

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

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

8 May 2008  
Embassy Annex, International Zone, Baghdad

by (b)(3), (b)(6)  
MNFI Historian

*We began recording the interview at about 1305 in the CG Conference Room outside the SOC. For 30 seconds beginning at the 11:22 mark in the recording, you can hear sirens going off warning of incoming fire. We remained in the room conducting the interview. There were no explosions following the siren.*

### **Abstract**

~~(S/NF)~~ I am Colorado National Guard, career with 19th SF Group, and a Denver police officer. I've have been shaped by a CSM, many police commanders, and three mobilizations. We worked with 3ID extensively on Maupin case (resolved). We worked closely with GoI on Hindawi rescue. We've resolved 14 of 37 cases of missing. MNFI and USMI have worked very well together on Personnel Recovery issues. Hostage taking is a serious problem. (b)(6) was *found* in Basra. Sadr City operations may help us with proof of life on currently missing Americans, but could also lead to more kidnappings of American troops. Embassy personnel ensconced in the Green Zone don't understand Iraq as well because they don't have vital contacts on the outside. They don't experience life outside, so they're in a bubble. It's the troops outside the Green Zone, the infantry and SF especially, who are out among Iraqis that really get what is going on. I think many Americans back home don't understand why we're in this conflict, and the media does not capture it, but that's what the public relies on. The SF are the best they've ever been, and absolutely overstressed. The guys in my battalion and I are proponents of what the U.S. and the GOI are trying to accomplish. You have to be on the ground here to understand it, and I don't think many civilians back home do understand it. 45:10.

### **Interview**

#### ***Professional Background***

(b)(6)

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

***What individuals, events, or institutions have particularly shaped you?***

(U) 3:00. Several individuals, in the military and outside, and been influential. My Command Sergeant Major who was also a police officer and who encouraged me to go to OCS and continue my career that way, as well as several police command officers with regard to leadership skills, crisis intervention, and conflict resolution. And I would point to my three activations with SOCOM have been valuable for working along side the active component and for having the opportunity to show them that the National Guard and RC also had a contribution to make in the mission.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ ***What does the Office of Regional Affairs do?***

~~(S/ACGU)~~ 4:06. [redacted] 1.4c, 1.4d That is their in-theater name. They're collecting information and developing networks inside and outside Iraq for the tactical, the operational, and the strategic sets, as they see it. My original posting on the deployment was as an LNO to the ORA, and I've served in that capacity since October 2007. Given my law enforcement background, I also was given the responsibility for liaison with various law enforcement agencies here in the IZ, that was a subtask I had from the SOCOM commander. Part of my duties was to liaison with the Joint Personnel Recovery Center, which is now the Personnel Recovery Division in MNFI. I was responsible for attending those meetings, representing CJSOTF, providing their input and their participation and assistance in PR operations. It culminated in the first successful rescue on 10 Jan 08. CJSOTF elements were advising Iraqi SOF rescued a Dr. Hendawi who was the father of the Iraqi chemical weapons program. He had been kidnapped in Baghdad, and within 14 hours of the report of his kidnapping, information was fed, the plan was developed, and ISOF elements under the advisement of CJSOTF raided some houses in eastern Baghdad and successfully rescued [redacted] (b)(6) This was a very monumental moment in that Iraqi forces had exercised PR operations in their own country. We did not do it for them. I continued serving as a LNO to the JPRC . . . 8:00. The rescue was very significant and it was a great accomplishment for the ISOF. They were determined to find him, searched 17 houses before they got, and they succeeded. Unfortunately, we were not able to publicize that success because the nature of the work he was involved in forbade publicizing it. It was a successful rescue, but because of the target, we could not advertise to the Iraqi public and the world what they had accomplished. The reason we could not publicize it was that [redacted] (b)(6) was in a classified Department of State program, and publicizing it would have jeopardized not only him and his family but others members involved in that program.

***Would you go ahead and review the case of SPC Maupin? Back in 2004 and 2005, I would have thought--I did think--they'll never find him.***

~~(S/ACGU)~~ 9:00. SGT Maupin was captured in a convoy in April of '04. In fact, [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] (b)(6) is also listed as missing in the same convoy action. We had received proof of life of Maupin on, I think, three separate occasions, videos, the last of which was an alleged execution video showing an individual in a set of DCUs being shot at night. The images were rather grainy and unclear, but an analysis was done of his uniform with the one Maupin was seen wearing in an earlier video, and they determined through organizations back in the states that there was a high probability that that was his uniform by the pattern analysis on it, but it was never confirmed at all.

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

(S/ACGU) 10:15. 3ID, TF [1.4a] had set up a task force to look for him specifically, and they dedicated about 10 individuals, one of whom was donated from the MNFI JRPC as well, and their sole purpose was to track and locate SGT Maupin. They went on, I would say, several hundred missions, different sensitive site exploitations, interviewing several hundred Iraqi nationals. I believe they have 10 individuals they are holding in custody right now that they think are responsible for his death. Two have already been sentenced to death for terrorist crimes, but not crimes directly related to Maupin's death, and eight others have court hearings pending in the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI).

(S/ACGU) They tried to work the detainees against each other to try to gain more information about what had happened, but nothing had been successful. TF [1.4a] continued on with other site exploitations and other missions within the Qarghuli Village area where that occurred. Finally they were able to get a tribal engagement. I think it was the 1-21 Infantry, [ (b)(3), (b)(6) ] was able to engage a tribal sheik that provided some information and finally led to an area that was deemed a killing ground. There were many remains located in the area. And luckily, a law enforcement professional that was along on the sensitive site exploitation found a [uniform] and several bones, one of which was a lower jaw bone. All those items were collected up and transported back to Dover, where ultimately it was determined that they were the remains of SSG Maupin. But that was the culmination of four years of work and focus and effort. It is indicative of the determination of 3ID to bring back one of their own and not give up on the mission. It was also indicative of the interagency cooperation, the military, the Department of State, [1.4c] CID, and all the entities that we have brought together in what we call the Joint Interagency Personnel Recovery Working Group (JIAPRWG) and that is what we've had functioning for approximately the last 75 days since February. It has been through the injection of energy of Brigadier Jeffery Sengelman, the Director of Operations for MNFI STRATOPS.<sup>1</sup> He has been a driving force in making sure that everyone stays focused and does everything they can to make sure we bring back these remains.

(S/ACGU) 13:40. When I took over as interim director, the previous director had been reassigned, I was asked to assume the director's position in a dual-hat role because of my participation with CJTSOTF in the [ (b)(6) ] ase as well as my law enforcement experience. Personnel recovery here in the Iraqi theater of operations is very complex in that it is not traditional PR like rescuing down pilots or fliers or rescuing SOF elements caught behind the lines. It is very much law-enforcement and criminal justice centric. The investigations are very similar to long-term homicide or kidnapping cases, and it also involves the engagement of tribal sheiks, regional [unintelligible] and elements that have been anti-coalition in the past to try to get them to develop and give information that will help us resolve these cases. When I started, there were 37 outstanding cases. We are currently down to 23. But Iraq still has more missing Americans than the whole rest of the world combined. We have 16 missing Americans right now. Of course, that doesn't account for Vietnam and its MIAs. I'm talking about active, recent kidnapping cases.

---

<sup>1</sup> I interviewed Brigadier Sengelman on the morning of 8 May 2008, a few hours before this interview. See my files for a cross reference.

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

We have four American soldiers remaining and fourteen American/DOD contractors or citizens.

~~(S/NF)~~ ***I have a follow-up question on ORA. As a historian, I'm familiar with the processes and challenges of walking around, asking questions and developing sources, though mine is all completely in the open, but do you know broadly speaking how they do that?***

~~(S/NF)~~ 16:10. I don't have access to all their files or modes of working, but of course they have case officers working particular issues associated with current operations, like Sadr City right now, as well as the IDF that we've dealt with recently, they develop sources and material on that. And then long term, they're developing sources that both we and the Iraqi government for the region, both short and long term. They are also training an Iraqi National Intelligence Service, that is in their own image and able to function on its own when we leave this theater.<sup>2</sup> And I think we'll have some type of footprint here always, and we'll always have a liaison here, or a working relationship, as we do with many countries' intelligence services, sharing information against common threats.

***From what you can see, how do MNFI and USMI function together?***

~~(S/ACGU)~~ 17:34. My primary visibility on that, of course, is on the JIAPRWG. The Department of State Office of Hostage Affairs has a representative in our group. We work very closely together, and often, the responsibilities for different cases blur across the lines of different offices. The military, obviously, is in charge of any DOD contractors or CF soldiers who are missing, but when we get into what we call Persons of Interest . . . these are American citizens, other country nationals, or even Iraqis whose rescue is deemed particularly important and [requiring] our efforts. Or it could be where another country has asked for our assistance. A good example of this was the Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul who was kidnapped recently. The Vatican directly approached the US government for assistance in his case. Again, he was considered a person of interest for other reasons. [All the members of the JIAPRWG] share information and work our different seams and work together to try to resolve these cases. The interagency aspect of PR is particularly important here in the Iraqi Theater of Operations [ITO]. You can not do it as your own stove pipe entity. You must coordinate it all. Soon, we will teach the Iraqis the same things, because unfortunately kidnapping and hostage-taking is a historical event that happens a lot and will continue and it is a direct threat against GoI officials.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ ***I've notice from weekly BUA briefings on kidnappings and assassinations that, to the extent we have succeeded in protecting top level officials, mid-level bureaucrats have now become the target, [a different way of shutting down the government].***

~~(S/ACGU)~~ 20:09. Yes. And again, security has to be paramount before a government can stand up on its own, and the kidnapping and killing of those individuals has a primary effect on themselves as well as the secondary effect on all the other mid-level officials. It is a common TTP of the enemy to do that.

---

<sup>2</sup> Cross reference my January and February 2008 interviews with (b)(6)

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

***What do you understand about [redacted] (b)(6) recovery?***

~~(S/ACGU)~~ It is interesting to note that this was [redacted] (b)(6) second kidnapping. He had previously been kidnapped in Somalia. He obviously came to do a story, I think involving Sadr. That is not someone you just walk up to and ask "Hey, can I do an interview with you?" and that's it. Everyone here, if your not an Iraqi, is deemed to be an agent of a foreign government, and I'm sure he was probably considered that for the British. When he was captured, it was pretty apparent that government entities were probably involved, particularly the Ministry of Interior police. Later, in his debrief, we found out he was transported from the [rescue] site by Ministry of the Interior police, and police officers were involved in that. His first transport was in a police car, as reported by [redacted] (b)(6). From there, [redacted] (b)(6) obviously was sought by the British government and coalition forces, and his case was tied into two other cases, the [redacted] (b)(6) case and the Crescent Security Group, five individuals. They all got kind of lumped in together. Obviously coalition forces were looking for the two previous cases and the British were looking for that one, but they bled into each other. I think the British were approached and negotiations were taking place. They had their interests, coalition forces had their interests, sometimes they were similar and sometimes they were conflicting. Ultimately, [redacted] (b)(6) was . . . *found*<sup>3</sup> by Iraqi Army forces on a neighborhood sweep through Basra. Whether he was put there intentionally for a set release, or whether they came upon him unexpectedly, we may never know, but we are grateful it was a successful rescue. And I think, to the world, the Iraqi government got the credit for the rescue, which is a benefit in itself, showing that they are capable of conducting those types of operations, and the fact that they also turned back a major insurgency operation in Basra itself. But I think there are probably other things about [redacted] (b)(6) release that we may not fully know or are known to only a few people.

***The situation in Sadr City is constantly evolving. Can you state where we stand with it today?***

~~(S/ACGU)~~ 24:05. Sadr City, since the freeze by JAM last August, the freeze went for six months and held JAM back. Security and attacks against the IZ had diminished. The freeze was extended again in February, but unfortunately, not all elements have complied with that, JAM Special Groups specifically. Once the Easter Sunday IDF barrage started up, and has continued since then, it has become obvious that operations in Sadr City were necessary. That has been a safe haven for JAM and JAM Special Groups for some time. Currently, MNFI, MNCI, IA, and ISOF forces are poised to go in there on direction from PM Maliki. That may have a direct effect on personnel recovery because we have some assessments or beliefs that some of our cases are being held in Sadr City, particularly [redacted] (b)(6) who was taken in '06, and the UK 5 from Bearing Point. If they are in Sadr City and these operations continue, it may inadvertently provide us proof of life. JAM Special Groups may show them to the world or at least to us and use them as human shields and threatening their demise if operations don't cease. So far, we have heard nothing from them. It could also be that these individuals are deceased, and we may come upon them in our sweeps of Sadr City; we are not sure, but we are ready for those two [scenarios]. And lastly, any kind of operation like this in an urban environment, with

---

<sup>3</sup> There is a slight emphasis in the voice.

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

JAM/SGs tactic of kidnapping, we could see kidnapping of coalition forces. We are seeing a lot of it now with the IA and the IP. They are being kidnapped and taken off of checkpoints and being held to try to make the IA and the IP stand down and afraid of coming into the city. So we have to be ready for the open cases that we have right now as well as new cases that we hope do not take place.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ ***In a recent incident, 10 IAs at a checkpoint were ambushed and killed, and the CG asked in a BUA how it was a checkpoint could be overwhelmed that way.***

~~(C/FOUO)~~ 27:09. That is a good question. Obviously, JAM Special Groups and the enemy do not wear a uniform. They blend in with the civilian populace and they can just walk up. That makes them difficult to identify. That's why we have issues with vehicles coming up on checkpoints and escalation of force incidents in those short, high-intensity situations. Like all checkpoints, when individuals stand there for a long period of time, they can become complacent, and as they're being watched and checked, and when guard forces switch out, that may be a promising time to attack them, and obviously if you have ten individuals at a checkpoint and you attack with 40 or 50 individuals, they can be easily overwhelmed.

~~(S/ACGU)~~ ***I understand there's been a significant capture in Sadr City in the last 24 hours.***

(S/ACGU) 28:29. We've had many on-going operations in Sadr City looking for 7 Special Groups targets in the last week.

***(U) What is your impression of how well Embassy personnel understand the situation in Iraq?***

(U) 29:00. There are two different aspects to how you look at this, and it depends on where you're situated. American forces, coalition forces, and those individuals who operate outside the Green Zone have a very clear perspective on it because they live in that area. However, life here, as it's been deemed in the title of a book, *Emerald City*, it's very sterile and different. Prior to Easter of '08, the threat in the IZ, the IDF, was very, very low. The IDF now has shown individuals that there is a danger here. But if you work in this building and just stay in this building, I think you sometimes have a clouded perspective of what it's like outside the T-walls that surround the IZ, not seeing up close what is really going on out there, how it impacts not only coalition forces and contractors, but also particularly the Iraqi people themselves, and the suffering that they've undergone, their living conditions, and what they have to do to survive on a daily basis. Here, I think you come here on a three month or a six month tour, you have your trailer and you have your great DFAC, you have a place that does your postal services and your dry cleaning, and you think it's like back home, except for maybe the lack of green grass and a nice park or somewhere to drive, and you're reminded of it because you can't go places outside. But I think sometimes you can fall into a false impression that it is not as serious as we think it is. If you don't leave the *Emerald City*, as it's so called.

***(U) What is the perspective of people who are living out among Iraqis outside the IZ?***

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

(U) 31:08. The SF take a lot of pride in the fact that we are very culturally aware of all the areas of the world that we cover. We take the time to learn languages and cultural taboos so that we do not offend people and we can easily interact with them, train with them, learn with them, and develop them. When you interact with individuals in a threat environment over a long period of time, you gain relationships that will last a life time. You also understand, and they understand you, what you are trying to accomplish and I think you fully understand the threat to them and their family and their way of life. We come here to visit to change and then go home to our families. They live here 24/7, and will continue to live here and want to do it, and many times many of them lose their lives as they are seeking that. To try to understand this war, this situation, you have to be outside in the Red Zone, interfacing with individuals at all the different levels, the Iraqi Army soldiers, the Iraqi police, the Iraqi civilians, the Government of Iraq, and I think once you do that, and you leave your tour of duty and go home, you have a different perspective than what you thought you were going to see when you got here. I know I certainly have. I can appreciate the position they're in, the life that they led prior to Saddam's fall, and now the challenges they face today.

(U) 32:45. Speaking just for myself, I think a lot of individuals back in the United States, that do not have that perspective, don't clearly understand what is going on here, why our country is involved in this struggle, we're trying to uphold and stand up the Iraqi government to be a self-sustaining government in this portion of the world, and what we're doing, and can't fully appreciate it unless you have served a tour of duty here. And when I hear people that have these comments that have never stepped outside of their state or their country in the United States, I'm a little appalled that they can do that based only on things they've read in a book or seen in a newspaper or on TV. And that is why, for many reasons, veterans and veterans only, of this war, will understand, among themselves, the sacrifices and what has taken place in this struggle.

***(U) What has been the impact of the operations tempo we've seen in the last few years on SOCOM?***

~~(S/ACGU)~~ 34:08. [Notes rather than transcription] The impact of three conflicts-- Philippines, Afghanistan, and Iraq--on Special Forces since 9/11 has been huge. For the first time, all seven SF Groups have deployed somewhere, some on single tours, but many on multiple tours, and that has a severe impact on training and exercises around the world. We have to do recruit heavily right off the street into the 18X SF MOS. The lucrative pay associated with contracting means that many SF personnel have left, made good money, and then returned. So we've had to implement big bonuses to retain and get key personnel. That has a big impact.

***(U) Many elements of the Army--Army Reserve, National Guard, active forces-- have announced in recent years that they are now busting 'red lines' to support on-going operations. On the other hand, many serving say this is the best the military has ever been. So we seem to have two sides of the same coin. Is the same true of the SF?***

~~(C/FOUO)~~ 37:44. Yes, it is. I have friends and acquaintances in both 19th Group and in 20th Group, I've served in the 19th Group for 28 years. We have never been this well

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

trained, we have never been this well equipped, but we've also never had this optempo. We in the National Guard have dual entities that we serve. We have our civilian careers and then we have the military. Sometimes they are very . . . they work very well, sometimes they do not. I have several stories of soldiers who have gone bankrupt, they have their own businesses that go under when they leave, when they fulfill their commitments. I've had soldiers who have gone bankrupt with their homes. And it is a hard price to pay for National Guard soldiers because of the fact that they . . . they have served admirably, but it has another order of effect on their jobs back home. Employers have to keep the businesses running back home. I wish it was the same that we saw in World War II where you saw the country was fully committed to the war effort and you saw everyone tied into it some way or other. I'm glad this is not the same level of being a world war, but I think it does have the same effect, and a lot of Americans are very conscious of that fact back home. You can't find many Americans that they don't know someone, a relative, or an acquaintance that has some tie to the military and has been affected by this in some over the last seven years. But that two-sided coin is very apparent right now with what we're pushing the Guard to do and what their capable of doing.

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

(U) 39:30. This is a very unique command, this four-star entity. It has been an honor to serve here, both to see the struggle of getting things done here, nothing is easy, but you see a lot of dedicated Americans and coalition force members that are working hard to do it, often 14 to 16 hours a day, struggling to do their jobs, do their part, and then they go home to their families to see when the next call comes to again do their duty.

(U) I came into this tour of duty I think with my eyes open having studied it through different books, through different vignettes and lessons learned and so on. But I think I and my battalion, 5th Bn, 19th SF Group, I think we come away from this with a very new perspective, and the fact that we are proponents of this war, and proponents of what the United States government is trying to do here, and what the Iraqi government is trying to do for themselves as well.

***(U) Implicitly in what you just said, when you flew over here, you were not necessarily of that same mindset.***

(U) 41:00. As most patriotic Americans wearing this uniform, your answer the call to duty, you do what your country asks you to do, and you're proud to do that. I firmly believe it is an honor to serve, but a privilege to lead. I'm very proud to have brought my battalion over here and to say that we did our part as a battalion. But I think I have a greater appreciation and understanding of this war having endured eight months here in country and having seen the sacrifices that not only American forces but coalition forces have suffered. Every single day, I see the American and the coalition casualty count. Every single day I see how many American, coalition, Iraqi Security Forces, and civilians are killed and wounded. It is not . . . and I'm used to [casualties] from back home as a police officer, but the numbers here are astronomical, and we've seen in it our own roles of crossing the 4,000 mark now in American soldiers that have died. It is a significant

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~

~~SECRET/NO FORN 20180508~~

job that we have here, and that is indeed very honorable and necessary in this part of the world.

***(U) A phenomena I've seen in a few officers is that they may have doubts about the policy before the deploy, but within about 30 days of being on the ground, their outlook changes, and I think it is because in being on the ground, they then feel invested in it.***

(U) 42:44. I think that is true. To fully appreciate it, you have to be here. I think all soldiers, particularly on your first tour of duty, have a somewhat romantic notion of what war is and want to participate in it because of the patriotism or because they think it will be a great experience. Until you see and individual torn apart or killed or wounded and the day by day struggles and harsh conditions, then that glamour quickly dissipates and it becomes a matter of survival and the focus on your soldiers that serve alongside you. And then the war just focuses on you surviving and you getting through your mission and you taking care of them, and everything else is outside of that bubble and window. You do what you're told, and you just try to get through day by day. And then when you go back, you have a greater appreciation of what it means to be an American, of what it is to be free, and to be able to vote, and to speak your mind in public, and to live, and conduct your life and your children's lives the way you want to. And it makes you really appreciate what it means to be an American. To do that, you have to have visited a Third World country and have to have been exposed to a third world struggle. I firmly believe that, and again, this is my third tour of duty, and I come away with an even greater appreciation of what it means to be an American. And I know that I will engage other Americans back home on the justification and necessity of this war, and I will explain it to them in a calm fashion, not being drawn into an emotion one, but there will be some people that I just can not convince, because I simply can not portray to them what it's like to be here. I think only to other veterans, of other similar situations, like my step-father, who is a Vietnam Vet, or my uncles or cousins who are Vietnam vets, and other veterans truly understand that. But a civilian, although we work ultimately for them, may not have the capacity to understand. 45:10

~~SECRET/NO FORN~~