

MA [REDACTED] Yes.

CAPT [REDACTED] Eighteen to twenty, I'll say that. I think that's all the questions I had to follow up right now. Anything else, General?

GEN HODGKINS: Yes. I'd like to confirm...for the record. The first issue, although I think we got a clarification from 7-3, was on the Mavericks where the MISREP listed four were fired. He had said that he had brought one back, so it obviously has to be a mistake. There could only be three, [REDACTED] So, just to confirm that in fact, you did fire two.

MA [REDACTED] I did fire two and I think in my previous interview, I stated that he was in on Maverick pass...I think he said later, he told me that it was a gun pass. But, either way, he only fired one of his two Mavericks. I fired both...based on the information...I have today.

COL [REDACTED] As far as the rest of the ordinance there, is it fairly accurate?

CAPT [REDACTED] It looks the way she's done it is all 7-3, and then 7-4.

MA [REDACTED] Yeah...this...yes, generally. I mean I write down my weapons parameters from the LASTE...from the date of capture on the line up and at the end of the sortie. Again, if we had a tape...and I usually record that...

COL [REDACTED] So, the only pass that's not accurate there is probably the Maverick?

[REDACTED]

MAJ [REDACTED] I...would be 7-3's Maverick. He only got one Maverick off.

COL [REDACTED] So, it was about...what eleven runs, maybe? I think there were twelve on that weren't there?

MA [REDACTED] That's, yeah...probably about right.

CAPT [REDACTED] Maj [REDACTED] anything? Any questions?

TAB H

Tab H

FAC Testimony and Statement

Captain [REDACTED] (MOUTH) Testimony..... H-3
Captain [REDACTED] (MOUTH) Follow-Up Testimony..... H-21
Captain [REDACTED] (MOUTH) Statement..... H-27

*Declassify entire tab H
except sections marked*

[REDACTED]

Intentionally Left Blank

26 April 2003

Interview with Ca [REDACTED]

Parties present:

BRIG GEN WILLIAM F. HODGKINS, USAF

COL [REDACTED] USMC

MAJ [REDACTED] USAF

CAPT [REDACTED] USAF

CAPT [REDACTED] USMC

CAPT [REDACTED] USMC, Defense Attorney

COL [REDACTED] My name is Colonel [REDACTED] and under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

[REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] The other day I read you your rights...again, I read your rights the other day. If you have any questions...I'm re-reading them to you now. If you have any questions, we can take a moment break for you to ask those questions or speak with counsel. I am Maj [REDACTED] member of the Air Force. We're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on or about the 23rd of March 2003, of which we suspect you of the offense of violating Article 92 of the UCMJ, in that you failed to obtain the proper authority to authorize Type 3 CAS to a flight of A-10s. I advise you that under the provisions of Article 31, UCMJ, you have the right to remain silent, that is say nothing at all. Any statement, oral or written, may be used as evidence against you in a trial by courts-martial, or on other administrative proceedings. You have the right to consult a lawyer, and to have a lawyer present during this interview. You have the right to military legal counsel free of charge, and in addition to military counsel, you're entitled to civilian counsel of your own choosing, and at your own expense. You may request a lawyer at any time during this interview. If you desire to answer questions, you may stop the questions at any time. Do you understand these rights?

[REDACTED]
CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] Do you want a lawyer?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] I note that your attorney's already present. Is that correct?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] Do you want to consult with him in private?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] That's all I have, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] OK, [REDACTED] we've read your statement, the statement that you provided to the board. We also have some initial interview statements from some pilots, and what we're trying to do here is get a clear picture of the air situation on the 23rd of March. I've got 15 questions here that we'll go through and see if you can clarify for us things in your statement, things that might help us establish a better picture of what was happening from the air. The first question is, you mentioned in your statement that JENKE 78 was a single A-10 that checked in

[REDACTED]

with you on the 23rd of March. Could the aircraft's call sign had been GYRATE 7-3, and could it have been a section of A-10s vice one aircraft?

CAPT [REDACTED] GYRATE 7-3 does ring a bell, Sir. I was more sure of the number than the actual word of the call sign. There was no time to write down call signs that day, as we didn't have any pre-planned CAS. I wasn't sure who would be checking in, did not have access to an ATO as well, so all of the call signs were brand new to my ear. Rather than have aircraft repeat call signs over the radio and waste time, I just went with what I remember. I'm more sure of its being 7-8 than 7-3, although I know you mentioned that 7-3 was the one operating at the time and had a MISREP commensurate with what happened, and I was sure at the time it was a single. The only voice I heard back from the A-10s was the same voice. It could've been a flight lead talking for his wingman, but it was always the same voice, and the times I could observe the aircraft, it seemed like there was just a single A-10. I don't remember specifically, but I think he did check in as a single.

COL [REDACTED] Second question...Did you control any other A-10s that day, earlier or later?

CAPT [REDACTED] None earlier. I personally did not control any other A-10s. HAWK, the FAC with Tanks controlled A-10s here, if I may point it out. After the Battalion consolidated the city across the north bridge, we again consolidated about 4 or 5 hundred meters north of the north bridge. At that time the XO asked me to provide a wall of fire support. As we moved north, our objective, our final objective being the T intersection.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] And what was the T intersection? What grid was that?

CAPT [REDACTED] That's ...225 410, approximately.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

CAPT [REDACTED] We had HAWK controlling the A-10s at that time. I don't know his call sign. He dropped MK82s across the road in front of us, about 600 meters away.

COL [REDACTED] And where was that grid location, then, where he dropped?

CAPT [REDACTED] Approximately 225 400, up in here, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

CAPT [REDACTED] And then he also dropped bombs in a treeline where we thought there was a Delta 30 battery, over here, approximately 213 400, something right around there, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

CAPT [REDACTED] Again, that was at nightfall. So about a month ago, that was probably about 1430Z time.

COL [REDACTED] OK. Third question. What type of deconfliction measures did you establish?

CAPT [REDACTED] With the A-10, the only deconfliction measure I gave him was North of the Saddam Canal. I didn't give him any other lateral deconfliction or time or altitude deconfliction.

COL [REDACTED] Fourth question. At any time, did you have eyes-on the target area that the A-10 was engaging?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Fifth question. You said in your statement that you got the aircraft time on station and ordinance. Do you remember how much time he had on station and the ordinance load that he was carrying?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. 45 minutes time on station. The ordinance mix was MK82s, Mavericks, and 30 millimeter gun. I don't remember how many of each he carried. He obviously carried quite a few _____.

COL [REDACTED] OK. The sixth question. You said that you sent the aircraft north of the Saddam Hussein Canal to find targets. Did you pass the pilot any additional information with regard to enemy forces, equipment that he could expect to see?

[REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED] Not specific equipment, Sir. I said I was worried about the enemy reinforcing the fight from the north. They had been reinforcing from the east. As we moved through the city, I had the Cobras running up and down the east flank of the city in salt flats. I was worried about the 23rd Infantry Brigade Headquarters and forces coming down from the north. I told him to go north and basically tell me what you see.

COL [REDACTED] So, you didn't describe any targets to him?

CAPT [REDACTED] He talked about vehicles. I asked for the grid. I got the grid back, and I think when he ????? air. I don't remember the exact numbers, but I remember plotting on my photo...I had a grid photo of the city that I was working off of. I remember it flying somewhere near here.

COL [REDACTED] Let's go on to the seventh question here. You stated that JENKE 7-8 OR GYRATE found targets in the vicinity of the northern bridge. Did he describe those targets to you?

CAPT [REDACTED] All he said was vehicles, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] OK. And the location of those vehicles, do you have?

[REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED] I don't remember the number, but they plotted out somewhere around 225 387, right in here.

COL [REDACTED] OK. That's really the answer to question number 8. How many passes...question number 9, how many passes did the A-10 make? Do you know?

CAP [REDACTED] Five, Sir, that I remember. It was...I'll expound for you.

COL [REDACTED] Yeah, do you...what was the ordinance he dropped on those passes in a sequence?

CAPT [REDACTED] From my perspective, he dropped MK82s, either one or two, and I could see the top of the explosion above the city. At that point, or just prior, he stated talking about taking some Triple A fire, and that's in my statement as well. He then made what I thought was three gun runs, and my situational awareness was he's making those gun runs to suppress the Triple A that he was receiving. And, I believe I also wrote I've no doubt he's taking Triple A. We found the guns, and the guns were here, just to the west of this bridge on a, on like a little shack.

COL [REDACTED] And what's that grid?

CAPT [REDACTED]: 223 385, approximately. Pretty close, and then just on the other side of the bridge as well, there's another ZPU1, 14.5 millimeter. And then, 300 meters down the river, right here where this road would intersect, a patrol found another ZPU1.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] And that is grid?

CAPT [REDACTED] 225 383 or 4, approximately.

COL [REDACTED] OK, Question ten. Did you have...

CAPT [REDACTED] I'm sorry. The last one was a Maverick shot.

COL [REDACTED] Just one Maverick, that?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. The statement talks about him wanting to roll in from the north for that shot. But, I aborted him based on...Mavericks if they break lock, they'll go long, and obviously, we've got Marines and civilians in the city here, so I aborted him on that. He came around from the east to west and then it was basically a point blank Maverick shot.

COL [REDACTED] And the runs that he was making, were all of them from east to west?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir. Some were from left to right, so that would have been west to east.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

CAPT [REDACTED] Both ways.

COL [REDACTED] Both ways?

CAP [REDACTED] Just in the 270 090. I think that the Maverick shot was actually more from the west to east.

COL [REDACTED] You stated the altitudes in your statement, but at what altitudes was he starting at? What was the lowest altitude you believe he got to?

CAPT [REDACTED] He started at around [REDACTED] on what [REDACTED] was. I asked him what he would be rolling in from, and then he bottomed out... My sight picture on A-10s is not as good as, obviously, on other platforms, but it looked like about [REDACTED] is where he was bottoming out.

COL [REDACTED] The tenth question. Did you have Cobras working along the Saddam Canal during the times the A-10s checked in with you?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir. If they were working the Saddam Canal, it was against my wishes, because, again, my SA is that my Company fight that's in the city, and I didn't want the Cobras going too far north and getting shot down. They had been pressing targets all day long, hovering over treelines, getting shot up, getting some MISREPs back down of guys that came back with battle damage. There was no way I'd let them go all the way up there for fear that they would get shot down, and now we've got to do a rescue mission.

COL [REDACTED] How far did those...to your knowledge, how far did those Cobras go up there? What was the closest they got to the canal?

CAPT [REDACTED] I'd say no more north than the 373 northing.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

CAPT [REDACTED] From my estimation, I could see them making their runs, so I could clear them. They were making runs and shooting at about the 37 northing, at targets that were up here along the canal.

COL [REDACTED] Question eleven. You stated that you came upon a couple of Humvees, labeled TF2, Task Force Tarawa. Then, you called "abort, abort, abort" to the A-10s. Did you give the pilot a reason for the abort call?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. I told him we'd come upon some friendlies, and I wanted to double check lead trace that...I didn't understand at the time why there would be Humvees in front of us if we were lead trace. So...

COL [REDACTED] What grid was that? Where you saw the Humvees?

[REDACTED]

CAPT S [REDACTED] It was the 361 northing, right here, and we'd come out on one of these roads and made a left, and then the Humvees were right in front of us.

COL [REDACTED] On the MSR?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir. They were in the street, like an alley way.

COL [REDACTED] And what's that grid? Approximately.

CAPT [REDACTED] It's either one of these streets here. Either the...you know... the 3215, 216, 217.

COL [REDACTED] Approximately.

CAPT [REDACTED] One of those streets there, yeah. And as we made that left, saw these Humvees..." abort, abort, abort." Asked for lead trace. I got 361 northing, which makes sense because we made that left turn and were turning west along that 361.

COL [REDACTED] Subsequent to the abort call, what did you say to the pilots after you confirmed that you were lead trace with Bravo Company?

CAPT [REDACTED] I told them I've got friendlies. I'm checking on it. He came back and said, "Hey, all my targets are north of the canal." I said, "Roger that. Standby." I got the lead trace

[REDACTED]

back to the Company Commander as 361. It's in my statement. And I asked, "Is that our lead trace?" And they're like, "Yeah, we are lead trace," is what I get back from them. I gave that to the A-10s, and I cleared them again to engage.

COL [REDACTED] How many runs had they made prior to the abort call?

CAPT [REDACTED] I'm not sure, Sir. I'm not sure.

COL [REDACTED] Do you know how many runs they made subsequent to the abort call? That first abort call?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, I'm not sure.

COL [REDACTED] About how long was the fight stopped during that time while you checked?

CAPT [REDACTED] Probably about 5 minutes.

COL [REDACTED] Question thirteen. During this exchange, what did the A-10 pilots say to you? Did they say anything to you?

CAPT [REDACTED] Just that, "Hey, all my targets are north of the canal."

COL [REDACTED] And when you cleared them back to re-engage, did they say anything to you at that point?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Question number fourteen. Did the pilots pass any BDA to you?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] So you didn't get any BDA at all from them?

CAPT [REDACTED]: No. When I informed them that there may have been a friendly fire incident, they...they got my call sign.

COL [REDACTED] What did they specifically say when you informed them? What did you tell them when you aborted the air? When you checked fire because you thought there were friendlies in the area: What exactly did you say to them, to the best of your recollection, and what did they say to you?

CAPT [REDACTED] OK...I called, "check fire, abort, abort, abort," whatever I could do to get him to stop shooting. They did stop orbiting overhead.

COL [REDACTED] Did they say anything to you at that point?

[REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED] They inquired as to what...the reason. And of course, it's on me to give him the reason, you know. So, I grabbed my FSC leader and said, "Hey, what's wrong?" He says, "Hey, the Battalion thinks there may be some friendlies north of the bridge." And, that's when I informed the A-10s. I said, "Hey, we may have some friendly Marines north of the bridge. I'm checking on it now. I'm going to clear it up for you." Because, to my knowledge, obviously, there was no Marines up there. I, in fact, thought that there was some confusion, and the Battalion thought that the A-10 was firing on targets north of the Saddam...or the Euphrates bridge.

COL [REDACTED] What did the pilot say to you after you told him that?

CAPT [REDACTED] The pilot said, "Hey, you know, we were cleared." And I said, "Roger. I'm checking on it now." And then they seemed pretty ready to RTB or move on to the next mission. So, they got my call sign, and I said "Hey, it's MOUTH." They asked if there was a number attached to that, and I said no. And then they...

COL [REDACTED] Did they say anything else to you? During that time, do you recall?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] During the A-10 engagement did you witness any [REDACTED] or any [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]s, or anything else from the area that they were engaging?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] That's all I have. Are there any other questions?

CAPT [REDACTED] I do have a follow-up. I'm Capt [REDACTED] pilot advisor to the board. Prior to them asking to make a run from the north, had you given them any kind of restrictions as far as run in directions?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yeah, it's in my statement and it's east west only.

CAPT [REDACTED] OK.

COL [REDACTED] General, do you have anything?

GEN HODGKINS: Yes. I think in your statement there was a reference to a fight just to the west. I think that was in your statement, I'm not sure. But was there a fight, and were there any Cobras to the west? Are you aware of anything that was going on to the west that was another sort of separate fight?

[REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED] I have no...no recollection of any fights going on to the west at all...nothing I was in control of.

GEN HODGKINS: Another question. Did you hear in any of the RT with the Cobras or the A-10s, a reference to white civilian vehicles or SUVs?

CAPT [REDACTED] believe some of the targets that the Cobras were shooting at were SUVs that they deemed to be hostile. Either technical vehicles with machine guns or whatever. I don't...they solved...the Cobras were solving the positive hostile criteria there.

MAJ [REDACTED] A quick clarification question, Maj [REDACTED] here. Did you do two abort calls?

CAPT [REDACTED] Right. One for the HMVs. One for the ...Maverick that was coming in from the north and then the final one after we...so, three total.

MAJ [REDACTED] that's all from me.

COL [REDACTED] in closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT

BLANK

[REDACTED]

30 April 2003

Follow-up Interview with Cap [REDACTED]

Parties present:

COL [REDACTED]

MAJ [REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED]

Defense Attorney

CAPT [REDACTED] Capt [REDACTED] with Col [REDACTED] Maj [REDACTED] Capt [REDACTED]

and Capt [REDACTED] regarding the 23 March An Nasiriyah friendly fire incident.

MAJ [REDACTED], I just want to remind you, we've read you your rights earlier and would you like me to re-read your rights under Article 92?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] Do you need to consult with your attorney in private?

CA [REDACTED] No, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] And are you willing to answer questions?

CAP [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

MAJ [REDACTED] Thank you very much.

[REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED]: Would you please, as a follow-up, just describe the type of CAS that you were employing with the A-10s? Describe the method and which you were working the A-10s.

CAPT [REDACTED]: OK. When they checked in, I sent them to the Saddam Canal to look for forces that were possibly reinforcing the fight that we were in. When they found the vehicles north of the bridge, north of the Saddam Canal, I gave them Type 3 control to engage those targets. I told them make their runs east west so as not to allow ordinance to spill over into the city. I did not turn them loose. The FAC always retains the forward authority. I continued to monitor their attacks. I told them specifically, I could not observe them or the target area. In reality, I could observe them on some runs. I continued to monitor them as best I could.

COL [REDACTED]: Did you clear them for each pass?

CAPT [REDACTED]: No. No, Sir.

CAPT [REDACTED]: So, in relation to that, did you hear them call in hot for each pass?

CAPT [REDACTED]: I don't specifically remember hearing in hot from GYRATE and I'm not even sure the call sign was actually GYRATE. On some runs he did make _____ CAS calls—in from the east, or wings level. It seemed like he did not understand that those calls are only required during Type 1 and Type 2 control. On these runs, however, I did respond with cleared or cleared hot in order to ensure that he got his bombs off. I did not think there was time

[REDACTED]

to get into a discussion on close air support doctrine or communications. I was comfortable that he understood my clearance restrictions, except on the one where he did call in—in from the north. I specifically told him east – west. Called in from the north with a Maverick and I aborted him. That's in my statement. He seemed...he just seemed confused about the comm not the actual clearance. On the runs where I could observe him, he was pointing safely away from the city and obviously the friendlies and civilians. I was also confident that there were no friendly forces ahead of me, so I continued to allow him to engage even though his comm was non-standard. In other words, to sum it up, he was operating his aircraft correctly he just wasn't talking correctly.

CAPT [REDACTED] Do you remember having an A-10 verify your position by employing some rockets?

CAPT [REDACTED] Negative.

CAPT [REDACTED] You don't remember that?

CAPT [REDACTED] No.

CAPT [REDACTED] Can you tell me just your background, as far as controlling air?

CAPT [REDACTED] I'm an F-18D WISO with almost five years, 1000 hours in _____. I'm a FAC-A certified via the _____ FAC-A syllabus since February of 2001, roughly 40 aerial

[REDACTED]

controls. I've been a FAC since October 2002, with roughly 25 controls from the ground. I was school trained at the Tactical Air Control Party Course, Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Atlantic. I'm a MOTS-1 certified Air Combat Tactics Instructor on the F-18D. Mission Commander. I'm a graduate of the Fighter Weapons School. I've been a Battalion FAC for five months. My last controls in training were roughly one week prior to An Nasiriyah and I've been to three combined arms exercises.

COL [REDACTED] As a FAC?

CAPT [REDACTED] No, Sir. They were all as an aviator. As a FAC-A. Two as a FAC-A, one as just a CAS player.

CAPT [REDACTED] During the entire battle, I guess more importantly, at the time that GYRATE, the A-10s that you were talking to checked in, where was your battalion CO located?

CAPT [REDACTED] I don't know his exact position. I do know that based on the plan, based on doctrinally how we employ mechanized battalions he was behind me. I never saw him pass. I, never heard a word that he was, in fact, in front of me. So my SA was that he was about 600 to 700 meters to our south in the city.

CAPT [REDACTED] So he crossed the bridges then?

[REDACTED]

CAPT [REDACTED] He crossed the Euphrates bridge and stayed behind us as we moved to the city.

CAPT [REDACTED] And when you say stayed behind us, you mean Bravo Company—Team Mech?

CAPT [REDACTED] Yes, behind Bravo Company.

CAPT [REDACTED] Had you worked with A-10s before prior to this campaign?

CAPT [REDACTED]: Just a couple of years ago in an air to air engagement, not a CAS environment.

CAPT [REDACTED] Anything in this campaign?

CAPT [REDACTED] Negative.

CAPT [REDACTED] You mentioned the A-10s talking about suppressing triple A in your statement. Did they actually say they were being shot at? Or were they just trying to suppress? Did they just mention suppressing?

CAPT [REDACTED]: They mentioned taking fire. They mentioned suppressing that fire. I have no doubt that they were. We found the guns a couple of days later, and the Cobra pilots said that

[REDACTED]

they saw triple A, air bursting triple A along the canal. I'm sure, if you don't have those statements from them, they'd make the same statements. So I am positive, he was, in fact, taking fire. He mentioned it and he mentioned suppressing.

COL [REDACTED] Do you remember what he said to you when he mentioned it?

CAPT [REDACTED] He said they're shooting at me, and I'm going to have to suppress.

CAPT [REDACTED] After I gave you the questions, I kind of came up with a couple more, if you want to _____ these please? Can you tell me your understanding of who is the approving authority for each type of the CAS, according to the op ord?

CAPT [REDACTED] I would request...stop and get the questions...

CAPT [REDACTED] You want me to stop? OK. In closing, I just want to remind you that this is your sworn testimony and please do not discuss it with...outside of the group...of the board or your lawyer. Thanks.

STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN [REDACTED]

I, Captain [REDACTED] of 1st Battalion 2nd Marines, after being placed under oath, hereby state that I was acting as the forward air controller for Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment of Task Force Tarawa. I had been a member of the battalion since 15 November 2002, having graduated from Tactical Air Control Party School in October. I am an F/A-18D Weapons and Sensor Officer.

On 23 March 2003, my company was ordered to attack to seize the northeastern bridge of An Nasiriyah. We had been planning such an attack for over one month. The plan changed almost daily and rapidly devolved into a "Be prepared to..." mission in case the overall war effort required it. We were tasked as the main effort and organized as "Team Mech" consisting of two mechanized rifle platoons, a platoon of tanks, and an attachment of Javelin anti-tank teams. As the main effort during the attack on the northeastern bridge, we would be given priority of fires, meaning I would have control of any air assets, and the rest of my Fire Support Team (FiST) would have control of indirect fires. The plan was for Team Tank (task organized as two tank platoons and a mechanized rifle platoon) to lead us into the town to the southeastern bridge of An Nasiriyah (over the Euphrates river). Once there, Bravo would press ahead and seize the northeastern bridge as the main effort. Alpha company would take the southern bridge and be relieved by follow-on forces (2nd Battalion, 8th Marines). Charlie Company would be the supporting effort. Commander's Intent was to rapidly seize both bridges in order to facilitate follow-on forces of I MEF to move north towards Baghdad. The order of march was to be Team Tank, B Co, the Forward Command Element, A Co, then C Co.

We had no preplanned Close Air Support assets scheduled to assist in our attack. All air assets would be immediate CAS and required immediate air requests from our air officer. He informed us that fixed wing and rotary wing air would require 15-30 minutes of advance notice. I read through the pilot-controller handbook, marked my charts appropriately, but had no assets to plan for. This meant that our FACs would have to make due with any airplanes that could be diverted from other missions.

We staged for the attack about 40-50 kilometers south of An Nasiriyah at a highway cloverleaf we had been guarding to facilitate Army units moving north. My Company Commander briefed us four suspected enemy grid locations in the city including a suspected artillery battery, commando unit, the 23rd Infantry Brigade headquarters, and another unit. We knew the enemy composition, as we had been briefed all along by our S-2. What we had no information on was the enemy's disposition. We did not know where mortar, infantry, air defense artillery, tank, and indirect fire positions were. We were executing a movement to contact.

As we approached the city at approximately 0500Z, Team Tank began to take light small arms and mortar fire VIC PV192231. Our 81mm mortar platoon dismounted and began firing for Team Tank. After about an hour, Team Tank began to move north again along the Main Supply Route (MSR). At this time, we had a single UH-1 helicopter overhead that we just happened to raise by cycling through frequencies. He was lightly armed, and

I deconflicted him from our 81mm mortars and enemy fire by holding him south of the 16-northing gridline three kilometers to our south. Our air officer began trying to get immediate air support, with little success. We then asked the UH-1 to radio Jalibah FARP and get us help. The air officer did not have comm with the FACs from Team Tank or Alpha Company, so I worked as the Air Officer, passing arriving aircraft to Team Tank, where they were needed most in the fight. I then passed Battle Damage Assessment reports back to the air officer via the Tactical Air Control Party -Local (TACP-Local) net. Tanks shortly became engaged with more enemy units VIC Umm al Hujil (PV185260). They stumbled upon an Army convoy that had been ambushed and taken a large amount of enemy fire. Trucks were shattered and burning on the MSR. They rescued four soldiers and were concerned about more friendlies in the tree line west of the MSR. AH-1 Cobra helicopters began to show up from Jalibah. They began destroying trucks, 2 ZU-23 AAA systems, tanks, and personnel VIC PV198290.

The Team Tank FAC was in control, and I was relaying to the air officer who had no Tactical Air Direction (TAD) net UHF communication capability all day long. No one was able to raise him via UHF until the next day. This is the frequency range we use to talk to aircraft. Normally, the air officer monitors this net and approves or disapproves missions as appropriate. He did not have this capability. I had to relay what was happening because I was the only FAC he was able to talk to via TACP Local (a VHF Encrypted Frequency Hopping net). I lost TACP Local while in the city a few hours later. In retrospect, if I had clear communications with the air officer, I could have received immediate approval or disapproval for each mission I was running in the city.

All of these targets were pop-up targets found well inside the maximum effective range of threat weapons systems. We were not getting any reconnaissance or intelligence up ahead of us. The Cobra pilots already were beginning to exhibit some of the bravery that would eventually carry the day and help save the battalion. They hovered over tree lines teeming with enemy to deliver withering gun, rocket, and Precision Guided Munitions and allowed us to proceed north to our objectives. This engagement lasted from about 0530Z to 0630Z.

Unfortunately, the tanks ran out of fuel due to the 40-50 kilometer movement and all of the off-road maneuvering during the fight. They moved to the refuelers in the rear of the column and the fight was passed to B Co. This means that control of all fires belongs to Bravo Company. I immediately began to control a flight of AH-1 Cobras, their calls signs were either "Orken-07 or Orken-25." Our company was moving two hundred meters north along the MSR at this time. I ordered the Cobras north to screen our movement and scour the western tree line for enemy troops, alerting them to the possibility of friendlies in the area (the ambushed soldiers). They found nothing in the tree line, but then found three tanks VIC PV198290. They shot 3-5 Hellfire missiles and killed three tanks.

Nails-61 (a flight of two F/A-18Ds) checked in with limited fuel. I quickly employed them on the three "dead" tanks in order to assure destruction and allow the battalion to keep moving north. They dropped a single MK-83 bomb with success, and then finished

with another group of two bombs. We were approximately 1500 meters southwest. The Cobras had no remaining ordnance and returned to Jalibah. I asked them to re-arm, refuel, and return with more assets.

The engagement died down and the battalion consolidated on the MSR. I dismounted to remove my warming layer shirt and pack night vision equipment. I ran over to the Command Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAVC-7) to brief the Air Officer and the S-3 Officer (Operations) about the fight, battle damage reports, and the possible friendly soldiers. Then I ran back to my AAV and we almost immediately moved out. The Air Officer told me about his lack of UHF comm and his limited VHF comm. I thought he would get it fixed later or we would continue to work around it. The work around we did during this first engagement was very painful, as we had two or three FACs and the aircraft on the TAD net and no control from the Battalion. We moved out with our Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT) squad in four Humvees in front, followed by B Co 1st Platoon in three AAVs, and my AAV. I was the fourth AAV in the column, about 150m from our lead vehicle (lead trace). A tank platoon of four M1A1s was supposed to lead our company, but had run out of fuel.

My vehicle contained the Company Commander, the Weapons Platoon Commander (who acted as the FiST leader), myself, my radio operator, the artillery forward observer, the artillery scout, the artillery radio operator, the 60mm mortar forward observer, and the 81mm mortar forward observer [REDACTED] leader. My radio operator sits underneath and helps me to monitor the nets. We stand on benches with our heads exposed in order to see the battlefield. The AAV platoon commander attached to B Co commanded the AAV.

At about 0700Z, C Co moved out into the open plain on our left flank and A Co was in the rear (following in trace). We found the shattered army convoy VIC PV188285. The Cobras returned on station and immediately destroyed enemy trucks VIC PV186309. Upon check-in, I tried my best to give a quick friendly and enemy situation update and held the rotary wing south of the 16 (later 20) northing. This kept them about four kilometers south of the fight. The Cobras were screening our flanks. I had witnessed their bravery and was reluctant to let them go very far forward into enemy held territory. An aircrew rescue (TRAP) mission would have been difficult, even during this relatively quiet period of the battle. Our working TAD frequency was [REDACTED]. We moved quickly past the army trucks and as C Co crossed the 30 northing we made contact. As C Co did not have a FAC and did not have priority of fires, I had to control air overhead their formation as well. The Cobras were having much success with PGM munitions on trucks. A large, but unknown, number of trucks, weapons, and enemy positions were destroyed less than 1000m in front of C Co during their assault toward Qaryat at Mudayji. B Co stayed on the MSR abeam C Co and moved towards the railroad bridge south of An Nasiriyah.

An Rocket Propelled Grenade was fired at an AH-1 and I called "SAM (Surface to Air Missile) Launch.....No factor!" over the TAD net. Days later I realized that this was an unguided RPG, and not an SA-7 SAM as I had feared. The Cobras continued to press

hard against targets in front of C Co. At this point I have eyes on C Co. There were operator monitor the net, as I was on TAD continuously for ten hours. He monitored TACP-Local, as we weren't getting any luck raising anyone on that net. The PRC-113 (UHF) is bulky, and I had to hold it above the metal vehicle to assure continuous communications with the aircraft. The radio fell to the floor of the vehicle numerous times, as we would lurch forward trying to get north. Our company was receiving enemy fire. At many times we would stop and orient at a 45-degree angle relative to our direction of travel to get a better view for the fire support team. Observation was difficult as turrets, packs, antennae, and equipment surround the top hatch.

I also gave control to Orken-25 at one point. This passing of control was for approximately the same amount of time and for the same reasons mentioned above. This particular call sign returned to the fight at least 3 times and was present as late as 1900Z. between 6 and 8 Cobras on station and I deconflicted them using the MSR, keeping some on the relatively quiet east side, with most performing attack runs for me on the west side. As they ran out of ordnance, they proceeded back to Jalibah. I did not have any comms with the air officer at this point and was forced to maintain control of both the battlefield and the flow of air support. However, the situation was still under control. If it had become out of control, I would have called off the air. I believe the Cobras were flying back to the battle on their own accord as I heard many of the same voices and call signs all day and into the night. I do not know if we were receiving help from higher in getting that air support. Many pilots that day checked out with me saying, "Mouth, I'm going to Jalibah and I'll be right back."

At one point of the battle, I gave FAC (A) control to a Cobra pilot as it was becoming difficult to see the whole battlefield. He ran the fight for about fifteen minutes firing five Hellfire missiles and then gave the fight back to me. During this time, I was organizing call signs, air space and targets. The difficulties of controlling aviation from a moving, firing armored vehicle are manifold. I have to hold a map and two radio handsets while writing down information and surveying the battlefield. Good comm flow lightens the workload. But during that fight, it was so busy that I could not afford to let my radio. As we crossed the oil pipeline in the vicinity of the 30 northing, the contact became closer. Our AAV screeched to a halt and our CAAT vehicles reported enemy tanks 300-500 meters in front of them, on the other side of a small railroad bridge. We had unknowingly walked into a mechanized ambush. The CAAT vehicles and a Javelin gunner in 1st platoon killed 5 of the tanks. Enemy fire increased, but we were not yet taking casualties. I ran the remaining Cobras on enemy machine gun positions supporting the tanks. They were located between oil tanks VIC PV211311. They destroyed the machine gunners with 20mm gunfire and flechette rockets. We began engaging dismounted enemy troops VIC PV192320 with .50-caliber fire. The enemy retreated to the safety of a mosque that was indicative of the tactics they would employ throughout the day. I personally saw four destroyed tanks VIC PV206322.

At this point, I lost sight of C Co. There was no other way to get into the town other than following us across the railroad bridge and the subsequent Euphrates Bridge. C Co fell in behind our company. The whole column began to work north along the MSR. A Co was

in trail, but I don't know their order of march. On the far side of the railroad, we entered dense palm tree country. I thought the intensity of the ambush would increase, as it was impossible to see into the forest for more than a few meters on either side of the vehicle. Personnel inside our vehicle began firing their weapons at enemy Fedayeen forces. I saw a number of enemy troops in civilian clothes carrying AK-47s. I also saw a number of Fedayeen surrounding a mortar position along the south bank of the Euphrates River VIC PV210342. I called the Cobras in, but the enemy scattered, and the Cobras did not fire. To the Cobras, these Fedayeen would appear as a group of civilians loitering on the south bank of the Euphrates River, but they were actually firing mortar rounds at us before they scattered. Our speed was increasing as we crossed the river, so I passed up the mortar target. We needed the Cobras for the city fight.

I had no comm with my air officer or higher headquarters and was primarily focused on fighting our way to the northern bridge. For clarification, Ambush Alley is the four-kilometer section of the MSR between the southern Euphrates Bridge and the northern Saddam Canal Bridge. Our plan was to make an immediate right turn off of the MSR (Ambush Alley) and sweep north on the salt flats 2000m east of the built up area around the MSR. This was to be done under the cover of Team Tank (still refueling behind us).

As we made the right turn, the firing increased rapidly. Our vehicle and personnel did not take any hits, but enemy rounds cracked overhead and two RPGs missed the vehicle by a few feet. The Fedayeen would use civilians as shields and fire from homes filled with noncombatants so we couldn't just target the buildings. They would also force civilians out in the streets to choke off our fields of fire and then pop out of doors and windows to fire at us. Target acquisition was extremely difficult. I ran the Cobras up and down the salt flats and they engaged a number of enemy machine gun vehicles and positions. I never let them go too far north for fear they may get shot down. A TRAP mission now became absolutely impossible and their bravery was bound to get them in trouble. They never went north of the northeastern bridge (our objective). I remember flashes of what they engaged. At one point they shot so close to our formation that I thought I would be showered with spent shell casings as they poured from their guns. This was not a problem because I would not let them shoot until they were past lead trace. They also fired rockets and PGMs at Fedayeen positions and vehicles. I do remember them asking to engage unmanned D-30 howitzers VIC PV2535, but as they were unmanned and not an immediate threat, I felt we needed their ammunition on live targets.

At some point early in the city fight, there was a break in the air support for about a half hour. The timeline now will suffer from the effects of time compression. My FiST leader called for "weapons up" as we were entering a densely populated sector. AAVs and freshly arrived tanks were becoming bogged down in the city's muddy alleys. Sniper fire increased. My radioman and I switched places so he could employ his M-16A2. I let him up and withdrew into the bottom of the AAV. About 15 minutes later, I finally got a call on TACP Local from the air officer. He said, "Mouth, I need you to get on guard and get any air support you can get." I knew this was serious because guard frequency is normally only used for peacetime emergency operations. But, as we had received little

air support from higher agencies, I pulled my radio operator down, jumped up and made three transmissions: "On guard, on guard, on guard, this is Mouth in the vicinity of An Nasiriyah. We have troops in contact and need immediate air support. Contact me on [REDACTED] An RPG flew over our AAV and exploded overhead, brushing back the artillery forward observer.

Almost immediately, fixed wing aircraft began checking in. I stacked them and waited for a FAC (A)-capable F/A-18D or F-14 Tomcat to check in. None did. My intention was to send them north of the bridge to find and destroy enemy reinforcements or enemy waiting to ambush us as we got to the bridge. A single A-10 checked in. I remember his call sign as something close to "Jenke-78." I got his on station time and ordnance and sent him north of Saddam Canal to find targets. I told him our situation and that the city fight was a rotary wing fight and I wanted to use fixed wing to prosecute deeper targets.

Jenke-78 found targets in the vicinity of the northern bridge. He told me his targets were north of the Saddam Canal. I had him pass me a grid and asked him to standby while I checked on lead trace, or the location of our lead vehicles. My situational awareness at the time was that A Co was at the southeastern bridge and that C Co was somewhere behind us. My FiST leader asked the Company Commander for lead trace via the AAV internal communication system. The Company Commander replied 361 Northing, which he believed to be the battalion's lead trace. I referenced my gridded overhead photo of the city and compared the two locations. The targets were approximately 3000m north and on the other side of the Saddam Canal. At some point he reported that he was taking fire. I do not doubt this report as a few days later, I found two ZPU-1 14.5mm anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) guns at the bridge, and a patrol found another gun 300m east of the same bridge.

I informed the A-10 that I could not observe him or the target area. I told him "I cannot observe" and I said this multiple times. We were in a maze of streets and two story structures. He reported vehicles and moments later he began taking fire. As he was already in an overhead "wagon wheel" attack, a Nine-Line CAS Brief was not necessary. Based on the Rules of Engagement, we were not allowed to use unobserved fires in urban environments. An artillery strike would have been out of the question. I gave the A-10 Type III control and cleared him to engage targets north of the Saddam Canal. I forced him to make his runs East-West so as not to endanger Marines or civilians in the town to the south.

As I could not observe the target area, I could not solve the "positive hostile" requirements of Positive Identification (PID) criteria. This requirement is that we only engage targets that have a hostile intent or commit a hostile act. I carefully satisfied the "negative friendly" requirements with the information I had. First, the order tasked us as the Main and Lead Effort. Second, I was briefed that there were no friendly units forward of us during the attack. Often, we place reconnaissance assets forward, but on 23 March there were none. Third, all of the other battalion maneuver elements were behind us as we crossed the Euphrates. Fourth, I did not see any of these forces pass us in the city. Finally, I asked for friendly lead trace from my Company Commander and received

a lead trace 3000m south of the intended target area. Marines were in extremis and I made a time critical decision to give the A-10 Type III control to engage targets he observed and deemed hostile.

At any second, I felt that our company would break free from the maze of streets and sprint for the bridge. Communication with the battalion was nonexistent for me and intermittent to nonexistent for the Company Commander. I did not want the Company Commander to stop the column in the middle of an ambush. I also did not think there was time to find a clear channel to the Battalion Commander to explain the situation, then ask for approval for the fires. I understood the Battalion Commander's Order, but, based on my understanding of his Commander's Intent and Marine Corps Mission Orders, I cleared the A-10 to engage in order to satisfy Commander's Intent. Close Air Support Fires are "use it or lose it" by nature. They are flexible and lethal, but very fleeting. Based on the information I had at the time, I believed my company was minutes away from the anvil of a mechanized ambush. I felt that if I did not act, Marines would die.

The A-10 began to make his runs. His first run was with MK-82s. He dropped one or two. I saw the explosions from those hits and visually picked up his airplane as he employed defensive flares after dropping the bombs. I saw the explosion, but still could not observe the target. He was rolling in from approximately [REDACTED] feet and bottoming out somewhere between [REDACTED] feet. His next two runs were with his 30mm cannon. He told me he was using that to suppress AAA fire. I was able to observe him intermittently.

As we moved west in the city, we came upon a couple of Humvees labeled "TF-2." I immediately called "abort abort abort" to the A-10, thinking someone had passed us, and lead trace was in front of us. We were having some trouble making our way through the city. I held the A-10 and again asked for lead trace. The Company Commander reported 361 northing. Then I asked again if that lead trace was the battalion's or ours. My FiST leader asked the Company Commander, and he responded, "We are lead trace." I again cleared the A-10 to engage.

During a Maverick run, the A-10 called "In, from the North." I called "abort, abort, abort" and said I needed the runs from east to west. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He changed his run in and released the Maverick.

After the Maverick hit, my FiST leader told me to "check fire" the A-10. I told the A-10 to "check fire" and asked the FiST leader for an explanation. He said battalion reported that there may have been Marines north of the Canal. I disagreed, but informed the A-10, telling him that we may now have friendlies up north and I would clear it up. I believed that someone had gotten the bridges mixed up and thought the A-10 was north of the southeastern (Euphrates) bridge. The A-10 pilot told me that I had cleared him, and I did not want to get into a debate on the radio. Soon after, the A-10 departed and got my call sign. He asked if there was a number attached to "Mouth." I told him "negative." That was the last I heard from that call sign. My game plan was initially to run Type I control

through a FAC (A). Since no FAC (A) aircraft checked in, I was forced to run Type III with the single A-10. Other aircraft (unknown call signs) were stacked overhead but never used.

To my surprise, the battalion stopped and consolidated in a vacant lot VIC PV223371. At that time (approximately 1200Z) I was running rotary wing CAS aircraft and stationed two UH-1s over the stuck vehicles now about 1500m south of us in the town. They kept the enemy at bay during the vehicle recovery and sanitization/abandonment effort. They gave me regular reports. The Company Commander, FiST leader, and I got out of our vehicle, sat behind a 60mm mortar, and assessed the situation.

Almost immediately, the battalion executive officer asked for our assistance. I was still confused about the "check fire" call and sought some answers...no one had any. For the moment, I focused on the XO who ordered me to again call for more air support to support our push north across the bridge in a half hour. At that point, I learned from the A Co FAC that C Co had sprinted north via Ambush Alley. Team Tank, prior to the battalion consolidation, sprinted north as well. I could see this as we were within 100m of Ambush Alley at that time. I was in the town, but I could see up the road. A Co also pushed north to help, but my knowledge of A Co movements is limited. They were supposed to be at the southern bridge waiting for 2/8.

A Co's FAC was busy running CH-46 MEDEVAC missions to evacuate C Co's wounded. He relayed to me that there were Marines still trapped on the roof of a two-story building 200m south of the northeastern bridge. I relayed this information to the battalion XO. I saw one burning AAV in Ambush Alley in the vicinity of the bridge and realized then that the fighting had been bad for C Company. The rooftop Marines were picked up prior to our movement. We climbed aboard our vehicle, I instructed the Hueys, we boarded our vehicles, and the rest of the battalion sprinted north. Our FiST leader called in an artillery strike along the West side of the Alley to protect our movement. The time was approximately 1300Z. We were very worried about daylight. The stuck vehicles were still mired in the muddy streets to our south.

We had a platoon commander from C Co aboard our AAV during the consolidation. I asked him if he thought anyone was hurt by the A-10. He said he didn't know, but thought they had taken some casualties from artillery. My situational awareness at the time is that C Co got north of the bridge after the A-10 strike.

When we consolidated north of the bridge, that platoon commander informed me that he believed that the A-10 may have indeed caused some friendly casualties. I was devastated. I saw the Company Commander and First Sergeant from C Co. They looked like they had been through hell. The Company CO was covered in blood. I did see one AAV that had been completely destroyed. They looked like they may have been delivered from an aircraft. Later in the week, I walked the battlefield by myself. I saw the vehicle (which had been moved) and looked at the bullet holes in the road. Less than ten feet from the holes was an [REDACTED]

I knew, however, that the fight was not over and we would need air support to get us safely to our objective, protect us once there, and protect the stuck vehicles in the town. I had been buttoned up until 400m north of the bridge VIC PV224395.

The FAC from Team Tank ran an A-10 (unknown call sign) on the tree line VIC PV215405. He dropped two MK-82s, and then dropped two more 800m north of us VIC PV224403. We wanted to run an artillery series in support of our 1000m movement to our consolidation point at a road intersection VIC PV225410. Because the A-10 was being controlled by the Team Tank FAC who had no comm with battalion, we had to cancel artillery for fear that the A-10 would be hit. I was keeping the Hueys over the stuck vehicles until those vehicles finally sprinted across the bridge with a single M1A1 tank.

I ran two more sections of "Orken" Cobras to secure our perimeter. It was now dark and approximately 1600Z. I used my Infrared laser to mark our position and sent them around our defense. The Company Commander and I were distraught over our role in the possible friendly fire incident, but we both went to the Battalion Commander with the news. The Battalion Commander asked that we both continue to do our duty as the fight was far from over.

I monitored my PRC-113 throughout the night. As flights of Cobras checked in, I would mark our position and give them instructions. They stayed overhead all night long. A Co FAC also controlled the aircraft.

The next day, communications were a stark contrast to the day before. I had solid comms with my Air Officer via UHF and VHF. His comms with the other FACs weren't as good, so I had to relay information again. He could approve, disapprove, or modify all of my missions. This normal channel of requests was not available the previous day. The work around the previous day going through the FiST Team Leader to the B Company Commander to the Battalion Operations Officer to the Battalion CO was either saturated or not working well. I successfully ran numerous rotary wing and fixed wing attacks to destroy counterattacking and re-supplying Fedayeen troops, vehicles, and compounds. My Company Commander, who had little to no comms [REDACTED] with the Battalion CO the previous day, now had clear channels. We could get approval on all levels for each attack.

What was still contributing highly to our friction was our lack of preplanned air support, and our Air Officer's limited comms with Regimental Air and the DASC. Aircraft would show up with limited amounts of playtime, having been diverted from other missions. I tried to use them, but often had to scramble to put together a safe mission.

I never knew that C Co had made the dash for the bridge. I would have known had our communications been working. In the absence of communication, I acted to achieve the Commander's Intent. The picture painted for me was that reinforcing enemy units were lying in ambush on the far side of the bridge. This perception was based on my discussion over the radio with the A-10. We had been fighting continuously for almost 6

hours against a determined enemy whose disposition we did not know and whose will to fight had been underestimated. We had basically done a movement to contact, through an urban area, with no reconnaissance and no planned air support. Every single target I destroyed that day was a "pop-up" target and we were always well inside the enemy's engagement range when we fired. I was not ready to continue to fight this way and allow my company to be annihilated as we attacked the bridge. Our intended maneuver would have offered clear, devastating flanking fire to the enemy across the canal.

I acted with the information I had to ensure the safety of the men I served. I did not believe there was time or communication capability to get approval from the Battalion Commander for Type III control. I knew he was busy fighting to get the battalion out of the ambush and believed that the time it would have taken to get approval via an already limited net would have cost us lives. We needed those fires.

I would like to take the opportunity to include my thoughts on other possible contributing factors to this friendly fire incident. First, and foremost, was the lack of clear communications across the board. My own communication problems have been detailed above, but the battalion as a whole was having difficulties. This was caused by the stuck (later abandoned) Command and Control AAV and the line-of-sight challenges posed by an urban environment [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I do not know if these systems were operational during the fight.

Second, I feel that C Co needed a FAC. As the lead unit in the regiment and the mechanized battalion, we should have been given another FAC. Each company should have had one in addition to the Battalion Air Officer. Normal allotment is two FACs and one air officer. There are many trained FACs in CONUS who would have been available. During their attack on the northern bridge, C Co did not have priority of fires. That still belonged to B Co. C Co could only rely on organic fire support assets (60mm mortars). Had we been alerted to their drive down Ambush Alley, we would have discontinued all fire support and passed control to them. I could have met them in Ambush Alley and controlled aircraft in support of their attack.

Third, we were not given any preplanned air support for our attack. No targets were serviced prior to our movement. There were many enemy positions that day which should have been destroyed earlier. The lack of preplanned close air support forced us to scramble throughout the day to provide protection for the Marines. Moreover, a preplanned fixed-wing FAC (A) could have controlled the fight at the northern bridge and would have had the responsibility to identify enemy targets prior to ordnance release. When we have preplanned air support, I can influence the Company Commander's maneuver to better be supported by air. When that A-10 checked in, I had to use those fires rapidly or lose them.

Lastly, I believe that it should have been possible for the A-10 pilot to see an AAV and identify it as friendly. At the start of his run [REDACTED] it would be impossible to tell the difference between friendly and enemy. However, after each run he bottomed out at a

low enough altitude to see what he was targeting. An AAV is large and looks like no other vehicle in the enemy's inventory. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Lastly, the green star clusters fired should have also alerted the A-10 to the presence of friendly forces.

I want to do my utmost to honor the memory of the Marines who died that day. I do not want to shirk any responsibility for what happened. The truth about this incident is the most important aspect of this entire process. I am truly saddened by the loss of our fellow Marines during the Battle of An Nasiriyah. I will carry their memory with me forever.

[REDACTED]

Captain, USMC

Signed and sworn before me this 23^d day of APRIL 2003

[REDACTED]

Investigating Officer's Name and Position on Accident Investigation Board

[REDACTED], MAJOR, USAF
LEGAL ADVISOR.

**NO
TAB I**

TAB J

Tab J

1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment Personnel Testimony

LT COL W [REDACTED] Staff Judge Advocate, 1st Battalion J-3

COL [REDACTED], Chief of Staff, Task Force Tarawa J-11

LT COL [REDACTED] Task Force Tarawa J-19

MAJ [REDACTED], Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, Task Force Tarawa J-25

MAJ [REDACTED] Senior Air Director, Air Support Element Forward J-31

LT COL [REDACTED] Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion,
2nd Marines J-39

MAJ [REDACTED] Operations Officer, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-89

CAPT [REDACTED], Air Officer, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-103

MAJ [REDACTED] Forward Air Controller, Alpha Company,
1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-113

CAPT [REDACTED] Forward Air Controller, Alpha Company,
1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-125

CAPT [REDACTED] Commander, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion,
2nd Marines J-139

CAPT [REDACTED] CO, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-149

LT [REDACTED], Rocket Platoon Commander,
1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-163

LT [REDACTED] Platoon Commander, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-169

1LT [REDACTED], Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-183

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment Personnel Testimony Cont.

LT [REDACTED] Commander, Charlie Company,
1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-197

1ST SGT [REDACTED] First Sergeant, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion,
2nd Marines J-203

GYSGT [REDACTED] Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines .. J-215

GYSG [REDACTED] Platoon Sergeant, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion,
2nd Marines J-229

SSGT [REDACTED] Mortar Section Leader,
Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-235

SSGT [REDACTED], 1st Platoon Sergeant, Charlie Company,
1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-243

CPL [REDACTED] Squad Leader, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-253

CPL [REDACTED] Machine Gun Squad Leader,
Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-257

LCPL [REDACTED], Rifleman, Charlie Company,
1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-263

LCPL [REDACTED], Assistant Sawgunner,
Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-269

LCPL [REDACTED] Machine Gunner, Charlie Company,
1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-275

LC [REDACTED] Sawgunner, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-279

SGT [REDACTED], Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines J-285

[REDACTED]

Interview with Lt Col [REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] State your name please.

LT COL [REDACTED] Lieutenant Col [REDACTED] Staff Judge Advocate at 1st Battalion,
social security number XXX-XX-XXXX.

COL [REDACTED] My name is Colonel [REDACTED]. Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

[REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Would you please relate to me...I understand that you have some knowledge of the incident based on information you got from your deputy, who conducted the investigation. Would you please relay to me what you know and understand?

LT COL [REDACTED] Sir, basically 23rd March, 1/2 was trying to secure some bridges in An Nasiriyah. And the scheme of maneuver, from what I understand, was Bravo Company was supposed to be in the lead and Charlie Company was supposed to be in the rear. Alpha Company had secured the southern bridge and were trying to push forward to secure the northern bridges. Bravo Company was under fire and they tried to go around the bridges on the side and got stuck in the mud. Charlie Company pushed forward. The FAC...there was no FAC with Charlie Company. There was a FAC with Bravo Company, I don't recall the Captain's name. It's in the preliminary inquiry that my deputy did. Anyhow, Charlie Company pushed forward. The A-10 came on station. The FAC did not know that another unit had pushed forward. He cleared the A-10....from what my deputy tells me...from where he was located from the forward bridges was about...over a 1000 meters apart. So, he could not see as well as _____.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Was Charlie Company taking fire any time during and just prior to the A-10 arrival?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. Throughout the whole period they were engaging the enemy, the enemy was firing with mortars, firing with RPGs, firing with small arms and heavy machine guns.

COL [REDACTED] As they moved toward the bridge?

LT COL [REDACTED] They were moving the entire time. It was a movement to contact, and they were firing the entire time. And that was one of the reasons why Bravo Company, from what I understand, went the other route, to try to avoid the intense enemy fire, then got stuck and Charlie Company just punched through. The A-10 cleared and started engaging, from what I understand, the AVs, based on the preliminary inquiry.

COL [REDACTED] Do you know the call sign of the A-10?

LT COL [REDACTED] No, Sir. I believe that information may be maintained by our ASE. At the time, we had to do a preliminary inquiry, the ASE forward who holds that information had punched for another mission, so we were not able to get that information to meet the deadline they had for the preliminary inquiry. They had 48 hours to get it done. So, they may have that information now. Anyhow...so what happened was...The A-10 engaged the AVs, from

[REDACTED]

what...the report of the preliminary inquiry and they made 8 passes. I believe, by the 3rd pass, they were trying to call it off, but there was no FAC. There was an FO.

COL [REDACTED] You say there was an FO?

LT COL [REDACTED] There was an FO, a Forward Operator. The Forward Operator was with Charlie Company, Lt [REDACTED] Witness statements indicate that Lt [REDACTED] called back to the FAC. The FAC tried to call them off several times, the A-10s. [REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] No, Sir. I do not.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

LT COL [REDACTED] From my understanding, the A-10 fired off his chaff. He thought it may have been an anti-aircraft SAMs or _____, and kept on engaging them, making passes, about 4 or 5 other passes. Lt [REDACTED] unfortunately was killed by the A-10. Witness statements indicate that he was obliterated by 30 millimeter fire. And that's basically _____.

COL [REDACTED] Following the incident, what transpired? When did you first hear about the incident?

[REDACTED]

LT [REDACTED] I first heard about the incident about the 25th.

COL [REDACTED] And you were here with Task Force Tarawa then?

LT COL [REDACTED] Not currently at the location we were at. We were near Jalibah.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

LT COL [REDACTED] Moving up to An Nasiriyah, because we were about to engage and there was very heavy fighting, because where the 3rd ID was supposed to secure An Nasiriyah, it didn't really happen. They bypassed An Nasiriyah, so there was not a lot of shaping. There was very intense fighting in An Nasiriyah.

COL [REDACTED] So, it wasn't until two days after the event that you first found out about it?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. When I first found out it was "no kidding" a friendly fire. And then we moved our main. We had movement day. We had set up day and then that's when we started getting the preliminary inquiry.

COL [REDACTED] OK. So you started a preliminary inquiry after you set up again on or about the 25th, probably? The 26th?

[REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] Maybe on the 26th or 27th.

COL [REDACTED] The 26th or 27th you started the preliminary inquiry.

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] And you sent your deputy down onto An Nasiriyah with a team, or?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. What we did was, not really. Just himself and he took a digital camera and he went to 1/2, to their CP and started interviewing witnesses. He interviewed several witnesses. He got the names of several witnesses that for whatever reason were on patrol or spread out throughout the companies, and he was able to make some inquiries as to what occurred. He also tried to interview with the FAC. The FAC invoked his rights. From what I understood, the FAC broke down and was visibly upset.

COL [REDACTED] OK. So, you didn't get up to the site yourself, but he was at the site. Do you have the pictures?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. We do have digital photographs of the AVs. There were several AVs that were destroyed. We don't know which ones were destroyed by the A-10. My deputy does know. He actually got 30 millimeter rounds out of one of the AVs, and he obviously could point to which one of the AVs got damaged from the A-10.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Do you know how many casualties were caused by enemy fire?

LT COL [REDACTED] I would say...KIA's?

COL [REDACTED] KIA's that were wounded by enemy fire vice the A-10.

LT COL [REDACTED] I'm more certain about the KIA's. I'm not too sure about the WIA's _____.

We had so many WIA's, I can't count. I've kind of lost track, but...

COL [REDACTED] KIA's?

LT COL [REDACTED] I think we had 11 by enemy fire, and...

COL [REDACTED] This was in this incident?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. 11 by enemy fire, and I believe,...by friendly fire, 8. The total was 18 or so, something... The total was 18 KIA's, 17 KIA's ___ - total, from the incident. The majority were by enemy fire, and I think 7 or 8 were by friendly fire.

COL [REDACTED] Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

LT COL [REDACTED] No, Sir. That's it.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

LT COL [REDACTED]: Yes, I do.

COL [REDACTED] Thank you very much.

[REDACTED]

Interview with Col [REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] State your name please.

COL [REDACTED] Co [REDACTED] XXX-XX-XXXX, Chief of Staff, Task Force Tarawa

COL [REDACTED] My name is Colonel [REDACTED]. Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

COL [REDACTED] Yes.

COL [REDACTED] Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

COL [REDACTED] Yes.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

COL [REDACTED] I do.

COL [REDACTED] I understand that you visited the An Nasiriyah incident site somewhere between 2, 3, or 4 days after the incident. Can you please walk me through what you saw when you first arrived on the scene, the damage that you saw to the vehicles, the position and location of the vehicles, and any other information that you can remember regarding what you saw on the damage during the afternoon you were there.

COL [REDACTED] I was sent... myself and a small team was sent by the commanding General out to the site in order to do a preliminary investigation into what was then an alleged Blue on Blue incident. My team and I traveled up through the eastern bridges of An Nasiriyah. There's two bridges, a southern and a northern bridge, about a 4 kilometer corridor between the two. As we crossed over the southern bridge, there was a destroyed Amtrack sitting in the center of the road. The claim is this Amtrack had been hit by an RPG on its way back taking medevac people out. We proceeded down the corridor all the way to the northern bridge. Sitting just next to the northern bridge on the right hand side of the road was a catastrophically destroyed Amtrack. At the time I was told that was the Amtrack that had been struck by the A-10. We then crossed over the northern bridge, over the Saddam Canal, and proceeded down the road towards the CP of 1/2. As we proceeded down the road, on the left hand side of the road was another catastrophically destroyed AAV and another damaged AAV, which I didn't pay any attention to at the time. I

[REDACTED]

just kept on down the road. The investigating officer who was with me was left at the BLT Headquarters to take statements and to visit with people. Myself and the Regiment's XO, and a small security team then returned back the way we had come. We did not look at the two vehicles that were short of the bridge, as the Regimental Officer was under the impression, as was I, that it was the Amtrack on the other side that had been hit by the A-10. We crossed over the bridge and approached the AAV that was sitting on the side of the road. It was split down the middle, burned out on the inside, catastrophically destroyed. We only got within a few of it, and it became apparent there was still [REDACTED]. Unfortunately, also scattered about was any number of unexploded ordinance, grenades, mortar rounds, all types of UXO, which made being around the vehicle extremely hazardous. Also scattered about in the area were a number of Marines packs that were strewn across the road and sitting everywhere. What we did then is we proceeded to try and identify the number [REDACTED], carefully looking through the rubble as best we could. I believe...I think we identified six, although there was no way to tell that some of them were [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] About that time, there became a fair gathering crowd of curious people starting to press up on both sides. This was just two days after the fight. It was still considered a pretty hazardous zone. Convoys were still taking fire as they were passing through this area. At that particular time, because we only had a few security people with us, we backed up to the bridge, waited for reinforcements, got a few...got a Mech Company came up on the bridge, and came back down to the site, again, still believing that this site was the site that had been struck by the A-10. At that time, we called in an EOD team in order to clear away enough of the UXOs to actually start recovering the [REDACTED] that were scattered about this and inside this AAV. At that particular point in time, I left that business to the Regimental XO, proceeded back over the bridge, and reported to the [REDACTED], to the MEB Commanding General what [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

we had found. He didn't know at that time that we had found any bodies. I don't believe that the BLT or the Regiment knew that there were any bodies left there at that time either, like I said. It was a hot zone, nobody had gone back out and actually dismounted to look around until we had gone back out. We got back over to the Regimental. The MEB Commander was visiting BLT 1/2 CO at the time. I got over there and started talking to him, and was informed that that was not the AAV that had been struck by the A-10. So, the Battalion commander said it was the AAV that was ditched on the other side of the bridge. So, we proceeded back to that AAV, the team and I, and looked it over. We found no [REDACTED] but I did find a pretty well shot up AAV. Although, it was very difficult to tell...we didn't see any A-10 ordinance. I'm not sure I'd have known it if I saw it. There were no real identifiable bullet holes on that vehicle because it was just shattered to pieces. We looked around that for a while, took pictures, and then as we were leaving, we had gone down to check out with the BLT, we were coming back. We stopped beside two other AAVs. These AAVs had been pulled in for kind of a maintenance. They were sitting looking like they were doing some maintenance on it. So the CG wanted to stop and take a look at them. We stopped and looked at those vehicles, and we crawled up on them...we were walking around them actually, and one of the young Marines said, "Oh, yeah, this thing's been hit by the A-10 too." I said "Well show me." He took me up on top of the AAV. Standing on top of the AAV, I could count four, what looked like bullet strikes or shell strikes, but I'm not expert enough to know if they were the right millimeter that comes off an A-10. They were clearly something of a fairly large caliber. Two or three in the front turret and maybe one in the rear deck, but not catastrophic, just random hits. I came down off that AAV, and we're getting ready to go when the commanding General pointed to the side of the second AAV. It looked like the same kind of hit on the turret on the side of that AAV. Kind of a...shell strike. But again, none of us were expert enough to know that those were A-10

[REDACTED]

strikes. Neither of those two AAVs were catastrophically destroyed. They had been hit by something obviously, but that was it. That's about the size of it. After that, we left and came on back to the CP.

COL [REDACTED] How many total damaged AAVs were there?

COL [REDACTED] One...let's see...1, 2, 3...there were three that were pretty much catastrophically destroyed, and then the two that we looked...that I personally saw...and then the two that were damaged that were being worked on. Whether they ever brought those back to working order, I have no idea.

COL [REDACTED] So that's seven that had some type of damage?

COL [REDACTED] There were seven total, but we didn't see all seven because some of the ones that were damaged they turned off to the right when they first came across the bridge, and were shot up over there. We never got over to see those. As I understand it, when the BLT came across the bridge, the lead company came across the bridge and bore right in an attempt to avoid this road that ran down through an open area. That company got bogged down in some very thick mud and bad terrain and got stuck. Not all of them, but a portion of them. At that particular point in time, the second company, which was Charlie Company, which was the company we believe was struck by the A-10, were told to come across the bridge and continue the attack. The AAVs, at least on the far side, were those Charlie Company AAVs.

COL [REDACTED] And there were five of those?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CO [REDACTED] There were four that I saw, and...

CO [REDACTED] Four that you physically saw?

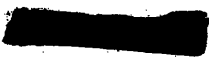
CO [REDACTED] There were four of those. The two were catastrophically destroyed, one on each side of the bridge, and the other two were shot up, but not blown apart.

CO [REDACTED] Col [REDACTED] I'll ask you to provide me, if you could, a diagram of what you saw there, and if possible, the locations of those vehicles relative to the bridge and the urban area.

CO [REDACTED] I'll be glad to.

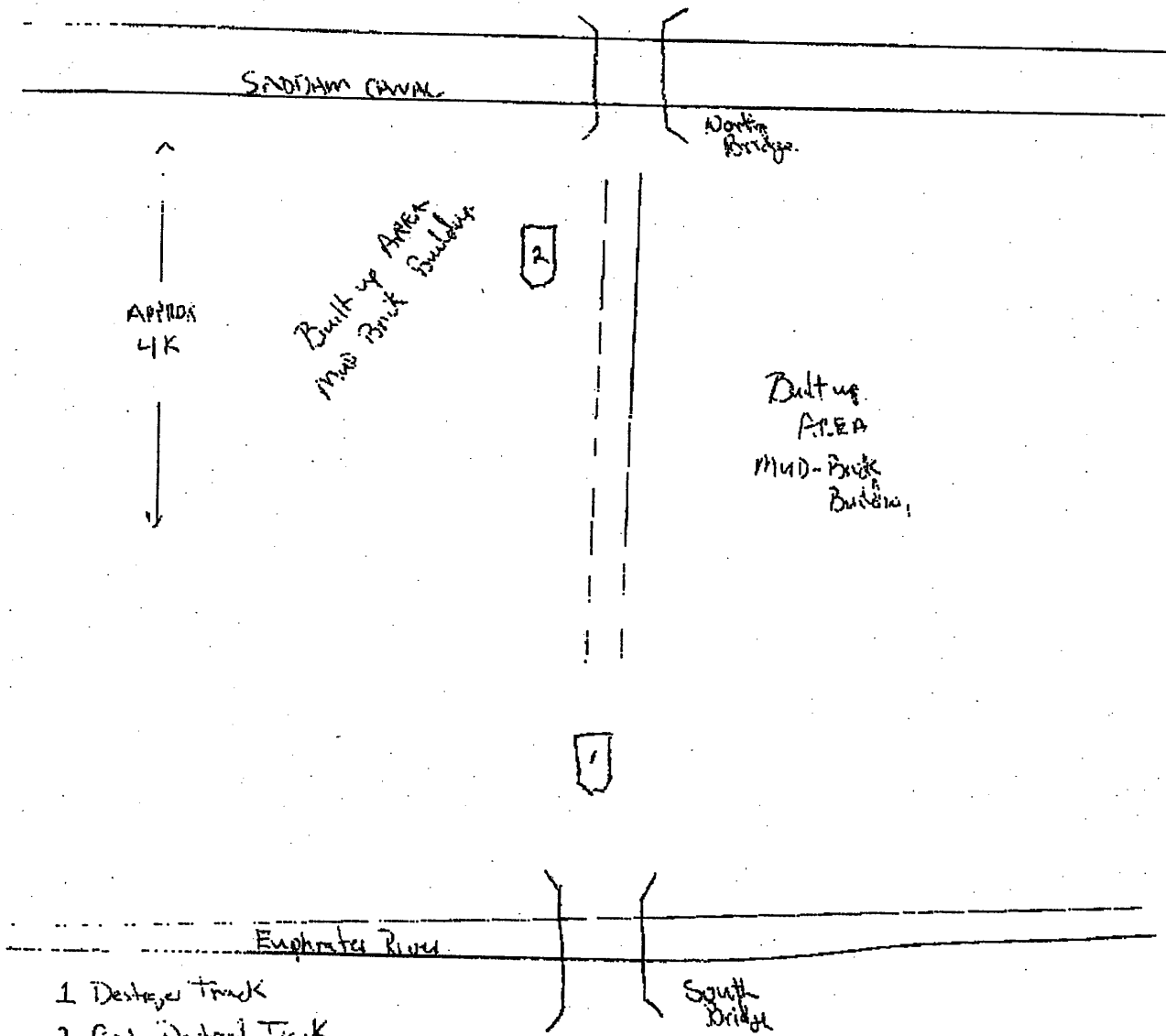
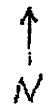
CO [REDACTED] Closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

CO [REDACTED] I understand.



7 13

3



- 1 Destroyed Track
- 2. Cat. Destroyed Track (noted round strikes)
- 3. Cat. Destroyed Track (Indicated by Bet us hit by A-10)
- 4 Damaged Track (noted round strikes)
- 5 Damaged Track (noted round strikes)





INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Interview with Lt Col [REDACTED]
10 April 2003, 1600

COL [REDACTED] state your name please.

LT COL [REDACTED] Lt Col [REDACTED] XXX-XX-XXXX

COL [REDACTED] My name is Colonel [REDACTED]. Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

[REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] I understand that you were responsible for combat ID of the vehicles within the Regimental Combat Team.

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. I was in charge for the entire task force, Tarawa Task Force. I was in charge of procuring the combat identifications specifically. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

really more for the M-1s than they were for the vehicles that we're looking at. Additionally, [REDACTED] understand this was a daytime incident. So, I believe it won't be an issue.

COL [REDACTED] How were the vehicles? Was there guidance on how the vehicles were supposed to be marked?

LT COL [REDACTED]: Yes, Sir. The guidance was...

COL [REDACTED] as it written?

[REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. It is. It was written. The guidance that was prescribed was that each vehicle that they called shooter plus, which a shooter plus is any vehicle that would be forward of the line that would be anticipated in combat operations. [REDACTED] a

[REDACTED] They tried to get enough...getting these was a challenge the whole time. However, we did gather enough to outfit the task force for the shooter plus. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED]

LT CO [REDACTED] I don't know if they had those, Sir. We tried to again...I don't have the exact numbers of what we had at the task force. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] of the AAV?

LT COL [REDACTED] Well, the way it's...everybody was supposed to have it set up...in the AAVs, I know that we're able to do this. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] As I understand, this incident was a daytime incident. So [REDACTED] and I don't know in the daytime if he would be using [REDACTED] they would be useless.

COL [REDACTED] Right.

LT COL [REDACTED] The CFLCC guidance, which I know a lot of people had a hard time with, was that [REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED]: On the vehicles? Yes, Sir. Right now, what we started to see is the [REDACTED] I'm not sure. I know in An Nasiriyah, those guys had a pretty hard time in the beginning. So, I can't...I would be guessing if I tried to tell you what condition I thought [REDACTED] would have been in. Again, considering this was a daytime thing, [REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. But to get back to your question. They [REDACTED] I've seen, most of them actually work [REDACTED] They're being [REDACTED] but I know that people could [REDACTED] They weren't thinking, or they were resting or something along those lines.

COL [REDACTED] Do you have anything else you need to add here?

LT COL [REDACTED] No, Sir. That pretty much addresses what.. [REDACTED] I guess the biggest issue I had was the same thing that everybody did...was th [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I assume that the thought is...you know...you'd be more concerned about...you know, you got day time, you ought to be running vis ID anyway, regardless of any type of combat markings.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] in closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

LT CO [REDACTED] I understand.

Interview with Major [REDACTED]
11 April 03, 0600

COL [REDACTED] Go ahead and state your name for the record, and your social security number, and your MOS and your job here.

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. Major [REDACTED] social security number XXX-XX-XXXX, MOS 4402, I am the deputy Staff Judge Advocate for Task Force Tarawa.

COL [REDACTED] My name is Colonel [REDACTED]. Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

[REDACTED]

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir, I do.

COL [REDACTED] if you could, please walk me through when you first became aware of this incident, and the subsequent actions that you took related to this incident, and I understand that you wrote the preliminary inquiry. Is that correct?

MAJ [REDACTED] That's correct, Sir. Sir, on the 23rd of March, we heard that 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines took some heavy casualties taking the northern bridge on the eastern side of An Nasiriyah. About two days later on the 25th of March, word filtered up to the headquarters it might have been an incident with an A-10. At this point, the Task Force Headquarters was about 20 miles south of An Nasiriyah. On the 26th, we moved up to An Nasiriyah. We got there too late in the day to go forward to 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines position. So on the 27th I was taken up to 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines Headquarters on the northern side of An Nasiriyah to conduct the preliminary inquiry. While there, I met with the Battalion Air Officer, the Battalion Fire Support Coordinator, who was also the weapons company commander. I spoke with the SJA Alpha. I had a brief talk with the Forward Air Controller, call sign MOUTH, at the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines.

COL [REDACTED] And his name is?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MAJ [REDACTED] That, I don't have, Sir. I have none of their names at this point, Sir. I also spoke to the Company Gunney for C company 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, who was also was on the northern side of the bridge. From those interviews, I gleaned that the Battalion's course of action they chose was to have, they were a mechanized company all on AAVs. Their Alpha Company secured the southern bridge with their Bravo Company to lead to the northern bridge followed by Charlie Company. When they came across the southern bridge, Bravo Company maneuvered off to the east and became stuck. Charlie Company was ordered forward. Charlie Company went up and across the northern bridge, at which point they were engaged by enemy indirect fire. It was at that point, from what the witnesses said, an A-10 started to roll in on them and made approximately eight passes on their position. After the first or second pass, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Battalion Air Officer, his radio was physically broken, so he had very little situational awareness as to what was going on. Bravo Company had the Forward Air Controller, call sign MOUTH, who was...because he was supposed to be in the lead, but he was about 5000 meters back...Charlie Company did not have a Forward Air Controller with them.

COL [REDACTED] You subsequently did interviews with these gentlemen?

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. It was the S-3 Alpha, the weapons company commander and the Air Officer sitting down in 1/2's room with me, and they effectively told me the Battalion's plan that day and what happened that day from their perspective, which I summarized in my preliminary inquiry.

COL [REDACTED] you know the FAC's name from Charlie Company, or Bravo Company?

MAJ [REDACTED] Sir, if I had a copy of investigation...

COL [REDACTED] you don't have it with you?

MAJ [REDACTED] I don't have it with me, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] What was the state of mind of the FAC when you spoke with him? The Bravo Company FAC.

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. The Bravo Company FAC, call sign MOUTH, when he came in to see me, he started off...he was standing in front of me and said, "Sir, I don't want to make any comments now. I've seen too many people get crucified on CNN for their actions. I'm not comfortable speaking without talking to an attorney first." At which point, I sat him down, tried to calm him down, and he became extremely emotional at that time. And for approximately 10 to 15 minutes, cried...feeling the burden of what he may have been involved in, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Did you...subsequent to this...Did [REDACTED] who was the Bravo FAC, say anything to you? Did anybody else? Did he talk with anybody else? And do you have knowledge of anything he said to anybody else?

MAJ [REDACTED] Sir, about two or three days after my interview up there, I ran into the Battalion Executive Officer, I don't have the name off the top of my head, who said that he had some

[REDACTED]

essential information and I let him know that the investigating officer would be down at some point to talk with him. I don't know if it's anything more than the S-3 Alpha had already provided or not, but...and then the Company Gunnery Sergeant provided a statement, and the Platoon...the Amtrack Platoon Sergeant also provided a written statement. It came in a little bit later. It basically said that he saw an A-10 roll in and he's indicated on the inquiry one of the people that should be contacted.

COL [REDACTED] Do you have anything else you want to add at this time?

MA [REDACTED] No, Sir. I don't.

COL [REDACTED] In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MA [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. I do.



INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Interview with Major [REDACTED]
11 April 03, 0653

COL [REDACTED] Go ahead and please state your name, rank and your social security number for the record and billet for the record.

MAJ [REDACTED] [REDACTED], XXX-XX-XXXX, Senior Air Director, Air Support Element Forward.

COL [REDACTED] My name is Colonel [REDACTED]. Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

[REDACTED]

MA [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MA [REDACTED] Yes, Sir, I do.

COL [REDACTED] If you would, would you walk me through the Command and Control procedures that have gone on out here with air and how air is tasked.

MA [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. Basically, the Air Tasking Order comes out that describes how all the aircraft...who they work for and their specific duties. That comes out early in the morning. We get that, we look at, and then we make that ATO work for the day. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] That's our primary job out here in the Air Support Element. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Primarily Forward Air Controllers and Air Officers out there, and then we fill those requests, not only JTARs, but also Assault Support requests and medevacs from that Air Tasking Order. But if we're not able to meet those needs from that Air Tasking Order, we go to higher, whether it...it would most likely be the TAC center, Tactical Air Command Center, and request from them to divert air from, whether its ASOC or from other elements out there on the field. Primarily that's what we do, Sir.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Now, does all air come through the DASC to you, and you pass it on, or has air been directed straight from the TACC down to the FAC level?

MA [REDACTED] The best way to address that question is...academically, there's one DASC on the battlefield. Out here for this operation, there's one DASC with 1st Marine Division, and then you have an Air Support element, which does DASC functions with the UK. Then you have an Air Support Element with the Task Force Tarawa, which does DASC functions. Aircraft, if they're going to go work in one of those sectors, they take off, and they primarily go through TAOC and then to one of the ASCs for the DASC for work. Unless we divert aircraft, they don't talk to the DASC or the other ASC. They basically go for the positive control agency, like TAOC or AWACs and then come straight to us for work.

COL [REDACTED] What about... Are there any instances where air will be...aircraft out there looking for targets of opportunity will contact FACs directly?

MA [REDACTED] There have been some instances of FACs picking up aircraft or having aircraft jump over the DASC or the ASC, and go work directly for them.

COL [REDACTED] How are the aircraft able to do that? How are they able to get the frequencies?

MA [REDACTED] lot of times the frequencies...they get those from running previous missions, or they also get those from the TAC Center at times.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Can you tell me what air...Do you have any record of air that ran down to 2nd Marines on the morning or afternoon of the 23rd of March?

MAJ [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] What was that?

MAJ [REDACTED] I had several sections that got diverted that day.

COL [REDACTED] We are looking at the log book for the ASC.

MAJ [REDACTED] Sir, how far back do you want me to go on this log book?

COL [REDACTED] Start about 1000.

MAJ [REDACTED] Here, Sir? About 0953 1-2 crossed the first bridge, they're in An Nasiriyah, got a report of troops in contact at 1023, casevac at 1024...at 1105 Zulu at CAOC Air, divert 2 A-10s, call sign JODA 6-1 over to us with an estimated time of arrival of 1145 Zulu...at 1119 had NAIL 6 and 7 headed to 1/2 to work, reported troops, artillery, and a ZSU-23-4 in the vicinity Papa Victor 207 309...at 1123 had a REDBACK 5-5 work with OPA 7-1. OPA 7-1 was UH-1s, on JTAR 23-11. NAIL 6-7 at 1134 went to the tanker, then after that he went immediately back to 1/2. And then at 1147, 1/2 reported a mass casualty at Papa Victor 209 348.

COL [REDACTED] How many casualties?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

MAJ [REDACTED] They said approximately 50 at the time. I don't have any other amplifying information on that. And, that is when we requested additional support from the DASC and the UK through the close battle cell. And that's when we received a JTAR at 1203, JTAR 23-13 from the Regiment was assigning NAIL 6-5, which was two F/A18s and ROMAN 11, that's two F-14s, to an unknown target, location in An Nasiriyah...Do you want me to proceed on down a little farther, Sir?

COL [REDACTED] Yes. Anything that has to do with casevac after that period, would you go ahead and see what we've got.

MAJ [REDACTED] Roger that, Sir. At 1253, received medevac from 2-3 TAC Echo at PapaVictor 199 213...2 casualties, one listed as urgent...then at 1254 received medevac 2-3 TAC Fox at Papa Victor 230 395...that's 14 casualties and 12 listed as urgent... At 1304 had 2 A-10s, call sign MINNUNO? 5-1 went to work with the Forward Air Controller, call sign DUCK...Then at 1416 received medevac 2-3 TAC Golf, vicinity Papa Victor 199 213 with four casualties listed...At 1432, receive JTAR 2-3, TAC 1-5, suspected Scud launcher, this was from 3-2, that was at Papa Victor 182 452. There was assigned two A-10s, call sign NEEDLES 5-7...and at 1458 the DASC-A broadcast on guard for all casevac aircraft to come up _____ FSC-4...and that is basically it all the way up to 1530. And from...at 1610 got a battle damage assessment from NEEDLE 5-1, that's mission 65-51...Troops at Papa Victor 201 405, 8 MK82s expended, no known BDA. That's about it Sir, for the afternoon.

COL [REDACTED] Can you give me your general impressions of what transpired, what kind of battle was transpiring in the An Nasiriyah area?

MA [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. What happened was, our troops went up to go take the bridges in the vicinity. They had a western bridge and also they had a northeastern bridge. On that morning, as the troops went into contact, they got into an armor ambush. When that armor ambush took place, immediate call came back for casevac work. From my point of view, when we heard there was casualties, we immediately started looking at where the troops were that were called in that casevac, where they were in contact, and started to get air immediately flowing to them, especially since there was an armor engagement.

COL [REDACTED] At the same time, enemy armor?

MA [REDACTED] Enemy armor. Yes, Sir. Our armor went up there and got ambushed by enemy armor up there. So, we were also looking at getting the casevac bird up there. So we had two issues at the time. I know, from my point of view, we were getting ready to launch casevac, and they actually moved a triple A piece, a ZSA2-3, TAC-4 within one kilometer of the landing zone where the casevacs were going to be moved to. So, they were actually looking to do an ambush on our casevac aircraft. It was very dynamic. A lot of air was flowing in there that day. I did not hear about this Blue on Blue until several days afterward. It wasn't confirmed until I actually talked to the MEB JAG about it. But up until then, it had just been basically scuttlebutt. I did not hear anything about it that day, air flowed in, air flowed out. But on that day, we had a lot of troops in contact and we had a lot of medevacs.

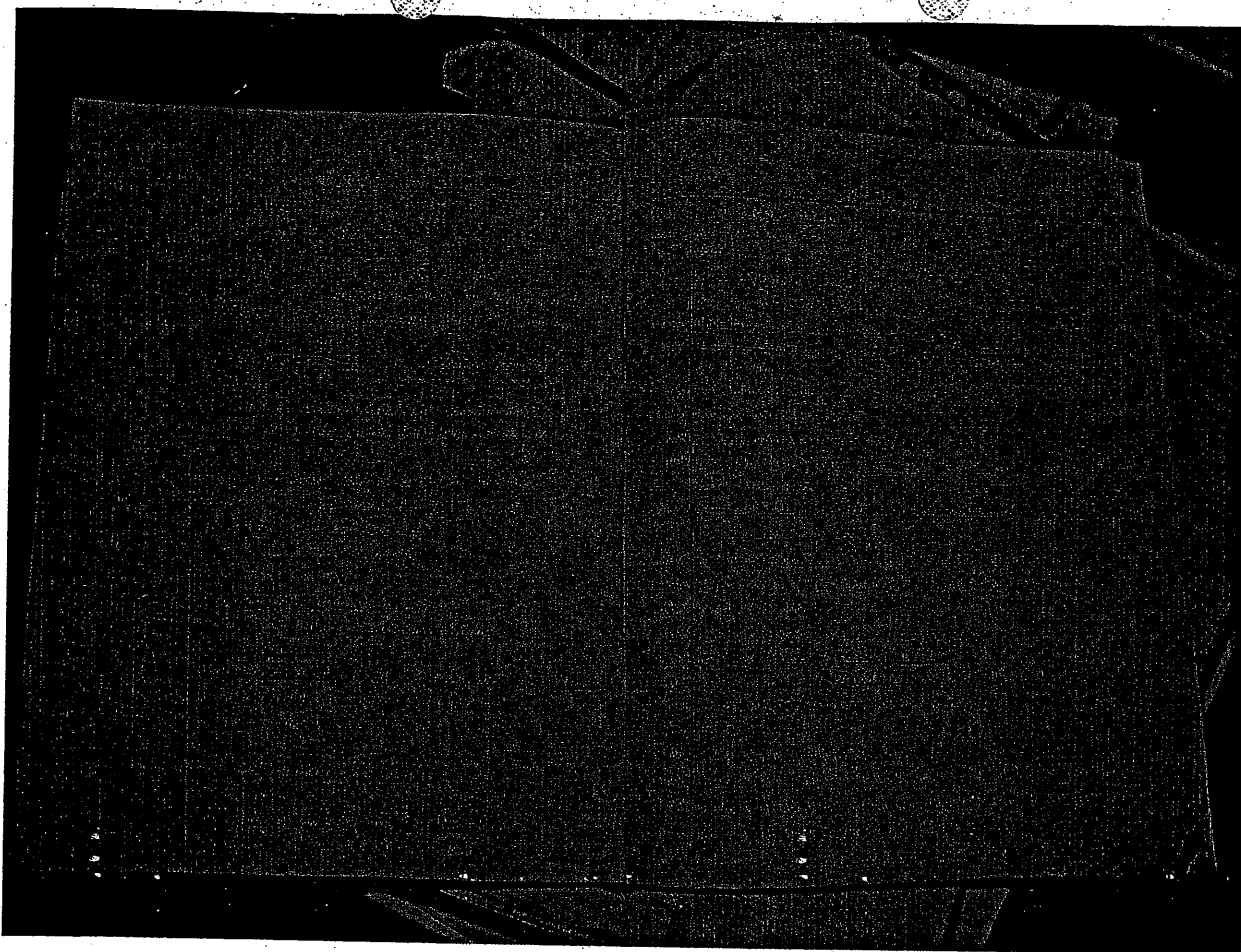
[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Do you have anything else that you would like to add [REDACTED]

MA [REDACTED] No, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MA [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.



J-38

[REDACTED]

Interview with Lt Col [REDACTED]
11 April 2003, 0956

COL [REDACTED] state your name please.

LT COL [REDACTED]: Lt Col [REDACTED] XXX-XX-XXXX.

COL [REDACTED] My name is Colonel S [REDACTED] Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

COL [REDACTED] we've got a map in front of us that I will provide. Would you please walk us through the disposition of friendly forces on that day, your scheme of maneuver? I understand that you captured an enemy prisoner and he had some information on their disposition of forces and what their intent was.

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir. Early on the 23rd, we launched out of our defensive positions in Jalibah. We staged on the main MSR heading north toward An Nasiriyah. We lead with tanks, followed by Bravo Company, who was a Team mech, followed by the forward. Behind the forward was Alpha Company, followed by Charlie Company. We were going to approach the city in a, basically, a column formation and move to seize the bridges, the eastern bridges of An Nasiriyah, which originally was a "be prepared to" mission that we found out about the night before, was going to be the actual mission that we had up there. Originally, our mission was to follow in trace and go up the Route 1 and assist in keeping Route 1 clear. But, with An Nasiriyah, the eastern bridges being a "be prepared to" mission from the MEB (TFTARAWA). We got that mission clarified the night before. The next morning, very early, we launched out, staged, and we began movement to An Nasiriyah. About 10 clicks south of An Nasiriyah, we

[REDACTED]

came under artillery and mortar fire along the route. We also took machine gun fire and small arms fire. It was at that time, and this was about mid-morning, that we were in the process of trying to clear some buildings that were on both sides of the MSR that we had thought that some of the small arms fire had come from. We could see out in the distance where the mortar fire was coming from, and we were trying to prosecute that with our artillery. At one point, if I remember right, our artillery engaged enemy artillery in the city, "Red Rain" counter battery fire that they were picking up. It was at that time, sometime around 9 local, that Gen [REDACTED] and the Regimental Commander, [REDACTED] approached our position, and it was explained to me that we needed to seize the bridges, that the small arms fire, we could bypass that and continue, because there were two RCTs waiting behind us to pass through the eastern side of An Nasiriyah and head up Route 7 toward Baghdad. We began our movement. We started to bypass the small arms fire to get our movement, picking up the momentum, when Team Tank had encountered about seven US Army survivors from a convoy earlier that morning, who went up the same route we were on. They had been ambushed by forces inside the city. Tanks had retrieved those individuals and found that there were five additional wounded soldiers forward. So, when we found out about that, we pushed tanks forward to retrieve those individuals. And when tanks came back with them, they had to go back and refuel because they were pretty much below half a tank. We didn't want to go into the fight without tanks up front. After that is when Co [REDACTED] and Gen [REDACTED] showed up. It wasn't before that. It was after that. One of the concerns was that the General had mentioned that there were twelve others still missing that they are hearing about from higher headquarters. As we're pressing on the bridges to be looking for these individuals, And, we had to have that in the back of our minds. So, it kind of picked up our momentum to push forward as quickly as possible. One, to seize the bridges, which was the

[REDACTED]

intent of the commander, and it was my intent to rapidly seize the bridges. And two, to see if we could find any of the survivors that might still be along the road. As we got closer to An Nasiriyah, we found remnants of the Army vehicle convoy that had been destroyed. One vehicle was still intact, and we retrieved that on...we still have today. But as we got closer to the city, the southeastern side of the city, we came upon the first bridge, which was a railroad bridge. It wasn't the bridge that goes over the Euphrates. It was not an objective, but when we got to that bridge, that was the trigger point that if our tanks hadn't refueled, we were not going to go any farther. We were going to stop there, consolidate until we could get armor up front. We were starting to receive heavy small arms fire southeast of the city, and it was at that point that our AAVs and Team Mech, Bravo Company, saw T55s. They backed off. We pushed CAAT forward. CAAT saw the T55.

COL [REDACTED] What's CAAT?

LT COL [REDACTED] Combined Anti-Arms Team. A combination of heavy guns, vehicles, tow vehicles. The tow vehicles pressed forward engaged the T55s. In the southeastern side of this city, by that railroad bridge, there were a total of nine T55s engaged. Some of those T55s had been drug into position, had no engines or transmission in them, but they had ammo in the turrets, and there were numerous secondary explosions when they were engaged. There were also...the ammo was still visible. I think Gen [REDACTED] and his Ops O, Co [REDACTED] were crawling around the some of them and verified that. So, some of these tanks were not operational other than the fact that they appeared to be just stationary pill boxes. But, about the time that we were on this railroad bridge, I was talking to my Ops O saying, "Hey, if we don't

[REDACTED]

get tanks up here, we're not going any farther." I was talking to my XO, Maj [REDACTED] in the rear, who was with the main, by the log trains?, and we were pushing him to get the tanks back up to us. Three tanks from Team Mech arrived that had been refueled. One of their tanks broke down at the refueling site and was unable to join us, but they had pushed forward. It was at that point, we were not taking any heavy fire other than the small arms. The T55s were observed, some of them moving, some of them stationary, and we decided push for the bridge, the southern bridge, and we did rapidly. We got on the southern bridge. Team Mech took the lead because tanks were still back refueling. Team Mech, followed by the forward, followed by Alpha Company, and then Charlie Company behind them. We got over the first bridge with no fire at all. It was...you know...there was absolutely no fire whatsoever once we got on the first bridge. Alpha Company, which was behind me, occupied the bridge as Team Mech continued the lead. And part of plan up here was to go down and take a side street to the east and outskirt or outflank this built up area here. We were trying to go through the back side of the city, and come in here and establish a support by fire position with the mech company, Team Mech, which was Bravo Company, and the tanks, to support the seizure of this northern bridge. Charlie Company, who was right behind the forward...

COL [REDACTED] Moving to the east?

LT COL [REDACTED] Moving to the east, following in trace, was going to also pass through and seize that bridge. As it turned out, we got back into this area here, where you see that trail, and it was nothing but a mud flat. No intel suggested that it was like that. It was a...

COL [REDACTED] That was just over the southern bridge?

LT COL [REDACTED] Over the southern bridge about...

COL [REDACTED] Started to proceed to the right?

LT COL [REDACTED] Actually it was right where that trail is right there that you see.

COL [REDACTED] OK.

LT COL [REDACTED] That goes off. So, it was about maybe a third of the way up, a little less than a third of the way up the main MSR there. It took a right, got right back in here where you see that angle is, and that's where our first tank just sunk to the axle. The dirt on the ground looked like this. We thought it was going to be more of a paved road back there and it wasn't. But, underneath that dirt was nothing but soft, wet mud and sand. It was there that Bravo go bogged down, couldn't move forward any farther. Charlie was behind us and at some point was alone. Charlie Company commander made the call to push straight across and seize this bridge.

COL [REDACTED] What orders did you give for him?

LT COL [REDACTED] The order for him was follow in trace, pass through, and seize the bridge. Based on the commander's intent to rapidly seize the bridge, knowing that we were

[REDACTED]

stuck here, he took his own initiative and pushed forward to seize that bridge. At this point, we had lost comm with Charlie and Alpha Company back here. It was intermittent.

COL [REDACTED] And you were with...?

LT COL [REDACTED] I was behind Bravo.

COL [REDACTED] You were behind Bravo.

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes. I was trying to call him because he, I was going to tell him to push to the second bridge vice following trace, because we weren't going to go anywhere. We had vehicles stuck up here. We ended up taking Bravo and moving down the side streets here with the exception of the C-7 and P-7 chase, two Hummers, and a tank that got stuck. Everything else was able to move down the side roads, and we were coming down through here. Now, we came under heavy fire here, all through this alley...

COL [REDACTED] C-7s and P-7s are AAVs?

LT COL [REDACTED] AAVs, yes. That where the forward was in. I was following the C-7 in my Hummer and my Ops O was in his Hummer. And we were...as it turned out, we ended up moving with everybody down the side road. We ended up getting this tank out later in the day, and one of the Hummers, but we were unable to retrieve the C-7 and the P-7 because they were stuck so badly. And there was still pretty much a lot of fire down here. Then Charlie, at some

[REDACTED]

point shortly after we got stuck, launched out here. It was about, maybe 40 minutes later, 30 to 40 minutes later that I found out. Because I was trying to call him and tell him don't sit here, move. He had already done that, and I found out that he'd done that, and he had not stopped at the northern bridge. Apparently, he had moved down and consolidated forward of the bridge on the northern side. And we ended up getting down here to this point later in the day, and we had already passed tanks through. Alpha Company, who had the southern bridge, had launched up here to assist Charlie Company in their consolidation. When Alpha linked up with Charlie, pretty much the fighting stopped at that point. And, we came through with Bravo, through this portion of the city and linked up and had all the combat power on the northern side of the bridge. 2/8 was supposedly on the southern side of the southern bridge making an attempt to link up with Alpha Company. But Alpha Company got a call...actually, the Charlie Company XO came back to the bridge and said we need additional help with medevacs forward, and that's when Alpha Company CO pushed. He was on the bridge waiting for link up with 2/8. That link up never took place, and the reason why was 2/8 was back on this railroad bridge thinking they we're on the southern bridge, and they weren't. So, he again pushed forward, and that's when pretty much this fighting here stopped. And then later in the afternoon, we all, on the other side of the bridge, linked up.

COI [REDACTED] talk to me about...you say some folks had surrendered to you on the 23rd.
And the 23rd Brigade, was it...the Republican Guard?

LT CO [REDACTED] No. They were regular Army.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Regular Army. Tell me what you learned from them about the disposition of enemy forces within An Nasiriyah.

LT COL [REDACTED] The first night that we were consolidated on the northern side, we had an ambulance approach from this direction, take a hard left...

COL [REDACTED] Which direction was this?

LT COL [REDACTED] This was from the east. OK, you can see down here on the canal...

COL [REDACTED] So, it was north of the canal on the MSR.

LT COL [REDACTED] East on the northern side of the canal. But...this is where the 23rd Brigade headquarters was at. There was an ambulance that was approaching. This would have been about, 0800 Zulu...was approaching...I'm sorry. Not 0800, but about 1000 local in the evening, 2000.

COL [REDACTED] 2200?

LT COL [REDACTED] 2200. I'm sorry. From the east and...because we did not have a road block here established as of yet, he got down through here. The ambulance...I think the Marines saw the ambulance and they didn't fire on it because they thought it was...

COL [REDACTED] And this was after the fight, after you consolidated, that these folks came up to you?

LT COL [REDACTED] Right. They came down here and our tanks stopped them right here. That turned out to be the CO of the 23rd Brigade who was masquerading as a paramedic with one of his other officers and then a wounded officer in the vehicle and they were trying to get back into the city. When we took him under that night as a EPW, he had told the HET Team that they didn't expect us to come through the eastern side and they were even more confused when we tried to go around the eastern side, because they had two forces of two opposite directions that were hitting them. And so that kind of confused them. He was shuttled back to the rear very quickly and we didn't have a chance to talk to him. A week later, the...

COL [REDACTED] That was on what date?

LT COL [REDACTED] This would have been on the 23rd that we had him. And the...I'd have to go back and look it up.

COL [REDACTED] ut the 30th or so?

LT COL [REDACTED] It would have been about the 30th or the 1st. It was the day that we got the orders to leave An Nasiriyah, and the next day we left. But the day before we left An Nasiriyah, we...the executive officer of the 23rd Brigade surrendered to us. We sat down with him for about two hours and talked their disposition and composition and what they were

[REDACTED]

thinking. He drew this out for us, but...the 23rd Brigade was defending north of the city. 1st Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Battalion here. The 504th Brigade was in the city, as well as a lot of their artillery and mortars, and there were artillery and mortars out here on the northern side as well and in positions over in here. Then, they had another brigade, I think it was the 47th, that was down to the southeast. That was who we ran into the very first engagement with the mortars and artillery and machine gun fire.

COL [REDACTED] About how many forces would you say were in the city and around the city?

LT COL [REDACTED] The brigades were averaging between...according to him now, and I have not been able to verify this, about 1600 men each. Their brigades are smaller than our brigades. As far as Fedayeen in the city, he was not sure. He thought between 5 to 800 Fedayeen fighters in the city. He did not know how many Baath fighters or Baath party members were in the city.

COL [REDACTED] How many brigades did they have?

LT COL [REDACTED] Three.

COL [REDACTED] Those were brigades about 1600 each, plus Fedayeen and other folks?

[REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] Republican Guard, he was not sure how many Republican Guard officers were in the city. I know over here, we killed a total of five Republican Guard officers.

COL [REDACTED] That was just north of the southern bridge?

LT COL [REDACTED] The southern bridge. As we rolled in here, we were, ... as we came back in here, they were just kind of like standing out there and were engaged, and when I dismounted, my first thought was ... you know ... were these guys police, or were they regular army. Our S-2 went out, ended up taking some of the epaulettes off the uniforms, confiscated the weapons, and described them as Republican Guard.

COL [REDACTED] There were substantial forces in and around the city then?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes. Very much.

COL [REDACTED] Armed with?

LT COL [REDACTED] RPGs, AK-47s, light machine guns, and mortars, and artillery.

COL [REDACTED] Let me go through some of the questions I've got here and see if we can answer some of them. Then we'll talk specifically about the incident on the 23rd with the A-10s. What were the weather conditions during that day?

[REDACTED]

LT COL [REDACTED] It was a warm day and clear,...no clouds. It was pretty much that...

COL [REDACTED] Unlimited visibility?

LT COL [REDACTED] Unlimited visibility.

COL [REDACTED] Are there FSC G-3 logs for 23 March?

LT COL [REDACTED] Say again, Sir?

COL [REDACTED] Are there logs for 23 March?

LT COL [REDACTED] We have logs, yes, Sir. And the FSC was able to keep his yellow canaries, and he transposed those yellow canaries into a log book, which because of the events that were going on as we were moving through the city, he was only able to keep yellow canaries. Log book entries were secondary, but at the end of the day, and the next couple of days, he took those yellow canaries and caught up the log book.

COL [REDACTED] Yellow canaries are yellow notes, basically for message notes?

LT COL [REDACTED] Yes, Sir.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] e'll obtain copies of these logs. Now, the battalion air officer and the FSC were co-located, and the air officer's radio was damaged and he couldn't talk with higher headquarters. Who could he talk to?

LT COL [REDACTED] He was unable, once in the city, to talk to anyone except for MOUTH, who was the FAC. I believe that's who he was talking to, but he was unable to talk to anyone else outside. Now, I talked to the FSC on my radio, cause he was unable to go out to Charlie Company or anyone else and talk to them.

COL [REDACTED] But he was in contact with MOUTH throughout the battle?

LT COL [REDACTED] The FSC was in contact with MOUTH on and off throughout the battle, yes, as I was explained.

COL [REDACTED] What calls from DASC or Task Force Tarawa came in with regard to handoff of aircraft inbound?

LT COL [REDACTED] As far as I know, prior to coming into the city, my understanding is that the FSC had requested through the air officer as much air as we could receive. As we got to the southern bridge, the railroad bridge, we were told that there were fixed wing assets on station. At that point, it was..we wanted to keep the rotary wing, because that's what was having the most effect. We had no cleared targets for fixed wing yet. So, the fixed wing was pushed north of the city. From my understanding is that went back to VIKING, which was Regiment,

[REDACTED]

that they'd pushed the air north of the city. We don't need it here, the fixed wing here, what we need is the rotary wing, which was having the biggest effect on enemy targets as we were moving up through the city.

COL [REDACTED] And at that particular time, you hadn't crossed the bridges yet?

LT COL [REDACTED] We were on the southern bridge, that first bridge. Not the one that was the objective, but the bridge that was going over the railroad tracks, about 4 clicks south of the first objective, which was the southern bridge here on the Euphrates. The bridge here, and then back here about 4 clicks, right here at the edge of this map was another bridge that was a railroad bridge, or goes over a railroad track.

COL [REDACTED] So, the aircraft were pushed north. Do you have the call signs of all the aircraft that came into contact?

LT COL [REDACTED] I don't. But the air officer probably does. I don't know if he remembers those at this point or not.

COL [REDACTED] Would he have them written down?

LT COL [REDACTED] I'm not sure if he has them written down or not.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] We'll check on that. Did the FSC coordinate or talk with higher headquarters?

LT COL [REDACTED] Up to the time we got into the city, he was talking to VIKING, but after getting into the city, and we got stuck on the northeast side, his comms apparently were not working properly to where he could talk to VIKING.

COL [REDACTED] When Charlie Company was engaged, then he wasn't talking to higher headquarters?

LT COL [REDACTED] Not that I know of, no.

COL [REDACTED] Battalion Air also told companies to coordinate air as best they could. When did this happen, do you know?

LT COL [REDACTED] I don't know if that happened at all, with Battalion Air Officer telling companies to coordinate their air. I think he had a conversation with MOUTH, and at some point, the air was pushed to MOUTH to use.

COL [REDACTED] The air was pushed to MOUTH by?

LT COL [REDACTED] The Air Officer.

[REDACTED]

COL [REDACTED] Battalion? By the Battalion Air Officer?

LT COL [REDACTED] By Battalion Air Officer.

COL [REDACTED] Was the Battalion aware that A-10s were coming on station?

LT COL [REDACTED] I think the FSC was aware of that. I was not aware we had A-10s on station until that afternoon when it was briefed to me. Actually, I was aware of it when I got a call from Lt [REDACTED] over the TAC net, asking that we turn the air off, because they were being engaged by friendly air. And that's when I was trying to get on the net with VIKING and FSC to get them to turn off the air. The FSC, from my understanding, was also aware of that, because he had heard the conversation. He was trying to come up on the nets...getting the Air Officer on the nets trying to get the air off.

COL [REDACTED] Who called to turn off the air? Charlie Company?

Charlie Company. One of the LTs.

COL [REDACTED] Was he talking to Bravo Company Air Officer?

LT COL [REDACTED] No. The Bravo Company FAC.

COL [REDACTED] The Bravo Company FAC. So FSC heard the call. Did they attempt to get in contact with Bravo Company FAC?

LT COL [REDACTED] I think they did, but they were unable to at that point.

COL [REDACTED] They were unable to get in touch with the Bravo Company FAC to turn off the air. Was anybody able to get in touch with Bravo Company FAC?

LT COL [REDACTED] don't believe so, no.

COL [REDACTED] Do you know what time Charlie Company called? When that call was made?

LT COL [REDACTED] No, I don't. At that point, there was no contact with the Battalion. Basically, we were fighting our way through the eastern side of the city. Charlie was on the northern side consolidating, and we were just trying to make our way toward them.

COL [REDACTED] Charlie Company was taking fire. When were you aware that they were taking fire? What types of fire were they taking prior to the air?

LT COL [REDACTED] You know, really, at the time, I was trying to get a hold of Charlie because we were stuck. We were receiving small arms fire and RPG fire. We did not have any

[REDACTED]

idea that they were under fire until I heard Lt [REDACTED] call saying that he was under...he was under fire, not an A-10, but he was under fire from friendly air.

COL [REDACTED] Did he say A-10?

LT COL [REDACTED] I can't remember whether he said A-10 or whether he said it was friendly air. But, I do remember at that point becoming aware that they were in a fire fight up there against friendly air as well as...you could hear the fire. You could hear the small arms, explosions, from where they were at. Also at the same time, I was getting calls from Alpha Company saying they were under intense enemy fire and again small arms, RPGs. He was wanting permission to push to the next bridge, and I told him no, hold right now until we make the link up with 2/8, well 2/8 was back on the other bridge and not on the bridge we thought he was not on our bridge. And he was talking...2/8 was talking to me, and trying to conduct link up. I was talking to WARPARTY, who was 2/8 actual. He was reporting that he was on the southern bridge and that he was moving to conduct link up and I was wanting him to conduct the link up so that we could get Alpha moving to the other side to reinforce Charlie. As it turned out, 2/8, I believe was still on the bridge that goes over the railroad tracks, about 4 clicks south of the bridge that was going over the Euphrates, which was our first objective. There was some confusion as to what bridge I believed they were on. Now, I say that because Charlie never physically saw 2/8, or rather, Alpha never physically saw 2/8 anywhere on the bridge. Although WARPARTY 6 was telling me he was on the southern bridge, and he was trying to conduct link up, and I think that he was down here on this bridge.

[REDACTED]
Who is WARPARTY 6?

LT COL [REDACTED] That's 2/8's actual. So, and the reason why I believe that is because Team Mech, who we had leading, originally reported to me that he had seized the first objective. That's when we first came up on that southern bridge, and I looked at my map and I said, "No, you've go about 4 more clicks to go, check again." And he said, "Roger." He had just made...you know...he thought he was on the bridge that was going over the Euphrates. And again to...It was there that we waited for the tanks to show up, and then we began to push forward. But, we had the initial engagement down there on that southern bridge, and then got over the first objective bridge, which was over the Euphrates, with no contact, turned right, came up through the streets, we got stuck. And then Charlie pushed shortly thereafter for this bridge here. Alpha was already on this bridge securing it, because they just stopped behind us and occupied hasty defensive positions to secure the bridge, and Charlie passed through them and was supposed to follow us around, but instead kept going north, after they realized we were stuck.

TAPE ENDS

RESTART SECOND SIDE

COL [REDACTED] think this is where I started asking you questions. The weather at the time was clear and visibility was unlimited?