

Terry Holdbrooks- Training for Guards

We had two weeks of training in Fort Dix, New Jersey from individuals who hadn't ever been to Guantanamo. And it wasn't in a military facility; it was just a mock prison made of mesh wire and PVC piping. It really wasn't a very accurate display. Our detainees when we were training were our fellow soldiers. So it was kind of a very haphazard way to learn what it's like to work in a prison situation. But...

Interviewer: What year was that?

It would have been in 2003.

Interviewer: And in terms of the two weeks, that was your full training as a guard before you were shipped off to Guantanamo?

Correct.

Interviewer: Did you have any sense, or did they tell you what kind of prisoners you'd be working with? What kind of men these detainees were?

Outside of all the catch-phrases we've heard, you know, "the worse of the worst," and "a bunch of towel heads and dirt farmers" and such...it's the only reasonable explanation, is that they didn't want us to trust them, they didn't want us to develop any type of a friendship or relationship with them whatsoever. As I've said before, prior to us leaving, we went to Ground Zero. The day we were leaving, we went to Ground Zero. And I can only imagine the purpose behind that was for propaganda. You know, take us to the place where 9/11 happened, and tell us that Islam and Muslims are to blame. Take us to Guantanamo, well obviously everybody's going to be riled up. It's going to be an effective means to getting the job done.

I think a lot of people initially were buying into the propaganda of it. And fortunately, by the end, I can say that maybe only half of them were still buying into the propaganda. Um, I myself, as soon as we got to Ground Zero, I remember particularly reading one comment that somebody had written on the wall, "This is the worst tragedy to happen to all of mankind." And, as I was reading this comment, I just kind of snickered and started laughing. And, you know, my company's behind me, and they look and they're like, "What are you laughing about? This is Ground Zero. 2700 people died here. This is a



tragedy.” And I’m like, “Yeah, it’s a tragedy. It’s not the worst one ever.” Like, “What are you talking about, yes it is.” I’m like, “The Holocaust wasn’t worse? The Armenian genocide? The Crusades? These things didn’t matter?”