored Humvee's, we had to augment it. Then we did a road trip from Kuwait up into Baghdad, that was quite an experience.

**Q:** What was your impression once you landed in Kuwait, was the heat unbearable?

**BL:** It was pretty hot. When we stepped off the plane I remember, thinking, that if you've ever stepped off a plane and if you've ever stepped behind a jet wash, it's like that except it doesn't go away once you leave the tarmac, and it was incredibly bright. We would be in vans going out to our camp in Kuwait, we'd have the shade shut and then you know when everybody was trying to catch up on sleep they didn't get on the plane. The sun reflected so well off the sand it was blinding.

**Q:** How long did it take you to get acclimated?

**BL:** About a couple weeks. Just drinking a lot of water, eating well, and starting to do some physical training. Being aware of a good work rest cycle but...that was pretty neat.

**Q:** Now the training you received in Kuwait, do you think it prepared you for what you saw in Iraq?

**BL:** To a degree, I'd say it definitely helped, but it's really hard to fully replicate what we would see in Iraq. I'd say they did a pretty good job but there's always room for improvement.

**Q:** What was your trip to Baghdad like?

**BL:** A really long drive, but luckily no major incidents. We were kind of preparing for the worst if you will, but there were no significant attacks on our convoys moving north.

**Q:** Once you arrived in Iraq did you see evidence of the war on the roadsides? Villages you passed through?

**BL:** Not really, except for some bullet pop marks on overpasses moving south to north. Maybe some damage on vehicles and interfaces as we would stop along the way, but no, there had been a lot of effort put into battlefield maintenance.

**Q:** All right, when you arrived in Baghdad, what kind of quarters were you put up in?

**BL:** We were put in an old...I believe it was an Iraqi compound...

**Q:** Military Compound?

**BL:** I believe so, that or a civilian factory base. It was probably a military compound. We were nearby these larger kind of industrial facilities.

**Q:** In what unit were you assigned to?

**BL:** That was 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment or 18 Cav **part (video cuts at 12:37)** division.

**Q:** Do you want to describe what your duties and responsibilities were once you've arrived in Baghdad and were you going out on patrols on a daily basis?

**BL:** Not on a daily basis. I was the battalion intelligence collector and coordinator. I basically was in charge of the collection effort for our battalion. Sometimes I did have the opportunity to go out on patrols and work with our soldiers out on the ground and see what they did. It also gave me a better understanding for what the sector was like in terms of different areas of the sector which helped me and my supervisor, Captain **Hasik (13:24)**, make better assessments for the commanders.

**Q:** Obviously they were satisfied with the job you've done.

**BL:** I'd like to think so.

**Q:** Ok.

**BL:** I didn't get too many complaints. It was really an honor and a pleasure being part of that unit and working with the soldiers.

**Q:** Were you ever under attack, either direct or indirect fire from mortars or rockets?

**BL:** Yes.

**Q:** What was that like the first time you experienced it?

**BL:** It sounded like a plane was landing about 10 feet overhead when a rocket...believe it was a Katyusha rocket...came in just over the base. Then there were some mortars that landed occasionally like right outside the base, right outside our office really, on the base even. So it's just kind of, we really just got used to it, just a very strange, surreal experience.

**Q:** Any close calls?

**BL:** Not from indirect fire, but some from IEDs...

**Q:** Do you want to tell us about that?

**BL:** Sure. It was actually, we had a camera crew with us at the time. They were doing...I think it was Frontline, is that PBS? Or...

**Q:** I think so...yes

**BL:** There was a Frontline of program done on our unit and we had the sound man in our Humvee and the cameraman was in the Humvee behind us. An IED went off on our Humvee as we were approaching a traffic circle in southeast Baghdad. It was interesting because if you watch the video you can hear this sound from inside the vehicle and you can see what's going on from outside the vehicle. Luckily, it wasn't too big of a device, so only our gunner sustained minor injuries...had some hearing issues.

**Q:** Now at that point were your vehicles armor-plated?

**BL:** Not factory armor, well some of them were, but that one I think was more of a...you know what, I don't remember about that specific vehicle. We still had some but we tried to quickly transition from factory armor out on patrols and there was definitely a command emphasis on that. I don't want to...without speaking to specific type.

**Q:** Did any of the people under your command suffer any wounds or did you lose any people.

**BL:** Definitely. We lost some soldiers, it was a tough fight in that part of Baghdad, but no one in my section, but some guys in our unit, the battalion, yes.

**Q:** From the one incident or over the course of the year?

**BL:** Not from that specific incident but over the course of the deployment.

**Q:** Did you get to go home at all during that period of deployment?

**BL:** Yes, I had an opportunity to go on R&R, rest and relaxation, for about two weeks back to the states.

**Q:** Did you find it difficult having to go back again?

**BL:** Yes and no. I'd say if I wasn't part of a unit. If I was just an Individual Augmentee, worked in a room by myself, probably would have been harder to go back. Knowing that my unit was still there and I was going back to them. It was a lot easier going back. I really loved my unit. If I was given the opportunity to not go back I probably wouldn't have taken it because the rest of the unit was still there, so I wanted to get back to them. It was nice to be able to come home together.

**Q:** Once you got back to the unit, how long were you there before you were deployed back to the States? Approximately?

**BL:** Maybe about four or five months, maybe a little bit less.

**Q:** What were your living conditions like then? I heard that people that were there say sand got into everything no matter how hard you try to keep it out.

**BL:** Well some areas that definitely was the case. We were lucky when in Baghdad, we had a hard site facility, so it was one building where we had our offices, and also some of the staff members had one room to several officers, and we had bunks. I have no complaints about that, every once in a while we lost hot water, but sometimes we would go down and visit other units and other bases...you try to really appreciate what you do have instead of thinking about what you don't.

**Q:** What about entertainment over there, what did you do on your time off?

**BL:** We didn't have that much time off. My boss and I would sometimes go to the gym and work out a little bit.

**Q:** Did you have movies?

**BL:** Yeah every once in a while, we wouldn't go to a theater and sit for a full-length feature but every once in a while if we were eating, brought dinner back at our office, the S2 and the S3 office was split so it was nice, we got a chance to work with the operations captains and these are the same guys that would then transition to command so we had a good working relationship with the company commanders which is really important for our section...but we would sometimes watch, five minutes of Team America or something like that, get a good laugh while were eating dinner and then go back to work.



**Q:** What about USO shows, were you entertained at all by any groups?

**BL:** There might have been one but I don't even think I went to it so I can't remember what it was. I think a lot of those USOs, didn't frequently come to our base, we were kind of a smaller satellite base within the city.

**Q:** When were you deployed back to the States?

**BL:** It was almost a full year right around Saint Patrick's Day of 2005.

**Q:** Did the entire unit come back with you or...

**BL:** Yes.

**Q:** You went back to Fort Hood?

**BL:** Yes, back to Fort Hood and then shortly after that went to the military intelligence officer advanced course back at Fort Huachuca Arizona.

**Q:** How long was that?

**BL:** All and all that was about 11 months. I had the opportunity to be kind of an aide-de-camp for a Colonel before my course started and also do a tracking course which is really neat. It was a great skill set to learn, especially in that area of the US. Then also after the advanced course I got a chance to do the counter-intelligence course. After that I got the opportunity to return to Fort Hood and originally, I was supposed to go down to a brigade, but, I was snatched up by division and was placed in division headquarters for the next deployment.

**Q:** Oh, so you were deployed again?

**BL:** Yeah, both times with the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. First time at the battalion level and the second time at the division level.

**Q:** Do you want to tell us about your second deployment?

**BL:** Sure. It was quite different, again a great experience. Had a chance to work with some great soldiers and fellow officers. I say a lot different because I didn't get to leave the wire at all on the second deployment. I was the day shift intelligence operations battle captain.

**Q:** Where about were you?

**BL:** Camp Victory and Baghdad again, but near the Baghdad International Airport base complex.

**Q:** What did you find different on your second tour as oppose to your first? Was it still a hot area or was it reasonably secured at that point?

**BL:** The base was pretty secure; I mean you can't fully secure it from indirect fire but they went to extra measures to try and beef up the defensive measures, to mitigate indirect fire attacks.

**Q:** So, you still got hit with rockets and mortars?

**BL:** Yeah, but they went to a lot of effort to make it as safe as possible and they did a great job, but, even so there was still some casualties unfortunately from indirect fire attacks on the base.

**Q:** Your second deployment did that last a year also?

**BL:** That actually lasted 14 and half months. That was during the surge.

**Q:** You want to tell us about that?

**BL:** It was a lot...very different. Not only was I at the division level as opposed to battalion, I was pretty much...I had a shift at a desk working next to my S3 operations counterpart, their Battle Captain, and essentially getting a lot of information and reporting from all different levels of units throughout the city, trying to do whatever fusion at our operational level was possible, than also coordinating with analysis control element, the ACE shop, then working together. Then putting those assessments out to the actual battle space owners, throughout the city.

**Q:** Did have much contact with the press at all?

**BL:** Some. Not personally. There were frequently reporters visiting Baghdad and a lot of times they would go through the base and just talk to the commanding general of the division or the **MMDB (24:06)** commander, one in the same individual. So you would see them, Haraldo was there one day and some other reporters, and that base had more USO shows of course because it was a lot bigger and a little more secure.

**Q:** Did you enjoy your second tour more than the first one?

**BL:** I don't really compare...haven't really compared the two...but I mean there was a lot of great things about being in my battalion during my first tour. There were definitely days where you would like to think we were able to contribute to our second tour, our sections specifically. That was really rewarding as well, it was very different.

**Q:** Was it more stressful you think?

**BL:** It was a different kind of stress. There was sometimes there would be a lot of reports coming in and you want to make sure you do the right thing, but I never really, besides the indirect fire threat, there wasn't as much of a concern for physical danger.

**Q:** Did you have another R&R during that period?

**BL:** Yes. Another two weeks.

**Q:** Came back home again?

**BL:** Yes. Back here and to New York.

**Q:** Were you married?

**BL:** No, I actually met my wife right before my second deployment here in Manhattan, actually, only about four blocks away from where we're doing this interview right now.

**Q:** Once your deployment overseas ended you went back to Fort Hood again?

**BL:** Yes back to Fort Hood, and started out-processing. Lived in Austin during that time, that was a lot of fun, great city, highly recommend it.

**Q:** Now you said out-processing, you decided not to make the Army a career?

**BL:** Yes, at that time I still wanted to serve my country but in a different capacity and still actually considering options. Right now I'm part of the New York Army Reserve National Guard.

**Q:** What brought you to National Guard?

**BL:** It was part of this arrangement with the in-service retention processing center at Fort Hood. They basically talked about the advantages of staying in the National Guard and I liked the idea of staying in uniform. It was a really hard decision to leave active duty. I can't even rule out maybe going back one day, but I love still being part of the Army.

**Q:** Now are you with AGR (Active Guard Reserve) right now?

**BL:** No. Considering looking for AGR opportunities but right now I'm ADSW or ADOS. It's Active Duty for Special Work or Active Duty Operational Support, or something close to that.

**Q:** What unit are you with now?

**BL:** I'm with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment.

**Q:** The 69<sup>th</sup> has quite a history doesn't it?

**BL:** They do and I'm proud to have to be part of it.

**Q:** When did you get married?

**BL:** Just this past October.

**Q:** Congratulations.

**BL:** Thank you very much.

**Q:** I see that you ended up with your bachelors and have you continued on with your education besides your military education.

**BL:** No, although I plan to take advantage of the GI Bill at some point, as soon as I figure out my next stable job. Ideally if an AGR opportunity comes up I'll try to apply for that and then use my GI Bill to get a Master's Degree in International Relations or Middle Eastern Culture, maybe throw some Arabic classes in there, that way I can do my job better.

**Q:** Have you joined any veterans' organizations at all?

**BL:** I have not, but I definitely intend to.

**Q:** Is there anything that you would like to talk about that we haven't touched on? Any incidents you can recall that come to mind or people you knew that impressed you or...

**BL:** Oh man, there's so many. I think one reason why I'm still wearing this uniform right now is because from the very beginning when I joined ROTC, **blue (28:40)** was like 1997, we had...make sure that year is correct... yeah 97. I had such great mentors, they were infantry, Master Sergeants and my ROTC unit, from Master Sergeant Medina to Master Sergeant Picket. Made such great friends in my ROTC class and then when I joined the Army, I feel like it's one big family. Transitioning from Active Duty to the National Guard, it still feels like one big family, especially this being my home state. I'm really honored to still be in this uniform and I'd like to stay in it a lot longer.

**Q:** Have you stayed in contact with people you were in the Active Army with?

**BL:** Yes. Not as much as I'd like to but I intend to get back in touch with them and it's great to catch up and there are some people that I still talk to on a regular basis and some that are still in, others are doing other things, but they're great people.

**Q:** Well thank you so much for your interview and welcome home.

**BL:** My pleasure, thank you.