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(b)(3), (b)(6)

Al Faw Palace, Victory Base Camp, Baghdad

By (b)(3), (b)(6)

MNFI Historian

### Abstract

(b)(3), (b)(6) is in the NC National Guard and is a Field Artillery officer. He liked MHD training. The 90<sup>th</sup> MHD did not collect on 1CD, just on its subordinate units. Integrating into the division staff was important. Sadr City became no go terrain in Dec '07. 1CD had a strong sense of how to do stability operations, and emphasized both quick and visible projects and substantial, enduring ones. Basra was unexpected.

(b)(6) explained the UK approach, and what was wrong with it. 4ID had not planned to build the wall in Sadr City; it developed from a progressive series of innovations and adaptations that turned the battle and force the enemy to fight on ground of our choosing. [Engineering turned this into an amazing offensive battle that fully exploited the strengths of the defense]. The Air Weapons Teams also fought a decisive battle against rocket launch cells. MITTs were crucial to IA success. MHDs should write something while doing their work.

### Discussion

I mobilized on 15 August 2007 and arrived in Kuwait on 26 August. I am supposed to redeploy tomorrow, 16 August 2008.

#### *What is your background?*

(b)(3), (b)(6)

#### *What did you get out of MHD training, and what was it like joining a division?*

Working in a division, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division which had MND-B when I deployed in August, was totally foreign. We had portals now. I had gone through MHD training twice, in October 2006 and May 2007. I liked the process and the concept of MHCSI and the ODR plus narrative documentation. I liked going to Chickamauga and Delbruck. It was nice having an AT in downtown Atlanta instead of Ft. Stewart or Ft. Bragg.

~~SECRET/REL ACGU~~

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***What MHD did you replace, were they integrated into the division, and how did you integrate?***

We replaced the 90<sup>th</sup> MHD here, and Army Reserve unit under (b)(3), (b)(6). They had worked under MNCI under Commander Downing. The 90<sup>th</sup> really did not integrate into the division (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) regarded his work as just being with the subordinate units, so they did a lot of interviews and collection with all the units, but not with the division. They really didn't get the operational story.

I integrated into the division staff first by attending the G3 Huddles. In retrospect, I wished I'd attended the CoS Huddles as well, because that would have given me a better view of things.

When I arrived, 3/2 Stryker was doing clearing operations in Khark Security District and in Rusafa. These were quick clearing operations. The Division main effort was East Rashid. The brigade commander was (b)(3), (b)(6). They had a real fight with a number of troops in contact. They also covered the Mechanics area, which was an AQI stronghold.

***How did Sadr City become no go terrain?***

In November 2007, Iraqi SF did a raid in Sadr City. Coalition SF went with them, and they had Apache support. That apparently caused problems for the GoI. In December 2007, an MNFI frago came out that said virtually all operations in Sadr City, like 95%, required PM Maliki's approval. That turned Sadr City into a JAM safehaven. 2/82 was responsible for the area, and they wanted to go in, but they couldn't. Instead CF and ISF set up checkpoints around Sadr City.

In August 2007, reconciliation had been going strong. 2/5 had a huge fight in Mansoor, and the Sol threw AQI out of Ameriyah and then out of Ghazaliyah. In Operation Blue Shield, Sunni policemen could not drive to their training, because of the threats they faced from Shia. So we transported them, flew them. Reconciliation went full ahead thanks to money and sheiks' cooperation.

1CD had figured out the clear, hold, build strategy. They secured markets, did checkpoints, and launched projects. They figured out they needed to simultaneous efforts, one visible, like painting murals and cleaning streets, and one permanent, like infrastructure repair. That was the way to engage local communities.

***1CD was in Baghdad in 2004 and 2005, then Baghdad went south in 2006. Did anyone in 1CD offer an explanation for that?***

According to (b)(3), (b)(6) who is now in the MNFI in the IZ, ICD had Baghdad on the right track until 3ID screwed things up. They screwed things up by dropping all the contracts that 1CD had in place to keep people employed.

***How did 4ID approach the mission?***

I was really impressed that MG Hammond, when he first arrived, went right to General Abud at the BOC and told him he was "Proud to be a subordinate unit to the BOC." That has been the theme here. Tactical overwatch. It is an extended reach concept. There are more JSSs and COPs in the community. 1CD brought the concept to Mansoor. 4ID carried it farther. The mantra was get off the big FOBs. They launched Operation STEADFAST FALCON, which was the isolation of Sadr City and IO into it. It was to

~~SECRET/REL ACGU~~

~~SECRET/REL ACGU~~

inform SC residents what the Special Groups were costing them. It focused on Psy Ops and tip lines, targeting specific individuals.

4ID had a program and a staff section called SWEATH, which stood for Sewer, Water, Electricity, Trash, and Health. I don't know what the A was. Attacks have dropped to 10 to 12 a day. One of the big topics is the decline of AQI in MND-B. MND-B captured many senior AQI. We no longer have all those car bombs and deep-buried IEDs. Protection of the Populace became 1CD's mantra.

***As the surge was starting, many critics opposed sending any more troops to Iraq. Do you remember doubting it or wondering what would happen?***

I learned to give up trying to predict what would become of anything. I thought it was over when the regime fell. Then I thought it was over when they captured Saddam, and when they held elections. I just transitioned into a wait and see mode.

***Describe the situation in March 2008.***

The 11<sup>th</sup> IA Commander was on leave. When violence broke out down in Basra in late March, it took us by surprise. This was the Shia-on-Shia confrontation. BG Grimsley. . acted to minimize.

In Basra, (b)(6) was the UK mentor to General Mohan. I flew into the Basra operations center. (b)(6) thought Mohan had things worked out politically for a June, July confrontation, but was not ready in March. Now, look at what happened on 20 May, when two IA brigades gained a permissive entry into Sadr City, plus the IA can't lose with CF backing, and the people have embraced the idea that parties can't maintain militias . . According to (b)(6) the UK screwed things up in Basra. There were two models, the Sicilian Mafioso model or the Lebanese approach of multiple militias. The UK thought it was dealing with a Sicilian Mafioso. Instead it as Lebanon.

***How did the Wall go up in Sadr City?***

The wall was not planned. It was an innovation. It had been used in Adhimiya before to establish a safe neighborhood in a Sunni area. In Sadr City, building the wall drew out the militia, who fought the building of the wall because it cut them off from their Jamila market extortion racket.

Basra would have been totally different without the CF intervention. Give the Iraqis credit, they moved two divisions down there, the 14<sup>th</sup> IA and the 1<sup>st</sup> IA out of Fallujah, which came with Marine MiTTs.

In Sadr City, Phase I began on 23 March. JAM started launching rockets on the IZ to take pressure off of Basra. On 25 March, they seized the checkpoints around AO Gold. That was a bad day. At that point, MG Hammond figured he had two fights. The first one was to secure the checkpoints. The second one was to stop the rocket firing at the IZ, which was unacceptable. 90% of the rockets they used were 107mm. The max range from the IZ put the necessary launch sites in AO Gold. Therefore, 4ID set out to retake the checkpoints and the police stations that the militia had overrun. Then, 3BCT/4ID moved 1-2 Stryker to Tharwa, and then sent 1-69 Infantry to Jamila. They augmented this force with six to seven companies of tanks, Strykers, and Bradleys to reinforce IA checkpoints. Armor on checkpoints made an impression. The IA then came out with T55s reinforcing the checkpoints further.

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Then there was the deep fight against the rockets. For this, 4ID deployed three air weapons teams, two Shadows, and a Predator. They killed a lot of rocket teams.

1.4a

In early April, 1-2 SCR was conducting a route clearance fight and relying heavily on EOD. On 6 April, 11<sup>th</sup> IA sent two battalions into AO Gold, which ran from PL Florida to PL Gold. They faced some tough fighting. (b)(3), (b)(6) was in this fight, and Major Roads in was KIA on 7 April. He was the MiTT team chief to the commander of 3d Bn, 42<sup>nd</sup> Bde, 11<sup>th</sup> IA MiTT. The MiTTs had to do a lot of pushing to get the Iraqis to move forward. They slowly achieved success, and this increased their confidence. In mid-April, they started putting up the wall, from Route Arrows to Route Pluto.

During this time, the IA did the first humanitarian assistance mission into Tharwa. This followed a vehicle ban. The media saw the IA providing relief. Initially, they were building at night and then conducting 24-hour operations.

The first SF operation came on 7 May. It was a bust because they got surrounded. This was a 1.4a man sniper team.

From that point on, they operated ½ block north of the wall as it was under construction. They learned the trade in MNF-W. We have slides showing what they did.

Air Weapons Teams were vital to the rocket fight and to the building of the wall.

Today, the people of Sadr City are continuing to turn over caches to the IA. The population has welcomed IA control. In the southern part, there are huge improvements. The commander of the 926 Engineer Brigade has put together TF 1.4a and they are conducting accelerated projects in the Thawra area and Shula.

***Have you been under fire during your tour?***

I've never been under direct fire. The closest I've seen indirect fire was in September and October of 2007, when I could see the burst of the detonation.

***Is there anything else you'd like to add?***

Based on this experience, I think MHDs should write while they're here, no matter what CMH or USARC says. They should write something small because it gives your collection effort some focus and coherence.

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