

**Battle of Phase Line Gold  
Sadr City, Iraq**

**Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces  
Partnering for Iraq, Integrating Forces**

**Combat Operations  
March 23 – May 20, 2008**

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## Introduction

From March to May 2008, Iraqi and Coalition forces defeated Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) in Baghdad and for the first time since the invasion brought Sadr City, a hotbed of Shia militia activity, firmly under the control of the central government. Along with similar operations in Basra in the south and Mosul in the north, the battle for Sadr City demonstrated the growing capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces and the expanding confidence in and support for the government of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Success, however, was hardly assured. There were days when the fate of Maliki's government seemed to hang in the balance, and the task was beyond daunting. Sadr City, an impoverished enclave of 2.2 million, threatened to become a large-scale Mogadishu. Early in the operation, Iraqi forces seemed on the verge of crumbling, and there were only a few coalition companies available to support them. However, the Prime Minister was steadfast, Iraqi forces were willing, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and Multi-National Division-Baghdad (MND-B) brought to the fight the enhanced capabilities and tactics needed to prevail. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade fought the Battle of Phase Line Gold (PL Gold), which proved decisive to breaking the Mahdi Army's grip on Sadr City. The fighting featured amazing combinations of ancient, modern, and futuristic tactics, from siege warfare to urban operations by air weapons teams and deft information operations to emphasize Iraqi leadership. The results, the Mahdi Army in disarray and mounting successes for Iraqi forces and the Iraqi government, are a tribute to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade's innovative approach to urban combat and to Soldiers' devotion to the mission. Moreover, Sadr City under Iraqi government control is another sign of the success of and of growing security and stability in Iraq.

## **Major Events**

March 23 to March 31, 2008, Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) and Special Groups (SG) fired 86 rockets at the International Zone (IZ)<sup>1</sup>. The majority of the rounds were 107mm rockets fired from points of origin (POO) sites within Sadr City. Often the rockets missed the intended targets in the IZ but killed innocent Iraqi civilians living in the area. By the end of the month, MND-B experienced an average of 68 attacks per day.<sup>2</sup> The increase in attacks in the Sadr City area corresponded with the Government of Iraq's (GoI) offensive to re-establish security and control from militias in southern Iraq. Attacks included small arms and Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) fire on Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Coalition Forces (CF), mortar and rocket attacks on Combat Outposts (COPs) and Joint Security Stations (JSSs), and a significant increase in the number of roadside bombs or Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Militia elements used Explosively Formed Projectiles (EFPs) and ambushes to maintain their freedom of movement.

As a result of the sudden increase in violence, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade from the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (3-4 ID) was faced with managing three distinct and challenging fights. First, the Brigade, in conjunction with ISF, began counter-offensive operations to establish security in and around Sadr City. 3-4 ID helped to reestablish the ISF checkpoints in the area while MND-B provided additional Armor and Stryker companies to the fight. Additional armor reinforcements arrived from the 9<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division (9<sup>th</sup> IA) and Multi-National Division-Center (MND-C). Then, 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stryker Cavalry Regiment (1-2 SCR) attached to 3/4 ID fought to secure and eventually resupply overwatch sites in Tharwa I, the southeast part of Sadr City. Holding and securing these positions became critical as these sites allowed the squadron to control rocket launching sites (POO- Points of Origin) that insurgents used to shoot rockets into the IZ. On March 27, 1-68 Infantry (AR) secured the Jamilla area (southwest corner of Sadr City) which allowed 1-2 SCR to concentrate its efforts on the Tharwa I area. The 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division (11<sup>th</sup> IA), with support from 3/4 ID, conducted the first of many humanitarian missions within Sadr City by delivering needed food and water to residents in Tharwa as part of the mission.

In addition to reestablishing the checkpoints and eliminating POO sites within 107mm rocket targeting range of the IZ, the Brigade coordinated assets to defeat rocket teams operating north of PL Gold. During this deep fight, the Brigade employed Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)

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platforms and various delivery assets such as Air Weapons Teams (AWTs) and Close Air Support (CAS) to successfully destroy rocket teams or their systems.

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Iraqi Army Brigade (3/42 IA) moved into the southern part of Sadr City to establish checkpoints and to secure key terrain. Entering from the south along Route Florida, the IA companies marched north to establish checkpoints along Route Gold. The Iraqis chose to send another battalion into the area (2/42 IA) after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion encountered substantial resistance. During this period, MND-B Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) and ground commanders from 1-68 AR, 1-2 SCR and 3/4 ID convinced Iraqi leaders to push through the resistance.

In mid-April, 3/4 ID began constructing a wall comprised of concrete barriers, known as T-walls, north of PL Gold. The walls extended across Sadr City from Route Aeros along the southern edge to Route Grizzlies along the northern edge and created what would be known as the Gold Wall. Realizing the negative implications of the wall, SG/JAM elements engaged Coalition Forces all along the construction site. Eventually, the wall served to isolate the southern part of Sadr City (known as AO Gold) so CF and ISF could re-establish security and begin significant infrastructure projects that were designed to improve the quality of life of the residents.

The Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) at the Joint Security Station (JSS) Sadr City opened on April 22, 2008. Inside the CMOC, the Brigade established the Iraqi Assistance Center (IAC) to assist residents with compensation claims related to collateral damage from the fighting and to continue to provide basic living essentials in the form of food and water.

On May 15, after a considerable construction effort and heavy fighting, the Gold Wall reached Route Grizzlies. To succeed in construction of the wall, the Brigade used considerable infantry, armor, engineers, ISR assets, aerial weapons platforms and special operators. Intelligence reports indicated that high level SG leaders departed Sadr City for Iran and the Sadrist leaders affiliated with JAM began negotiations with Gol to allow the Iraqi Army to enter the northern areas of Sadr City. On May 20, two brigades of the Iraqi Army entered Sadr City and began to establish Gol control.

This operational narrative is the summation of the ISF and CF efforts from March 23 to May 20, 2008, which includes the re-establishment of ISF Checkpoints around Sadr City and the creation of security within AO Gold. It includes the efforts of MND-B elements with the Iraqi Security Forces, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) assets, and other enablers applying counterinsurgency (COIN) principles inside AO Gold that would lead to the eventual reintegration of Sadr City into Baghdad.

## **Background**

### *Sadr City, JAM, SG, ISF History*

Developed in the late 1950s to house Iraqi poor, the area currently known as Sadr City was once called Saddam City. After Coalition Forces toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003, the area was renamed Sadr City to honor Mohammed Sadiq Sadr (father of al-Sayyid Muqtada al-Sadr), revered Ayatollah who was assassinated in 1998 by Hussein's security personnel. Created in June 2003, Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM), also known as the Mahdi Army, socially and economically began to dominate the enclave. Prior to March 2008, Sadr City appeared to operate like a separate nation, where Sadr's word was synonymous with the law. The cleric's influence was everywhere including the hospital, the Islamic courts, the police, the municipality and the mosques.<sup>3</sup> Ironically, during the past few years, this Sadr stronghold also became one of Baghdad's poorest neighborhoods.

Since 2004, Coalition Forces and militia elements within Sadr City have engaged in several rounds of significant fighting. In April of 2004, the Mahdi Army ambushed a patrol from 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division inside the enclave resulting in eight Soldiers killed and 57 wounded.<sup>4</sup> In August 2005 and October 2006, Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces placed short term blockades around the city. From November 2007 to the spring of 2008, Coalition Forces had only a limited presence in the city. The was a direct result of a political backlash that occurred following a mission inside Sadr City led by Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) with support from CF. The operation developed into a significant firefight in

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which the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division had to bring in Apache gunships for support. The raid resulted in significant collateral damage and had the potential to be politically embarrassing for the GoI. Therefore, the GoI restricted the ability of CF and ISF to conduct raids and other operations within Sadr City.<sup>5</sup> In December 2007, Multi-National Corps Iraq (MNC-I) published Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) 525 which directed that all raids in Sadr City must have the approval of the MNC-I Commander and include prior notification to the Iraqi Prime Minister.<sup>6</sup> The net effect of this directive allowed JAM and SG elements to find sanctuary and develop stockpiles of various weapons within Sadr City.

### The Enemy

In August 2007, al-Sayyid Muqtada al-Sadr issued an order "suspending the activities of the Mahdi Army for a six-month period."<sup>7</sup> In February 2008, al-Sadr extended this ceasefire. However, intelligence indicated the enclave was heavily protected from external threats with IEDs, EFPs, rockets, mortars, anti-aircraft weapons, and small arms systems to include sniper teams.<sup>8</sup> Indirect Fire (IDF) and bombings against Iraqi and Coalition Forces were initiated or supported from these networks headquartered within Sadr City. With an estimated population of 2.2 million residents, JAM/SG maintained approximately 1,000-2,000 active fighters.<sup>9</sup> Potentially, the area could produce up to 20,000 fighters if Muqtada al-Sadr called for a general uprising.

The enemy has been described as coming from three overlapping elements.<sup>10</sup> JAM fighters consisted of young, unemployed men charged with defending the Shia population in Sadr City and other Shia enclaves under the authority of OMS (Office of the Martyr Sadr – the political party led by Muqtada al Sadr's father during the Hussein era). These fighters were paramilitary forces with limited training and an organization based on the neighborhood in which they lived. JAM fighters, for the most part, conducted defensive operations to protect their local area from external influences to include AQI and, at times, the ISF and CF.

1.4b They have been referred to as JAM Special Forces. They were involved in offensive operations such as ongoing EFP attacks, weapons trafficking and rocket attacks. Elements of the third group, which existed to varying degrees in both JAM and SG, were criminal elements. These individuals took advantage of the lawlessness which existed as a result of violence and inadequate security, most closely resembled an organized crime organization. They focused on robbery, intimidation and other criminal activities for financial gain either for personal use or to fund attacks on the GoI, ISF or CF.

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### Iraqi Security Forces

In March 2008, the Iraqi Government had minimal combat power in the area and only a National Police (NP) battalion that operated inside AO Gold. Although they had a brigade dedicated to Sadr City, the ISF did not spend too much time in the enclave. Sadr City Iraqi Police (IPs) were essentially controlled by JAM.<sup>13</sup>

ISF tactical capabilities were limited to checkpoint operations in response to enemy attacks. Their logistics system is rudimentary but improving. Proper planning should ensure improvement in this area in future. Standard for checkpoints had not been established so vulnerabilities were exploited.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division served as the Iraqi Army ground controlling headquarters for the Sadr City area and the northeast portion of the Baghdad province. The 11<sup>th</sup> IA had a number of significant challenges which could have easily lead to mission failure. First, when the Division was formed in March 2007, many of the Jundi (Iraqi Army Soldiers) came from the Sadr City area. JAM knew where to find the family members of the Jundi on the checkpoints. Due to the real and perceived threat JAM posed to the families of Jundi, there were approximately 700 deserters from the 11<sup>th</sup> IA in the first week of fighting.<sup>14</sup> A second factor that caused desertions and other dereliction of duty was the fear of the Mahdi Army that existed within the Iraqi Army ranks. JAM fighters had the reputation of being highly competent fighters who received superior training in Iran.<sup>15</sup> Third, up to this point in time, the Iraqi Army had rarely taken the lead in military operations. This fighting represented a major shift in operational responsibility. Fourth,

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the 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army was noticeably short of equipment. The unit was the first IA division to be fielded by the GoI. Logistical issues in obtaining specialized equipment were yet to be resolved. Key divisional units which had yet to be formed by March 2008 such as the bomb disposal company, the ISR company, the motor transport company and the engineer company. Thus, the 11<sup>th</sup> IA was reliant on CF enabler support in order to succeed in this endeavor. Fifth, Iraqi ground tactics were, in many ways, not yet fully developed. Within MiTT teams, there existed a term known as the "Iraqi bloom." This term referred to the practice of IA units returning fire in an uncontrolled manner that resulted in the unit expending its ammunition during its first engagement. "They would receive one or two sniper rounds and the whole platoon would open up at every window and everywhere. You want to be on the inside of the bloom, not on the outside," said [b 6] of the 11<sup>th</sup> IA MiTT. "The next thing you know is the commander (IA commander) is pulling his unit back because they are out of ammunition." A sixth challenge was the fact that the 11<sup>th</sup> IA had only five of its nine organic battalions because one brigade was attached to the Karkh Area Command on the west side of the Tigris River which meant there were not enough organic forces available initially to prosecute the effort. Seventh, the division commander, Staff Major General Muzhir Shakir Missaif was on leave in late March. His absence left the division Chief of Staff (CoS), Staff Brigadier General Dhif, to manage operations. Although the CoS is a very competent administrator, he does not possess the same experience and dynamic leadership qualities found in MG Muzhir.<sup>16</sup> Leadership, in many ways, is the key factor in whether an IA unit succeeds or fails. As a general rule, Iraqi military units conduct little planning, Pre-Combat Checks (PCCs) or Pre-Combat Inspections (PCIs). The commander simply receives the mission and directs his subordinate units to an objective often accomplishing the mission on the sheer will of the commander. Finally, the Baghdad Operational Command (BOC), the organization overall in charge of security throughout Baghdad province, would come to manage the isolation Sadr City and eventual clearing of AO Gold. This additional headquarters complicated operations as the 11<sup>th</sup> IA served as the ground controlling headquarters for much of the area. At one point, the BOC directly controlled the movement of companies within the 11<sup>th</sup> IA, usually via mobile phone communications. Additionally, the BOC refused to allow MG Muzhir to rotate his units out of the enclave to replace worn units with fresher troops.

### Setting the Conditions

Iraqi Security Forces demonstrated their abilities early on in the fight. Some were aggressive and determined to show their strength against the enemy. However, some units refused to fight, essentially stopping to work for the government by surrendering their weapons to Sadr officials.<sup>17</sup> A number of National Police (NP) units allowed their checkpoints (CPs) to be overrun without attempting to organize a serious defense.<sup>18</sup> One of the greatest challenges to be overcome by the ISF was the intimidation by militia members. In some cases, the family members of ISF were told that they would be killed if the ISF member performed his duties.<sup>19</sup> Several of the NP Commanders refused to command and control their units or conduct operations against SG and JAM.<sup>20</sup> After the increase of violence was quelled, 700 Shurta (National Policemen) were dismissed for their failure to perform their duties as required.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, four battalion commanders remained under house arrest for complicity with militia elements.<sup>22</sup>

### Operation Steadfast Falcon (Map 1)

In December 2007, MND-B developed Operational Steadfast Falcon with the objective to establish an environment in Sadr City that would reduce the influence and legitimacy of SG networks and set conditions for sustainable security and sustainable employment. The plan called for placing CF and ISF in a series of JSS around Sadr City from which they could isolate the SG networks by interdicting their lines of communication. An integrated information and civil military operation plan would advance reconciliation and create conditions for improved security and cooperation with the population. This plan incorporated several phases in which certain conditions were required to proceed to the subsequent phase. The JSS created to enable CF and ISF to isolate SG became critical to success during the increased period of violence as they provided a location from which to project combat power to defeat the enemy and regain control of the area.

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Map 1: Operation Steadfast Falcon called for the establishment of checkpoints around Sadr City and the creation of Joint Security Stations (JSSs). When 4<sup>th</sup> ID arrived in December 2007, there were few forward positions around Sadr City. The creation of the JSSs proved instrumental in March/April of 2008 because they facilitated the movement of combat power to the area.

#### **Iraqi Army/Coalition Force counter offensive to re-establish security**

As militia elements overran checkpoints inside and along Routes Grizzlies and Aeros, the Coalition moved combat power to aid the ISF to recapture these positions. At one point MND-B had six additional company teams in the area as well as one reinforced Engineer Company from the 35<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade. The armored and Stryker systems provided moral support to the ISF, increased the force protection level for occupants of the checkpoint and delivered a strong message of Coalition commitment to the ISF and Gol fighting against the militias while protecting to ISF partners and the residents of Sadr City.

One of the first steps by the Iraqi Army to re-establish security was to replace the National Police (NP) battalion inside the southern part of Sadr City in what would be known as AO Gold. This NP unit was basically a light infantry organization with pickup trucks. They lacked the armored vehicles and heavier systems found in the Iraqi Army. Early reporting indicated the enemy would employ coordinated defensive and offensive operations in order to retain as much of Sadr City under their control as possible. Therefore, the Iraqi leadership pulled this battalion out AO Gold and would later insert two battalions from the 42<sup>nd</sup> IA Brigade.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> IA Brigade, 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division received the mission to re-establish checkpoints north of Sadr City and to place battalions into the area between routes Florida and Gold in early April. Operating in the Adhamiyah area where al-Queda in Iraq (AQI) attacks generally consisted of bombings, IEDs and isolated small arms fire, the Jundi had to adjust to an enemy employing more concentrated and

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coordinated firepower. Armed with small arm weapons and a few RPGs, the 11<sup>th</sup> IA division did not have the weapons nor the confidence necessary to overmatch the firepower of JAM/SG elements which included IEDs, EFPs, snipers, mortars, rockets, and RPGs.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Iraqi Army Push into Sadr City**

On the morning of April 6<sup>th</sup>, infantry companies from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion from the 42<sup>nd</sup> IA Brigade moved along north-south routes toward PL Gold. Local tribal leaders gave their support to Gen Karim, Commander of the Rusafa Area Command, and thus the Iraqis believed the entry would be permissive.<sup>24</sup> Instead, the JAM/SG fighters ambushed the Iraqi Army.<sup>25</sup> Initially, the companies of the 42<sup>nd</sup> IA Brigade secured Route Tennessee which was located north of PL Florida but well short of PL Gold. The MiTT teams and leaders from 3/4 ID cajoled and pushed the Iraqis to maintain the momentum and continue their movement forward. Of particular note was the performance of (b)(3), (b)(6) the Deputy Commander of 3/4 ID. He worked with his IA counterparts every night constantly rallying, pushing and coordinating matters with the ISF.<sup>26</sup>

When describing the impact of MND-B leadership in influencing the performance of the 11<sup>th</sup> IA, BG Grimsley commented, "In many cases, especially once we started the offensive operations to secure Phase Line Gold, the effectiveness of the operations was a direct result of the influence of the transition teams or in many cases because a lot of us (commanders) were out there. It would be very difficult for an Iraqi battalion commander or even company commander who might not be quite so confident in his ability to maneuver his battalion, because he's never done it before. They haven't really been doing this for five years. Most of these guys who are battalion commanders now were at most captains maybe in the old Army. It became very difficult for them not to be out there leading their Soldiers, when they knew we were out in front. If all of us, the American leadership, was willing to go stand there halfway up to Gold and get shot at in the middle of the night, it's a face thing, it's an honor thing. They're not going to let it happen. They might not want to be there, but once they find out we're there, it's no going back."



Map 2: AO Gold (outlined in red) was divided into two areas. The southern portion, Tharwa 1, contained a large number of low income residents. The residents in the northern portion, Jamilla, were generally wealthier. Additionally, this area contained the Jamilla market which served as a significant source of funding for JAM.

Throughout the ISF movement into AO Gold (Map 2), MND-B promoted the message that the ISF was in the lead.

(b)(3), (b)(6) commented:

"The world saw the Iraqi Army in the lead in Sadr City and it wasn't the American Army entering Sadr City. The key...the lynchpin... the enabler that made that successful, more than anything, is the ability of the 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division. If they had not had the minimum level of skills, the command and control capability and professionalism, there is nothing we could have done to have been successful and to maintain that public perception that they were in the lead.....The key was the Iraqi Army. They were tenacious.....If you look at their uniforms they have a 2<sup>nd</sup> ID patch on one shoulder, a 1<sup>st</sup> CAV patch on the other shoulder and a 4<sup>th</sup> ID patch on their helmet. They have been

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hanging out with some serious professional Soldiers for a while now and they have buds (U.S. Soldiers) from those divisions that have taught them something."<sup>27</sup>

CF Psychological Operations (PSYOP) actions provided significant assistance in allowing the ISF to root out militia members within AO Gold. The leaflet drops by US and Iraq helped to influence the perception of the Iraqis taking charge of the situation and inform the public of the tip line, a number that Iraqi citizens can use to report suspicious activity to the ISF. After the Iraqis conducted their leaflet drops, Coalition Forces dropped around six million leaflets all over Sadr City. These drops had a positive effect of increasing the number of phone calls received at tips lines and at the information provided directly to ISF and CF at the patrol level. "Last time we went into Sadr City, it was very, very ugly," commented (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) "This time it seemed like everyone living in the neighborhood was eager to pass on the information."<sup>28</sup>

### Small Unit Actions

Arriving from the eastern part of Baghdad, A Company, 1-21 Infantry deployed to JSS UR on the evening of March 25<sup>th</sup>. Located north of the center part of Sadr City, JSS Ur allowed for rapid projection of combat power and increased CF ability to interdict SG fighters moving in and out of Sadr City. The position is considered key terrain for Coalition Forces. On April 20<sup>th</sup>, two reinforced platoons of 1-21 IN became decisively engaged against an EFP team and an armed group<sup>29</sup>. Around 0100, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, A/1-21 Infantry, placed three Observation Posts (OPs) west of JSS Ur to interdict and kill an active EFP team. At 0645, (b)(3), (b)(6) team interdicted a five man EFP emplacement team. The ensuing fighting resulted in three enemy combatants killed, one enemy captured and one enemy escaped. Thirty minutes later, (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) from another OP, observed 15-20 suspected militia members receiving instructions from leaders. As the group moved to flank 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon, (b)(3), (b)(6) team engaged nine combatants with various weapons. During the engagement, the OP received small arms and RPG fire. As they became compromised, 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, B/1-21 IN maneuvered to extract the team. In doing so, the platoon discovered and eliminated two enemy personnel on rooftops. Various classified reports would later indicate that the 1-21 IN Soldiers eliminated two highly valued insurgent targets, known as High Value Individuals (HVIs). To recognize the actions of these Soldiers, MG Jeffrey W. Hammond, Commander of MND-B, awarded seven impact Bronze Star medals.<sup>30</sup>

Northwest of Sadr City, Charlie Company, 1-64 Armor deployed to JSS Ur on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of March. Their mission was to assist the ISF in blocking three sections along Route Grizzlies and to provide protection to barrier emplacements. Equipped with M1 Tanks, the unit demonstrated a powerful presence on the streets. In one event, a RPG 29 struck one of the tanks from the front. The grenade struck the gun tube and the primary charge blew a hole in the tube. The secondary charge followed and struck the front of the tank causing minimal damage. When the tank was hit it was covered in a dust cloud. The tank pushed forward through the cloud of dust and engaged the exposed RPG team with .50 caliber fire. "After the enemy observed the survivability of the tank," recalled the unit commander (b)(3), (b)(6) (b)(3), (b)(6) "we didn't take much fire after that."<sup>31</sup>

Tactical PSYOP Teams (TPT) conducted a variety of missions but mostly focused on using loudspeaker support to broadcast messages to the citizens and insurgents in Sadr City. The purpose of some of the messages included the following: influencing the local populace to call in tips on militia activities; informing the populace of ISF and Coalition activities and safe areas; informing the populace of ISF/Gol efforts to restore stability and to conduct quality of life projects within Sadr City; and to influence (via taunts and insults) militia members to come into the open to fight, thereby exposing themselves for CF/ISF targeting opportunities.

(b)(3), (b)(6), a member of the TPT assigned to Comanche Company 1-2 SCR, sensed that violence was brewing in the area. Around March 15, 2008, he noticed the local population change overnight; they were scared of cooperating with Coalition Forces and were afraid to allow CF to come into their houses. Some locals mentioned that the time was right for a showdown between JAM and CF. "The locals were scared of JAM," commented (b)(3), (b)(6) "They wanted a way out, but there was nothing they could do."

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In the previous week, (b)(3), (b)(6) helped his unit and ISF members distribute 80,000 tip cards that asked for locals to provide information on criminal elements within the area. The cards included the phone number for the tip line at JSS Sadr City. During 1-2 SCR's fight to secure over-watch sites in AO Gold, (b)(3), (b)(6) used the Long Range Audio Device (LRAD), to deliver the following message: "Everywhere else in Iraq is safe, except here. Think. Why is that?" At one point the local Mosque played counter messages: "Don't listen to the lies spewed by the box of lies." During this time (b)(3), (b)(6) used a dismantled loudspeaker system to inform the citizens that the militia was attacking the ISF and to request local residents call the tip line. He praised the citizens of Sadr City for utilizing the tip line even though it could mean death if they were exposed as a Coalition or ISF informant.

"It would have been easy for locals to stay at home and not call," he explained, "They knew they risked being killed if found to be helping (the Coalition)." In describing the violence, (b)(3), (b)(6) comments, "On March 26 after dark on that day is when Hell on Earth just broke out. At that point I was an infantryman. We were fighting for our lives. It was just God awful craziness. A couple of times I was trying to play civilian non-interference messages, but we were taking it (enemy fire) from everywhere - rooftops, alleyways, cars, sewers. We were getting attacked from every direction, every angle," (b)(3), (b)(6) said. "At one point, we were sent to an Iraqi Army (IA) checkpoint to bail them out, but we were asking 'Who is going to bail us out?' It was a macabre scene. There were tracers, wounded and dead everywhere. One of the IA tanks was getting ready to engage one of our Strykers. I got on my loudspeaker and put out an anti-fratricide message. They were getting ready to engage with a 125mm main gun. It was just chaos everywhere."

(b)(3), (b)(6) was a TPT leader from the 321<sup>st</sup> Tactical PSYOP Company (TPC). He was assigned to Bravo Company 1-14<sup>th</sup> Infantry attached to 1-2 SCR. (b)(3), (b)(6) told about drawing out insurgent forces. During the fighting in early April, insurgents would engage Bravo Company with small arms or RPG fire. The gunners on the Stryker vehicles did not have the opportunity to target their attackers. To counter these hide and shoot tactics, (b)(3), (b)(6) through an interpreter, broadcast taunts. The insults were defaming the honor of their attackers by casting them as cowards. He credits this tactic with bringing ten fighters into the open and they were subsequently eliminated by Bravo Company.

When the Iraqi Army began seizing parts of AO Gold in early April, maneuver companies from 3/4 ID partnered with an Iraqi Army company.<sup>32</sup> It was a one to one ratio, captain to captain, company commander to company commander. The MND-B units remained behind the ISF and provided mentorship and reinforcement as needed. The international perception of events could have been substantially different if CF Soldiers on the ground decided to "take charge" of events with their overwhelming firepower assets. Likewise, any excessive use of force involving CF troops with civilian casualties would have negative repercussions.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, al-Sadr announced a nine point plan to end the violence. By the 31<sup>st</sup>, attacks with the MND-B OE returned to near pre-escalation levels and the BOC lifted the curfew within Baghdad. From the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>, attacks within the Baghdad Security Districts had more than quadrupled from the previous week (83 to 378). Close engagements (21 to 192) increased to over nine times the level from the previous week. Increases also occurred in Standoff attacks (16 to 81) and IED denotations (16 to 51). The levels of attacks were near the highest point on record (week of 15 Jun 2007, 397).

### Counter Indirect Fire Fight

On March 23 the MND-B Commander sketched out a plan to defeat the rocket teams operating inside Sadr City. The enemy were known to shoot and move fast. The Division and the ISF had to establish a presence inside the southern part of Sadr City to control routes to deter rocket teams from attacking the IZ. To secure the ground, 1-2 SCR and route clearance teams along with other enablers seized key sites historically used by rocket teams. When these units entered the City, there was heavy contact on every route. Before the maneuver forces could enter into the area, the route clearance teams established a safe route. According to (b)(3), (b)(6) Operations Officer for 107<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, "The ground fight against IDF teams in AO Gold was successful on the backs of the route clearance teams. Tanks would not go forward. The route clearance teams were the FLOT (Forward Line of Troops). It was

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weapons free for 120 mm (M1 Abrams tank systems) or smaller weapon systems north of PL Gold and weapons free for .50 Caliber fire south of PL Gold. There was a lot of shooting. We had one Husky driver's vehicle get hit five times in one night. We had days where we would move 75 meters and then have to pull back because of damage to our vehicles. Route clearance teams received significant attacks beginning on March 25<sup>th</sup> and continuing until late May.<sup>33</sup>

While overseeing a ground fight, 3/4 ID managed numerous aerial assets to include Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Air Weapons Teams (AWT) to identify and target IDF teams operating out of Sadr City. Task Force 1.4d (TF 1.4d, the Division's combat aviation brigade, increased their operational tempo (OPTEMPO) from one AWT over Sadr City to three teams.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, two organic Shadow UAS, two Predators UAS from echelons above Division, and CAS were used to prosecute the operation.

The Brigade and the MND-B staff implemented and improved the sensor to shooter link connecting surveillance assets to systems capable of employing a variety of munitions. The Brigade and Division Fires and Effects (FEC) teams developed Named Areas of Interest (NAIs) on which to focus UAS platforms. To develop NAIs, the Brigade and Division examined a variety of factors to include weather, time of day, range of rocket systems and enemy patterns. To quickly and effectively manage and de-conflict ground and air space, the Brigade divided the sector into four quadrants.<sup>35</sup> After a short period of studying tactics, the Brigade could locate the enemy's rails within 60-90 seconds after they fired a rocket. This gave them the opportunity to locate, track and destroy the IDF teams quickly. Techniques employed by the enemy that were exploited by CF included: returning to POO site to retrieve the rails used to launch attacks; reducing the volume of rockets from 7-10 per attack to 1-2 per attack; moving launch sites from schoolyards, soccer fields and courtyards to roadways; burning tires to obscure the IDF launch area; parking vehicle mounted rocket systems under awnings; using tarps to cover rockets and rails; and utilizing large gatherings such as soccer games to conceal their activities.

As Division learned the enemy's techniques, they developed counter measures and continued to eliminate a number of rocket teams. In a DoD press conference on June 1, 2008, the MND-B Commander, MG. Jeffrey W. Hammond stated:

"Following a rocket launch from a position in Sadr City, one of our air weapons teams -- that's two Apaches -- responded to the launch site at about 5:30 p.m. one evening. They stayed on station, rotating other teams out for five hours, keeping an eye on these rocket rails, because they'd fired, and then they moved on, knowing that they'd come back to get them, because the precious commodity was more the rails than it was the rockets. Now, after five hours, three enemy personnel returned to retrieve the launchers. Our air weapons team engaged them with one Hellfire missile, killed two of the enemy, destroyed the launch system and destroyed the second rocket that they had erected and were preparing to fire. Remarkable work by a patient, very patient, professional team of Army air weapons teams."<sup>36</sup>

Key to success was the ability of staff officers at the division and brigade to remain flexible and constantly question or review targeting methods. Over time, MND-B determined various IDF indicators. These concepts were shared with UAS Operators and AWT pilots (example Tarps -- Photo1) that proved to be significantly helpful in targeting IDF teams. The division used the following system for delivery of munitions:

1. AWTs (Apache gunships with hellfire munitions) -- most common delivery system
2. Close Air Support - carried the low collateral munitions
3. Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) -- all weather missile system (critical feature) fired from FOB Hammer in MND-C
4. Predator systems armed with Hellfire munitions
5. 155 Field artillery/mortar systems -- used to fire illumination (harassment of SGs) and terrain denial fire outside of Sadr City

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By the end of March, MND-B eliminated a substantial number of IDF teams but the enemy would continue to fire rockets and mortars in addition to challenging CF and ISF operations such as construction of the wall. From March 23-31<sup>st</sup>, TF<sup>1.4a</sup> conducted 29 engagements, killing 81 insurgents, destroying 17 rocket rails and 4 vehicles. By early April, MND-B had substantially degraded the enemy's ability to accurately fire rockets into the IZ (see chart below).

Total number of rounds on the IZ by Day:											
23 Mar	24 Mar	25 Mar	26 Mar	27 Mar	28 Mar	29 Mar	30 Mar	31 Mar			
12	0	16	14	15	16	11	1	2			
1 Apr	2 Apr	3 Apr	4 Apr	5 Apr	6 Apr	7 Apr	8 Apr	9 Apr	10 Apr	11 Apr	
2	2	2	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	0	

### The Gold Wall

Initially, 1-2 SCR and 1-68 AR began simultaneously constructing the wall in each of their Operating Environments (OEs) during 12-hour nighttime shifts. The Brigade determined that this strategy gave the enemy the opportunity to regain the offensive during the hours of light. The Brigade then transitioned to one build site with uninterrupted construction. This shift helped the wall progress at more substantial rate.

In the early weeks of building the wall, 1-68 AR and 1-2 SCR units spent more time clearing the road of the large number of EFPs than actually emplacing barrier materials. A key decision by the 3/4 ID which dramatically improved construction time was the approval for units to implement the technique called Stand-Off Munitions Disruption (SMuD) procedures. Previously established protocols required CF units encountering an IED or EFP to secure the site and call in explosive experts to recover the device intact for further examination. However, this protocol, while important for understanding and defeating IED networks, slowed progress in building the wall. Thus, another Tactic, Technique and Procedure (TTP) was approved for use during this operational period.

SMuD tactics involved detonating an IED in place without attempting to recover any portion of the device prior to destruction. Often this meant destroying the explosives via direct fire from a Stryker or M1 Abrams Tank. This process allowed teams to clear the route more quickly, thus giving more time for barrier emplacement operations.



**Photo 1:** To conceal their rockets from UAV and AWTs, IDF teams concealed their rockets under tarps. Within short time, reconnaissance operators learned this technique. When the rocket team returned, MND-B successfully delivered fire to eliminate the team and rocket system. US Army Photo. Date: Unknown

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#### Route clearance and building the wall

Within MND-B, the 35<sup>th</sup> Engineer brigade<sup>37</sup> managed the 769<sup>th</sup> Construction Effects Battalion and the 107<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. The 769<sup>th</sup> oversaw the construction of vertical and horizontal projects throughout the MND-B area. The 107<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion focused on clearing routes of roadside bombs. Various sapper companies from the battalion and organic route clearance units belonging to 3/4 ID became critical in ensuring freedom of movement along the construction site. The 821<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company from the 769<sup>th</sup> Battalion operated the cranes and armored forklifts along the wall construction site (Photo 2). Prior to receiving the task to construct this wall, the 821<sup>st</sup> built walls along major roads and around JSSs and COPs. These were relatively quiet missions which involved little combat. These sappers would soon learn that building the wall in Sadr City would become a combat task.



Photo 2: Members from the 821st Engineer Company (far right) and unknown infantrymen emplace barriers on AO Gold. In the foreground, three M1 Abrams tanks from 3/4 ID provide security for the barrier emplacement teams. Photo Courtesy: b 3, b 6 821st Engineer Co. Date - unknown

The 821<sup>st</sup> assisted in placing 3,138 barriers along Route Gold.<sup>38</sup> The route clearance and security elements encountered substantial resistance in the form of EFPs, RPGs and small arms fire during the building of the Sadr City Wall. In many cases, there would be 10-15 EFPs within a 50-75 meter stretch of road. Route Gold was completely saturated. On a number of occasions, JAM/SG elements conducted offensive actions aimed at the construction site while under the cover of a dust storm. They had significant intelligence available to indicate that AWTs and UASs were less likely to target them under these conditions. However, in periods of low visibility which affected aerial assets, MND-B used the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) to defeat any elements attacking the construction site. MND-B conducted three successful attacks using this system on buildings north of PL Gold.<sup>39</sup> These rocket attacks served to reinforce the message to the JAM/SG fighters that the Coalition and ISF could engage them anytime, anywhere.

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After completion of the wall, elements from 821<sup>st</sup> became involved in route sanitation. This task included clearing debris and other unnecessary items that are often used to camouflage roadside bombs. The unit used heavy construction equipment such as D7 Dozers to clear routes of debris, trash, rubble, or burnt out cars to allow maneuver units freedom of movement and also to improve the appearance of a community. The Soldiers would remove debris and trash from the roadway and the sides of the roads for 20-40 meters on each side then smooth rough areas along the roadway and roadside area. This particular technique assists maneuver elements and route clearance teams to better locate disturbances in the ground that might indicate the presence of a roadside bomb. The amount of debris and trash was substantial as the area had not seen any government trash services in a long time. Removing these piles reduced the enemy's ability to hide roadside bombs. On one night mission, the unit removed 60 dump loads of trash within a one mile stretch of road. The sanitation task, while important to protect CF and ISF operations, became one of the first steps in restoring a sense of normalcy for the citizens in the area.

### Building the Wall – The infantryman's story

#### Charlie Company 1-68 "Team Steel"

Operating out of JSS Ur, Charlie Company 1-68 AR, "Steel Company," began reinforcing Iraqi Army checkpoints along Route Grizzlies on March 25. During these actions, the unit became involved in a 96 hour firefight with skirmishes every two to four hours. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, the company shifted to clearing rocket launch sites and assisting with clearing operations. In mid-April, the company began assisting with the completion of the wall. Tanks and Bradley vehicles provided security along Phase Line Gold oriented north towards Sadr City. The unit's attached infantry platoon from B Company 1-68 AR provided the ground labor to emplace the walls. During the construction, the company was involved in a significant number of firefights. The extraordinary courage and bravery of the infantry Soldiers were cited by all who witnessed the construction of the wall including the members of the [redacted] 1.4a

One of the more harrowing tasks involved climbing the ladder to unhook the barriers from the crane. Although there were substantial amounts of reconnaissance and firepower over-watching the area, the enemy had the advantage of being able to hide and wait for a Coalition Soldier to expose himself. The location of the construction site was obvious and work pushed in a northerly direction. To place the T-walls, cables were connected to the wall. To unhook the cables, the Soldier climbed the ladder and exposed his upper body to a potential sniper (Photo 3) located north of Gold. While constructing the wall, the unit became engaged in daily contact. "It wasn't a matter of if there was a fight," recalled [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) [redacted] b 3 b 6 of B 1-68 AR, "but, when the fight was going to happen."<sup>40</sup>

The unit's contributions can best be demonstrated by the number of awards and medals submitted. In total the unit submitted 44 Army Commendation Medals (40 approved), seven Bronze Stars Medals with valor, and 14 Purple Heart Medals.<sup>41</sup> Over half of the unit personnel received an award with a valor recommendation.

#### Bushmaster Company, 1-14<sup>th</sup> IN

Around 1000 on April 29<sup>th</sup>, Bushmaster Company 1-14<sup>th</sup> IN became decisively engaged while emplacing barriers on Route Gold. During the mission a tank platoon provided outer security while 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon and Strykers from the company HQ provided local security. The company commander, [redacted] b 3 b 6 along with members of 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon dismounted to emplace the barriers. The action began when an EFP struck one of the tanks. After securing the wounded tanker in a Stryker vehicle, the commander created a cordon to extract the wounded to FOB Callahan. During this consolidation, an IED exploded underneath a Stryker vehicle engulfing it in flames. The enemy engaged the unit from multiple positions with small arms and RPG fire. [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) ran 50 meters to remove Soldiers from the burning vehicle. At that moment, one of Soldiers in the vehicle burst from it, on fire. [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) chased the Soldier down to put out the fire and removed his burning clothes. [redacted] b 3 b 6 tossed the Soldier over his shoulder and carried him 50 meters away to a Stryker vehicle. In one last heroic act, [redacted] b 3 b 6 exposed themselves again to enemy fire as they moved obstacles from the roadway that prohibited the evacuation of the wounded.<sup>42</sup>

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Photo 3: Even with protection from a [REDACTED] 1.4a M1 Abrams tanks, Air Weapons teams and other infantrymen, the four to six man construction team from B 1-68 AR came under daily enemy fire from buildings north of PL Gold. Photo Courtesy: B Company, 1-68 AR, Date Unknown

### Logistics – Building the wall

The 64<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) served as the primary logistical operator for actions around Sadr City. The high OPTEMPO forced the battalion to operate at twice the unit's normal level and capacity.<sup>43</sup> One of their more critical tasks became establishment of two forward barrier holding areas. Located at the intersection of Route Gold and Route Aeros, the first holding area faced constant harassment from small arms and mortar fire. The second holding area, located at route Plutos between the western and southern corners of Sadr City, conducted 24 hour operations when the wall reached the halfway mark. To help secure key terrain, the BSB delivered and emplaced a significant amount of barrier materials to include large concrete towers to JSS Sadr City and the intersection of Route Gold and Delta. The Brigade repaired 27 M1 Abrams tanks, 16 M2, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, 16 Huskys, and 27 Mine Resistant Ambush Protection (MRAP) vehicles.<sup>44</sup> The brigade treated 1,585 patients at level II aid stations and 39 patients were evacuated for more significant injuries.<sup>45</sup>

### CJSOTF – Special Forces Integration

On May 7, a [REDACTED] 1.4a began the first of four operations to protect the infantrymen who were constructing the Gold Wall. This specialized team developed their unique techniques in Ramadi and Fallujah during the construction of Combat Outposts (COPs). The strength of the team was the ability to deploy a substantial number of snipers into one position. They established over-watch positions forward of the Gold Wall construction site. They drew fire away from the construction site to protect the infantrymen and to allow them to target enemy forces. In essence, they create a mini-strong point armed with experienced, well trained snipers. On their mission, the team encountered fire from 360 degrees. After expending much of their ammunition, the

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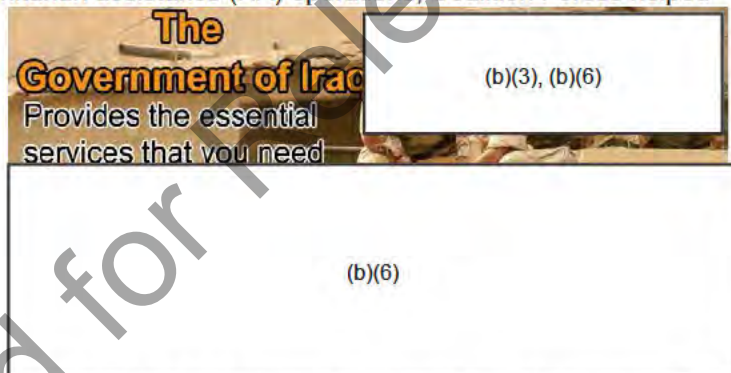


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team had to be extracted by conventional forces. However, the team's next three missions were substantially more successful. The highest number (46) of enemy killed in action (EKIA) during one day occurred during a dust storm. Frequently, the enemy would use sandstorms to avoid detection by aerial observation platforms. In total, the snipers engaged 67 targets during eight days in support of the construction efforts along PL Gold.<sup>46</sup> In the end, this non-conventional team supplied the commander with the ability to locate, target and eliminate a quick enemy who understood how to maneuver in urban terrain. Often, the militia fighters would dart out of alley or rooftops before armored or Stryker systems could acquire and engage. For their part, the Navy Seals relied upon the conventional forces for delivery of heavy firepower and extraction support as needed. The system proved complementary as both conventional and non-conventional forces benefited from the strengths of the other. In describing the contributions of this team, BG Grimsley stated that 'the [redacted] 1.4a [redacted] fundamentally change the dynamics of the battlefield by their ability to get in and shake things up.... because of their skills.'<sup>47</sup> The Special Operations Forces (SOF) used their expertise and weapons systems to provide a buffer of protection for ground forces. Through the efforts of many, the wall became a reality.

### Restoration of Normalcy in AO Gold

By assisting the Iraqi Army to conduct humanitarian assistance (HA) operations, Coalition Forces helped demonstrate that the ISF was ahead of the fight. [redacted] (b)(3), (b)(6) the Civil Military Operations Officer for the 11<sup>th</sup> IA, led the way in planning and developing HA missions. [redacted] b 3 b 6 understood the military significance of winning over the population by first providing humanitarian assistance. To execute these HA missions, 3/4 ID and elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sustainment Brigade provided the 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army with humanitarian meals and bottled water.<sup>48</sup> Then, elements of the Iraqi Army distributed these goods to the residents of Sadr City. The Division used external media and Coalition resource assets (Public Affairs, PSYOP Fliers (Photo 5), Combat Camera) to portray the event as an "Iraqi" event. The net result was a significant improvement of the credibility of the Iraqi Army. Often, the Iraqi Soldiers were asked by the residents in AO Gold to stay in Sadr City and to help eliminate JAM from the community.<sup>49</sup>



**Photo 5: The Iraqi Army distributed fliers informing the residents of upcoming humanitarian missions**

### Establishment of the CMOC at JSS Sadr City

On April 22, 2008, the Sadr City Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) became operational at JSS Tharwa I (also known as JSS Sadr City) within AO Gold. The purpose was "to expand non-kinetic operations in OE Gold with the intent to energize civil military operations in Sadr City and as soon as possible establish a direct relationship with local residents by establishing an IAC (Iraqi Assistance Center)."<sup>50</sup>

### CMO in Sadr City: Looking Back

Good people of Sadr City, we have opened a Civil Military Operations Center in your neighborhood to provide a place for you to file claims for damages and receive information on Contracting. The hours of operation are 9-5 PM Sunday through Thursday. Located at JSS Sadr City. 0790-110-2294 or 0790-110-2829

IO Handbill

#### Phase I Immediate Aid

- Distributed 4,500 Family Food Packs
- Established two Self Help Construction Kits at CMOC
- Two CME's in Jamilla and Thawra 1

#### JSS Sadr City CMOC

- CF 33 Personnel
- ePRT Liaison
- USAID Liaison
- Beladiya Liaison

#### Phase I Key Tasks:

- |                                  |        |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| HA food drops in the Muhallas    | 28 Apr |
| CME in the Muhallas              | 28 Apr |
| Civil Recon of each Muhalla      | 24 Apr |
| Publish IO Message               | 24 Apr |
| Establish ePRT Cell at CMOC      | 23 Apr |
| Conduct local leader engagements | 23 Apr |
| Improve ESS in South Sadr City   | 26 Apr |

CME in Thawra 1

Street Light Repair  
Rt. Delta

Rubble & Trash  
Removal

Self Help Construction  
Kits

HA Family Food Packs

(b)(6)



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MG Hammond stated: "With improved security conditions, MND-B, in coordination with the Government of Iraq, began to focus on improving the quality of life for the residents of Sadr City. This included removing the trash and rubble, humanitarian and medical assistance, installation of street lights, sewer, water, and electrical repairs, and refurbishing the important Jamilla market...partnering with their national/local government authorities, we established a civil-military operations center in Sadr City to help the people, to receive claims and to coordinate humanitarian aid and military-civilian efforts. To date, there have been over 1,000 residents of Sadr City that have walked in, filed claims (Photo 6), and many of those we've paid out, totaling to date over \$70,000. Now, currently there are nine funded projects, totaling over \$1.1 million, and 23 micro-grants paid out, totaling over \$57,000. And there's a lot of work -- still more to do and it's really exciting."<sup>51</sup>

The initial projects included clean-up projects related to keeping routes cleared for traffic and Coalition Forces. Then, the CMOC engaged with the local leaders and helped to establish the Neighborhood Advisor Council (NAC) and District Advisor Council (DAC) with AO Gold. Around June 2008, these groups held their first meeting in 14 months.<sup>52</sup>



Photo 6: (b)(3), (b)(6) from the 432<sup>nd</sup> CA Battalion (attached to 3/4 ID) process the claim of a resident whose home may have been damage at some point during the fighting with Coalition Forces. Inside the CMOC, the brigade established the Iraqi Assistance Center to compensation request.

The response from the population to the CMOC was very positive. The citizens did not have essential services to any significant degree inside this area. Many of the residents had been without any food rations for three months<sup>53</sup>. The CMOC partnered with the ISF/Gol to assess the needs of the community and began civil military estimates to determine the status of essential service in the community. The CMOC helped to ensure large water breaks inside Sadr City were fixed and oversaw the removal of over

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300 tons of debris and rubble. By June 2008, the CMOC initiated 200 micro-grant programs valued at over \$400,000 USD and 83 reconstruction projects valued at over \$13M USD.

#### Task Force 1.4a

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, MND-B created and assigned Task Force (TF) 1.4a to 3/4 ID to include a specialized engineering staff from the 926<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade. This change allowed for enhanced project management capability and technical expertise beyond the skill sets found CMOC. TF 1.4a incorporated and enhanced the capabilities of the CMOC. Within a short time, the pace and intensity of the rebuilding accelerated at a remarkable level. TF 1.4a was tasked with the following objectives:

- to improve quality of life in the area
- to restore essential services with Gol leading the effort (Photos 7-12)
- to reconstruct the Jamillia market for economic and political stability<sup>54</sup>



#### CONCLUSION

Previous attempts to root out the insurgency inside Sadr City failed for a variety of reasons including popular support for JAM, JAM/SG military capabilities, ISF development, CF force structure, conditions throughout Baghdad, and political considerations. Recently though, the population has tired of JAM and SG elements. The sophistication of the capabilities of the Coalition Forces and in particular the training of the Iraqi Army have dramatically improved. The Iraqi Army has made significant strides in personnel, equipment and professionalism. Today, the population might not trust the IPs or NPs, but the Iraqi Army has secured the confidence and faith of the Iraqi populace.<sup>55</sup>

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In analyzing of the Battle of Phase Line Gold, the enemy made two critical errors that CF and ISF were able to exploit. By firing a substantial number of the rockets at the IZ, the populace turned away from supporting JAM and thus accelerated CF and ISF efforts to restore GOI control to Sadr City. The majority of IDF attacks impacted outside the IZ and killed and wounded innocent civilians. MND-B was able to employ Information Operation measures to influence the citizens of Sadr City, reminding them that deteriorating conditions resulting from the ISF cordon and CF kinetic strikes in Sadr City were the lawful response to these criminal elements' attacks. When the IA entered Sadr City north of PL Gold in May 2008, the residents welcomed their arrival. Secondly, the enemy became heavily engaged in direct firefights with CF along PL Gold. This strategy shift failed because the CF easily defeated the enemy in a force-on-force situation. It was noted by key leaders that the ferocity with which the enemy fought against the wall was very surprising.<sup>56</sup> The CF and ISF understood that for a number of years the Jamilla Market was a revenue generating area for JAM. The 11<sup>th</sup> IA Commander, MG Muzhir, estimated that JAM collected at least two million Iraqi dinars per month in extorted "taxes" from this source. Thus, retaining control of this area was critical to the enemy's ability to generate the funds needed to equip, train, and pay their members. After the removal of JAM from this wholesale market, the residents of Baghdad paid fair market value for produce for the first time in years. The positive impacts of giving this area back to its citizens were noticed immediately.

There were three decisive points in this battle. First, on three consecutive days from 1-3 May, Task Force 14<sup>th</sup> and MND-B conducted precision strikes against SG/JAM HVIs<sup>57</sup> north of PL Gold. The targeting of senior militia leaders represented a significant shift in strategy as previous air strikes eliminated ground elements involved in direct fighting. By May 12, the cumulative effect of these strikes persuaded many of the SG leaders to flee Sadr City and greatly demoralized SG and JAM fighters<sup>58</sup>. The second decisive point occurred during the construction of the Gold Wall. The enemy suffered a major setback when trying to contest the construction of this structure. During the five weeks of construction, the enemy lost his best and most committed forces, and MND-B demonstrated the ability to impose its will.<sup>59</sup> In many ways, the wall was like a bug zapper. It drew in the fighters which allowed CF to target and destroy these groups. The wall provided the mechanism to give MND-B and other elements the opportunity to directly engage and defeat the JAM and SG fighters. Last, the ability of the Iraqi Army to regain their composure and establish checkpoints after JAM and SG seized the initiative was critical. Various ISF companies broke apart under JAM/SG pressure in March and April. Eventually the IA was able to move troops and armor to re-establish their positions. Overall, the IA kept their resolve and demonstrated that they have remarkably improved their capabilities.

None of the MITT teams could cite a specific decision or event which could be characterized as turning point for the 11<sup>th</sup> IA Division during the March to April timeframe. However, the Iraqis gradually gained confidence as they continued to operate and have battlefield successes. Some of the factors specifically cited as improving the ISF confidence include improvements in the ISF leadership, CF firepower from armored systems and AWTs, and ISF successes on the checkpoints and within



Photo #13: On May 21<sup>st</sup>, Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 49<sup>th</sup> Brigade seized this huge cache near the al-Sadr Hospital. The cache included mortars, EFPs, small arms rounds, RPG systems and a variety of other munitions. During clearing operations in Basra, the IA found huge caches of weapons and munitions, many of which appeared to have been recently supplied by Iran. In Sadr City, the results were very similar. By the end of June, the Iraqi Army found caches, including 175 IEDs, 76 EFPs, numerous RPGs, rifles, and over 320 mortar rounds. US Army Photo. Date Unknown



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AO Gold. By May 2008, the myth of the “ten foot” Mahdi Soldiers disappeared and the 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Soldiers developed confidence in their abilities.<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps the most significant impact of recovering the AO Gold area was the empowerment of the ISF. With CF support, the 11th IA Division accomplished their goal of establishing a security presence and clearing militia from AO Gold. This victory helped instill new-found confidence in the IA. Based on the demonstrated ability of the ISF and CF, the GoI found itself in an obvious position of power. The GoI had the upper hand in negotiating with or eliminating future activities of SG and JAM. Children are now playing soccer near Route Gold and are living a more normal life.

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, two Iraqi Army Brigades, without Coalition ground support, moved unopposed north of PL Gold into the rest of Sadr City. Generally, the residents welcomed the arrival of the Army. JAM elements handed them copies of the Koran as a sign of friendship. Once inside this section of the enclave, the Iraqi Army confiscated enemy caches, detained SG targets, maneuvered forces and made a number of tactical decisions. By late June, the IA recovered over 205 caches comprising mortars, rockets, various small arms, EFPs and other types of weaponry. However, the groundwork for success was laid when the Iraqi Army with support from CF regained their checkpoints and established new positions in AO. Two days prior to the Iraqi Army entry into northern Sadr City, al-Sadr agreed to a cease fire. During a phone conversation, an anonymous senior Sadrist said to MG Muhzir, 11<sup>th</sup> IA Division Commander, that ‘Sadr City was special and requires special treatment.’<sup>61</sup> The division commander responded: ‘I am the Iraq Army, there is no place that an Iraqi Army Soldier cannot go.....to include Sadr City.’

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3/4 ID Combat Roll-up	
IEDs	IED 288 (210 det, 78 found) EFP 112 (39 det, 73 found)
Direct Fire Engagements	630 (BCT initiated 64)
Main Gun Rnds	818 fired
25mm Rnds	12,091 fired
Air Engagements	85 AWT Hellfire Engagements 33 Predator Hellfire engagements 10x CAS engagements 6 x GBU-38v4 (low-CDE 500lb bomb) 4x GBU-38v1 (full-up 500lb bomb) 4 x Shows of Force
GMLRS	7 total GMLRS fired
Enemy	Over 700 EKIA 16 DIV/BDE Targets KIA 16 DIV/BDE Targets Captured 17 DIV/BDE Targets deserted

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Chart: Combat statistics from 3/4 ID (25 MAR to 02 JUN)

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- <sup>1</sup> (S) MND-B Fire and Effects Cell Brief, IDF AAR 23-31 Mar 08, (U) number of rounds impacting the IZ.
- <sup>2</sup> (S) MNC-I BUA Brief, April 1, 2008 (U) Average # of attacks in MND-B OE – Mar 23 -31, 2008.
- <sup>3</sup> "An Enclave of Normalcy in Fearful Baghdad", Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post Foreign Service, Mar 27, 2008.
- <sup>4</sup> Fighting kills dozens of Iraqis, 8 US Soldiers, CBC News, April 6, 2004.
- <sup>5</sup> Oral history interview, BG William F. Grimsley, Deputy Commander for Multi National Division Baghdad with [b 3 b 6] June 19, 2008.
- <sup>6</sup> (U) FRAGO 525 Approval and notification of operations (supersedes frago\_441 approval and notification of operations, dated 27 mar 07) to MNC-I Operations Order 07-01, 8 Dec 2008 (applies to all of Sadr City except Muhallas 512,514,516,518).
- <sup>7</sup> Fox News/Associated Press, "Radical Shiite Cleric al-Sadr Announces Ceasefire Extension", Feb 22, 2008.
- <sup>8</sup> FRAGO 185. to MND-B to Operations Order 08-01 (Operation Steadfast Falcon), Jan 16, 2008.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Oral history interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] 3/4 ID S2 with [b 3 b 6] and [b 3, b 6] June 27, 2008.
- <sup>11</sup> DoD News Briefing with MG Jeffery Hammond, Commander Multi National Division Baghdad, June 2, 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Oral interview, [b 3 b 6] MND-B PMO, with [b 3 b 6] July 8, 2008.
- <sup>14</sup> Oral interview [b 3 b 6] 11<sup>th</sup> IA Executive Officer with [b 3 b 6] July 3, 2008.
- <sup>15</sup> Oral Interviews with [b 3, b 6] 11<sup>th</sup> IA MiTT Chief, July 3, 2008 and [b 3 b 6] [b 3, b 6] 1<sup>st</sup> NP NPTT team chief with [b 3 b 6] May 21, 2008.
- <sup>16</sup> Oral interview, [b 3 b 6] 11<sup>th</sup> IA MiTT Chief with [b(3), (b)(6)] July 3, 2008.
- <sup>17</sup> [b 3 b 6] Shiite Militias Cling to Swaths of Basra and Stage Raids, New Your Times, March 30, 2008.
- <sup>18</sup> (S) Brief ISF Impact to Sadr City (30 Mar 08), (U) re-worded assessment of ISF units to meet classification Standards.
- <sup>19</sup> Oral history interview, [b 3 b 6] 1<sup>st</sup> National Police Transition Team Chief and Senior Advisor to the Rusafa Area Commander with [b 3, b 6] May 21, 2008.
- <sup>20</sup> (S) Brief ISF Impact to Sadr City (30 Mar 08), (U) Comment on NP Battalion commanders.
- <sup>21</sup> Interview [b(3), (b)(6)]
- <sup>22</sup> Interview [b(3), (b)(6)]
- <sup>23</sup> Oral history interview, MG Muzhir, 11<sup>th</sup> IA Division Commander with [b 3, b 6] July 3, 2008.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Oral history interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] MND-B G7 Chief Psyop Officer with [b 3 b 6] June 24, 2008.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> 1-21 Infantry Monthly History Report, April 2008.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> Oral history interview, [b 3 b 6] Commander, Charlie Company, 1-64 Armor, (attached to 3/4 BCT during March 28 2008) with [b 3 b 6] April 4, 2008.
- <sup>32</sup> BG Grimsley Interview.
- <sup>33</sup> Historian Notes, Conversation between [b 3, b 6] 07th EN Battalion (Michigan Army National Guard), 926 Engineer Brigade, MND-B and [b(3), (b)(6)] 130<sup>th</sup> Military History Detachment, June 12, 2008.
- <sup>34</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> CAB, Brigade Histor Re ort, 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr, FY 08, Version 2.
- <sup>35</sup> Oral history interview: [b(3), (b)(6)] 3 BCT, 4<sup>th</sup> ID Brigade Aviation Officer, June 30, 2008.
- <sup>36</sup> DoD News Briefing with MG Jeffery Hammond, Commander Multi National Division Baghdad, June 2, 2008.

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37 The 35<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade completed a Transfer of Authority with the 926<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade on May 25, 2008.

38 Oral history interview, [b 3 b 6] Assistant Operations Officer for 769<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion with MAJ Tom Sills, May 31, 2008.

39 (S) 4<sup>th</sup> ID GMLRS Missions brief 27 April-3 May U Mission results April 27, 29-30, 2008.

40 Oral History Interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] B/1-68 AR, June 30, 2008.

41 Oral History Interview, 1-68 Command Group, [b 3, b 6] June 29, 2008.

42 Narrative Report for Medal, [b(3), (b)(6)] G1 MND-B.

43 Valor Unit Award Narrative, 64<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion, March 25 – May 25, 2008.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Oral history interview, Navy Seal Team Chief (the name is confidential).

47 Oral history interview: BG William Grimsley.

48 Brief, MND-B Humanitarian Assistance CONOPS, April 2, 2008.

49 Oral history interview, [b 3 b 6] HQ, 11<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Div [b 3 b 6]

[b(3), (b)(6)] (Nav Histor Detachment Jul 3, 2008.

50 [b 3, b 6] TF 1.4a June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

51 DoD News Briefing with MG Jeffery Hammond, Commander Multi National Division Baghdad, June 2, 2008.

52 Oral History interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] TF 1.4a June 9, 2008.

53 Ibid.

54 (S) MND-B FRAGO 398 (Task Force 1.4a to OPORD 08-01, Ironhorse Resolve, (U) Mission of Task Force 1.4a

55 Oral interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] 11<sup>th</sup> IA MiTT Chief with [b 3 b 6] July 3, 2008.

56 Oral Interview, BG Grimsle June 2008.

57 Oral interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] and [b(3), (b)(6)] 3/4 S2, June 28, 2008.

58 Ibid.

59 MND-B G3 Notes on the battle of PL Gold, June 2008.

60 Oral interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] 11<sup>th</sup> IA Executive Officer with [b(3), (b)(6)] July 3, 2008.

61 Oral interview, [b(3), (b)(6)] 11<sup>th</sup> IA MiTT Chief with [b(3), (b)(6)] July 3, 2008.

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### Chronology of Key Events

4th ID Assumes the MND-B OE from 1st CD	19-Dec (2007)
Muqtada al-Sadr extends his ceasefire	22-Feb (2008)
3/4 ID assumes Sadr City OE from 2/82 ABN	15-Mar
Rocket attacks at International Zone begin to climb dramatically	23-Mar
Setting the conditions - MND-B isolates and targets SG cells in Sadr City (Mar 23- April 5)	
al Sadr calls for 'Day of Civil Disobedience'	25-Mar
MND-B begins to observe significantly elevated attacks levels from Special Groups. Many units around Sadr City crumble under pressure from SG/JAM forces.	25-Mar
3/4 ID receives authorization to conduct operations south of PL Gold in Sadr City without approval from the MNC-I commander	26-Mar
An Air Weapons Teams from TF 1.4a Aviation conducts the first of many successful engagements on IED/EFP and IDF teams in or around Sadr City	26-Mar
4/10 MTN & 11th IA Div limit vehicle movement into Northern Sadr City to 3 entry points	27-Mar
3/4 ID begins Striker Denial 1-2 SCR seizes POO sites south of PL Gold	27-Mar
1-68 CAB assumes Jamilla and additional combat power (7 companies of Abrams/Strykers) arrive or begin movement into the sector	27-Mar
After receiving small arms fire, C/1-68 AR directs the first GMLRs strike into a building along Route Gold (check date)	27-Mar
1-2 SCR begin clearing operations in Sadr City, south of PL Gold	27-Mar
11th IA conducts the 1st ISF humanitarian mission since the conflict erupted. During this food and water distribution in Tharwa, the IA come under mortar fire	27-Mar
Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki issues an around the clock curfew for Baghdad	28-Mar
al Sadr orders ceasefire and issues list of demands to the GOI (9 points ?)	30-Mar
The GOI lifts the Baghdad Curfew. But, the Sadr City curfew remains in effect until April	31-Mar
312th Tactical PSYOP Co. establishes 93.9 FM Radio Free Baghdad at JSS Sadr City	1-Apr
MND-B assists the Rusafa Area Command to conduct a humanitarian mission in Sadr City	2-Apr
Development of AQ Gold and the Gold Wall (April 4 - May 11)	
ISF re-establish checkpoints around Sadr City	5-Apr
3/4 ID conducts a follow & support mission of the 3/42/11IA movement into Sadr City to secure key areas south of PL GOLD	6-Apr
The Iraqi National Security Council issues statement calling on all political parties to disband the militias if they want to participate in national elections	6-Apr
A RPG attack on B/1-2 SCR results in 2 US KIA and 1 US WIA	7-Apr
3-1 Iraqi Army finds 7 caches and 3 IEDs in Sadr City	8-Apr
An Armed Predator kills 1 1.4b long PL Gold	8-Apr
From JSS Ur, 3/4 raises an aerostat observation balloon observing Sadr City (ask 3/4 ID if this was key)	10-Apr
C/1-68 AR kill 15 1.4b members during enemy initiated complex attack along PL Gold	11-Apr
GOI lifts vehicle ban in Sadr City	12-Apr
Seven companies attached to 4/10 MTN and 3/4 ID in support of containing SG uprising begin incremental movements back to parent units (need to figure out when they got there)	12-Apr
Sadrists initiate negotiations with the GOI	14-Apr
A company of Iraqi police inside Sadr City desert their station to militiamen. An ISF specialized unit recovers it the next day.	15-Apr
9th IA and 3/7 Cav emplace barriers along Route Delta - separating Jamilla and Thawra	16-Apr
Under the cover of a dust storm, militiamen began assaulting CF/ISF positions	17-Apr
3/4 BCT begins emplacement of the Gold Wall to seal off Jamilla and Thawra from the rest of Sadr City	19-Apr

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MND-B establishes a Civil-Military Operations Center in Sadr City	22-Apr
3/4 Establishes the ePRT Cell at the CMOC	23-Apr
Essential Service Projects begin in AO Gold	26-Apr
Under the cover of a heavy dust storm, insurgent launch attacks at Coalition and Iraqi positions. In two separate engagements, 22 and 16 militiamen were killed.	27-Apr
IRAM (Lob Bombs) strike JSS Sadr City and FOB Loyalty resulting in 15 US WIA and extensive damage to 3 buildings	28-Apr
PM Maliki directs the BOC to prepare plans to clear Sadr City of 1.4b and weapons	28-Apr
BOC directed by the Iraqi PM to develop a plan to clear Sadr City	28-Apr
During an engagement between elements of 1-68 AR and SGCs, 3 M1A Abrams tanks are damaged, 1 Stryker vehicle destroyed, 6 US WIA and 28 1.4b KIA	29-Apr
MND-B and Task Force 1.4a conduct three key precision strikes that force many SGC leaders to depart Sadr City	1-3 May
1.4a team begins operations along PL Gold	7-May
LTG Abud briefs PM Maliki on the Sadr City security plan	7-May
Five engagements in Sadr City result in 18 EKIA, 4 EWIA and 5 IA WIA	9-May
ISF and CF complete cordon around Sadr City	9-May
TF 1.4a completes TOA with 1-68 AR for southern portion of OE Gold	10-May
Ceasefire and 14 Point Agreement (grants Iraqi Forces permission to enter Sadr City) May 10-11	
Representatives from the Iraqi Alliance Party and the Office of Muqtada al-Sadr reach a 14 point agreement granting the Iraqi military (without US troops) permission to enter the remaining parts of Sadr City	18 May
821st Engineer company, elements of 3/4 ID and Iraqi contractors complete emplacement of 3,138 barriers in AO Gold	15-May
Six battalions of Iraqi Army troops move into the northern districts of Sadr City as part of Operation Salaam ("Peace" in Arabic)	20-May
MND-B establishes Task Force 1.4a (Sadr City)	30-May
105 men begin serving in the first of several Neighborhood Guard Programs in Sadr City	10-Jun

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