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HEADQUARTERS MULTINATIONAL CORPS- IRAQ
BAGHDAD, IRAQ

This transcript was produced from tapes provided by the U.S. Center of Military History.)
This is writing a story on Multinational Corps - Iraq in the U.S. Center of Military History. Today is 5 June, and I am about to enter C-3 Chief of Future Operations, Multinational Corps - Iraq, at the Headquarters, Multinational Corps - Iraq, Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Baghdad, Iraq.

With me in conducting the interview is who is the Multinational Corps Command Historian. So the third voice you hear in this interview will be that of could you briefly describe your background and experience that prepared you for your current position?

Okay. Predominantly, I am an aviator. I've been in tactical aviation through about the first 19 years of service, and then following that I served as a battalion commander, then did an ROTC assignment as Professor of Military Science at the University of Washington, then went to the War College and then from the War College came out to Fort Lewis for a few months as Chief
of Plans there, and then was asked if I would deploy to Iraq with III Corps, which I agreed to do.

Did you command an aviation battalion?

I did not.

What type of battalion?

It was a recruiting battalion.

Recruiting battalion. Okay. As I understand it, you were augmented to III Corps from Fort Lewis. Can you talk a little bit about that, when you came, how many people you brought with you, and what types of plans you worked on with III Corps before you deployed?

Okay. First, we came with a team of about 14 folks from I Corps, and we trained briefly for about 10 days with III Corps before we deployed with them in preparation. We didn't do the MRX portion, but we had a small exercise geared directly toward preparation for those that were coming from I Corps.

So you actually came to Fort Hood in November then. Is that right?

That's -- Actually, end of October.
End of October?  
End of October, I think somewhere around the 26th, actually, is when we conducted our initial training and then departed in early November.

So were you -- Did you know the staff very well at III Corps? I mean, in the 3, did you know for example?

I had not met previously. I had served with General Odierno previously when he was with Task Force 1.4a. At that time I was the XO for --

In 1999?

I was the XO for the Aviation Regiment.

All right. So you didn't get a chance to work on any plans with III Corps much before you deployed?

Well, not with III Corps, no. We did some planning with I Corps, obviously, but we really had no planning with III Corps.

When did you know you were going to be augmented to III Corps?
I think we had -- I think it was right around the first of October, late September, early October of '06.

Now the C-3, described FUOPS, which is Future Operations, as the "key planning cell" in MNCI-I, quote/unquote.

Along those lines, please describe a little bit about what you and your section does, and how does your section differentiate between Plans and Policy Section under

That's always the interesting question. We focus typically on the shorter range plans. You know, doctrinally, I think they will tell you we ought to be looking out maybe three days to six weeks, and then Plans picks up at the six-week point and, of course, Current Ops would handle anything from now until three days. But I think the way that we come to look at how we approach our work is the Current Ops Chief works hours -- or minutes to hours. FUOPS works hours to days, and the Plans and Policy works days to weeks.

Okay.

That seems to be a little bit more
accurate.

Okay.

But we typically take the shorter, you know, battery changes, short fuse missions, and some of the special projects, operations and intelligence briefs, sniper defeat program, biometrics program, and work some of those as well.

So it's not just plans and orders, but we also have some specialty areas.

One of the areas that really started to grow is infrastructure security, and I had what I call two parts to the FUOPS Section. One is the Frago battery which is upstairs behind the JOC, and then we have the Effects/Infrastructure Cell which is down here in what we affectionately call the "blue box" just outside the JOC.

They work on infrastructure security plans, which is really a growing area right now, as well as helping integrate Effects into our operational plan.

Do they work for you?

That's correct.

So what does Effects do?

Effects essentially -- The way it
was originally planned is we have an Effects Group -- Let me make sure I'm clear. Effects don't work for me. I have an Effects piece within my cell.

Okay.

Effects work for the E Corps, General McDonald, who is on the third floor. But essentially, the way this was designed to work, and it works pretty much along those lines, is that the Effects Group monitors the lines of operations, governance, economics. We, FUOPS, watch the security line, and then there is a transition line operation.

Essentially, it is projects or programs developed along the non-security line of operations. When they get ready to hit the street as a plan, quite often that plan will come to FUOPS to integrate all the pieces, get the security integrated in the plan, and then we publish the order.

So the idea was to try and get Effects integrated into the operational planning of the Corps, and it has worked pretty well so far.

One of the things that we really try to focus on, what has been different from previous Corps Commands here, is that we want to make sure that, once we decide something, we
generate action, and that action is generated through a Corps Frago that comes from the C-3.

In previous Corps, often the Effects team would write a separate effects order, and it wasn't written by the 3, so to speak. It was published through the 3, but it was written by the Effects folks. Quite often, it was reading material, but it generated no action.

So we wanted to avoid that pitfall and get it integrated into the Future Operations planning so that we could pull all the correct enablings to it, get it out, and then make sure action resulted from those efforts. And for the most part, that's been working pretty well.

I have a couple of follow-ups with that.

You mentioned you have a -- I believe you said a Frago --

Factory? So your guys are actually writing the Fragos. Is that right?

A good part of them. We don't write every Frago.

Right.
But we write a good part of the
Fragos.

Okay. The other thing is: I understand that V Corps, who was the Multinational Corps before you, only had a very small FUOPS cell, like five, and yours is I think you said.

Right.

Can you comment? Was that a lesson learned from V Corps or did III Corps just kind of think that that's the way they wanted to use their --

We came with people from Fort Lewis, but our didn't come to FUOPS. So the FUOP Section, actually, the full-timers, as we say, is probably -- I think that's somewhere in the neighborhood of or so that are full time under my control.

We have folks from other sections that are dual-hatted. They work for Sections Chief, but they serve as a representative to FUOPS. So by the time you have the full-timers and the dual-hatters, you've probably got somewhere in the neighborhood of, I don't know, folks there.

The idea with the larger FUOPS cell gets back to exactly what I was talking about. The purpose was to make it
a little bigger so that we could do the effects integration.

For example, the Effects Cell has manned part of FUOPS. I have an Information Ops rep from Effects. So he's that link back to Effects. Then I have about, let's see, one, two, three -- three other officers that come out of the Effects area that represent various aspects, but they maintain that link so that we stay tied in with what the Effects folks are doing.

Okay. As the FUOPS Chief, what typically occupies your time; and if you could, please walk me through one of your typical days, not today because you are the chops guy.

A typical day for FUOPS would begin with the BUA (Phonetic) in the morning. We usually come in a little bit earlier to prep, and then we often get key guidance from General Petraeus as well as the CG as we listen to the BUA, observe what occurs. A lot of times that is a heads up as to what we might expect.

For example, they show the structure security slides. If there is a problem with repair teams getting to certain locations to repair electrical power, for example, that may generate some action for us to get with the Iraqis...
to determine what it is we need to do to help resolve that.

So it starts typically with the BUA. Then me personally, I do spend a lot of time in meetings. Given that I do have the responsibility to do the security line of operation assessment for the C-3, I really need to stay abreast of where the CG's head is, so to speak.

So key meetings that I try to attend include the O&I briefings, the Defeat Extremists briefings where we address the activities of the terrorist or extremist factions that we are working against in detail.

(b)(6) How often are they held?

(b)(3), (b)(6) Those are once every two weeks.

Then on the alternate week would be the (Phonetic) assessment, which gives a general assessment of activities in Baghdad and the overall plans, as well as some of the economic information ops, CIOPS (Phonetic) things they are doing. It's kind of a broader perspective.

Then I attend the Intel Fusion brief, which occurs usually about twice a week, and those presentations there -- and one more is the COEC (Phonetic) update, which occurs weekly on Sunday. If I stay tuned into those, I usually have a pretty good sense of what the CG is thinking.
So as I step back and do the assessment of how security operation is progressing, that gives me the background to shape my assessment and recommendations for the CG.

Okay. Give me a sense -- So you start a little bit before the MNF BUA in the morning.

Right.

You know, by the end of the day, what time do you call it a day?

Well, we usually do a lot of our order writing. We finish up that in the evening. We want to try and get those to the CHOPS before he goes to see the C-3, typically somewhere by about 2000 in the evening, we try to get our orders out.

Who are your key order writers?

I've got Really, just about everybody in FUOPS writes orders. So -- But if you want the key ones, it's probably

What's his rank?

But those are your key guys?
Then probably a guy that's going to leave here shortly, (Phonetic) and probably say

But I mean, everybody writes.

Okay. Your MNCI Coalition campaign operational concept dated 6 March, very thorough, well written campaign narrative. Do you know who the primary author was of it? Did that come out of your section, or not?

No. That came out of the Plans Section, and there was about three or four guys writing.

What's your relationship with that? Did you guys -- Did you have any input into that plan?

We always have a chance to review it anytime it is briefed or there's updates. Sometimes when they go up to the CG, I'll go in and sit in on the plans briefing, and anytime I see something, I'm always providing feedback to the 3.

So although not my direct responsibility, I certainly look at it and particularly since I do the security update, a lot of that information is fed into the process. I don't know how much is used, but it certainly goes back in and, I'm sure, has an impact on what things are done.

So would you say your section then is
more concerned with trying to implement --

That's right.

-- and execute that plan?

Correct.

Do you interface in the execution part with the CG's Initiatives Group at all?

Well, I think they've just gotten here, as I understand it, unless we are talking another CG's Initiative Group.

No. General Odierno's.

I haven't done much to date. So --

Okay. That's fine.

And I think they just got here a few days ago.

Okay. I want to take you back a little bit to when you first got here in December. Now you took over -- You TOA'ed on the 14th of December --

Correct.

-- and that's Transfer of Authority.

And you took over from General Corelli's (Phonetic) V Corps mission as the MNC.
Right.

Can you describe briefly and kind of succinctly what the overall intent was? Was it just to continue on what V Corps was doing? That's what I'm trying to get at.

I think initially it was. I think we had some ideas on what we wanted to do. Initially, we were moving toward a transition plan.

Right. The bridging strategy.

The bridging strategy. So we were moving down that road with plans, and that was the direction we were moving. Then that changed, and then the bridging strategy essentially was put on hold as we started to develop the (Phonetic) concept and the brigade surge came to life. So that essentially replaced those planning efforts.

Right. Can you comment a little bit about the -- What I'm trying to do is capture the staff atmosphere in late December/early January before the President's announcement of the surge in mid-January.

Were you anticipating -- You probably already knew that the surge was coming. The President formally
announced it in mid-January, but you had to know before that, that it was coming.

What was the atmosphere in the staff? Was it anticipatory? Was it simply to continue to execute what the V Corps had and General Casey MNF strategy or were you trying to shape and change it to fit a -- what would eventually evolve into (b)(6) and the new Corps strategy?

I think we were -- You know, looking back it was just -- To me, it was just a gradual transition. We looked at the bridging strategy, had thought through it, and developed a way to try and make that work, and as the surge started to come into play, obviously, we had to look at the situation differently.

So we just said, okay, this thought process is to going to apply now, because we've got to develop plans to manage and handle the surge. So we put it on the back burner, and let's start working through the surge requirements.

It was just a gradual transition, in my mind. It wasn't any excitement. It was just people looking at what needed to be done. We've not got a new set of assets and rules to play with: let's figure out how to use them, and
let's think through it and come up with a good way to make it work and be successful.

It seems to me that it's quite an abrupt shift, looking kind of from the outside -- an abrupt shift in strategy when, under Corelli's V Corps and General Casey's MNF, it was kind of a commute to the fight, and all of a sudden, you know, you get new leadership in -- III Corps comes in. The President announces the surge in mid-January, and General Petraeus comes in in the beginning of February, end of February, I think, and it almost completely is 180 degrees different.

I'm not sure if I agree with that. I think maybe it's a bulls in the (Inaudible). Eventually, you are going to have to transition. That won't go away.

So -- and I think that was kind of the umbrella thought. It was put the bridging strategy on hold, because before we transition now, we are going to go and get our arms around Baghdad. Let's clean up Baghdad, and then we will eventually transition.

As a part of the there was a transition strategy.

Right.
And so I don't think it was that abrupt of a shift. It was simply transition to something we were eventually going to have to do. Don't forget about it, but, well, we've got forces here that are going to give us a better capability to try and reduce the violence that is occurring in Baghdad. So let's focus on that problem, and let's figure out how we can best solve it with the amount of forces that we're going to have.

Okay.

So, again, I didn't see it as a great shift. I saw it as a transition, bridging strategy on hold. We'll eventually come back to it. It might be a little bit different, but the general concept won't go away.

Would you care to assess the Corps -- your predecessor Corps's operations, in particular their operations to secure Baghdad, Together Forward 1 and 2, and what key lessons did you take from those?

I guess I didn't study that too close. I don't have a whole lot to say on that. I think I just focused as we got into theater what it is we were asked to do, think through the plans and the facts before us on the battlefield, and (Inaudible).
Let me go back to the transition between the two Corps again.

What was the handoff like? Did you talk to the FUOP predecessor?

I think we had a good handoff. I mean, they had a good system in place. We were able to fall in on it, and because we were a little bit more robust, there's a little bit more we could do.

So I thought that we had a little bit more time to think through the Frago development process than they did, because given the amount of people that they had, they just simply had to crank stuff out very quickly, where again we had this capability to integrate Effects and to do a little more -- you know, if I've got a bigger cell to begin with that's cross-functional, I've already got some expertise internally that can provide a little bit better input into the Frago development process.

The concept within our Corps was I as the FUOPS could reach out to different sections. If I need that expertise, bring it in very quickly and work [problems. I think that's been a benefit. I think that has helped us
quite a bit, and I'm hoping that the 18th Airborne comes in with a robust FUOPS or, if they don't, within their Plans shop they have a robust capability that can do that.

(b)(6) Have they already sent teams here to observe?

Well, they haven't sent teams yet. I think there's been key leader visits, but we are just starting to get into that process now.

Okay. As of this date, about four months into (b)(6) from about mid-February to about mid-June, how would you characterize the key indicators so far, as you see them as the FUOPS Chief?

(b)(3), (b)(6) I think we are making progress in Baghdad. I think that the violence is decreasing in a general trend. I think that's a positive trend. There are certainly spikes here and there that get captured in the news that make it difficult to get the overall message across that there is a ;positive trend occurring in Baghdad.

I see that, as we are successful in Baghdad, some of the activity around Baghdad in the belts is increasing. As we expand in areas we haven't been before, we are running into -- I guess people call them sanctuaries; I don't know
that sanctuary is the right term. I just think it's areas that we haven't cleared before.

So folks, where they have been able to operate unencumbered, are not able to do that anymore. So from that perspective, by the Effects indicators, we are not being successful, because violence is on the uptick.

Well, it's going to be that way until we get through some of these areas that we haven't cleared before. So I don't think we are off track, but I think we've got to clean up some of the previous uncleared areas before we are going to see a greater downward trend, particularly outside of Baghdad.

Okay: would you like to jump in?

If I could. A couple of things.

I want to go back, if I could, and just -- Could you tell me about the sub-sections in terms of the structure of the FUOPS Cell? You mentioned some of the names, but do they have particular departmental assignments within FUOPS?

Well, it's really -- The general strength is the Frago factory, which is upstairs and the Infrastructure and Effects Cell, which is downstairs in the
blue box.

The Infrastructure primarily focuses on oil and electric infrastructure. They also pick up some other Fragos -- for example, the MOH FPS replacing the Facilities Protection Services in Medical City. They have done the Mosul dam response con plan.

Some of the bigger projects that are not as time sensitive have been pushed to the Infrastructure folks, if I don't have enough manpower in the Frago factory, to work those.

So I really have, again -- For example, really works the short fused ones, because he's good at it. He can handle the distinguished visitors and get those cranked out very quickly. I mean, he did the Saddam Hussein security mission to get him over to the gallows, which we cranked out in a matter of five hours and got that done.

Then I've got who works Samarrah and Diyala areas -- so, really, MND-North missions. Then I've got who's working special ops related missions and kind of takes some of the harder special projects, simply because he's got the capability to
knock down the top targets.

Then out on the back deck there in the JOC, we've got a number of folks: (Phonetic) works transportation. (b)(6) works the O&I briefings. He also picks up some of the other augments, tasking, Fragos. (b)(6) works counter-sniper, and also new equipment fielding, and I've got that works transition, and he really kind of works for me and CHOPS. He kind of splits the middle. But he's got a group of folks that helps him out upstairs.

Then I've got who is a U.K. officer that works a lot of the Iraqi Army issues, rotations in and out of Baghdad, M-16, M-4 training. Then he also liaises somewhat with Southeast and, of course, he's got a tie-in to the Brits there. And I've got who also helps with the IA business and (Inaudible).

Great. Is the structure of having Future Ops as an entity within C-3 -- Is that the norm as opposed to having them in a C-5 Section? Was that a unique decision relative to how this Corps is structured?

Yes. I think it was a conscious decision by III Corps to have a FUOPS that was going to be an
Effects integration function. I mean, I think we stayed pretty true to that, although I think, as we have developed here, Effects is kind of defining itself a little bit.

There is still interaction, but maybe not as much as they originally perceived. But I mean, we've got the ties already built into FUOPS.

I mean, we've already got an Effects linkage. So we get that IO, PAO. Some of the non-connect things are always wrapped into our orders, where you might miss that if you didn't have that Effects linkage.

You talked about one of the interesting pieces, which is this cross-functional teaming that's been successful.

You talked about some of the folks who are double-hatted who are coming to you from these other sections. Can you just kind of -- Well, I don't need the names per se, but can you give me the functional areas of some of those people that are sitting in?

Yes. I mean, -- he works Plans and FUOPS. So he provides that support.

I've got (Phonetic) from the Chemical guys, our dual-hat. Our Intel folks are dual hatted,
although I do have some resident, but they aren't rated by me, but they are in the chair.

Chaplain, a lawyer who is dual hatted.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Great.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Those are just a few.

(b)(3), (b)(6) Have you seen this cross-functional teaming work in some arrays in other commands you've been in or is this fairly unique to this scenario?

(b)(3), (b)(6) This -- It was different than the way we did it in I Corps. So naturally, from the Corps perspective, since I haven't worked on too many Corps staffs, I guess that's my only frame of reference.

I Corps was -- FUOPS and Plans were combined essentially, and then you had Current Ops. Intellectually, we worked the Effects, but I'm not sure that we did as good a job as integrating the different areas, since we are here.

A part of that is just I Corps. They get hit with a lot of taskings, and they support a lot of deployments, and they are always operating well below what they are authorized. So you're constantly just pulling things together to get the job done.

(b)(3), (b)(6) You're kind of in a unique
position as someone who was augmented to III Corps to kind of come in, and see things perhaps from a different perspective.

Can you share with us your thoughts about how you see the functionality of III Corps having come in here to take over as the MNCI element, just as a professional -- a career professional?

Oh, I think the biggest comment I have is I think, particularly within the C-3 arena, work flows pretty smoothly, and there's not a whole lot of personality conflicts, where there's usually a lot of conflicts between CHOPS, Future Ops and Plans, because you're fighting over who owns what. You just don't see that here, and most of it just has to do with the personalities involved, and it works pretty smooth.

That's why I'm sitting in the CHOPS shop right now. I mean, CHOPS -- I mean, he comes in and sees my guys as orders are getting worked sometimes. He ends up being the final reviewer. So he may have questions, but it's fine. He can come in and, if there's any issues, I'll resolve. But same way, if there's things happening on the floor that I need to go check, I can go out there and check and not have to worry about talking with him. Just let him know. Same
thing with working with Plans.

I just think there's a pretty good cross-talk. And of course, we all meet once every night. So there's a chance to communicate.

You seem almost like a natural, though, to fill in for the CHOPS, because you guys are involved in writing the Fragos.

Right, right. That's exactly right. Yes. That's one of the reasons I looked at the staff again, because I do the security loop. I'm one of the guys that sees everything, where some are more focused in a specialty, and so they don't know about certain things that are happening. So keeping a broad focus helps, too.

I have one last one, if I can. As you look at your point in your tour right now, having joined the Corps, come into theater, worked through this transition of the previous bridging strategy into from your seat what has been the biggest challenge in making that come together?

I think the biggest challenge is trying to get Coalition staff leadership to be comfortable working with the Iraqis.
We want to stay in our lane and do things within our comfort zone, and unless we get the Iraqis engaged, it ain't going to happen, because they don't care what we think.

A good example is this reconciliation conference that's going on right now. It's our idea, and we're asking the Iraqis to help provide security, and they're saying, screw you, you guys want to do it, you provide your security, it's not our idea. You think it's good for us? Okay. Roger, noted. Have a nice day. That's kind of the way it is.

Let me ask two quick questions, and we'll wrap this up.

The new Operations Order, the base Op Order. What input did you have in your section on this?

Well, I guess that's -- Again, it gets back to the process.

Right.

You know, direct influence? Did we review the product and the plans developed? Yes. Did I have a FUOPS rep that was directly involved in that? The answer is no, again because Plans kind of branches out in a similar fashion as I do, but yet all the input that we
provide into the Effects process and to Assessments process is into what needs to be done, how things are going, what we need to focus on or feedback on the product itself -- those are all inputs that we provided.

So I think systemically, the answer to your question is systemically we supported it. Directly, we didn't.

Okay. Got it.

The next question is more of a broader question that I'm not sure you get involved in. But I noted when I was here in March and again in May General Mixon in Multinational Division-North requested or wanted more reinforcements up in his area.

Right.

Because of the ongoing violence in the belts up there.

Right.

The Corps didn't have a reserve to send them. So they had to essentially rob from Peter to pay Paul, take a battalion from MNDB and put it up there, a Stryker battalion.

Do you get involved in those kinds of decisions?
For example, how do you create a Corps reserve? What do you do with a Corps reserve?

I don't get involved with the decision to do that, but I write the order to execute it.

Okay. Okay. That's good. That helps me understand a little bit about more what FUOPS does.

The planners are probably shaping that.

Right.

And then it says, okay, it's time to execute; FUOPS, you got to make it happen.

Okay. Got it.

I have you got anything else?

I'm good. Thank you.

Well, one last question.

You know, we've been asking you some questions here for the past 45 minutes or so. Do you have anything you would like to add that you think should go on the record here?

I guess I've got one thing.

Sure.
I do think the leadership here in III Corps, MNCI, is pretty solid. I think what I like is -- I mean, to compare, in terms of when action is taken here, I think we are trying to do things that have a purpose, and if they don't have a purpose, we don't do them, even though they may have been done in the past where there was a requirement to have an Effects meeting that -- I mean, if it didn't generate something that needed to be done, we don't waste time doing it.

So I think, in terms of efficiently operating, I think III Corps has done pretty well. I don't see a lot of time wasted unnecessarily. And when it does start to get wasted, either a meeting is cut down, it's eliminated or it's just only a few key people join in on it.

So I think the command climate here is pretty good.

Good. Okay.

I mean, I come from -- I Corps has got some great leaders, too, but again they've got a different tug on them, but they do all of that as well. But I just think things have gone pretty smoothly.

Well, good.
In terms of how things are being run.

That, incidentally, echoes other comments I've heard around the Corps.

Well, thank you very much for your time.

This concludes the interview. Thank you.