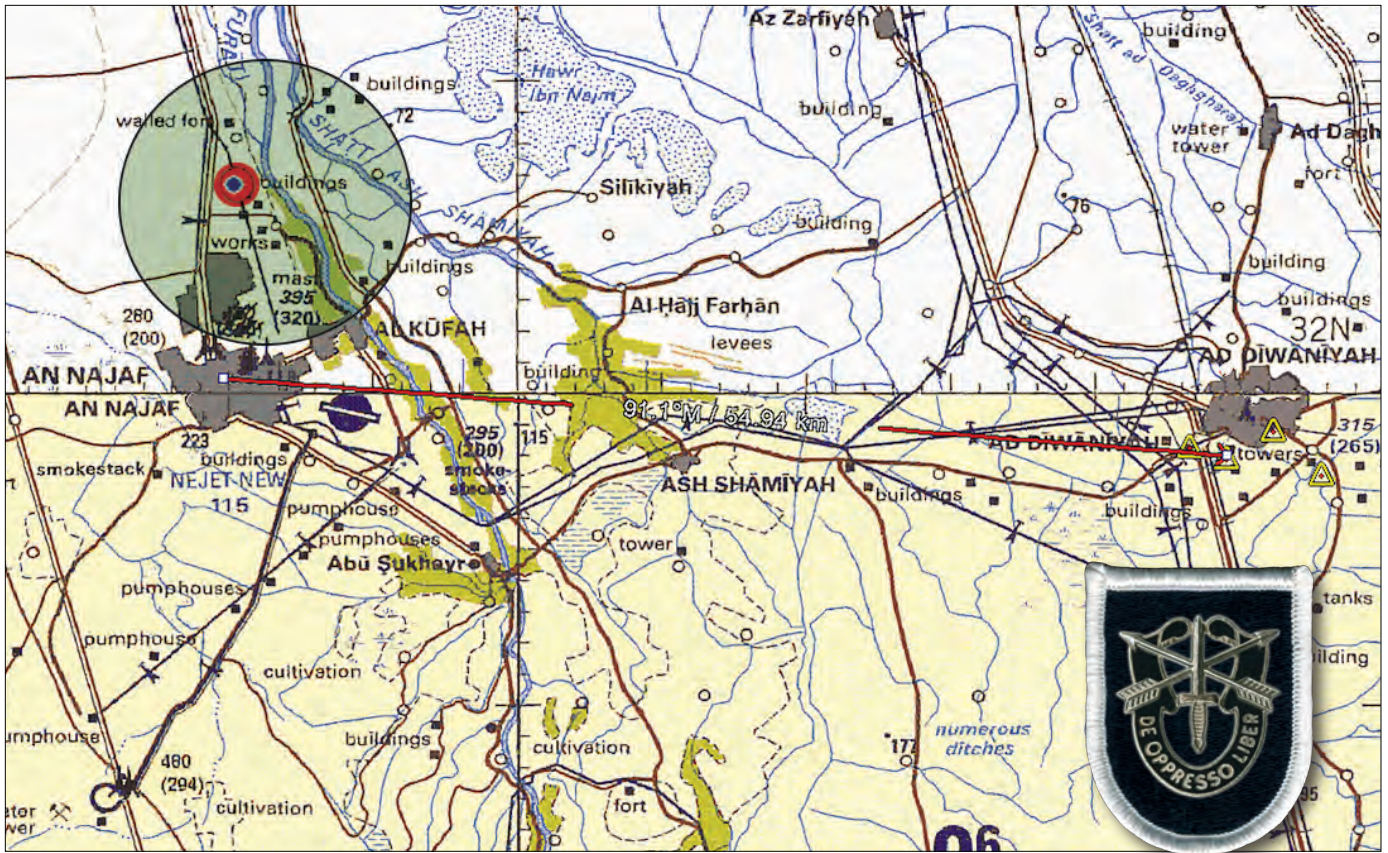


Fighting Through the “Fog of War”

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

by Charles H. Briscoe





Air map section shows the two key cities in the ODA 566 area of operations with the battle site marked. Contact site is bi-colored bullseye in upper corner.

5th SFG beret flash with SF DUI.

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

Prologue

ODA 566, TF Raptor, and ODA 563 with Hilla SWAT sequentially became heavily engaged just north of An-Najaf by the early afternoon of 28 January 2007. The action began when General Uthman, the 8th Iraqi Division commander, asked ODA 566 to help one of his scout platoons break contact. This required more combat power than the SF team had. TF Raptor, relieved of its high value target (HVT) mission in An-Najaf, reinforced ODA 566 with significant assets. The two SF elements, having employed close air support (CAS), used their combined fire power and personnel to assault the main point of enemy resistance. This offensive maneuver enabled more than fifty trapped Iraqi officials, police, and military to reach the safety of friendly lines. The relative calm afterwards convinced Iraqi General Qais, the Province Security Chief, and Colonel (COL) Saadi Al-Maliki, the 1st Brigade commander, 8th Iraqi Division, that the compound fight was over. After accomplishing the morning's relief mission, ODA 566 and TF Raptor were cheered by the villagers along the road as they started back to Camp David to refit and go their separate ways.¹

Unfortunately, the fighting had just begun. ODA 563 and a company of SWAT police were dispatched from Hilla

by the AOB 560 (Advanced Operating Base) commander to assist ODA 566 at the contact site. However, TF Raptor, ODA 566, and ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT used different routes to approach and depart the contact site. Reassured by ODA 566 at Camp David that the fight was over, the ODA 563-led convoy of SWAT trucks was surprised when hit by a heavy volume of fire from the southern berm of the compound. As the lead ground mobility vehicle (GMV) swung left to directly assault the linear ambush, the pseudo echelon left maneuver executed by the trucks behind evolved into a "cavalry line" charge. The volume of fire from the crew-served machineguns on the ODA 563 and SWAT vehicles caused the enemy to abandon their primary positions on the top of the berm. They moved into protected secondary trenches inside until the



Hilla SWAT trucks spread along the southern base of the walled compound.



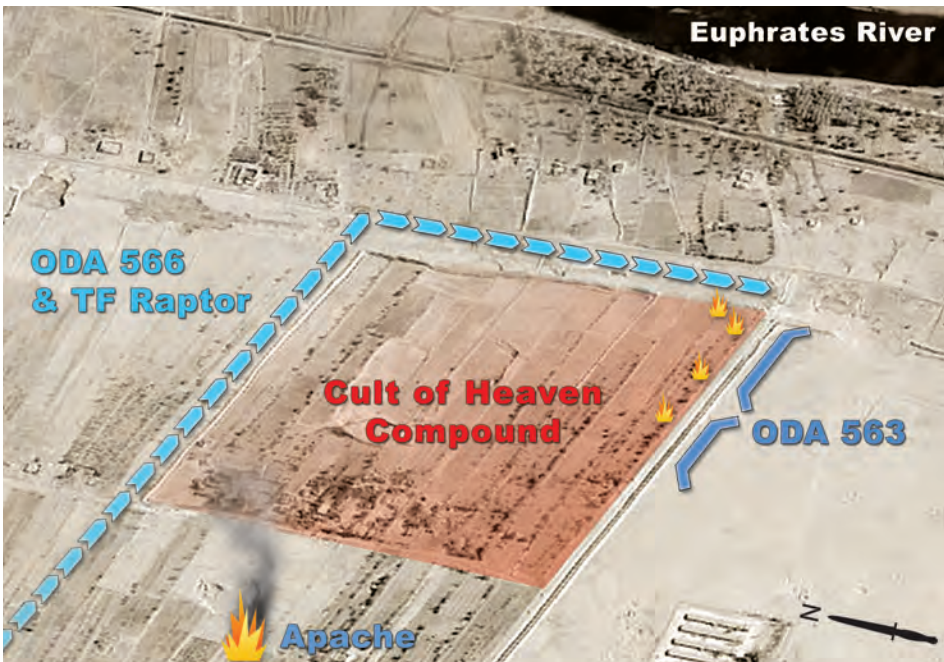
Hilla SWAT medic patch has the Red Crescent, the Muslim symbol for the Red Cross Patch is courtesy of Harry Pugh.



Dismounted Hilla SWAT police relax against the southern berm during a lull in the fighting.



Iraqi Hilla SWAT commander COL Abbas standing next to the CAS-destroyed truck-mounted DShK heavy machinegun in the southeast corner of the compound.



This map shows the return route of TF Raptor and ODA 566 to the contact site. ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT were in the southeast corner.

vehicles reached the base. Then, the enemy fighters reappeared on top to quickly pin down the last two-thirds of the convoy when the SWAT police and SF soldiers dismounted. Several attempts to rally the policemen to continue offensive action were fruitless. The valiant efforts by two SF sergeants to get a Carl-Gustav M-3 anti-tank weapon into the fight were twice stopped cold by heavy enemy fire.² After treating his fellow soldiers SSG Peter

Stoneman*, the senior medic, spotted six SWAT policemen, in a far left flank position, isolated and clearly pinned down by enemy fire. Stoneman unloaded the wounded from the "War Pig," slipped behind the wheel of the 5-ton truck, and with SSG Carl Apo* manning the M-240 machinegun, drove over to rescue the SWAT police from their tenuous position. With the truck positioned as a shield and Apo providing covering fire, Stoneman jumped out, manhandled the six trapped Iraqis aboard the armored truck, and drove back to the main body.³

Meanwhile, Captain (CPT) Robert Konrad*, the ODA 563 commander, COL Abbas, the Hilla SWAT commander, CPT Ali, the company commander, and several others on the far right flank, conducted a ground reconnaissance covered by their truck guns. The small group, using a series of bounding overwatch moves supported by crew-served weapons, discovered a weak spot in the enemy defenses along the eastern wall. After a 500-pound bomb was dropped by an F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter, the group managed to crest the berm. Having surprised the enemy with their maneuvering, they delivered effective small arms fire from the eastern flank until the SWAT captain was shot in the face.⁴

However, during the ODA 563 and SWAT cavalry assault against the southern wall, an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter making cannon runs on the compound was shot down. That act triggered a number of escalated responses from the JSOTF (Joint Special Operations Task Force) and the multi-national JTF (Joint Task Force) headquarters. While ODA 566 and TF Raptor were simultaneously being tasked by their respective commands with the CSAR (Combat Search and Rescue) mission, a Stryker battalion task force was alerted to

execute a “Fallen Angel” mission (recovery of a downed aircraft and aircrew).⁵

Major (MAJ) Jack Guardino*, the TF Raptor commander and CPT Eldon Johnson*, the ODA 566 commander, were still not aware of how significant the enemy threat was in the compound. They quickly put together a plan that included a request for “Big Army” support. Then, with ODA 512 leading, they headed back to the morning contact site. Part I of the Battle of An-Najaf article in *Veritas* 2-08 concluded with CPT Gordon Muldoon*, the ODA 512 commander in the lead of TF Raptor, approaching CPT Konrad (ODA 563), just after he had called in CAS on a truck-mounted 12.7mm DShK machinegun in the southeast corner of the compound.⁶

The fighting to this point emphasized how the Iraqi Army’s assumption of control of the battle space affected U.S. Army Special Forces and the Iraqi military and police elements with whom they worked. Since American SF had direct access to CAS, Iraqi military and political leaders regularly asked them to help military and police units break contact, often in the worst of circumstances. The first half day of fighting on 28 January revealed that the assault forces and SWAT police needed small unit infantry tactical training. But, more importantly, the quantity of ammunition carried by Iraqi elements determined their level of aggressiveness and how long they could deliver sustained fire. Modular Integrated Communications Helmets (MICH), body armor, and up-armored vehicles with ballistic glass saved lives and enabled courageous men to stay in the fight, trading round-for-round, with disciplined, well-trained enemy fighters.⁷

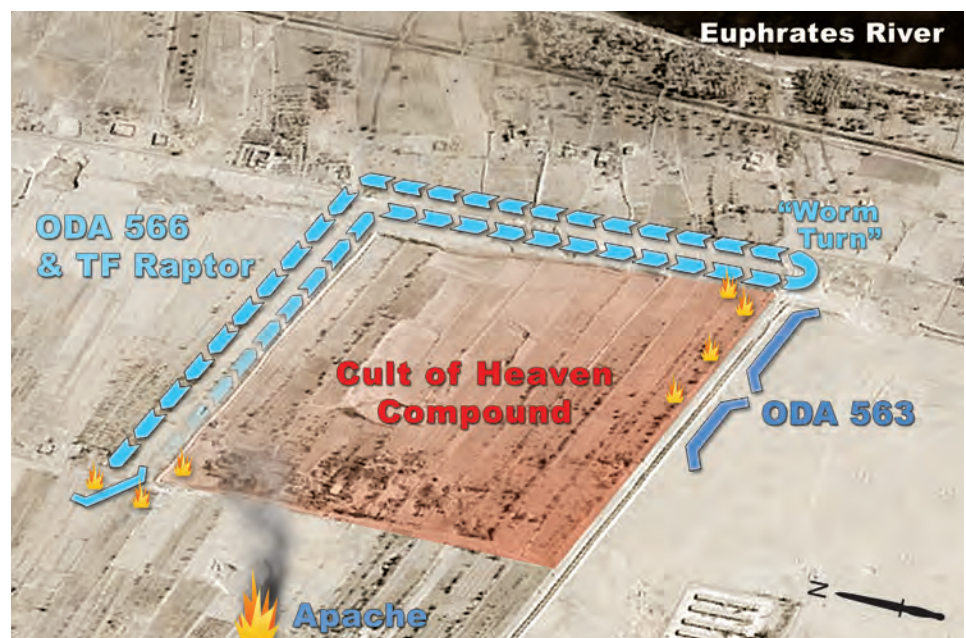
CSAR Gets TF Raptor & ODA 566 Back in the Fight

The intensity of combat ratcheted up several notches when TF Raptor and ODA 566 returned to the fight. Focused on quickly expanding the search for the downed Apache, the two elements unknowingly chose a road that paralleled the western wall of the large compound. The ten to twelve-foot high western berm with tiered fighting positions and trenches was manned by determined fighters with a seemingly limitless supply of ammunition for a variety of weapons. The rest of the Battle of An-Najaf, 28-29 January 2007 proved dramatically different from the morning fights.

When TF Raptor and ODA 566 departed less than two hours before, the Iraqi military, police, and political leaders present were confident that they had control of the situation. Because the Falcon View computer map navigation system was not calibrating

fast enough in the maze of walled orchards and farm buildings, CPT Muldoon was using his topographical map and compass to shoot back azimuths to verify crash coordinates. Reverting to the basics was second nature for the former Ranger battalion fire support officer. ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT had dismounted after their vehicle assault and were exchanging fire when CPT Konrad was told about the downed Apache by SSgt Robert MacGregor*, his JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller). Map coordinates were provided by the wingman circling high overhead.⁸ They did not match those that Muldoon had, but Konrad had a better idea as to the size of the walled enemy compound and the threat inside.⁹ The wingman of the downed Apache, hovering high overhead, was coaxed by Konrad’s JTAC to mark the crash site with chaff. Worried about the AAA (anti-aircraft artillery) or RPG (rocket-propelled grenades) that had downed his partner, the remaining Apache stayed several thousand feet over the site when he dumped chaff. The steep angle to the helicopter made it impossible to shoot a good compass azimuth. CPT Konrad surmised that the plume of smoke rising beyond the far left side wall was probably the downed Apache. This was sufficient for CPT Muldoon. He “shot” several compass back azimuths from different locations along the berm before rejoining MAJ Guardino (Raptor commander) and CPT Johnson (ODA 566). During that short stop two Iraqi assaulters were wounded by enemy fire.¹⁰

Since CPT Konrad had called for CAS on the walled compound, MAJ Guardino asked him to delay further employment until Raptor got to the helicopter crash site. The Hilla SWAT captain who had been shot in the face was loaded aboard a Raptor vehicle to hasten his medical evacuation. Because ODA 563 and the Hilla SWAT police were engaged with the enemy on the southern end of



Dashed arrows show the entry route of TF Raptor and ODA 566 to the contact site. After meeting CPT Konrad (ODA 563) in the southeast corner, the convoy “worm turned” to retrace their route.



TF Raptor & ODA 566 head back to the contact area.



This photo shows how Raptor assaulters were positioned in the back of their GMVs when the convoy entered "the gauntlet."

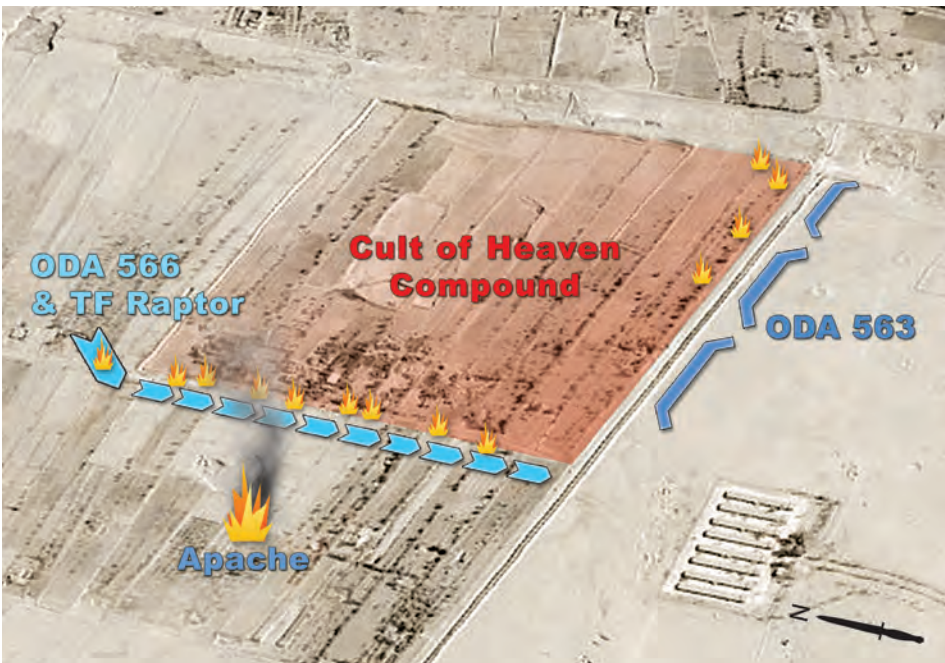


TF Raptor and ODA 566 execute a "worm turn" to retrace their route while CPT Robert Konrad and the ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT reconnaissance element guard the southeast corner of the compound.

the compound, the rescue convoy reversed direction and backtracked along their entry route. CPT Muldoon established the convoy pivot position and the element simply "worm turned," thereby keeping everyone in their original positions. This grandiose maneuver (nine trucks) along the near side the compound did not go unnoticed by the enemy. The volume of small arms fire and RPGs directed at the slow moving convoy increased as the vehicles returned to the north end of the walled-in area and started turning left.¹¹

TF Raptor "Runs the Gauntlet"

The American-led rescue force bypassed a road that ran parallel to the long axis of the compound because they were headed towards the largest plume of smoke. Thus, inadvertently they approached the morning's contact site from the opposite direction. CPT Muldoon and MAJ Guardino agreed that since the helicopter crash had not been spotted from this route that they should try the sandy road that they had bypassed on entry. This would extend the search pattern. Unknown to them that particular road paralleled the western side of the walled enemy compound (250 meters in length). As the lead vehicles turned left heading down the narrow sandy track, the proverbial "chit hit the fan" as the Raptor-led nine-vehicle convoy edging around the corner, momentarily stopped when a flurry of RPGs were fired at the lead trucks.¹²



When the convoy temporarily stopped at the corner, the last Raptor truck & the two ODA 566 trucks were jammed up. About a hundred meters down the western wall of the compound, CPT Gordon Muldoon (ODA 512) leading the TF Raptor convoy, halted momentarily when several RPGs were fired at his vehicle. That short pause caused the convoy to "accordion" when he radioed, "Cinch it up tight," and started the race to break through the "gauntlet of fire."

along the top of the wall, engaged the convoy. CPT Muldoon described the action. "The Raptor mini-gunner, the .50 cal machinegunners, and the GIBs (guys in back) on the M-240 machineguns were firing point blank at enemy shooters to their left no more than 5-6 feet away. You could see them drawing careful 'beads' with their AK-74s. The rooftops of buildings inside the compound were visible to the gunners. As all hell broke loose, I radioed, 'Cinch it up!' alerting the Raptor drivers to close up tight and hit the gas. We had to escape that "gauntlet of fire" as fast as possible."¹³ But, the momentary stop caused the convoy to "accordion" as it resumed movement.

When the assault force in the lead stopped abruptly, CPT Johnson's driver (ODA 566), initially blinded by their dust cloud, had to hit his brakes and swerve right to narrowly miss the last Raptor GMV. MSG Sam Kavanaugh* (ODA 513) was "shotgun" in that assault truck. SSG Adam Donitz*, manning the twin M-240 machineguns above, was slammed against the ring mount as the GMV jerked to a halt halfway into the turn.¹⁴

"I was recovering my balance, wondering what those Iraqi Army guys hunkered down off to the right were doing there, when I spotted a group of thirty enemy fighters in the corner of the compound concentrating their fire on the GMV in front of me. The Iraqi assaulter on the .50 cal was killed in an onslaught of heavy fire and slipped down inside the truck. When I tried to swing the twin 240s to bear, I could not move them. Empty shell casings and links in the traversing ring groove had locked the mount perpendicular to the truck. Unfortunately, the enemy fighters were clustered at about 45 degrees. When he realized that I was not shooting, the leader directed them to concentrate on our truck. As bullets pinged off my armored gun shield, I pulled out my Glock 9mm pistol and began shooting into the massed group. They were close-no more than twenty feet away. I managed to kill their leader and hit several more before my clip ran out. Rather

than change magazines, I ripped a hand grenade off my vest and threw it into their midst," said SSG Donitz. "RPGs seemed to be whoosing all around us."¹⁵

"Realizing my dilemma, MSG Kavanaugh quickly handed another grenade up. I had just tossed it when our driver hit the gas slamming me against the ring mount. As we got parallel to the compound wall I was able to bring my twin 240s to bear. With 1,000 round belts on each gun, I quickly went 'cyclic' because there were so many targets blasting away just 10-15 feet from us. I was firing point blank into them and they still kept at it. Armed fighters ran out of buildings inside, down trenches, and then dropped prone to fire from the berm. Everybody aboard the Raptor trucks was shooting like mad as we tore down that road. I felt the heat of RPGs as they flew by. They were that close. By the time we turned the corner, I had about 150 rounds left of my original 2,000. That's how bad it was," said SSG Donitz. "The volume of fire was ten times greater than any 'Mad Minute' fire power demonstration or 'EXPENDEX' at the machinegun range."¹⁶

"Raptor was the biggest, most vulnerable target based on the tactical arrangement of our GMVs, but we had speed to cut the time in the 'kill zone.' The enemy was placing well-directed fire from their left wall positions into the rear open bays of the Raptor trucks causing havoc. The assaulters were hanging on with one arm 'spraying and praying' as American mini-gunners and Iraqi machine gunners cycled through boxes of ammunition on the trucks. One heroic assaulter without hesitation climbed into a .50 cal machinegun ring in the midst of the fighting when the gunner, shot dead, fell down inside the truck. It was truly a 'free for all' as the enemy fighters fired point blank and threw hand grenades down on us. Most hand grenades just bounced off, exploding on the ground. RPGs, fired at such close range, did not arm. But, when they hit, they slammed into the trucks like sledgehammers, splintering and shattering metal, sending jagged fragments everywhere. We fought our way down the far side of the compound. The whole thing was wild and crazy," recalled MAJ Guardino.¹⁷

"The sound of gunfire kept escalating until it became a massive roar . . . louder than any volume of fire I had ever heard before. I saw enemy heads pop up and shoot, then, they dropped down and reappeared further down the line. Rounds were constantly smacking into the truck. I ducked when a heavy burst of fire spider-webbed the driver's window in my GMV. It killed our Iraqi .50 cal gunner.



Iraqi "Raptor" Patch



Artist's Sketch: With the twin M-240 machineguns locked at 90° SSG Adam Donitz engaged the grouped enemy fighters with his pistol just before TF Raptor ran the "gauntlet of fire" on 28 January 2007 (D. Telles).

He slipped down inside the truck, into the Combat Cameraman's lap on the right. As we raced down the road an Iraqi assaulter in the back clambered up top to man the .50 cal in the middle of the fighting," said SFC Zeke Monroe* (ODA 513). "That was really gutsy."¹⁸

ODA 566 "Runs the Gauntlet"

The first ODA 566 GMV, stopped at the corner, saw what was happening to the Raptor trucks as they sped away into the "gauntlet of fire." The GMV gunners saw thirty to forty enemy fighters firing side-by-side, then roll to a new position, engage again, and then get up and run to man other fighting positions further down the wall. They saw inner defense trenches behind the berm. RPGs were smacking the Raptor vehicles while armor piercing bullets cut through truck bodies. Anti-personnel bullets, kicked up dust where they impacted the truck and then ricocheted off in all directions. The Iraqi assaulters, engaging targets just feet away, were being slammed down into the truck beds, often wounded, by direct body hits (fortunately absorbed by armor). "Run flat" tires were being shredded as the closed-up trucks raced away at 45 mph trying to use speed to break clear of the linear ambush.¹⁹ ODA 566 in the rear was still in the starting blocks.

As the only American combat force assigned to the province, ODA 566 traveled heavy with three times their basic load of ammunition and extra fuel. Operating essentially alone in a province with two major cities, they had to defend themselves and have sufficient firepower to break contact. As the loud roar of gunfire enveloped his truck, SSG Allen Lawrence*, driving the first 566 vehicle with CPT Johnson, watched the Raptor convoy accelerate away. Instinctively, he "floored" his gas pedal. "The intensity and noise of gunfire were incredible. Bullets smacked into the windshield and my side window, spiderwebbing them. I hunched down to look out of the top section and saw nothing but gun barrels pointed down, firing directly at us. The best that I could get was 30 mph on the straightaway. By then, the last Raptor truck had disappeared in the dust," said Lawrence.²⁰ It was worse outside in the back of the truck.

"As I began engaging the enemy with my Squad Assault Weapon (SAW), I could see the death and destruction caused by the .50 cal, M-240s, and the mini-guns of Raptor. But, it didn't seem to have much impact on them.

They kept pouring fire at us. SSG Mark Watson* was steady hammering them with the .50 cal. Then, my M-249 was blown apart, slicing up my face, knocking me backwards. I let go of it and instinctively grabbed my M-4 carbine. That's when I noticed that MSG Roger Ligon's* truck was taking a real beating. At that point we were about ten meters apart," said SFC Jack Carter*, the GIB on the lead 566 GMV.²¹

"ODA 563 was telling us to 'Cease Fire' because they thought we were 'firing them up.' (In reality the enemy force in the compound was engaging both elements simultaneously). When we got to the far corner of the wall, I had SSG Lawrence stop to scan his mirror for MSG Ligon. My worst fear was that we might have to fight our way back down the road to rescue them. Though it was less than a minute before we caught sight of Ligon's truck emerging from the dust, that time seemed like an

eternity," said the ODA 566 commander.²² For the men in the team sergeant's truck, it almost was.

As expected the last two vehicles in the convoy (ODA 566) got the brunt of the assault. They were the slowest, separated from one another and Raptor, and the enemy fighters were able to relocate *en masse* along the walls for the coming "turkey shoot." MSG Ligon, the 566 team sergeant, was "riding shotgun" (right seat) in the last vehicle



Artist's Sketch: SSG Allen Lawrence drives the lead ODA 566 GMV through the "gauntlet of fire" on 28 January 2007 (D. Telles).

of the convoy. They were just turning the corner when he heard the heavy crescendo of gunfire ahead. It made him conscious of how bad it was going to be. "We were on a very narrow dirt road channelized by berms on each side. SSG Lawrence, the lead 566 GMV driver, had gotten a slight jump on us when SSG Geoffrey Kendrick* hit the gas hard. By then, we were being hammered by bullets. RPGs were flying while hand grenades bounced off the hood. When I saw the convoy pulling away in a massive cloud of dust, I yelled, 'Go! Go! Go!' knowing that we were the 'tail gunner,'" said Ligon.²³

SSG Kendrick, driver of the last truck, remembered that "we were getting pounded so hard. The side windows and windshield cracked and spidered. It was hard to see out. I had to scrunch down to see out. The enemy was so close that I could actually see into their eyes and anticipate the strike of the hand grenades they were throwing down on us. An RPG zipped across the hood. Armor piercing rounds were punching through everywhere, kicking up small puffs of dust inside. A round smacked down between my legs from the top of the truck. I knew some of the tires had been hit just the way the truck was handling. The lead GMV was out of

sight. The dust was so thick that Roger Ligon was helping me stay in the middle of the narrow track. The noise inside from the impacting rounds, grenades, and RPGs created an incredible din. And, we had thought the morning fight was bad. That was child's play compared to the 'gauntlet.' We really got a beating. It was so bad that I was mentally willing the truck not to stop," said Kendrick, "because I knew the two guys in the back were having a worse time."²⁴ And, they were.

As the last "duck" in the enemy "shooting gallery," the fighters swarmed to concentrate their fire on Kendrick's truck. SSG Matt Porter*, the .50 cal machine gunner, was slammed back from the gun as the body armor covering his left shoulder absorbed most of the impact. SFC Paul Jackman*, the GIB on the M-249, had only gotten off a few rounds when he was knocked away from the machinegun as several bullets hit the firing bolt, sending splintered steel shards into his right arm. The senior medic grabbed his M-4 carbine and was returning fire when that too, was shot from his hands. Then, a bullet slammed into his MICH helmet rocking him backwards.²⁵

This was fortunate for the American-Iraqi interpreter Steve*, riding in the back with SFC Jackman. The enemy volley of bullets that destroyed his M-4 and knocked him backwards had spun him enough for his armor to absorb several back hits and turned him towards the rear of the bouncing truck. That was when Jackman caught sight of the wounded interpreter on the verge of tumbling out of the truck. "I reacted out of sheer adrenaline. My right arm was useless. I lunged and caught his pants belt with my left hand as he teetered on the edge of the lowered tailgate. How I managed to pull him back into the truck I still don't know. Nelson had been hit and dropped his rifle. He stumbled while trying to grab the weapon before it skittered out of the racing truck. Once I got him in, I pushed him down by the spare tire because the firing had not diminished. Using my left hand I somehow managed to fumble my .45 cal pistol out of the left side-mounted chest holster as I knelt down beside Nelson. As I started firing my pistol, I could see into their eyes. They were that close. Two guys stood up and ran down the berm continually shooting broadside at the truck," remembered SFC Jackman. "As I was crouched behind the spare tire that was taking hits, I was thinking, 'This is really a Lulu. If we stop

they'll swarm us.' Then, we turned the corner and the firing let up."²⁶ By that time Raptor had gotten to the next parallel road beyond the compound where yet another surprise awaited.

Another Player on the Battlefield—MiTT 810

As CPT Muldoon led Raptor down the road paralleling the "gauntlet" he spotted three HUMVEEs on the left. They were opposite a distinct plume of black smoke rising behind a house in an open field to the right. On hyper alert after escaping the "gauntlet of fire" Muldoon directed his team to flank the three trucks and with the crew-served weapons protecting him, went forward to sort out "the latest smoke" on the confused battlefield. They turned out to be soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, serving as the province Military Transition Team (MiTT 810). Their collective reaction to CPT Muldoon was, "Holy Cow! Did you just drive through that? What are you doing here?"²⁷ He had like questions for them. The MiTT had been on the way to An Najaf to spend a few days working with the Iraqi Army brigade commander and staff. They just happened to be nearby when they heard the radio report of an AH-64 Apache shoot down. With M-240 machineguns on their vehicles and carrying small arms (9mm pistols and M-4 carbines), LTC Stephen Hughes, the MiTT leader, having eleven soldiers, decided to investigate and render assistance.²⁸

Covered by the other two MiTT trucks, MSG Thomas Ballard took his HUMVEE forward to the crash site. While making a quick dismounted check, he came under enemy fire. Having determined that there were no survivors, Ballard, wounded in the arm, beat a hasty retreat. After that excursion the MiTT decided to pull back and wait for help. When CPT Konrad (ODA 563) brought in CAS, they marked their position with green smoke as instructed. They did not know the extent of the fighting that had taken place in the area, nor that this SF element at their position, not ODA 563, had the CSAR mission for the downed Apache.²⁹ While MAJ Guardino and CPT Johnson were making an assessment of their combat capabilities—soldiers and vehicles, SSG Lawrence (ODA 566), using an M-79 grenade launcher, and SGT Rex Peters* (TF Raptor) with a Carl-Gustav, eliminated the enemy threat in a small building near the crashed helicopter site. By then, CPT Konrad was directing another pair of Apaches against the enemy compound.³⁰



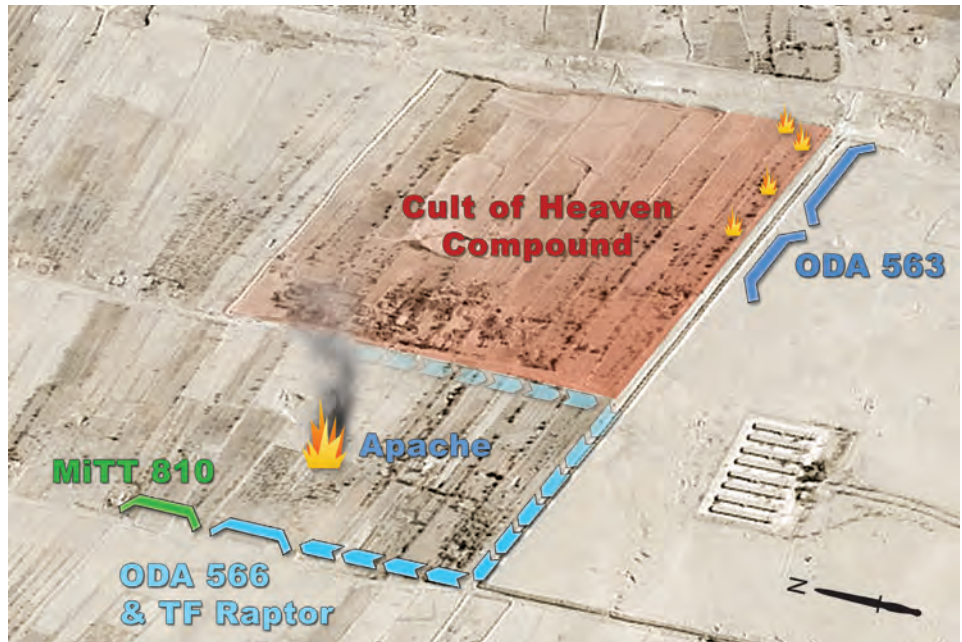
Artist's Sketch: The wounded SFC Paul Jackman (ODA 566) grabbed Steve, the interpreter, by his belt in time to keep him from tumbling out of the last truck running the "gauntlet of fire" on 28 January 2007 (D. Telles).



25th Infantry Division SSI

While fanned out in a perimeter around the MiTT trucks, the ODA 566 and TF Raptor medics began checking casualties. “Our M-2 .50 cal gunner, SSG Mark Watson*, had been shot through one hand and SFC Carter, the GIB manning a M-249 SAW, had a sliced finger caused by a round that had smashed the trigger mechanism, breaking the gun. SFC Jackman, the GIB in the last vehicle, had a serious right arm wound and numerous shrapnel cuts on his face. He received these when his M-4 was trashed by a volley of gunfire. The .50 cal gunner had a head wound from taking a direct hit on his helmet. Two Iraqi machine gunners were dead and several were wounded, none seriously, except for CPT Ali, the SWAT company commander, whom TF Raptor had agreed to medevac (medical evacuation) before running the ‘gauntlet.’ We found him on the floor of the third truck, choking on his blood. Shot in the face, a 7.62mm bullet had passed through both cheeks knocking a tooth out as it exited. We got him to sit up and checked his wounds. Then, we told him to lower his head between his legs and reassured him that he would survive,” said SSG Lawrence, the ODA 566 junior medic.³¹ “A few of our wounded guys, like Specialist Four (SP4) Norman Bond*, the intelligence analyst, were treated by our medic, SFC Ken Dougherty*. The trucks were pretty trashed—all the left side windows and windshields were spider-webbed and there were lots of flat tires. The Iraqi assaulters deserve a lot of credit. Many of them performed heroically,” stated SFC Monroe.³²

A rapid damage assessment was critical to determine the SF capability to complete the CSAR mission. SGM Fred Nathan*, the AOB 510 (Raptor) sergeant major, and MSG Ligon, ODA 566, established a hasty casualty collection point to enable the SF medics to triage the wounded. The Raptor mobility sergeant, SSG Steve Black*, responsible for the operational readiness of vehicles and crew-served weapons, drivers, and machine gunners, had already started checking vehicles for battle damage. SP4 Toby Parker*, the attached mechanic from the 5th SFG Support Battalion, was on flank security. Drivers were changing tires (twenty-two flats including spares). Iraqi Raptor HUMVEEs did not have “run flat” tires. Two Raptor .50 cal machineguns had been disabled by breach block hits. The two team sergeants supervised the ammunition and operable machinegun redistribution to balance the fighting power.³³ “Those guys did a lot of wind sprints in helmets and body armor. The vehicles were fifteen to twenty meters apart and the enemy never stopped firing at us from the berm to the rear of the downed Apache,”



In its search for the downed AH-64 Apache attack helicopter, TF Raptor encountered MiTT 810 just after clearing “the gauntlet” and turning north.

said CPT Muldoon. “Under fire the men changed 20 tires and got one of the .50 cal’s ‘up’ by cannibalizing another damaged one. Though we fired some AT-4s and Carl-Gustavs at the enemy, they did not abandon the berm. After an Apache put a Hellfire missile into the small house in the right corner of the compound the harassment fire was reduced considerably.”³⁴

Since the MiTT confirmed that there were no Apache aircrew survivors, assaulting a determined enemy to secure two bodies and a “black box” made little sense to MAJ Guardino and CPT Johnson considering the state of their equipment and forces. The radio message that a Stryker task force was less than an hour away solved the dilemma.³⁵ Wounded were consolidated aboard an ODA 566 and a MiTT truck and prepared for evacuation to the Polish military hospital in Ad Diwanayah as ODA 563 resumed CAS. The MiTT sent their HUMVEE sporting a set of Texas longhorn cattle horns on the hood to guide the Strykers in from Route Miami while the SF took defensive positions and refitted while they waited.³⁶

The Enemy Keeps ODA 563 Fixed in Position

Realizing that he had accomplished his goal, CPT Konrad moved to rejoin the remainder of his force. They were spread out along the southern wall of the compound from the center to its eastern corner. That proved easier said than done. While the enemy pummeled TF Raptor and ODA 566 as they “ran the gauntlet” down the west wall, another large group concentrated on ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT police, firing from southern wall positions. When he first heard the Raptor miniguns, MSG Shamus Flanagan*, the team sergeant for ODA 563, thought that the heavy volume on his group was coming from them, but it made no sense. The enemy threat was reduced when SSgt MacGregor, the JTAC with CPT Konrad, called in a



COL Abbas and several Hilla SWAT police along the southern berm of the compound.

couple of airstrikes. The CAS enabled the reconnaissance element to rejoin MSG Flanagan and the main body.³⁷ When two trucks tried to slip into the chicken farm behind ODA 563 about dusk, they were driven off by fire.³⁸ These actions proved wise because it would not be until 2 a.m., 29 January 2007, that B Company, 2/3 Infantry (Stryker) drove down “the gauntlet” unhindered to link up with ODA 563. These Strykers provided much-appreciated resupplies of ammunition, food, and water.³⁹



2nd Infantry Division SSI

“Big Army” Strykers Join the Fight

The 5 p.m. arrival of the lead Stryker unit, C Company, 2/3 Infantry Regiment task force enabled TF Raptor and ODA 566 to prepare for a battle hand-off. But, the first necessity was to sweep and secure the crash site. Having twenty Stryker armored vehicles and carrying a 120mm and two

60mm mortars for indirect fire, CPT Bradley Commins* had significantly upgraded the American ground combat power. After positioning the mortars to cover his assault the Stryker commander cleared the area around the aircraft crash site, established security, and assessed the recovery requirement. ODA 512 accompanied the Strykers and provided the attached engineer sappers with body bags. Shortly after C Company finished the sweep, the remainder of the 2/3 Infantry task force led by LTC Barry F. Huggins arrived.⁴⁰

The Stryker battalion commander provided a quick capabilities brief while his second armored company (B Company) expanded the security around the crash area. MSG Kavanaugh (ODA 513) and his Air Force JTAC, SSG Boyd Partain*, explained the limits and deconfliction line for the SOF “kill box” to LTC Huggins and his JTAC. CPT Konrad (ODA 563) in the southeastern corner of the compound would continue to control CAS for two reasons: because CJSOTF had committed Air Force SOF AC-130U Spectre gunships; and because he had better situational awareness. Putting ODA 563 under 2/3 Infantry tactical control (TACON), making Konrad the SOF liaison officer to the battalion commander, and co-locating the Stryker JTAC with ODA 563 satisfied all parties.⁴¹ A Stryker escort to Camp David for TF Raptor and ODA 566 completed the battle handoff arrangements. By then, only sporadic firing was coming from the compound between air strikes.⁴²

CJSOTF Refits & Prepares SSE

Reinforcements pulling resupply trailers met CPT Johnson (ODA 566) in the lead Stryker vehicle at a Route Miami check point. ODA 565 (CPT Steve Watson*) with another company of Hilla SWAT had been sent by MAJ Brockman, the commander of AOB 560. They joined Raptor and ODA 566 as they limped back to Camp David to effect another refit. “Our convoy was a real sight. The

After the reconnaissance mission the ODA 563 GMV added its firepower to the southern berm defense.





Since the Stryker can go 65 mph, it took less than an hour for the TF to drive from FOB Kalsu to the An Najaf area.



The C Company 60mm mortars were co-located with the 120mm mortar and its fire direction system inside the Stryker to the rear.

trucks were lurching side-to-side like 'a circus cavalcade of clown cars' with guys all packed inside, good trucks towing broken ones, and 'run-flat' tires wobbling every which way. It was hard to stay 'closed up tight' in the dark because we were driving with smashed windshields and windows and seeing the road was difficult. The 'right seaters' kept the drivers straight," said SSG Lawrence.⁴³ MiTT 810 with its "Texas longhorn" HUMVEE leading left to spend the night at the Polish military compound at Camp Echo.⁴⁴



Strykers encountering Ashura crowds in Hilla.



The Stryker interpreters worked with the Hilla police to bypass the Ashura parade floats.

The FOB and AOB commanders closely monitored the fight on the radio and visually tracked activities on the ground with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). They coordinated for the Stryker relief force, stacked CAS sorties, arranged ammunition resupply and critical items (tires, windows, and windshields), and anticipated the need for a sensitive site exploitation (SSE) element the following day. "When American SOF is in heavy contact, all the petty bureaucratic issues fall away. Everyone pitches in, making aircraft available for medical evacuation and emergency resupply, providing hard-to-get items (Super Swamper tires), medics to reduce the load on the teams, and mechanics to get damaged fighting vehicles operational as quickly as possible. The 'push down' from all levels was incredible," commented LTC Miller, the FOB 52 commander.⁴⁵ "The CJSOTF and FOB staffs quickly realized that this was a major action. That became apparent when lots of ammunition was being delivered and they still kept running out," said SGM Jerry Koulter*, the FOB 52 operations sergeant major.⁴⁶

Everyone contributed. "MSG Ben Fidelli*, AOB 560 operations sergeant, and SFC Mark Roberts*, his assistant, put refit/resupply packages together. CPT Geoff Mathews* and ODA 2074 (20th SFG Army National Guard), slated for assignment to Ad Diwaniyah was the logical choice for the SSE mission. SGM Koulter, given a team of augmentees, was charged to lead the SSE effort," said MAJ Brockman, the AOB 560 commander. All American elements crowded inside a very jam packed Camp David to prepare to execute their missions at daylight.⁴⁷ "We (SGT Tom Port*, SP4 Parker, and several mechanics provided by the CJSOTF) worked all night on the trucks to get them operational,



Iraqi Raptor assaulters in combat gear.



Raptor mini-gun truck being overhauled at Camp David. Ammunition brass is still visible on the hood.

cannibalizing and applying field expedient solutions, refueling, and rearming," recalled SSG Black, the Raptor mobility NCO.⁴⁸ Back at the contact site, air attacks and mortar fire constrained the enemy fighters.

Integrated Assaults by Fire on the Compound

All night long, CAS was used against the compound. "He (Konrad) was kept in place because CJSOTF had directed that terminal control of AC-130 gunships, a unique SOF asset, would not be given to a conventional Army ATAC," said LTC Christopher Miller, FOB 52 commander. "The CAS ranged from F-16 Fighting Falcon fighters to A-10 "Wart Hog" fighter-bombers to AC-130U Spectre gunships and AH-64 Apache helicopters."⁴⁹ The two Air Force joint terminal attack controllers (ODA 563 and TF 2/3 Infantry) and LTC Huggins coordinated air strikes and mortar fire to isolate the compound and reduce harassment fire on C Company and the Engineer sappers and mechanics as they worked to recover the remains of the Apache pilots and to load the wrecked aircraft for transport back to Kalsu. These tasks took much longer than anticipated and delayed the B Company movement to join ODA 563 on the southern end of the



2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment Stryker at An Najaf.

compound to secure that sector. This was important because the Stryker task force had told the Iraqi police and military to relocate to Route Miami. It was too hard to distinguish the friendly forces from enemy fighters at night.⁵⁰ In between CAS missions, SSGs Carl Apo* and Jesse Bartram* (ODA 563), wearing night vision goggles (NVGs), engaged enemy fighters with their M-240 and .50 cal machineguns intent on resupplying and reinforcing their comrades on the walls.⁵¹

Despite almost constant aerial bombardment, the Stryker one-hour ceasefire at midnight to broadcast surrender appeals (interpreters using commercial loudspeakers) enabled the enemy to recover, bring casualties to their infirmary, and redistribute munitions. A very porous Iraqi military and police cordon on the far west side of the compound (actually Route Miami) and the orchards along the Euphrates River to the east offered good night escape routes. The enemy in the compound used this time to get their heavy machineguns into the fight.⁵² B Company, having done its escort mission and recovered the Apache, was sent to reinforce ODA 563 and shore up the southern and flank defenses. Twenty heavily armed Strykers had an uneventful trip down the "gauntlet" road. Once positioned to best employ their thermal sights the Stryker gunners "locked down" security, closing earlier gaps in coverage.⁵³

Still, the enemy fighters persistently fired at the Americans during the infrequent lulls. The SF machine gunners on the trucks wearing NVGs engaged them as they "popped up" between airstrikes. It was not until the predawn hours that the firing from the compound dwindled down to infrequent bursts.⁵⁴ By then, LTC Huggins, the TF 2/3 Infantry commander, had finalized his assault plan. It was to commence after a final surrender appeal was broadcast by loudspeakers at first light.

As C Company moved into positions along the northern wall and at its corners to block for the B Company, ODA 563, and Hilla SWAT assault from the south, people carrying white flags began to emerge from the compound. A group of forty women and children came first to "test the water" and when the American infantrymen of C Company did not fire, that prompted more and more to start walking towards the Strykers. Soldiers quickly replaced the pins

Strykers Enter the Fight.



The first white surrender flag from the compound appears in front of C Company.

C Company take support by fire (SBF) positions to cover B Company.



While the first enemy fighter to surrender was being searched, a group of forty women and children materialized from the compound and sat down.

Concerned that the first enemy fighter to surrender is a suicide bomber, he is thoroughly searched by C Company personnel.





2/3 Infantry Stryker soldier guards the detainees being held in makeshift concertina enclosures.



2/3 Infantry Strykers provide security while Iraqi Army and Police process detainees from the compound.



Hilla SWAT police join 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment Stryker task force to clear the enemy compound on 29 January 2008.

B Company, 2/3 Infantry Strykers, ODA 563 with its five-ton "War Wagon," and the Hilla SWAT prepare to launch a combined assault from the south to clear the compound on 29 January.



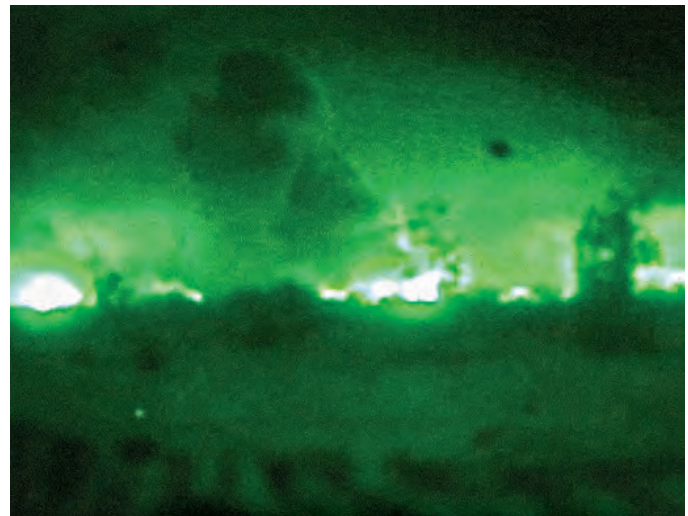
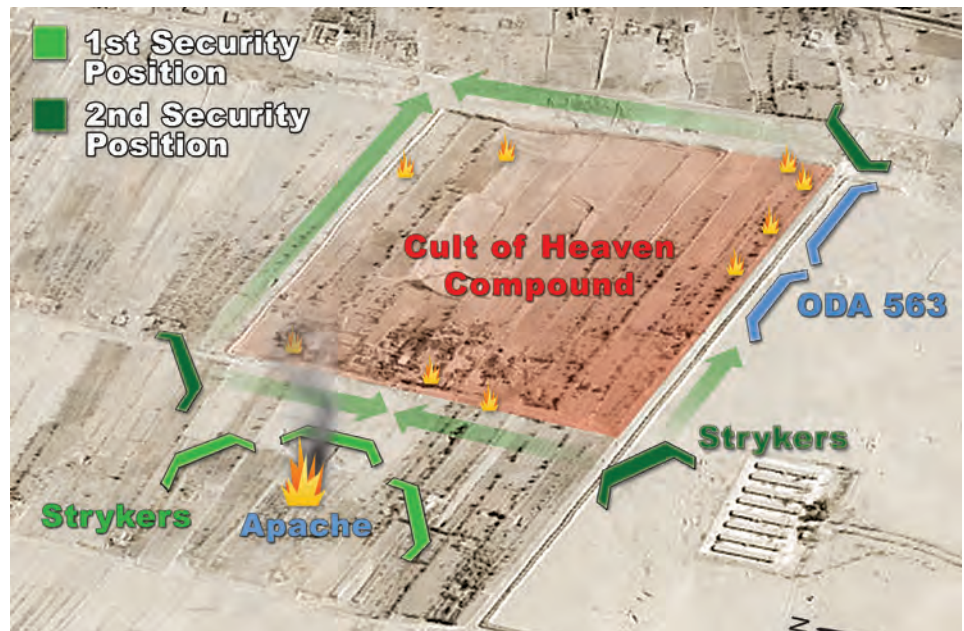
Modified map of compound showing ODA 563 & Stryker company security positions, before TF Raptor and ODA 566 left for Camp David on 28 January 2007.

in hand grenades and carefully maneuvered to control the oncoming people. "There were no innocents, wounded or not. They were fighters and their families. They had chosen to stay and support the resistance. Our first concern was suicide bombers. When two hundred had come outside, it was obvious to LTC Huggins that while the compound still had to be cleared, our basic mission had changed radically," said CPT Commins. "We were unloading the 'C' (concertina) wire off the vehicles as our interpreters began broadcasting instructions. Though they had wounded among them, our first priority was to separate, search, and segregate."⁵⁵ As the Strykers dealt with the post-conflict tasks, TF Raptor was enroute to Baghdad, towing three disabled trucks.⁵⁶

Epilogue

When CPT Johnson and ODA 566 arrived at the battle site, the C Company interpreters had induced the survivors in the compound to come out and surrender shortly after dawn. Then, B Company, 2/3 Infantry, ODA 563, and the Hilla SWAT began clearing the walled facility and surrounding areas. Resistance by the wounded left inside was minimal. Circular concertina wire enclosures separated 411 blindfolded and flex-cuffed males from 200 plus women and children and the wounded in a triage area. During the late morning sandstorm three UH-60 Black Hawk medevac helicopters carried out the seriously injured. It was about noon when General Uthman, 8th Division commander, and COL Saadi, 1st Brigade commander, took charge of the detainee operations. Then, an "Iraqi face" was put on the operation. The 810th MiTT and the B Company Strykers stayed until the last detainees were delivered to Baghdad on 30 January 2007.⁵⁷

An estimated 370 enemy KIA and 411 captured males substantiated the initial Iraqi Scout and Police reports of 800-1,000 fighters on 28 January. The dead fighters were uniformly well-armed, had clip-on plastic identification badges, were similarly clothed, and most wore black canvas chest ammo carriers. They each had seven to eight magazines and several weapons. Iraqi soldiers identified the dead foreign fighters. "The CJSOTF Air Officer had committed everything that they had in the wing against this hundred acre target," said LTC Miller, FOB 52 commander.⁵⁸ Yet, after eighteen



Thermal image of airstrikes lighting up the night sky.



Night vision sight photo of airstrike on enemy compound.



These photos show how elaborate the defenses in the compound were, the variety of heavy weapons, and the quantity of small arms captured.

hours of CAS (14 F-16C, 8 A-10, and 4 AC-130U sorties) against the compound, more than six hundred survived—a testament to strength of the defenses.⁵⁹

The interior of the compound was a labyrinth of well-constructed, thick-walled buildings, most with deep, bunkered cellars. An underground medical clinic (100' by 30') was used to treat the wounded while the battle raged. The fighting positions along the walls of the compound were several feet thick. The eight-twelve foot high walls were terraced with platforms to allow fighters to reload and get resupplied under cover. They obviously had been constructed using a backhoe or bulldozer. There were fighting trenches around the buildings. Secondary defense lines behind wall positions were tiered and planks bridged the trenches.

Eleven 60mm and 82mm mortars had been clustered in a corner. There was a ZPU-1 anti-aircraft (AAA) heavy machinegun on a truck and three more DShKs mounted on trailers. It was most likely one of these crew-served guns that shot down the Apache after two RPGs missed the two aircraft. One truck-mounted DShK had driven into the corner nearest ODA 566 the morning before. Hastily abandoned Iraqi Scout HUMVEES and civilian trucks outside the compound had been destroyed by the CAS as were numerous 5-ton trucks, pickup trucks, automobiles, and motorcycles inside. Truckloads of functional small arms, light machineguns, mortars, a couple hundred RPGs, vast quantities of ammunition (the majority armor-piercing) and mortar rounds, medical supplies, and more than a ton of packaged food ("Happy Cow" cream cheese and "Kire" for bread making) in stacks six feet high had been loaded aboard the Iraqi Army trucks for their future use.⁶⁰

Large stacks of eight-page propaganda newspapers identified the leader, Diya' Abd-al-Zahra' Karim or Ahmad Al-Hassan, and explained why this well-trained, and equipped fighting force, *Jaysh al Ra'ab* (Army of Heaven) had been positioned near An Najaf. It was a non-JAM, non-Badr Shia messianic extremist group, *Ansar Al-Imam Al-Mahdi* (Supporters of the Messiah) determined to install their leader as the 12th Imam of the Shia. Documentation revealed a 575-man battalion organized along former Iraqi Army lines, with names beside each position, and detailed target folders to support assassinations of the senior leaders to effect a seizure of Shia power after the elimination of the eleven Imams.⁶¹



This picture of Imam Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Mohammed, was on the wall of the Ahmad Al-Hassan's meeting room in the compound.



Stacks of this multi-paged newspaper with Diya' Abd-al-Zahra' Karim or Ahmad Al-Hassan on the front page explained why this well-trained, and equipped fighting force, Jaysh al Ra'ab (Army of Heaven) had been positioned near An Najaf.

A Summation

In August 2004, major combat had taken place around the Ali Mosque and cemetery between the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), three battalions of the 1st Cavalry Division, and Iraqi forces on one side and the Islamist Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr on the other. Fighting began in the city center, moved through the cemetery, and shifted to the Ali Mosque where the Mahdi Army took refuge. The shrine was surrounded by American and Iraqi forces. Four 2000-pound JDAMs (Joint Direct Attack Munitions) on two hotels adjacent to the shrine being used by the insurgents finally prompted a ceasefire. Iraqi police assumed control of the city when the U.S. forces and Mahdi Army agreed to withdraw. Thirteen U.S. were KIA and more than a hundred WIA, forty Iraqi Security Forces were KIA, and forty-six Iraqi Security Forces were WIA compared to 159 Mahdi Army fighters KIA and another 261 captured.⁶² While the Mahdi fighters had to surrender their weapons in order to leave, none were detained.⁶³ For its role in the 2004 battle TF Raptor received a Meritorious Unit Citation.⁶⁴

Jund al-Samaa “Army of Heaven”



The 12th Imam is located at the far left, face enshrouded by brilliant light.

The messianic Shiite group, *Ansar Al-Imam Al-Mahdi*, or “Supporters of the Messiah” and its armed wing, *Jund al-Samaa* or “Army of Heaven” established themselves in a well-fortified compound in an orchard area between Al Zarqa’ and Al Maf’hanah, north of An Najaf. The group’s leader, Ahmed Hassani al-Yemeni, or Dia Abd al-Zahra Kadim, proclaimed himself as Al Mahdi, or the guided one. According to Shi’a belief, the 12th Imam, Muhammad al-Muhtasib, who disappeared as a child, would reappear as a messianic figure, Al Mahdi, at the end of the world to save mankind and usher in a perfect Islamic society. Evidence showed that Hassani/Kadim and his followers planned to attack the city of An Najaf on the final day of Ashura to seize the holy shrine of Imam Ali, assassinate the senior Shiite clerics, to include the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and in the apocalyptic chaos afterwards, proclaim that Al Mahdi had returned.

Hassani/Kadim was described as a disgruntled disciple of Muhammad Al-Sadr, the father of the Mahdi Army leader Muqtada Al Sadr, who founded the Sadrist strain of Iraqi Shiism. The group was considered a fringe, radical offshoot of the Sadrist movement. However, just like the younger Sadr and his followers, they opposed the

mainstream Shiite religious establishment in Iraq and were hostile to the U.S. government and Sunni Arab insurgents. Hassani/Kadim was killed in the fighting on 28-29 January 2007.

The 550-575 man “Army of Heaven” had five line companies with three platoons each. These platoons had three eleven-man squads. The headquarters company had administrative, medical, supply, transportation, security (body guards), intelligence, crew-served weapons (heavy machineguns and mortars), and sniper sections. The “Army of Heaven” was well-organized, trained, and highly disciplined. Target folders had been prepared to support the assassinations of senior Shiite clerics. These attacks would herald the messianic and apocalyptic events that were to precede the return of Al Mahdi. He would save the true believers from their trials and tribulations at the hands of the Sunni and infidel oppressors according to Shiite belief. Several six-foot high stacks of propaganda newspapers with Hassani/Kadim on the front page were standing ready for distribution in the wake of the chaos planned by the “Army of Heaven” at the Imam Ali shrine on the last day of Ashura, 30 January 2007.



American and Iraqi TF Raptor personnel conducted a memorial service for the Iraqi assaulters killed in action, at An Najaf, 28 January 2007.

Friendly casualties from the Battle of An Najaf in 2007 were light. Four Iraqi military were KIA and two dozen wounded. There were two Americans killed (Apache pilots) and eight wounded versus 370 enemy fighters KIA and untold numbers wounded.⁶⁵ A lot of GMVs and weapon systems were battle-damaged. But, less than twenty-four hours after TF Raptor had returned to Baghdad, the assault force was 100% mission ready. Restoring combat readiness to the assets involved at An Najaf became the top priority for the CJSOTF. Army SOF support personnel worked around the clock to accomplish those tasks. It was a herculean team effort.⁶⁶

Despite a success with relatively few casualties, the last remnants of the “fog of war” associated with the 28-29 January 2007 fight that developed from an “Iraqi only” operation were not removed until several weeks afterwards (see sidebar on Messianic Shiite Group). The first day of the 28-29 January battle 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 play a major role in every Iraqi military operation. The airstrikes and indirect fire that accompanied the sheer combat power of a Stryker task force with more than forty armored vehicles broke the will of the “Army of Heaven” fighters during the night of 28-29 January 2007. While the initial Stryker surrender appeal with a ceasefire at midnight provided the enemy with some relief to resupply and reinforce, subsequent appeals the following morning were successful and saved many lives.⁶⁷

In retrospect, the failure of the SF elements to share tactical intelligence assessments with one another and the conventional force added to the “fog of war.” The Stryker force successfully integrated the battlefield operating systems of both elements to “lock down” the compound with night vision optics in order to most effectively use coordinated fire attacks. The necessity to train direct

action assault forces and SWAT police in small unit infantry tactics was realized. Equally important, the amount of ammunition carried by soldiers and police determined the level of their aggressiveness and ability to sustain effective fire. American combat equipment works. MICH helmets, body armor, and up-armored vehicles with ballistic glass saved lives and enabled very courageous men to stay in the fight, trading point blank fire with disciplined, well-trained enemy shooters just feet away.⁶⁸ With that said, the Special Forces elements, having stretched their capabilities to the limit, were ready to relinquish the fight to a conventional force that had the ground combat power to decisively break the enemy resistance . . . a Stryker task force.

The intensity and violence of the combat during “the gauntlet” was difficult to project in words. However, it will linger in the memories of these gallant Special Forces and Iraqi soldiers and police. And that is not all bad. ♣

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

- 1 CPT Eldon Johnson* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MAJ Jack Guardino* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 15 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MAJ Walt Brockman* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 4 December 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.
- 2 CPT Robert Konrad* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, CPT 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, MSG 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, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, MSG Flanagan telephone interview notes, 4 September 2008, and CPT Konrad email to Dr. Briscoe, 25 May 2008, Subject: An Najaf Article, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
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- 11 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and SFC Monroe interview, 13 June 2008.
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- 13 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 14 SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 15 SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 16 SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
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- 18 SFC Monroe interview, 13 June 2008.
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- 20 SSG Allen Lawrence* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 21 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
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- 24 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick Interview, 14 November 2007.
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- 34 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007 and CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007.
- 35 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007 and CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007.
- 36 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, and CPT Bradley Commins* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 15 August 2008, Presidio, CA, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 37 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, and SSG Bronson interview, 25 June 2008.
- 38 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 39 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 40 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008, and MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007.
- 41 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008, and 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf AAR.
- 42 MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007.
- 43 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007 and SSG Black interview, 14 July 2008.
- 44 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007 and MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
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- 47 CPT Johnson Interview, 13 November 2007, MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo Interview, 4 December 2007 and MAJ Brockman Interview, 4 December 2007.
- 48 SSG Black interview, 14 July 2008.
- 49 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and SSG Bronson interview, 23 June 2008.
- 50 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 51 MSG Flanagan, SSG Jesse Bartram*, SSG Daniel Malcolm*, and SSG Carl Apo* interview, 4 December 2007.
- 52 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008 and 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf AAR.
- 53 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 54 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007 and CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 55 CPT Commins, 15 August 2008. **During the final surrender appeal on 29 January, some fifty males attempted to "squirt" northwest during the confusion. MSG Flanagan, with part of ODA 563 and truck-mounted SWAT police, chased them down and herded the men back to the detainee area.** MSG Flanagan interview, 4 September 2008.
- 56 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007, MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007 and SSG Black interview, 14 July 2008.
- 57 MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 14 November 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, and CPT Commins, 15 August 2008.
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