

**Joseph J. Taluto**  
**Narrator**

**Mike Russert, Wayne Clark**  
**Researchers**

**November 2006**  
**10:30 a.m.**

**MR:** Could you give me your full name, date of birth, place of birth, please

**JT:** My name is Joseph J. Taluto. Place of birth is Rochester, New York, on 12 December 1947.

**MR:** What is your title now?

**JT:** I am the Adjutant General of the State of New York.

**MR:** When did you enter service?

**JT:** I entered the service in October of 1965 in Schenectady, New York. I joined the 727 Maintenance Company in Schenectady.

**MR:** You enlisted at that time?

**JT:** I enlisted at that time, remained an enlisted person for up to three years. I entered OCS in 1967 and graduated and commissioned in 1968.

**WC:** Did you go through ESMA?

**JT:** I went through the Empire State Military Academy, yes I did.

**MR:** After you left there in 1968 what was your assignment?

**JT:** My first assignment was as a shop leader at the Maintenance Company in Gloversville, as a lieutenant after commissioning. So I served there for a period of time.

**MR:** Why did you decide to enlist?

**JT:** Well, most of that was my father's doing, his encouragement. He was a lifelong guardsman. He had entered World War II, and served with the 90<sup>th</sup> Division overseas. When he came home, he joined the guard and he always thought that the guard was a lifesaver for him. He felt it was a great organization. He came back from the War; he ended up working for the National Guard as one of those early technicians. When I came of age, he was very anxious for me to get in the Guard because he thought I was a good

candidate for it because I was maybe having too good a time in high school and he felt the discipline was good and it was something that I could fall back on. It was like manifest destiny, almost like it was meant to be. As much as I tried to resist the idea that I would follow in his footsteps as a fulltime person in the National Guard, it evolved that way.

**WC:** Was he an officer also?

**JT:** He was a warrant officer. He was overseas as enlisted, so when I got in, it was shortly thereafter—within a couple years— that he started to persuade me to go to OCS, but that wasn't my idea either. So, he encouraged me to get into the Guard—he used the word encourage—and he encouraged me to go to OCS, said that if I was going to be in, I was going to be an officer, and so on and so forth. So those two things put me on a path that led to my eventually going to work for the National Guard full time and the rest is history. Going to be 41 years here in another 30 days.

**MR:** I noticed you went into the defense artillery officer basic course. What does that mean “defense artillery?”

**JT:** Air defense artillery. As a Guardsmen, I went to OCS, was assigned out there as a traditional soldier, but I succumbed to the idea that I was going to work in the program because I decided to get married, I decided to go to work, and I ended up working at the Division of Military and Naval Affairs. What's interesting about this story is my first job at the Division of Military and Naval Affairs was State Grade 3, which is as low as you can get, and I was a clerk typist. Now I am the Adjutant General of the State of New York and work at the M and A as the head of the National Guard. So, what I tell everyone at the M and A is that when I was a clerk typist, I was extremely good. Having

said that, I worked at the M and A started in 1968 right after I got out of OCS and worked my way up the State Grade pay salary to State Grade 7 and I was making about \$ 136.00 every two weeks.

**WC:** That was out at the State Campus?

**JT:** That was at the State Campus, at building twenty-two then. So that was my beginning, but it wasn't a very healthy salary. As an officer I was more ambitious and wanted to have more responsibility and make more money. The air defense program—at that time the National Guard was involved in air defense artillery—had a Nike Hercules Site down in the New York Metropolitan area, and there was an opening, and it was a huge jump in salary for me. It was a federal job, not a state job, and I decided to take that job, as a lieutenant [inaudible] platoon leader, moved my family down to Long Island, and that is how I got into the federal program in 1970 and that was the beginning of my federal career in civil service that went from 1970 to 2001. And so as a lieutenant, I went into the air defense program, I had to go through the basic course to be qualified. So I became qualified in the Nike Hercules system, fulltime as a platoon leader, great assignment, learned a lot, got to lead troops on our base, was responsible for missiles with nuclear warheads and was involved in very important full time work, so that set me up well. From there, the Nike Hercules program was going to phase out because of the threat of enemy bombers was subsiding so there was a transition in the works. I ended up looking for another position in the Capital District area, which was my home, where my parents lived. I wanted to move back there and it's where I joined the Armor Battalion and took a lieutenants position there, and became a Captain in the Two-Tenth armor. I went to the armor officer basic course, became an armor officer and remained so for the

rest of my career. I was in that battalion for eight years, pretty much assumed every position in there that one could do in the Two-Tenth Armor. Moved along from the armor battalion into a pretty unique unit called the Twenty-Seventh **Rearery** Operation Center, which was only seven or eight “**Grayots**” as they call, them in the Army National Guard in the whole inventory of the US Army. That was a great assignment because we got to be affiliated with the Eighteenth Airborne Corps and I learned a lot going to Fort Bragg and working with the first **costcom** and the people at Fort Bragg and many, many exercises and it was pretty high speed. The **Rearery** operation center was kind of a G3 operations for the corps rear area. Today we don’t have asymmetric warfare we don’t have these kinds of boundaries anymore so we’ve transitioned from there.

From the **RayAc** I went to the troop command, which is a kind of a division, brigade-division-level headquarters that was a command control headquarters for the G3, became the chief of staff, then I transitioned in 1990—the Forty-Second Division moved up to the Capital District area and that’s where I became the chief of staff for the Forty-Second and that’s where I began my affiliation with the Division and remained there from December of 1989 all the way through 2006 with only one other assignment in there for a couple of years where I was a joint force headquarters chief of staff at the M and A. So I had three assignments at the M and A court typist, chief of staff, and adjutant general, so all spread out with many years in between. That’s a vast wrap-up of forty one years.

**MR:** Now would you talk about first of all being with the joint taskforce commander with the World Trade Center crisis?

**JT:** I was fortunate enough to be promoted to General Officer in 2000 and I was a deputy commander of the Forty-Second Division. We were preparing for a division level war fighter that we were scheduled for in a regular rotation that they take the divisions through. We happened to be in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, at the seminar portion of this division war fighter exercise. The seminar is a week-long event where you prepare yourself for the actual CPX. We arrived down there on the eighth of September. It was obviously a Tuesday morning and we were in our classroom having a presentation from the people at Fort Leavenworth when I got word of the attacks on the World Trade Center. Of course, the seminar was brought to a halt. The division commander at the time, Tom Garret, and I discussed going back with a small team to New York to get ready to go assist our state in recovery operations. We made some phone calls back to New York and they certainly wanted to get us back in town. I left with about seven other guys in a van and drove 22 hours back to the armory. We got back and after a short rest—

**MR:** What armory was that?

**JT:** In Glenmore Road at the Division Headquarters. We made a visit up to the state headquarters and got the lowdown on what was happening and immediately prepared to take our tactical command post down to New York City. I went down and met with the initial response team down there, and got briefed on where they were at. We had plans to expand our response and all that business down there. About seven to ten days after September 11<sup>th</sup>, we deployed down there and took control of the National Guard response. I was the initial commander on that task force. That task force grew from about 500 to close to 2,500 and it was not just Army National Guard, there was Air

National Guard, our Naval Militia, Marine Corps Reserve, and our New York Guard State Volunteer Force—all involved to come up with the 2500 man task force.

**MR:** What was your headquarters site?

**JT:** Our headquarters was at Park Avenue, which was better known as the Seventh Regiment Armory. We had a forward command post and tactical at Battery Park. So I had the brigade operational headquarters down at Battery Park and the main effort for the National Guard response was at the Park Avenue Armory. We got organized and got more established and of course the logistics of keeping 2500 troops in the New York metropolitan area, rotating every two weeks, was fairly challenging, but our work down there was extremely important and our airmen, sailors, soldiers, and marines did a great job. We worked security and we worked a lot of the administrative processes in helping with badging and access to the area. We worked logistics and did a lot of warehousing and transportation work—taking things to and from. The Guard response was pretty robust and we did good work. So, from that very significant event in our country's history, I was asked just a couple weeks ago—we were at the World Trade Center for its fifth anniversary— and I was asked by the media had my life changed since 9-11 and, of course, without question, it did. What unfolded for me personally after that, I am not sure if there is any American who can't say their life changed after 9-11.

My personal story there, after the events of 9-11, I retired from my civil service job as a federal employee member I said that I was fulltime in the National Guard. I completed 35 years of federal service in October 2001, and I retired from the civil service part, but I remained as a National Guardsmen and remained active as the Deputy Commander of the Division. I stayed in the city for a couple months running the Task

Force and then I turned the Task Force over to General **Garrett** who came down to do a stint and relieve me. After a very short period of time home, I accepted an assignment at Forces Command, which is our Army's Force Generation Headquarters. The Force Com Headquarters is the one responsible for training the peacetime army and then deploying units overseas as required by the Combatant Commanders. With all of the mobilizations that began shortly after 9-11 and with our response and our attack on Afghanistan and taking down the Taliban regime, Forces Command started to have to push out a lot of reserve components and they decided they needed a one-star national guard officer at the Forces Command headquarters to assist and support them with the workload and turning out National Guard and reserve units. I was not the first one in that assignment, there were actually two before me, but they were ninety-day to 120-day assignments and I accepted. So, I went to Atlanta and I worked in Atlanta from February of 2002 till about the end of June or first of July. I was asked to extend down there in that assignment, but I declined because I was nominated to become the Division Commander, which was something I didn't really expect. But that came about, so in late 2002, sometime in October, I assumed command of the Forty-Second Division.

**MR:** Is your father still living?

**JT:** No, my father unfortunately passed away back in 1972. I was in the air defense program and had just transitioned back to the Army Battalion; it was within that period of time in 1972 that he passed away. He knew I had made Captain and that was about it. What he knows now, we don't know.

Getting back to assuming command of the division, it was a great honor; a great legacy of the Forty-Second Division. We were going to prepare a small task force to

command control troops in the Balkans. We were up for a rotation in the Balkans known as S-4 K-4, and it was a two-star command and I thought I was going to have a chance to go over and command control of a task force in the Balkans, but they downsized it to a one-star command the rotation before us so it was going to be one of our deputies that was going to get to deploy with the task force to the Balkans. So, as things start rolling along, we are now in 2003, and we are starting to ramp ourselves up for the Balkans rotation in late 2004. At the very end of 2003 there were grumblings that there was consideration of a National Guard division to be deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. By that time, in March 2003, we had taken down the regime in Iraq and they were setting up rotations two and three and the rumors were out that they were going to take a National Guard Division over there.

There was a process that went on over the holiday period from 2003 to 2004. I knew that the Forty-Second was being considered as one of the divisions. There were eight National Guard divisions at this time—and still are—four of those divisions were not in the consideration because they were either in the Balkans rotation or had just returned from the Balkans rotation. So some of the divisions were eliminated, but I think there were three or four divisions being considered. I knew we were in consideration. On the fourteenth of February, Valentine's Day, 2004, the phone rang at my house and it was the general officer that I worked for at Forces Command some two years earlier—because, remember, I said Forces Command were the ones generating forces. He called me up and said, “congratulations, the Forty-Second Division has been selected for this rotation and you will be going to Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom.” So that now begins the unbelievable event of alert mobilization and deployment to Iraq. As a two-star

National Guard general officer, it was quite an honor and privilege to get to do this—the first National Guard Division Commander or any commander that was going to be committed to combat since Korea. To my knowledge, the first National Guard Commander to command active duty troops since World War II. We were going to make some history in this deployment and it became a very busy time in my life.

On the second of May 2004, I entered federal service and began building what would be known as “Task Force Liberty” in the Forty-Second Division. Headquarters was the Divisional Headquarters and of course we were going to come in and control four brigades in north-central Iraq, two of which would be active duty brigades from the third division and two National Guard brigades. The division base would be off Forty-Second, that would be the aviation brigade, the division artillery, the engineer brigade, and small organizations like the MP Battalion, the **Sigma** Battalion, things like that. We’re all Forty-Second based. We brought the components of the Forty-Second Division base on to active duty between May, June, and July and we mobilized at Fort Drumm and Fort Dix. The Division headquarters was located at Fort Drumm and mobilized there along with the Division Artillery headquarters, the Engineer Brigade headquarters, the **Sigma** Battalion, the MI Battalion, groups like that. At Fort Dix, we had the aviation brigade and the division support command, which was a very large group. Our post-mobilization training lasted five months and culminated in September with a mission rehearsal exercise, which was successfully completed in September and we were ready—

**MR:** What do you mean by that?

**JT:** A mission rehearsal exercise was just the final validation that you were ready to do what you were going to be doing. It was a very robust and intense CPX conducted by

Fort Leavenworth and we were put to our paces there for a mission rehearsal exercise—showing that we had the capabilities to do our command control mission and had all of our systems fleshed out—it is the last rehearsal before you go into your deployment.

Now, during this period of time, I had been to Iraq in 2004 three times. My first trip to the country of Iraq was in June of 2004 and I went back in July. I met with the First Division Commanding General, Major General John Baptiste. The First Division was in North-Central Iraq and they were the ones that we were going to relieve. So we made several trips over to do recons and to make decisions about where we were going to put certain organizations of troops. The First Division was extremely helpful and the trips were extremely helpful. We made one final trip after the mission rehearsal exercise and got some R&R in October and started deploying troops in November in the early phases of our task force. We went back in December for a final relief-in-place rehearsal with the First Division on exactly how we would take 24,000 troops out and put 24,000 troops in. This is not an easy piece of work but a relief-in-place that needed to be planned and phased and done right. I returned home for a very short period of time and on the twentieth of December I deployed to Iraq for what would be almost a year to the day before I returned.

I got over there on the twentieth of December and we began the process of the relief-in-place program with the First Division—phasing our brigades in and taking their brigades out. That turnover occurred over a month period of time. There was a slight delay in us taking command in north-central Iraq because there was an election in Iraq that was scheduled to happen in December and we were scheduled to take command in January immediately after the election. The election got pushed back thirty days, and so

they delayed the relief-in-place because the First Division had all of the requirements covered for the election with all of the security forces that had to be put out there. So the commander of the theater decided to delay our change of command over there until February so it was after the election. If you remember right, on the fourteenth of February I get the phone call and on the fourteenth of February we had a change of command in Iraq—one year exactly to the day, kind of coincidental, this was not planned obviously at all.

But that was it, we were in charge in north-central of Iraq in February 2005. This odyssey from 9-11 for me personally goes from being retired from federal civil service being a deputy commander thinking that I would retire from the National Guard to becoming the division commander thinking that he was going to send a small task force to Bosnia, turns out he takes a division size 23,000 troops and goes to Iraq and find myself there three and one-half years later. As I mentioned previously, we had two brigades from the Third Division—the first and third brigades—we had a brigade from Idaho, the one-sixteenth brigade, and the two seven eight brigade from Tennessee. What is kind of interesting about Task Force Liberty, which is what we were known as, was that just like our forefathers in the Forty-Second Division—that original division World War I made up of twenty-six states, with four regiments, one from Iowa, one from New York, one from Alabama, one from Ohio—we had two active duty brigades and two National Guard brigades one from Tennessee one from Idaho, one from Georgia, Fort Benning, and one from Fort Stewart. With a whole bunch of other National Guard units attached to us and United States Army Reserve units attached to us in that task force, we were made up of twenty-nine states. So we were living up to our name, the Rainbow

Division, which General MacArthur coined back in World War I when the division was formed—the division stretched across the country like a rainbow because it included so many states, twenty-six in World War I. We lived up to our legacy there, with twenty-nine states in the Forty-Second in Task Force Liberty. We were located in north-central Iraq. We had headquarters in Tikrit, Iraq, which was Saddam Hussein’s hometown. In fact, our headquarters was at his presidential palace in Tikrit, a sprawling palace complex, 146 buildings, a very large piece of property that he used for his family and friends only, not for the Iraqi people. At the end of our tour, we were the last major U.S. unit to use a presidential palace; we actually were able to turn it over the Iraqi people when we left. Our successor that came in was the One hundred and First, who relieved us and took on the next rotation, was located in another base north of Tikrit.

Commanding north-central, multi-national division north-central, Task Force Liberty’s area where the Forty-Second command controlled the Task Force Liberty was a very diverse area, the size of West Virginia. It had a Sunni population that was fairly significant and one of the four provinces that we had charge of, Salahuddin, a province mostly 80% Sunni. We had the Ta’Mim province, which was mostly a Kurdish province, so we had the Kurdish influence. Then we had Suleimaniyah, which is also Kurd and Diyala province which was a mix of Shia and Sunni and Kurd. **Amodino Central** was extremely large, the size of West Virginia—can’t remember how many square miles though we knew that at one time—and very diverse, Sunni, Shia, Arab, Kurdish mix.

On our watch we were responsible for trying to turn some of this over to Iraqi security forces, which we were able to do. We were very prideful of the fact that, on our watch, we were able to train two Iraqi Divisions, the Fourth and the Fifth. We’ve got

several units within those divisions to assume battle space in north-central Iraq. We were able to either close or turn-over ten bases to the Iraqis, which was significant downsizing of the United States footprint in north-central Iraq. And we were able to off-ramp one of the four brigades at the conclusion of our tour. So, we believe that we continued the good work of the First Division that preceded us, made some substantial progress in Iraq, had a referendum election in October there, where they came out and voted for their Constitution. We were able to make a lot of progress at provincial government operations and some inroads in security—though, certainly, there were security concerns when we left. We turned over the north-central portion of Iraq to the One Hundred and First in better condition than what we found it, which was, I think, the mark of success to be able to move the ball downfield, or however you want to say it, just to improve the situation to the point where shortly after we left, the One Hundred and First took over and they actually did turn the battle space over to the Fourth Division and Fifth Division that we instituted. So, north-central Iraq has progressed quite well and we were very instrumental in that. Being in the lineup with the Big Red One and the Screaming Eagles on either side of us added to our own esteem and legacy of the Forty-Second Division—being in the lineup with two tremendous Army organizations such as those. We felt very fulfilled when we redeployed back.

We lost 84 great Americans during our time there and several wounded. But, I think all of our leaders and commanders over there did magnificent work. We still remain close obviously as you would imagine to this day, both with the active duty folks and the National Guard folks.

So the history of having a National Guard commander command active duty forces initially was kind of a big deal, but probably within two weeks people stopped asking that question because we were just basically all engaged and getting our work done. At the end of the day, the National Guard is a component of the Army, but it is part of the Army. The National Guard of course has additional missions here at home which we are very proud of. But we are also there primarily now as an operational reserve for our Army and ready to perform in the war fight when necessary to whatever level that the powers that be want to do it. So we are very proud of being able to add to the Forty-Second's history and we are very proud of being able to make a contribution to the global war on terrorism. We have a lot of great memories; a lot of great relationships were made in that effort. That's the chronological rundown.

**MR:** Do you think your mission in Iraq was clearly defined to you?

**JT:** It was. Our mission statement was to conduct stability operations along four lines of operation and clearly, there still was an offensive combat element to that because we had an insurgency growing there, but stability operations do have an aspect of offensive operations to them. We had a very clear, measurable way ahead. For example, like I mentioned, developing and growing Iraqi security forces—that was very measurable and we accomplished there. Downsizing the U.S. footprint in Amandai North Central—only seventeen bases were closed during OIF Three and the Forty-Second closed ten of those bases. That's real progress. We had provincial governments established, elected governors of provinces, provincial councils formed, city governments established, some aspect of law and order. Yes, there was an insurgency there, but from the standpoint of making progress along that continuum, in the four lines of operations, which were

security, governance, communicating, and economic—and of course we did a whole bunch of things on the economic side of the house. We had a clear vision of what we needed to get done, and the fact is it was measurable progress as compared to, say, the mission. Of course getting the Iraqis to be self-sufficient and standing up on their own government, that is not going to be done on one rotation and we knew that going in. But we knew that in order to make a contribution to the eventual outcome of that, these were the steps. I mean they had three elections in Iraq and we were there for two of them. And very successful elections I might say.

**MR:** You had to have contact with the local people. What were the relationships like between your men, yourself, and the local people?

**JT:** At the leader level, we had wonderful relationships. Great relationships with the Iraqi division commanders, brigade commanders, the battalion commanders. I knew them, we worked together, we socialized together, we talked, our units worked together. So there was quite a good relationship between United States and Iraqi forces. I had wonderful relationships with the governors of each province, the elected leaders. We had councils. I had good relationships with many of the tribal leaders in north-central Iraq, the sheiks that were community leaders and part of the government.

Our relationships down into the community were inhibited by security problems. The fact that some of the people felt threatened by hanging out with United States forces or establishing relationships with United States forces that could eventually be used against them and threatening their families. It's funny, our impression was that they wanted very much to embrace us. And again, they did embrace us at those levels that I just described, but it wasn't like you could go down into the community and sit amongst

the people—the common, ordinary, non-governmental, non-military leaders—and break bread very easily. But, the fact is they would've loved to do that had there not been an insurgency and people opposed to the regime being taken down or whatever other reasons they had.

**MR:** Do you think your troops were adequately prepared for what they met there?

**JT:** I do. We were well trained and we were well equipped for what we had to do. One of the things I have always said is that the National Guard and the U.S.A.R. what we brought to the fight was a great deal of maturity and experience. For example, if you take a squad leader or platoon sergeant in the army, you are going to find a young man that probably is not married, hasn't had a job, joined the army out of high school, or may not even have college finished at this point, whereas the counterpart in the reserves probably is married, probably has had a job, and is probably four to five years older. Also, he has a civilian skill. We have law enforcement officers, who were very helpful in helping work with the Iraqi police. We have civil engineers, who were very helpful when you have things like water treatment and infrastructure that was a 1950s vintage. We had many people who were extremely helpful with bringing those civilian skills along with their soldier skills.

I have always said that Task Force Liberty was an extremely diverse and very powerful task force because of the mix between reserve and active. Our active component counterparts, they brought stability operations experience from the Balkans. Certainly, we were with the Third Division, who had already been to Iraq, and many of those soldiers were on their second rotation. So they had that experience coupled with the reserve components' experience with their civilian skills and their soldier skills as

well, which made us a very strong task force and that was very evident and there are a lot of examples of that.

**MR:** With Iraq, Afghanistan, there has been a lot of strain on the National Guard. How do you envision your role as the Adjutant General in this time of change in the Guard's role.

**JT:** By the way, becoming Adjutant General was another job I did not expect coming off of my Division Command experience. My predecessor retired, so here I am. Now, I am in a position where the Adjutant General is a force provider and maintains the readiness of the National Guard. Of course this is answerable to the Governor to support our state missions. But, we have to keep our troops sharp and focused and ready to continue to serve. These are challenging times, the tempo is high. The Army is being asked to carry a tremendous load and they are not going to be able to do it without the National Guard and reserve support. So as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and just business as usual continue to move down the road, we are going to have to continue to provide forces.

The fact is that we have young men and women who are joining our ranks, who want to do something for their country, and they are choosing the National Guard as a way of doing that. We are going to have to work hard on our recruiting and retention to keep some of the veterans that we do have and to keep our forces as robust as possible so that we are capable of working this for the long haul. So that is a major issue for the Adjutant General and our leaders in New York, to keep our units at full strength and ready to answer the call if needed again. I say if needed again, I mean when needed again is what it's turning out to be.

**WC:** Do you find that morale is still high in the Guard?

**JT:** I think it is. From what I see. I think the veteran soldiers that have come back feel very good about what they have been able to accomplish and what they are doing. This is a high time for the National Guard. We're in the war fight and we are doing quite well. We are making a great contribution, they feel good about that. We're here at home, we're responding to natural disasters, as we always have—50,000 troops responded to Katrina. We have flooding here in our own state, we supported that just recently, and of course we're always here for that kind of stuff. We sent troops to the southern border, at the President's request, to support our border patrol. The New York National Guard is contributed to that; we will contribute more to that in this coming year. Of course, we work Homeland Security, day in and day out. We have an outstanding task force in New York City of 300 troops. So the people in the National Guard feel good about what they are doing, the fact that they are making a significant contribution and being able to do that. The morale is good. The sacrifice is great, but the morale is good. I believe our country is at war. I think we have been, in a new type of war, an asymmetrical war.

**MR:** Can you define what that means?

**JT:** Well, asymmetrical means there are no boundaries. It is 360 degrees, it is all around you. What we are seeing in Iraq and Afghanistan and the way forces are fighting like Hezbollah in Lebanon I think are examples of what asymmetric warfare is. You don't have a uniformed force out there necessarily, and you don't have a state-sponsored force. You have state-sponsored forces I should say, but not home-grown state-sponsored forces that are supported by government. So we have been working and preparing for asymmetric warfare for some time, but this is a new evolution in warfare and we are

transforming our army into a modular army, more expeditionary, more agile, and capable of moving around.

Our National Guard is going to be fully modernized. We are not going to have the same kind of resourcing we've had in the past where the active army is first to fight, kind of has the equipment and the National Guard was a strategic reserve. The National Guard is now considered an operational reserve. Our brigades are going to look just like the active duty brigades in organizing and equipping, and that's where we're going. In fact, here in New York, we've already reorganized our brigade, the Twenty-Seventh brigade, and our Forty-Second Division headquarters has already been transformed into the modular design. So, we're moving along in this area.

**MR:** Certainly in 1965 when you joined the National Guard you didn't envision where you are today. How do you think being in the Guard has changed your life, not just since 9-11.

**JT:** It's again, my father thought that I was an average high school student, that it would probably be good for me to get in the military and have the discipline and so on and so forth. I didn't envision it that way, but there was some kind of a flame lit early on when I became a commissioned officer. We can go through the whole discussion on leadership at some point—are leaders made or born type of thing—I think there's a mixture of things there—you have potential, and I think that potential gets drawn out by experience, education, and training. I think I had leadership potential and I was able to fulfill it. Whether that could have taken place in industry. I had designs of becoming a physical education teacher. I thought that's what I wanted to be and, who knows what career path I would have chosen. But, I love team work, I love team sports, I always played sports in

school and enjoy sports to this day. So, team work was always fascinating. I always got a lot of enjoyment out of accomplishing something together with someone else.

Individual awards are great, but I think those kinds of recognitions come along based on how you perform with a team. That's just my personal viewpoint of these things.

There's no bigger fraternity, there's no organization that is a team of teams like the army. I think I just got into this system and I was able to realize the full potential.

And certainly, circumstance and timing has a lot to do with doors opening and closing, and I have been blessed, absolutely blessed. From the standpoint of getting opportunity, people have had confidence in me to not only choose me for an assignment, but also to give me responsibility like we just had in Iraq, which is very fulfilling. But, there is a responsibility in getting that done, and so it's always challenging. I have found it extremely rewarding and I think it has been an environment where I have been able to realize my potential and given the effort and hard work and accepting that responsibility, you can move on and great things can happen.

**MR:** Thank you very much for the interview.

**JT:** Mike, it was great. I appreciate it. I appreciate the opportunity to get not only some of the personal stuff on tape but a little bit of that run-up for the division and get that on the record. We're working hard at trying to capture this part of the division's history and do it justice, with the World War I and II guys. I know, Chris, that all of the National Guard guys that graced the Division from 1947 on, everybody that wore Rainbow patches share in it and feel good about it. I appreciate it. I appreciate the museum.