

Interview with Dewey Briscoe by Bryant Lyles, SE student

Conducted on April 17, 2017

Interviewer (Bryant): What made you join the military?

Interviewee (Dewey): I was from a middle class family, who made too much money to qualify for financial aid, but they didn't make enough money to pay for me to be able to go to school. I don't know, I kinda fucked around in high school, so that was my only way to go to college.

Interviewer (Bryant): Where were you first stationed overseas, and what were your initial thoughts on being there?

Interviewee (Dewey): Man, I guess my first station overseas would've been when we pulled into Camp Buehring in Kuwait. We were there for two weeks for acclimatization training. It was like a giant beach with no ocean. White, fine, powdery sand that gets in everything. It was December, one hundred degrees, and it was barren and pretty shitty. We went from Buehring to LSA Anaconda, and that was really the first place I was stationed at in Iraq. We had issues getting there. We spent seventy-two hours on a tarmac waiting for the plane to get fixed after we landed in Bahrain once we encountered mechanical issues in flight on our way to Iraq. We finally get to Iraq, and we get four hours of in-theater briefing. Then we finally get a chance to lay down, so they send us over to tent city. So, I take all my body armor and everything else off, and I'd just finally nodded off. Then I hear the most God awful boom I've ever heard in my life. A mortar had hit three tents down from us. It was crazy, so the only thing I was wondering was "What the fuck have I gotten myself into?"

Interviewer (Bryant): What were some of your positions and responsibilities while serving?

Interviewee (Dewey): I was a member of a Personnel Security Attachment. Pretty much I had a couple of "packages" we called them. I guess you would say high value target or VIP. So we would shove them to different stations and made sure they were safe. After that, I was a team member on a Police Transition Team. I was responsible for logistics and communications for the Wasit Province. So I'd meet with various members of Iraqi leadership in the area. It was a lot of colonels from Saddam's era that we just kinda repurposed for the Iraqi Police Force because they kinda knew the area and the people. So I'd go and get their reports and make sure they were actually in line with the actions they were taking. It was a bunch of bureaucratic shit.

Interviewer (Bryant): Any military story in particular you like to share with people?

Interviewee (Dewey): People think when you go to war, it's like all action all the time, and it's really not. Like ninety percent of people don't even go do nothing. They got nothing to do but fuck with people, who actually do shit.

So we're four and a half hours from anything American. In order for us to get back to where we had a PX or a post office, we had two and a half hours to Camp Scania, depending on the weather and the conditions of Tampa. Tampa is the interstate 1 in Iraq. It runs from Kuwait to

fucking Turkey. Depending on what it was like, you never knew. If the roads were black, that means Medivac can't fly, which means nobody leaves Scania regardless. So you might get stuck there for an hour to refuel and eat, or you might be stuck there for three days, like we were one time. Anyway, it was the middle of the summer, brutally hot. You get this forty-day period every summer, where if the sun is up, the wind is fucking blowing. I mean it's fifty to sixty miles per hour winds all day long, and it just picks up the dirt and throws it at you.

So it took us ten and a half hours to get to fucking Baghdad one day. When we finally get up there, I'm hungry, I'm hot, I'm nasty. We hadn't been up there in three months, that's how long it had taken us to resupply. So I just wanted to eat, go get my mail, take a shower, read my fucking mail, then go to sleep. So we get to Burger King and then "boom," a fucking Katyusha rocket hits a forklift in the back parking lot of the PX. So the incoming is going off; it blows up, and everyone is supposed to be in the fucking bunkers. But where we just came from, as soon as the sun went down, I mean all night long. So getting shelled was something we were fairly used to. So me and Gomey are eating our fucking burgers while everyone else is sitting in the bunkers. Then a Sergeant Major runs up, yelling at us, "Ya'll need to take cover right now!" and all kinds of other shit. I looked at him, and I looked over at my unit patch and said, "I'm Mission Essential, I'm gonna finish my fucking burger." So I went back to eating my burger, and then I left. He tried to cause a big stink over it, but there wasn't shit he could do because I was gone the next day.

Interviewer (Bryant): What has life been like since leaving the Army?

Interviewee (Dewey): Man, it's been interesting. It was really hard when I first got out. I mean, my God, I can't even begin to describe the challenges that I faced. I still deal with a lot of them right now, but the thing about it is every bit of that shaped me into the person that I am today. All of the good and bad that I experienced in Iraq has made me enjoy and value life a lot more, and appreciate it much more. It made me really pay attention to the relationships that I've got.