

Fighting Through the

# “Fog of War”

The Battle of An Najaf,  
28-29 January 2007-Part I

by Charles H. Briscoe



*ODA 563 and Iraqi Hilla SWAT police prepare to enter the contact area on 28 January 2007 during the two-day Battle of An Najaf.*

**In**

*\*In keeping with USSOCOM Policy, Special Operations Soldiers Major and below in this article have been given pseudonyms.*

August 2006, Captain (CPT) Eldon Johnson\* and Master Sergeant (MSG) Roger Ligon\* returned to An Najaf, this time with ODA 566, 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (2/5 SFG), during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM IV (OIF IV). The team's foreign internal defense (FID) mission in Ad Diwaniyah was expanded to include An Najaf when the SF team assigned to that Shia holy city was diverted to the Iraqi Army Counterinsurgency (COIN) School. Since two key leaders of ODA 566 knew the Iraqi military leadership in and around An Najaf from a previous tour, it was a logical FOB 52 (Field Operating Base = 2/5 SFG) realignment.<sup>1</sup>

An Najaf, one of the holiest Shia Islam cities in Iraq, is the center of Shia political power. It is located about forty-five miles south southeast of Karbala and hundred miles directly south of Baghdad. The population has increased significantly since 2003 (585,600 people) with the influx of immigrants coming from abroad. As the city containing the tomb and shrine of Imam Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Mohammed, whom the Shia consider to be the righteous caliph and first imam, it attracts a tremendous number of Shi'ite Muslims from around the world every January before Ashura. Adjacent to the shrine of Imam Ali is possibly the largest Muslim cemetery in the world. Only Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia host larger Muslim pilgrimages.<sup>2</sup>



*5th Special Forces Group Flash*

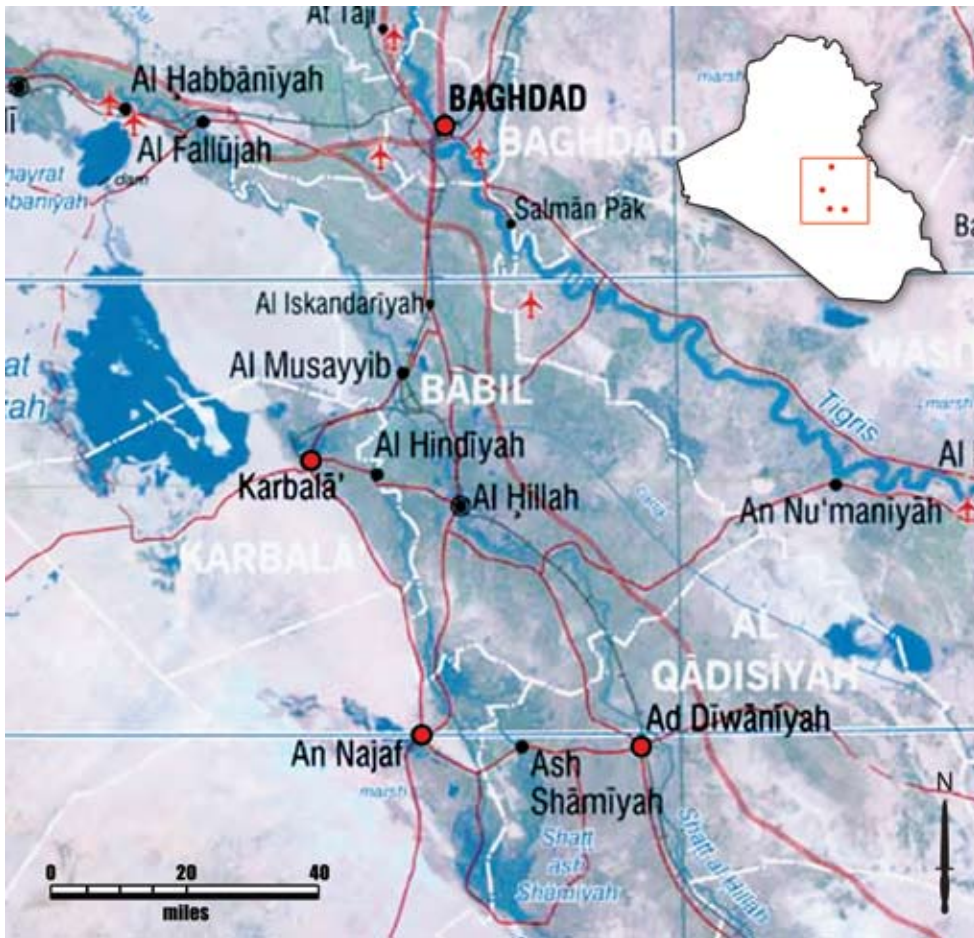
This two-part article explains the second Battle of An Najaf (the first was August 2004) and the roles and missions of three Army Special Forces elements and the very different Iraqi military and police forces that they train and with whom they regularly operate. The story has been divided into phases because a complicated situation kept escalating in intensity and it was too difficult to appreciate, understand, and digest in a single "bite." All SF units and command levels contributed to the success of the operation. The steady transition of operational control of Coalition areas of responsibility to Iraq has dramatically altered the combat environment. FID has become the primary Special Forces mission. The two-day battle reinforced the necessity for ballistic window glass, up-armored vehicles, body armor, and helmets. Conditions began to reverse dramatically in An Najaf and Ad Diwaniyah during the Christmas holidays of 2006.

In the first five months of OIF IV (August-December 2006) An Najaf had been calm; Ad Diwaniyah was the problem area for ODA 566. Although the 900-man Polish contingent of the Multi-National Force (MNF) led by a two-star general and the Iraqi Army 8th Division headquarters and one infantry battalion were located in Ad Diwaniyah, Iranian-supported JAM (*Jaysh al Mahdi*) army elements, nominally directed by Muqtada al-Sadr, controlled the city streets. Because there was a Multi-National presence in Ad Diwaniyah, CPT Johnson, with command approval, reestablished an American SF presence in An

*Imam Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Mohammed, is considered by Shia Muslims to be the righteous caliph and first Imam. The mosque containing his tomb (map set) is located in the center of the old section of An Najaf.*

*Imam Ali*





The location of the Iraqi cities mentioned in this article (Baghdad, Karbala, Al Hillah, An Najaf, and Ad Diwaniyah) are shown on the map.



*Iraqi General Uthman, the 8th Division commander, had his headquarters in Ad Diwaniyah.*

Najaf in August 2006, despite the inconvenience of having to arrange logistics support.<sup>3</sup>

Two days (27 August 2006) after their arrival in Iraq, General Uthman, the 8th Division commander in Ad Diwaniyah, called CPT

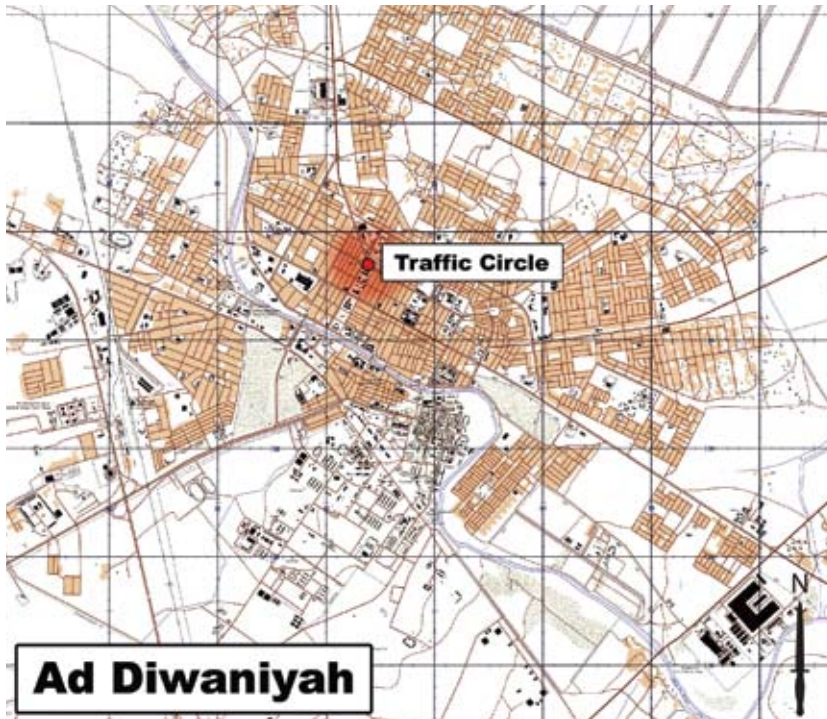
Johnson\* for ODA 566's help. An Iraqi Army patrol had clashed with JAM militia. A serious fight was underway. The platoon was decisively engaged and had numerous casualties. The general would provide a company to assist if the SF team would help them extract the embattled Iraqi element. Several weeks before, an Iraqi platoon, after getting into a serious fight with the JAM, had exhausted their ammunition and surrendered before help could arrive. All thirteen Iraqi soldiers were executed.<sup>4</sup> This engagement was an opportunity to reinforce General Uthman's confidence in CPT Johnson\* and his SF team and an opportunity for the Americans to assess the combat skills of the Iraqis since their last rotation.<sup>5</sup>

"The action was good for the guys. It was important to

get it straight from the start," said MSG Ligon, the team sergeant. "The Poles did little patrolling in the city."<sup>6</sup> ODA 566, "saddled up" in two up-armored Ground Mobility Vehicles (GMV), picked up another eleven Iraqi Army vehicles with troops at the 8th Division compound (the promised company) and proceeded into the contact zone. About 200 meters short of crossing the main highway bridge into the city, the American and Iraqi Army relief force was engaged from their right by twenty-five JAM insurgents firing AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) from a three-story building called the 'Tire Factory.' Heavy crew-served weapons fire from the GMVs suppressed the enemy fire and the JAM broke contact. Then, a second group of enemy fighters hidden in houses and alleys on the left fired on the convoy. When we returned fire, they consolidated in one structure."<sup>7</sup> It was time to drive the JAM away.

The Air Force JTAC (Joint Tactical Air Controller) with ODA 566, Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Michael Stone\*, had close air support (CAS) standing by. A well-directed 500 lb. Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) was dropped on the building, completely destroying it and the 20-25 JAM inside. That eliminated the enemy resistance and fire became sporadic as the relief convoy resumed movement into the city.<sup>8</sup>

After the airstrike the Iraqi relief force cleared buildings on each side of the street as the convoy moved towards the heart of the city, the main traffic circle. Three hours and one well-placed JDAM later, the combined element made contact with the beleaguered Iraqi platoon. The SF soldiers positioned their "thorn trucks" (al-Qaeda/Taliban parlance for SF GMVs having multiple pedestal-mounted crew-served weapons) was brought by foreign fighters to Iraq) between the JAM militia and Iraqi element. The relief force would not conduct any ground assaults. As ODA 566 provided covering fire, the Iraqi troops collected their wounded and the seven dead, loading everyone aboard vehicles. As they withdrew, the Special Forces team covered the Iraqis from bounding overwatch positions.<sup>9</sup> "It was a hairy, urban combat operation, but it 'got everyone's [(ODA 566)] head into the game' at the beginning of OIF IV and set the tone for the rotation," said CPT Johnson\*.<sup>10</sup> The JAM dominance of Ad Diwaniyah became such a problem



*The highlighted traffic circle on the city map of Ad Diwaniyah was where ODA 566 rescued the beleaguered Iraqi platoon in August 2006.*

that the U.S. 4th Infantry Division (4th ID) decided to clear the city in early October 2006.

That proved easier said than done, even with an armor battalion task force. "The 4th ID task force assembled at Camp Echo and spent several days preparing for the mission. This gave the JAM plenty of time to get ready and relocate supplies before the tankers came. After having their PSYOP loudspeaker teams [with MP (military police) protection] driven off, they lost two M-1 Abrams tanks and two M-2/3 Bradley armored fighting vehicles to RPGs and IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). The armored task force withdrew after two days," said Staff Sergeant (SSG) Allen Lawrence.\*<sup>11</sup> An approaching rotation date had some bearing on the decision. It was a real mess



*US Navy F/A-18 Hornet fighter aircraft.*

when ODA 566 conducted a presence patrol in Ad Diwaniyah on 9 October 2006, while the 4th ID was still in country.<sup>12</sup>

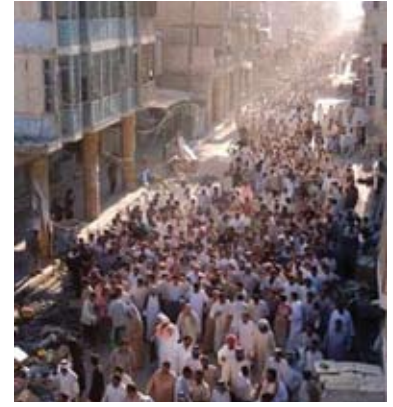
CPT Johnson wanted to make a late afternoon foray into downtown Ad Diwaniyah to show SF resolve to the JAM. They were going to visit a joint Army/Police checkpoint (CP) on the traffic circle where two days before an Iraqi police lieutenant had been executed. An Iraqi reconnaissance patrol had been detained by JAM for several hours the following day. ODA 566 led the presence patrol in their three GMVs with a platoon of 8th Iraqi Division Scouts from An Najaf in three brand-new up-armored

HMMWVs fixed with PKM 7.62mm machineguns. "The Scouts were really proud of those trucks. While we halted near a mosque, Iraqi Police, anticipating a fight, began cordoning off the area. Shortly after the Scouts 'fired up' a car that would not stop for the police, the first hand grenades were thrown. RPGs followed and our combined presence patrol was soon fighting more than fifty JAM militiamen. They hit us with light machineguns, AK assault rifles, hand grenades, and RPGs. Two hand grenades bounced off the truck before exploding and the fuses fell out of the other two," remembered SFC Jack Carter.\*<sup>13</sup>

"The JAM managed to hit our GMVs with nine RPGs," said SSG Lawrence, the junior 18D (SF medic) driving the lead GMV with CPT Johnson. "When the RPGs hit, they rocked the truck. It felt like someone hitting us with a sledgehammer. Fortunately, they were firing them so close that the RPGs didn't have time to arm. The rockets cracked our ballistic windshield and windows and careened off hoods and truck tops. Bullet holes and RPG scars and burn marks were pretty normal. When we took a direct hit on the right windshield, the impact threw me against the door and bounced my head off the side window. The flash 'whited out' my NVGs and smoke was filling the cab. CPT Johnson immediately yelled, 'Everybody on the truck! Back up! Stop!' in such quick succession that when I hit the brakes on the third order, the GIB (guy in back) with the M240 and Nelson\*, our 'terp' (interpreter) were tossed out of the back into a fruit stand on the side of the street. It would have been comical if it hadn't been so serious."<sup>14</sup> With the gunfight still raging after thirty minutes CPT Johnson called in CAS.



*The 7.62mm PKM light machinegun and a rocket-propelled anti-tank grenade (RPG), with its launcher.*



*LtoR: Pilgrims fill the plaza surrounding the Imam Ali mosque during Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram; Especially devout Shia Muslims flog themselves to atone for the murder of Hussein, grandson of the prophet Mohammed, that created the schism between Shia and Sunni; All the streets in An Najaf leading to the Imam Ali mosque were filled to overflowing with pilgrims during Ashura.*

Instead of delivering ordnance near the crowded city center, the two Navy A/F-18 Hornet fighters loitering overhead, did a flyover “on the deck.” That was sufficient to make the JAM break contact. “With one GMV damaged we executed a ‘worm’ turn and got out of there. We were shooting out street lights as we left. The Air Force Tactical Air Control Party (TACP), in our last vehicle, got the F-18s to provide us ‘top cover’ as we withdrew from the city,” recalled SFC Seth Roberts,\* the senior medic.<sup>15</sup> Four of the armor-wearing American SF received minor wounds from spalling RPGs and small arms fire.

ODA 566 had made it clear that unlike the Poles, the Special Forces would enter Ad Diwaniyah at will. They towed SSG Lawrence’s truck back to Camp Echo, Diwaniyah.<sup>16</sup> After having to regularly mix it up with the JAM, it was a relief to perform FID missions in An Najaf, at least until Christmas Eve 2006. Retaliation for capturing the primary lawyer of Muqtada al Sadr was the emplacement of a large EFP (Explosively Fired Projectile) against the team house at Camp David. Fortunately, the bomb was discovered and disabled, but it demonstrated how relatively unstable it was in An Najaf.<sup>17</sup>

Pilgrims to An Najaf prior to the Day of Ashura (29

January 2007) swelled the city population from 600,000 to several million in January, daily closing three lanes of traffic on major four-lane divided highways in the city. Especially devout Shia Muslims were prone to flog themselves with “cat-o-nine tails” during parades on Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram. This was done to atone for the murder of Hussein, grandson of the prophet Mohammed, which historically created the schism between Shia and Sunni Muslims. The voluminous pilgrimage and sanctity accorded by the religious holiday provided natural cover for militant meetings as well a venue to recruit Jihad fighters.<sup>18</sup>

## **ODA 566 & TF Raptor**

ODA 566 was actively patrolling and monitoring the situation when CJSOTF sent Task Force Raptor [ODB 510 headquarters (-), ODA 512, and an Iraqi assault company to deal with several high value targets (HVTs) expected to meet in An Najaf under the auspices of attending a funeral. After several “spin ups” (“stand by to execute”) in the first thirty-six hours, MAJ Jack Guardino\*, the Raptor commander sent part of his force (the Commando company mounted in M1126 Stryker LAV IIIs (light armored vehicle)



*ODA 512 (TF Raptor) GMV with its 7.62 mini-gun.*



*Iraqi "Raptor" Patch*



*American SF soldier with Iraqi Raptor assaulters.*

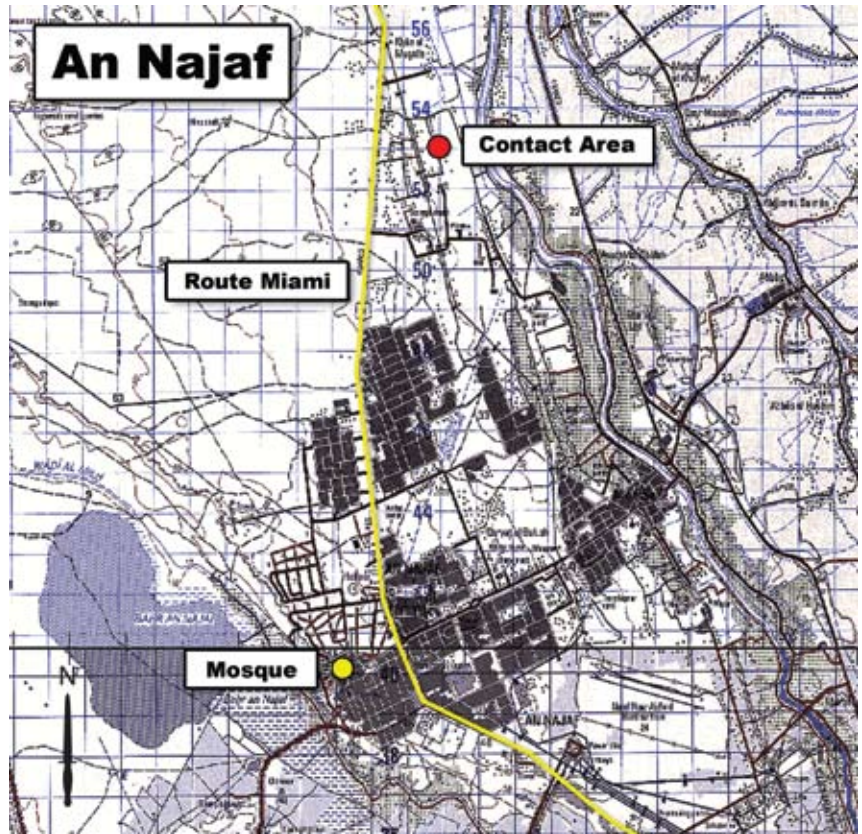
and LAV-25 Pandurs) back to base in Baghdad using Route Tampa. An Najaf was not going to be lucrative; the intelligence was good, but the potential HVTs had immersed themselves among very large groups, making it impossible to capture them by direct action. The CJSOTF agreed with Guardino's assessment and supported bringing the rest of his element home on 28 January 2007. In the small Camp David, ODA 566 had hosted TF Raptor for three days while both elements intensely mission planned.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the two forces were pretty much exhausted when CPT Johnson received two calls for help from the Iraqis about 7 A.M., 28 January 2007.

"SGT Ali, the 1st Scout Reconnaissance Platoon sergeant with whom we had worked in Diwaniyah in October, reported that they were in heavy contact in the northeastern outskirts of An Najaf, had numerous casualties, and needed help. This was almost immediately followed by another cell phone call from Governor Abu Galel, the elected provincial governor, requesting U.S. air and ground support. I told MSG Ligon to get the guys on the trucks while I got clearance from the FOB. Remember, the Iraqi Provisional Government assumed control of the province and General Uthman, 8th Iraqi Army Division commander, took responsibility for the battle space (Karbala to Al Kut to An Najaf) in September 2006. MAJ Guardino volunteered to reinforce us with Raptor in the event JAM was involved," said CPT Johnson. "And then, we moved out in the direction of the reported fighting."<sup>20</sup>

"That was not easy. Ashura was in full swing. The entire four-lane roadway with its tree-lined median [An Najaf-Karbala highway (Route Miami on the west side of the objective area)] was jammed with pilgrims walking, riding in cars, trucks, bicycles...you name it. I was honking my horn and physically pushing a path through the mass of people and vehicles with my GMV. It was slow going until we got around the 20th Revolution Circle," said SSG Lawrence, driver of the first ODA 566 GMV.<sup>21</sup> It was just as bad when the Raptor convoy of eight vehicles bulled its way onto the highway ten minutes later.

## **ODA 566 & TF Raptor Help the Iraqis Break Contact**

CPT Johnson (ODA 566) reported: "As we neared the contact area, I heard gunfire and flagged down two Iraqi 'bongo' trucks (five-ton commercial vehicles) coming towards us with wounded aboard. After our medics checked them out, we loaded everyone on one vehicle and got Heider, one of the better Scouts, to lead us into the contact area. In the midst of dazed Iraqi officials and police was a highly agitated COL Saadi Al-Maliki, the 1st Brigade, 8th



*Map of An Najaf showing the relationship of the Imam Ali mosque and Route Miami (Karbala/An Najaf highway) to the initial contact site.*

IA Division commander. MSG Ligon positioned our two GMVs between the Iraqi group and a berm, aligning them side-by-side, but at an angle to maximize the firepower of our .50 cal, M-240, and M-249 machineguns. COL Saadi estimated that there were 1,000 enemy fighters. I thought that it was probably a hundred based on experience. Regardless of numbers, different groups of about 15-20 shooters, delivering well-aimed small arms fire, had 15 Iraqi Scouts pinned down. These fighters would pop up on the berm ridge, each firing a few shots, then drop back down, and reappear at a different position to fire again. As I tried to figure out what was going on, the GMV gunners began engaging targets."<sup>22</sup>

During a hail of gunfire that wounded MSG Ligon and SSG Geoffrey Kendrick, the lead GMV driver, and smashed into the ballistic shield of SFC Roberts' M-240, the three abandoned the idling "RPG magnet" to lay down a base of fire from a more covered position. MSG Ligon with his M-203 grenade launcher, SFC Roberts with two M-72 LAWs (Light Antitank Weapon), and SSG Kendrick with an M-79 grenade launcher and a bag of 40mm rounds occupied a small ditch near a concrete structure. From there they covered the Scout withdrawal by fire.<sup>23</sup> Rocket-propelled grenades kept slamming into the armored GMVs, cracking windows and splattering everyone with shrapnel as armor-piercing small arms rounds punched holes through bodies and doors. "That's when the reinforcements (TF Raptor in seven GMVs and their 5-ton wrecker) joined us on the battle site," said CPT Johnson.<sup>24</sup>

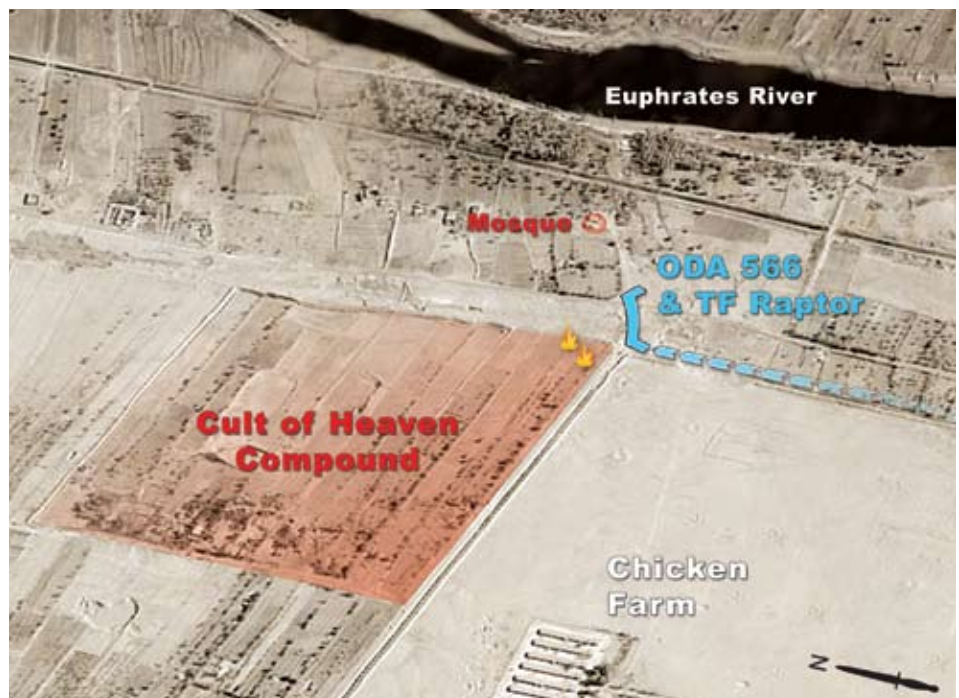


*Artist rendition of the 28 January 2007 vehicle-supported assault by ODA 566 and TF Raptor to drive the enemy back from the compound berm allowing trapped Iraqi government officials, police, and Army Scouts to reach safety.*

MSG Sam Kavanaugh,\* team sergeant for ODA 513, quickly moved his two 7.62mm mini-gun trucks to the left and right of the ODA 566 vehicles. Then, he began spreading out his team and the Iraqi assaulters to reinforce the defensive line and cover the flanks. A small village and cemetery was on the west side and enemy fighters were running around in a palm grove that extended to the Euphrates River on the east.<sup>25</sup> Small arms fire was kicking up dust all around him when two RPGs ricocheted off the ground on either side “bracketing” him. Undaunted by the heavy enemy fire and shrapnel, MSG Kavanaugh positioned his personnel to join ODA 566 in a limited, vehicle-supported ground assault to permit the trapped Iraqi Scouts, police, and officials to reach friendly lines. Kavanaugh admitted, “I did get quite a few holes in my body armor pouches and pants leg pocket. My radio was grazed by fire. Shrapnel took a small chunk out of my right forearm.”<sup>26</sup> In the meantime MAJ Guardino, the senior American SF commander, was focused on arranging CAS. He had his junior JTAC, Technical Sergeant (TSgt) Dale Osborne\*

working directly with SSGT Nate Andrews,\* the TACP located in the Ops Cen of ODA 566 in Camp David.

While MAJ Guardino was waiting for CAS, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) appeared overhead indicating that a higher headquarters was monitoring the situation. Unfortunately for the SF on the ground, they received no reports about what was on the other



*Section of imagery map showing Phase One with element locations, entry route, and key terrain/sites highlighted.*

side of the berm to clear some of “the fog of war” from the situation. Its presence blocked the employment of CAS. Broken, disjointed radio communications, though patched together by relays, plagued Special Forces elements throughout the fight.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime, CPT Johnson, the local SF commander, was trying to sort out the situation in his area of responsibility with COL Saadi.<sup>28</sup>

It quickly became obvious to the ODA 566 commander that this was a politically-driven, “Iraqi only” operation that had gone bad. Details would be unknown for some time. These situations were inevitable since control of Najaf province had transitioned to the Iraqi government in January 2007. American Special Forces were expected to help the Iraqi Army and government officials maintain the peace after the transition.<sup>29</sup>

It was later discovered that the Deputy Provincial Governor had led an official entourage consisting of the Minister of the Interior, the chief of police, and other government staff into the 1500m by 1500m compound at first light to arrest the leaders. The party was escorted by six Scouts in two HMMWVs. While the fifty person negotiating element politely waited with warrants for the leaders, they were attacked with a PKM 7.62 machinegun. Two of the Scouts facing away were killed instantly and the other four wounded. The Iraqi police chief was wounded seriously in this initial volley of well-directed fire. When the volume of fire grew intense, injured Scouts, police, and the Iraqi officials abandoned their vehicles (seven or eight SUVs and the two HMMWVs) and fled the compound in a hail of gunfire.<sup>30</sup>

The only part that was clear at 1100 hours, 28 January 2007, was that COL Saadi was in charge of the cordon force around the compound. This force of Iraqi policemen, most of whom had only sidearms, and two Army Scout platoons, numbered 150 men. Fortunately, the Scouts, armed with AK-47s and PKM light machineguns, had received marksmanship and basic soldier skills training and direct action urban and dismounted infantry tactics from ODA 566. What had provoked the firefight was undetermined. What was certain was that Iraqi government officials had “poked a stick into a hornets’ nest” and were unprepared for the consequences. How big that hornets’ nest was, remained to be seen.<sup>31</sup>



*Iraqi Colonel Saadi Al-Maliki, 1/8th Brigade commander, was in charge of the cordon force surrounding the enemy compound.*

“Those guys were well-trained. They did bounding overwatch from position to position, moved between positions, and then regrouped before massing their fires. They took deliberate aim before firing. They were good shooters with small arms, machineguns, and RPGs and kept engaging. They were staying to fight. Their proficiency prompted me to push guys out to cover our flanks as I tried to spot the mortars” said CPT Gordon Muldoon\* [(ODA 512) TF Raptor].<sup>32</sup>

In addition to small arms, RPGs, and machineguns, 60mm mortars were used against the American-led relief forces. The volume of enemy fire and variety of weapons was too heavy to use sniper rifles effectively against the “poppers” on the berm.<sup>33</sup> “I set up a sniper position in a ditch on the far side of the road fifty meters in front of the trucks. After firing twenty-seven or twenty-eight rounds they drove me off with a well-aimed RPG. The rocket hit so close that spalling showered me,” said SFC James Carter,\* the intelligence sergeant for ODA 566. “Since I was ‘pegged,’ I scooted over to another covered position.”<sup>34</sup>

The SF teams and Raptor assaulters responded in kind and MAJ Guardino “upped the ante” with CAS—two F-16 Falcon fighters and two A-10 “Wart Hog” fighter bombers strafed the compound with 20mm and 30mm cannon fire respectively before dropping their 500-pound bombs.<sup>35</sup> Enemy fire dwindled during the air attacks. MAJ Guardino and CPT Johnson combined their forces to mount a heavy weapons-supported ground assault with soldiers walking and firing between the slow moving trucks to the base of the berm. “At the start of the assault I hurriedly brought a twin M-240 and a .50 cal truck up to the assault line. Since our vehicles were fifty to a hundred meters apart and our internal communications



*An F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter, carrying extra fuel tanks, takes off with full load of ordnance.*





*The A-10 "Wart Hog" fighter-bomber was designed to provide close support to ground troops.*



*TF Raptor assaulters take control of fleeing Iraqi police, Scouts, and government officials to effect a safe passage of lines.*

were not working well, I did a lot of running back and forth to keep the assault line intact and our flanks covered," said MSG Kavanaugh.<sup>36</sup>

"In the middle of the assault with bullets and RPGs flying all around, SSG Steve Black\*, the Raptor mobility NCO, jumped into the back of the trucks, pulled miniguns apart, adjusted headspace and timing, and reloaded them. He was oblivious to the danger; he was that focused," said CPT Muldoon. "During the ground attack, shooting from two to three hundred meters away, they had us 'tap dancing like little girls' as bullets kicked up dust between four of us," chuckled the 6'3" former West Point football player.<sup>37</sup> The RPG fire was so accurate that

CPT Johnson's GMV was stopped "dead" in the assault when a ricocheting rocket propelled grenade slammed under the truck cutting the hydraulic lines.<sup>38</sup>

SGM William Nathan\* brought the Raptor 5-ton wrecker forward to drag the disabled truck from the assault line. Close air support, AT-4s and LAWs, and the rolling vehicle-supported ground assault forced the enemy fighters off the berm ridge long enough to allow the politicians, police, and Scouts to begin abandoning cover and run to the safety of the American-led relief forces. When COL Saadi gave permission to eliminate snipers in a rudimentary mosque using CAS, trapped Iraqis began to flood towards ODA 566 and TF Raptor. "That slowed down the fight sufficiently for the Iraqi police and Scouts to pull out. We were already redistributing our ammo reserves," said MSG Ligon.<sup>39</sup>

The number of fleeing Iraqis, wearing a variety of dress and carrying arms, quickly grew to more than fifty. Since they could not be readily identified, the TF Raptor assaulters, concerned about bomb-wearing infiltrators, went into action. They seized weapons, searched, separated, and got everyone down in the prone. Those rescued accepted the no-nonsense, professional treatment as the price for their salvation. When COL Saadi and the Province Security Chief, General Qais, vouched for them, a few were permitted to get up and identify other friendlies.<sup>40</sup>

Once the safe passage of lines had been completed and the wounded (eight Scouts and several policemen) given first aid, ODA 566 had fulfilled its obligation to General Uthman, the 8th IA Division commander. They had accomplished the relief/rescue mission without becoming decisively engaged. American CAS made the difference. BG Qais, the provincial security chief, and COL Saadi assured CPT Johnson and MAJ Guardino that they could handle the situation; CAS had "eliminated" the enemy resistance.<sup>41</sup>

MAJ Walt Brockman\*, the ODB 560 commander in Hilla, was monitoring the situation. Feeling pressure from the aggressive COL Abbas, the former deputy province police chief and current Hilla SWAT commander, who planned to take a company to An Najaf, he dispatched ODA 563 from Firebase Stack. They would accompany

*TF Raptor and ODA 566 assemble on Route Miami to return to Camp David after helping Iraqi police and military break contact in the late morning (28 January 2007). The TF Raptor wrecker is towing a battle-damaged 566 GMV.*





*A Hilla SWAT policeman mans a truck-mounted PKM light machinegun.*



*The Hilla SWAT traveled in Chevrolet Crew Cab 4x4, pickup trucks with pedestal-mounted PKM light machineguns.*

*Hilla SWAT Patch*



*Iraqi Colonel Abbas, the current commander of the Hilla SWAT (right side center), often rode in the bed of the ODA 563 "War Pig," an armored 5-ton truck with three M-240 machineguns.*

the SWAT to reinforce ODA 566. COL Abbas regularly employed Hilla SWAT, a Ministry of the Interior asset, outside the province when he thought "the missions were good for Iraq." ODA 563 and the SWAT company had been recovering after a frustrating night raid.<sup>42</sup>

## **Enter ODA 563 & Hilla SWAT**

Feelings on the young SF team ran high. "I figured that all we were going to do was 'baby sit' the Iraqis or clean up another of their messes again," said SSG Daniel Malcolm\*, the junior communications sergeant. "Truck driving and crew-served weapon duty was akin to 'sitting on the bench' while the 'varsity' did ground assaults with the SWAT. Those guys, positioned to support, usually just guarded the trucks," commented SSG Jesse Bartram,\* the junior weapons sergeant. "Little did we know."<sup>43</sup>

Knowing that ODA 563 was enroute, CPT Johnson got into his other GMV (his truck was being towed by the TF Raptor wrecker) to lead the two elements back to Camp David to refit and rearm. The two elements missed ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT by five or ten minutes because that element made its approach along a different route. Unaware that two AH-64 Apache attack helicopters had flown to the contact site, they did not realize that the fight was far from over.<sup>44</sup>

As soon as the combined force closed on Camp David, immediate refitting, rearming, and weapons maintenance per combat SOPs took precedence. Weapon systems were stripped off the disabled ODA 566 GMV and remounted on the third truck. Crew-served weapon and individual ammunition was replenished and extra boxes loaded aboard the "thorn trucks." The TF Raptor soldiers were scrambling to do the same thing. Fuel was "topped off," oil and fluid levels were checked, and ammunition loaded as all vehicles were made "fully combat ready" again.<sup>45</sup> CPT Johnson felt pride and satisfaction as he watched the beehive of activity orchestrated by the SF team sergeants. "These guys are really pros," he thought as he entered the Operations Center (Op Cen).<sup>46</sup>

## **CSAR Mission - ODA 566 & TF Raptor**

It was when entering the OpCen CPT Johnson first heard that an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter (BIG GUN 72) had been shot down at the contact site. His Air Force TACP, SSGT Andrews, who had been "stacking up" CAS sorties during the last action, alerted him. "I told MSG Ligon what had happened and said, 'Get the team 'kitted up' and ready to go.' This was about 1345 hours, local time. Then, I called the AOB to get a 'Big Army' mech (mechanized) task force to support and followed that with an email. MAJ Guardino and his sergeant major, who had come to the Ops Cen to say, 'Thanks for all the support,' before leaving for Baghdad, cancelled their plans when they heard about the Apache shutdown. We were both given the CSAR (combat search and rescue) mission. Based on grid coordinates for the AH-64 crash site and being told, 'Go towards the rising smoke,' MAJ Guardino and I came up with a hasty plan on his truck hood. We would approach from the north with Raptor leading," said Johnson. "My two wounded guys were already on their trucks ready to roll."<sup>47</sup>

However, pinpointing the downed Apache gave the two SF elements a real appreciation of how well-trained and equipped those enemy fighters behind the eight to twelve-foot high berm were because the TF Raptor-ODA



Section of imagery map showing Phase Two depicts ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT doing a vehicle half-left echelon assault on enemy forces firing from the compound berm.



An AH-64 Apache attack helicopter.

566 convoy was taken under fire shortly after leaving Route Miami. Despite the area being fairly open, it was a labyrinth of walled fields and narrow roads with small palm groves interspersed. The maze proved tough to navigate. Walls were just high enough to block clear vision. The logical decision to approach from the north was based on the map coordinates, but unfortunately,

Artist's rendition of ODA 563 and the Hilla SWAT half-left echelon assault on the enemy forces.

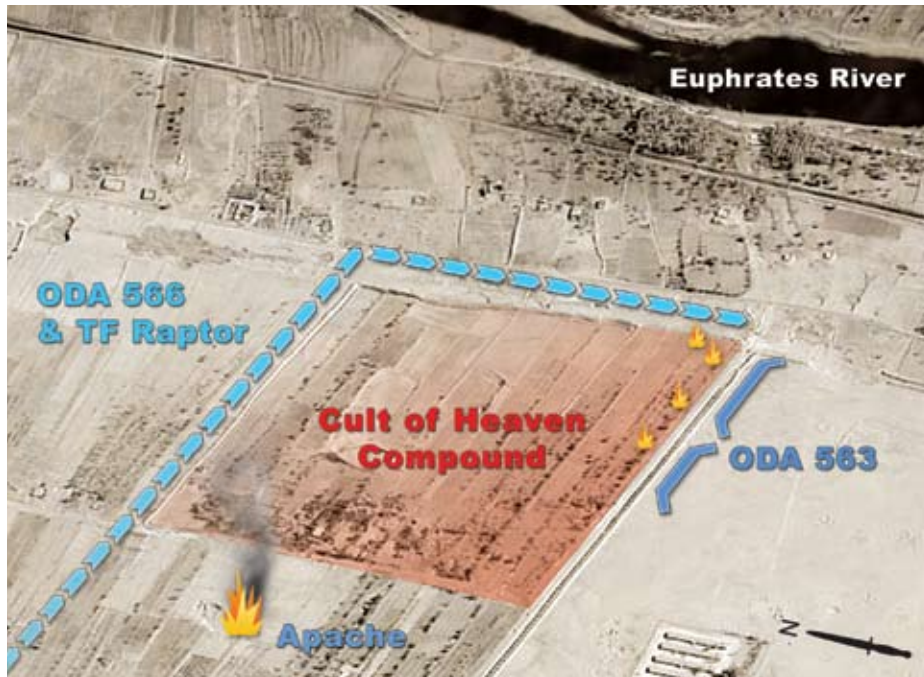


it was diametrically opposite of the routes used by the two SF elements earlier in the morning and there were several smoke columns (caused by the CAS) to add to the confusion.<sup>48</sup>

Shortly after entering the maze the nine vehicle convoy began receiving heavy enemy small arms fire. While moving under fire, MAJ Guardino, an old college baseball catcher, reached down and single-handedly snatched up an Iraqi assaulter, who had fallen from the vehicle ahead after being shot in the head. He pulled the wounded soldier into his moving truck one-handed. SFC Carter, the GIB on CPT Johnson's vehicle was hit in the shoulder with a 7.62 mm bullet during the approach. That was how accurate the enemy fire was as the nine trucks crept towards the compound corner where TF Raptor had positioned its mini-gun trucks earlier. CPT Muldoon in the lead

Raptor vehicle (ODA 512) spotted two SF soldiers beside an Iraqi officer as the convoy approached the corner. Unsure of their identity, he dismounted to ask if they knew where the downed Apache was.<sup>49</sup>

CPT Johnson (ODA 566) at the end of the nine vehicle convoy knew the two SF were from ODA 563 because he had radio communications with their team sergeant. They had been sent to reinforce ODA 566 and were accompanied by a company of Hilla SWAT. The convoy stopped when CPT Muldoon got out. Johnson's crew swung to cover the left flank where the Euphrates River was in the distance. TF Raptor, supported by ODB 560 for the assigned HVT mission in An Najaf, were "geared up" for the trip back to Baghdad. They rarely monitored the local ODB frequencies and were unfamiliar with the capabilities of provincial Iraqi police and special military forces like Hilla SWAT and the Scouts. These factors added to the "fog of war" as the fighting escalated. Since both elements had been given the follow-on downed helicopter CSAR tasking, MAJ Guardino took charge as the senior commander.<sup>50</sup>



Section of imagery map showing Phase Three has the route of TF Raptor & ODA 566 as they search for the downed AH-64 helicopter and the positions of ODA 563 & Hilla SWAT.



A farm trailer-mounted 12.7mm DShK heavy machinegun in the Cult of Heaven compound. It was hooked up to a tractor.

## ODA 563 & Hilla SWAT Make Contact

ODA 563, leading the Hilla SWAT company with a GMV, left Route Miami to approach the contact site from the west. The team "War Pig," an armored 5-ton truck with a ring-mounted M-240 machinegun in front and two pedestal-mounted side M-240s, was moving in the middle of the eighteen SWAT trucks. They first encountered a large chicken farm which was checked. TF Raptor had done the same thing in the morning. After clearing the farm the Hilla force resumed their eastward move.

When they entered a large semi-open area the convoy was hit by heavy flanking fire as the lead elements of the convoy came abreast the base of the walled compound. The SWAT in unarmored Chevrolet crew cab 4X4 pick-up trucks with pedestal-mounted PKM machineguns, emulated the action of the ODA 563 GMV when it executed a half echelon left assault to best counter the enemy ambush. "It was like a modern day Western movie," said SSG Malcolm. "In reality, it was divine intervention that caused the SWAT guys to do it." The "cavalry-style" gun-truck assault was ended abruptly by a large berm bordering the road. The SWAT provided some suppressive fire initially, but that ended quickly when the volume of fire from the berm ridge increased. The SF soldiers in the "War Pig" of ODA 563 and

most of the Hilla SWAT, separated from CPT Konrad in the GMV, quickly became decisively engaged at the berm. The lightly-armed police, having received little infantry tactical training, were not prepared to fire and maneuver to break up the situation when it became more complicated.<sup>51</sup>

"We had just cleared a chicken farm and were assaulting to the north in our trucks when I spotted two Apaches at 200/300 feet a half mile to the northeast doing 'Figure 8' gun runs. The two helicopters were taking RPG and heavy machinegun fire from the target. I watched an RPG airburst near them, and then, one helicopter was hit. The rotor blades stopped and it fell straight down." This was the collective memory of the AH-64 shootdown by MSG Shamus Flanagan\* and SSGs Daniel Malcolm\* and Jesse Bartram.<sup>52</sup> At the opposite end of the SWAT line, SSG Jesse Bartram\* on the GMV was engaging a DShK with his .50 cal machinegun.<sup>53</sup>

The Special Forces soldiers with MSG Flanagan tried to use heavier weapons to reduce the enemy fire. "SFC Edward Gross\*, a side M-240 gunner from the 'War Pig,' grabbed an M3 84mm Carl-Gustav antitank weapon and crawled up the berm. Just as he got ready to fire the recoilless rocket grenade into the compound from the top of the berm, a sniper took him out. The shot that struck his 'MICH' (Modular Integrated Communications Helmet pronounced 'mitch') knocked Gross back. Unconscious, he slid face down the berm. The MICH had saved him. SFC Peter Stoneman\*, the senior medic, treated and bandaged the scalp wound and sent Gross to recover in the 'War Pig,' said MSG Flanagan.<sup>54</sup>

SSG Malcolm knew how close the enemy fighters were,



*Outside & inside views of 7.62mm impacts on "MICH" helmets worn by ODA 563 soldiers. Both men survived with minor concussions.*

*Artist rendition of a Cult of Heaven sniper knocking out an ODA 563 soldier attempting to engage with an M3 Carl-Gustav anti-tank recoilless rifle.*

having crested the berm several times. "I actually saw their faces. They were aiming and firing semi-automatic. It was accurate fire. They weren't typical 'spray and pray' guys.' Dirt was flying up all around us."<sup>55</sup> "But, not having seen what happened to SFC Gross, Malcolm, the other 'Pig' side gunner, picked up the Carl-Gustav dropped by him to do a repeat maneuver. He suffered the same consequences. That sniper was good," said Flanagan, the ODA 563 team sergeant.<sup>56</sup>

Malcolm regained consciousness with a bandage around his head and an Iraqi SWAT policeman who had treated him, proudly shouting, "OK, mistuh! OK mistuh!" ("You'll be all right now"). "I felt like I had been smacked in the head with a baseball bat. Everything went black as I flopped face down and slipped down the berm. It was like watching fuzzy TV as I came to with this Iraqi trying to wipe the dirt off my face with a rag. My head hurt a lot."<sup>57</sup>

MSG Flanagan said that "while the score was MICH: 2, Bad guys: 0, we were down to eight effectives on the team. We all tried to make light of the injuries to keep the Iraqis from freaking out. I hurriedly spread the remainder of my guys among the Iraqi SWAT manning frontal and flank security positions to keep them with us and moved the 'Pig' closer."<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile, CPT Robert Konrad\*, the ODA 563 commander, had been conducting a reconnaissance of the open area on the far right flank (\*Note: This was well forward of the original ODA 566 morning position) with SSG Cliff Bronson\*, the junior medic. Bronson was trying to eliminate that truck-mounted DShK in the right corner of the compound with an M-79 40mm grenade launcher and Carl-Gustav antitank rockets. When that proved unsuccessful, CPT Konrad, SSG Bronson, SSGT Robert Macgregor\*, the JTAC, COL Abbas, CPT Ali, the SWAT company commander, and several of his policemen made a dismantled flank assault against the southeastern side of the compound.<sup>59</sup>

CPT Konrad, SSG Bronson, SSG Macgregor, COL Abbas, and some SWAT police managed to crest the



*Proof of the effectiveness of ballistic glass mounted on the sides of the TF Raptor GMV cargo areas.*



*CPT Konrad\* (center) and Iraqi COL Abbas (right) standing on the berm near the CAS-destroyed truck-mounted DShK heavy machinegun. To their rear is SSGT Macgregor\*, the JTAC for ODA 563.*

berm on the southeast side of the compound. From there they saw 75-100 enemy fighters manning interior trenches with other secondary defensive berms behind them. SSG Bartram, the GMV .50 cal machine gunner, the driver, SSG Kennan, with his truck idling, and SSG Carl Apo\*, on the "War Pig" frontal M-240 covered this maneuver. The three Americans and the SWAT police engaged the surprised enemy fighters with their rifles

until CPT Ali was shot in the head. That prompted the group to get off the crest. Then CPT Konrad, using COL Abbas' laminated topographic map, called for CAS.<sup>60</sup>

SSGT Macgregor, talking to two F-16s on station overhead, verified his location with a signal mirror. Konrad provided his initials to clear a "Danger Close" mission and a jet fighter swept down and dropped a 500 pound bomb on the DShK, less than a hundred meters away in the compound.<sup>61</sup> That dampened the enemy fire.

SSG Bronson was busy treating the SWAT captain when CPT Muldoon (ODA 512), leading TF Raptor, approached them.<sup>62</sup> Since the rest of ODA 563 and the Hilla SWAT police were out of sight around the corner in defensive positions along the south berm, CPT Muldoon was surprised when he saw the Americans. He was still unaware of the strength and capabilities of the enemy force in the compound and he was intent on locating the downed AH-64.<sup>63</sup>

Muldoon was unsure who CPT Konrad was, why he was there, and what he was doing. The ODA 563 soldiers were likewise suspicious. They had heard that the Iraqi military had lost several HMMWVs (pronounced Humvees) to the enemy and facing them was a line of GMVs and the lead truck had a 7.62mm mini-gun.<sup>64</sup> This temporary pause in the action provides a natural break point for a two-part article on the Battle of An Najaf, 28-29 January 2007.

In Part II the intensity of the combat will be ratcheted up several notches. TF Raptor and ODA 566, intent on expanding their search for the downed Apache, will unknowingly choose a road that paralleled the long axis wall of the enemy compound. That twelve-foot high wall was fiercely defended by well-trained fighters with a seemingly limitless supply of ammunition for a wide variety of weapons. Running that gauntlet of heavy, point blank fire will be described by the participants in Part II of this article in the next *Veritas*.

The first day of the 28-29 January fight dramatically revealed the impact of Iraqi Army assumption of battle space control. The Americans were expected to help the Iraqi military and police break contact, often in the worst of circumstances. Politics played a major role in every Iraqi military operation. The need to train assault forces and SWAT police in small unit infantry tactics was realized, but more importantly, how much ammunition was carried by the soldiers, determined their level of aggressiveness and ability to sustain effective fire. American combat equipment worked. MICH helmets, individual body armor, and up-armored vehicles equipped with ballistic glass saved lives and enabled very courageous men to stay in the fight and trade fire with equally disciplined, well-trained enemy soldiers.<sup>65</sup> ♣

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*Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. He earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina and is a retired Army special operations officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and Colombia.*

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## Endnotes

- 1 CPT Eldon Johnson\* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, LTC Christopher C. Miller, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and MSG Roger Ligon\* and SSG Geoffrey Kendrick\* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 2 "Najaf," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Najaf>.
- 3 CPT Johnson\* interview, 13 November 2007 and MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 4 SSG Allen Lawrence\* interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 21 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 5 CPT Johnson\* interview, 13 November 2007.
- 6 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 7 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, and MSG Ligon email to Dr. Briscoe, 28 May 2008, Subject: Corrections to Battle of An Najaf," USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 8 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007 and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008.
- 9 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007 and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008.
- 10 CPT Johnson\* interview, 13 November 2007. **Fortunately, this was the first combat tour for only one or two personnel on ODA 566, which had just one 18X assigned.**
- 11 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007, and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008.
- 12 CPT Johnson\* interview, 13 November 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007, and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008.
- 13 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, SFC Jack Carter interview, 23 January 2008, and SFC Seth Roberts\* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 5 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 14 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007.
- 15 SFC Roberts interview, 5 December 2007.
- 16 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, SFC Jack Carter interview, 23 January 2008, and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008.
- 17 SFC Jack Carter interview, 23 January 2008 and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008.
- 18 "The Day of 'Ashura,'" <http://islam.about.com/od/otherdays/a/ashura.htm> and CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 19 MAJ Jack Guardino\* interviews with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 and 15 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **TF Raptor, moving rapidly along Route Tampa, the most dangerous highway in Iraq [an "IED (improvised explosive device) runaway" explained MAJ Guardino], inadvertently drove into Ad Diwaniyah on the way to An Najaf. As the heavily armed strike force muscled its way through the crowds of pilgrims in daylight, their presence became blatantly obvious.**
- 20 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007 and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008. **"Our GMVs were always kept 100% operationally ready for just this type situation," said SSG Kendrick.** MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 21 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007.
- 22 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 23 SFC Roberts interview, 5 December 2007 and MSG Ligon email, 28 May 2008.
- 24 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 25 MSG Sam Kavanaugh\* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and SFC Zeke Monroe\* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 June 2008, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

- 26 MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007.
- 27 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, and MAJ Guardino email, 22 May 2008. **One unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) overhead belonged to AOB 560 at Hilla. Another had been dispatched to overfly the area when the Apache helicopter was shot down. AOB 560 and FOB 52 had "video feeds" from these two in their Op Cens, but communications to all engaged forces was poor throughout the fight. While message relays were done, the resulting traffic was often disjointed, incomplete, or "overtaken by events" (OBE).** LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007.
- 28 MAJ Guardino\* interview, 15 November 200, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, and MAJ Guardino email to Dr. Briscoe, 22 May 2008, Subject: An Najaf Article, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 29 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007.
- 30 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and SFC Jack Carter interview, 23 January 2008.
- 31 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 32 CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007 and SSG Adam Donitz\* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 12 June 2008, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 33 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 14 November 2007, and LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007.
- 34 SFC Carter interview, 23 January 2008.
- 35 CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007.
- 36 MSG Kirkwood interview, 13 November 2007 and SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 37 CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007.
- 38 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007. **"During the first bound, I felt the rounds hitting my truck. During the second bound, the truck didn't feel right. On the third bound, the drive train was slipping and I thought that the transmission was shot out. When I got the word to make the fourth bound, I hit the gas. The engine revved and nothing happened. Everyone else moved out leaving my truck behind the assault line,"** said SSG Allen Lawrence. SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007.
- 39 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 40 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, and CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 41 CPT Johnson interview, 14 November 2007, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, and MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007.
- 42 CPT Robert Konrad\* and MSG Shamus Flanagan\* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 15 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MAJ Brockman interview, 14 December 2007, MSG Shamus Flanagan,\* SSG Jesse Bartram,\* SSG Daniel Malcolm,\* and SSG Carl Apo\* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 4 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **COL Abbas, Deputy Police Chief for Babel Province, had taken control of the Hilla SWAT battalion after COL Salaam and his executive officer, MAJ Tahir, were killed in mid-October 2006. A traitorous SWAT officer had placed a large IED against the wall of their offices in the SWAT headquarters building. General Qais, the Police Chief, gave COL Abbas that role to prevent a favored political appointee from getting the position.** CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007.
- 43 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 44 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, and MAJ Walt Brockman interview, 4 December 2007.
- 45 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 46 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 47 MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007, SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007 and CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007. **It was standing operating procedures (SOP) for the U.S. Forces command (1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division) to dispatch a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to recover downed Allied aircrews as soon as they received the report. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, 4/25 Infantry Brigade Combat Team at Camp Kalsu, about an hour north of Hilla had the QRF mission. Their lead elements were on the road to An Najaf within an hour.** LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and MAJ Walt Brockman interview, 4 December 2007.
- 48 CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, and CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 49 CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, and SFC Jack Carter interview, 23 January 2008.
- 50 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, and SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007.
- 51 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007 and MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007, and MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007.
- 52 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 53 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007 and MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 54 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007.
- 55 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 56 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007.
- 57 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 58 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007.
- 59 CPT Konrad email to Dr. Briscoe, 25 May 2008, subject: An Najaf Article, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 60 CPT Konrad email, 25 May 2008 and SSG Cliff Bronson\* telephone interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 16 June 2008, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 61 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007 and MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 62 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007.
- 63 CPT Konrad interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 64 CPT Konrad interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 65 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007.