



Joint Advanced
Warfighting Project

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

Al Sahawa—The Awakening
Volume I: Al Anbar Province Final Report

William (Bill) Knarr, Task Leader
Col Dale Alford, USMC
Mary Hawkins
LtCol David Graves, USMC
Jennifer Goodman
MajGen Thomas Jones, USMC, (Ret)
Col Tracy King, USMC
Carolyn Leonard
John Frost
Matt Coursey
LtCol Russell Keller, USMC, (Ret)

July 2015
Approved for public
release; distribution is
unlimited.
IDA Paper P-5100
Log: H 13-001793



The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation that operates three federally funded research and development centers to provide objective analyses of national security issues, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise, and conduct related research on other national challenges.

About This Publication

This work was conducted by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) under contract DASW01-04-C-0003, Task AI-8-2827, for the Joint Advanced Warfighting Program (JAWP) Board of Directors and Task BE-8-3035, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. The JAWP Board consists of the Deputy Commander, US Joint Forces Command; the Deputy, Joint Operations Support, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition; the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy; and the Joint Staff Director for Joint Force Development (J-7). The views, opinions, and findings should not be construed as representing the official position of either the Department of Defense or the sponsoring organization.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Marine Corps History Division for opening its files to the team, to Sheikh Ahmed Bezia Albu-Risha for opening his home and hosting many of the Iraqi interviews, and to the US Forces Iraq for making the battle site surveys and in-country interviews possible. We would like to particularly thank all of the interviewees who took the time out of their busy schedules to talk to the JAWD team, some of whom did so at their own risk. Special thanks to Dr. Kevin Woods and Colonel Scott Feil, USA, (Ret), for their expertise and coaching throughout the review and publication process—they were incredibly helpful in publishing these stories.

Copyright Notice

© 2015 Institute for Defense Analyses
4850 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1882 • (703) 845-2000.

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES
Joint Advanced Warfighting Project

IDA Paper P-5100

Al Sahawa—The Awakening
Volume I: Al Anbar Province Final Report

William (Bill) Knarr, Task Leader
Col Dale Alford, USMC
Mary Hawkins
LtCol David Graves, USMC
Jennifer Goodman
MajGen Thomas Jones, USMC, (Ret)
Col Tracy King, USMC
Carolyn Leonard
John Frost
Matt Coursey
LtCol Russell Keller, USMC, (Ret)

This page is intentionally blank.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Anbar Awakening project, and the five volumes that document its findings, is to tell the story of Al Anbar's *Sahawa*—or Awakening. In doing so, it will show that there were a number of developments throughout Al Anbar between 2003 and 2008 that significantly contributed to the overall Awakening story. This document, Volume I, is the final report and provides the narrative, as well as the analyses, themes, and lessons for the entire project.

In 2003, a US-led Coalition toppled Iraq's military in less than a month of major combat operations. Following the defeat of the Iraqi military, a combination of events resulted in a lethal insurgency.¹ In March 2004, insurgents in Fallujah killed four US contractors. A local mob hung the burned remains of two of the Americans from the old city bridge. The Coalition's abortive attempts designed, in part, "to make the insurgents pay" simply added influence, or *wasta*, to the insurgent's cause. It also signaled the Iraqis and others in the region that the Americans could be "beaten." According to Dr. Mowaffak Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, Fallujah became a symbol of the insurgency.²

The security and political conditions in Iraq worsened throughout 2004. Al Qaeda's bombing of the Madrid commuter train system on 11 March resulted in Spain withdrawing from the Coalition in April. Honduras soon followed. Almost simultaneously was the revelation of criminal abuse of Iraqis by US personnel at Abu Ghraib prison. These and related issues, festering since 2003, gained traction in the spring of 2004 and provided recruitment fodder for a growing insurgency. The young firebrand Shia cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, seized the opportunity and with his militia and other supporters created havoc in the southern cities of Karbala, Najaf, and Al Kut. Additionally, the growing insurgent activity threatened to cut the Coalition lines of communication from Kuwait to Baghdad. Contracted truckers were intimidated; little fuel and supplies were getting through to Baghdad and Al Anbar. In response, the Coalition redeployed units from ports of debarkation and home station to return to Iraq and stabilize the situation. By May 2004, according to former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, "the whole country was boiling."³

To add to the chaos were several major transitions during June and July. Two new headquarters, the Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) and Multi-National Corps–Iraq stood up to

¹ There were many US "missteps," though in the grand scheme of things, these failures were a factor but hardly the only ones. Many other contributing factors are discussed later.

² Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubai'e, Iraqi National Security Advisor, was interviewed by Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, USMC, at his home in Baghdad, Iraq, 29 Jan 2006.

³ Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, USMC, Baghdad, 6 Feb 2006; Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubai'e, interview 29 Jan 2006.

replace the smaller combat focused Combined Joint Task Force-7. Then the Coalition Provisional Authority passed sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government and stood down. Recognizing the new status of a sovereign Iraq, the US re-established its embassy with Ambassador John Negroponte at the helm. But with this new team came a new plan: to set the conditions for successful elections in January 2005. Those conditions necessitated eliminating Fallujah as an insurgent sanctuary.

By summer 2004, Fallujah became unbearable for its residents. They had come to understand through experience the horrors of living under Al Qaeda in Iraq's (AQI) extreme interpretation of *Sharia*. Instead of partnering with the Iraqi people to fight the occupiers, the extremists, led by the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, demanded to lead the jihad with the intent of first destroying and then transforming the social fabric of the province. Notable Fallujah area residents such as Farhan De Hal Farhan and Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli soon fled but carried the message that these takfiris, or extremists, were really the enemy of the Iraqi people. This realization and simple message was the first step toward what would become the Awakening.

During the next two years communities, towns, and districts along the Euphrates would awaken to the fact that AQI was not their friend. They also soon realized that they could not defeat AQI on their own. The only way AQI could be beaten was for the Anbaris, like it or not, to partner with the Coalition. But there was a reciprocal requirement. The Coalition had to be willing to work with the local people; in most cases that meant working through the tribes. This was the second step in the Awakening.

One of the biggest challenges the Coalition faced was connecting the people to the Government of Iraq (GOI). After all, the Coalition was going to leave and it had to wean the people off Coalition support. Fostering the legitimacy of the GOI and developing that connection was the third and most difficult step. At this writing, it is also the step that, despite the withdrawal of Coalition forces in 2011, remains largely incomplete.

Thesis

Most popular narratives of the Anbar Awakening associate the beginning of the movement with a 14 September 2006 proclamation by Sheik Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha where he coined the term *Al Sahawa*. The simplicity of this version fails to connect events and relationships that preceded Sattar's declaration. This project contends that there was a robust connection in terms of events and relationships from Fallujah in 2004 to Al Qaim in 2005 to the Hadithah-Hit Corridor in 2006, to Ramadi in 2006/2007 and back to Fallujah in 2007/2008. That connection, however, was not obvious to American eyes. In effect, the awakening, or *sahawa*, became the *Sahawa*, an accumulation of related events and efforts by communities along the Euphrates, setting the conditions for a dramatic turning point in Ramadi as the insurgents ran out of room to hide. The awakening in Ramadi was spectacular, but it did not begin or end

there.⁴ This collaboration, grounded in Iraqi culture and societal networks, went generally unrecognized by most outsiders. Understanding this underlying context enables a deeper, more coherent, and more complete narrative of the Awakening movement.

Objective

The objective of the Anbar Awakening project is to create an unclassified, accessible resource for trainers and educators.⁵ It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles. The project presents the Awakening movement's phases along a timeline that runs from the inception of the insurgency in 2003 to the Coalition's transfer of responsibility for Al Anbar to the Iraqis in 2008. In addition, the project offers analysis and lessons, many of which are transferrable to current and future conflicts.

Reconstruction

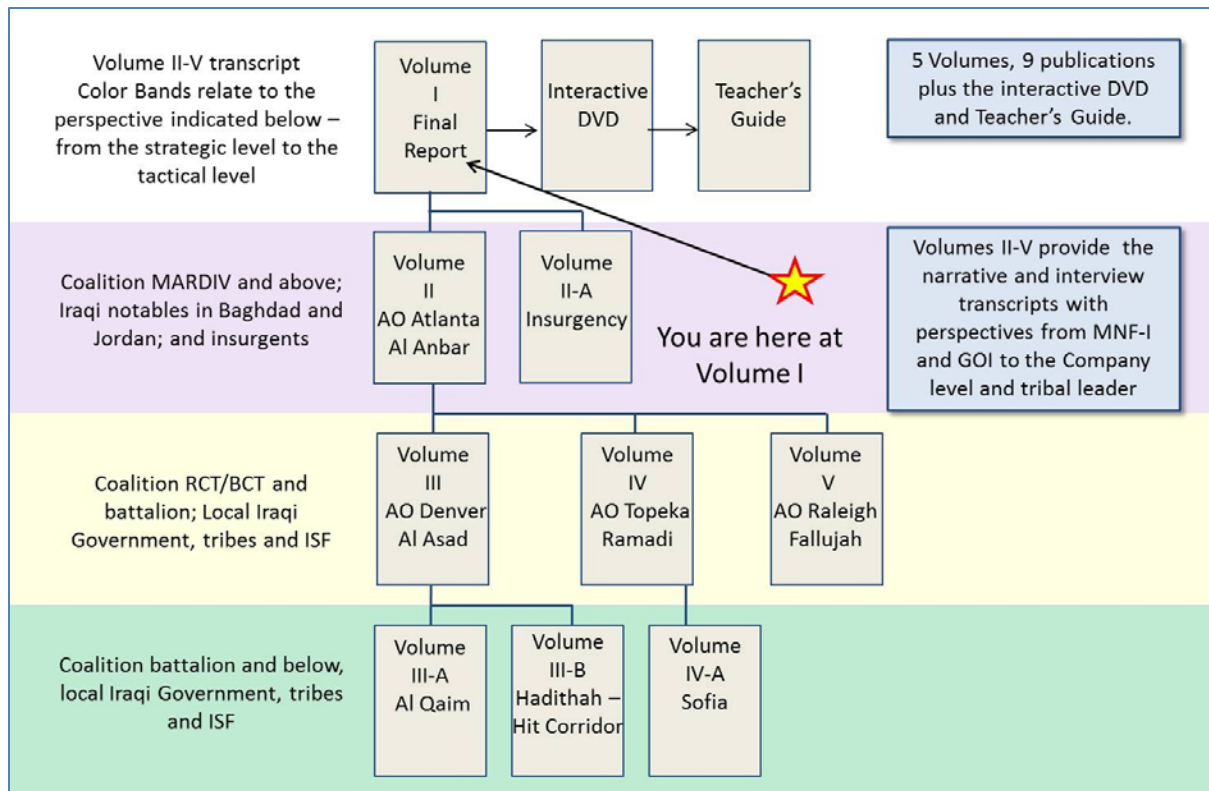
Reconstructing the events in Al Anbar into a multimedia product begins where most case studies, historical analyses, and comparable projects end. The case study has to be completed first; then (or simultaneously, if possible) multimedia materials need to be collected; and finally those materials have to be woven together to bring the case study to life. Much of the information in this project came through the interviews contained in the appendices of the project's volumes. Those interviews and other contributing material provided the script—the storyboard—with quotes that identify a range of “characters” and video or audio clips for the multimedia product.

The Awakening Project comprises five volumes of supporting documents and an interactive DVD with a Teacher's Guide.⁶ The purpose of the Teacher's Guide is to suggest how a teacher might use the DVD and the various volumes to support and inform research, training and education. It provides storyline experiences that may be relevant to on-going conflicts and examples that allow students to see the strategic implications of tactical actions and *visa-versa*. Volume I is the final report. Volumes II–V, arranged by Coalition designated Areas of Operations (AO), cover events ranging from the strategic to the tactical level. They also contain background on each AO, full interview transcripts from personnel who lived and worked within these AOs, and summaries of each transcript (see Figure).

⁴ This paper uses the upper case *A* or *S* to describe the overall Awakening or *Al Sahawa*, and the lower case *a* or *s* to describe those local movements to include the one in Ramadi.

⁵ Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public releasable material to be used in their seminars.

⁶ The term *teacher* in this context is used broadly. It can mean professor, instructor, trainer, small group facilitator or anyone that uses this material as a teaching/learning resource.



Areas of Operations in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes

This Volume

This volume, Volume I (Final Report), provides the narrative from the birth of the insurgency in 2003 until the transfer of authority for security in Al Anbar Province from the Coalition to the Iraqi Government in 2008. It provides both Iraqi and Coalition perspectives on events in Al Anbar that impacted the evolution of the area from an insurgent stronghold to one that supported the Coalition and, in most cases, the GOI.

Lessons, Themes and Leads

Each volume in the project provides themes corresponding to significant events in each AO. Below are examples of the lessons, themes, and leads gleaned from the events that occurred throughout Al Anbar.

Sanctuaries and Safe Havens aren't all Bad

Most people think of sanctuaries and safe havens as they relate to insurgencies, as locations where the enemy can freely move, train, and equip before entering the target country. Jordan's role as a sanctuary served a different purpose. A war like the one in Iraq needed a safe place where people from all sides, combatant and noncombatant, could meet and talk

without security requirements dominating the agenda. Jordan afforded that location. Many notable tribal leaders, former Iraqi military officials, and former insurgents already lived in or found sanctuary in Syria or Jordan, because living and meeting in Iraq was unsafe.

Jordan also gave the Iraqis an alternate link to the outside world. Whereas the official link was via the GOI, Jordan became an unofficial conduit for plans, meetings, and activities to address or connect to foreign interests. This is an enduring lesson.

Force Ratios

Force ratios applied force density rules of thumb with the associated math. As an example, Army FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency suggests as a rule of thumb, 20–25 counterinsurgents to 1,000 residents in an area of operations (or 1 to 40 or 50), but emphasizes that it greatly depends on the situation.⁷

The problem with such ratios is that they discount the role of local auxiliaries and even independent local forces with a common objective. Perhaps the best example is the Iraqi police in Al Anbar. The local police were the most important link in the chain, because they were closest to the people whom the indigenous government or counterinsurgent were trying to protect. A question for those who promote force ratios is to what extent is the process of developing and working with the Iraqi Army (and other security forces) accounted for in terms of both inputs (the training/partnering mission) and eventual outputs (personnel capable of providing security).

Additionally, there are other approaches to establishing a metric for sizing and structuring forces for such missions. On the training/education multimedia addendum to this project, Colonel Scott Feil, USA, Retired, offers several approaches for consideration and further study: mission-based force structures, population-ratio based force structures, and geographical-based force structures.

Capacity Building, or, Give me ten guys and I can give you 300

Lieutenant Colonel Kris Stillings, USMC, Commander of one of the Military Transition Teams in Ramadi asked Lieutenant Colonel Tony Deane, USA, Commander TF 1-35, for ten Soldiers to augment his team. Stillings said, “Hey, if you give me ten guys, I can give you 300.” Deane commented, “What a deal!”⁸ In fact, Major General Robert Neller, Deputy Commander,

⁷ Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency, published 15 Dec 2006, para. 1-67. See computations in Chapter 11.

⁸ Colonel Tony Deane, former commander, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor in Ramadi, Iraq, from June to Nov 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr at Deane’s office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 12 Oct 2010. A MiTT is assigned to various ISF levels. In this case, Stillings was saying, if Deane provided 10 Soldiers, Stillings in turn could provide an Iraqi unit of at least 300, as the MiTT trained, advised and accompanied the Iraqi unit in combat.

MNF-West (MNF-W), thought the Military Transition Teams (MiTT) and Police Transition Teams were so important, that MNF-W augmented, from their own forces, those teams.⁹

Another approach to building capacity was using the Combined Action Platoons or CAP—known as the Combined Action Program in Vietnam—that embedded Coalition forces with Iraqi forces. The Marines implemented this in Al Qaim, Ramadi, and in the Corridor. These will be enduring themes for the future.

Some of the Fog of War was Self-Generated

Intelligence reports and assessments were not keeping pace with the realities on the ground. Many people scratched their heads over the MNF-W's August 2006 intelligence assessment and ultimately questioned the credibility of the intelligence system.¹⁰ If counterinsurgency is a bottoms-up war where the intelligence comes from the population, then why wasn't the intelligence staff listening to the commanders on the ground and in the community who were engaging the local leaders?

“Only Force them to be Brave Once”

Recruitment postponements, cancellations, and delayed reporting times put new recruits at risk as they exposed themselves and their families to AQI retribution for their affiliations with the Coalition and the GOI. In Hit, for example, the Operational Detachment Alpha managed to marshal a group from the tribes for pickup and movement by air to a training area, but the air didn't show up. It's much more difficult to get them to come back a second time.

Ramadi recruitment suffered from a similar problem. LTC Deane asked Sheikh Ahmed Albu-Risha why the numbers of recruits in Ramadi were so low. Ahmed explained that although the candidates would go to the recruitment drives, when they got home, they were subject to AQI intimidation. Deane suggested that they conduct the drives in the tribal areas and ship the recruits out to training on the same day, that way, Deane observed, we “... only force them to be brave once.” Ahmed agreed.

The Triad: Coalition, Government of Iraq, the People

The Coalition continued to reinforce a connection between recruiting Iraqis into security forces and the GOI until 2007 when the *Sahawa* movement in Al Anbar evolved into the Sons of Iraq (SOI), a national program.

⁹ Major General Robert Neller, former Deputy Commanding General for Operations, MEF (FWD), Feb 2006 to Feb 2007, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Quantico, Virginia, 24 Feb 2010.

¹⁰ This refers to I-MEF G2, “State of the Emergency in Al Anbar,” I MEF G-2, 17 Aug 2006, cleared for open publication 16 Dec 2010 by the Office of Security Review, Department of Defense and declassified by US Central Command Memorandum 10-012, at the request of Dr. William Knarr.

Former Prime Minister Dr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari complimented the management of the early Awakening program in Al Anbar, but saw its evolution to the SOI as an unnecessary, un-supportable social program.¹¹ Reconciling SOI into the GOI was a significant challenge up to April 2010, with, according to Mr. Mohammed al-Saady, Chairman of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation in 2009, 14,000–50,000 *sahawas* in the Baghdad area alone, left to transition into the ministries.¹²

However, while it was difficult before 2007 to recruit Iraqi police and soldiers due to the stigma associated with working for the GOI, recruiting them directly into an organization affiliated with the GOI alleviates the challenges of transitioning SOI into the GOI later. If, as FM 3-24 dictates, one of the tenants of counterinsurgency is to link the people to the government, then this must be consistent, and not left for the host nation to implement later. This is an enduring theme.

Move from a Threat-centric to a Population-centric Strategy

According to Colonel Stephen Davis, USMC, Commander, Regimental Combat Team-2 (RCT-2) during August through October 2005, the RCT-2's forces grew from 3,200 to around 14,000 as it received additional Coalition, as well as Iraqi, forces.¹³ Additionally, Special Forces detachments were reintroduced to AO Denver. These detachments began engaging the population to determine which tribes might be receptive to working with the Coalition and GOI. This led to forming the Desert Protectors—local tribesmen recruited, trained, organized and deployed as scouts to support Coalition and ISF operations. With the increase in forces in September 2005, Col Davis was able to move from a threat-based strategy to a population centric strategy and initiate his combined, permanent, persistent presence. This also occurred in Ramadi in mid-2006. General George Casey, Commander, MNF-I, called it reinforcing success.¹⁴ But with the increased development of the Iraq Security Forces through tribal engagement and additional forces, such as the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit in November 2006, the war in Al Anbar was tipping in favor of the Iraqis and Coalition. But military might wasn't the only answer to these types of conflicts.

All commanders made it very clear that governance and economic development had to closely follow military action of “clear, hold, build” to ensure continuity of operation and to

¹¹ Dr. Ibrahim Al Jaafari, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, Baghdad, 30 Apr 2010.

¹² Mr. Mohammed al-Saady, Chairman of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Baghdad, 30 Apr 2010.

¹³ Colonel Stephen Davis, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Camp Lejeune, 25 May 2010.

¹⁴ General George W. Casey, former MNF-I Commander, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, Washington, DC, 16 Dec 2010.

preclude any gaps that AQI could exploit. Hence, Prime Minister Allawi's insistence on a Fallujah Reconstruction plan before executing the 2004 second battle of Fallujah; Lieutenant Colonel Dale Alford's work in Al Qaim in 2005; Colonel Sean MacFarland's insistence on the Ramadi Reconstruction Conference in Ramadi, in January 2007; Brigadier General David Reist coining of the term Commercial Battlespace, and many other examples. As Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli's would say, "this is not the kind of fight that is going to be won by military kinetic action alone. It's a combination across all the lines of operations."¹⁵

Engagement

Engagement was arguably the most important lesson. As readers reflect on the above lessons, themes and leads, they will find that some form of engagement was instrumental in each of them. The need for tribal engagement to gain the support of the people, although marginalized by the CPA, was critical; as Colonel Charlton described it, "your relationship with the population [via the tribes] is your force protection....and it's a building block of everything we're doing here." He emphasized that engagement involved opening other doors to include religion through religious leaders. According to him, "When AQI moves into a neighborhood, its first stop is the mosque. It's their ideological base. They will try to take whatever ideology is being preached to that mosque and replace it with their version." When you open that door and engage, it gives you a powerful tool in combating terrorism and terrorist ideology.¹⁶

Conclusions

The Awakening was much more than Sheikh Sattar's announcement on 14 September coining the term *Sahawa*. Governor Mamoun Sami Rashid, Al Anbar Governor during 2005–06, described it best as a sequence of actions throughout Al Anbar that culminated in the awakening in Ramadi:

When we started fighting Al Qaeda in Fallujah, the fight started to trickle down to Al Qaim, then Hadithah, then Anah, Rawah, and all these cities. The tribes, with the help of the coalition forces, they took the fight to Al Qaeda. The last round of fighting was in Ramadi.¹⁷

These events were connected through the "Sheikh network," that unofficial grapevine of social connectivity that Americans were not part of. Rather than the starting point, Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* was the product of accumulating events.

¹⁵ Tom Shanker, "Yes, More Troops Would Help a Bit," *New York Times Week in Review*, 17 Sept 2006.

¹⁶ Colonel John Charlton, former Commander, 1st BCT, 3rd Infantry Division, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Alexandria, VA, 20 Oct 2010

¹⁷ Governor Mamoun Sami Rashid, Al Anbar Governor 2005 to 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Ramadi, 7 Apr 2010.

Although many Americans perceive events in Ramadi as disconnected from previous events, this study showed that the Iraqis saw and leveraged those connections and relationships, thus creating a continuous narrative that:

- began in 2004 with the battles for Fallujah and the meetings in Amman, Jordan,
- sparked in Al Qaim with the first significant revolt of a tribe against AQI,
- saw the emergence of courageous Iraqi leaders such as Colonels Shaban and Farouq in late 2005/2006 to organize and lead local police forces in the Corridor;
- was strengthened by the continued involvement of influential Iraqi tribes and families to connect the various events;
- set the conditions in 2006/2007 for the Ramadi *sahawa*, the turning point, where it accelerated throughout Al Anbar, and
- entered its final stages in Al Anbar 2007/2008 with its return to the environs of Fallujah.

Subsequently, the awakening, or *sahawa*, became the *Sahawa*, a collective effort by communities along the Euphrates. This collaboration, grounded in Iraqi culture and societal networks, albeit unrecognized by most outsiders, provides a deeper, more coherent and continuous narrative of the Anbar Awakening.

This page is intentionally blank.

Contents

1. The Awakening	1-1
A. Objective.....	1-1
B. Collection.....	1-2
C. Publication Series and Structure.....	1-2
D. The Volumes.....	1-3
E. This Volume	1-4
2. The Seeds of the Insurgency	2-1
3. The Battle for Fallujah: Al Fajr.....	3-1
A. Reinforcing the Fallujah Myth: A Time of Chaos.....	3-2
B. Transition: From Chaos to Condition-setting	3-4
C. Applying Lessons to Set Conditions for AL FAJR	3-5
D. Operation <i>AL FAJR</i> : Phases I—IV	3-10
E. Implications of AL FAJR	3-22
F. 2004: A Coalition perspective	3-24
G. Themes and Lessons	3-24
H. 2004: The insurgency in Al Anbar	3-26
4. AO Denver: A View from Al Asad Command.....	4-1
A. The Wild West: Background	4-1
B. RCT-2: Mission, Goals and Strategy.....	4-2
C. First Half of Deployment: Clear, Attack and Neutralize	4-4
D. Second Half of Deployment: Troop Increases and SOF Re-entry.....	4-4
E. The Creation of the Desert Protectors.....	4-6
F. Creating Presence and Supporting Successful Elections	4-6
G. Themes and Lessons	4-7
H. Continuing Effort.....	4-9
5. Al Sahawa: An Awakening in Al Qaim.....	5-1
A. Background.....	5-1
B. The Attack on Camp Gannon	5-2
C. Albu-Mahal Rejects Al Qaeda in Iraq	5-5
D. Al Qaeda Returns with a Vengeance	5-7
E. Changing the Balance.....	5-10
F. Operation STEEL CURTAIN	5-16
G. Combined, Permanent, Persistent, Presence.....	5-22
H. Themes and Lessons	5-25
I. Conclusion.....	5-27
6. The Hadithah—Hit Corridor	6-1
A. Hadithah Triad.....	6-2
B. Hit.....	6-12
C. Themes and Lessons	6-24
7. Ramadi	7-1
A. The Ready First Combat Team Deploys to Ramadi	7-1

B.	Task Force 1-35 Armor.....	7-6
C.	Confusing Signals—the Fog of War?	7-10
D.	An awakening	7-11
E.	Task Force 1/6 Marines	7-15
F.	TF 1/6 Marines: The Third Line of Operation.....	7-19
G.	The Engineer’s Contribution.....	7-20
H.	Task Force 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment.....	7-22
I.	Other Iraqi Leaders Who made a Difference	7-24
J.	Continued Progress in Ramadi.....	7-24
K.	The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division	7-26
L.	Themes and Lessons	7-29
M.	Heading East.....	7-32
8.	East Ramadi and the Shark Fins.....	8-1
A.	Task Force 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment Deploys.....	8-1
B.	Sheikh Jassim and the Albu-Souda Tribe	8-3
C.	Battle for Sofia.....	8-6
D.	Securing Sofia.....	8-12
E.	AQI’s resistance.....	8-13
F.	Julaybah, Operation CHURUBUSCO , 17–25 January 2007	8-14
G.	Mula’ab, Operation MURFREESBORO , 18–28 February 2007	8-15
H.	Iskan, Operation CHICKAMAUGA , 24–28 March 2007	8-18
I.	Building on Success.....	8-18
J.	Themes and Lessons	8-19
K.	Heading East.....	8-22
9.	Fallujah.....	9-1
A.	The Fallujah Environs: Zaidon, Al Karmah and Saqlawiyah	9-3
B.	Fallujah	9-10
C.	Themes and Lessons	9-11
D.	The Last Anbar Hold-out	9-14
10.	Decline of the Insurgency in Al Anbar and Transition to Provincial Iraqi Control	10-1
11.	Collection and Analysis.....	11-1
A.	Research Questions.....	11-1
B.	Responses to the Research Questions	11-2
C.	Conclusion	11-26
12.	Narrative Summary, Contributing Factors and Conclusions.....	12-1
A.	The Continuous Narrative of the Awakening	12-1
B.	A Narrative Connected by Relationships and Events	12-9
C.	Disconnected Perspectives, Rather than Disconnected Events.....	12-11
D.	Conclusion	12-13
	Appendix A: Who’s Who	A-1
	Appendix B: Maps	B-1
	Appendix C: Illustrations	C-1
	Appendix D: References	D-1
	Appendix E: Abbreviations.....	E-1

1. The Awakening¹⁸

At a 14 September 2006, meeting in Ramadi, three days after a classified report was leaked to the *Washington Post* announcing Al Anbar as “militarily unwinnable,” Sheikh Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha announced the Awakening—the *Sahawa*.¹⁹ At that meeting, Sattar, along with 40 other sheikhs from the Ramadi area, signed an Emergency Council proclamation to work with the Coalition to drive Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) from Al Anbar. By December 2006, 18 of the 21 Ramadi-area tribes had joined this Awakening movement.²⁰ By February 2007, the movement began to accelerate throughout Al Anbar as the Coalition reinforced areas seeking help to defeat Al Qaeda. On 3 September 2007, one year after Sattar’s announcement, President George W. Bush met with the tribal leaders of Al Anbar and the leadership of Iraq to congratulate them on their successes.²¹ Sattar was assassinated ten days later, but the Awakening did not stop or stall. On 1 September 2008, conditions were stable enough for the Coalition to hand over control of the province to the Iraqis.

What happened? How could Al Anbar—the birthplace of the Sunni insurgency and AQI—turn around so quickly?

This volume and the others in the study provide trainers/educators a set of multimedia tools for use in the classroom and the field that describe the conditions that existed in the theater, what the actors perceived and how they reacted to change those conditions, and analyses of the decisions and implementation processes that contributed to the Awakening.

A. Objective

The objective of the Anbar Awakening project is to create an unclassified, accessible resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.²² The project presents the Awakening movement’s phases from development of the insurgency in 2003 to the Coalition’s transfer of responsibility for Al

¹⁸ The Awakening movement was the Al Anbar Awakening until 2007 when two things occurred: Sheikh Sattar changed the name Al Anbar *Al Sahawa* to the *Al Sahawa Al Iraqi*, and the movement was implemented in other areas of Iraq outside of Al Anbar.

¹⁹ Thomas E. Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 11 Sept 2006.

²⁰ Ramadi is a city and district—in this case those sheiks came from both the city and the district. Anthony Deane, Colonel, USA, “Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle,” *Military Review* (Jan–Feb 2010).

²¹ Alissa J. Rubin, “Sunni Sheikh Who Backed US in Iraq Killed,” *New York Times*, 14 Sept 2007

²² Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public releasable material to be used in their seminars.

Anbar to the Iraqis in 2008. In addition, it offers analysis and lessons, many of which are transferrable to current and future conflicts. The ultimate product is a multimedia instructional package to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.

B. Collection

Interviews were conducted in the United States, Iraq, and Jordan, and were structured around a series of five primary research questions (PRQ). Those questions were supplemented with secondary research questions (SRQ) that provided more granularity to the research. The SRQs, when answered, addressed the breadth and depth of the project and kept it focused on the objective. None of the research questions were necessarily static; they changed as they were answered and new leads developed. Interview plans based on those questions were tailored to each interviewee. Although the final collection plan was more detailed and complex, the initial PRQs and SRQs are in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Initial Primary and Secondary Research Questions for the Awakening Project

Primary Research Questions	Secondary Research Questions
1. How, when, and why did the insurgency start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who participated? • Why did they join?
2. What was the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalent definition? • Are there other definitions? If so, what are they? • Do different groups define it differently? If so why? • Was there more than one awakening?
3. What caused the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What events set the conditions for the Awakening? • Why did the Anbaris turn against Al Qaeda? • Why, and under what condition, did the Anbaris seek help from the Coalition? From the GOI? • What were the notable events of the Anbaris turning on AQI and joining with the Coalition? Was the GOI a partner in those events? Was there a relationship between those events? • Was there a “tipping point?” If so, when, where, how did it start, how did it evolve?
4. How did the Al Anbar Awakening reconcile the causes identified by PRQ 3? Who and what events contributed to the reconciliation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who and what events contributed to the reconciliation? What processes were used to reconcile the causes? • What were the strategies used by the actors to achieve their goals? • How did those strategies interact? • What resources were necessary/made available to the actors to implement their strategies?
5. What were the major themes of and lessons from the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did these themes and lessons contribute to success in the larger context of Iraq? • Are they transferable to other areas such as Afghanistan or Africa? • Should they be incorporated into doctrine? • Should they be taught at the various Professional Military Education institutions? If so, how?

C. Publication Series and Structure

Creating an unclassified, credible, accurate resource for trainers and educators to examine the Awakening using multimedia is more difficult than it may sound. Constructing all of the material gathered during the interviews into a multimedia product begins where most case studies, historical analyses, and comparable projects, end: First, the case study must be com-

pleted; next (or simultaneously, if possible), the multimedia materials must be collected; and then those materials must be woven together to bring that case study to life.

That being the case, this volume is part of a multi-volume set comprising interview transcripts and a final study report, and provides a basis for the multimedia product.

D. The Volumes

The Al Anbar Awakening product consists of five volumes of reference material, comprising nine publications, plus a Teacher's Guide with an interactive, multimedia DVD. Volume I is the final report containing a narrative that follows the organization of the DVD. Volumes II–V contain the interview transcripts organized according to Coalition areas of operation (AOs). (See Figure 1-1; also, a map of the various AOs is in Appendix B.)

The volumes are organized as follows:

- Volume I. Al Anbar Awakening—Final Report
- Volume II. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Atlanta, An Overview
- Volume III. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Denver, Western Euphrates
- Volume IV. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Topeka, Ramadi Area
- Volume V. Al Anbar Awakening: AO Raleigh, Fallujah Area

Taken together, these volumes tell the in-depth Awakening story and feature all of the interview transcripts from which the narrative was constructed. As an example, Volume II covers AO Atlanta, which is approximately all of Al Anbar province. Volumes III–V cover the AOs subordinate to AO Atlanta and districts subordinate to Al Anbar.

Additionally, Volumes II–V all begin with the same introduction, PRQs, and structure to orient readers within the project and narrative, regardless of which volume they read first.

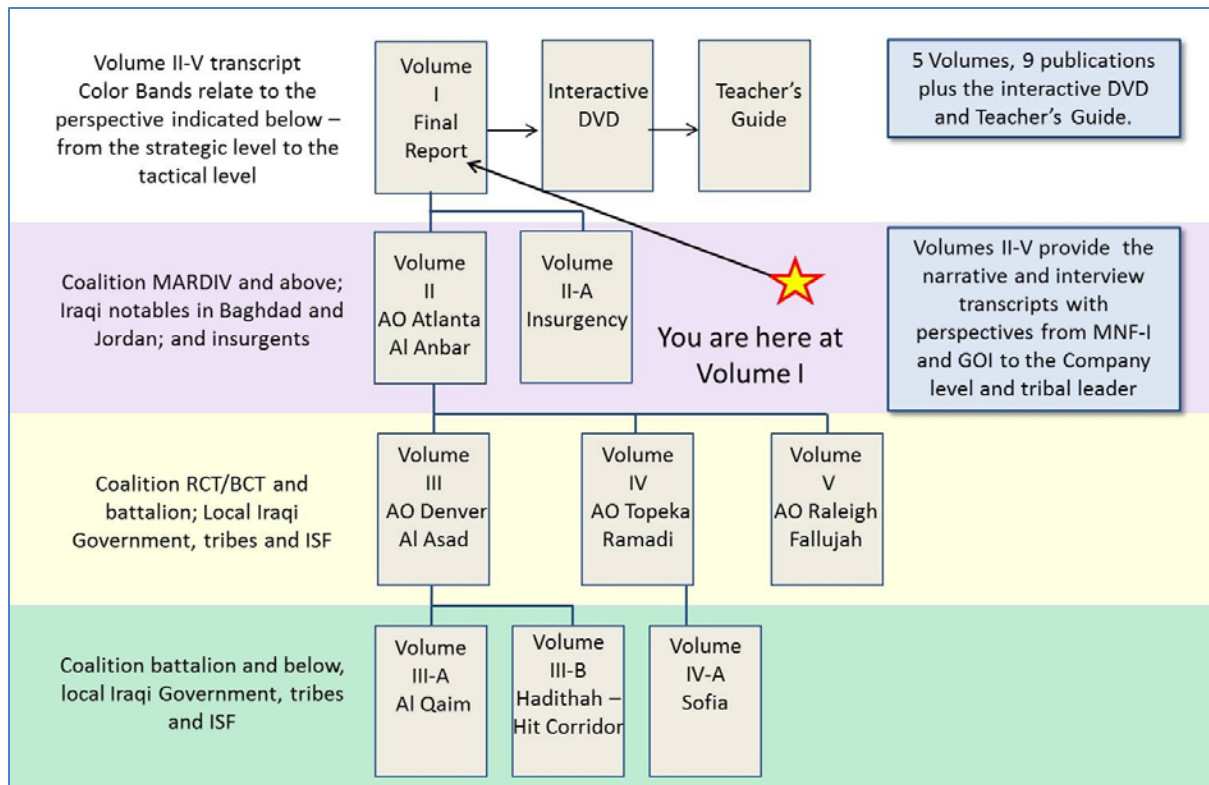


Figure 1-1. Areas of Operation in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes

E. This Volume

The purpose of Volume I is to provide the final report: the narrative from the other volumes, focusing on Fallujah, Al Qaim, the Corridor and Ramadi, and the study findings. Those narratives are provided in Chapters 2 through 10 with the analysis, themes, lessons and conclusions at Chapters 11-12.²³ Additionally, the following appendices are provided.

- A – Who’s Who. Name spellings and descriptions of Iraqis who appear in the document. The description includes the person’s position, tribal affiliation, and some background information.
- B – Maps. Map showing areas discussed during the interviews.
- C – Illustrations
- D – References
- E – Abbreviations

²³ This volume contains the most current narrative. Although the original narratives in the previous volumes are not inaccurate, the narratives in this volume benefit from additional discussions and publications since Volumes II–V have been drafted and published.

2. The Seeds of the Insurgency

A number of reports indicated that Anbaris were receptive to the Coalition when its forces entered Al Anbar in March 2003. According to Sheikh Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, Sheikh of the Dulaymi Confederation, that was not by accident. During pre-invasion meetings with US Government representatives, Sheikh Majed was asked to help the Coalition enter Al Anbar and avoid conflicts with the Anbaris. He agreed, contacted tribal and military leaders in Al Anbar, and gained their support. Majed also received satellite phones from “John,” which were distributed to contacts in Al Anbar with instructions to monitor and report on Iraqi Army movements.²⁴ The Coalition’s initial approach to engagement did not surprise the Anbaris. After all, when the British occupied Iraq after World War I, they installed a Sunni-dominated government, which had been the norm since the Ottoman’s time in Iraq.²⁵ What did “shock” the Sunnis, however, was a series of post-invasion Coalition actions or inactions throughout the spring and summer of 2003 that changed what they thought was a generally peaceful coexistence.

The first major complaint Iraqis mention was the Coalition’s inability to create a minimum standard of security that included protecting the borders and controlling the looting and lawlessness. This included unsecured Iraqi ammunition storage areas. General Babikir Baderkhan Zibari, Chief of Staff and Commanding General of the Iraqi Joint Forces, emphasized that this was a major “Coalition mistake,” which would contribute to a growing insurgency and “come back to haunt the Americans.”²⁶

Mr. Mahmood al-Janabi, a former leader within the major insurgent group, *Jaish al-Islami* (JAI), similarly expressed his surprise and dismay at the lack of security.

We thought that when the Americans invaded us they had come to remove Saddam Hussein. But we were shocked and astonished to find out that the American Forces had come to decimate Iraq...they were allowing thieves and looters to come to governmental factories and institutions...to loot them and then to burn them down.²⁷

²⁴ Sheikh Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan. John was presumed to be a member of an OGA.

²⁵ Sterling Jensen and Najim al-Jabouri, “The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening,” *Prism*, vol. II, Dec 2010.

²⁶ General Babikir Baderkhan Zibari, Chief of Staff and Commanding General of the Iraqi Joint Forces, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, USMC, Iraq Ministry of Defense, Baghdad, 3 Feb 2011.

²⁷ Mr. Mahmood al-Janabi, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 7 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan.

After inadequate security (not necessarily in this priority) Iraqis often cite top US Administrator to Iraq Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority orders number one and two—the first calling for de-Ba'athification and the second dissolving the Iraqi Military—as significantly contributing to the insurgency. Dissolving the military and de-Ba'athification greatly increased the number of unemployed Iraqis, many of whom were former military.

Additionally, the Sunnis felt it deceitful that the Coalition would come to the Anbaris for help to invade Iraq, then execute policies that would force a majority of the Anbaris, as Ba'athists and/or military, out of work, and then install Shia expatriates, such as Ahmed Chalabi to run the country.²⁸

Engineer Jalal al-Gaoud was baffled by this situation:

All of a sudden they [Sunnis] see themselves being dislodged from their jobs and overnight two or three million people were thrown in the streets without salaries. On the other hand, Shia religious leadership and sectarian political parties with strong Iranian influence were on the helm of the new Iraqi government....Although we really tried to understand what was happening, we couldn't. It was too contradictory and did not make sense! Unfortunately, whenever we say that to the Americans, they smile and nod their heads!²⁹

Similarly, Mullah Nathem al-Jabouri, former AQI member, added that a lot of former Army joined the insurgency for financial reasons after they lost their jobs in the military. He added that they also joined to save and protect the Sunnis' identity. "The Sunnis accepted Al Qaeda, because they were scared by the thought of the influences of the Iranians coming in and taking over."³⁰

This, along with a perception of the Coalition's harsh and sometimes brutal treatment, attributed by Iraqis to ignorance or arrogance, created a population that was extremely vulnerable to the influence of insurgents.

Mullah Nathem related his experience of what he perceived as the Coalition's ignorance. He indicated that he had good relations with the Americans at the beginning of the invasion, but that soon changed:

When the Americans invaded Iraq, they didn't know anything about Iraqi traditions...attitudes or behaviors. The Americans started killing without any reason. Informers were giving the Americans false information, which led the Americans to make wrong decisions. They took innocent people to jail by the dozens. This is

²⁸ Sheikh Majed interview, 3 Feb 2011.

²⁹ Engineer Jalal al-Gaoud, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Ms. Mary Hawkins, and Mr. Munther Saiegh, 5 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan.

³⁰ Mullah Nathem al-Jabouri, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 12 and 14 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan.

what created the reaction of the Iraqi people. And this reaction came under different umbrellas. It could be Islamic, Nationalism, or Ba'athist unification.³¹

Former Prime Minister Al Jaafari characterized the Coalition treatment of Iraqi citizens as soldier misconduct and provided examples:

The misconduct of some of the Coalition soldiers dealing with Iraqi citizens...it was an offensive way of dealing with people. The Coalition soldier would not condone any slight movement or any suspicious movement; right away he would point his weapon and shoot to kill.

In addition to a dishonored Sunni community, Mullah Nathem succinctly added Al Qaeda came as martyrs to fight for and save the Iraqis from the invaders; they came with the Islamic Sunni ideology and as such, were accepted in the Sunni society; former army members joined for financial reasons; and the Sunnis' fear of the Iranians prompted them to join arms with the Al Qaeda.³² As such, AQI promised Anbaris security, money, and a strong Sunni counterbalance to the rising Shia influence in the country.

From the perspective of many Iraqis, such Coalition actions, whether real or imputed, helped nurture the conditions for Iraqi unrest and disaffection with the Coalition. Simply being an occupier and not being Arabic and Muslim was enough justification for many Iraqis to bear arms against the Coalition. Then, de-Ba'athification and the dissolution of the Iraqi Army forced many Sunnis out of work. In addition to the loss of income, they felt disrespected. Compound that by the Iraqi perception of the Coalition's heavy-handed treatment of the Iraqis without apparent reason.

When asked if one event might have fueled the insurgency more than others, a number of interviewees pointed to an incident on 28 April 2003 in the city of Fallujah. Responding to hostile small arms fire, Coalition forces, according to Iraqi reports, fired into a crowd of demonstrators, killing several people. Mr. Saif Rachman provided an Iraqi perspective:

From the Fallujans' perspective, they were having a peaceful demonstration at one of the schools in the city. US Forces fired on the demonstrators and killed several of them. After that incident, things went sour. Al Anbar is a traditional tribal area with tribal law. Because the Fallujans felt that the US military killed one of them, they were honor-bound to exact revenge.³³

³¹ Mullah Nathem interview, 12 and 14 Feb 2011.

³² Mullah Nathem interview, 12 and 14 Feb 2011.

³³ Mr. Saif Rachman, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, USMC, 5 Feb 2006, Baghdad. At the time of the interview, Mr. Saif was the chief of staff for Dr. Hachem al-Hassani, speaker of the Iraq Parliament and a member of the Iraqi Islamic Party. He started working for Dr. Hassani in early 2004 and assisted in the negotiations with the Fallujans.

By the end of 2003, the Coalition faced a full-fledged insurgency comprising former regime elements, Nationalists, and Islamic extremists. In the chaos, the criminal elements migrated to the groups that promised the most gain for the least risk.

By early 2004, Fallujah had become the center of insurgent activity, with extremists such as Al Janabi, Hadid, and Zarqawi getting stronger by the day. The first real indication of this occurred in February when GEN Abizaid decided to visit the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) and police headquarters in Fallujah. GEN Abizaid planned to walk the streets of Fallujah; but those plans were cancelled when insurgents opened fire on the police and ICDC headquarters. The next day, insurgents again attacked the police headquarters, freeing 100 prisoners and killing 23 policemen. Located several miles outside the city, Coalition forces were unable to do anything. Those police left alive were so demoralized by the attack they simply stopped coming to work or began to collaborate with the insurgents.³⁴

Fallujah would dominate the Iraqi news during 2004, becoming a symbol of the insurgency and the focus of Coalition efforts as it fought to regain control of the city.

³⁴ Bing West, *The Strongest Tribe* (Random House, 2008), 28.

3. The Battle for Fallujah: Al Fajr³⁵

Crowds of howling horsemen lined the road for several miles. Fallujah itself was ablaze with flags, packed with people. Scores of tribal horsemen encircled the [soon-to-be King Faisal's] motorcade, bellowing cheers, wheeling around the cars, kicking up clouds of dust...the Chief of the Dulaim, Ali Suleiman came out to meet them.

—From *Desert Queen*³⁶

Fallujah—a Sunni town of about 259,000 people—lies 40 miles west of Baghdad. A major stop along the smuggling route from Syria and Jordan to the Iraqi capital, Fallujah has challenged authority throughout its history, revolting against the Ottomans during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, against the British Mandate in 1920, and even threatening Saddam Hussein himself. Fallujah has long been known as a renegade city. Untamable.

The Coalition's initial experiences in Fallujah were no better. They were unprepared for the violence that erupted in March and April 2004 as evidenced by their indecisiveness and half-measures in executing and terminating the first battle for Fallujah —Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE. By mid-2004, Fallujah was a haven for insurgents; used as a sanctuary to manufacture improvised explosive devices (IEDs), hide caches, and generate the spiritual force that inspired the insurgency nationwide. Fallujah also became the in-country nucleus for insurgent information operations (IO). Studio-quality media and propaganda were created and distributed via networks to regional, national, and international audiences.³⁷ *Fallujah* conjured visions of violent extremists, torture chambers, and beheadings.

The second Battle for Fallujah in November 2004—Operation AL FAJR—was a hard-fought, Coalition-led combat assault to clear the city of insurgents and restore Fallujah to its rightful residents. The fighting was so intense, and the insurgents so committed, that uprooting them required fire power so extensive that the city suffered widespread damage. The central

³⁵ To provide continuity on the narrative and include a major event, this chapter was taken from a previous JAWP project and publication, W.M. Knarr, R. Castro and T. King, *Seizing the Peninsula, a Vignette from The Battle for Fallujah, an Education and Training Resource* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, Jan 2011).

³⁶ Janet Wallach, *Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell* (New York: Anchor Books, 2005), 315–16. Gertrude Bell (1868–1926) played a critical role in obtaining support of Arab leaders for the British Empire during and after World War I. In Fallujah, she worked to build consensus for Faisal bin Al Hussein Bin Ali El-Hashemi's coronation as King of Iraq, reflecting the importance of the tribes and Fallujah to that decision. In this July 1921 meeting, they were seeking support from Ali Suleiman, Chief of the Dulaim.

³⁷ MajGen Richard Natonski, Commander, 1st Marine Division (1st MARDIV), interview with the authors, Camp Pendleton, 9 Dec 2005.

narrative of the assault is told in the heroics of Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen committed to complete the mission and support each other. The purpose of this article is to tell the lesser-known story of how the Coalition developed and worked with the Iraqis, applying lessons learned when setting the conditions for AL FAJR, and AL FAJR's impact on the Iraqis and their January 2005 elections.³⁸

This chapter traces events through 2004 paying particular attention to the preparation for and execution of AL FAJR.³⁹ At the end, we will discuss the contributions to AL FAJR of relationships and team-building, political-military dynamics, and information operations.

A. Reinforcing the Fallujah Myth: A Time of Chaos

A number of reports indicate that Fallujah was initially receptive to the Coalition when its forces entered Iraq in March 2003.⁴⁰ That quickly changed. On 28 April 2003, responding to hostile small arms fire, Coalition forces fired into a crowd of demonstrators, killing several people. And with that, some contend, the Iraqi insurgency was born.⁴¹

On 31 March 2004, four US contractors were ambushed in Fallujah. Charred remains of the brutally beaten bodies were hung from the ramparts of the old North Bridge. During a savage demonstration, Fallujans cheered, and someone held a sign underneath one of the bodies that read *Fallujah is the cemetery for Americans*.⁴²

Although the Marines in Al Anbar province cautioned against hasty action that could play into the insurgents' hands, they were ordered to assault the city and find the perpetrators. During the next month the Coalition, in succession, would:

1. Commit, via Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE, the 1st Marine Division (1st MARDIV) to gain control of the city and demonstrate Coalition resolve;
2. Accede to a cease-fire under Iraqi national, regional, and international pressures; and
3. Cede control of Fallujah to the Fallujah Brigade.

The Fallujah Brigade—an *ad hoc* organization consisting of Saddam-era Iraqi military leaders, Fallujah residents, *Jundi*,⁴³ and insurgents—was lauded by the Iraqis as “Fallujans securing Fallujah.”

³⁸ As used throughout the article, *Coalition* does not include the Iraqi Government, and *Coalition forces* does not include the Iraq Security Forces (ISF). The story told here reflects an evolving relationship.

³⁹ The Joint Center for Operational Analysis (JCOA) requested IDA study the operational and strategic lessons from the battle for Fallujah.

⁴⁰ Mr. Saif Rahman, interview with the authors, Baghdad, 5 Feb 2006. At the time of the interview, Mr. Saif was the chief of staff for Dr. Hachem al-Hassani, who was speaker of the Iraq Parliament and a member of the Iraqi Islamic Party. He started working for Dr. Hassani in early 2004.

⁴¹ National Public Radio, “Spread of Iraqi Insurgency Feared in Arab World,” *Morning Edition*, 3 Apr 2006.

⁴² Colin Freeman, “Horror at Fallujah,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 Apr 2004.

⁴³ Arabic word for *Iraqi soldiers*.

For many Iraqis, Fallujah represented the Coalition's defeat and the insurgents' victory.⁴⁴ Even the operation's name, VIGILANT RESOLVE, was a misnomer—it reflected a lack of resolve. Additionally, most of the participating Iraqi forces, albeit limited, dissolved or refused to fight their countrymen. Fallujah's mythical reputation as renegade and untamable remained intact.

To make matters worse, Fallujah wasn't the only fight at the time. About the same time as VIGILANT RESOLVE, the Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA's) actions against Muqtada al-Sadr enraged the Shia community: al-Sadr's Mahdi Militia revolted in Sadr City, Karbala, Najaf, and Al Kut, while elements of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC), primarily Shia, refused to support the Coalition and fight the Militia.⁴⁵ During April 2004, 30% of the ICDC *Jundi*—about 10,000 of the 33,000—didn't show up for work. Some switched their allegiance to the insurgency or the Militia.

Contributing to the chaos in early 2004 were major Coalition force rotations throughout Iraq, particularly in Al Anbar. Although conjecture, many suggest that these force movements provided a target of opportunity for both the insurgents and al-Sadr's followers. Additionally, conflicts within the Coalition and between the Coalition and Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) worsened. The Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7, predecessor to the Multi National Force-Iraq, MNF-I), the CPA, and the IGC did not work well together. Both Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, spoke passionately of the failure of Paul Bremer, CPA Administrator, to consult with the IGC. Allawi spoke tactfully about the relationship between Bremer and LTG Ricardo Sanchez, commander of Coalition forces in Iraq, but it was obvious the "chemistry between Sanchez and Bremer" was not good, "so this led to more confusion."⁴⁶

GEN Babikir Baderkhan Zibari, Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Armed Forces, mentioned disconnects between the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and CJTF-7 during VIGILANT RESOLVE and, in particular, during the organization of the Fallujah Brigade.⁴⁷

So in June of 2004, conditions in Iraq were grim as the CPA prepared to transfer sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG).⁴⁸ Allawi summed up the state of affairs:

⁴⁴ "Many enlisted following a great battle they considered a great victory—the April 2004 fight for Fallujah," Abu Nour, insurgent and kidnapper of Jill Carroll; Jill Carroll, "The Jill Carroll Story," *Christian Science Monitor* (18 Aug 2006).

⁴⁵ All of these actions were legitimate, but the timing was not opportune. Actions included 1) 28 March, the CPA shut down Muqtada al-Sadr's newspaper, *Al Hamza*, for "inciting violence"; 2) 2 April, the Coalition arrested a key al-Sadr lieutenant, Mustafa al-Yacoubi, for the murder of Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei in June 2003 in Najaf; 3) 5 April, the CPA issued an arrest warrant for Muqtada al-Sadr for the murder of Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei in June 2003.

⁴⁶ Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, interview with the authors, Baghdad, 6 Feb 2006; Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubai'e, interview with the authors, Baghdad, 29 Jan 2006.

⁴⁷ GEN Babikir Baderkhan Zibari, interview with the authors, Baghdad, 3 Feb 2006.

As we went to June, everything was boiling throughout the country...the reason was a lack of vision and a lack of real consultation with the Governing Council and Security Committee. I think half-hearted and half-cooked measures were taken on the operations. On the political front, the landscape was confused with no attempt to link the political landscape with the insurgency.⁴⁹

B. Transition: From Chaos to Condition-setting

A number of military and government transitions perpetuated and intensified the chaos that characterized the first part of 2004:

- In May, CJTF-7 transitioned to MNF-I and Multi National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I).
- In June, the Multi National Security and Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) was established to help the IIG stand up the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).
- On June 28, the IGC was dissolved, and the IIG was established; with that, sovereignty transferred from the CPA to the IIG.
- Upon the transfer, the CPA dissolved and the US Embassy was established.

Those transitions, however, brought a new team, additional resources, a campaign plan, and an objective: successful elections on 30 January 2005.⁵⁰ Upon establishing the US Embassy in Baghdad, Ambassador John Negroponte arrived as the senior US civilian leader to work with GEN George Casey, the new MNF-I commander. The two men met in Washington beforehand, where they discussed an initial strategy and recognized the value of building relationships. According to Casey:

The military and civil side had to work together, so we agreed on the one-team, one-mission concept...and that ‘one team, one mission’ had to include the Iraqi government. We set out to help make this Interim Iraqi Government successful.⁵¹

During this time, Fallujah worsened, and by late July 2004, the city was infested with insurgents. The Fallujah Brigade was characterized as a failed experiment.⁵² According to Dr. Rubai’e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, the Marine assault, withdrawal, and subsequent handoff of Fallujah’s security to the Fallujah Brigade was a turning point in the war because it signaled that the insurgents could repel the Coalition. “After that, the bad guys entrenched

⁴⁸ One of the Coalition members from the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cav Division described the environment as “despair.” The very people the Coalition had come to save were now turning against the Coalition. There were no friendly Iraqi faces.

⁴⁹ Allawi interview, 6 Feb 2006.

⁵⁰ The UN-supported International Mission for Iraqi Elections, headed by Canada, indicated that the Iraqi January 2005 elections generally met international standards.

⁵¹ GEN George Casey, interview with the authors, American Embassy, Baghdad, 6 Feb 2006.

⁵² LtGen James Conway in, “Failed Strategy in Falluja?” CNN.com, 14 Sept 2004.

themselves in the city, and the city was a symbol, even among the Arab world.”⁵³ This perpetuated the myth that Fallujah was untamable and renegade.

In August, al-Sadr again roused the Shia community, primarily his Mahdi Militia in An Najaf, and tested the new Iraqi government. As the situation heated up, Casey asked himself, “How can we help this new Iraqi Government succeed?”

We set out in Najaf to help the Iraqi Government achieve its first success. We told ourselves this could be a unifying event for this new government...it was really an opportunity for Prime Minister Allawi to demonstrate his strength as a leader, and he really did.⁵⁴

Although, like in April, this was another crisis reaction, the operation in An Najaf turned out to be a success for the Coalition and the Iraqis, one that provided much needed experience for the IIG and ISF as the Coalition prepared to head back into Fallujah.

During September—December 2004, Coalition forces and the IIG focused on setting conditions for the January 2005 election. Eliminating insurgent sanctuaries was critical to nationwide elections. Topping the list was Fallujah.

C. Applying Lessons to Set Conditions for AL FAJR

The Coalition and IIG were sensitive to the failures and successes of the past year. A number of lessons guided them as they prepared in September and October to re-enter Fallujah and move towards the January 2005 elections—lessons that can be categorized as political, security, information operations, and reconstruction.

1. Political

Casey emphasized the political-military dynamics inherent in the situation:

This was political-military interaction and how the political side sets up military success....This was a joint Coalition-Iraqi operation, and the IIG [Allawi] had the lead on selling it to the Iraqi people...had the lead on selling it to the countries of the region, because it was regional pressure that caused the first Fallujah to really come unglued.⁵⁵

Allawi understood his responsibilities and the gravity of the decision to go back into Fallujah. He listed his preliminary actions:

⁵³ Rubai'e interview, 29 Jan 2006.

⁵⁴ Casey interview, 6 Feb 2006. Some would credit Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's most prominent Shia cleric and resident of An Najaf, for negotiations with Sadr, but Casey thought it was less important who got credit than that “The government came together, they had a crisis; they solved the crisis together with our help. And they came out of it a winner, that was an important element going into Fallujah.”

⁵⁵ Casey interview, 6 Feb 2006.

- Soliciting regional support. Allawi contacted President Mubarek in Egypt, King Abdullah in Jordan, and others before the operation.
- Informing the Iraqi Government and people. Allawi informed all of Iraq that the impending assault on Fallujah was directed against the terrorists, not against the people of Fallujah.
- Exhausting political options. Allawi was adamant about meeting with those linked to the insurgents and wanted to make sure he had done all he could to negotiate a settlement before committing to military action.⁵⁶

During Operation AN NAJAF, Casey had asked how the Coalition could help the new IIG be successful; during AL FAJR he asked, how could the IIG help the Coalition.⁵⁷

We were looking at the situation in Fallujah. Just a hugely difficult urban fight. So we started asking ourselves, what can the government do for us that will make our job easier?...the emergency decree they put out said 24-hour curfew, no one's allowed to carry guns, the police force is disbanded, no driving...a range of measures that made target selection and engagement easier.⁵⁸

2. Security

LTG Thomas Metz, Commander, MNC-I, vowed that Operation AL FAJR would not be a crisis reaction like VIGILANT RESOLVE and operations to quell the Shia uprising in April—May had been. Conditions were being set, including increased troop levels to secure critical areas of the country.

I based almost everything on the lessons I learned in April...an attack into Fallujah could potentially create another uprising around the country, and so it was a total Corps operation....The Corps focused on resources and getting the plan for the whole country, everything from border closings to doubling stockages of class III and V.⁵⁹

Logistics had been a major problem during April-May 2004, so to preclude a recurrence, MNC-I positioned forces to secure lines of communication. Additionally, the MEF built a supply depot they called the Iron Mountain to ensure critical supplies were pre-positioned to support the battle.

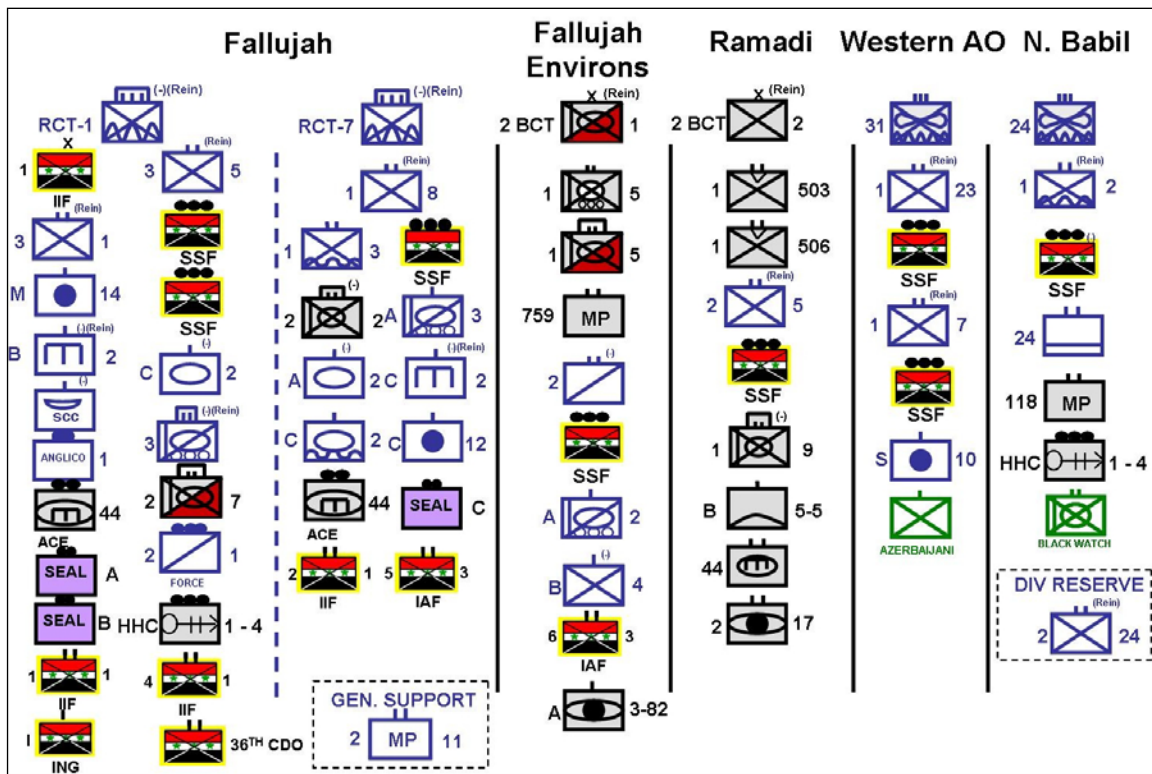
⁵⁶ Allawi interview, 6 Feb 2006.

⁵⁷ Casey interview, 6 Feb 2006.

⁵⁸ According to Casey, this was the emergency decree Allawi announced on the eve of the assault.

⁵⁹ LTG Thomas Metz, USA, telephone interview with William Knarr, 19 Dec 2005. Metz was Deputy Commander CJTF-7, Feb–May 2004, and Commander, MNC-I, May 2004-Feb 2005. Classes of Supply III and V refer to petroleum, oils, lubricants (POL) and ammunition, respectively.

The number of Coalition and Iraqi forces involved in the main assault force and adjacent areas was far more robust than those available for VIGILANT RESOLVE.⁶⁰ (See Figure 3-1 for AL FAJR task organization). During VIGILANT RESOLVE, four under-strength Iraqi battalions were available; only elements of the 36th Commando Battalion remained to fight. During AL FAJR, the ISF would field elements of the 1st Iraqi Intervention Forces (IIF) Brigade (headquarters and three battalions), the 3rd Brigade of the 5th Iraqi Division (headquarters and two battalions), the 36th Commando Battalion, and small platoons of Iraqi Specialized Special Forces (SSF) to support the Marine battalions.⁶¹ However, the Iraqi on-hand strength was less than might be expected. For example, LTC Yassir Haziz Muqmad, commander of 4th Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade was authorized a force of 759 personnel, but had only 300 soldiers on hand for AL FAJR.⁶² Most Iraqi battalions were at 50–60% strength—crucial to computing combat power.



Courtesy 1st MARDIV

Figure 3-1. Task Organization for AL FAJR

⁶⁰ Coalition forces available to VIGILANT RESOLVE consisted of a Regimental Combat Team with, eventually, four Marine battalions committed to the city.

⁶¹ The Iraqi brigade headquarters elements were present, and in some cases participated in planning, but control of the Iraqi battalions was vested in the Coalition.

⁶² A major weakness at the operational and strategic levels was payday. There was no direct deposit, so every payday, the Iraqi Soldiers took their paychecks home. This meant at least one-third were always gone.

Of particular concern to Coalition planners was ISF operational competence. Would they stand and fight? Were they capable, sufficient, integrated, and sustainable? Was there a competent ISF to take over the security of Fallujah after the combat operations?

Despite the number of Iraqi units trained and fielded since their reorganization in the summer of 2004, they were still a relatively small and inexperienced force. Although the ISF participated in previous combat operations, they had not led the charge in those fights, and particularly not against a well-entrenched enemy. Additionally, the ISF still relied heavily on the Coalition for operational support and sustainment that was normally provided through the embedded Advisory Support Teams (ASTs).

The AST's primary responsibility was training and advising the ISF. One of the major weaknesses noted of the Iraqi military was leadership. LTC Rodney Symons, Senior Advisor for the 3rd Iraqi Brigade, 5th Division, reflecting on leadership development techniques that proved effective, cited "leading by example":

They saw that we lead from the front; we endure the same hardship. If we tell you to do something, we are going to go out and do it ourselves. That was just a function of leadership and the soldiers took great comfort that there was an American right there beside them as they launched to secure an objective, or they did an attack by fire, and they went in to kick in a door of a house. They [advisors] were getting shot at; they were fighting alongside and in some cases they were helping to lead the soldiers.⁶³

Lastly, to meet Casey's guidance of relinquishing control of the city to a capable ISF, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior were to provide additional forces—the 2nd IIF Brigade and Public Order Brigades, respectively—to secure the city following major combat operations.

3. Information Operations

Information operations had been a dismal failure during VIGILANT RESOLVE. The Coalition and Iraqi Government needed to address several questions as they prepared for AL FAJR: How do we retain the IO initiative? How do we ensure the freedom of our IO and control the enemy's use of it?

Brig Gen E. F. Lessel, USAF, Director of Strategic Communications (STRATCOM), who was responsible for both public affairs and IO, had three large tasks: (1) ensuring effective strategic communications for MNF-I, (2) working strategic communications on an interagency level, and (3)

helping the Iraqi Government do strategic communications. The Iraqi media didn't know how to do interviews, they weren't familiar with the free press, they didn't

⁶³ LTC Rodney Symons, USA, telephone interview with William Knarr, 26 Aug 2005.

know how to ask questions during interviews...we ended up helping the Iraqi Government establish a communications directorate.⁶⁴

As such, Lessel worked closely with Allawi's staff to coordinate media events and releases.

An excellent example of IO is the name adopted for the AL FAJR operation. Originally called Operation PHANTOM FURY, Lessel recognized—as did Casey and Allawi—the negative implications of a US moniker:

We went back to the IIG and said, 'What would you call this?' They responded 'Operation AL FAJR, New Dawn.' Lexicon was very important...cultural aspects we have to think through from an IO standpoint, it's what you say...who says it, when you say it, and to what audiences.⁶⁵

Fortunately, Allawi understood his media mission and—according to Casey, Lessel, and others—was good at it. Allawi's concept was that

One of the components necessary in dealing with Fallujah was to keep the media coverage throughout the Arab world, throughout the country so everyone would understand. I went two days before the operation started and spoke about Zarqawi, and I said specifically that he had taken the honorable people of Fallujah as hostages. I felt it was very important...that we keep the people of Iraq informed that we are not after the people, we are after the terrorists.⁶⁶

Metz understood the necessity of IO as well and vowed not to lose that contest again. In preparation for AL FAJR, he developed what he called the IO threshold. The purpose of the IO threshold was to

...enable the MNC-I commander to visualize a point at which enemy information-based operations (aimed at international, regional, and local media coverage) began to undermine the Coalition forces' ability to conduct unconstrained combat operations.⁶⁷

This didn't mean the Coalition couldn't cross the IO threshold, but it did mean that when it did, it had to complete the operation within days and hours.⁶⁸

One of the failures of VIGILANT RESOLVE was the absence of Western media, or, for that matter, any media that wasn't pro-insurgent, in Fallujah. For Operation AL FAJR, Coalition

⁶⁴ Brig Gen E.F. Lessel, USAF, interview with William Knarr, Washington, DC, 28 Dec 2005.

⁶⁵ The literal translation of *al fajr* is *dawn*. III Corps, which provided the nucleus of the MNC-I command and staff, is also known as the Phantom Corps.

⁶⁶ Allawi interview, 6 Feb 2006.

⁶⁷ LTG Thomas Metz and LTC James Hutton, "Massing Effects In the Information Domain: A Case Study in Aggressive Information Operations," *Military Review* (May-June 2006): 2–12.

⁶⁸ Metz and Hutton, "Massing Effects," 6.

forces planned a robust media embed program with 90+ embeds representing more than 60 media outlets.⁶⁹

4. Reconstruction

A major contributor to IO is an effective post-combat reconstruction program. In preparing for Operation AL FAJR, General Casey kept in mind one of the lessons learned during Operation NAJAF: to use reconstruction efforts and other lines of counterinsurgency operations to build upon success.⁷⁰

Allawi was just as adamant about the reconstruction effort. His concern during VIGILANT RESOLVE was, “What should we do after we liberate Fallujah?” For AL FAJR, Allawi established the Iraqi Reconstruction Committee and, before agreeing to the assault, ensured that the committee was prepared for post-combat reconstruction.

As conditions were being set, the 1st MARDIV prepared to execute AL FAJR.

D. Operation AL FAJR: Phases I—IV

The 1st MARDIV’s mission was to attack “to destroy anti-Iraqi forces in Fallujah in order to establish legitimate local control.” The Commander’s intent was to: eliminate Fallujah as an insurgent sanctuary, set conditions for local control of the city, and support the MNF-I’s effort to secure the approaches to Baghdad. AL FAJR comprised five phases; the first four of which will be discussed:

- I. Preparation and Shaping
- II. Enhanced Shaping
- III. Decisive Offensive Operations
- IV. Transition⁷¹

1. Preparation and Shaping: Training and Integrating Iraqi Forces

The Coalition and Iraqi Government played a major role in setting the conditions for success at the strategic and operational levels. At the tactical level, 1st MARDIV executed a series of feints and raids that supported intelligence collection and analysis that fed targeting and additional operations. Those feints and raids also deceived and confused the enemy about

⁶⁹ Embeds were news people who traveled, ate, and slept with the Coalition unit.

⁷⁰ Casey interview, 6 Feb 2006.

⁷¹ Phase V, Transfer of control of Fallujah to the Iraqis, like reconstruction, was a continuing effort that’s beyond the scope of this paper. Eventually, in October 2006, Iraqi soldiers assumed control of the Fallujah Civil-Military Operations Center, and in September 2007, the 2nd Iraqi Brigade withdrew from Fallujah leaving the city’s security to the local police and government.

the time and place of the main attack.⁷² 1st MARDIV also conducted a series of unit movements, battle handovers, and integration of joint and combined forces to set conditions within the province for the battle.

Although the ASTs worked hard to prepare their Iraqi units for AL FAJR, the 1st MARDIV now needed to integrate them into its formations. The division started by building the Iraqi units a place to live and train. Within days, the Seabees erected the East Fallujah Iraqi Camp to billet and train the Iraqis. Col Michael Shupp, Commander, Regimental Combat Team One (RCT-1), explained how timely assessment of ISF capabilities guided training:

When we got them, we had to do an assessment to find out what their capabilities were because all previous ISF were really questionable. We had to find their level of proficiency...at the squad and company level, I believe is where they fell out. But no fire support, no medical support per se, and then we had to train them. So we had a small cadre. They did rules of engagement, the medical classes, the Law of Land Warfare, geometry of fires...then we even put them through a live-fire tactic...where they went into the shooting houses and onto the range, so we could see how good they actually were.

Shupp also stressed building relationships:

Dinners, personal get-togethers were where we got to talk to them, but then we also brought the Iraqi staffs in...24 hours prior we started giving them presentations on what we were actually going to do.⁷³

In addition to the ASTs, 1st MARDIV provided liaison elements to ISF units to help coordinate operations and provide support. Communications between the ISF and Coalition forces were crucial, and these liaison teams helped maintain this link.

Due to the number of civilians in Fallujah, one of VIGILANT RESOLVE's challenges had been to positively identify the enemy. Rather than announcing an evacuation, the Coalition initiated rumors—dubbed the Whisper Campaign—that the offensive was about to start. Combined with Allawi's announcement regarding Fallujah, the residents took the hint and started leaving in October; only ~5,000 remained at the time of the actual assault

2. Enhanced Shaping: D-Day, 7 November 2004

Fallujah was isolated on D-Day via electronic attack, dynamic cordon to the southeast (by 2BCT of the 1st Cav Division), securing the bridges on the west, the peninsula assault,

⁷² We venture no one was deceived on the time and place of the main attack when the forces started lining up north of the city. However, at the tactical level, it appears the insurgents anticipated the strike from the east and southeast because of their emplacement of defensive positions and obstacles. The exception is the interior of the Jolan and the approach to the Hadrah mosque (refer to Figure 3-2 for locations) that one would have expected to be defended. However, when the insurgents saw the build-up on the eve of the assault, they didn't have time to adequately re-orient those defenses.

⁷³ Col Michael Shupp, USMC, interview with authors, 1st MARDIV Headquarters, 9 Dec 2005.

joint fires, and the movement of forces to the north into attack positions (see Figure 3-2). The Fallujah Hospital was also seized.

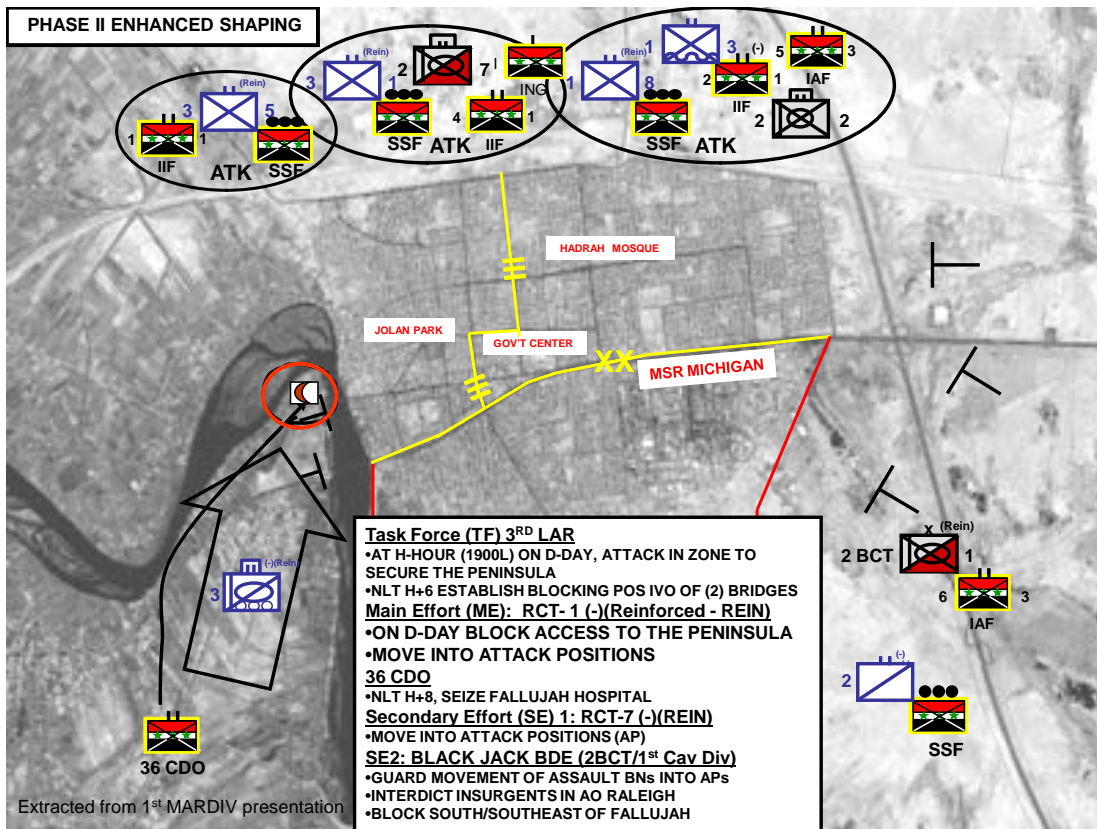


Figure 3-2. Operation AL FAJR, Phase II: Enhanced Shaping

During VIGILANT RESOLVE, the insurgents had used the hospital as a command and control node, which contributed to their IO success by providing a platform to disseminate disinformation. Denying them that platform and conduit was the reason for seizing it. In addition, the 36th Commandos, an element of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces, took the lead and gave the IIG and Coalition an effective IO feed.

The hospital area, at the north end of the peninsula on the west side of Fallujah, is circled in red in Figure 3-2. The North Bridge over the Euphrates, the site of the Blackwater contractor mutilations, is within 100 meters of the hospital.

During their time training under the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG), the 36th Commandos had become expert in reconnaissance, Human Intelligence, and direct action operations, such as seizing and clearing sensitive sites and targeting terrorists. The 5th SFG established, trained, mentored, and partnered with the unit since November 2003 (see Figure 3-3).

At 2200 hours on 7 November, as the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion (3rd LAR) secured the peninsula and set up blocking positions on the North and South Bridges leading from the peninsula to Fallujah, the 36th Commandos entered the hospital compound and had it secured by midnight. By early the next morning, they had vetted the residents and staff and found insurgents, small arms, and RPGs among them.



Courtesy 5th SFG

Figure 3-3. 36th Commandos and 5th SFG Advisors during a mission rehearsal

One combat cameraman and two advisors outfitted with helmet-mounted video cameras taped the operation. The helmet-mounted video was fed back to the MEF to exploit for IO purposes. In addition, CBS newsman Kirk Spitzer was embedded with the 36th Commandos.

Spitzer, with camera rolling, followed Assault Team A of the Iraqi forces as they stormed the main entrance of the hospital complex. At 0200, still at the hospital, he broadcast video clips via satellite to the CBS news facility in London to be rebroadcast to CBS in New York.

Combat cameraman SSG Brett Bassett, USA, accompanied Assault Team B on the east side of the hospital capturing footage of the 36th Commandos as they entered and cleared their sector (Figure 3-4).

As the 36th, accompanied by Bassett, moved through the doctor's lounge in the middle of the hospital, they paused in front of a television. There, they saw themselves conducting the operation (Figure 3-5) they had completed roughly two hours earlier. Surprised, they turned to Bassett for an explanation. Bassett didn't know how Al Jazeera was obtaining the video; he only knew it wasn't his. The 5th SFG personnel thought Al Jazeera had intercepted it as Spitzer was

transmitting to London. Although Allawi had kicked the network out of Iraq during the summer of 2004, Al Jazeera was the first to air video of AL FAJR combat operations; Spitzer’s footage didn’t air on US national news channels until later on 8 November. It is ironic that an Arabic news media organization, which did not support Coalition and IIG operations in Iraq, aired it first—probably giving it more impact and credibility.



Courtesy 5th SFG

Figure 3-4. 36th Commandos seize Fallujah Hospital, 7 November 2004



Courtesy 5th SFG

Figure 3-5. Al Jazeera broadcast of 36th Commandos’ hospital seizure

3. Decisive Offensive Operations

a. Assault

The myth of Fallujah remained for the Iraqi soldiers, even as they prepared for AL FAJR. Fallujah was a new mission for the 1st Brigade, 1st IIF Division, considered one of the best in the ISF, but when they heard *Fallujah*, “everybody was scared.”⁷⁴ Getting some of the units there was a challenge. MAJ John Curwen, USA, Senior Advisor to the 6th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division (IAD), said:

When they found out they were deploying to Fallujah, the battalion went from 700+ down to 229 soldiers when we hit the ground in Fallujah.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Mr. Mazin Muhammad Rhada, 1st IIF Brigade interpreter, interview with the authors, Al Qaim, 20 Jan 2006.

⁷⁵ Major John Curwen, telephone interview with Dr. William Knarr, 3 Oct 2005. According to Curwen, *Jundi* were paid for work they had done, and *when to pay* the *Jundi* became a major decision. The 6th Battalion opted to wait and not pay its soldiers until they were in Fallujah and the 5th Battalion paid them before departing for Fallujah. Some *Jundi* from 5th Battalion quit before deployment and others from 6th Battalion left (*deserted* may come to mind, but there were no hard penalties for leaving the Army—this was a job to most) after they arrived in Fallujah.

Maj Michael Zacchea, USMC, Senior Advisor for the 5th Iraqi Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 5th IAD, also talked about the number of AWOL soldiers in his unit:

We did have a lot of desertions right before the Battle of Fallujah. We had one entire company, about 120 Iraqis just up and left. I don't know how that could possibly have happened, because 120 guys walking through the desert—I don't know how anybody doesn't see them—but they were just gone. But the people who remained were solid.⁷⁶

MajGen Natonski described the array of Coalition and Iraqi forces as they moved into attack positions on 8 November:

I was wandering across the front, meeting with the units as they moved into attack positions; it was awe-inspiring. At that moment, this was the greatest concentration of combat power on the face of the earth...as you looked at the attack forces ready to cross and surround the city, they were a combination of Army and Marine forces with their Iraqi counterparts.⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, this array of forces was a tremendous confidence builder for the Iraqi soldiers. LtCol Michael McCarthy, Chief of 1st MARDIV's Effects Coordination Cell, was with Natonski at the time:

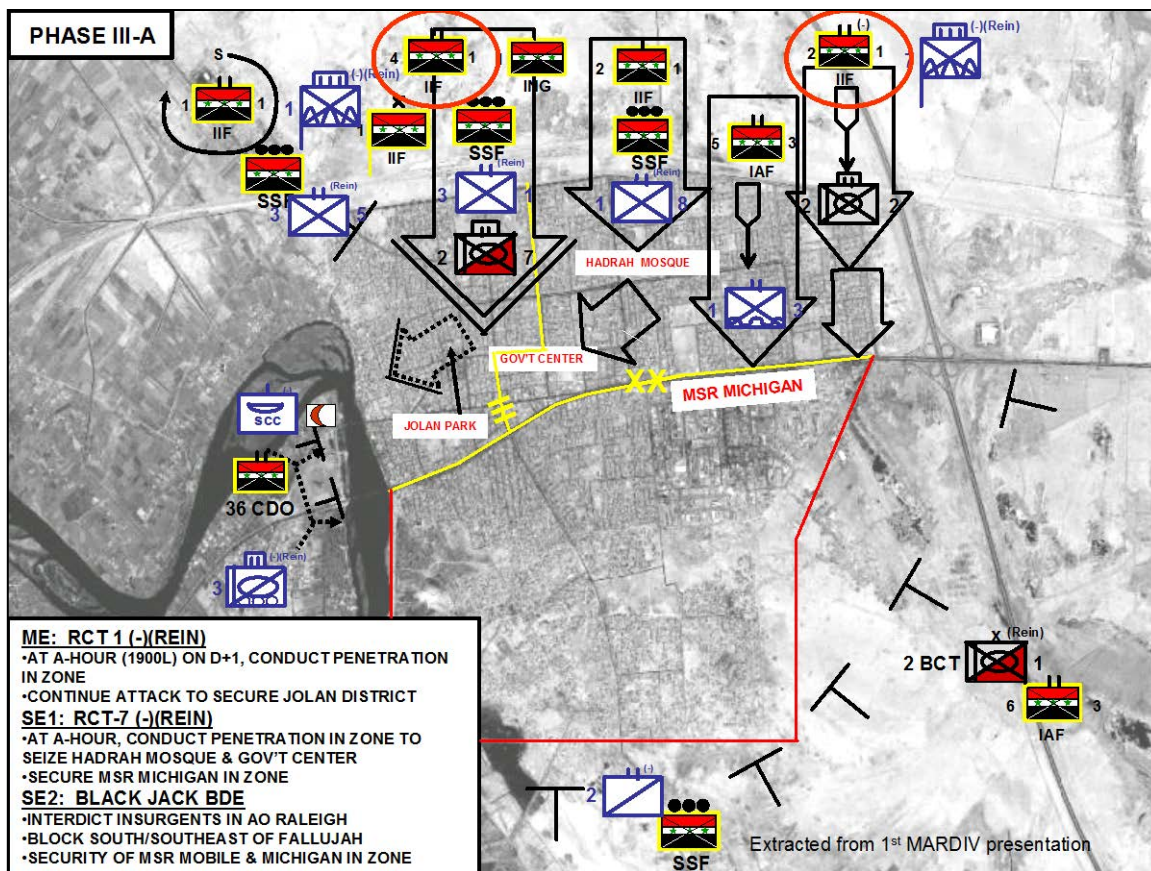
You could see the Iraqis drive around in their trucks. It would be kind of quiet, until they got the sense of it. Look at all this stuff! Literally, they would cheer and wave. They knew, 'We are on the right side.' They didn't really know what was going on, but once they took a look around and saw tanks and Marines and Soldiers, and guns and helicopters, you could see their calmness, 'We are actually on the winning team this time.'⁷⁸

The assault, Phase III-A, started at 1900 local on 8 November with 2-7 Cavalry leading the main attack for RCT-1 in the west (see Figure 3-6). Its mission was to penetrate and secure the Jolan district—a heavily defended and difficult area because of its Byzantine architecture and close-quarter structure.

⁷⁶ *Morning Edition*, NPR, "Marines Discuss Training of Iraqi Troops," 21 June 2006, with Maj Michael Zacchea and 1st Lt Seth Moulton.

⁷⁷ MajGen Richard Natonski, Commander, 1st MARDIV, interview with authors, Camp Pendleton, 9 Dec 2005.

⁷⁸ LtCol Michael McCarthy, 1st MARDIV, interview with the authors, Camp Pendleton, 9 Dec 2005.



Courtesy 1st MARDIV

Figure 3-6. Operation AL FAJR, Phase III-A: Assault, D+1

Col Shupp introduced the 4th Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade (left-most Iraqi unit circled in red, Figure 6) to the fight on 9 November. They were responsible for the lines of communication security on Phase-line Henry, the north-south road through the city (yellow line north of the Government Center). Their mission was to prevent leakers from 7th Marines' area of operations from flowing into the Jolan, moving east to west. Shupp backed them up with one company of mechanized infantry; they had no heavy weapons and no fire support except as provided by the Coalition.

I was desperately concerned about blue-on-blue casualties created by these forces....To make sure there was no confusion, my regimental staff walked them into their battle positions. As we walked them into town, there were all sorts of negligent discharges and young Iraqi soldiers firing at ghosts in buildings; they were just scared to death. Their Sergeant Major shot himself in the foot, an accidental discharge. So we walked them into position, and this battalion did a tremendous job under LTC Yassir.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Shupp interview, 9 Dec 2005.

RCT-7 conducted a supporting attack to the east, seizing the Hadrach Mosque and Government Center and securing main supply route (MSR) Michigan. Col Tucker used elements of the 2nd Battalion, 1st IIF Brigade to back them up.

The 2nd Battalion was one of the units that refused to fight in Fallujah in April 2004, but this time, according to SSG Bryan Reed, an advisor to the battalion, the unit wanted to come back: “They had something to prove,” and in the heat of battle, “they exceeded everyone’s expectations.”⁸⁰

Developing these *Jundi* from mutineers and deserters into a combat force is a tribute to their advisors and Coalition partners. Part of the advisor’s art of teaching and building confidence is to understand the Iraqi unit’s capabilities, and to recognize the fine line that separates building confidence from over-commitment. LTC Marcus DeOliveira, USA, Senior Advisor to the 1st Brigade, reflected on finding the right balance:

We tried to put them in situations where they felt comfortable. We didn’t try to overextend them. If we kept raising the bar each time we put them in different situations, they slowly gained confidence and eventually conducted a night attack into Fallujah alongside Marines—which is what the 2nd Battalion eventually did.⁸¹

It was also important to publicize the Iraqi’s contributions to the fight. In accordance with Natonski’s intent, 1/8 Marines capitalized on “Kodak moments”—opportunities to put Iraqis in the lead. When 1/8 with Iraqi forces captured the Government Center, the media release was of the Iraqi soldiers raising the Iraqi flag over the Government Center (see Figure 3-7).

b. Search and Attack

On 11 November, RCT-1 and RCT-7 continued their penetration into the south of the city, and on 13 November, entered Phase III-B, Search and Attack. Despite Allawi’s announcement on 13 November that the city was secure, a lot of fighting remained to clear the area of entrenched insurgents missed during the initial drive through the city.⁸²



Courtesy Marine Combat Camera

Figure 3-7. Iraqi soldiers raising Iraqi flag over Government Center in Fallujah

⁸⁰ SGT Jared Zabaldo, MNSTC-I Public Affairs, “MNSTC-I ASTs Led the Way in Iraqi Fight for Fallujah,” *The Advisor*, 27 Nov 2004.

⁸¹ LTC Marcus DeOliveira, telephone interview with William Knarr, 20 July 2005.

⁸² Although there was no question it would be a Coalition and Iraqi victory, some would suggest that Allawi’s seemingly premature announcement was part of his IO campaign.

The ISF conducted a variety of missions, including platoon- to battalion-sized operations, maintaining traffic-control points, clearing operations, and direct action. They were reported to have executed certain kinds of missions more effectively than Coalition forces: identifying foreign fighters, locating caches, and clearing culturally sensitive areas. The Iraqi forces' capability to converse with detainees and identify country of origin was remarkable:

They could go into a house after Soldiers or Marines had gone through and because they knew the architecture and they knew the layout, they found caches that we missed. When it came to prisoners, you'd line up a row of detainees and they'd go down the line and tell you, 'He's Saudi, he's Syrian, he's Tunisian, he's Egyptian.' Just like you'd say, 'He's from Boston, he's from the South, he's from New York,' by their accent. They proved invaluable.⁸³

Shupp's confidence in the 4th Iraqi Battalion's capabilities grew, and eventually he assigned them their own battlespace.

While the Iraqi forces continued to develop and grow, they did have their weaknesses. Natonski noted that sustainment was expected to be a long-term operational issue and there were a number of tactical issues that would take time to fix:

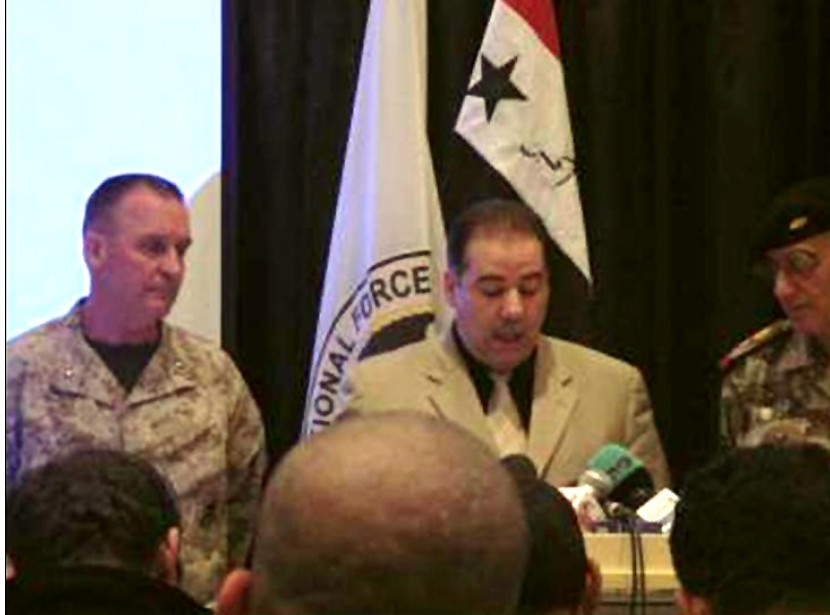
Fire discipline left a little to be desired. When they pulled the trigger, it was usually until the magazine was empty. They had the tendency to drift out of their sector when they saw a place to loot. You know the ROE [rules of engagement] was important. We had ROE cards printed in Arabic to give them; however, most of them probably couldn't read it, so they also had the verbal reinforcement before they went into the battle. They emulated the soldiers and Marines that they were serving with, and they had American advisors who were key.⁸⁴

The Geneva Convention protects culturally sensitive areas unless they are being used for military purposes, whereupon they lose their protected status. In most cases, the Coalition opted for Iraqis to clear mosques so the insurgents couldn't exploit the presence of foreigners in their IO campaign.

As the kinetic fight continued, the non-kinetic fight, including information operations, was pursued at all levels. Indeed, the media campaign was a critical and integral part of the operation. While Allawi was the spokesman at the strategic and national levels, LTG Abdul Qadir, the Iraqi Ground Force (IGF) Commander during AL FAJR, worked hand-in-hand with LtGen Sattler, the I-MEF Commander, while operations were on-going to address operational and tactical issues with the media at the Rotunda at Camp Fallujah (see Figure 3-8).

⁸³ Natonski interview, 9 Dec 2005.

⁸⁴ During Saddam's era, the Army looted area residences—some would comment that the residences constituted their "shopping center." One of the most difficult things to teach or change will be the *Jundi's* understanding of the Army's mission. In a dictatorship, that mission is to protect the dictator; in a democracy, the mission is to protect the people. Natonski interview, 9 Dec 2005.



Courtesy MNF-I Public Affairs

Figure 3-8. 12 November 2004 Press conference (l-r): LtGen Sattler, Commander, I-MEF; Mr. Nakib, Allawi's spokesman; LTG Qadir, Commander of Iraqi Ground Forces for AL FAJR

COL Powl Smith, the IO Officer for the Strategic Communications Directorate of the MNF-I, commented on working with the Iraqis in dealing with the media:

It took a while to find a guy who wasn't afraid to get in front of the camera. We had to give them public affairs training. 'Don't be afraid of the camera, tell your story...of your units...of your country.' We finally got Qadir, as the Commander of the Iraqi forces, to stand up next to General Sattler and give their joint briefing. This gave it a lot more credibility.⁸⁵

A significant part of these meet-the-press sessions included images of insurgent torture houses, vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) construction, and propaganda. DeOliveira commented on the Iraqi support:

Every couple days General Qadir would come into Fallujah alone or with General Sattler and he would gather up stuff to show on TV. The Iraqi soldiers were pretty keen at picking up items of IO value, whether it was a head-cutting saber or masks or DVDs, and they would pass it to him. At Camp Fallujah they would do a daily press conference. That was probably the first time I saw the Iraqis really put some effort towards IO.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Smith's comment about being afraid to get in front of the camera wasn't referring just to being camera shy. In many cases, the Iraqis were concerned about their safety and that of their families. This was probably most prevalent at the lower levels and in unsecured areas. COL Powl Smith, interview with the authors, Institute for Defense Analyses, Virginia, 12 Dec 2005.

⁸⁶ DeOliveira interview, 20 July 2005.

But it wasn't always easy, especially in the beginning: "For the most part, the Iraqis would shy away from the media—no pictures, no names. You'd almost have to beg them, 'Come on, you gotta do this!' Then they'd show up."⁸⁷

c. Pursuit and Exploitation⁸⁸

In conjunction with operations in Fallujah, pursuit and exploitation operations in outlying areas were crucial to killing or capturing insurgents and keeping them off-balance before the elections. RCT-7 was withdrawn from Fallujah in mid-December to pursue the enemy east of the city. 2BCT of the 1st Cav Division continued to operate in communities around Fallujah through mid-December. While this maneuvering was important at the operational level, LTC Akrum, Deputy Commander, 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division, said its significance was also recognized at the tactical level:

The big lesson we learned from Fallujah battles: we are supposed to keep chasing the insurgents. We don't stop when we capture Fallujah, we need to keep looking for insurgents.⁸⁹

d. Setting Conditions for Phase IV

Before the city could be returned to its residents, it needed to be cleared of unexploded ordnance, standing water, and dead bodies. Fallujah sits below the Euphrates' water level and one of the water pump stations was damaged during the battle.⁹⁰ The standing water hid unexploded ordnance and decaying bodies. Additionally, the electric grid, water treatment, and sewage systems were in such disrepair that they needed to be replaced entirely. To deal with the human remains, I MEF (1st FSSG) set up a mortuary to the east of the city near the cloverleaf. They brought in Muslim clerics to advise and ensure that the bodies were prepared and buried in accordance with Islamic rites.

The Coalition took lessons it had learned in Operation AN NAJAF on planning and reconstruction and applied them in Fallujah. Commander of IGF for Al FAJR, LTG Abdul Qadir was impressed that the Coalition was simultaneously conducting combat operations and reconstruction:

⁸⁷ DeOliveira interview, 20 July 2005.

⁸⁸ Pursuit and Exploitation phase was 28 Nov 2004–4 Jan 2005, according to Natonski, interview, 9 Dec 2005.

⁸⁹ LTC Akrum, Deputy Commander, 2nd Brigade, 1st IIF Division, interview with the authors, East Fallujah Iraqi Camp, 16 Jan 2006.

⁹⁰ Damage to the pump station elicited a number of questions about the care taken when targeting critical infrastructure and some have questioned, in general, the level of collateral damage within the city and asked if it was necessary. Damage to buildings was justified to save Coalition and ISF lives—they were ordered to clear the area against an enemy that came to die, that had embedded itself in such a way as to increase the likelihood of inflicting Coalition and ISF casualties. The damage caused city leaders in Mosul and Ramadi, among others, to pause and say they did not want a Fallujah-like fate for their cities.

I have never experienced such things before, but even from the first phase of the battle, I saw something very unique. The [Coalition] was already building and fixing things, but they were still in the battle. This is something I have never seen in any other Army, and I am impressed.⁹¹

On 3 December, in preparation for the transition phase, BG Mehdi Sabih Hashem al-Garawi arrived with his Public Order Brigade. He recalled that day as one of the hardest of his life. Many of his soldiers did not want to enter the city, and 14 of his officers mutinied. To maintain control, he had to eat with them, sleep with them, and lead them into combat—to the point that he led small teams to clear buildings. He finally gained the confidence of his people.⁹²

In addition to the Public Order Brigade, the 2nd Iraqi Brigade, 1st IIF Division, entered Fallujah to replace the 1st Iraqi Brigade. This unit, along with the 4th Brigade, partnered with the Marines to control the city.⁹³

On 9 December, Allawi announced that Fallujah would be opened for resettlement on 23 December.

4. Transition

During Phase IV the Civil-Military Operations Center was established; remains, rubble, and water were removed; unexploded ordnance and caches were cleared; and entry controls were established in preparation for resettlement.⁹⁴

In addition to establishing entry-control points and a population resettlement plan, RCT-1 also organized and established Humanitarian Assistance Sites throughout the city that provided food, water, and clothing to returning residents. Natonski said that every head of household was immediately paid \$200 for damages.⁹⁵

Initiated during the Transition phase, the Inter-ministerial Fallujah Working Group met twice a week, once in Baghdad and once in Fallujah. The Fallujah meetings continue today.

1st MARDIV eliminated Fallujah as an insurgent sanctuary, but the implications were much greater than the military victory.

⁹¹ LTG Abdul Qadir, interview with the authors, Camp Victory, Baghdad, 25 Jan 2006.

⁹² MG Mehdi Sabih Hashem al-Garawi, interview with the authors, Baghdad, 31 Jan 2006.

⁹³ Col John Ballard, USMC, Commander, 4th Civil Affairs Group during ALFAJR, interview with Bill Knarr, Anacostia Naval Station, 18 Jul 2005. Ballard discussed the importance of establishing a police force in Fallujah upon transition. Although promised several times by the Ministry of Interior, the force did not materialize until much later. Col Ballard provides a good description of the reconstruction efforts in his book *Fighting for Fallujah*, 2006.

⁹⁴ Population resettlement took place during 23 Dec 2004–14 Jan 2005; Natonski interview, 9 Dec 2005.

⁹⁵ Natonski interview, 9 Dec 2005.

E. Implications of AL FAJR

1. The Myth-buster

Fallujah's culture and spirit will live on. However, aspects of the Fallujah myth could be addressed only through force. As such, AL FAJR:

- Eliminated Fallujah as an insurgent stronghold and sanctuary,
- Dispelled the myth that the Coalition was afraid to invade and that Fallujah was invincible,
- Prompted other "renegade" cities to reflect on a Fallujah-like fate, and
- Built Iraqi confidence.

The Iraqi soldiers exemplify such a change: When told they were going to Fallujah, many deserted. Compare that to the confidence they exhibited after their AL FAJR experience; as Mehdi remarked, AL FAJR was a turning point for his forces—"This was the first combat for the Public Order Brigade and they succeeded."⁹⁶

Many Iraqis considered AL FAJR a victory for all of Iraq and not just Fallujah.⁹⁷ LTG Qadir commented that the true value of AL FAJR was the confidence and experience instilled in the *Jundi*; they were no longer afraid to fight the terrorists.⁹⁸

Mr. Mazin, interpreter for 1st IIF Brigade, spoke of the psychological effects of AL FAJR on other would-be insurgents and renegade cities:

[When AL FAJR began,] most of the insurgents escaped to Ramadi. Tribes in Ramadi fought them there. They said, 'We don't want our city destroyed like Fallujah.'⁹⁹

Casey also spoke of the power of victory in Fallujah and its influence in Ramadi:

AL FAJR left a lasting impression on the city. These guys respect strength, and that's something that I had to balance all the time because cannons aren't necessarily the best solution in a counterinsurgency environment....People in Ramadi say they talk about not wanting to be Fallujah. We say 'we are not going to have al Qaeda safe havens; if you are harboring al Qaeda we are going to come and get them.' Fallujah is at the back of everyone's mind.¹⁰⁰

AL FAJR was a crucible event, a major battle for the minds of the Iraqis. As such, it was not only a major military victory, but a psychological victory for Iraq and the Coalition.

⁹⁶ MG Mehdi Sabih Hashem al-Garawi, interview with authors, Baghdad, 31 Jan 2006.

⁹⁷ Akrum interview, 16 Jan 2006.

⁹⁸ LTG Abdul Qadir, interview with authors, Camp Victory, Baghdad, 25 Jan 2006.

⁹⁹ Mr. Mazin Muhammad Rhada, 1st IIF Brigade interpreter, interview with authors, Al Qaim, 20 Jan 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Casey interview, 6 Feb 2006.

2. Elections in Fallujah

During the January 2005 elections in Fallujah, the ISF provided security. Approximately 8,000 people voted. Despite what most would call a low turnout, the opportunity to vote was important to support a valid election, and the effects were greater than could be judged at the time. Kael Weston, State Department representative in Fallujah, emphasized that Fallujan participation increased dramatically in follow-on elections:

You went from the biggest kinetic fight of the whole campaign to an opportunity for these Sunni Arabs to turn out to vote, and they did....If you fast-forward to October 15th, following a fatwa issued by the Imams of Fallujah...you had over 180,000 voters in Fallujah...Then in December [2005], the word was out that everyone needed to vote.¹⁰¹

The Battle for Fallujah opened the door for the democratic process in Fallujah and throughout the nation.

3. Setting Conditions for the National Elections

The trauma AL FAJR and follow-on operations wrought upon the insurgents kept them off balance, denying them time to regroup and stabilize.¹⁰²

At the same time, the Coalition's forewarning of the coming battle to encourage the residents to leave Fallujah also allowed insurgent leaders to flee before the assault. This also gave the insurgents an opportunity to plan and execute attacks elsewhere while the Coalition and ISF committed forces to Fallujah. Mosul was the epicenter of that activity.

Insurgent spokesman Abu Assad Dulaimy admitted they lost the media battle but was not ready to surrender the military battle: "Mosul is the right hand of Fallujah and helped us open a new front to fight the Americans."¹⁰³ Fortunately, the Coalition and the Iraqis contained that crisis in Mosul.

The national elections in January 2005 were relatively quiet and the UN-supported International Mission for Iraqi Elections, headed by Canada, indicated that the Iraqi elections

¹⁰¹ Kael Weston, telephone interview with Bill Knarr, 26 May 2006.

¹⁰² "Why the Future is Fallujah," Strategy Page.com 27 Mar 2006, www.strategypage.com/htm/htinf/articles/20060327.aspx; Referring to the Battle of Fallujah, Nov 2004, "The terrorists that got out, later all repeated the same story. Once the Americans were on to you, it was like being stalked by a machine. The often petrified defender could only remember the footsteps of the approaching American troops inside a building, the gunfire and grenade blasts as rooms were cleared, and the shouted commands that accompanied it....The defenders could occasionally kill or wound the advancing Americans, but could not stop them. Nothing the defenders did worked." Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, *The Battle for Fallujah*, IDA Document D-4286, January 2011.

¹⁰³ Karl Vick, "Fallujans To Begin Returning Home," *Washington Post* (18 Dec 2004) A2.

generally met international standards.¹⁰⁴ This was a major political and psychological victory for Iraq and the Coalition.

F. 2004: A Coalition perspective

Iraq endured a number of changes during 2004. The year can be characterized as chaotic, transitional and, condition-setting:

1. Chaotic and reactionary as major force rotations occurred in January through March and the Coalition contended with critical combat actions in the Sunni Triangle as well as in the Shia community from April through May.
2. Transitional as the Coalition and Iraqi Government underwent major reorganization and leadership changes during the summer.
3. Condition-setting and proactive from October through December as the Coalition and IIG set the conditions for successful elections in January 2005.

Additionally, 2004 began and ended with Fallujah in the headlines.

AL FAJR provided a turning point in Iraqi progress. During AL FAJR, the Coalition-led partnership wrested the initiative from the insurgents, rapidly triggered and negotiated a series of events to which the insurgents couldn't respond or sustain a response, and maintained the initiative, subsequently allowing an Iraqi-led partnership to execute the January 2005 elections.¹⁰⁵

GEN Casey best captured the importance of AL FAJR to the overall war:

I don't believe that the elections would have come off if there was still a safe haven in Fallujah. I'm absolutely convinced of that. It was part of the overall psychological impact on the Iraqis to say, maybe we *can* do this. It was one of the things that caused them to step up and vote and make a choice, and on the 30th, they did.¹⁰⁶

Although 2004 was a year of change in Iraq, November 2004 through January 2005 defined a turning point in Iraqi progress. Commencing with a crucible event for the Iraqis—AL FAJR—and culminating with a glimpse of democracy—the elections—it was the first of many turning points the nation would have to negotiate before realizing democracy and independence.

G. Themes and Lessons

This chapter has highlighted a number of themes of particular importance to the preparation for, and execution of, AL FAJR. Those themes were further highlighted by the contrast

¹⁰⁴ That may not have occurred had the people of Fallujah not had the opportunity to vote. Additionally, per Kael Weston, the effects of Al Fajr on Fallujah residents' inclination to vote wasn't realized until that Fall at the constitutional referendum and at the December 2005 elections.

¹⁰⁵ Albeit with a very forward-leaning Coalition.

¹⁰⁶ Casey interview, 6 Feb 2006.

between conditions during the first five months of 2004 and those leading up to and including the elections of January 2005. They include:

- The importance of relationships and team-building
- Political-military dynamics and how each supports the other
- The difficulty and importance of information operations

1. The importance of relationships and team-building

The evolution from chaos to condition-setting revolved around relationships. Poor relations among the major players prior to the transition led to dysfunctional organizations. Working with and developing Iraqi capabilities couldn't mature until those relationships developed. The turning point that occurred between May and August resulted from

1. The transition to a better resourced and more capable Coalition organization;
2. The transfer of sovereignty to Iraq, which required that interpersonal and organizational dynamics change;
3. The development and execution of a plan to meet political objectives; and most importantly,
4. The assemblage of a team committed to working together.

Team-building with the Iraqis became everyone's business—not only through formal organizations such as the MNSTC-I and the ASTs, but also through adaptable arrangements. Examples include Coalition units partnering to coach and train Iraqi units, LtGen Sattler's mentoring of LTG Qadir, and 1st MARDIV's approach to developing relationships and camaraderie at dinners and get-togethers beyond the formal preparations for battle. This was reflected at the top, MNF-I/Embassy/IIG as well as at the tactical level.

Critical to building relationships are the ASTs. There was nothing but praise from the Iraqis for the ASTs and leading by example was by far the most important training and confidence-building method employed by Coalition forces. Names like Zacchea, De Oliveira, Cornell, Miller, Symons, Curwen, and many others will become part of the Coalition's legacy to Iraq and synonymous with American ideals of courage, commitment, and freedom.

2. Political-Military Dynamics and How each Supports the Other

GEN Casey and Ambassador Negroponte committed early-on to the idea that, "The military and civil side had to work together...and this one team, one mission had to include the Iraqi Government."¹⁰⁷ During the operations in Najaf, the Coalition looked for ways the military could support "this new Iraqi government." During AL FAJR, Casey emphasized the importance of the political-military dynamics in setting conditions for AL FAJR.

¹⁰⁷ Casey interview, 6 Feb 2006.

Political-military dynamics are probably best reflected in the connection between AL FAJR and the January 2005 elections—military strategy supporting political objectives.

3. The Difficulty and Importance of Information Operations

As the United States continues to grapple with doctrinal differences between IO, PAO, and PSYOP, some wonder at its ability to advise in this area. But, given the Coalition's botched performance during VIGILANT RESOLVE, there was a concerted effort at all levels to make IO work during AL FAJR.

At the strategic level, Allawi clearly understood it was his job to manage global, regional, and Iraqi national perceptions. Despite the Coalition's help, only an Iraqi could manage those perceptions and talk convincingly to other Iraqis.

While Allawi was the spokesman at the strategic and national levels, Qadir worked hand-in-hand with LtGen Sattler to address operational and tactical issues with the media. At the tactical level, the Coalition had an extensive media embed program. It was the quickest way to get the story out, something the Coalition has been unable to do during VIGILANT RESOLVE.¹⁰⁸

A large part of IO involves controlling the enemy's use of the media and restricting flexibility. During AL FAJR, the insurgent IO apparatus simply could not keep up with the Coalition and Iraqis. How successful were the Coalition and Iraqis during AL FAJR? Abu Assad Dulaimy, spokesman for the insurgent-led Mujahidin Shura Council in Fallujah, acknowledged, "We admit we lost the media battle ..."¹⁰⁹

H. 2004: The insurgency in Al Anbar

The year 2004 saw many changes in Iraq. The capture of Saddam Hussein in December 2003 diffused efforts by former Ba'athists/regime members to lead the insurgency. Not inclined to accept the loss of their leader gracefully, they became prime recruits for the two major camps of Sunni nationalists and/or radical Islamists. Although there were a number of indicators, the televised insurgent attack on General Abizaid and his entourage in April as he attempted to visit one of the Iraqi security force headquarters was an abrupt eye-opener for those that thought everything in Iraq was under control. It escalated quickly from there. The Blackwater murders triggered the Coalition's abortive response - the insurgents' claimed victory over the Marines. According to one of Jill Carroll's kidnapper, "Many enlisted following [the]...great victory—the April 2004 fight for Fallujah."¹¹⁰ It went downhill from there: The

¹⁰⁸ There were rules, but for AL FAJR, the media were not encumbered by the bureaucracy that news releases from a unit required, i.e., the vetting of proposed releases through the various chains of command.

¹⁰⁹ Karl Vick, "Fallujans To Begin Returning Home," *Washington Post* (18 Dec 2004) A2. Also note that Abu Assad Dulaimy is part of the same tribal confederation as Ali Sulaiman, Chief of Dulaim during Gertrude Bell's time—see beginning quote—relationships run deep.

¹¹⁰ Carroll, "The Jill Carroll Story."

loss of Fallujah; Abu-Ghraib revelations; Coalition partners such as Spain withdrawing their forces from Iraq; Mahdi militia uprisings in Karbala, Najaf and Al Kut – Iraq was out of control and according to Prime Minister Allawi, “everything was boiling throughout the country.”

Initially, the multitude of headquarters changes that took place over the summer contributed to the chaos. Those changes included the transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government, and the stand-up of the MNF-I and the US Embassy. But, in hindsight, those changes seemed to be for the better, as the Coalition and Iraqis stabilized the Mahdi militia uprising in Najaf during the summer, took back Fallujah from the insurgents in November and continued to keep the insurgents off-balance through the elections of January 2005.

2004 ended with the insurgency in Anbar degraded but not destroyed. The insurgents would move north towards Mosul and west-northwest along the Euphrates towards the Hadithah Triad and further west to the district of Al Qaim along Iraq’s border with Syria. The next chapter addresses development in Area of Operations Denver, the area west of Ramadi to the border.

This page is intentionally blank.

4. AO Denver: A View from Al Asad Command

We were just trying to out-guerilla the guerilla....We had established this pattern of being everywhere and nowhere. We were out west, we were over here [pointing to the map], we were down here, we were over here, we were up here, and we were back here....They didn't know where we were going.

—Colonel Stephen Davis¹¹¹

US military operations in Fallujah from March to December 2004 created chaos for communities along the Western Euphrates River Valley (WERV) northwest of Fallujah. During Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE in the city in April, Coalition forces were directed to leave cities such as Hit, Barwanah, Baghdadi, and Hadithah in order to support the operation. With the Coalition gone, the insurgents exploited the situation by targeting residents who had helped Coalition forces, and when the Coalition began returning in May, they found most of the populace unwilling to work with them.

In November, while the Coalition prepared for and executed Operation AL FAJR in Fallujah, the situation worsened.¹¹² Again, Coalition forces abandoned communities along the WERV to support AL FAJR, and again the insurgents moved in to punish those who had supported the Coalition. Additionally, insurgents that fled the fighting in Fallujah during AL FAJR found refuge in those communities along the Euphrates, reinforcing the insurgent forces already there.¹¹³ The movement of those insurgents—who included Sunni nationalists as well as foreign fighters taking direction from AQI leader Abu Musab Zarqawi—contributed to the ground conditions that RCT-2 found when it deployed to AO Denver in March 2005.

A. The Wild West: Background

Commanded by Col Stephen Davis, RCT-2's AO Denver was a 30,000-square-mile region in Western Iraq, which included several major population centers along the WERV: Hit, Hadithah, and the Al Qaim district. Moreover, AO Denver shared borders with Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Col Davis explained the environment into which he led his troops:

¹¹¹ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹¹² There were two major operations in Fallujah in 2004: Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE in April 2004, and Operation AL FAJR in November 2004—sometimes respectively called the battles for Fallujah I and II.

¹¹³ Captain Scott Cuomo, USMC, “The ‘Wild, Wild West:’ Iraqi lessons for Afghanistan,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (Oct 2009).

The Euphrates is a highway. It's been a highway for 4,000 years. These are business men out here, and you need to look at this area through a different lens. The solution out here will be found as a business equation. This is not good guys versus bad guys, although there were plenty of bad guys. Everybody's got a business angle up here, because that's what they do. And there are some great survivors up here. They've survived 35 years of Saddam. He couldn't tame them, and so by understanding this, you start to understand a bit about the environment that we were walking into.¹¹⁴

RCT-2's command was based out of Al Asad Airbase, which is south of the river between Hadithah and Hit. AO Denver—nicknamed *The Wild West*—had been occupied by SOF and Army units throughout 2003. From early 2004, when the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) took control of Al Anbar, RCTs were assigned to Al Asad Airbase in AO Denver until September 2009 when RCT-8 was redeployed as part of the Coalition drawdown in Iraq (see Table 4-1).¹¹⁵

Table 4-1. Command History in AO Denver

Dates	Commander	Unit
March 2003–April 2003	—	CJSOTF-W
April 2003–September 2003	LTC Reilly	1st Squadron, 3d ACR
September 2003–March 2004	COL Teeple	3d ACR
March 2004–October 2004	Col Tucker	RCT-7
October 2004–March 2005	Col Miller	31st MEU
March 2005–February 2006	Col Davis	RCT-2
February 2006–January 2007	Col Crowe	RCT-7
January 2007–January 2008	Col Clardy	RCT-2
January 2008–January 2009	Col Malay	RCT-5
January 2009–September 2009	Col Love	RCT-8

CJSOTF-W = Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-West, ACR = Armored Cavalry Regiment, MEU = Marine Expeditionary Unit

B. RCT-2: Mission, Goals and Strategy

Col Davis' RCT-2 described themselves as “The little RCT with a Division mission in a MEF battlespace.” The regiment deployed with 3,200 Marines and Sailors—in the form of two infantry battalions: 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines (3/25), and 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines

¹¹⁴ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹¹⁵ Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, “Unit Presence in Al Anbar,” 10 May 2010

(3/2)—as well as two Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) companies. “We were totally an economy of force effort,” Davis said.¹¹⁶

Davis recalled that RCT-2 “got there with a very open and adaptive mindset,” despite the “complex operational environment” they were walking into. The regiment’s campaign plan, named POWER SWEEP, consisted of 16 major combat operations—an operation about every two-to-three weeks. Each operation involved one or more of the six separate but interrelated fights within the AO (Figure 4-1). The campaign plan was a part of what Davis’ called the “be everywhere, yet be nowhere” strategy.¹¹⁷

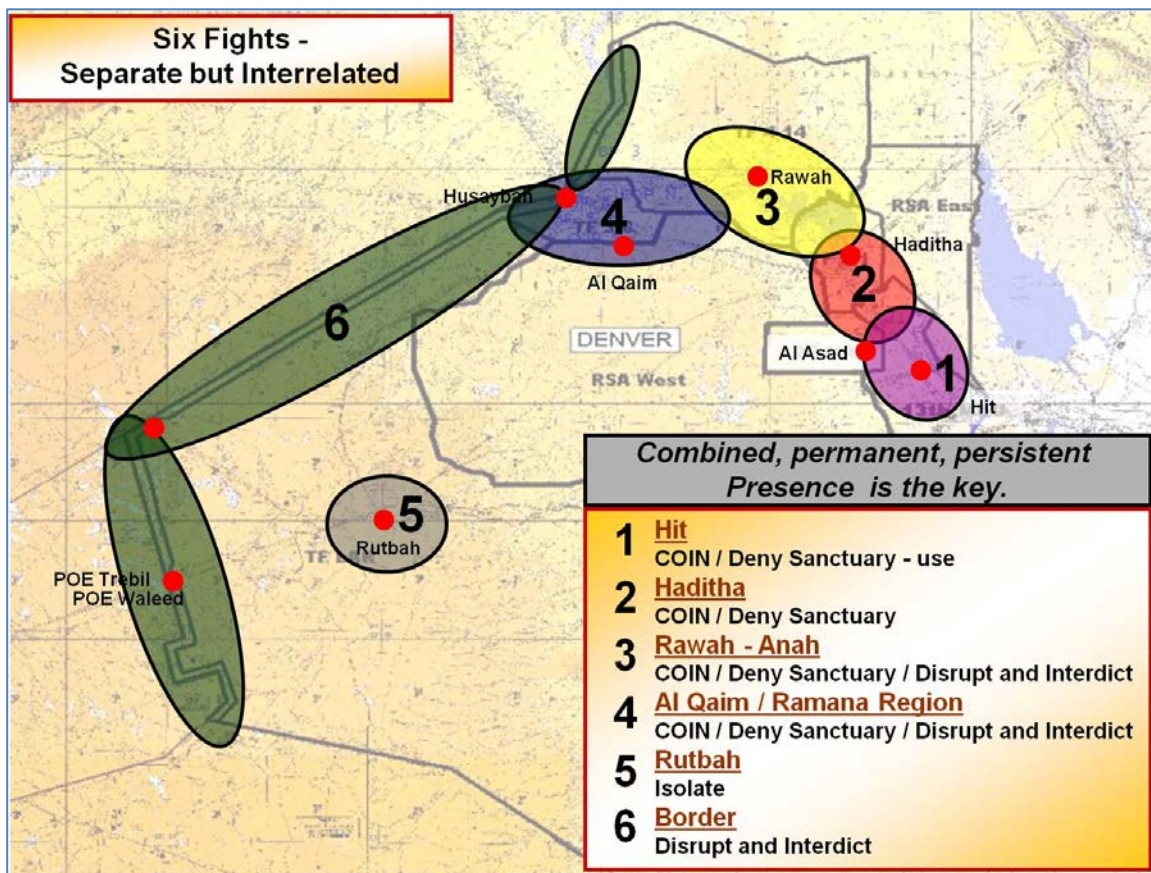


Figure 4-1. Six interrelated fights in AO Denver

Davis described RCT-2’s campaign plan—linking it to the mission, goals, and overall strategy—as real simple:

My mission: Conduct COIN [counterinsurgency] operations in order to disrupt and interdict anti-Iraqi insurgent elements. Our goal was to ultimately get these areas to where the National Referendum and the National Elections could be held. How we

¹¹⁶ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹¹⁷ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

were going to do that was by establishing the combined, permanent, persistent presence in the major population centers in the Euphrates River Valley, *combined* being the key part. Being able to establish presence gives you security, which gives you stability, which creates the environment for success to occur.¹¹⁸

C. First Half of Deployment: Clear, Attack and Neutralize

The first half of RCT-2's deployment, or as Davis describes it, the first semester of campaign plan POWER SWEEP—15 March to 15 September—comprised cordon and search; disrupt and interdict; and clear, attack, and neutralize missions. Because RCT-2 only had four rifle companies during the first semester, it was unable to go north of the river. Instead, Davis focused on keeping the enemy off balance.

To the outside observer who wasn't really looking at what we were doing here, it looked like we were just playing "whack-a-mole." All we were trying to do was stay alive and keep the enemy, particularly the foreign fighters, off balance. Again, we were only talking to the security LOO [line of operation] here; we're trying to keep this guy off balance, and I'm trying to get inside his OODA [observe, orient, decide, and act] loop in order to make him reactive to me, not the other way around.¹¹⁹

One defining moment for the regiment came during its second month there, in April 2005, when Camp Gannon in Husaybah was attacked by insurgents later linked to Zarqawi. The insurgents unleashed a triple suicide bombing and demonstrated they were capable of conducting complex and well organized operations. Although 3/2 Marines successfully fended off the attack, they were surprised by its complexity and the insurgents' discipline and commitment.

D. Second Half of Deployment: Troop Increases and SOF Re-entry

September 2005 was an eventful month in AO Denver. The first half's 11-operation campaign wrapped up in September with Operation CYCLONE, and the second half kicked off in September with Operation GREEN LIGHTNING. During the latter half, Davis' focus expanded from destroying the enemy to include protecting the population. Though the clear-and-neutralize operations would continue, Davis wanted to send a message to the population: *Not only did I provide you security so you and your family will live, but here are the benefits to working with us.*¹²⁰

In September 2005, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I) commander, General George Casey, came out to see Davis. "He got it!" Davis recollected—Casey immediately understood what was happening, and gave Davis additional forces to reinforce what he saw as success,

¹¹⁸ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹¹⁹ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹²⁰ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

and to ensure RCT-2 had the resources necessary to support the National Referendum in October and elections in December (see Table 4-2).

Table 4-2. Units Moved to RCT-2 in September 2005

Service	Unit(s)	Short Title
US Army	2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division	2-14 Stryker
USMC	Task Force Phantom, a Long Range Surveillance (LRS) Unit	TF Phantom (LRS)
US Army	2nd Battalion, 114 Field Artillery, of the 155th BCT of the Mississippi Army National Guard aka The Mississippi Rifle	2-114 FA
US Army	3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment	3-504 Inf
USMC	2nd Force Reconnaissance Company	2nd Force Recon
Iraqi Army	1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division	1/1 IAD
Iraqi Army	3rd Brigade (later to be reflagged as the 28th Brigade), 7th Iraqi Army Division	3/7 IAD

“Despite the addition of much greater force structure,” Davis explains, “the theory didn’t change. We stayed married up with Iraqis, and we didn’t go into towns until we could stay there.” RCT-2 then had 14,000 troops—enough to create combined, permanent, persistent presence in several population centers.¹²¹

September also brought the return of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) forces in the form of an ODB and attached Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA). Special Forces (SF) had been absent from Anbar Province for almost a year, and the detachment that had been there previously was redirected to Baghdad due to greater need.¹²² The ODB, commanded by Major Martin Adams, USA, had its headquarters at Al Asad. Under its control were three ODAs: 545, 555, and 582.¹²³

MAJ Adams sent ODA 545 to operate in Hit, where the previous team had successfully worked with the Albu-Nimr tribe. ODA 555 was sent to Hadithah, and ODA 582 to Al Qaim to work with one of the major tribes, the Albu-Mahal. MAJ Adams had received intelligence that there were potential vulnerabilities in the Albu-Mahal tribe worth exploring.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹²² Brent Lindeman, “Better Lucky Than Good: A Theory of Unconventional Minds and the Power of ‘Who,’” Naval Postgraduate School Thesis, Dec 2009.

¹²³ Lieutenant Colonel Martin Adams, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, VA, 21 Dec 2010. Adams became a Major during his command of the ODB.

¹²⁴ Adams interview, 21 Dec 2010.

E. The Creation of the Desert Protectors

In September 2005, Adams deployed a Medical Civil Assistance Program team to the town of Akashat. Akashat is a desert town south of Al Qaim where Albu-Mahal tribe members had recently fled AQI's strict rule and brutality in Al Qaim. Adams recalled that the intent was to make this a test case:

If they start shooting at us, we'll know this isn't going to work. They were indicating that they'd be willing to at least let us come in and see what we're about. [We went out and said,] "We're open for business. Anybody who needs medical care, line up!" And so they started doing that. They [the team] did the thing that SOF does: "Okay, this guy looks kind of interesting, why don't we talk to him?" Or military age, potential fighter ages folks, let's talk to them and see what's going on.¹²⁵

This mission led to identifying a number of individuals who ended up becoming the first Desert Protector platoon. The Desert Protectors were the first Sunni tribal militia supported by both the GOI and MNF-I. It was the first time that a tribe provided recruits who would be inducted into the Iraqi Security Forces used to fight AQI. Many Iraqis and Americans point to the development of the Desert Protectors in Al Qaim and the revolt of the Albu-Mahal tribe against AQI as the seeds of the Awakening, or at least an awakening with a lowercase *a*.

The small group of about 26 tribesmen trained and immediately deployed to support 3/6's Operation STEEL CURTAIN. Later this group became the first elements of the police force in Al Qaim.¹²⁶

In addition to the ODB and ODAs, other SOF elements were targeting the insurgents in the area. According to Col Davis, the work that the SOF and RCT-2 were doing was mutually reinforcing:

Was it SOF in support of general purpose forces? Or was it general purpose forces in support of SOF? Who really cares? The bottom line is you need to focus on: What's the plan? Are we getting it....What's the mission? Focus on the mission. Don't worry about who gets credit. Leave your ego at the door. Are we moving the ball forward? Are we killing bad guys? Are we taking care of the people?¹²⁷

F. Creating Presence and Supporting Successful Elections

Once Davis had 14,000 troops, the reinforced regiment could establish a combined, permanent, persistent presence in several population centers, including Hadithah, Hit and Al Qaim. One way they did this was by building firm bases.¹²⁸ According to Davis, Lieutenant

¹²⁵ Adams interview, 21 Dec 2010.

¹²⁶ Adams interview, 21 Dec 2010.

¹²⁷ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹²⁸ Platoon/company-sized positions.

Colonel Dale Alford, the 3/6 commander, built his bases after rolling in with all of his equipment, burying CONEX containers and

welding racks into the side of those things to live in. Even if it was a temporary facility, the *speed and rapidity* with which he could do that was impressive! I mean, he had a great integration between his engineers, his combat engineer support guys, and his rifle companies.¹²⁹

October 2005 brought the national referendum on the Iraqi constitution. Although there was a low turnout, with only 7,500 votes cast, it was about 7,500 more than had been cast in the national elections in January 2005.

Two months later, the national election was held. The fact that 80,000–90,000 votes were cast marked a major shift in the AO. Davis concluded, “That’s when you know the tide has swung.”

G. Themes and Lessons

This chapter has highlighted a number of themes of particular importance to the execution of a population-centric COIN strategy as well as events that were unique to AO Denver.

1. Tribal Engagement

According to Col Davis, US forces were not allowed to engage with the tribes and militias until August 2005 when GEN Casey approved the creation of the Desert Protectors.¹³⁰ Before that, RCT-2 was supposed to engage the population via the local government and not the tribes; however, in many cases, local governments were not established—if they were, they were often seen as ineffective and corrupt. Slowly but surely, troops on the ground began working with willing tribes that held more *wasta* (influence) than the local governments. The coordination between US forces and the Albu-Mahal and Albu-Nimr tribes serves as an early example of tribal engagement. The details of these relationships are developed in Chapters 5 and 6 (Volumes III-A, Al Qaim and III-B, Hadithah Triad/Hit respectively).

2. Connection to the Iraqi Government

This chapter provides two examples of connections that were established between the population and the GOI. The first was between the Albu-Mahal tribe and the central government; this developed when members of the Albu-Mahal were recruited and vetted into the Desert Protectors by the GOI and the Coalition. This initial link was important to the Awakening movement, because as other Anbaris observed this relationship, they realized it was possible

¹²⁹ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

¹³⁰ Project research has not uncovered any evidence that this was a written policy; however, it was a widely held, and enforced belief emanating from earlier CPA actions in Al Anbar.

to work within the framework of the government, and gave the Iraqi people yet another avenue to stand up against the insurgency. A second link was created when Anbaris in AO Denver voted in high numbers during the National Elections. For many Anbaris, this was their first experience with formalized democracy.

3. Developing a continuous narrative

This volume provides insights into Coalition and insurgent activity between operations in Fallujah in 2004 and the first awakening event in Al Qaim in 2005. In addition, it begins to resolve events that occurred in Al Qaim, such as the development of the Desert Protectors, and SOF's engagements with the Albu-Nimr tribe in Hit. It also introduces the concept of combined, permanent, persistent presence and sets the conditions for understanding Chapters 5 and 6 (Volumes III-A and III-B) as they detail events in Al Qaim and the Hadithah Triad/Hit areas respectively. As such, it helps fill in the gaps and provide a continuous narrative.

4. Commercial battlespace

Merchants have travelled along the Euphrates River Valley for thousands of years. The river connects Baghdad and other Iraqi cities with major economic and population hubs in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, among others. Much insurgent and Coalition movement occurred along the WERV and not within the open spaces of the desert. Additionally, almost all of RCT-2's operations were focused along the Euphrates. Whoever gained control of the economic battlespace—insurgents or Coalition—stood a much stronger chance of influencing the population.

5. Switching from a threat-centric to a population-centric strategy

A new theme observed during this time period (March 2005 to February 2006) was the Coalition's strategy shifting from threat-centric to population-centric. This switch is most discernable between the first and second half of the RCT's deployment, when the RCT received the forces needed, Iraqi and Coalition, to execute combined, permanent, persistent presence. Although in both halves, Col Davis was focused on disrupting the enemy, the second half shows some of the first examples of Coalition forces working to gain the population's support at the expense of the insurgents. This shift towards a population-centric strategy reflects a trend that is traced and examined in subsequent Chapters.¹³¹

6. Reinforcing success

Another theme unique to AO Denver in 2005 is the notion of reinforcing success. As mentioned above, GEN Casey reinforced RCT-2 with both Coalition and Iraqi troops in Sep-

¹³¹ This had been the strategy, but RCT-2 did not have the forces to implement it until the second half of the deployment.

tember 2005. That in turn enhanced the regiment's ability to effect combined, permanent, persistent presence, which then supported the National Referendum and National Elections.

H. Continuing Effort

In February 2006, both Davis' and Adams' deployments ended. Progress in AO Denver during RCT-2's deployment had come at a cost: RCT-2 suffered 111 killed, including 80 Marines, 14 Soldiers, 3 Sailors, 1 civilian, and 13 Iraqi *Jundi*. However, Davis and his troops had been part of the police initiative, the endorsement of the Multi National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) to allow troops to talk to the tribes and their militias, the franchise of militia as policemen, the re-establishment of Iraq's sovereign borders controlled by Iraqis, a successful national referendum and national election, and 15 cities and towns stabilized or moving towards stabilization with combined, permanent, persistent presence.¹³²

The decrease in security and subsequent insurgent control that had been allowed to occur in AO Denver as a result of large-scale operations in Fallujah was reversed. This newly established relationship between US Forces and Iraqi tribes would set the conditions for the monumental events that would occur throughout 2006, especially in the Al Qaim District. Al Qaim was so significant to both the Coalition and AQI that the next chapter focuses on the events in that area during 2005 and 2006 (the last half of RCT-2's deployment addressed above).

¹³² Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

This page is intentionally blank.

5. Al Sahawa: An Awakening in Al Qaim

The sun of freedom shines from the West.

—Sheikh Kurdi, Albu-Mahal tribe¹³³

Anbar Province's Al Qaim district became increasingly important to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) after November 2004 when it lost its sanctuary to the Coalition forces' onslaught in the second battle of Fallujah, Operation AL FAJR. The Al Qaim district is located on Iraq's border with Syria. Although the district's population of 150,000 to 200,000 represents only 10% of the Anbar population, the area holds strategic importance due to its location on the Iraqi border and along the Euphrates River.¹³⁴ Al Qaim is a lucrative smuggling route for black market goods, and was AQI's lifeline to Baghdad as foreign fighters, money, and other resources that fueled the insurgency infiltrated Iraq. With the loss of Fallujah, Al Qaim also became AQI's newfound sanctuary.

The purpose of this chapter is to tell the story of Al Qaim's *sahawa*—its evolution from AQI-supporter to AQI-opponent.¹³⁵ In doing so it will show that Al Qaim's *sahawa* provided one of the first examples of successful counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in Al Anbar and Iraq, long before FM 3-24 was lauded as revolutionary new COIN doctrine.¹³⁶ Additionally, the chapter challenges the notion that Al Qaim's revolt against AQI was a singular, unrelated event, but was instead a part of a continuous narrative, connected to events in Ramadi, and was ultimately one of the critical enablers that led to the Anbar Awakening.

A. Background

AQI arrived with offers of partnering with Al Qaim's tribes to defeat the Coalition. They promised money and other resources. As Muslims and Arabs, AQI members said it was the obligation of Al Qaim to conduct *jihad*, to fight the crusaders. After all, the Coalition, ignorant of tribal customs, religion, and traditions had disrespected and dishonored the people of Al Qaim, and a patriotic resistance had already formed there. Initially, the tribes of Al Qaim saw

¹³³ Sheikh Kurdi Rafee Farhan al-Mahalawi, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Kurdi's guest house, Ubaidi, Iraq, 17 Apr 2010.

¹³⁴ Colonel Dale Alford, briefing on 3/6 Marines in Al Qaim Iraq, Aug 2005–Mar 2006, Institute for Defense Analyses, 16 Feb 2010.

¹³⁵ The translation of the Arabic word *sahawa* is *awakening*.

¹³⁶ Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency, published 15 Dec 2006.

the Al Qaeda movement as the “complete *jihad*.”¹³⁷ They believed it was time to rid the area of the occupiers. Together, they,—AQI, the tribes, and their militias—could do that.

The tribes of the region varied in size and available resources and were not capable of defeating the US occupiers on their own. Some, like the Abu-Mahal tribe, the strongest tribe in the area, organized and resourced the Hamza Battalion specifically to fight the Coalition.¹³⁸ However, even with the support of the tribal militia, the Abu-Mahal lacked the weaponry, ammunition, and other equipment to win such a fight. AQI’s offer of support was tempting. Most of the tribes accepted.

But AQI’s offer was deceptive; this was not a partnership. AQI provided weaponry and funding, but they also demanded to lead the *jihad* with the intent of first destroying and then transforming the social fabric of Al Qaim. They started by taking over the smuggling routes, skimming profits and killing those that resisted. They then imposed a radical form of Islamic Law or *Sharia* on the community with fanatical punishments for transgressors. AQI used religion to justify its actions, which included forced marriages to the local women.¹³⁹ The most common intimidation tactic was to behead those that resisted and leave the head on the chest of the body in the street for all to see—sometimes only the head was left and the body disposed of in the river or the *Jazeera*—the desert. Despite the risk of brutal retribution, there were dissenters among the tribes, particularly within Abu-Mahal in Husaybah, the small Iraqi border town which served as Al Qaim’s main market, and the port of entry.

AQI needed to show it was in charge; it could not afford dissenters or challengers. The most visible challenge to their authority was the Coalition’s Camp Gannon, which was located in the northwest corner of Husaybah.¹⁴⁰

B. The Attack on Camp Gannon

*This is going to be a great attack against the Americans. This will be a victory for Allah. This will be a victory against the coalition, and this will be a victory in which we free Iraq from the American oppressors.*¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Sheikh Kurdi interview, 17 Apr 2010.

¹³⁸ “And that’s a fact!” exclaimed Sheikh Kurdi, the on-the-ground leader of the Abu-Mahal tribe after Sheikh Sabah, the Paramount Sheikh of the Abu-Mahal tribe, fled to Jordan. Sheik Kurdi interview, 17 Apr 2010.

¹³⁹ *Forced* was a descriptor used by many Americans to describe marriages of foreign fighters to local women. However, most of Iraqis interviewed by the JAWP team in the Al Qaim area did not agree with the word “forced.” Sheikh Kurdi explained that since the foreign fighters were there on a jihad, that they could not simply take a woman because religiously that would be improper, so they “arranged” these marriages. However, these marriages were not always without some sort of intimidation. Unfortunately, once the foreign fighter died or left Itaq, there was no one to take care of the widow and children.

¹⁴⁰ Camp Gannon was named for Major Richard Gannon, Commanding Officer, Lima Company, 3/7 Marines. Major Gannon was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on 17 Apr 2004 while attempting to save members of his company. He was killed in action.

¹⁴¹ Colonel Stephen Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

Camp Gannon, constructed adjacent to the old border station between Syria and Iraq, became a reviled icon of the occupation. AQI needed a victory against such an icon for psychological as well as practical reasons: First, AQI needed to show the tribes of the area it was in charge of the region and Camp Gannon represented a significant symbol of the Coalition's permanent presence. Second, although Camp Gannon's reach along the border was limited, it severely restricted the insurgents' ability to move foreign fighters and other support into Iraq. Finally, as Camp Gannon restricted the flow of goods and resources from Syria, it represented a loss of monthly revenues to the insurgents.

Early morning on 11 April 2005, the enemy greeted Camp Gannon with two rounds of mortar fire. This was normal. India Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines (3/2) had been receiving a daily fare of mortar rounds at Camp Gannon since they arrived in February as did their predecessor, Baker Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (1/7). What was not normal was the sophistication of the follow-on attack—a trademark of Al Qaeda in Iraq.¹⁴³

Three suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIED) preceded by a breaching vehicle and followed by a film crew/media van penetrated Gannon's defensive barriers and targeted its inner sanctum—the command post (CP). Captain Frank Diorio, Company Commander, India Company, knocked down by successive blasts, recalled hearing someone yell, "Fire truck!" The fire truck was the last and largest of the three SVBIEDs.¹⁴⁴ "My heart sank, I heard the explosion. I thought it was a direct hit on my CP....I thought I'd lost about 150 Marines" (see Figure 5-1 for Sequence of bombing). Immediately after the last blast, Capt Diorio heard incoming fire—



Figure 5-1. SVBIED Camp Gannon¹⁴²

¹⁴² Insurgent video provided by Colonel Stephen Davis, USMC, former commander RCT-2, during an interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, on 25 May 2010 at his office at the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC), Camp Lejeune.

¹⁴³ Major Frank Diorio, USMC, interview with MajGen Tom Jones, USMC, Retired, Camp Pendleton, Cal., 8 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁴ During his initial in-country briefings Major Diorio had heard of the "Fire Truck." It was reportedly laden with explosives and embedded in a village near Al Asad. The Coalition did not dispose of it because of the collateral damage it could cause in the area. The truck, a high value resource to the insurgency, was whisked away by the insurgents to be used against a future high priority target. That target was Camp Gannon.

small arms, rocket propelled grenades, and machine gun—from houses adjacent to Gannon. Foreign fighters had infiltrated the area the night before, vacated the residents, and staged for the assault and exploitation of the SVBIED attack. Within minutes of the incoming fires, Capt Diorio heard outgoing fire and saw lieutenants and non-commissioned officers moving to positions and supplying Marines at their posts. Miraculously, as each platoon accounted for its Marines, Diorio realized that no Marines were lost.

Within 24 hours the insurgents posted the video announcing the attack as “a victory for Allah...a victory against the coalition...a victory in which we free Iraq from the American oppressors.”¹⁴⁵

However, the townspeople quickly learned that the Coalition lost no forces. To save face, the foreign fighters announced over the mosque loud speakers that the “Americans didn’t die because you [the townspeople of Husaybah] are bad Muslims....or else we would have had victory.”¹⁴⁶

The people of Husaybah didn’t buy the propaganda. One night soon after the 11 April attack, the Marines heard the sound of gunshots coming from the Market Place in Husaybah. They called a local source the “East End Lady,” who resided at the east end of Husaybah, and asked, “What’s going on?” She replied, “Well, there was a fight in the Market Place between the foreign fighters and a local. The local is making fun of them for not killing any of you guys. And the foreign fighters shot and killed him.” This was Capt Diorio’s first indication that something was going on that the Marines might be able to influence. Capt Diorio explained, “There was no inclination that they liked us...but they were making fun of the foreign fighters... [so maybe it is something] we can use.”¹⁴⁷

Although this may have been the Marines first sense of a rift between the tribes and AQI, trouble had been building for months. To protect their equities and control the population, AQI had not been allowing the tribes to arm and protect themselves. Security in Al Qaim, and in particular in Husaybah, had become untenable. The Albu-Mahal appointed, one of their own, Major Ahmed Adiya Asaf as the new Chief of Police.¹⁴⁸

On 2 May 2005, MAJ Ahmed was walking Main Street in the market area of Husaybah when seven men attacked, shot, and beheaded him.¹⁴⁹ AQI was simply reinforcing the declaration it had made earlier to the tribal leadership that AQI, not the tribes of Al Qaim, would be in charge of security—AQI would not tolerate competition of any sort.

¹⁴⁵ Major Diorio interview, 8 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁶ Major Diorio interview, 8 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Major Diorio interview, 8 Feb 2011.

¹⁴⁸ Colonel Ahmad interview, 18 Apr 2010.

¹⁴⁹ Colonel Ahmad interview, 18 Apr 2010.

The beheading of MAJ Ahmed proved to be the last straw. The Abu-Mahal became the first tribe to openly revolt against AQI.¹⁵⁰

C. Abu-Mahal Rejects Al Qaeda in Iraq

The change was swift. On the same day MAJ Ahmed was killed, Abu-Mahal's Hamza Battalion turned on AQI and their local supporters, other tribes such as the Karbulis and Salmanis. The militia that was created to fight Coalition forces changed course and led the Abu-Mahals into their first major battle against foreign and local insurgents.¹⁵¹

The ferocity of AQI's reaction to Abu-Mahal's challenge—and the realization of the magnitude of the consequences should they fail—prompted Abu-Mahal members to call upon the Coalition for help. Former Governor of Al Anbar Province Fasal al-Gaoud contacted Americans at Camp Fallujah on behalf of the Abu-Mahals.¹⁵² Al Gaoud was a member of the Abu-Nimr tribe, a tribe that shares ancestry as well as history with the Abu-Mahal tribe.¹⁵³ The Abu-Nimrs are the dominant tribe in Hit, a town northwest of Ramadi. In addition to Fasal's call for help, Abu-Mahal leadership called Bruska Nouri Shaways, Iraqi Deputy Minister of Defense, requesting the Coalition forces' support.¹⁵⁴ The intent was promising, but the potential would become lost in the chaos of what seemed to the Coalition to be a case of "red-on-red" struggle for power.

On 10 May, AQI kidnapped Al Anbar Governor Nawaf Farhan, a member of the Abu-Mahal tribe and cousin of Sheikh Sabah, the Paramount Sheikh of the Abu-Mahal tribe. Governor Nawaf attempted to reconcile the conflict in Al Qaim, but found himself a pawn in AQI's campaign to intimidate the tribes into compliance. AQI Had gone too far, however, and this act only further infuriated the Mahalawis and strengthened their resolve against AQI.¹⁵⁵

In the midst of the conflict between AQI and Abu-Mahal, Regimental Combat Team (RCT)-2 launched Operation MATADOR on 7 May. The operation, planned before the fighting broke out between AQI and Abu-Mahal, was designed to disrupt terrorist activities in the Al Qaim region.¹⁵⁶ The resulting twin offensives against AQI—the Abu-Mahal's Hamza Battal-

¹⁵⁰ Colonel Ahmad interview, 18 Apr 2010. Also found in publication by Colonel Montgomery and Chief Warrant Officer 4 McWilliams, "Al Anbar Awakening," Volume II, *Iraqi Perspectives*, Marine Corps University Press, 2009, 141.

¹⁵¹ Sheikh Kurdi interview, 17 Apr 2010.

¹⁵² Hanah Allam and Mohammed al-Dulaimy, "Iraqis Lament Call for Help," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 May 2005, indicated that other Al Qaim tribes, in addition to Abu-Mahal, were also resisting AQI, but our research found no support for that contention.

¹⁵³ Iraq Tribal Study: al Anbar Governorate, 18 June 2006, Global Resources Group, 4-17 and 4-28

¹⁵⁴ Hanah Allam and Mohammed al-Dulaimy, "Iraqis Lament Call for Help," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 May 2005.

¹⁵⁵ An al-Mahalawi is a tribal member of the Abu-Mahal tribe.

¹⁵⁶ MNF-I Press Release, "Victories in May," 9 June 2005, www.usf-iraq.com/news/press-releases/victories-during-may.

ion's and RCT-2's—were separate and uncoordinated. They both targeted the same enemy, but in different areas—the Albu-Mahal's primarily in Husaybah to the west and south of the river and RCT-2 in the east near Ubaydi and north of the river to the border (see Figure 5-2).

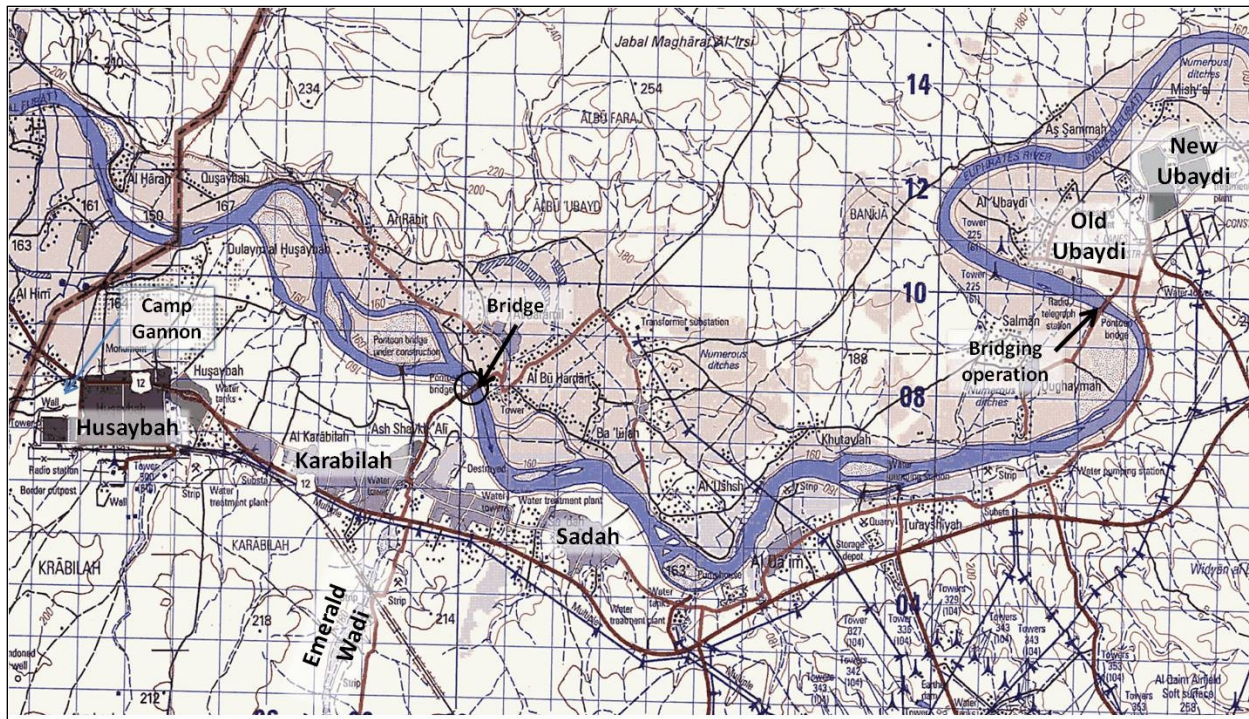


Figure 5-2. Map of Al Qaim Area

When residents returned after fleeing during Operation MATADOR, they found destroyed homes and fellow tribesman, some who had remained behind to support the Coalition, dead. Fasal al-Gaoud complained that the Coalition forces did not discriminate between AQI forces and the growing tribal anti-AQI forces.¹⁵⁷ On-the-ground Coalition forces, still unaware of any Albu-Mahal request for help and unable to discriminate among what they considered to be red forces claimed success in clearing insurgent areas. While the Coalition acknowledged that locals had provided intelligence information to support the assault, they remained dubious of local efforts to work with the Coalition in the fight.¹⁵⁸

Despite the confusion, Albu-Mahal's Hamza Battalion cleared Husaybah and pushed AQI to the east into Karabilah—a town south of the Euphrates populated by the Karbuli tribe, an AQI supporter. With Husaybah cleared, the Albu-Mahals began reconstructing damaged sections of the city and established tribal security around critical infrastructure such as government buildings and services. According to COL Ahmed, future leader of the Desert Protec-

¹⁵⁷ Allam and al-Dulaimy, "Iraqis Lament Call for Help."

¹⁵⁸ Allam and al-Dulaimy, "Iraqis Lament Call for Help."

tors, remaining pockets of AQI seemed to dissipate throughout June and July from areas around Husaybah as the insurgent group moved east towards Rawah.¹⁵⁹

RCT-2 and in particular, 3/2 Marines recognized insurgent forces seeking sanctuary in the Karabilah area. Specifically, during Operation MATADOR, insurgent forces north of the Euphrates fled southwest across the “Golden Gate” bridge (see map at Figure 2) for sanctuary in Karabilah. Additionally, the Karbuli¹⁶⁰ tribe that resided in Karabilah joined forces with AQI against the Abu-Mahal and Coalition. On 15 June RCT-2 executed Operation SPEAR, which aimed to root out AQI and disrupt its support systems.¹⁶¹ According to Colonel Mundy, commander 3/2, the fighting against insurgents wasn’t heavy but it was steady as Coalition forces cleared houses and moved north towards the Euphrates. The significance of the operation was in the find:

We found papers, a computer with a big database of people that had come through, passports of all sorts from different countries, weapons stockpiles, and a school room with a chalkboard drawing out how to build IEDs. It was a class for IED building...we found what we referred to as the torture house...and several guys in there still in handcuffs. They had scars all over their bodies. There was one room in the house [with]...a big hook in the ceiling and they would obviously run these guys up, hang them upside down over a bucket of water. They would dip them in the water and then pull them up. They had a frayed electrical cord plugged into the wall that they would sit there and shock them. They had burns and marks all over their bodies. There was very obvious foreign fighter involvement there in terms of the types of weapons...all sorts of different makes of RPGs and rifles.¹⁶²

D. Al Qaeda Returns with a Vengeance

Abu-Mahal’s struggle with AQI was far from over. During June and most of July, under the guise of negotiations, AQI gathered thousands of fighters from Mosul, Diyala, Baghdad, and Salah ad-Din into the Al Qaim area. On 25 July 2005, after nearly two months of building up its forces, AQI returned with a vengeance. Injured in earlier fighting, Zarqawi, the leader of AQI took personal interest in this operation. Within four days, thousands of AQI fighters, heavily outnumbering the 300–400 Abu-Mahal fighters, attacked and killed 60 tribal members. They also destroyed 41 family homes by detonating each house’s propane tank, including that of Sheikh Sabah.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Colonel Ahmad interview, 18 Apr 2010.

¹⁶⁰ The tribe has also been referred to as Karbuli or Karabilah tribe.

¹⁶¹ Bill Roggio, “Operations Spear in Anbar Province,” The Long War Journal site, www.longwarjournal.org.

¹⁶² Colonel Timothy Mundy, former Commander, 3/2 Marines in Al Qaim from Mar 2005 to Sept 2005, interview with Dr. William Knarr, School of Infantry at Camp Lejeune, NC, 14 Jan 2011.

¹⁶³ Sheikh Kurdi interview, 17 Apr 2010.

AQI attacked from three directions: from the Syrian border area in the west, from across the Euphrates River in the north, and from the east; the only route of escape open to the Albu-Mahal fighters was to the south. The Mahalawis, outnumbered and out of ammunition, fled for their lives. Most sought refuge with other tribal members in Akashat, 100 miles to the south of Al Qaim. Some travelled to Sufia, east of Ramadi, to stay with tribal brethren. Those who could afford to fled to Syria or Jordan.¹⁶⁴

Afraid for his tribe, Sheikh Sabah, from his refuge in Jordan, contacted the Iraqi Minister of Defense Dr. Sadun Dulaymi, and, according to Sadun, told him, “We need help, because our children, our women, old men, are all surrounded and...the terrorists are going to kill them all.” Upon learning this, the Coalition Commander, General Casey dispatched an airplane to transport Sabah from Amman to Baghdad. According to Sadun, a small group then “...met together in my office and put together a plan to help the people of Al Qaim, not just the Albu-Mahal tribe, but all the people of Al Qaim.”¹⁶⁵

In Al Qaim, prospects were grim for those that remained. The Mahalawis were no longer worried about AQI skimming profits or imposing a harsh social code. It was now a question of survivability. As predicted by Sabah, AQI continued its murder and intimidation campaign against those al Mahalawis who were trapped and could not flee. On the ground, Capt Diorio was getting regular updates from sources in Husaybah. He recalled, “Foreign fighters gathered to come kill my contact, my source, his family, and his immediate tribe [Albu-Mahal]”¹⁶⁶ Capt Diorio received a phone call from the East End Lady, who told him that that about 250 insurgents were at the “the palace.” “At the same time,” Capt Diorio said, “there [was] a lot of rhetoric that Zarqawi himself was coming to lead this, because he was annoyed by this Sunni tribe rising up against another Sunni tribe.”

The information, corroborated through other sources, started to gain traction, and Capt Diorio gained approval for an air strike on “the palace”—at least 100 were killed. This angered AQI and prompted it to bring in more fighters to complete the assault on Albu-Mahal. The fighters moved into the largest hotel in Husaybah, the yellow hotel with 50-60 rooms.

Capt Diorio received another call from the East End Lady, and he recalled her saying:

The guys who survived that other strike and a lot of guys who came in from out of town....there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of these guys in the hotel.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Colonel Ahmad interview, 18 Apr 2010.

¹⁶⁵ Dr. Sadun Dulaymi, former minister of defense, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, his home, Baghdad, 24 Apr 2010.

¹⁶⁶ Major Diorio interview, 8 Feb 2011.

¹⁶⁷ Major Diorio interview, 8 Feb 2011.

Again, other sources verified the information. In the mean-time the Albu-Mahal were split between the northern part and southeastern part of the city. Now it was minute by-minute updates; per Capt Diorio:

We were getting frantic phone calls: “We’re getting run over.” And then perhaps the most surreal moments...we saw in the hundreds, Iraqis come out of the north end of the city towards our OP [outpost]...with their hands up. They are now coming in full daylight out of the city towards our OP with their hands up. Falzi, our source, was calling us saying, “These are my people please help them. We’re getting killed.”

This was a true turning point as the Albu-Mahal turned to the Marines for help. Capt Diorio continued:

To watch them openly see us as their help, as their rescuers, in broad daylight with their hands up was amazing. To me that was the point where the entire city, the foreign fighters, [and] AQI saw the Albu-Mahals say, the Marines are our help. And they came in droves.

At this point, the Marines understood exactly what was happening. They knew this was a significant moment and were ready to support it:

And again talk about discipline. I had Marines now who at this point had fought over 300 fire fights and had faced the largest attack against a Coalition Base. They’d been through a lot, and they withheld their fire in a real display of discipline. They read the people.

But they also understood there were truly some bad guys embedded within this group of Mahalawis, so they were cautious and responded accordingly. Until they could sort things out, they told the approaching people, “We’re going to treat you like we would treat any other prisoner right now.” One of the people approaching the Marine outpost said, “I understand, and they [motioning to the others in the group] know it.” So, the Marines handcuffed and blindfolded them to sort them out when the situation stabilized.

At this point, the Marines had approximately 60 Mahalawis that they were processing as detainees. Capt Diorio began worrying about the situation worsening when he continued to receive troubled phone calls from Falzi’s family. At one point, one family member said, “We’re going to die. We’re getting crushed.” Diorio thought, “Hey, it was great that it worked for a while, but is this going bad now?”

But again, Capt Diorio’s Marines understood and responded. They perceived the Mahalawis cries for help as positive, and they were anxious to defend the tribe. At that point, Capt Diorio described the situation as “bigger than us [himself and his Marines].” He explained why:

...there was buy-in from the Marines...Colonel Mundy was involved. Colonel Davis was involved. The division was involved. They were all read into what was going on. They were sending up the request for airstrikes.

A Coalition airstrike destroyed the hotel saving Falzi and his family. Surviving members of his tribe evacuated south to Akashat. But Husaybah was lost. AQI came in with the Salmani, another local pro-AQI tribe, and took over the town, making life unbearable for those that remained. This happened at the same time 3/2 Marines conducted a Relief in Place (RIP) with 3/6 Marines. Capt Diorio later recalled his parting thoughts:

I think what we were left with was an initial thought that this failed. Then as we continued to think about it, we thought that this is the tipping point that every counterinsurgency needs. This is the tipping point that you now have a Sunni tribe, Albu-Mahal, who to the point of their very own lives, sided with Coalition forces, sided with India Company, sided with Marine Corps.

CAPT Diorio may have identified the tipping point with benefit of hindsight, but when asked, what he would have done had he remained? Capt Diorio responded, “I honestly think that we probably couldn’t have seen what we needed to see because of what we had gone through.” That is, it was time for a turnover, time for a fresh set of eyes to work the problem.

Psychologically, the Albu-Mahal may have tipped, but physically, they no longer remained in Al Qaim. By 5 September Zarqawi reportedly controlled the region and posted signs to that effect.¹⁶⁸ Despite the long list of Coalition transgressions and a deep mistrust of the Government of Iraq (GOI), AQI’s savage and uncompromising trajectory towards fanaticism convinced the Albu-Mahals that siding with the Coalition and GOI was a more palatable alternative to misery and death. AQI provided the Coalition and GOI an opportunity to change the balance in their favor and under their terms.

E. Changing the Balance

In February of 2005, Regimental Combat Team–2 (RCT-2) took responsibility for Area of Operation (AO) Denver, which included Al Qaim and four adjacent districts. RCT-2 had an economy of force mission to “conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in order to disrupt and interdict anti-Iraq elements.”¹⁶⁹ Their objective was to support a successful national referendum in October and National elections in December 2005, also a Multinational Force – Iraq (MNF-I) objective. Their approach was to conduct one or two major operations a month in the Western Euphrates River Valley (WERV), and to “disrupt and interdict anti-Iraqi elements,” both of which were tall orders for a small force. RCT-2 had 3,200 Marines and Sailors deployed in a 30,000-square mile battlespace, with an enemy infiltrating from a porous border to the west and fleeing from a lost sanctuary in Fallujah to the east. They were the “litttle RCT with a division mission and a MEF battle space.” By any objective measure, RCT-2’s

¹⁶⁸ Ellen Knickmeyer and Jonathan Finer, “Insurgents Assert Control Over Town Near Syrian Border,” Washington Post Foreign Service, 6 Sept 2005.

¹⁶⁹ Colonel Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

goal to “establish combined, permanent, persistent presence in major population centers in the WERV,” could not be accomplished with its assigned force structure.¹⁷⁰

But what started as 3,200 Marines and Sailors on an economy of force mission in February 2005, grew to 14,000 by September 2005 and comprised of US Marine, US Army and Iraqi Security Forces.¹⁷¹ There was also a redeployment of Special Forces teams into the area; their primary mission was Foreign Internal Defense, to work with indigenous Iraqis to help secure their own areas.¹⁷² Major Martin Adams, Special Forces Company Commander, deployed Operational Detachment Bravo (ODB) to Al Asad to work with RCT-2 and support the recently deployed Special Forces outlying Operational Detachments (ODAs 582, 555 and 545).

Captain Jim Calvert, commanding ODA 582,¹⁷³ arrived in Al Qaim in August 2005, around the same time that al Mahalawis were fleeing from AQL. CPT Calvert’s mission was broad and nebulous: Make life better for the Iraqis. Calvert recalled the conditions at Camp Gannon on his arrival as far from optimal; “We got hit with about everything the insurgents had—small arms, machine gun, rocket propelled grenades, mortar fire—it was not a contested area, the insurgents owned it.”¹⁷⁴

Reaching out and engaging the Sunnis in the area was critical to driving a wedge between the insurgents and the Iraqis and to changing the balance of popular support.¹⁷⁵ If the Coalition and GOI provided help, they would have to deal with the perception that they were supporting a tribal militia that might be seen as an anathema to Iraq’s central Government’s legitimacy. To diffuse this perception, potential recruits needed to be vetted and drafted into government service.¹⁷⁶

Just as the Coalition and GOI viewed militias as an anathema to Government legitimacy, the Sunni tribesmen, for the most part, found the stigma of being associated with the Ministry of Defense or Ministry of Interior just as repugnant. Therefore, this new organization, ex-

¹⁷⁰ RCT-2 Briefing, 15 Sept 2006, Regimental Combat Team 2, Viking in the Valley, presentation to Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA.

¹⁷¹ Colonel Davis, Commander, RCT-2 credits the increase in force structure to General George Casey’s understanding of the situation and intent to exploit success in the WERV.

¹⁷² The previously deployed ODA was 1st Group. It was there Jan 2004–Fall 2004. (Brent Linderman, “Better Lucky Than No Good: A Theory of Unconventional Minds and the Power of ‘Who,’” Dec 2009)

¹⁷³ 5th Group, 3rd Battalion, B Company, now 5322.

¹⁷⁴ Captain Jim Calvert, Commander, ODA 582, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Ms. Mary Hawkins, IDA, 26 Nov 2010. Pseudonym used at the request of the service member.

¹⁷⁵ Multinational Force–Iraq Campaign Progress Review, 12 Dec 2004.

¹⁷⁶ At the time it was the Iraqi Transitional Government or ITG; however, we will use *GOI* throughout the volumes to represent the Iraqi Government.

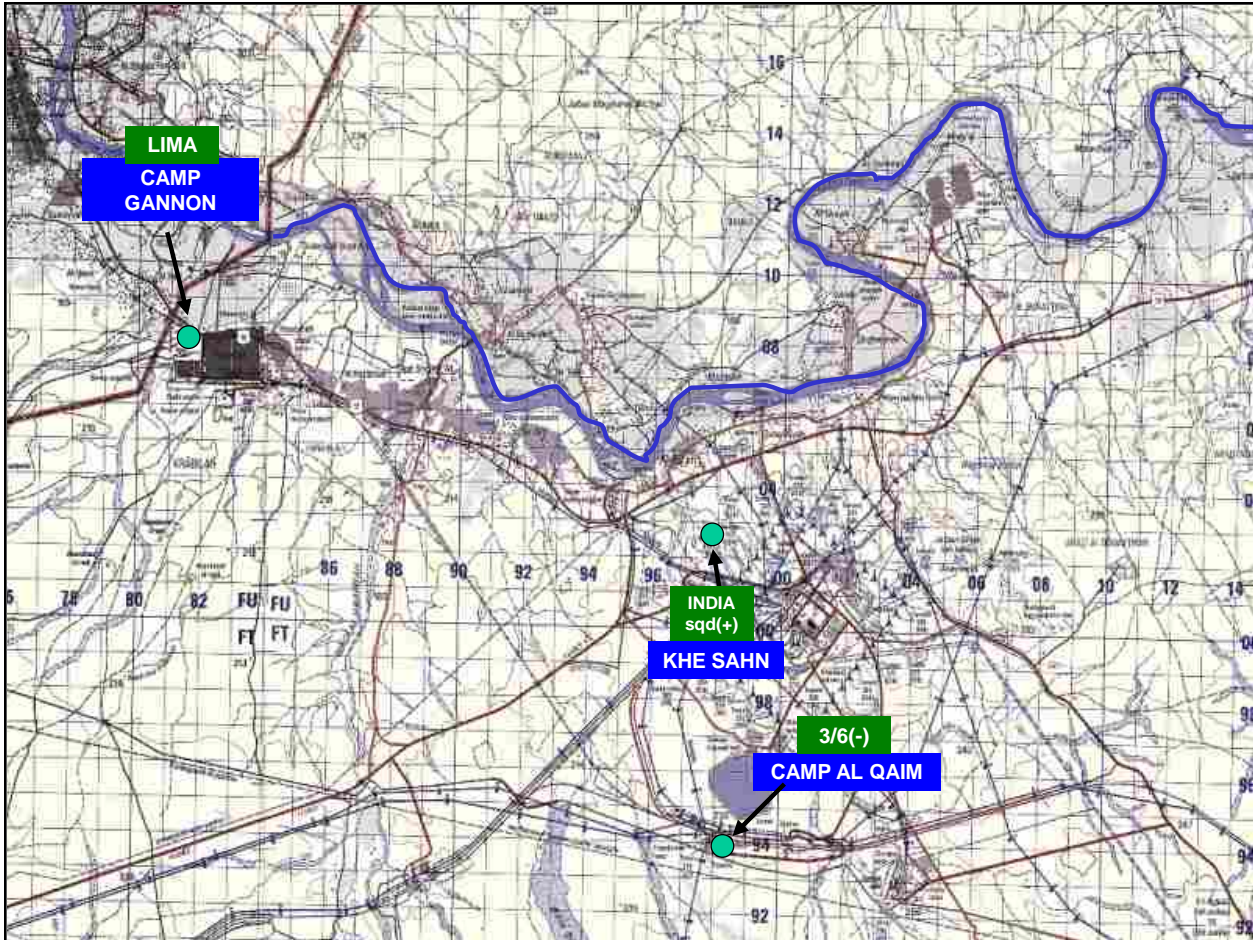
plained Dr. Sadun Dulaymi, would be known as the Desert Protectors and, in name, would be neither MOD nor MOI.¹⁷⁷

At a safe house in the vicinity of Camp Gannon, Calvert discussed recruitment with representatives of the Albu-Mahal tribe. At the time, the only takers were the Al Mahalawis; they had already committed themselves by attacking AQI and were marked men. The remaining other tribes were too intimidated or had already sided with AQI.

In late August 2005, a team representing the GOI and the Coalition arrived by helicopter in Akashat to vet several hundred Albu-Mahal tribesmen for enlistment into government service. According to Colonel Ahmad Jelayan Khalaf, Commander, Desert Protectors, 279 were deemed fit and inducted into the Desert Protectors. Of those 279, 89 were transported to the East Fallujah Iraqi Compound for training by Special Operations Forces (SOF).

While training and equipping a local force, the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment (3/6) replaced 3/2 Marines in Al Qaim on 10 September 2005 and occupied their sites at Camp Al Qaim, Camp Gannon, and the communications retrans site at Khe Sanh (Figure 5-3). LtCol Dale Alford, Commander, 3/6 Marines, arrived with an experienced unit, and an aggressive plan, and a new approach to liberate the district from the grips of AQI.

¹⁷⁷ Dr. Dulaymi interview, 24 Apr 2010. For practical reasons they were part of the Army, as they eventually received pay, uniforms, and equipment from the MOD, a necessary mechanism headed by Sadun, that was already in place. However, they primarily joined the Desert Protectors to defend their families and communities and remain in the area. That was also the Coalition's intent, and from this research, that intent was honored. The concept was to eventually integrate Desert Protectors into the Army as scouts or other units or into the police force. In addition to wanting to remain in their tribal area, they were also concerned that a Sunni soldier in a Shia Army would have difficulty surviving, especially if he were to deploy into a Shia area. Hence, this accommodation as a Desert Protector served the individual, the tribe, the Coalition, and the GOI.



Courtesy 3/6 Marines

Figure 5-3. Disposition of Forces at Transfer of Authority

Eighty percent of 3/6—including the battalion commander, company commanders, first sergeants, and non-commissioned officers—fought together eight months earlier in eastern Afghanistan. Although there were differences in the type of fight in Afghanistan and Iraq, there were similarities that helped shape the unit’s concept of operations.

One such similarity between Iraq and Afghanistan was that the “population,” not the enemy was the center of gravity. LtCol Alford explained, “You need to understand your enemy before you can protect the population. You’ve got to figure out who needs killing and who doesn’t. The problem is we [the average Coalition Soldier or Marine] wanted to shoot at all of them. Hell, we were making insurgents!”¹⁷⁸ LtCol Alford argued that the number one group his Marines needed to deal with was “POI—Pissed-off-Iraqis!”¹⁷⁹ They had to believe that their interests were better served by siding with the Coalition and GOI than with AQI.

¹⁷⁸ Colonel Alford briefing, 16 Feb 2010.

¹⁷⁹ Colonel Alford briefing, 16 Feb 2010.

A second similarity was the need for persistent presence. It made little sense to clear an area if there weren't enough forces to remain in it afterwards. Although 3/6, unlike its predecessor, arrived with its full contingent of Marines, it wasn't enough.¹⁸⁰

Finally, 3/6 brought an understanding from Afghanistan that they must integrate with the indigenous forces. In late September, the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division (1/1/1 IAD) was deployed to Al Qaim to work with 3/6 and designated Combined Task Force (CTF) 3/6. LtCol Alford now had the resources to establish a combined persistent presence within the population centers—the key terrain. As LtCol Alford tells it:

People ask [me]...where...I...c[a]me up with this concept. I don't really know. I can go back in books that I read as a young Lieutenant and Captain, like *First to Fight*, General Krulak talks about this. The Marines were doing this back in Vietnam in '67 or '68 before we really started doing it in '69, '70, '71 under General Abrams. This was before the COIN Manual came out in the Fall of 2006. What I'm saying is, this is nothing new. It is just protecting the population, in order to do that you've got to live where the population is, and that's what we were trying to accomplish. IRON FIST was nothing more than an operation to get into the people, to kick the bad guys out, establish ourselves, and stay. Once we moved into the city we weren't leaving.¹⁸¹

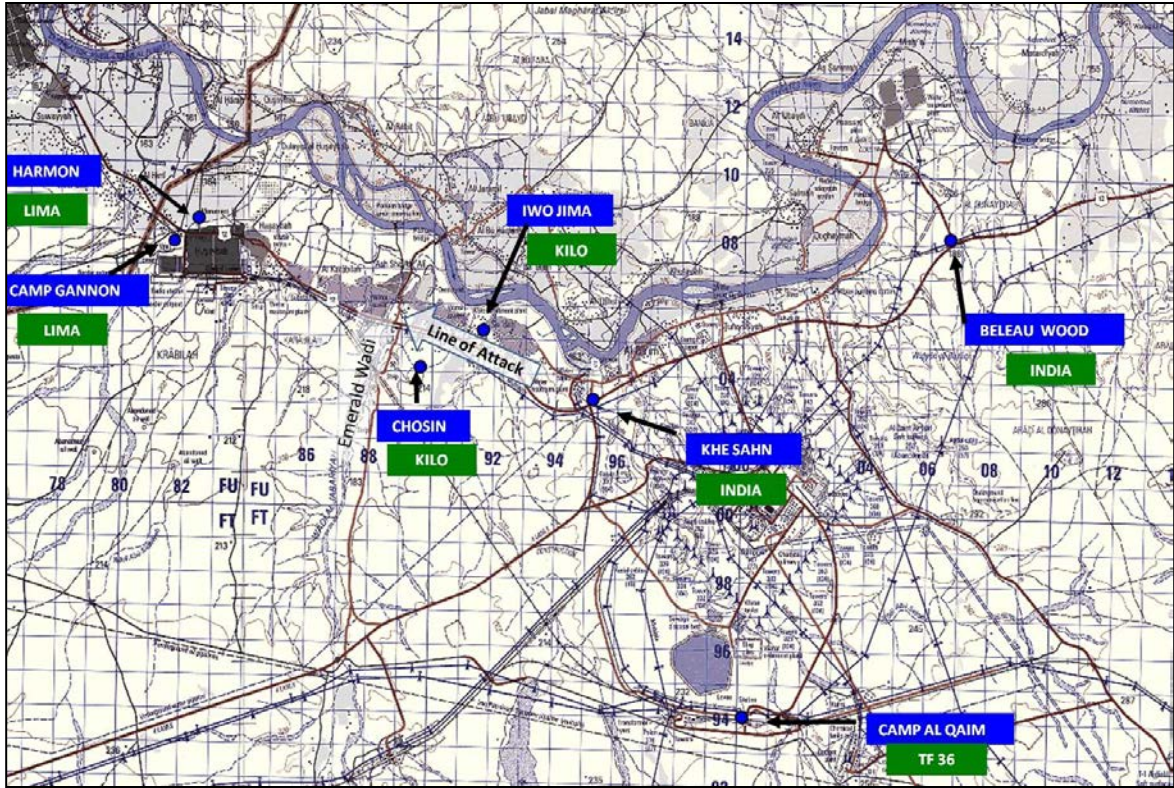
CTF 3/6 executed Operation IRON FIST during 1–7 October 2005, attacking from east to west through the town of Sadah and eastern Karabila, and stopping at the Emerald Wadi (tip of the blue-outlined arrow on Figure 5-4). They built four positions: Chosin, Iwo Jima, Belleau Wood, and Khe Sahn and left a platoon of Marines and Iraqis in each.

While focused in Al Qaim, IRON FIST wasn't conducted in isolation. CTF 3/6's higher headquarters, RCT-2, was simultaneously conducting a regimental operation dubbed RIVER GATE, in the area of Hadithah. CTF 3/6 and IRON FIST created a diversion away from the regimental main effort.

With the addition of more Coalition forces, Iraqi Security Forces, and the newly formed Desert Protectors, RCT-2 finally had the force structure necessary to execute their strategy—combined, permanent, persistent, presence. The resulting Task Organization, reflected in Figure 5-5, was much more robust than those forces available to RCT-2 earlier that year.

¹⁸⁰ 3/2 Marines provided one of its rifle companies to Al Asad for base security; 3/6 Marines wasn't required to do that.

¹⁸¹ Colonel Alford briefing, 16 Feb 2010.



Courtesy 3/6 Marines

Figure 5-4. 3/6 Marines Disposition after IRON FIST, 7 October 2005

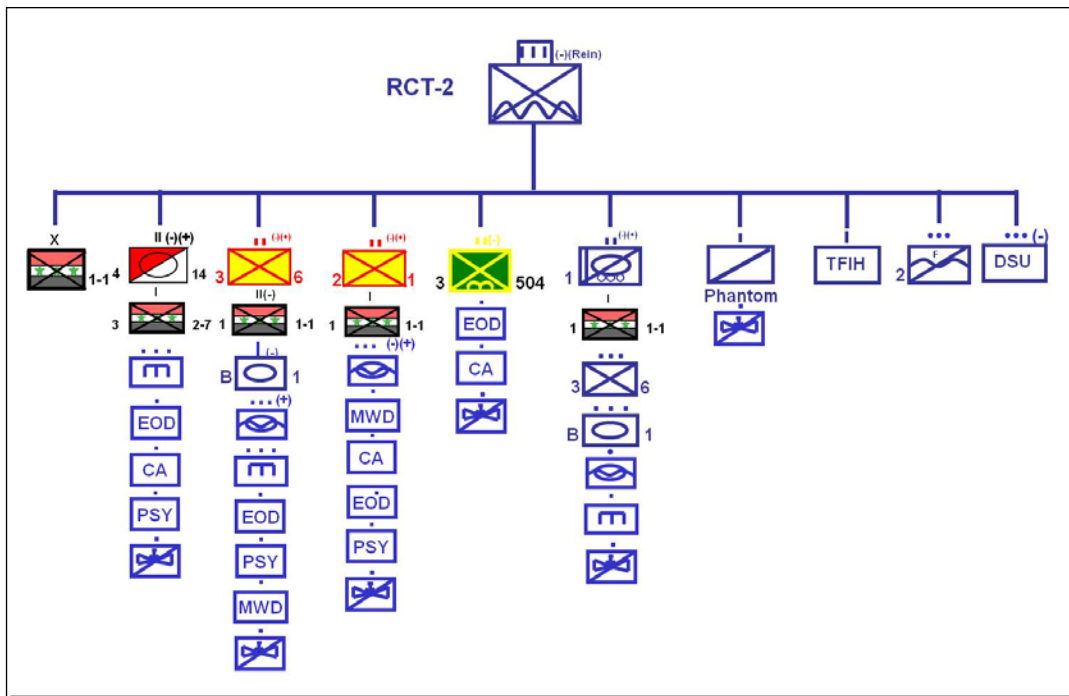


Figure 5-5. Task Organization, Operation STEEL CURTAIN

F. Operation STEEL CURTAIN

CTF 3/6 had positioned forces on the east side of the Emerald Wadi at the conclusion of IRON FIST and continued to engage the enemy in Karabilah on the west side of the wadi – the enemy expected the Coalition to continue the assault from the east.¹⁸² Instead, CTF 3/6 supported by Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/1, each with elements from the 1st Brigade, 1st Iraq Army Division (1/1 IAD) and Desert Protectors, repositioned from Camp Al Qaim to the Iraqi/Syrian border where they would assault east through Husaybah and Karabilah.¹⁸³ The RCT mission statement follows:

At 0500 5 November, RCT-2 conducts Joint / Combined COIN operations to isolate and clear Husaybah, Karabilah, Ubaydi, and Ramana IOT defeat AQI forces, establish persistent presence, disrupt insurgent activities, facilitate Iraqi restoration of the border and set conditions for national elections in the Al Qaim region.

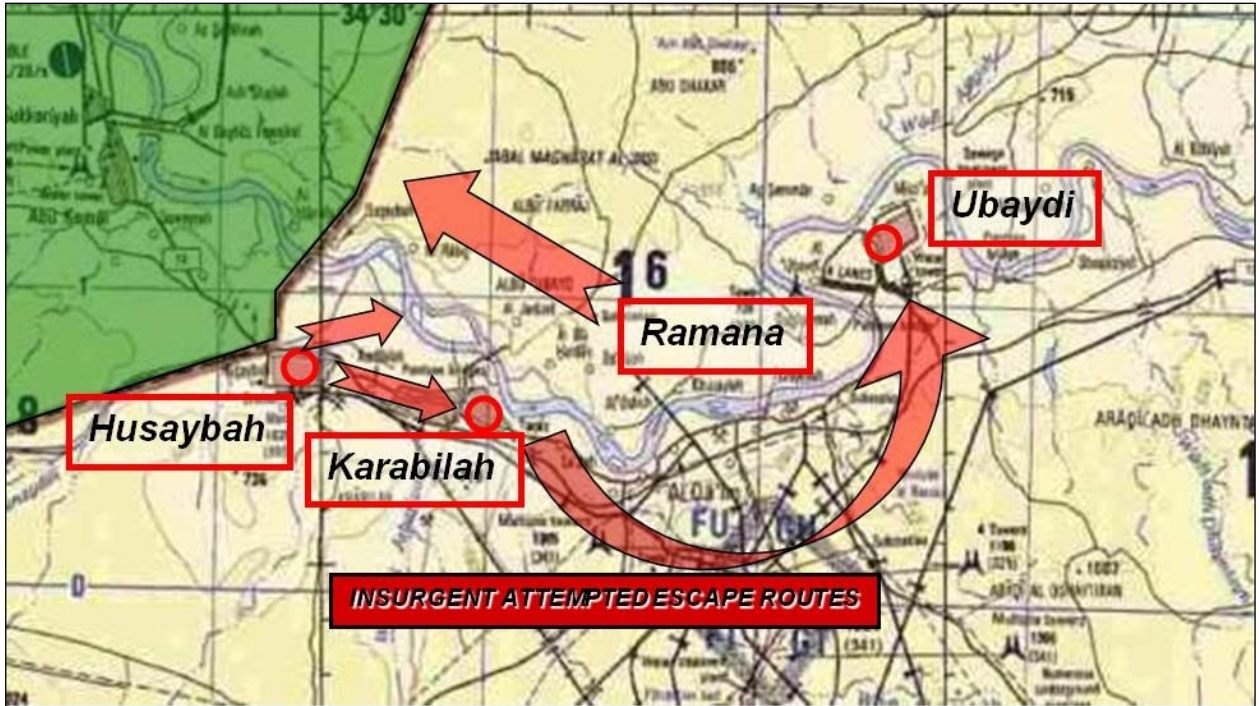
On 5 November, CTF 3/6 and BLT 2/1 assaulted into Husaybah and the area known as the “440 District” southwest of Husaybah, respectively. 3rd of the 504th Parachute Battalion (3-504) inserted by helicopter to the north of the river into the Ramana area, a known insurgent sanctuary.

Despite the tactical surprise, it took CTF 3/6 and Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/1 the next seven days to clear the Husaybah-Karabilah-Sadah area of insurgents. This was a sophisticated enemy. Insurgents wore Kevlar helmets and body armor and fought with a degree of discipline that reflected military or advanced terrorist training. All main roads and avenues of approach were laced with IEDs. Residential buildings were mined in order to target Coalition forces as they breached and cleared rooms. After engaging Coalition forces and encountering superior firepower, insurgents generally broke contact and conducted coordinated withdrawals to the east or discarded evidence of their actions and attempted to blend in with the population (see Figure 5-6). The enemy clearly knew what it was doing and how to do it.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, presentation to IDA, 16 Feb 2010.

¹⁸³ Those forces swung south through the desert to remain undetected as they moved to the border area and then moved north to reposition for the assault.

¹⁸⁴ Colonel Davis interview, 25 May 2010.



Courtesy Col Stephen Davis

Figure 5-6. Post-op STEEL CURTAIN Assessment

Immediately upon clearing areas, CTF 3/6 started constructing firm bases with one in Husaybah followed by one in Karabilah. On 14 November 3-504th and BLT 2/1 attacked into Old and New Ubaydi respectively. On 16 November Weapons Company, 3/6 Marines started construction on a firm base in New Ubaydi.

From 18 to 21 November, a Task Force consisting of 4-14 Stryker and the 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division (3/1/1 IAD) cleared the Ramana area north of the river.

Operation STEEL CURTAIN ended on 22 November 2005. An important but often overlooked accomplishment of that operation was that the Desert Protectors proved to be critical to the mission (see Figure 5-7). Major Mukhlis Shadhan Ibrahim al-Mahalawi, commander of the Desert Protectors, explained his mission had three primary objectives:

1. General military intelligence. “During the first stage we gathered a lot of intelligence like where the terrorists were staging, where their operations center was, where did they plant IEDs.”
2. Fighting. During the second stage they fought side-by-side with the Marines
3. Human Intelligence. During the third stage they were used to identify insurgents. “We were the only ones who could identify people captured by the US Forces. Somebody could be a prince or an emir [among the bad guys]...we knew who was the prince, the emir, and who were the assistants. It was our job to identify them.”



Courtesy MAJ Mukhlis

Figure 5-7. Desert Protectors Victory Celebration post-Steel Curtain

CPT Calvert recalled that the Desert Protectors were employed primarily as scouts. As such, they were broken down into small elements and embedded with regular Iraqi Army and Marine units. In this role they were invaluable to the operation. However, according to Calvert, there were some negative aspects associated with employing such a local unit:

The Albu-Mahal's were massacred. If you have people who lost family members and they know that somebody else from another tribe was responsible for it, you have to keep a close eye to make sure there aren't any reprisals for past actions.

You also want to make sure that there's no perception that these guys are the new ones in charge and you guys [the other tribe] are going to be squeezed out. A lot of times in dealing with tribes, there is a zero sum game. [They think] that the Albu-Mahal's are doing well at the expense of the Karbulis and Salmanis. It's definitely a matter of appearing to be doing the right thing and not just doing the right thing. Perceptions go a long way.¹⁸⁵

By late November CTF 3/6 had constructed 16 Battle Positions in the area from Husaybah to Ubaydi. Each position included Marines and Iraqis—normally a Marine platoon and an Iraqi platoon or company. Those positions were located in such a way that they would reflect combined, permanent, persistent presence (see Figure 5-8). In other words, the Coalition and Iraqi forces were positioned to live amongst the people. The next step was to engage the people.

¹⁸⁵ Captain Calvert interview, 26 Nov 2010.

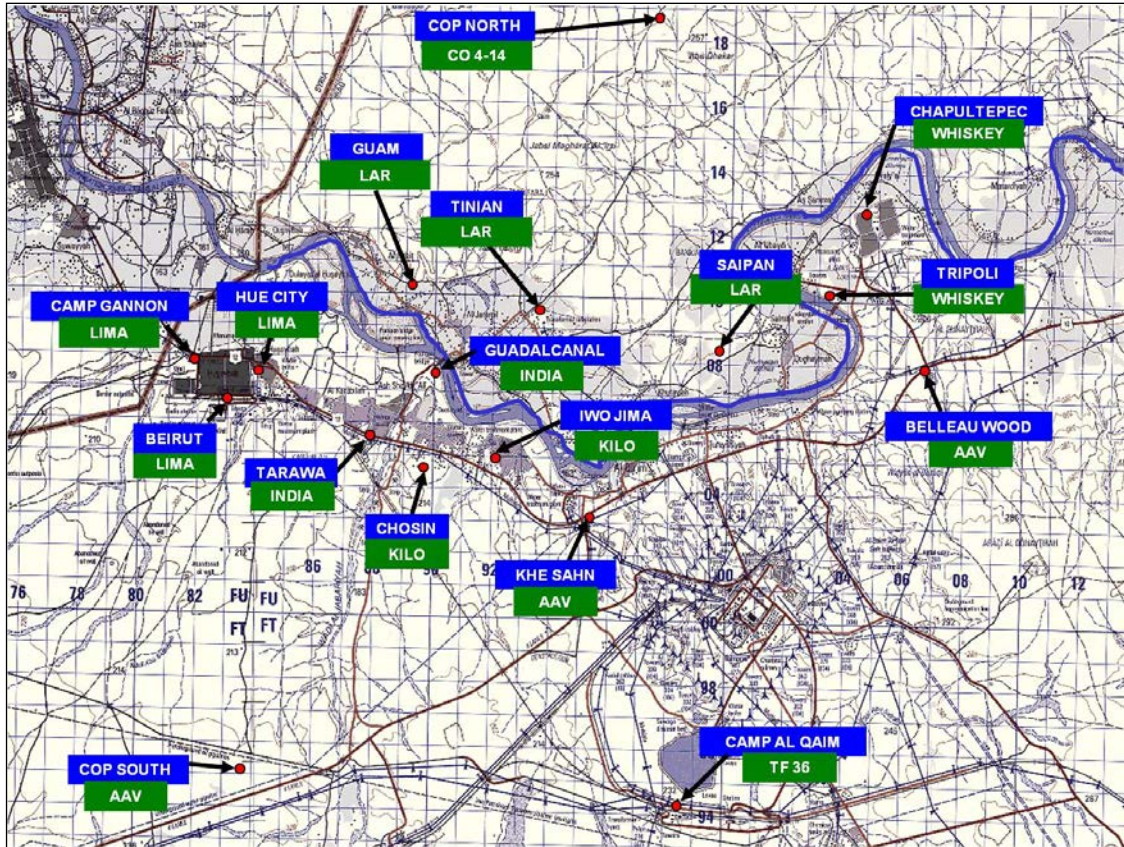
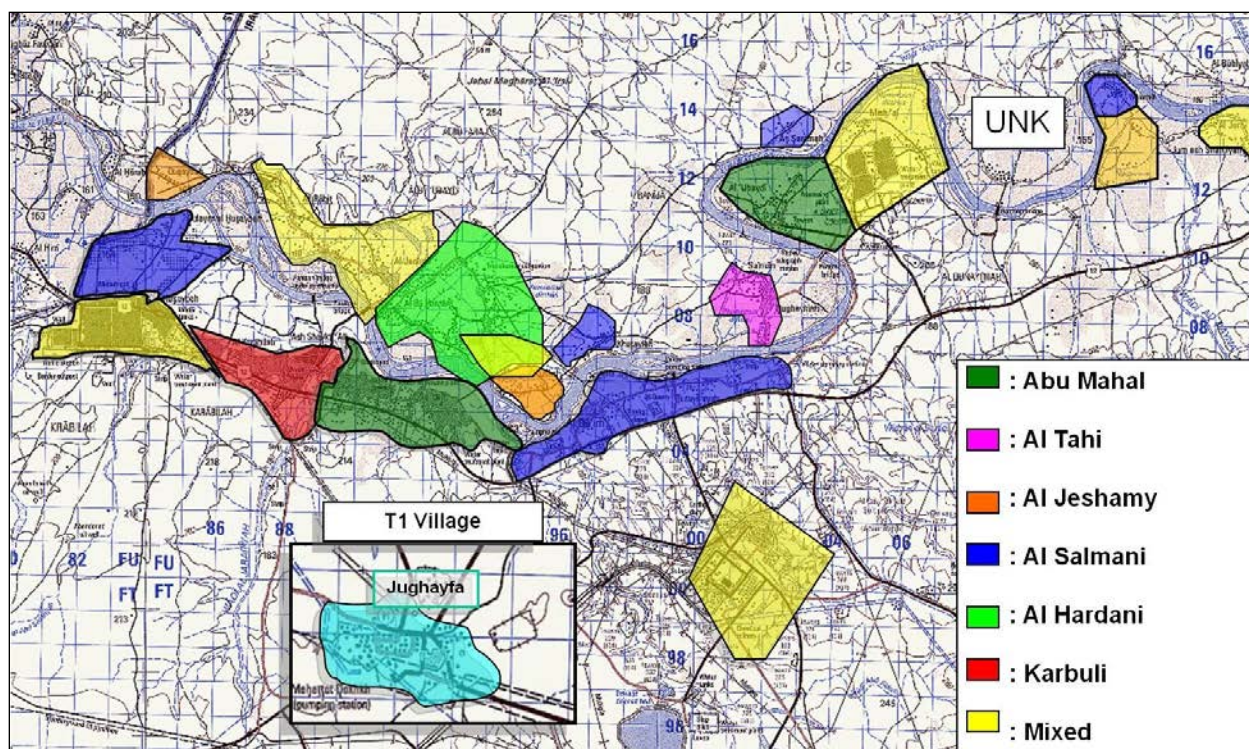


Figure 5-8. 3/6 Marines disposition after Operation STEEL CURTAIN, 22 Nov 2005

Mission analysis led LtCol Alford to assign company areas based on the tribal distribution—to link a company with a tribe. This was not an exact science because the tribes were geographically intermingled. The intent was to locate companies in areas where a majority of a tribe resided. As an example, India Company 3/6 dealt mostly with the Karbulis (see tribal areas at Figure 5-9). Additionally, the Marines attempted to treat all of the tribes the same and would not hold a meeting unless all the tribes were represented. According to LtCol Alford:

When only the three of the five tribes showed up, I gathered my crap, [and] told my guys, we're leaving. I told Mayor Farhan [that] when [he got] all five [tribes, he could] call me...About a week later one of the company commanders [told]... me...Mayor Farhan ha[d] them all. I show[ed] up, and he had four of the five. The Salmani tribe [was] the one that didn't show that time. I did the same thing. I picked my stuff up and I left. A few days later he had all five, and then we started dealing.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Colonel Alford briefing, 16 Feb 2010.



Courtesy Col Marano

Figure 5-9. Tribal Areas

In practice, treating the tribes equally wasn't always easy. Abu-Mahal had taken the greatest risks and LtCol Alford had worked very closely with Sheikh Kurdi, so it was difficult not favoring them over tribes that had until recently sided with AQI. The Marines had to constantly remind themselves to maintain a balance. As such during the drive to recruit tribesmen into the police force the Coalition solicited help from the sheikhs to nominate men from their tribes, and as they started developing police stations near the battle positions. This process allowed the Coalition and Iraq Army forces to partner with the police forces in those areas.

The day-to-day engagement with the population occurred at the lower levels—company, platoon and squad. At the company level, Captain Brendan Heatherman, Commander, Kilo Company 3/6 used the same technique for locating and assigning his platoons as LtCol Alford had used for assigning companies. He assigned platoons to different tribal areas, and he directed that the platoon commanders “be part of that tribe.” In other words, the platoon was to be an advocate for their tribes in requesting funds, developing projects, obtaining other resources. Capt Heatherman became a trusted arbiter. These close engagements helped the Coalition and Iraqi forces separate the insurgent from the populace. As Capt Heatherman recalled:¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Captain Brendan Heatherman, former Commander, Kilo Company, 3/6 Marines, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Marine Corps University, 24 Feb 2010.

We knew we really needed to make a connection with the locals to root out the insurgents. To do that, we needed to find out who the players were on the battlefield other than the locals. First and foremost was to find out who the enemy was.

As such, Heatherman identified four types of insurgent:

[1] The first was Al Qaeda in Iraq, former JTJ (Jama'at al-Tawid wal-Jihad). We had plenty of foreign fighters, and we knew they were coming in through Syria.

[2] The second group was local home grown, yet still hard-line Al Qaeda. Once we really connected with the people, it was not very hard to figure out who they were, mainly because when we came in and actually stayed, they and their families did not come back.

[3] The third were what we called "part-timers." They were locals who for whatever reason decided to attack us and then go back to their store or farm.

[4] There were also local, pseudo-Hamza groups who considered it their duty to oust anyone that came into their area. It was mainly the folks from Sadah that joined that.

Based on this analysis, Heatherman gave his platoons decidedly unconventional guidance. His guidance to the platoons:

I really wanted the platoon commanders to get down to that local level and become neighbors. I told them to be nosey neighbors. We want to know exactly what was going on. And we wanted them [the locals] to tell you [the Marines], because they are comfortable with you. So we patrolled meal-to-meal. You go out in the morning, and you have breakfast. Sometimes you bring food, and sometimes they would.

This guidance was reinforced at the battalion level. One of the metrics employed by CTF 3/6 was known as "eats-on-streets." Units would report the number of times they shared a meal with an Iraqi or ate a meal in a local café. Additionally, as units entered the community, they always had a specified mission; CTF 3/6 did not conduct so-called "presence" patrols. As LtCol Alford described it:

You did not do presence patrols. When Marines do presence patrols, they'll walk out and they'll kick rocks because they have no focus. That's why ASCOPE is so good.¹⁸⁸ You can take one of the six letters of ASCOPE and always put a patrol to it. Okay, you know, S, Structures, you're going to go into this sector and you're going to document every structure in that sector, every structure on that street, and how it can be used by the enemy, how it can be used by us, and how it can be used by the people. You do ASCOPE through three lenses: the enemy, yourself, and the population.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ ASCOPE: Civil considerations in tactical planning concentrates on an in-depth analysis of areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events. FM 3-24.

¹⁸⁹ Colonel Alford briefing, 16 Feb 2010.

Despite information collected during ASCOPE, understanding the civil structure within a given area wasn't always easy. According to Heatherman, the community leaders in his areas were the sheikhs, imams and mukhtars. The lead sheikhs were not always present. As an example, the Albu-Mahal paramount sheikh, Sheikh Sabah, fled to Jordan in August 2005, leaving Sheikh Kurdi in charge.¹⁹⁰ Imams dealt very little with the civil side of things. However, they were still influential because they spoke to the entire community at the mosque. "We did not mess too much with the imams, because they did not want to be messed with," said Heatherman.¹⁹¹ In his area, the mayor was the Mukhtar.¹⁹² In some areas the mukhtars were easy to locate, but you had to be careful.

When we went to Karabilah...I spoke with a guy who said he was mukhtar, but what I did not know at the time was that mukhtar could be the mukhtar of three houses or it could be the whole town. I spent two or three weeks with this guy thinking he represented the town of Karabilah, when he really didn't. But by the end of the three weeks he sure did, because we had empowered him with that area of the Karbulis in Karabilah. It was a big mistake. It caused some problems that we later overcame as we met other mukhtars and we started putting it [the civil structure] together.¹⁹³

When asked who pulled all of this information together, Heatherman responded,

Me [at the company level], but it was at every level. They [platoons and squads] had their own bank of knowledge about the area...this really caught on down to the lowest level. They figured out the importance of connecting with the local populace. It kept them safe, and it made them win; they liked it.

G. Combined, Permanent, Persistent, Presence

In January 2006, Colonel Ismael Sha Hamid Dulaymi, deployed the 3rd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division (3rd Bde/7th IAD) to Al Qaim. His unit would replace the 1st BDE/1st IAD which had deployed the previous October to support Operation STEEL CURTAIN. COL Ismael grew up in the Al Qaim region and was the cousin of Sheikh Sabah, paramount sheikh of the Albu-Mahal tribe. COL Ismael continued to command the 3rd Bde/7th IAD until March 2008.¹⁹⁴ He helped integrate the Desert Protectors into his Brigade with COL Ahmed becoming the battalion commander for the 3rd Battalion and MAJ Mukhlis becoming his intelligence officer. The 3rd

¹⁹⁰ Sheikh Sabah al-Sattam Effan Fahren al-Shurji al-Aziz, principal Sheik of the Albu-Mahal tribe in Al Qaim, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Amman, Jordan, 3 Feb 2011.

¹⁹¹ Captain Heatherman interview, 24 Feb 2010.

¹⁹² Mukhtar is an Arabic word meaning "chosen." In common usage, it describes someone who is in charge of a village or town.

¹⁹³ Captain Heatherman interview, 24 Feb 2010.

¹⁹⁴ Staff Brigadier General (sBG) Ismael Sha Hamid Dulaymi, Commander of the 7th Iraqi Army Division (IAD), interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, Al Asad Air Base, on 15 Apr 2010. Iraq. 3rd Bde/7th IAD would later be reflagged at the 28th BDE/7th IAD.

Bde/7 IAD's location in Al Qaim provided the combined, permanent, persistent presence that was so important to stabilizing the region. COL Ismael worked with five consecutive Marine battalions as each rotated into the area. In each case, Ismael asked the incoming Marine commander how they were going to help him improve the area (see Table 5-1 for a full list of the units responsible for the Al Qaim district). As an example, when Lieutenant Colonel Nick Marano, Commander, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines (1/7 Marines) arrived in March 2006, COL Ismael told him, "Colonel Alford established a lot of military bases throughout the area, so what are you going to do to support us?" LtCol Marano responded that they could do field reconnaissance. COL Ismael, satisfied with LtCol Marano's response, said that they "...chose the Al Madi [phonetic] area. The field engineers established that area as Vera Cruz Battle Position and we manned it with a platoon from the Marines and a company from the brigade."¹⁹⁵

Table 5-1. Commanders and their units in Al Qaim

Deployment Dates	Commander	Unit
March–4 May 2003		CJSOTF–W
4 May 2003–March 2004	LTC William Dolan	1st Sq/3ACR
March–22 Sept 2004	LtCol Matt Lopez	3/4 Marines
22 Sept 2004–25 March 2005	LtCol Woodbridge	1/7 Marines
March–10 Sept 2005	LtCol Timothy Mundy	3/2 Marines
Sept 2005–16 March 2006	LtCol Julian Alford	3/6 Marines
March–11 Sept 2006	LtCol Nicholas Marano	1/7 Marines
Sept 2006–28 April 2007	LtCol Scott Schuster	3/4 Marines
April 2007–7 Nov 2007	LtCol Jason Bohm	1/4 Marines
1 Nov 2007–5 May 2008	LtCol Peter Baumgarten	3/2 Marines
May–9 Nov 2008	LtCol Steve Grass	2/2 Marines

By May 2006, the Iraqi/Coalition had extended its presence along the Euphrates from the Syrian/Iraqi border to Al Amaari. This was almost twice the area covered in February. By September, according to Ismael, they, once again doubled that distance and extended their presence to the Rawah/Anah area—57 miles east of the Syrian/Iraqi border. That concept of combined, permanent, persistent presence, introduced by Col Davis and LtCol Alford to the Al Qaim area in October 2005, was continued and institutionalized by the Iraqis with each subsequent Marine battalion rotation, each one improving on the security of the area. In many cases those battle positions were partnered with a developing Iraqi police station. Later, when the local police could handle local security on their own, many of those battle positions were

¹⁹⁵ Colonel Nick Marano, USMC, former commander 1/7 Marines, interview with MajGen Tom Jones, USMC, Retired, Camp Pendleton, CA, 9 Feb 2011.

dismantled. With the security posture improving, LtCol Marano and COL Ismael were able to increase their efforts to improve the situation in other areas such as governance and economics by supporting the development of the judicial system, civic infrastructure, phosphate and cement plants, agriculture, and other areas.

Integral to all of those efforts was the continuous engagement with the Iraqis in what he, LtCol Marano, described as, the “Circle of Trust” (see Figure 5-10). In this case it included the Mayor of Al Qaim, the paramount sheikh and sheikh-on-the-ground for Abu-Mahal tribe, the Iraqi division and brigade commanders, and the S2 of the Brigade, MAJ Muklos (also spelled Mukhlis), also the leader of the Desert Protectors during Operation STEEL CURTAIN.



Figure 5-10. 1/7 Marines Circle of Trust, Al Qaim (2006)¹⁹⁶

It is important to note that at the center of the “Circle of Trust” was not a Marine or an Iraqi Government official, but Sheikh Kurdi. Sheikh Kurdi was there at the beginning and was clearly the key leader of the Abu-Mahal tribe throughout the Awakening process. He was a large man, with a no-nonsense but respectful and frank demeanor. He was clear that the original

¹⁹⁶ Courtesy Colonel Nick Marano. Note *Ismael* in the figure is spelled *Ishmail*.

motivation for the development and organization of the Hamza battalion—their mission was to fight the Coalition, “And that’s a fact!” But as the environment changed to a time when being Mahalawi was reason enough for beheading by Al Qaeda and it seemed that things could not get any worse, Kurdi pointed to a period in August to October 2005 when things started to change for the better. It was a time when the right person, with the right team, strategy, resources, and personal skills, came to stop Al Qaeda’s savagery. As Sheikh Kurdi recalled, “When Colonel Alford and his Marines came I said, ‘The sun of freedom rises in the west.’”¹⁹⁷

H. Themes and Lessons

There are a number of themes from events in Al Qaim that are significant to the Anbar Awakening movement. They include:

1. The significance of the Al Qaim district to AQI and the Coalition
2. The first significant turning of a tribe against AQI
3. Tribal engagement and the partnering of the tribe with the Coalition and GOI
4. Combined, permanent, persistent presence

Al Qaim’s revolt against AQI was part of a continuous narrative, connected to events in Ramadi, and one of the critical enablers of the Anbar Awakening movement.

Items 2, 3 and 4 were previously addresses. Item 1 and 5 are summarized below.

The significance of the Al Qaim district to AQI and the Coalition.

Sheikh Kurdi explained the strategic importance of Al Qaim to AQI, not only to Al Anbar but to Iraq:

Al Qaim’s strategic location was very significant to Al Qaeda. They thought that by controlling this area—because it’s on the Iraqi border—they would have supplies, finance, and weapons; everything they needed to support operations. When they lost this location, this strategic location, they lost everything: all the logistics support that came from outside Iraq was cut off. No more support of any kind! That’s why when they lost the battle here, they lost everything inside Iraq because everything was coming through the border. It was not just supplies from Al Qaim to Anbar Province, but supplies to all Iraqi provinces.

The significance of this terrain was not lost on the Coalition. Blocking the Syria/Iraqi border along the Euphrates at the Husaybah Port of Entry and securing Al Qaim was part of the Coalition’s larger strategy to restrict the movement of foreign fighters and resources, including suicide bombers and IED materials, from Syria down the Euphrates to Baghdad.

¹⁹⁷ Sheikh Kurdi interview, 17 Apr 2010.

Additionally, since Fallujah had been retaken by the Coalition in the eastern part of Al Anbar, control of Al Qaim to the west along the border severely limited AQI's freedom of movement.

Al Qaim's revolt against AQI was part of a continuous narrative.

Most accounts of the Awakening begin with Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* movement in Ramadi, September 2006–07. Although some acknowledge the Abu-Mahal tribe's actions in Al Qaim during 2005–06 as the first tribal uprising against Al Qaeda, they characterize the two movements—in Al Qaim and Ramadi—as isolated and unrelated. In the Coalition's eyes, it might seem that the two events were disconnected, but to many Iraqis, there was a strong connection through tribal communications, coordination, and affiliation, in particular among three of the tribes: Abu-Mahal, Abu-Nimr, and Abu-Risha.

When Sheikh Sabah needed help in August 2005, he turned to Dr. Sadun Dulaymi, Minister of Defense under Prime Minister Al Jaafari. Sadun turned to GEN Casey for help and received funding, equipping, and training. Additionally, ODA 582 was assigned advisory responsibility for developing those tribal forces. Hence, when the first tribe of any significance turned on AQI and sought help from the GOI and Coalition, GEN Casey fully supported the initiative. Most of the Abu-Mahal tribesmen fled to Akashat, but some fled to the Ramadi area and al-Mahalawis were found later working with Sheikh Sattar and Sheikh Jassim in the Ramadi area Awakening movement.

There were other ties between Abu-Mahal and Abu-Risha. Sadun, the principal GOI coordinator for the Desert Protectors was Sheikh Sattar's uncle. He grew up next to Sattar's family compound in Ramadi. There was also a connection between Sheikh Sabah and Sheikh Sattar. According to Sabah, Sattar met him in Jordan to discuss the Abu-Mahal's success against AQI and AQI's grip on the Ramadi area and to suggest how he might defeat AQI.¹⁹⁸

Sattar also met with the sheikhs in Jordan to gain their approval and support for his upcoming fight. Notably, Sheikh Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, co-regent to the Dulaymi Confederation, supported the Abu-Mahal tribe's revolt against AQI in 2005. He, along with other notable sheikhs in Jordan, approved Sattar's request and convinced Prime Minister Maliki to support the Awakening; similarly, Maliki said that there would be “No Awakening unless Majed and the sheikhs agree to it.”¹⁹⁹

Among those attending the meeting with Sattar and Majed was Mr. Numan al-Gaoud, a businessman and owner of the Doha Group in Baghdad.¹⁰⁷ The Al Gaouds are a prominent clan

¹⁹⁸ Sabah interview, 3 Feb 2011.

¹⁹⁹ Sheikh Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Amman, Jordan, 3 Feb 2011

in the Hit area and belong to the Albu-Nimr tribe.²⁰⁰ The Albu-Nimr and Albu-Mahal are closely related and share ancestry.²⁰¹ Recall during the early stages of Albu-Mahal's fight with AQI, it was Fasal al-Gaoud, a member of the Albu-Nimr tribe and former Governor of Anbar Province, who contacted the Americans at Camp Fallujah on behalf of the Albu-Mahal.

Colonel Michael Walker, USMC and former commander of the 3rd Civil Affairs Group, was convinced of this relationship between tribal members and Awakening events and attributed American's inability to recognize the relationships to "Coalition versus Iraqi" time. This is where the Marines saw the sequence of events in seven-month rotational increments. The Iraqis, on the other hand, visualized and connected events during the entire time frame, which in turn related to their collective memories of events predating the 2003 invasion.²⁰²

I. Conclusion

Al Qaim's awakening was one of the first significant examples of a successful counterinsurgency operation in Iraq and conditions in Al Qaim continued to mature and stabilize.

In addition to restricting the flow of foreign fighters and their resources into Al Anbar and Iraq, success in Al Qaim had other critical, far-reaching effects: The word was out that AQI could be beaten. Events in Al Qaim provided a glimmer of hope to other Iraqis, saying to them, "We can do this; we can beat AQI." Subsequently, developments in Al Qaim set a precedent for other towns and cities in Al Anbar, providing them with psychological encouragement, strategies, and examples passed along via societal networks and relationships.

The next area within AO Denver affected was an area known as the Corridor, a 70 mile stretch along the Euphrates, from Hadithah to Hit. According to BrigGen Reist, Deputy Commander of MNF-W in 2006, the Awakening moved from west to east "a wave coming ashore, not a singular event in any way, shape or form." The wave, in this case, started in Al Qaim in the summer and fall of 2005. In early 2006, it followed the WERV to the Corridor.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Al Gaouds have been categorized as a family, clan and subtribe. Because of their prominence and size (larger than a family) and in line with the ODA that partnered with them, this paper uses refers to them as a clan.

²⁰¹ Mr. Jalal al-Gaoud, Iraqi Businessman in Jordan, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Amman, Jordan, 5 Feb 2011.

²⁰² Colonel Michael Walker, USMC, interview via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 6 Jan 2011.

²⁰³ BrigGen David G. Reist, USMC (Ret.), former deputy commanding general (Support), I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) Multi-National Force-West from Feb 2006 to Feb 2007, interview with Dr. William Knarr, LtCol David Graves, USMC, Col Tracy King, USMC, and Mary Hawkins, at Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia, 4 Oct 2010. Specifically, Reist was speaking about Baghdadi located in the Corridor near Al Asad and praised the work of the chief of police in Baghdadi, Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin al-Ubaydi, also known as the Lion of Baghdadi, who led the fight against AQI.

This page is intentionally blank.

6. The Hadithah–Hit Corridor

Hadithah and Hit lie along the Euphrates River in the western portion of the Anbar Province. These two cities, defining an area referred to as the Hadithah–Hit Corridor, here forth called *the Corridor*, are approximately 70 miles apart.²⁰⁴ In 2003, as Coalition forces entered western Al Anbar, the populations of the Corridor initially cooperated. Early Coalition efforts to build and train Iraqi security forces—particularly in the Hadithah area—succeeded, but during 2004, the Iraqi-Coalition relationship changed in the area due to events in Fallujah. Marine units assigned to the area deployed to Fallujah to support Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE, the large-scale but ultimately aborted Coalition effort to pacify the city. The newly-established Iraqi security forces in the Corridor were left with little Coalition support. The void created by the Coalition’s absence gave insurgents opportunity to move in and take control.

In addition to sanctuary, insurgents found the Corridor strategically important because of its location along the Euphrates, access to a lucrative smuggling route and its lines of communications to other strategic locations such as Syria and Jordan, the northern Iraqi provinces of Salah ad-Din and Ninawa, and the cities of Ramadi, Fallujah, and Baghdad.

As insurgents seized control of the area, they immediately hunted and, once found, punished Iraqis who had cooperated with the Coalition. The Coalition returned from Fallujah to a demoralized population only to redeploy again to Fallujah in the fall of 2004 to support Operation AL FAJR, the second and successful assault on the city. Ironically, the Coalition efforts in AL FAJR that pushed insurgents out of Fallujah drove them to seek refuge in the Corridor. They may have been weakened by AL FAJR, but they were not beaten. The insurgents drive into the Corridor was more ruthless and widespread the second time around. These AQI-led insurgents carried out a murder and intimidation campaign that would set back Coalition efforts to gain the support of the population for several years. It was not until the Coalition had sufficient forces to execute its strategy of clear, hold, build, and until a number of local Iraqi’s came forward to lead the security forces and local governments, that the situation started to improve.

Finally, in 2006 and 2007, the cities of Hadithah and Hit respectively, turned against AQI. Although the cities were under the operational purview of the Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team (RCT) located at Al Asad, they were treated very differently with priority of forces within the Corridor devoted to Hadithah first and Hit second for reasons discussed be-

²⁰⁴ The Hadithah–Hit Corridor includes an area known as the Hadithah Triad (Hadithah, Barwana and Haqlaniyah), the Al Asad-Baghdadi area, and Hit.

low. As such, each city and its surrounding environment will be addressed separately. The following is an account of their stories.

A. Hadithah Triad

Hadithah is a farming city on the Euphrates River 140 miles northwest of Baghdad. It, along with Haqlaniya and Barwana—a combined population of 100,000—comprise the area called the Hadithah Triad (see Figure 6-1). The Hadithah Triad is strategically important for several reasons: lines of communications, water, hydro-electricity, and oil.

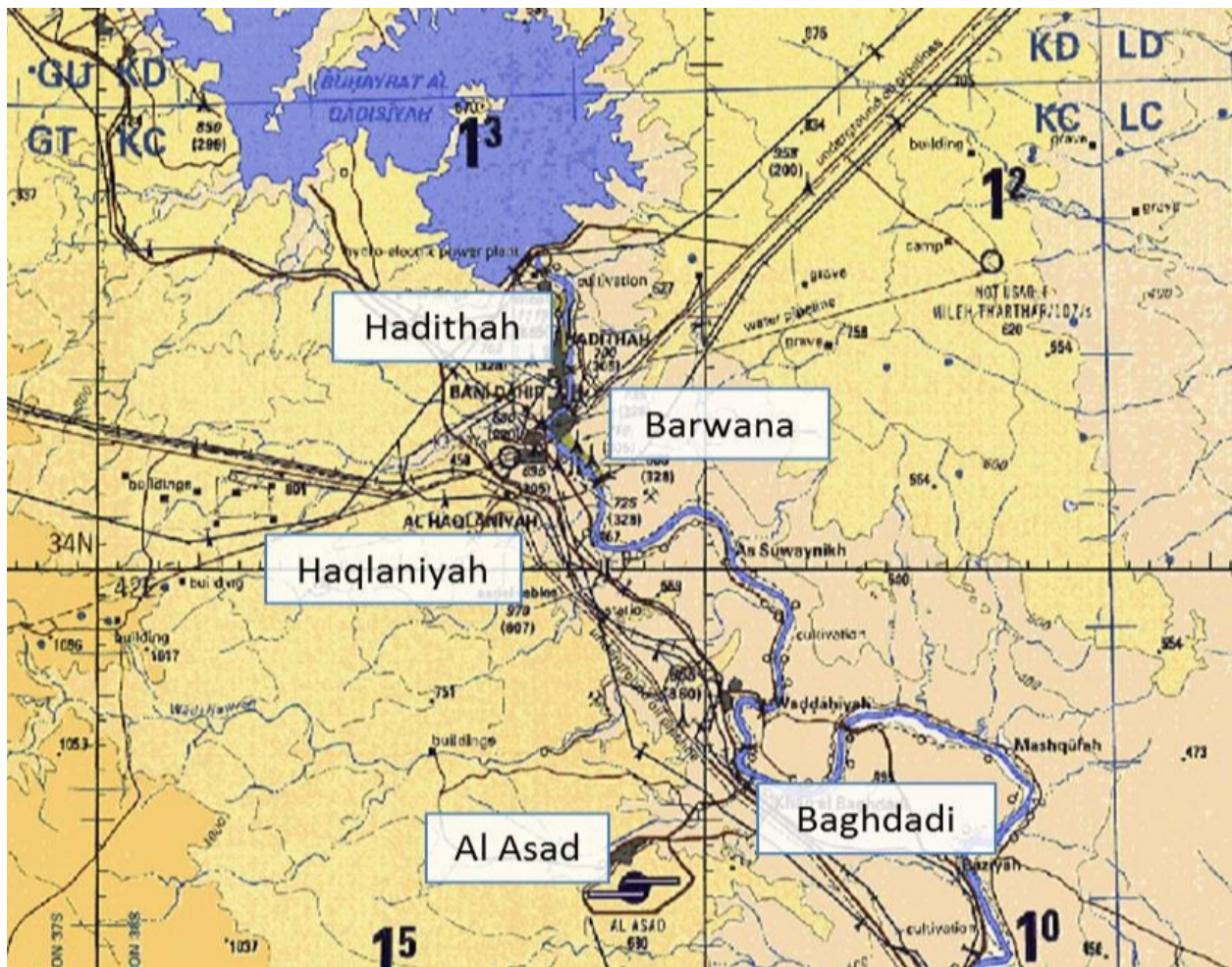


Figure 6-1. Map of Hadithah in Western Al Anbar

First, within Al Anbar Province and within the northwest region of Iraq, the Hadithah Triad is centrally located. Colonel Farouq al-Jughayfi, former Hadithah District Chief of Police, explained, “It was between Salah ad-Din [to the north and northeast], Ninawa [northwest], and the Syrian border,” which is why Iraqis commonly referred to the Hadithah Triad as a “knot.”

Insurgents quickly learned to exploit this knot area, and used its many routes to infiltrate or ex-filtrate areas along the Euphrates River to the west to Syria or Jordan, to the north to Mosul or southeast to the cities of Ramadi, Fallujah, and Baghdad.²⁰⁵ Another important aspect of the city is the Hadithah Dam, located on the southern point of Lake Qadisiyah. This hydroelectric dam provided 13 percent of Iraq's electricity and was vital for irrigation in the area.²⁰⁶ The dam became fully operational for the first time since 1990 in June 2004 after the US Army Corps of Engineers repaired it. Haqlaniya is also the home to a major oil refinery known as K3.²⁰⁷ The refinery has the potential of producing 16,000 barrels of oil per day, provides more than 1,000 local jobs, and produces oil for factories, electricity, and cooking.²⁰⁸

1. US Forces Enter Hadithah

For the first few months of the invasion, the Coalition's Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) operated in western Al Anbar with the major thrust of conventional forces approaching from the south. In May 2003, the first conventional force—the 1st Squadron of the Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3rd ACR)—was assigned responsibility for Hadithah. Forces were immediately deployed to the Hadithah Dam, because it was considered a critical target. An Azerbaijani infantry company attached to the ACR provided security at the dam complex, adding to the “coalition” element of the campaign.²⁰⁹

As was the case in many Al Anbar cities, the population of Hadithah initially accepted the Coalition.²¹⁰ Mayor Abd al-Hakim Rashid described the townspeople's reaction:

...After President Bush declared the end of the operations on 1 May 2003, all Iraqis, including Hadithah citizens, welcomed the Coalition forces.

The Iraqi situation was very complex, and they started fighting the Coalition forces. They [insurgents] started beheading people. If they [had] doubts about anyone who

²⁰⁵ Colonel Farouq Harden al-Jughayfi, former Hadithah Chief of Police, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Provincial Government Center in Ramadi, 8 Apr 2010.

²⁰⁶ Michael Martinez, “New Offensive Launched against Iraqi Insurgents,” *The Seattle Times* (26 May 2005), and “Haditha,” *Globalsecurity.org* <www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/haditha.htm>.

²⁰⁷ CWO-4 Timothy McWilliams and LtCol Kurtis Wheeler, *Al Anbar Awakening, US Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009, Volume I American Perspectives*, interview with USMC Brigadier General Martin Post, USMC, 2009.

²⁰⁸ Lance Cpl Paul Torres, “Oil Refinery Fuels Al Anbar Forward,” US Marine Corps website, 18 July 2008, <www.1stmardiv.marines.mil/News/NewsArticleDisplay/tabid/8585/Article/88406/oil-refinery-fuels-al-anbar-forward.aspx>.

²⁰⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Paul Calvert, USA, former S-3 for 3rd ACR, interview with John McCool with one Operational Leadership Experiences Project at the Combat Studies Institute, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 17 Feb 2006.

²¹⁰ Colonel Norman Cooling, former commander of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3) in the Hadithah area of Iraq from Mar to Sept 2006, interview with MajGen Thomas Jones, USMC, Retired, Mountain Warfare Training Center, 7 May 2010.

helped the American forces, they cut off his head. The situation became very bad, and the people were afraid.²¹¹

2. Establishing a Trend: Clear and Abandon

In March 2004, the USMC First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) took over responsibility for all of Al Anbar. Subsequently, the MEF assigned 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines (3/4), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bryan McCoy, to Hadithah. McCoy's battalion area also included the town of Rawah, which is north of Hadithah, and the area south, halfway to Hit.²¹² LtCol McCoy embraced First Marine Division Command (1st MARDIV) Major General James Mattis' guidance to establish a Combined Action Platoon (CAP) program capability, and charged the platoon with training and supporting the local Iraqi police force.²¹³ Such an approach leveraged a counterinsurgency tenet: put an Iraqi face on security to demonstrate control, inspire confidence, and win the support of the general population.²¹⁴ Marines quickly established a permanent presence in the town, conducting combined US-Iraqi patrols and helping to resolve local disputes.²¹⁵ While the insurgent threat grew, it had not yet matured into an organized fighting force.²¹⁶

Unfortunately, soon after the CAP was formed and as collaborative efforts were gaining momentum, 3/4 was pulled from Hadithah and dispatched to Fallujah to support Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE. The unit left only a small craft company as the sole presence in Hadithah.²¹⁷ Some of the Iraqi Police (IP) belonging to the CAP program had developed such a strong relationship with the Marines that they wanted to join 3/4 in Fallujah and fight alongside their new American partners. "They wanted to come with us. We had lived together, fought to-

²¹¹ Abd al-Hakim Rashid, former mayor of Hadithah, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, his office, Hadithah, 14 Apr 2010.

²¹² Colonel Bryan McCoy, former commander 3/4, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Major General Tom Jones, USMC, Retired, CENTCOM, Tampa, FL, 16 Mar 2010.

²¹³ The acronym *CAP* stood for Combined Action Program during Vietnam. Although essentially the same concept, in Iraq it stood for Combine Action Platoon, per Colonel Dale Alford briefing on 3/6 Marines in Al Qaim, Aug 2005 to Mar 2006, Institute for Defense Analyses, 16 Feb 2010.

²¹⁴ Captain Matthew Danner, USMC, "The Combined Action Platoon Seeds of Success in Iraq," American Veterans <http://www.americans-working-together.com/american_veterans/id16.html> 26 Feb 2010; Bing West, "The Road to Haditha," *The Atlantic* (Oct 2006).

²¹⁵ John Koopman, "Marines Seal Bonds of Trust/Special Unit Wants to Win Hearts and Minds," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 July 2004.

²¹⁶ West, "The Road to Hadithah."

²¹⁷ Joseph Giodono, "Beached Marines Ready to Return to the Water," *Stars and Stripes* Mid-east edition, (10 Jan 2005). The small craft company is equipped with the Small Unit Riverine Craft used by Marine small craft units. The 39-foot boat, armed with a Gatling gun and several other heavy weapons, carries a crew of five, along with up to 15 ground troops. It is used to patrol the waterways along the Euphrates. McCoy interview, 16 Mar 2010.

gether,” said Lieutenant Matt Danner, a platoon commander in 3/4 Marines. “I told them they had to guard Hadithah, and that we’d be back for them.”²¹⁸

As soon as 3/4 departed, insurgents from surrounding areas moved in.²¹⁹ Without the Marines’ support and guidance, the IPs could not maintain control. Insurgents severely punished Iraqis who had interacted with, or even worse, who had supported the Coalition. Several dozen police officers were killed while anyone who stood in the insurgents’ way was ruthlessly attacked.²²⁰ This was the first round of the insurgency’s murder and intimidation campaign designed to coerce the population to their side, or at a minimum, to ensure nobody supported the Coalition.

The Marines returned from Fallujah six weeks later. LtCol McCoy called their absence an “operational pause.” Coalition forces quickly resumed their work with the IPs, but they soon observed differences in how the population viewed them. One Corporal squad leader described it as “sinister.” “On some blocks, people would wave. But mostly they ignored us, like we weren’t even there. You could sense something was going on...”²²¹

Chaos and violence continued throughout 2004 as the insurgents gained strength and exploited the Marines’ inability to generate sufficient combat power to secure the area. Even though the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines (1/8) continued the CAP initiative when it replaced 3/4 in Hadithah in July of 2004, any progress was once again lost in late October when 1/8 was deployed to Fallujah to participate in Operation AL FAJR. Again, the population perceived this move as the Coalition forces abandoning them to the insurgency. 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines (1/23), whose AO was primarily in and around Hit, did shift subordinate units north to Hadithah to try to cover down for 1/8’s departure, but now 1/23’s battlespace ranged from Hadithah to Hit—a distance of about 70 miles. Given the threat, it was an impossible task for a single battalion.

The insurgents wasted no time exploiting the security vacuum created by 1/8’s departure; they wrought havoc in the main city centers, destroyed four IP stations, and murdered and tortured most of the police force as well as anyone who had cooperated with Coalition forces.²²² By late 2004, AQI had complete control over the city.

Lieutenant Colonel Norman Cooling, Commander 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3) explains the dynamic that occurred in Hadithah during AL FAJR:

Many of the insurgents were filtering out of those larger urban areas [in Fallujah] that were the focus of combat power and flowing into Hadithah. Concurrently, the

²¹⁸ West, “The Road to Hadithah.”

²¹⁹ McCoy interview, 16 Mar 2010.

²²⁰ Andrew Tilghman, “US Call for Iraqi Police in Haditha Goes Unanswered,” *Stars and Stripes* (5 June 2006).

²²¹ West, “The Road to Hadithah.”

²²² West, “The Road to Hadithah.”

same flow was happening from outside of Iraq...Al Qaeda was flowing forces from Syria and other places into Iraq, and of course, the meeting place for both was Hadithah. It's the first place where you really can blend into a large urban area.²²³

1/8 never returned to Hadithah. The Marines of 1/23 were left to cover the untenable AO that included Hit for four months until the next unit came in. Because the Marines were spread so thin, insurgents remained entrenched in the town and surrounding communities.

In early 2005, responsibility for AO Denver, which included the Corridor, changed when RCT-7 handed over responsibility to RCT-2. Colonel Stephen Davis, RCT-2's commanding officer, created a campaign plan designed to keep insurgents off balance.²²⁴ As the campaign plan was executed, units in RCT-2 were required to leave their assigned AOs to support operations in other areas of AO Denver. As a result of this "very aggressive rotational clearing strategy," units already severely challenged by a lack of sufficient combat forces found it impossible to hold any land that was temporarily cleared.²²⁵

In March of 2005, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines (3/25), under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Lionel Urquhart, conducted a relief in place with 1/23. In addition to inheriting a city overrun by the insurgency, 3/25 inherited the same oversized battlespace (from Hadithah to Hit) that 1/23 had been assigned.²²⁶

An example of RCT-2's clearing strategy was Operation QUICK STRIKE. Conducted in August of 2005, QUICK STRIKE employed 3/25, 3/2 from Al Qaim, and 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion from Rutbah. Due to the lack of resources, the Marines couldn't hold the area they cleared; instead, insurgents fled to avoid the sweep, only to return once the Marines had departed.²²⁷

During this time, various insurgent and terrorist groups, including AQI and the more nationalist Islamist group Ansar al-Sunna, still controlled Hadithah. Sharia prevailed. DVDs documenting the executions of alleged spies were distributed to children on the street.²²⁸ Any surviving Sunni police officers had fled, and no one would volunteer for police duty for fear of being killed. The town council implored the Marines not to play pro-government messages on the radio, because they did not want to be seen as helping the Americans. By this point, the Marines in Hadithah and the surrounding areas had been completely marginalized.²²⁹

²²³ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

²²⁴ Colonel Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

²²⁵ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

²²⁶ Omer Mahdi and Rory Carroll, "Under US Noses, Brutal Insurgents Rule Sunni Citadel," *The Guardian* (22 Aug 2005).

²²⁷ Mahdi and Carroll, "Under US Noses, Brutal Insurgents Rule Sunni Citadel."

²²⁸ Mahdi and Carroll, "Under US Noses, Brutal Insurgents Rule Sunni Citadel."

²²⁹ West, "The Road to Hadithah."

3. Available Forces Increase: Clear and Hold

In September 2005, as Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Chessani's 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines (3/1) assumed responsibility for the Hadithah Triad, a positive development appeared on the horizon. As a result of reinforcements sent into AO Denver, 3/1's battlespace was scaled down to just the Hadithah Triad; approximately one-third of the area that 3/25 had been charged to cover. Soon after, RCT-2 conducted Operation RIVER GATE, which was designed to create a permanent Coalition presence in the Triad. Units aggressively surged into the area conducting clearing operations. 3/1 cleared the Triad house by house. Mine clearing line charges were detonated along major avenues of approach in the city, because of the extensive IED threat. Although these actions signaled a rebirth of strength and control by Coalition forces, they also further alienated much of the population. Among the population's complaints was the bridges that were destroyed along the Euphrates River between Hadithah, Haqlaniyah, and Barwana, making daily life a struggle for local Iraqis on both sides of the river.²³⁰

Mayor Hakim recalled:

They also demolished some of the schools and some of the government buildings by using the excuse that there were insurgents inside...being a liberator, you should have won the support of the peaceful civilians. This bad behavior created enemies.²³¹

By the end of the operation, 3/1 began constructing three firm bases from which it would begin routine patrols of the town.²³² Following Operation RIVER GATE, 3/1 immediately shifted from highly kinetic clearing operations to stability operations. Many Marines in 3/1 were veterans of the high-intensity combat operations of Fallujah that occurred exactly a year prior. The shift in focus demanded a shift in the rules of engagement (ROE). LtCol Cooling described 3/1's situation:

Now all of a sudden, they're in a stability phase and there was no significant operational pause for them to reset and retrain...and do an in-stride rules of engagement change.²³³

The Marines' inability to recalibrate relative to the ROE likely contributed to the tragic incident on 19 November, when a squad of Marines killed a group of 24 civilians after losing a teammate to an IED attack.²³⁴ Already distrustful of Coalition forces because of the repeated re-deployments that left them vulnerable and because of the aggressive conduct of RIVER GATE, this event quashed any near-term chance of gaining the population's support.

²³⁰ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

²³¹ Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, Hadithah Mayor, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, 14 Apr 2010.

²³² Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth W. Estes, USMC (Retired), *US Marine Corps Operations in Iraq, 2003-2006*, Occasional Paper, History Division, US Marine Corps, Quantico, VA, 2009, 101.

²³³ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

²³⁴ Tim McGirk, "Collateral Damage or Civilian Massacre in Haditha?" *Time*, 19 Mar 2006.

4. The Lion of Baghdadi

As 2005 drew to a close and 3/1 faced considerable challenges in the Hadithah Triad, something happened in the town of Baghdadi that would prove pivotal to the entire region. Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin al-Ubaydi, an Iraqi with solid bona fides and substantial clout with the locals, came forward to battle the insurgents despite personal risk. He had fled his home city of Baghdadi in April 2005 and returned in October to discover insurgents controlling the city, intimidating and killing anyone who cooperated with Coalition forces.²³⁵

Enraged by the terror being waged on fellow Iraqis, Shaban pronounced to a group of AQI over a mosque's loud speaker:

I swear to God I am going to fight you guys forever! I will fight you wherever you go. I am saying this, and I am not afraid, because you are not working for the Iraqi people. You aren't helping them. You destroy and you kill. God willing, I am going to fight you and the generation right after me is going to fight you too.²³⁶

It took the Coalition several months before it trusted this passionately anti-AQI colonel. Eventually, the Coalition, Shaban, and several tribal sheikhs united and persuaded citizens to join the IP, of which Shaban had just become the chief. By the end of 2005, Baghdadi was largely under the control of Coalition and ISF.²³⁷ Shaban's example would have ramifications throughout Al Anbar Province. In fact, Shaban had such a positive effect on the area, that it prompted Brigadier General David Reist, the Deputy Commander of Multi-National Forces—West in the Spring of 2006 to credit Shaban's work in Baghdadi as the starting point of the awakening in the Corridor—several months before similar awakening events occurred in Ramadi.²³⁸ Not surprisingly, because of his success, COL Shaban was targeted by AQI for assassination. On 4 October, while pursuing insurgents, his vehicle was ambushed. He was severely wounded and taken to a US medical facility.²³⁹ Figure 6-2 is a still



Figure 6-2. Col Shaban Challenges Terrorists from his Hospital Bed

²³⁵ Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin al-Ubaydi, former Baghdadi Chief of Police, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, 8 Apr 2010.

²³⁶ Shaban interview, 8 Apr 2010.

²³⁷ Shaban interview, 8 Apr 2010.

²³⁸ Brigadier General David Reist, Deputy Commander MNF-W, Feb 2006–Feb 2007, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Ms. Mary Hawkins, and Colonel Tracy King USMC, 4 Oct 2010. This is significant because it places the start of the Awakening in the Hadithah–Hit Corridor before the Sept 2004 Awakening in Ramadi.

²³⁹ American Forces Press Service, “Police Chief Survives Attack,” 6 Oct 2006.

from the video of Shaban challenging the terrorists from his hospital bed saying that he will not be intimidated and that he will continue to fight.²⁴⁰

As 3/1's deployment came to a close in March of 2006, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (3/3), under the command of LtCol Norm Cooling, gained responsibility for the region. Shortly after 3/3's arrival, RCT-7 replaced RCT-2 and expanded 3/3's AO. LtCol Norman Cooling estimated that his battalion's area of responsibility had increased approximately 40 percent. To accommodate this change, 3/3 Marines paired with the Iraqi Army's 2nd Battalion, 27th Brigade (2/27 IA). The Marines helped develop 2/27 IA into a highly capable unit that would go on to conduct battalion-sized operations on its own (see Figure 6-3).²⁴¹



Courtesy US Marine Corps

Figure 6-3. Iraqi Soldiers from 2/27 Patrol with Elements of 3/3 Marines in Haqlaniyah

The Marines of 3/3 were determined to solidify the *hold* phase of clear, hold, build that 3/1 had begun when it created the forward operating bases during RIVER GATE. LtCol Cooling worked to identify and cooperate with key leaders in the area. The Marines also held IP recruiting drives outside of Baghdadi, but were stymied, because of the fear and intimidation

²⁴⁰ Shaban interview, 8 Apr 2010. COL Shaban provided the video and translation.

²⁴¹ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010. Unit 2/27 IA entered the area in January 2006 but was not operational until 3/3 Marines' rotation.

campaign waged by the insurgents, who successfully reminded the locals of the price paid by fellow Iraqis who followed such a path.²⁴²

5. Another Iraqi Returns Home to Fight AQI

In August of 2006, Marines were sent to the city of Shirqat in the Salah ad-Din Province where Colonel Farouq Tayeh Hardan, a charismatic former leader of the Provincial Security Forces, and other members of Hadithah's police force had fled.²⁴³ Marines went to speak with Farouq after LtCol Cooling learned that Farouq and a group of policemen fled to Shirqat in June of 2004 after harsh threats from AQI.²⁴⁴ Additionally, AQI had beheaded Farouq's brothers. The Marines, however, convinced Farouq and others to return to Hadithah to help Coalition forces to regain the population's support and to root out the insurgents.²⁴⁵

Col Farouq spoke about his homecoming:

I expected that when I arrived in Hadithah there would be a celebration...But because the people of Hadithah have never in the history of mankind been subjected to so much pain and suffering—their houses destroyed, children killed—my reception was the opposite of what I expected. They wouldn't shake my hand or say hello to me. Anybody who saw me would just turn their face and walk or run away.²⁴⁶

The citizens had been subjected to an exceptional amount of pain; it was clear that tireless effort would be required to regain their support. Farouq became the Chief of Police, and in one attempt to reach out to the people, offered a bail option to families of prisoners who were considered low risk. According to Farouq, "people came in by [the] tens and hundreds." Local tribal leaders, such as Sheikh Sa'id of the Jugayfi tribe soon joined Farouq to fight AQI and boosted overall efforts.²⁴⁷ Additionally, Shaban of Baghdadi offered critical support by supplying 90 Baghdadi police officers—enough for a bridging force until a local police force could be established.²⁴⁸ Residents soon saw the police force as an effective and viable institution, which in turn made it easier to encourage citizens to join the ranks. As security improved, local officials and tribal leaders began to meet regularly with the Marines to discuss security and reconstruction in the town.²⁴⁹

²⁴² Cooling interview, 7 May 2010. Pamela Hess, "Analysis: Iraqi Heroes Pay High Price," *United Press International*, 15 Mar 2007.

²⁴³ Farouq interview, 8 Apr 2010.

²⁴⁴ Hess, "Analysis: Iraqi Heroes Pay High Price."

²⁴⁵ Farouq greatly supported Coalition efforts; however, Marines were compelled to keep a "tight rein on him," because of the retribution that Farouq paid to AQI supporters. Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

²⁴⁶ Farouq interview, 8 Apr 2010.

²⁴⁷ Farouq interview, 8 Apr 2010.

²⁴⁸ Shaban interview, 8 Apr 2010.

²⁴⁹ Sergeant Roe F. Seigle, USMC, "Progress Steady, Marines Meet with Iraqi Leaders, Discuss Security in Haditha Triad Region," US Marines website, 5 May 2006, www.marines.mil.

Mayor Hakim said that it was during this time—when the leaders of the IP, the tribes, and the Coalition forces persuaded “the people [to] join the IP and resist the bad guys”—that Hadithah’s *sahawa* occurred. He explained:

...nobody led the *sahawa* in Hadithah. There was no popular militia to fight the *Sahawa*. It was official. They joined the IP. This way, we established the security in Hadithah.

6. Recognizable Progress

In September of 2006 when 3/3’s deployment ended, the insurgency was still a potent threat in the Hadithah Triad area. The surge of IP recruits triggered AQI to send more fighters to the city in an attempt to thwart progress.²⁵⁰ However, 3/3’s success with 2/27 IA, combined with headway in developing a viable police force, provided the incoming 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (2/3) the opportunity to increase the operational tempo.

Consequently, the security situation that 2/3, commanded by LtCol James Donnellan, inherited set the conditions for a turning point. Soon after gaining its footing, 2/3, reinforced by Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4), conducted Operation AL MAJID. The operation was designed to disrupt and defeat insurgent activity by controlling entrances and regulating traffic in all towns of the Triad, and was accomplished by constructing eight-foot-high dirt berms (see Figure 6-4), which facilitated collecting biometric data with the Biometric Automated Toolset System, registering vehicles into a database, and issuing ID cards to the local population.²⁵¹ These control measures severely restricted the insurgent’s freedom of movement, throwing them off balance and denying them the initiative.



Figure 6-4. Bermed area near K-3 Oil Refinery

LtCol Donnellan explained:

²⁵⁰ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

²⁵¹ Staff Sergeant T. G. Kessler, USMC, “California-based Marines, ‘Magnificent Bastards,’ Continue to Turn Up Weapons Caches in Iraq’s Haditha Region,” US Marines website, 26 Dec 2006; Corporal Mark Fayloga, USMC, “2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Returns to Isle,” US Marines website, 26 Feb 2010; Hess, “The Battle for Haditha.”

Then over the course of that time, the population control part of it really took effect. IED strikes were the immediate indicator as they started to dry up, because in the course of berming, we also did a systematic search.²⁵²

To reinforce the control measures, the battalion worked aggressively with Farouq and the sheiks to strengthen the police force. By the time the battalion's deployment in April 2007 concluded, they had recruited and mentored a force from a fledgling 10–12 officers to more than 200 policemen. Also, as the security situation stabilized with the growth of a viable police force, governance grew with the appointment of the new mayor, Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rasid in the fall of 2006. Mayor Hakim worked with the Coalition to normalize the city. Circulating through the Triad, Mayor Hakim conducted numerous tribal engagements, sought input from shop owners, and began essential repairs to the Triad's infrastructure.²⁵³ Further evidence of the growth in governance came in the form of weekly meetings. Donnellan, Mayor Hakim, and Farouq held with local officials and tribal leaders.²⁵⁴

When 2/3 concluded its deployment in April of 2007, it passed its responsibility to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines (1/3), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chip Bierman. LtCol Bierman's Marines inherited an operational environment clearly moving in the right direction, and they continued to build trust among the Iraqis, while encouraging more residents to join the police force. With the security situation stabilizing in the Triad, 1/3 transitioned to the *build* phase. Joint Iraqi-American operations continued to root out any remaining insurgents, but the emphasis was on setting the conditions to rebuild the communities. Businesses and markets reopened, and for the first time in years, citizens began to move throughout the region without fear of intimidation. By the end of 2008, major renovations had taken place: schools were refurbished, the hospital had doctors and medical supplies, roads and water were being restored throughout the Triad.²⁵⁵ Although it had taken almost four years and a heavy price paid by many, the future of the Hadithah Triad would not be determined by the insurgents.

B. Hit

The Iraqi city of Hit (pronounced *heet*), an agricultural city along the Western Euphrates River Valley, was one of the last areas in Al Anbar to shed AQI's influence.

Hit and its surrounding area, home to approximately 130,000 residents, was unique for two reasons: First, it was on the outer edge of regimental command AO Denver, bordering AO

²⁵² Colonel James Donnellan, former 2/3 Battalion Commander, interview with William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and MajGen Tom Jones, USMC, Retired, 16 Mar 2010.

²⁵³ Donnellan interview, 16 Mar 2010.

²⁵⁴ Corporal Luke Blom, USMC, "Marines, City Leadership Discuss Haditha's Future," USMC Website, 4 Feb 2007.

²⁵⁵ Hakim interview, 14 Apr 2010.

Topeka, and was a northern entry point to and escape route from Ramadi. Second, it was the home of the one of the most influential tribes in Al Anbar, the Albu-Nimr Tribe.

During the first years of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Hit suffered from the insufficient and short-term assignment of Coalition forces. The rapid turnover of units precluded Iraqi-Coalition relationships from developing and inhibited the development of local security. In part, this explains why Hit was one of the last cities in Al Anbar to become secure. It seems that despite its location as a gateway to Ramadi, Hit was considered geographically and politically less important in the Coalition's priority for assigned forces, though that did not mean it was unimportant. As Master Sergeant Andy Marchal, Team Chief for Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 555 described it, it was the home and center of gravity of the Albu-Nimr tribe. The Albu-Nimr tribe was one of the largest and most influential tribes in Al Anbar and arguably within Iraq.²⁵⁶ Leaders of the Albu-Nimr tribe, and in particular the Al Gaoud clan originating in Hit, were key participants and leaders in a number of major Awakening events that took place in Iraq as well as in Jordan.

1. Hit at the Beginning of the War

As in Hadithah, the US force to first operate in western Al Anbar in 2003 was the Joint Special Operations Task Force–West. In April 2003, responsibility for Al Anbar Province was transferred to the 3rd ACR. The 3rd ACR's presence in Hit was minimal, because its forces were spread across all of Al Anbar Province. Moreover, they were focused outward, on protecting the border region and targeting the flow of foreign fighters into the towns

When units from the 3rd ACR entered the area, they generally found poor economic conditions. The Regiment's operations officer (S-3), Lieutenant Colonel Paul Calvert, USA, described governance: "The local governments were really in disarray. They had a *de facto* mayor within the towns but we really weren't sure where their loyalties were."²⁵⁷

In Hit, the "de facto mayor" was Naim al-Gaoud. Naim, a member of Albu-Nimr, was elected soon after Coalition forces entered Iraq. At the time, the 3rd ACR worked with him because the Albu-Nimrs appeared to support Coalition efforts; however, the Coalition thought that they couldn't truly trust the mayor or the tribe.

Mayor Naim al-Gaoud's brother, Numan al-Gaoud, was aware of this and explained the situation.

When the American Army entered, we chose Naim to become the mayor of Hit...There were several attempts on Naim's life...the Ba'ath Party and Al Qaeda worked against him, at the time, in 2003, after the invasion. There was no police at all...Our tribe protected his life. Naim and the commander of Hit...cooperated well

²⁵⁶ Master Sergeant Andy Marchal, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 21 Dec 2012.

²⁵⁷ Calvert interview, 17 Feb 2006.

together. They worked together... When [the commander] saw the amount of people coming to protect Naim against Al Qaeda and the Ba'ath Party he said, "Who are these people, the huge amount of people?" Naim said, "This is my tribe. They all came to protect me." The American commander was cooperating with them, working together. He did not attack any of these people when they came in the thousands to protect Naim. The Americans did not protect my brother at that time, because they didn't know who was the enemy and who was the friend to them, so the tribe protected him.²⁵⁸

In early February 2004, Special Forces ODA 555 from 5th Special Forces Group entered the Hit area; approximately one month later, the Marines assumed control of the Province. RCT-7, commanded by Colonel Craig Tucker, was responsible for AO Denver, and the responsibility for Hit fell upon the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines (2/7).²⁵⁹ While 2/7 focused on establishing the CAP, engaging the city council, and fighting the enemy, the ODA focused on engaging the tribes in the area to undercut the insurgents' center of gravity, their connection to the people. The team's mission was "to identify and exploit opportunities to split al Qaeda elements from nationalist strands of the insurgency."²⁶⁰ MSG Andy Marchal, the ODA 555 team leader, knew from past experiences that the tribes were critical and that he and his men would be competing with the insurgents for tribal support. The team's plan was simple: figure out which was the most powerful tribe in the AO and work with it.²⁶¹ Prior to entering the area, Marchal's team identified the Albu-Nimr tribe as the dominant tribe in Hit.

Working through an informant called "Nubs" from the Shall clan of the Albu-Nimr tribe, and coordinating with the CJSOTF and Major General Mattis, commander of 1st MARDIV, Marchal created a "provisional company of Shall/Albu-Nimr tribesmen."²⁶²

Less than one month after 2/7 moved into Hit, it was redeployed to Fallujah to support Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE. As occurred in Hadithah and other areas, during 2/7's absence, insurgents filled the vacuum, punishing those townspeople who had interacted with the Coalition forces.

Many of the cities along the Western Euphrates were excellent hideouts for insurgents because of the existing travel infrastructure along the river. However, Hit's location was ideal for insurgents who wanted to be close to the big fights in Ramadi and Fallujah.

²⁵⁸ Mr. Numan Abdul Mahsen al-Gaoud, Iraqi Businessman, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Jordan, 13 Feb 2013.

²⁵⁹ LtCol Kenneth W. Estes, USMC (Ret.), *US Marines in Iraq, 2004-2004: Into the Fray* (Washington: USMC History Division, 2011), 166.

²⁶⁰ Brent Lindeman, "Better Lucky than Good: A Theory of Unconventional Minds and the Power of 'Who'," Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009.

²⁶¹ Marchal interview, 21 Dec 2012.

²⁶² Marchal interview, 21 Dec 2012.

During this time the tribesmen supported the Coalition efforts in VIGILANT RESOLVE by keeping the main road between the Al Asad Airbase and Fallujah clear of IEDs. To show its commitment and to reinforce their relationship, ODA 555 began performing small-scale civil affairs projects in Hit's Al Phurat district, which largely comprised members of the Albu-Nimr tribe (Figure 6-5).²⁶³ This opened the door for Albu-Nimr's paramount sheikh, Sheikh Abdul Razak al-Gaoud, and MSG Marchal to meet routinely.

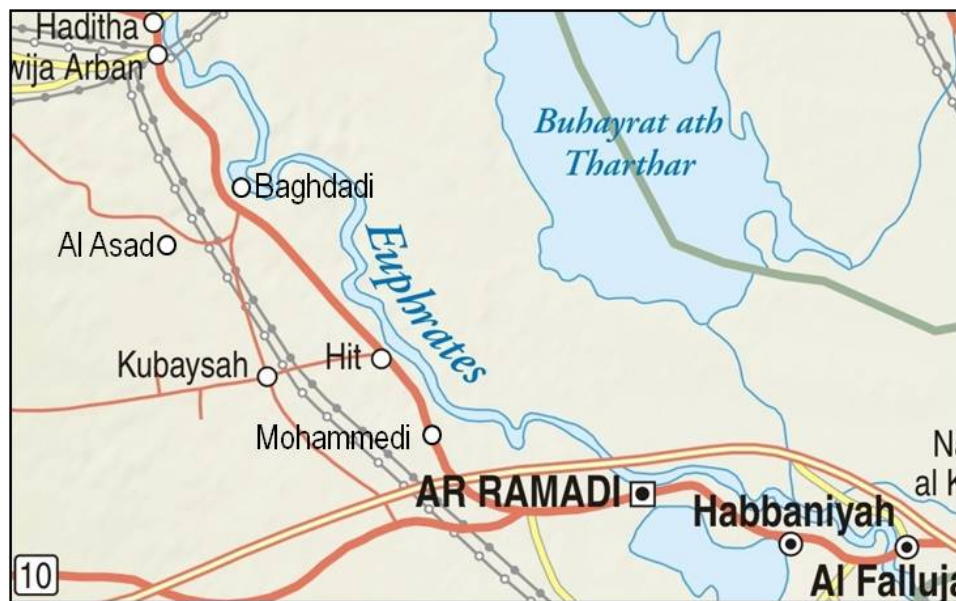


Figure 6-5. Map of Hit and Surrounding Area

2. Initial Success...

Despite the insurgents and their intimidation campaign, 2/7 returned to Hit and established one of the first CAP programs since Vietnam (as did 3/4 Marines in Hadithah). The CAP's mission was to train Iraqi forces so that they could eventually function on their own. CAP organized and coordinated missions and operations between the Marines, the 503rd Iraqi National Guard (ING) Battalion, and the IP. By the end of 2/7's deployment, Marine and ING forces had "confiscated hundreds of illegal weapons and explosive material, captured several insurgents, and successfully engaged the enemy on numerous occasions with no casualties to ISF or TF [Task Force] 2/7 Marines."²⁶⁴

²⁶³ The Albu-Nimr tribe attempted to work with Coalition Forces during the early days of the war. Sheikh Bezi offered the tribesmen's support if the United States would arm the tribe. Mr. Keith Mines, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 13 Mar 2011. He went on to say that this wasn't so much an awakening as it was a simple business deal.

²⁶⁴ Jason Goodale and Jon Webre, "The Combined Action Platoon in Iraq: An Old Technique for a New War," *Small Wars Journal*.

3. ...and Setbacks

The connection that ODA 555 had painstakingly built with the Nimr tribe was set back when, in June 2004, the Coalition Provisional Authority transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government. The transfer changed a number of policies and relationships. One of the policy changes eliminated the use of Commanders Emergency Response Program funds to pay local security forces. With funding terminated in June and the redeployment of ODA 555 to the states in July, the Coalition ceased supporting the Nimr company. Subsequently, the tribesmen were absorbed into the 503rd Iraqi National Guard Battalion, which the Albu-Nimr tribe saw as corrupt.²⁶⁵ In the fall of 2004, because of a greater need in Baghdad, ODAs were withdrawn from Al Anbar thus breaking the long-standing SOF/Albu-Nimr connection in the Hit area.²⁶⁶

Additionally, any gains as a result of work by 2/7 and the CAP during the spring and summer of 2004 were lost when the next unit responsible for Hit, 1/23 Marines, assumed responsibility for the entire Corridor in the fall of 2004. As 1/8 in Hadithah left to support Operation AL FAJR in Fallujah in November 2004, 1/23 repositioned forces to the northwest to cover those areas vacated by 1/8. As 1/23 greatly reduced its presence in Hit, local sheikhs promised that the local security forces would maintain security. Little did anyone know that the second- and third-order effects of AL FAJR would damage security in the Corridor to a point that it would not recover until mid-to-late 2006.²⁶⁷

4. Conventional Operations

In March 2005, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines (3/25), a Reserve Marine Corps unit, assumed responsibility for Hit.²⁶⁸ The Marines of 3/25 had a large AO—the region from Hadithah down to Hit—the entire Corridor.²⁶⁹ At about the same time, RCT-2, commanded by Colonel Stephen Davis, replaced RCT-7 marking the beginning of high operational tempo in AO Denver. Col Davis designed an aggressive campaign involving a major regimental operation about every two to three weeks. The Corridor in general and Hit in particular were often part of RCT-2's operation. Many accused RCT-2 of simply conducting “whack-a-mole” across AO Denver, but Davis' plan was to disrupt the enemy, keep them off balance, and eventually to create a combined, permanent, persistent presence when forces became available.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁵ Marchal interview, 21 Dec 2012.

²⁶⁶ Thomas R. Searle, “Tribal Engagement in Anbar Province: The Critical Role of Special Operations Forces” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 50 (Third quarter, 2008): 62–66.

²⁶⁷ Murphy, “In Fallujah’s Wake, Marines Go West.”

²⁶⁸ Estes, *US Marines in Iraq*.

²⁶⁹ Marchal interview, 21 Dec 2012.

²⁷⁰ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

Some operations were decidedly non-kinetic. For example, Operation OUTER BANK occurred 1 April–3 May 2005 in the Corridor and was designed to survey the area and gain situational awareness.²⁷¹

Still other operations, like Operation SWORD in late June 2005, were designed to gain trust as well as ground. Operation SWORD was the first time RCT-2 conducted an operation with a company of trained Iraqi forces. The company was split: one group was assigned to 3/25 Marines and the other to 3/2 Marines in Al Qaim. As a result of this operation for Hit, two forward operating bases and one Combat Outpost were established and were the first steps towards a combined, permanent, persistent presence in the city.²⁷²

Col Davis explains the effects of Operation SWORD:

We established two FOBs [forward operating bases], which were always combined with Iraqis and Americans. One was up at the traffic circle in the north end of Hit and one was down in the Youth Center in the south central part. They [the enemy] didn't like that at all, because you're now in the disruption business. Our guys were there permanently, and they started working out of these FOBs despite multiple attacks trying to remove them.²⁷³

Not surprisingly, as the Marines increased their activity in the city, AQI stepped up its attacks. Two large attacks occurred simultaneously on 4 September. One suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) was detonated at a Firm Base, another on the Hit Bridge, which was the only trafficable bridge between Hadithah and Ramadi. The entire bridge was destroyed, thus isolating the Albu-Nimr tribe, one of the only relatively pro-Coalition elements in Hit. The residents on the north side of the river in area called Al Phurat were now at increased risk (Figure 6-6).²⁷⁴



Figure 6-6. Hit Neighborhoods North of the River

5. Re-enter SOF

In August of 2005, Special Forces teams were reintroduced into Al Anbar after being absent for more than a year. MSG Marchal, now with ODA 545 deployed to Hit to find the secu-

²⁷¹ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

²⁷² Davis interview, 25 May 2010; "Operation Iron Hammer," Global Security.org, www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oif-iron-hammer_2005.htm.

²⁷³ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

²⁷⁴ Lindeman, "Better Lucky than Good."

rity situation worse than when he left in July 2004. The police were nonexistent, the 503rd ING had collapsed, and SVBIEDs were on the rise.

Marchal initially reestablished the relationships he had previously built. He contacted “Nubs” and through him linked up with fellow tribesmen such as Sheikh Hatim al-Gaoud, Hikmat al-Gaoud, and Sheikh Al Jubayr al-Gaoud. CW3 Tony Goble, Assistant Detachment Commander for 545 described his experience:

We were seeing if their [individuals mentioned above] allegiance or alliance was pro-government. We spent a lot of time on that side [north] of the river camping out at night in the desert as our security posture. Then during the day, we’d go in, link back up with him, and continue some conversations to the point where we felt that they were on board with at least wanting to see the area change and wanting to bring security to the area.²⁷⁵

Because Marines had mistakenly killed Sheikh Razak in January 2005, the ODA was unsure of how the Albu-Nimr Tribe would react to their return, so they created situations to demonstrate the team’s loyalty to the Nimrs. In one instance, the team worked with the commander of 3/25 Marines to create a “good cop/bad cop” drama. In this case the Marines arrested some Albu-Nimr relatives. MSG Marchal publically argued with 3/25’s commander for the release of the relatives. Because Sheikh Razak’s brother observed Marchal standing up for his relatives, this and other events eventually led the Albu-Nimr tribe to be more trusting of the ODA.²⁷⁶

6. Short-term Force Assignment

Despite force shortfalls, RCT-2’s vigorous campaign plan continued. In fact, regimental efforts were reinforced in September when the RCT received additional troops.²⁷⁷ With two major Iraqi political events looming—the 15 October referendum and 15 December 2005 elections—security was the priority.

Unfortunately, from September 2005 until February 2006, there was a rapid turnover of forces in the Hit area—within these six months, five different units were assigned responsibility for Hit (see Table 6-3). On the one hand, they were there to provide security for the October referendum and December election. But on the other hand, the lack of continuity adversely affected intelligence collection and community relationships. It was not surprising the citizens of Hit did not trust the transient Coalition forces and that they perceived the Coalition as noncommittal and disinterested in the community’s well-being.

²⁷⁵ CWO3 Tony Goble, USA, former member of Special Forces ODA, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Iraq, SOTF headquarters at Camp Victory, 1 Mar 2010.

²⁷⁶ Marchal, 21 Dec 2012.

²⁷⁷ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

Table 6-3. Unit presence in Hit September 2005–March 2008²⁷⁸

Date	Commander	Unit
Sept–Oct 2005	LtCol Jeffrey Chessani	3rd Battalion, 1st Marines
Oct–Dec 2005	LTC Gary Huffman	2nd Battalion, 114 Field Artillery
Nov–Dec 2005	Col James LaVine	13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)
Dec 2005–Feb 2006	Col Kenneth McKenzie	22nd MEU
Feb 2006–Feb 2007	LTC Thomas Graves	TF 1st Battalion, 36 Infantry (TF 1-36)
Jan–Sep 2007	LTC Doug Crissman	TF 2-7 Inf
Aug 2007–Mar 2008	LtCol J.J. Dill	1st Battalion, 7th Marines

From 30 November until 3 December 2005, 2nd Battalion, 114 Field Artillery (FA) and about 700 Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division conducted Operation IRON HAMMER in Hit.²⁷⁹ The goal was to clear the Hai al Bekr area of Hit (see Figure 6-6) from AQI and to increase security for the upcoming elections. Perhaps more critical, the operation allowed the Coalition to repair and reopen the Hit Bridge that had been destroyed by the insurgency in September.²⁸⁰ IRON HAMMER was a collaborative effort, combining the efforts of the IA, the US Army Civil Affairs team in Hit, ODA 545, and the ANGLICO (Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company) team. Despite 2-114 FA’s quick rotation, before it left Hit the unit had managed the 15 October constitutional referendum and planted the seeds for a secure election in December.²⁸¹

On 15 January 2006, the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) along with the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division (1/2/7 IAD) conducted Operation KOA CANYON in the Hit/Baghdadi area. The mission was to capture or kill insurgents and locate and destroy weapon caches.²⁸² Just two weeks later, the IA and 22nd MEU conducted another operation called SMOKEWAGON. Again, Iraqi and Coalition forces went door-to-door searching for insurgents and weapons caches.²⁸³

²⁷⁸ LtCol David Graves, USMC, “Unit Presence in Al Anbar,” May 2001.

²⁷⁹ “Operation Iron Hammer.” According to Estes, *US Marines in Iraq*, p. 128, 2/1 Marines and the Desert Protectors also participated in IRON HAMMER.

²⁸⁰ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

²⁸¹ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

²⁸² “Operation Koa Canyon Update” US Marine Corps press release, 19 Jan 2006.

²⁸³ “Operation Smokewagon” Global Security.org website.

7. Setting the Conditions for Success

In February of 2006, force inconsistencies in the Hit area were finally addressed by assigning the US Army's 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry (1-36), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Graves, to Hit for an entire year. At the same time that 1-36, now Task Force 1-36, conducted a relief-in-place/transfer-of-authority, responsibility for AO Denver changed from RCT-2 to RCT-7, which was commanded by Colonel Blake Crowe.

The situation that TF 1-36 inherited in Hit was dismal. Captain Robert Secher, a Marine advisor to the IA offered his description of the war torn city:

Hit is a lawless town with most of the fight in the north (the insurgents control/influence the southern part) as we convoyed at high speeds thru the town (speed is the best defense against IEDs) you could clearly see the look on [sic] the eyes of the people: sick and tired. First, a generation of Saddam, now insurgents and occupiers. Everyone makes promises and no one keeps them.²⁸⁴

Because so many different units had cycled through Hit during 2005, the Iraqi forces suffered greatly. They had no consistent training agenda, hence, LTC Graves decided to focus on training them. His unit began working with Military Transition Teams. He recalled:

Coalition forces in this area are still doing a lot of combat operations, but those [operations] are done with the idea that they will buy us breathing space, and give us time to train the Iraqi army.²⁸⁵

TF 1-36 also focused on the police in Hit. The previous ODA team had facilitated the creation of an IP station in Zuwayyah (see Figure 6-5). The unit capitalized on this initiative and expanded IP stations to Tal Aswad, Hai al Bekr, and Kubaysa.

The 5th Special Forces Group, ODA 545 arrived for its second tour in August of 2006. Master Sergeant Martin Moore and Lieutenant Colonel Martin Adams were veterans of a previous tour in the area and noticed that the city had become much more violent.²⁸⁶ Five-to-seven “significant activities”—such as an IED or sniper attack—per day was the norm. Brent Lindeman, team leader of 545, said that he and the team sergeant agreed that “the insurgents were winning in Hit.” He went on to explain:

In August 2006, the insurgency was definitely stronger than the counterinsurgency in Hit. The enemy owned the city and the city council. The enemy owned the roads. They took away the Coalition's freedom of maneuver in town through the use of snipers and IEDs. And, thanks to IEDs, the enemy also took away the Coalition's

²⁸⁴ Dan Efron and Christian Caryl, “A Centurion's Emails,” *Newsweek* (6 Nov 2006).

²⁸⁵ Jim Garamone, “Soldiers See Successful Iraqi Army as Ticket Home,” American Forces Press Service, 2 June 2006.

²⁸⁶ Master Sergeant Martin Moore interview at the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) headquarters at Camp Victory, Iraq, Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, 21 Apr 2010. Lieutenant Colonel Martin Adams, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Institute for Defense Analyses, Alexandria, VA, 9 Dec 2010.

freedom of maneuver on all the major lines of communication. The police were not being properly funded and resourced by the Iraqi government. And the IA battalion in Hit was vastly under-strength.²⁸⁷

To build situational awareness, ODA 545 began taking dismounted tours and conducting combat patrols with the IA Scouts (formerly the Desert Protectors).²⁸⁸ The team worked with the newly hired district police chief, General Ibrahim Hamid Jaza, and Colonel Shaban from Baghdadi to break up an insurgent checkpoint system that had frustrated TF 1-36 because of its early warning system.²⁸⁹

In October, ODA 545 and TF 1-36 joined efforts to move the IA Scouts from under the control of the Iraqi Army to an independent SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) element assigned to the IPs in the district. The Scouts had suffered from poor treatment in the Shia majority IA and morale had bottomed out. It was time to put their skills to more effective use as members of the IP SWAT platoons.²⁹⁰

The situation began to improve. The IP stations in the neighborhoods of Hit were generally successful in keeping insurgents out. The men of ODA 545 had successfully made connections with tribes surrounding the Hit District, but the center of the city remained overrun by insurgents.

In all, TF 1-36 had a rough tour and took many casualties, but by focusing on the IP, it laid the ground work for the next unit. By the end of its deployment, the unit had created a “700 man district police force and opened four additional police stations, expanding far beyond the al Phurat police force in Zuwayyah.”²⁹¹

8. A Turnaround

On 7 February 2007, a task force built around 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry, Task Force 2-7 (TF 2-7), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Doug Crissman, assumed responsibility for Hit. Eight days later, the IA, IP, and Coalition forces launched Operation SHURTA NASIR—*Police Victory*. When TF 2-7 came in, the time was right to go into the city center. CPT Lindeman said, “The whole point of the operation was to support an Iraqi-led, Iraqi-executed plan with

²⁸⁷ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

²⁸⁸ Dr. Sadun Dulaymi, former minister of defense, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, his home, Baghdad, Iraq, 24 Apr 2010. When the Abu-Mahal tribe rebelled against AQI, Sadun developed a program with the Coalition, Abu-Mahl tribe, and Iraqi Government to recruit those tribal members into an organization called the Desert Protectors. Initially, they were to be scouts for the ISF in the area.

²⁸⁹ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

²⁹⁰ Moore interview, 21 Apr 2010.

²⁹¹ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

minimal numbers of Americans in the background, and with the ODA and the PTT [Police Transition Team] advising the IPs.”²⁹²

In short, soldiers from TF 2-7 and from 1/2/7 IAD began by sealing off the city. The SWAT team, IPs, and members of the ODA entered on 16 February. The SWAT team focused on the mosques and population control. Military forces then moved in and cleared neighborhoods and conducted targeted raids. One of the ODA teams took over a building on Cherry Street, one of the most dangerous roads, which would become the new Cherry Street IP station.²⁹³

On 27 February, two days after the operation ended, LTC Crissman walked down Cherry Street with Mayor Hikmat and chief of police Hamid (see Figure 6-7). This event surprised the local population as well as the insurgents.²⁹⁴



Courtesy LTC Crissman

Figure 6-7. LTC Crissman (right) walks down Cherry Street with the mayor (center) and chief of police (left) two days after SHURTA NASIR

9. “We Stay, We Win”

By the end of the operation, US and Iraqi forces had rooted out the insurgent elements in the city. Despite that success, Coalition forces were suspicious that many insurgents left the

²⁹² Lieutenant Colonel Doug Crissman, interview via telephone with Dr. William Knarr and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 7 Oct 2011; and Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

²⁹³ Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

²⁹⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Crissman, “Commander’s Comments,” *The Cottonbaler Newsletter* (Spring 2007).

city before the operation having captured only 13. The operation also resulted in the establishment of two new IP stations and several police checkpoints. The message to the population was that the terrorists had left and the IP were now fully in control of the city center for the first time.²⁹⁵

The success of SHURTA NASIR spread to nearby cities of Mohammedi and Abu Tiban, causing them to flip in favor of the IP. These events can be credited to General Hamid who had sent a group of his IPs to assist their efforts.

General Ibrahim Hamid Jaza was known by Iraqis and Coalition forces as a hero figure who took a strong stand against AQI. During SHURTA NASIR he was critical to all elements of the operation. Many attributed Hit's increased security turnaround to the police chief's harsh tactics against the insurgents. Reports, however, of General Hamid's corruption—freeing prisoners for money, conducting extra-judicial killings, accepting bribes from insurgents, and allowing prostitution—were rife. The Iraqi Government had planned “Operation Police Call” to arrest Hamid; however, on 29 May, before the plan was complete, LTC Crissman arrested the police chief based on intelligence reports that said that if the Coalition forces did not apprehend Hamid for his crimes, then the population would take on the task itself and undercut the credibility of the rule-of-law efforts. In a dramatic moment, LTC Crissman went from posing with Hamid (Figure 6-8) for a commemorative picture to reaching over, drawing Hamid's hand-gun, and arresting him.²⁹⁶



Image used with permission, Michael Yon

Figure 6-8. LTC Crissman (left) posed with General Hamid (center) moments before he arrested him with his own hand-gun. At right is the interpreter.

²⁹⁵ Moore interview, 21 Apr 2010; and Lindeman, “Better Lucky than Good.”

²⁹⁶ Michael Yon, “The Final Option,” Michael Yon Online Magazine, 30 May 2007.

During the next few months, Coalition and the IP operations continued to keep the insurgents out.²⁹⁷ A new police chief was hired, Colonel Sallah Rasheed al-Gaoud, who was extremely experienced and who focused on professionalizing the IP.²⁹⁸ Money from US and Iraqi Government sources was used to rebuild infrastructure, start local businesses, and repair people's homes. The number of volunteers for the IP continued to grow and the newly-elected city council began to meet three times a week.²⁹⁹

By Fall 2007, Hit was considered stable. Success became self-sustaining. Once the population got a taste of what life without AQI was like, it was more difficult than ever for insurgents to influence the area.

C. Themes and Lessons

Each volume in this study provides themes, lessons, and leads as highlighted by significant events in each AO. Below are the themes, lessons, and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in the Hadithah–Hit Corridor. In addition, those events that were significant and similar (or dissimilar) to other areas of Al Anbar are noted.

Throughout 2003, 2004, and much of 2005, the Corridor was under AQI's influence due to the Coalition force priorities in other areas of Iraq and their inability to generate and sustain combined, permanent, persistent presence in the Corridor. The Coalition reacted to events in Fallujah by deploying Marine units from the Corridor to Fallujah. This left the population unprotected and resulted in a loss of trust. As one US battalion commander described it, they were destined to a cycle of "clear, abandon, clear, abandon,..." until they received the necessary force structure to maintain a presence and protect the population. This dynamic was also true of the SOF elements assigned to the area. Special Forces ODAs were assigned to the area in January 2004 and made some significant progress in gaining support of the Albu-Nimr tribe in the Hit area. However, before security was self-sustaining, the ODA was withdrawn in July 2004 due to other priorities.

Despite those conditions, there were a number of noteworthy initiatives that, if allowed to continue, would have made significant contributions to the effort. One was the CAP program initiated by US Marine units in both Hadithah and Hit. Another initiative was using SOF to work in parallel with the conventional forces to engage with the tribes and work by, with, and through them to help defeat the insurgency. Given that background, the comments below start in 2005 with the return of Coalition forces to the Corridor after the battles in Fallujah.

²⁹⁷ Crissman, "Commander's Comments."

²⁹⁸ Corporal Adam Johnston, "Rise and Fall of a Hero," DVIDS News, 15 Aug 2007.

²⁹⁹ Crissman, "Commander's Comments."

1. Combined, Permanent, Persistent Presence

It was not until the fall of 2005, when the Coalition and GOI dedicated additional forces to the Corridor, both Coalition and Iraqi, that the situation started to improve. This included the redeployment of SOF to the area and the assignment of elements of the newly formed 7th Iraqi Army Division.³⁰⁰ With these improvements, Coalition forces were able to conduct clearing operations reinforced with combined (Iraqi and Coalition) presence to hold the area. With the priority to Hadithah, however, Hit didn't receive a permanent assignment of forces until February 2006 with the deployment of TF 1-36.

The additional forces enabled the recruitment and development of the Iraqi Police in the area. The importance of the local police force cannot be overstated, but the police could not be developed until they had a viable backup in the form of Coalition and Iraqi forces. Once there was a noticeable improvement in the local security forces, the local government could then stand up and begin to operate.

In addition to security forces, checkpoint, outposts, bases and operations, other population control measures were employed. For example, in the fall of 2006, the Coalition constructed eight-foot high dirt berms around the Triad. The berming of the area, coupled with vehicle registration, controlled entrances, the collection of biometric data, and issuance of identification cards, all had a devastating effect on the insurgents' ability to gain access to the population. But, key to this was the development of the police force and the emergence and support of local Iraqi leaders such as Farouq and Shaban into key security positions.

2. An awakening

The progression and development of the Anbar Awakening can be characterized as, "The Sunnis, 1. Rejected the terrorists (AQI), 2. Joined the Coalition in the fight against AQI and other insurgent extremists, and 3. Supported and worked with the Iraqi local and national governments and their security forces." There are many specific examples of the Awakening events, each with its own local character. As an example, 1) Sheikh Sattar albu-Risha gained the support of 40 other Ramadi sheiks, rejected AQI in an Emergency decree on 14 September; 2) Partnered with the Coalition to fight AQI; and 3) Supported and worked with, albeit reluctantly, the Iraqi local and national governments and their security forces.³⁰¹ Another example of this occurred in Al Qaim. In both situations the Sunni tribes took the lead and were reluctant to work with the Iraqi Government.

This characterization of the Awakening, in general, holds true for the residents of the Corridor as well. However, as Mayor Hakim of the Hadithah Triad points out it, the awaken-

³⁰⁰ The purpose of the additional forces was to provide security for the upcoming referendum in October and election in Dec 2005. Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

³⁰¹ Colonel Tony Deane, former commander, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor in Ramadi, Iraqi, from June to Nov 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr at Deane's office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 12 Oct 2010.

ing in Hadithah was different from the awakening in Al Qaim or Ramadi. In those cities a tribe or collection of tribes, led by a tribal leader, revolted against AQI. Legitimacy was established when the tribal militia joined GOI-sponsored security organizations such as the IA or IP. That didn't necessarily occur in Hadithah. As Hakim indicated,

...nobody led the *sahawa* in Hadithah. There was no popular militia to fight the *Sahawa*...the leaders of the IP, the tribes, and the Coalition forces persuaded "the people [to] join the IP and resist the bad guys. It was official. They joined the IP. This way, we established the security in Hadithah. That [was how] Hadithah's *sahawa* occurred."³⁰²

One might argue that the Al Jugayfi was the prominent tribe in the area because its tribesmen dominated the local IP ranks. However, it wasn't the Al Jugayfi senior sheikh or one of the contesting sheikhs that ultimately led a tribal uprising or convinced its tribal militia to join the legitimate rank and file of the GOI. The early introduction of the CAP might account for this different path to the Awakening. As an example, the CAP and immediate introduction of the residents to the security requirements may have preempted the slower and more complex process of any tribal organized militia taking the lead on security and then partnering with the Coalition and GOI. Unfortunately, due to other events such as Fallujah in 2004, the CAP lost continuity and the awakening in Hadithah sputtered.

Awakening events in Baghdadi were also different. BrigGen Reist credits Col Shaban as the catalyst for the Awakening in the Corridor months before the Awakening in Ramadi. Although Shaban was a proven leader, he was not a tribal leader and he started to form the Baghdadi police force on his own to counter AQI. As in the Hadithah case, this model worked, but was different than the general Awakening narrative.

Finally, Hit was also different. The Albu-Nimr tribe, in general, had sided with the Coalition almost from the beginning. As an example: In 2003, Sheikh Bezi al-Gaoud's offer to provide Major General Charles Swannack, Commander, 82nd Airborne Division, tribesmen for security; SFODA teams worked with the Albu-Nimr tribe in Hit in 2004 and later in 2005-2009; in 2004 Talal al-Gaoud, son of Sheikh Bezi, linked the Coalition with the insurgents for talks in Jordan; Former Governor of Al Anbar Fasal al-Gaoud contacted the Marines on behalf of the Albu-Mahal in May 2005, and so on (discussed in more detail below).

There were also a number of similarities among these cases—the importance of the police as the pivot point for security in all locations, for example. It was only after the IP were in place and the connection to the population strengthened that the conditions were set for local government to develop and operate.

Additionally, an underlying theme was the Coalition's recognition that it needed to work with the people and gain their confidence if it was ever going to counter AQI. Most have agreed

³⁰² Hakim interview, 14 Apr 2010.

that it was not just an Awakening on the part of the Iraqis, but also on the part of the Coalition. Making that distinction and knowing when and how to start the turn from combat operations to stability operations is complex. It requires finesse and an understanding of second- and third-order effects of the unit's actions.

For example, 3/1 cleared Hadithah during Operation RIVER GATE (September 2005) by using mine clearing line charges, marking cleared houses with spray paint, destroying bridges residents would need for daily activities. Hakim added,

They also demolished some of the schools and some of the government buildings by using the excuse that there were insurgents inside...being a liberator, you should have won the support of the peaceful civilians. This bad behavior created enemies.³⁰³

Another example was the Hadithah massacre in November 2005. Some have asked, "What drove the Coalition down this path?" LtCol Cooling suggests that Marines from 3/1 were veterans of high-intensity combat operations from Fallujah the year before; all of a sudden they moved into a stability phase and there was no significant operational pause for them to reset and retrain, and to do what Cooling called an "in-stride rules of engagement change."³⁰⁴ He felt that this inability to recalibrate relative to the ROE likely contributed to that tragic incident.

3. Media and Information Operations

The Hadithah massacre raises some important considerations for media and information operations. LtCol Donnellan mentions that the media was more emphatic than the people about the Hadithah massacre.

The big eye-opener for me was that the incident did not resonate so much more dramatically with the people than perhaps any other sad story that happens in war, whereas AQI really latched on to it because they saw the attention it got in the Western media. And so, it had grown a life of its own again within the Triad, whereas for Colonel Cooling's first three or four months there, it was not the rallying cry that he heard when he held the tribal or sheikh meetings.³⁰⁵

4. A Network of Relationships and Events

Tribal engagement and relationships were significant throughout the corridor, but uniquely so in Hit because of the importance of the Abu-Nimr tribe in general and the Al Gaoud clan in particular. This relationship spanned the local to the national and connected the various Awakenings throughout Al Anbar. Examples follow.

³⁰³ Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, Hadithah Mayor, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, his office in Hadithah, 14 Apr 2010.

³⁰⁴ Cooling interview, 7 May 2010.

³⁰⁵ Donnellan interview, 16 Mar 2010.

In 2003, Sheikh Bezi Majil Nijris al-Gaoud approached MG Swannack, Commander, 82nd Airborne Division, and Keith Mines, Coalition Provisional Authority Governance Coordinator for Al Anbar with an offer to supply tribesmen as provincial security forces if the Coalition funded and armed them. Although Swannack and Mines saw this as a great idea, it was turned down by the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad.³⁰⁶

MSG Marchal's identification and linkage to the Albu-Nimr tribal leadership was critical to the recruitment of hundreds of the Nimrawi tribesmen into the Desert protectors/scouts to combat AQI.³⁰⁷ SOF's efforts paid off when it and the Albu-Nimr tribe coordinated Operation SHURTA NASIR along with TF 2-7. The operation was an IO victory that started Hit down the path of improved security.

Talal al-Gaoud, son of Sheikh Bezi, a businessman in Amman, Jordan was instrumental in setting up meetings in Jordan as early as 2004 between the Coalition forces and Iraqi Sunni leadership to include meetings with the insurgents.³⁰⁸ Colonel Michael Walker, former 3rd Civil Affairs Group Commander in Iraq from February to September 2004 attributed the start of the Awakening movement in Iraq to relationships the MEF fostered with the Iraqis in 2004, specifically with the Al Gaoud clan in Amman, Jordan.³⁰⁹

Former Governor of Al Anbar Fasal al-Gaoud contacted the Americans at Camp Fallujah on behalf of the Albu-Mahal tribe in Al Qaim in May 2005 when AQI was purging the Al Qaim area of Mahalawis.³¹⁰

In a larger context, Sheikh Bezi was a part of a network of notable tribal leaders, former Iraqi military, and former insurgents that found sanctuary in Jordan, because living and working in Iraq had become too dangerous. The tribal leaders regularly spoke with Sheikh Bezi on the phone and sometimes visited him in Amman. The older sheikh was able to offer advice and guidance, as he had access to the larger picture of what was happening in Anbar, because of his connection to the network of Anbaris, both resident and expatriate.

Al Gaoud representatives of the Albu-Nimr tribe participated in Sheikh Sattar Albu Risha's 14 September announcement of the *Sahawa* in Ramadi and were signatories to the emergency decree that signaled the beginning of the Ramadi Awakening.

Additionally, Sheikh Sattar shared connections with anti-AQI leaders in Hit and Hadithah. The sheikh traveled to Hit on many occasions to meet with tribal leaders. Sheikh Sa'id

³⁰⁶ Mr. Keith Mines, Coalition Provisional Authority Governance Coordinator for Al Anbar, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 13 Mar 2011. He went on to say that this wasn't so much an Awakening as it was a simple business deal.

³⁰⁷ Marchal interview, 21 Dec 2012.

³⁰⁸ David Rose, "Heads in the Sand," *Vanity Fair* web exclusive (12 May 2012) www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2009/05/iraqi-insurgents200905.

³⁰⁹ Walker interview, 6 Jan 2011.

³¹⁰ Allam and al-Dulaimy, "Iraqis Lament Call for Help."

of the Jugayfi tribe in Hadithah met with Sattar on several occasions, as did Col Shaban of Baghdadi (see Figure 6-9).³¹¹



Figure 6-9. Sheikh Sattar and Colonel Shaban meet

General Hamid also had connection to outside influences, mainly through his membership to the militant arm of the *Sahawa*, Thawar al Anbar. General Hamid often met at Sheikh Sattar's compound in Ramadi along with sheikhs from Albu-Souda, Albu-Mahal, Albu-Risha, Albu-Tiban, Albu-Nimr in Barwana, Obeidi in Baghdadi, as well as a few others.³¹²

The point is many Americans perceive events in Ramadi as disconnected from previous events or worse yet, don't recognize the relevance of previous events; however, this study shows that the Iraqis saw and leveraged those connections and relationships. That narrative began in 2004 with the Battles for Fallujah, sparked in Al Qaim with the first significant revolt of a tribe against AQI, saw the emergence of courageous Iraqi leaders such as Colonels Farouq and Shaban and Mayor Hakim in the Corridor to organize and lead local police forces as well as local governance, was strengthened by the involvement of influential Iraqi tribes and families to connect the various events, and set the conditions for the Ramadi *sahawa*. Rather than the beginning, Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* was the result of events and community movements and, subsequently, part of a continuous rather than a disconnected narrative.

³¹¹ Sheikh Sa'id, Sheikh of Al Jughayfi tribe, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, his home, Hadithah, 15 Mar 2011.

³¹² Lindeman, "Better Lucky than Good."

This page is intentionally blank.

7. Ramadi

The insurgency was seriously damaged in late 2005 as a result of the Coalition operations targeting AQI's network in western Anbar. This provided a window of opportunity for the elements of the Sunni Arab Resistance and other nationalists to politically engage the Coalition. Despite setbacks, AQI was able to regroup in early 2006 and shifted tactics to target insurgent and tribal leaders who sought political negotiation. AQI was so successful that it recovered from its losses and became the dominant insurgent group in Al Anbar, and in Ramadi, in particular. By March, AQI had eliminated much of the insurgent resistance either by murder, neutralizing its efforts, or bringing those who resisted into their fold.³¹³

Despite its dominance in Ramadi, there was little enthusiasm among Ramadi residents for AQI. The increased criminality that AQI brought, along with its murder and intimidation campaigns, meant that AQI was more feared than loved. The tribes and local leaders that remained anti-AQI, however, maintained a low profile until their next opportunity. That would come soon.

A. The Ready First Combat Team Deploys to Ramadi

The 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) of the 1st Armored Division, also known as the Ready First Combat Team (RFCT) received word in May 2006 that it was going to deploy from Tal Afar to Ramadi. Although the enemy's activity in Tal Afar was not as significant as what would greet the RFCT in Ramadi, according to Colonel Sean MacFarland, RFCT Commander, "it was a pretty good dress rehearsal for what we ended up doing in Ramadi."³¹⁴

There were a number of other differences that became apparent as the RFCT developed a plan for expelling the extremists from Ramadi and returning the district to its residents.³¹⁵

One difference was that Tal Afar had a more diverse mix of Shia and Sunni in the area. The Coalition could generally count on the Shia being more friendly and the Sunni more hostile. The RFCT came to understand that every time a Shia tribe was befriended, an adjacent Sunni tribe could become more hostile. Per COL MacFarland:

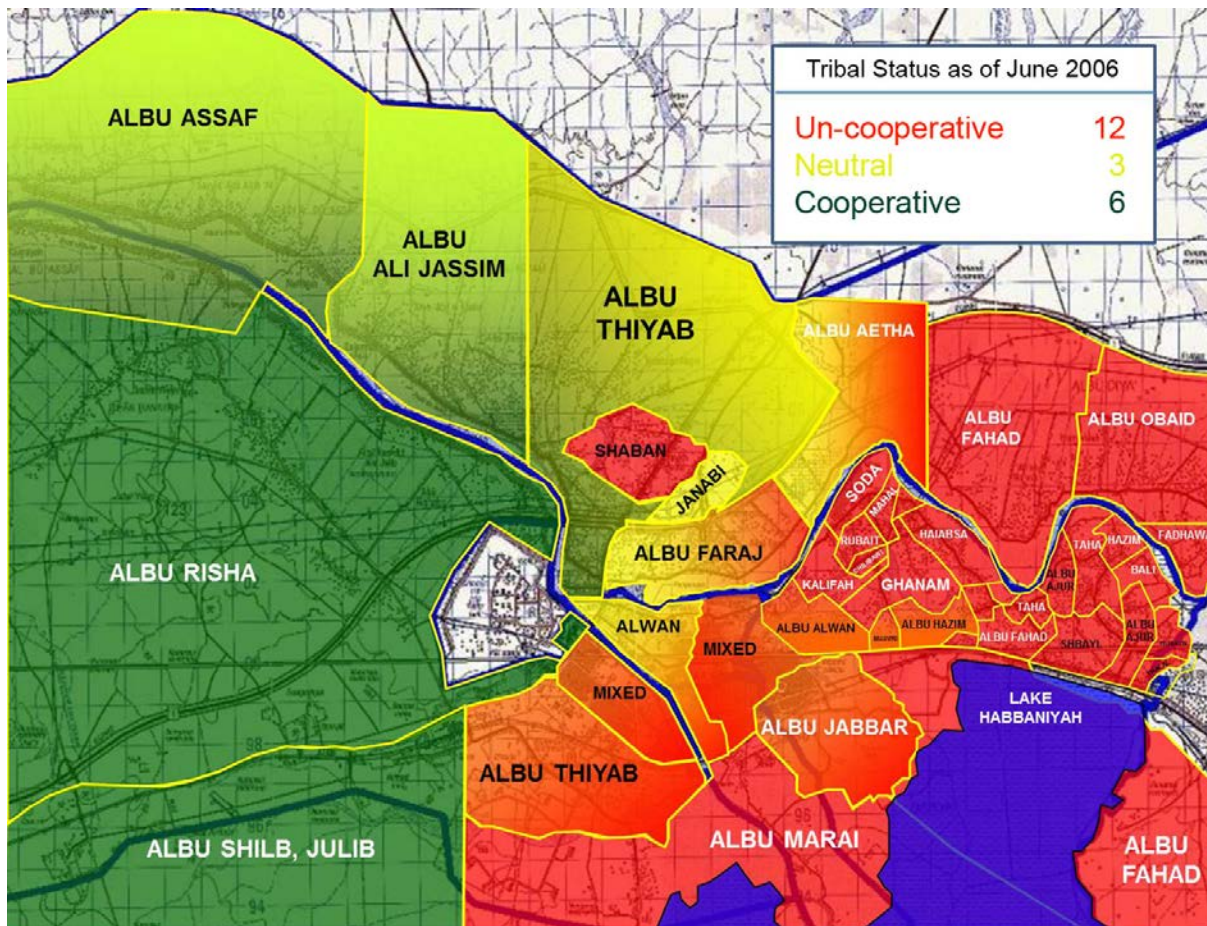
³¹³ Colonel Gary W. Montgomery and Chief Warrant Officer-4 Timothy McWilliams, *An-Anbar Awakening, Volume II – Iraqi Perspectives: US Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004–2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), 12.

³¹⁴ Brigadier General Sean MacFarland, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Ft. Leavenworth, 13 Oct 2010.

³¹⁵ Ramadi is a city and a district. Montgomery and McWilliams, *An-Anbar Awakening, Volume II*, 3.

You had ‘go’ and ‘no go’ areas or ‘go’ and ‘slow go’ areas in Tal Afar. You had your safe havens for us, and you had safe havens for the bad guys. You kind of knew where the demarcation line was. So when you flipped a tribe in Tal Afar, that was great, but there was always the problem of how do you get their opposite numbers on the other side of the sectarian divide to flip, also.³¹⁶

By comparison, in Ramadi, they were all Sunni Arab and the whole city was hostile. So MacFarland’s question was *How do we get a toehold in Ramadi?* He felt that once he found the “key to unlocking Ramadi that approach was going to work consistently [in Ramadi]. But if we couldn’t find that key, we would have no safe areas to operate in Ramadi.” MacFarland also realized that tribes did not have influence throughout the district, and this was even less so inside the city. He would have to rely on local leaders and Iraqi forces to hold some key areas. See Figure 7-1 for tribal areas in the Ramadi district.



Courtesy RFCT

Figure 7-1. Status of Tribal Attitudes towards the Coalition in the Ramadi District in June 2006. The white section in the middle is Camp Ramadi.

³¹⁶ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

Another difference from Tal Afar was that Ramadi was two-to-three times larger, both in area and population; the RFCT couldn't cordon or berm the city to isolate it and clear it concentrically towards the center as his predecessor Colonel H. R. McMasters and the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment had done in Tal Afar. MacFarland would have to clear it neighborhood by neighborhood, west to east, and hold his gains as he moved. Using Iraqi forces in counterinsurgency was increasingly important in the Coalition's counterinsurgency campaign, and it became even more important in Ramadi as MacFarland looked at the area and population he needed to secure.

Now, because I didn't have enough forces...I knew that I had to invest heavily into the development of Iraqi Security Forces. We had a veteran Iraqi Army Brigade to the east, the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division.... I also had a brand new Iraqi Army Brigade, the 1st Brigade of the 7th Division to the west.... And I had virtually no Iraqi Policemen, so I knew I had to go out and get Iraqi Police.³¹⁷

Also different was that although Tal Afar was important, in the larger campaign Ramadi was more important for several reasons. The most obvious was that it was the provincial capital of Al Anbar, and a third of all the population of Al Anbar lived in and around Ramadi.

Ramadi was also close to Baghdad. After the Coalition took back Fallujah from the insurgents during Operation AL FAJR, Ramadi became a major base of operations for the insurgents,

...where they could sortie into Baghdad or against Fallujah or down into the area south of Baghdad or up to Diyala Province north of Baghdad. So, they could influence the belts around Baghdad or they could get into Baghdad proper. Ramadi is an important location and Al Qaeda recognized this.³¹⁸

But the terrain in that area was also confining. Ramadi sits on a chokepoint between the reservoirs and lakes that separate Baghdad from Al Anbar Province. Additionally, major lines of communications in the form of the Euphrates River, major highways, and railroads run through the Ramadi area, and when moving from west to east, they converge before moving into the Fallujah and Baghdad areas. According to MacFarland, "If you are a foreign terrorist from Yemen, Syria, Egypt, or wherever and you wanted to get to Baghdad, you're going to probably pass through Ramadi."³¹⁹

Just as importantly, Ramadi was symbolically significant for Al Qaeda according to MacFarland: "In essence they planted their flag there after Fallujah and chose it as the capital of their Caliphate."³²⁰

³¹⁷ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

³¹⁸ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

³¹⁹ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

³²⁰ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

The RFCT moved into Ramadi with the Brigade headquarters at Camp Ramadi and TF 1-37 Armor to the south. 3rd Battalion 8th Marines (3/8 Marines) and 1-506th Air Assault were already on the ground in central and eastern Ramadi, respectively. TF 1-6 Infantry and TF 1-35 Armor would arrive from the Call Forward Brigade in Kuwait where they had been training and waiting to deploy into Iraq since November 2005.³²¹ This was their opportunity (see Figure 7-2).

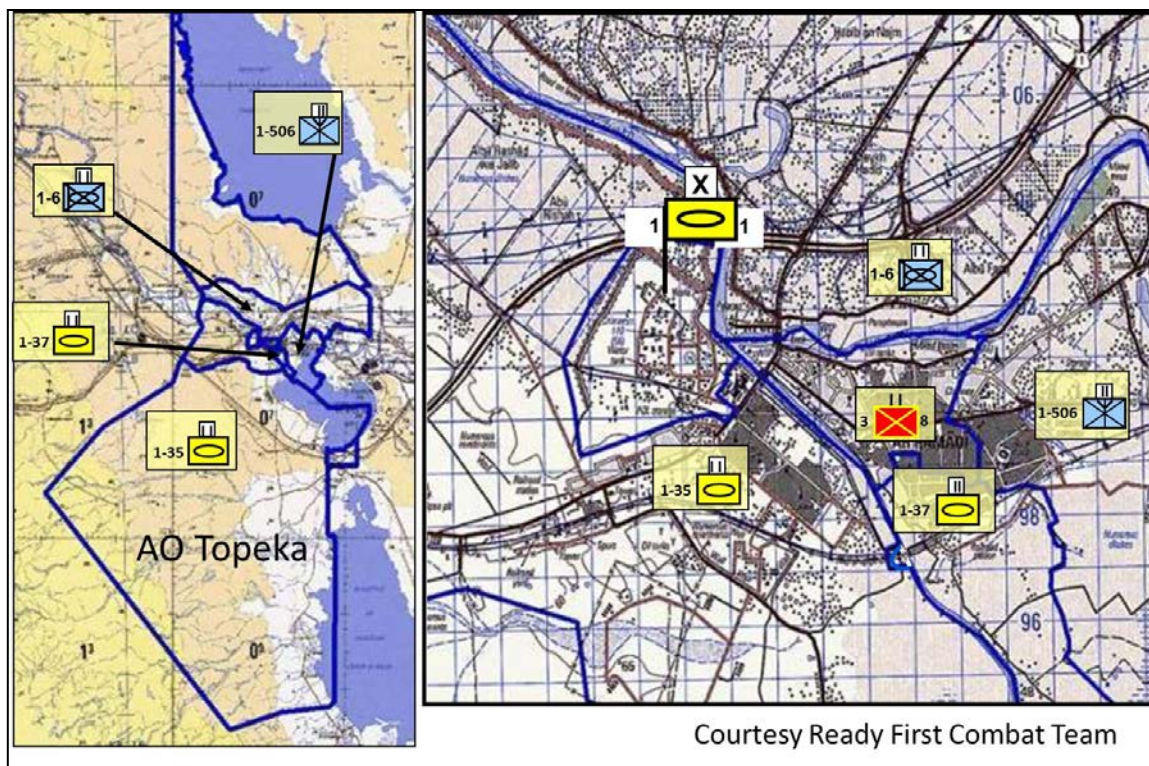


Figure 7-2. Maps of AO Topeka and RFCT's Initial Combat Maneuver Battalion Deployment

The RFCT conducted their relief-in-place (RIP)/Transfer of Authority (TOA) with the 2nd BCT of the 28th Division, a National Guard unit from Pennsylvania on 7 June 2006. On that same day, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his top spiritual advisor Sheikh Abd al-Rahman were killed in a Coalition airstrike north of Baquba—hopefully an omen of things to come.³²²

³²¹ Deane, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," 81. This article goes into much more detail than this chapter's description of events for TF 1-35 Armor.

³²² Jonathan Finer, "How US Forces Found Iraq's Most-Wanted Man," *Washington Post*, 9 June 2006; Joshua Partlow and Michael Abromowitz, "Officials Detail Zarqawi's Last Hour," *Washington Post*, 13 June 2006.

Despite Coalition efforts to keep troop movements secret, there were rumors that the Coalition was about to start an AL FAJR-style operation in Ramadi.³²³ AQI mid- and high-level leaders left the city *en masse* for safe havens in the Jazeerah area, the southern end of Lake Tharthar, the Hadithah-Hit Corridor, Al Qaim, and Syria. Residents also began preparing to evacuate. A number of AQI fighters remained, however, preparing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against Coalition forces in the event a major operation commenced. Having learned from Operation AL FAJR and Operation SAYYAD II,³²⁴ these fighters did not plan to confront the Coalition, but instead relied on IEDs planted throughout the city to thwart its advance.³²⁵ That approach did make the Coalition's movement less confrontational, but also potentially more deadly because of the number, size, and complexity of IEDs that were used. MacFarland received guidance about how to shape the operation; it would not be like Fallujah. According to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, MacFarland "was told, 'fix it; don't destroy it'. It was up to him, his staff and soldiers, to figure out the rest."³²⁶

MacFarland's plan envisioned deliberately moving across the city from west to east, beginning in the western portion of the AO with Task Force 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment (TF 1-35 Armor). In line with that plan, according to Lieutenant Colonel Lechner, RFCT Deputy Commander, there were two approaches and objectives: 1) conduct conventional operations to secure the city from AQI led insurgent dominance and 2) build Iraqi security forces, especially police, along with a municipal structure and popular support for long term success.³²⁷

But before completely settling into their AOs, MacFarland saw Zarqawi's death as an opportunity to seize the initiative. On 14 June, elements of the RFCT attacked into Ramadi from the south across the old railroad bridge in Tam'eem. MacFarland used a "swing force of three maneuver companies and an engineer company to weight the main effort" and shifted the force from one maneuver battalion to the next to confuse the enemy; to penetrate and create combat outposts (COP) within Ramadi. By the end of June, the Brigade had established four COPs in the southern and southeastern portions of the city.³²⁸

In addition to taking immediate action to establish footholds in the south, the RFCT saw an immediate need in the north of the city to secure the hospital and medical university. Insur-

³²³ Operation AL FAJR was a large-scale Coalition and Iraqi assault on the city of Fallujah in November 2004 to rid the city of insurgents. For more information, see Matt M. Matthews, *Operation AL FAJR: A Study in Army and Marine Corps Joint Operations* (Ft. Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006).

³²⁴ SAYYAD II comprised a series of operations in Western Al Anbar in the summer of 2005 that targeted insurgent areas. Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Estes, *US Marines in Iraq, 2004-2005: Into the Fray*, (History Division, US Marine Corps, 2011).

³²⁵ Joshua Partlow, "Zarqawi Group Vows to Press Attacks," *Washington Post*, 12 June 2006.

³²⁶ Robert Gates, Speech at the Association of the United States Army Conference, Washington, DC, 10 Oct 2007.

³²⁷ LTC Jim Lechner, USA, Retired, former Deputy Commander, RFCT, 16 Jan 2014 email, "Anbar."

³²⁸ COPs Iron, Spear, Eagle's Nest, and Falcon.

gent control of the hospital was not only a tactical problem, it presented a humanitarian crisis as the insurgents had expelled the hospital staff and shut the facility down, leaving the populace without medical care. It was during the early stages of setting the conditions in the area, both the city and its environs, that LTC Lechner assessed the status of the Ramadi police forces and tribal support. At the time there were about 50 policemen located at two stations located outside of Camp Ramadi. Although totally ineffective and fighting for their very lives under Col Ibriham Khalil's leadership they would provide the seed corn for what was to become a robust security force. In late summer 3/8 Marines took back the hospital from the insurgents and established an outpost east of the hospital. This nascent police force assisted the Marines by working the civil-military issues in the area.

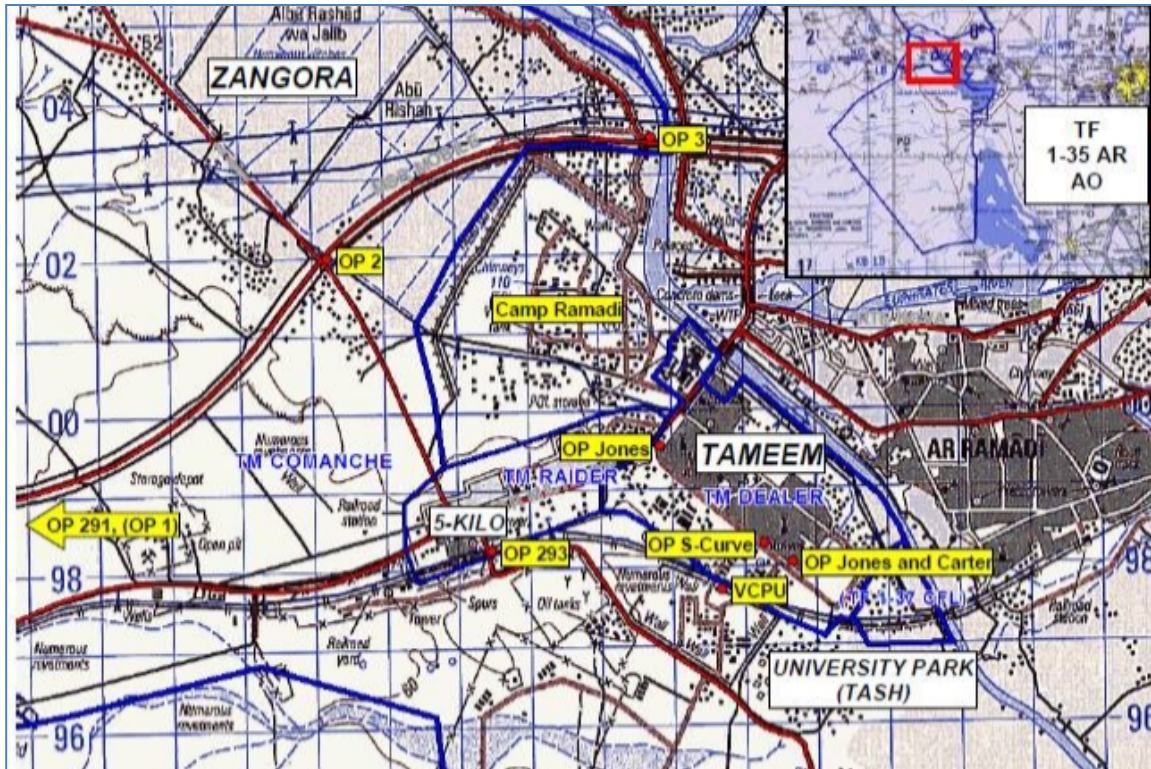
As the rest of the story focuses on work at the battalion level, it is important to note that there was an effective team at the brigade that was working the ISF development and in particular the police efforts in conjunction with tribal engagement—they couldn't do one without the other.³²⁹ They would first work the suburbs to the west and northwest of the city and then, when the time was right, support police development in the city. Key leader engagement would see its first opportunities in the west and southwest of the city in Task Force 1-35 Armor's area of responsibility, primarily with the Albu-Risha.

B. Task Force 1-35 Armor

TF 1-35 Armor deployed from Kuwait to Iraq on 26 May 2006. They, along with TF 1-6 Infantry would replace Task Force 1-172 (1st Battalion, 172nd Armor, Vermont Army National Guard, a four-company battalion with an enormous AO). Although the number of Soldiers was about the same, according to Lieutenant Colonel Tony Deane, TF 1-35 Armor Commander, "now you split the problem set, you had two battalion commanders and two battalion staffs working on that same area."³³⁰ TF 1-6 Infantry would be responsible for the area north of the Euphrates and north of Ramadi city, and TF 1-35 Armor would assume responsibility for the area west and southwest of the Euphrates (see Figure 7-3). During the transfer of authority, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Lovejoy, Commander, TF 1-172, introduced LTC Deane to the various tribal leaders in the area. One of whom was Sheikh Ahmed Bezia Albu-Risha. The Bezia clan had supported the Coalition for a long time and would figure prominently in the upcoming fight with AQI.

³²⁹ The RFCT team responsible for Iraqi Security Force development and tribal engagement was Lieutenant Colonel Jim Lechner, Deputy Commander, RFCT, Major Teddy Gates, MEF Police Implementation Officer, Captain Travis Patriquin, Brigade S9 (killed in action, Dec 2006), Captain Jason West, the S1 representative (killed in action in July 2006), Captain Mike Murphy, S3 representative and several other officers from the S3, S4 and military police. Lechner 16 Jan 2014 email.

³³⁰ Colonel Anthony Deane, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 12 Oct 2010.



Map courtesy COL Tony Deane

Figure 7-3. TF 1-35 Armor AO

1. The fight, the fronts and the AOs

LTC Deane described his fight as an economy of force effort with two major fronts in three different AOs. Economy of force speaks for itself; according to Deane, he didn't have the assigned or attached US forces to accomplish the mission as stated. To make up the shortfall, he was expected to develop ISF, army and police, to fill the gaps and eventually take over from the Coalition. Later, Deane recognized this as a good thing:

The lack of available US combat power forced us into a close relationship with the Iraqi forces and self-generating or augmenting transition teams for each Iraqi security force unit. This support provided to the ISF would likely not have occurred if US forces had been more robust.³³¹

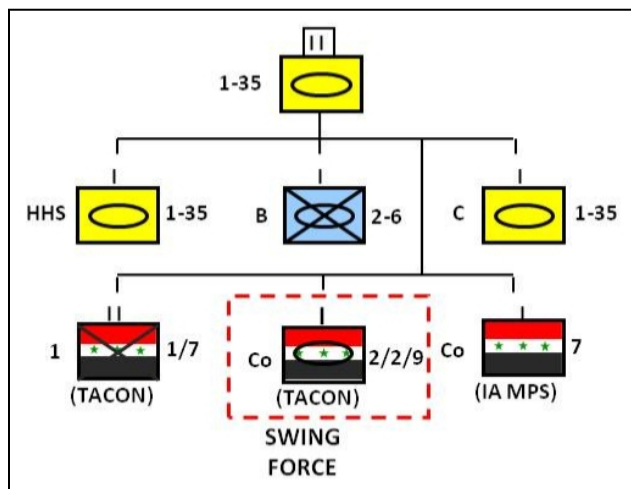
The impact and benefits of this became clearer when Lieutenant Colonel Kris Stillings, USMC, Military Transition Team (MiTT) Commander for the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division (1/1/7) offered, "If you give me 10 guys [to augment the MiTT], I'll give you 300 [in return]."³³² A deal that Deane readily accepted. In addition to having tactical con-

³³¹ Deane, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," 81.

³³² Deane, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," 81.

trol (TACON) of 1/1/7 of the Iraq Army, TF 1-35 was also supported by an Iraqi Military Police Company and Iraqi Tank Company (see Figure 7-4).

The two major fronts in this phase of the operation were the “incredibly lethal fight to wrest control of Ramadi back from Al Qaeda and the battle to link the population with the government of Iraq.”



Courtesy COL Tony Deane

Figure 7-4. TF 1-35 Task Organization

LTC Deane saw his battle space as three distinct AOs. Best viewed on the map at Figure 7-3, Charlie Company (Team Comanche) was responsible (from north-west to south) for the Tribal Region of Zangora, Routes Michigan and Mobile to the west, Camp Ramadi, the desert region to the south and the Anbar University. The Zangora area itself was relatively quiet and the tribes were supportive of the Coalition.

Bravo Company, 2-6 Infantry (Team Dealer) was responsible for Tam’eem, a violent and densely populated city of 40,000.

Headquarters Company was responsible for supporting the ISF sector of 5-

Kilo.³³³ LTC Deane described the level of violence in 5-Kilo as relatively low, but noted that this could have been the result of a lower level of population control exercised by the ISF. At times, Deane was unable to develop actionable intelligence on the area, and felt that it, under the eyes of the ISF, became a haven for Sunni rejectionists, those that rejected the legitimacy of the Iraqi Government, and possible AQI operatives.

2. Building Iraqi Security Force capacity

The second front in Deane’s two-front fight for this part of Ramadi was “...to link the population with the government of Iraq.” According to Deane:

If we can get them to join the police, then we’re not arming the tribes, because now they’re in the police and we are arming them as policemen.³³⁴ Additionally, they get some training; they take an oath; they’re getting paid by the government, which is

³³³ Extracted from Deane, “Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle.” Charlie Company comprised a tank company headquarters, tank platoon, the battalion scout platoon, and the battalion mortar platoon augmented with tankers from the Battalion HHC. Bravo Company, 2-6 Infantry was a mechanized company with an attached tank platoon.

³³⁴ The battalion was accused of arming the tribes; the point was that since they joined the police before they were armed, that accusation was untrue.

bringing economic benefit to the area. Since they are getting paid by the government, they now have a vested interest in the government succeeding.

The brigade and battalion commanders realized that reaching an end state of transitioning Ramadi, and subsequently Al Anbar, to Iraqi control depended on recruiting Iraqi soldiers and police forces and developing them to be able to work independently. Although there had been numerous recruitment drives in the past, simply holding events without credible Iraqi sponsorship was not working. Some of the recruitment drives were even deadly. The one that most people recall occurred on 5 January 2006 at the Glass Factory outside of the city. A suicide bomber killed 56 recruits and wounded 60 more.³³⁵ All part of AQI's murder and intimidation campaign.

Deane, after a number of social visits, broached the challenges of recruiting with Sheikh Ahmed. Ahmed explained that although the candidates would go to the recruitment drives, when they got home, they were subject to AQI intimidation and would not go back. Deane suggested that they conduct the drives in the tribal areas and ship the recruits out to training on the same day, that way, Deane observed, we "... only force them to be brave once." Ahmed agreed. The first new style recruitment drive was set for 4 July 2006 at the Bezia family compound. Worried about suicide bombers, Charlie Company provided tight local security. Although suicide bombers were not a problem at this location, mortars were. AQI mortared the compound from across the river in TF 1-6 Infantry's AO. Deane rushed to Sheikh Ahmed's house, "We'll stop! We didn't mean to put your family at risk!" Ahmed responded, "Absolutely not! We are going to see this thing through." At that moment, Deane recalled, he started looking at these tribal leaders as true patriots, "It is one thing to put yourself at risk, but it's another to risk your family's life."³³⁶

TF 1-35 recruited 80 police candidates that day. Less than hoped for but more than the 12 to 20 that had been recruited at previous drives. The Coalition held the recruitment drives at Ahmed's house every month thereafter.³³⁷

Soon thereafter, Ahmed became absorbed with managing the family business and Deane saw less of him. Sheikh Sattar then became the principle spokesman for the tribe. Deane described Sattar:

Word on the street was "He's got a business. He might be a little bit shady. He wasn't the brains of the operation." But Sattar was there and had a lot of charisma. When he walked in the room, everybody looked at him. He was just a real, real forceful guy. He was always immaculately dressed, robes were never dirty. And he

³³⁵ Monty Morin, "Suicide Bomber Kills Dozens of Iraqi Police Recruits and Two Americans," *Stars and Stripes*, 6 Jan 2006.

³³⁶ Deane interview, 12 Oct 2010.

³³⁷ The recruitment drives continued with several in July and August; each one brought in a couple hundred candidates. In September, the numbers started to drop off. Deane sensed "donor fatigue"—the tribes had committed half of their able-bodied men to the police and they were in training in Jordan. The other half was needed at home to protect the families.

carried chrome plated, ivory handled, Colt 45 Sesquicentennial Issue with the state of Texas on it. It was really a sight to behold.

Deane regularly met with Sheikh Sattar and, as Sattar's reputation grew, other Sheikhs joined the discussions. It was apparent that the Albu-Risha tribe was gaining in importance and expanding its contacts outside its traditional area. One of the Sheikhs who attended these meetings was Sheikh Khaled Ali Albu-Jassim (see Figure 7-5). Sheikh Khaled was instrumental in working with Col Khalid, the Ramadi Police Chief in opening the first police station in the northern suburbs along the highway in Task Force 1-6 Infantry's area. In August, Sheikh Khaled visited the Albu-Aetha tribe to the north of Ramadi to discuss rejecting AQI. AQI captured and beheaded him and held the body.³³⁸ This murder and act of disrespect enraged the tribes; local history points to this event, more than any other, as the catalyst for the Awakening.³³⁹ Colonel MacFarland also recognized the importance of the event, calling it a "turning point."

C. Confusing Signals—the Fog of War?

On 17 August 2006, the Coalition's senior intelligence officer for Al Anbar assessed, in a soon-to-be-leaked classified report, that the Multi-National Forces and Iraqi Security Forces were "no longer capable of militarily defeating the insurgency in Al Anbar."³⁴⁰ He went on to report that the tribal system of governance and authority "wholly failed in AO Raleigh and Topeka and has only limited efficacy in AO Denver."³⁴¹ The only exception noted in the report was Fallujah, where the tribes still functioned despite "local politics in Al Anbar [being] anemic or dysfunctional due to insurgent intimidation...."³⁴²

³³⁸ Some accounts indicate that his body was left in the desert.

³³⁹ Deane, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle"; Deane interview, 12 Oct 2010.

³⁴⁰ I-MEF G2, "State of the Emergency in Al Anbar," I MEF G-2, 17 Aug 2006, cleared for open publication 16 Dec 2010 by the Office of Security Review, Department of Defense and declassified by US Central Command Memorandum 10-012, at the request of Dr. William Knarr. Ricks, "Situation Called Dire in West Iraq."

³⁴¹ I-MEF G2, "State of the Emergency in Al Anbar," 1. See Appendix D for maps of various areas.

³⁴² I-MEF G2, "State of the Emergency in Al Anbar," 4.



Courtesy COL Tony Deane

Figure 7-5. 20 July 2006 at Sheikh Sattar's house. LTC Deane in the middle, Sheikh Sattar on the far left, and Sheikh Khaled Ali Abu-Jassim, third from left

While a number of Coalition senior leaders in Al Anbar characterized the report as basically accurate when read in its entirety, the report seemed to ignore successes in AO Denver, in particular Al Qaim, and the recent grassroots developments in the Corridor. In Ramadi, the recent tribal initiative and the nascent local militia known as the Anbar Revolutionaries promised another opportunity for organized resistance.³⁴³ With the right mix of leadership and vision, conditions were about to improve.³⁴⁴

D. An awakening

On 2 September, LTC Deane met with approximately 20 Sheikhs at Sattar's compound. Unexpectedly, but well planned and researched in accordance with their constitution, they declared an "Emergency Council" enabling them to collectively partner with the Coalition to rid Al Anbar of AQI. Part of the declaration included the ouster of Governor Mamoun which they claimed was also legal under their constitution. Realizing that the impact of such a declaration exceeded the bounds of his authorities, Deane commended the council for their commitment

³⁴³ John Ward Anderson, "Iraqi Tribes Strike Back at Insurgents," *Washington Post*, 7 Mar 2006. By summer 2006, the Thuwar al-Anbar (Anbar Revolutionaries) had reformed since its earlier dissolution after the death of Lieutenant General Sa'ab Manfi al-Rawi.

³⁴⁴ Ned Parker and Mohamed al-Kubacy, "Arm Tribes to Fight Al Qaeda, Say Sunnis," *The Times*, 13 Sept 2006.

and cautioned them that the ouster of Mamoun was unlikely to happen. Deane immediately updated COL MacFarland after the meeting and recommended he meet with Sattar.

MacFarland understood that Governor Mamoun was considered part of the legitimate but still fragile central government in Baghdad and the Marine Expeditionary Force's (MEF's) guidance was to work with Mamoun, rather than the tribes.³⁴⁵ Additionally, the MEF leadership was also meeting with a group of senior Iraqi Sheikhs in Jordan, and felt that any engagement with local sheikhs might undermine those efforts.

MacFarland, however, was skeptical. He had been spending a lot of the time with Mamoun, and it didn't seem to be going anywhere. Furthermore, the tribes did not see Mamoun as "legitimate" and, in fact, were convinced that he was supporting AQI.³⁴⁶ On the other hand, Colonel Pete Devlin, G-2 for the MEF, and others cautioned MacFarland that it was Sattar's reputation that was questionable and that Sattar might not be trustworthy. MacFarland valued Devlin's advice and understood the MEF's reluctance, but,

...somebody had thrown me a floatation device. And Pete was telling me, "Be careful, that floatation device isn't US Coast Guard Auxiliary approved, and it may not hold your head above water." I said, "Who cares. It's better than nothing." I grabbed it and it worked.

The solution came in the form of a local compromise. TF 1-35 Armor and the RFCT staff convinced the Emergency Council that if they did not pursue the ouster of Mamoun the local coalition forces would, in turn, work with them.

Despite all the cautioning, reluctance, and skepticism MacFarland encountered from higher headquarters, he met with the Sheikhs on 9 September (see Figure 7-6). He described the setting:

When I walked into the room, it was like a scene out of Lawrence of Arabia. All the tribes were represented by their sheikhs in their finest robes, and there at the front was an empty seat for me to go and sit down next to Sheikh Sattar...They plunked me right down in the middle of this and began to rattle off their manifesto, their 11 planks of their platform for the Awakening movement. They were all good, and as I've said before, had somebody asked me to write something like that, it would have been very close to what they came up with.

³⁴⁵ The MEF, dual-hatted as the MNF-W headquarters, was RFCT's higher headquarters in Al Anbar.

³⁴⁶ Deane interview, 12 Oct 2010.



Courtesy COL Tony Deane

Figure 7-6. 9 September 2006 meeting of LTC Deane (2nd from left), Sheikh Sattar (4th from left), COL MacFarland (5th from left), and the Ramadi Sheiks representing the Awakening Council

According to MacFarland, the key part of the Emergency Council Proclamation was “where they said that an attack on the Coalition Forces will be viewed as an attack upon members of our tribes....Within days of a tribe signing on, attacks in those areas on friendly forces would drop to zero.”

Unfortunately, in the midst of this rising tribal movement, the MEF G-2’s previously mentioned classified assessment was leaked to the press on 11 September 2006.³⁴⁷ Despite the negative impact of the report on public (American) perception, skepticism over working with the tribes and mixed messages received at Multi-National Force–Iraq, the Awakening gained momentum.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq.”

³⁴⁸ General George Casey, MNF-I Commander, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, Pentagon, 16 Dec 2010. Casey commented that the report wasn’t very helpful: “What I remember is it was an intelligence assessment without any assessment of the enemies’ weaknesses. And so there was no way to judge opportunities. It was just a very, very negative report, and it didn’t track with what a lot of the commanders were saying. So, Zilmer and I had a chat....I said, “You need to take a look at it. You need to give me your assessment of what is going on out here.”

On 14 September 2006, Sheikh Sattar publically announced the Awakening—the *Sahawa*³⁴⁹ (see Figure 7-7). Sattar, along with 40 other sheikhs from the Ramadi area, signed the Emergency Council proclamation to work with the Coalition to drive AQI from Al Anbar. The movement would come to be known as the *Sahawa Al Anbar*, the Anbar Awakening.³⁵⁰

TF 1-35 continued to “clear, hold and build” in their AO—much of it made possible through their efforts to engage with the Iraqis and build ISF capacity. They conducted extremely dangerous but effective operations throughout their area of responsibility, and in particular in clearing the university (Operation TOGA) and securing Tam’eem (Operation DEALER).³⁵¹

Partnering with the Iraqis was progressing, and there were a number of other developments. At a news conference on 29 September 2006, COL MacFarland gave a progress report.

The last time I talked to you [14 July 2006], I told you that we were at a tipping point in the battle for Ramadi. Well, I think we’ve actually tipped. Attacks are down 25 percent over the past couple of months, and coalition forces, together with the Iraqi security forces, have steadily increased their presence inside of the city. The Iraqi police recruiting has soared tenfold, and the Iraqi army readiness has improved to the point where Iraqi army battalions are now assuming the lead in portions of the city and its suburbs.³⁵²

Additionally, on 8 October 2006, the Iraqi Minister of Interior authorized Sheikh Sattar to take all action necessary to exterminate terrorism in Al Anbar Province, and to organize two “contingent Groups with each counting 750 members in each group in the city of Ramadi.” The contingent groups would be called Emergency Response Units. This was a sig-



Courtesy COL Tony Deane

Figure 7-7. Sheikh Sattar announces the Awakening from his compound

³⁴⁹ Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq.”

³⁵⁰ *Sahawa Al Anbar* has also been referred to as the Al Anbar Salvation Council with its military wing as the Thuwar al-Anbar (Anbar Revolutionaries).

³⁵¹ Deane, “Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle”; and Deane interview, 12 Oct 2010, provide excellent details and lessons on TF 1-35 Armor’s time in Ramadi.

³⁵² DOD News transcript, 29 Sept 2006, Presenter: Army Colonel Sean MacFarland, Commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

nificant amount of power to bestow on Sheik Sattar, as well as an increase in authorized forces for Ramadi. Things were looking up.³⁵³

However, despite the progress, Ramadi was still unstable. On 18 October, AQI staged a parade in Ramadi celebrating the designation of Ramadi as its Caliphate. Approximately 60 insurgents paraded along 17th Street waving AK47s, RPKs, and rocket-propelled grenades.³⁵⁴ The area became a prime target for Task Force 1st Battalion, 6th Marines (TF 1/6 Marines).

E. Task Force 1/6 Marines

LtCol Journey, commander of TF 1/6 Marines, had the main effort for the Brigade. He was responsible for the center of a very dangerous city (see Figure 7-8 for area orientation). The government was under siege. Every day a contingent of Marines would escort Governor Mamoun from his house to the Government Center. On many a days, due to frequent spikes in violence, Mamoun was the only person who showed up for work.

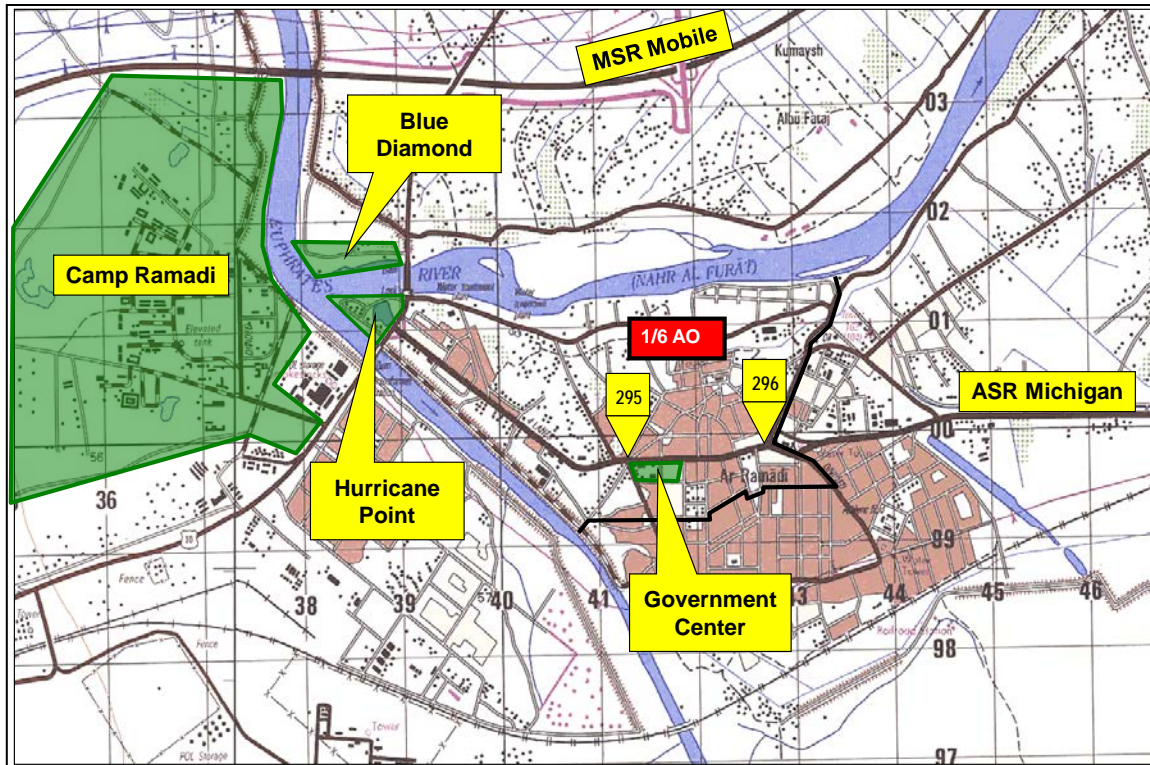
This was not Journey's first "pump" to Iraq. He commanded 1/6 Marines in Fallujah from March to October of 2005. In Fallujah, he partnered with elements of the Iraqi Army, provided Police Transition Teams out of hide, and started standing up police stations. He employed his battalion as a Combined Action Battalion based on lessons from the Marines Combined Action Program in Vietnam. He saw that the MiTT's mission quickly exceeded the capability of the eight or nine people assigned, so he started partnering Marine platoons with Iraqi platoons and companies with companies. The focus was not on boot camp training of individuals but on employing Iraqi teams "in such a way that the supported and supporting relationship shifts to the host nation, the Iraqi Security Forces element."³⁵⁵

Journey also had the benefit of talking to LtCol Dale Alford, a close friend and former commander of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines in Al Qaim from August 2005 to March 2006. Alford had successfully "lived among the people," legitimately linked the tribes to the Iraqi Government through the "Desert Protector" program, and helped transform the Al Qaim area from an AQI sanctuary to an AQI exclusion area within seven months.

³⁵³ Staff General Ahmed Muhammed Khalaf Al Jabburi, Deputy Assistant in the Western Area, based upon verbal order from the Minister of Interior to organize Al Anbar Police, dated 8 Oct 2006. Translated document provided by Colonel Anthony Deane, former commander 1-35 Armor. Per this order, Habbaniyah was also authorized a contingent of 750 police.

³⁵⁴ Colonel John Charlton, former Commander, 1st BCT, 3rd Infantry Division, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Alexandria, VA, 20 Oct 2010, and a presentation Charlton provided during his tour in Ramadi.

³⁵⁵ Colonel Bill Journey, commander of TF 1/6 Marines, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Joint Forces Command, Norfolk, VA, 3 Mar 2010.



Courtesy 1/6 Marines

Figure 7-8. TF 1/6 Marines Area Orientation

In late September 2006, LtCol Journey sat down with COL MacFarland the day before their RIP with 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines (3/8) to lay out his “four-block plan...for the next 30, 60, 90, 120 days.” It was obvious to MacFarland that Journey was on track: “He was completely inside my head intent-wise. He actually took it to another level at the battalion level and instituted some really neat things there that we then used elsewhere within the brigade footprint.”³⁵⁶

Journey developed three lines of operations that were complementary, mutually supporting, and executed concurrently:

- Neutralize anti-Iraqi elements and criminal threats to improving security and stability.
- Train, employ and operate in coordination with partnered Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army.
- Conduct and support civil-military operations/information operations efforts that develop the local populace’s trust and confidence in the abilities of their elected leaders and ISF.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

³⁵⁷ LtCol William Journey, *1st Battalion, 6th Marines Ramadi Overview*, presentation, received 3 Mar 2010.

1. Taking back the city

The situation facing TF 1/6 Marines was clear: the insurgents owned the center of the city; except for the Government Center, there was no permanent ISF presence in the heart of the city. The Marines' partnership battalion, the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Iraqi Brigade of the 7th Iraqi Army Division (2/1/7) was working on the problem from the "outside-in." That is, the battalion was located at Camp Ramadi with a company and outposts in the northwest sector of the city. In partnership, the new combined task force needed to start working "inside-out."

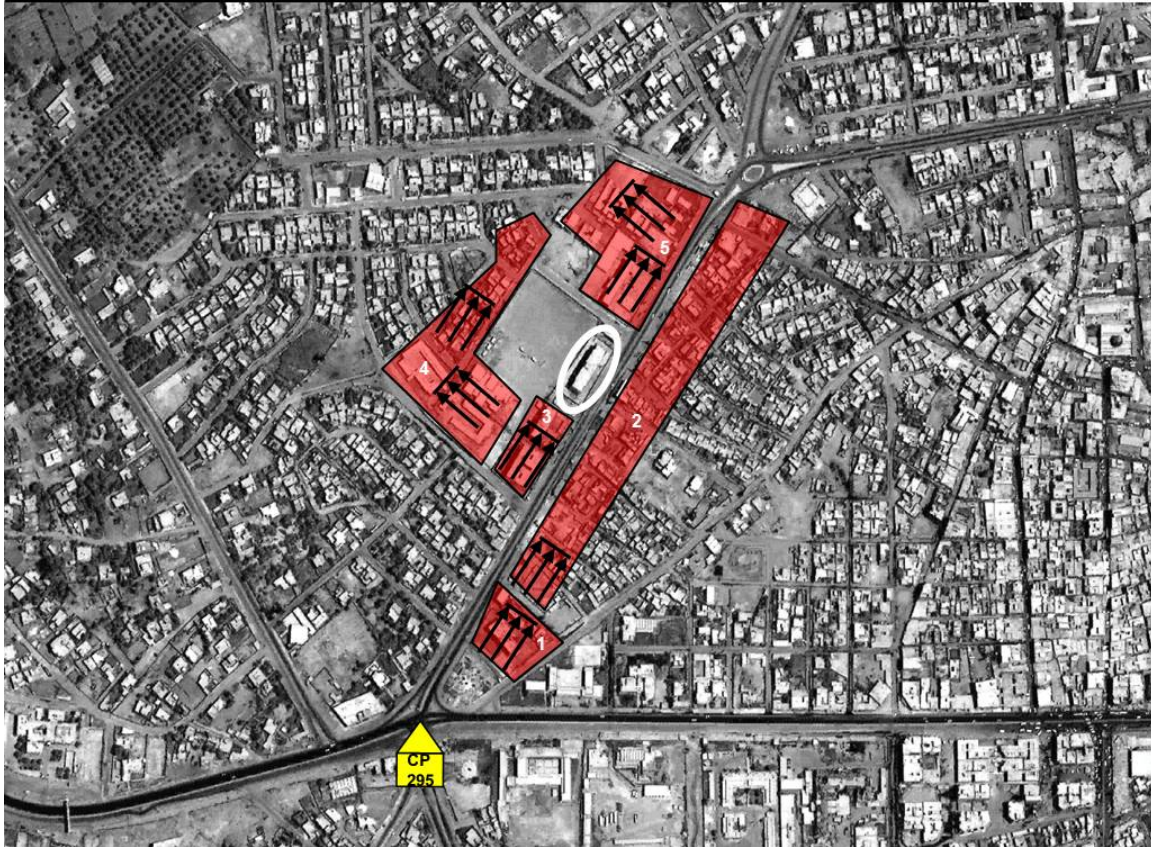
To create maneuver room, Journey had to "move the violence away from the Government Center." His plan was to seize a piece of terrain away from the Government Center as a starting point for expanding into the city. He chose a building on 17th Street, the street used by AQI to celebrate its new Caliphate. On 27 October 2006, ten days after the AQI celebration parade, 1/6 Marines with their Iraqi partners executed Operation BELLEAU WOOD to plant the first Iraqi Security Station (not called a combat outpost) in the heart of the city and in the heart of insurgent-controlled territory—a bold move that no doubt shocked the insurgents. Plus, they made it clear, the Iraqi and Coalition forces weren't leaving! (See Figure 7-9; the 17th Street Security Station is in the white circle. Use CP 295 to relate it to Figure 7-8).

Journey immediately established a contingent of Iraqi military at the new Security Station, but he needed police. Although Sheikh Sattar was coming through on his commitments to provide police recruits, those tribal members were not necessarily going into the city to be policemen. Some of them worked on the outskirts of the city at the West Ramadi Police Station, but they did not venture too far from their local police station. According to Journey, the value in local police is that they needed to come from the local area; in this case, from within the city center itself.

Colonel Ahmed Hamid Sharqi, who had been with the Ramadi Police since its inception, accompanied Journey to the Jazeerah area to link up with 20 Jordan-trained IPs who were supposed to support the Ramadi Station.³⁵⁸ However, the new IPs refused to go to Ramadi and were supported by the Jazeerah tribal leader who told Ahmed that everyone was responsible for "cleaning up their own mess." Ahmed responded, "Ramadi is not a specific area for one tribe; it's a mix from everybody; we need the help of everybody!" However, he argued to no avail. Colonel Ahmed and Journey left with no police and no support from Jazeerah. As Colonel Ahmed recalled, "The Marines told me after the meeting, 'Forget about it Colonel Ahmed. Don't worry; we are your tribe now.'"³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Colonel Ahmed Hamid Sharqi, Police Chief of the North Ramadi Police District, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, North Ramadi Precinct, 7 Apr 2010.

³⁵⁹ Sharqi interview, 7 Apr 2010.



Courtesy 1/6 Marines

Figure 7-9. 17th Street Security Station in the middle of AQI-held territory in the center of the city seized and held by 1/6 Marines during Operation BELLEAU WOOD³⁶⁰

2. Developing the police

While attempting to bring in police from surrounding areas, Journey had been working with the Governor to identify police candidates within the city. Journey noted that Mamoun, despite his own personal security issues and understanding the need for a police force, had not been too helpful overall. But one day Mamoun, quite unexpectedly provided the names of 120 candidates from the city “that had been vetted and screened.” Journey and his TF did not waste time “...within 24 hours we built a police station for them with 24/7 Marine presence. That was the Al Warar Police Station [located about a kilometer west of OP 295 along Route Michigan] which was absolutely the turning point for follow-on combined actions within the city.” Mamoun also nominated the police chief, Lieutenant Colonel Salam al-Alwani, an incredibly “brave and dedicated Iraqi.”³⁶¹ This was bad news for the insurgents. According to Journey, “A

³⁶⁰ Extracted from 1/6 Marines Operation BELLEAU WOOD Concept of the Operations.

³⁶¹ Journey interview, 3 Mar 2010.

local security force is an insurgent's worst nightmare because they know who the bad guys are....This was not going to be a good news story for the enemy."³⁶²

At the time, the TF only had one Coalition police transition team from the National Guard, located at the West Ramadi Police Station. In order to embed stations throughout the city, they needed to develop augmentation teams out of hide to partner with the developing police stations and substations. The first would be assigned to the new Al Warar Police Station and then to the previously built 17th Street Security Sub-station.

As noted earlier, higher headquarters tended not to notice the bottom-up change in Al Anbar, and the press even less so. Just as TF 1/6 Marines was bringing a permanent Iraqi and Coalition presence to the heart of what the insurgents had just declared their capital, a *Washington Post* article entitled, "Anbar Picture Grows Clearer and Bleaker," cited a mid-November updated version of the 17 August 2006 classified report indicating there had been no improvement, or expected improvement in Al Anbar security conditions.³⁶³

F. TF 1/6 Marines: The Third Line of Operation

As Journey's lines of operation were to be developed and executed concurrently, Major Daniel Zappa, the TF 1/6 Marines executive officer was responsible for developing the third line of operation, doctrinally referred to as Civil-Military Operations and Information Operations. Three essential team members were Mr. Adel Abouhana, Cultural Advisor to the TF commander; Lieutenant Colonel Salam al-Awani, the local police chief; and Captain Scott Kish, the TF Civil Affairs Officer. One of the initiatives, dubbed "Voice of Ramadi," was to use speaker systems, like those in the mosques, to broadcast their message to the population. At first, mobile systems were used, but eventually, static broadcast systems were set up at all the IP Stations. Adel sought IP officers with strong charismatic voices and developed and broadcast messages relevant to the local communities. Some of the messages explicitly thanked the community "for the information that you are providing on the insurgents." This technique served to plant seeds of doubt in the minds of the insurgents.³⁶⁴

But a credible message needed more than broadcast and leaflets, it needed deeds to show it was effective. Those deeds came in the form of increased security and better living conditions such as trash removal (in this case, including clearing destroyed cars and rubble).

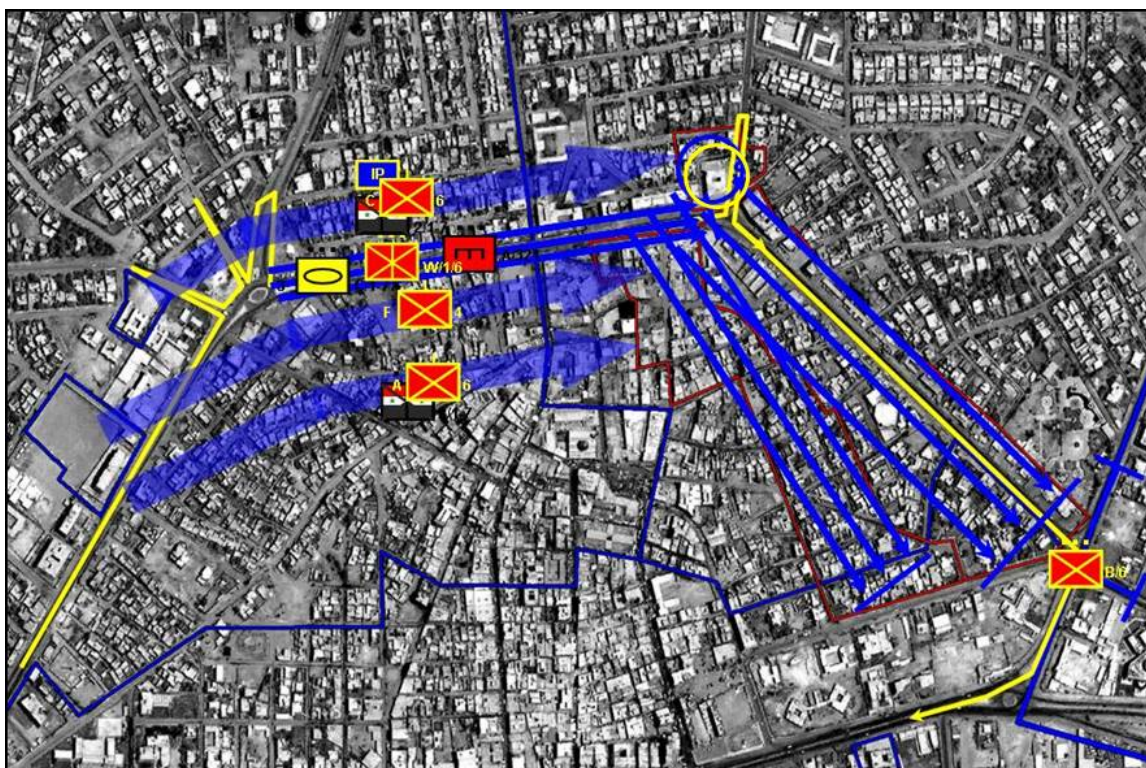
³⁶² Journey interview, 3 Mar 2010. LtCol Journey provided a great account of his first sit down discussion with the Shia Iraqi Army Battalion commander and LtCol Salam, the Sunni Police Chief to address all the potential issues that they as leaders needed to be prepared to address. See transcript in Appendix A, Volume IV of this project.

³⁶³ Dafna Linzer and Thomas Ricks, "Anbar Picture Grows Clearer and Bleaker," *Washington Post*, 28 Nov 2006.

³⁶⁴ Major Daniel Zappa, former Executive Officer, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Marine Corps University, 22 Mar 2010.

G. The Engineer's Contribution

As TF 1-6 Marines moved from west to east, one of the more challenging projects for the engineers was the Qatana Police Station. Beginning 18 December 2006, Operation HUE CITY set out to construct a station on the northeast corner of Racetrack (see Figure 7-10). Unfortunately, the insurgents knew that the area was prime real estate for an IP station and got there first to rig it and most of the nearby buildings with explosives before TF 1-6 arrived.



Courtesy 1/6 Marines

Figure 7-10. Operation HUE CITY's aim was to construct the Qatana IP Station in the northeast sector of Racetrack (yellow circle)

Lieutenant Scott Graniero, Sapper Platoon leader for 1/6 Marines, planned to construct the station in one of several buildings on the north side of Racetrack. His primary choice was the old Iraqi Sanitation building (also circled in yellow in Figure 7-10). Graniero explains his rationale:

The Sanitation building provided the most observation down all the avenues of approach that we were looking to cover. It was also probably the tallest of the three buildings in that area. And in an urban environment it's always good to be in a build-

ing that's taller than the other buildings around you, because nobody likes to be shot down on by the enemy.³⁶⁵

As the route clearance progressed and the infantry cleared the areas north and south of Racetrack, the engineers emplaced barriers along all the major intersections. According to Graniero, "our biggest fear was that they were going to run a VBIED up into our work area from the side, so we blocked off those intersections." The engineers arrived and occupied the Sanitation building at 0600, barrier materials followed at 0700, and by 0900 the Marines were building the perimeter and fortifying the building.

The smooth beginning to the operation did not last. What began as small arms fire, quickly escalated into a devastating IED attack. Graniero described events beginning at 0930:

I walked into the building to tell the Marines to get up and to start moving sandbags into the building and that is when the IED was triggered on us.... It was really chaotic, nobody knew what was going on inside the building because we were just standing there and the next thing you know the building blows up underneath our feet....We had about ten casualties, mostly guys from Charlie Company, 1/6...we CASEVAC'd them back.

Immediately following the IED attack, the platoon took mortar fire including two effective hits resulting in another ten casualties. "This is when we realized that this building was no longer going to be used as the OP."

Finding the position untenable, Graniero's platoon repositioned. By 1200, they had occupied the former Oil Ministry Building in the same area. The Marines quickly established perimeter security positions and started to fortify that building. At about 1800 they were unloading a recent resupply of meals ready to eat (MRE), when, according to Graniero:

As the Marines were moving the MREs in, they were just tossing them off to the side and one of the Marines had happened to grab a case of MREs threw it, hit the side of the wall, kind of exposed the wood panel open a little bit. Another Marine sees wires running up and down this wall and goes, "What the heck is that?" We then grab flash lights, look behind the wall and as we peel it back we see the 155 rounds double stacked on top of each other nose to nose and with the blasting caps inside the fuse wall. [See Figure 7-11]

Graniero realized that this, and probably other nearby buildings were also rigged and that they had to get out. They moved west down Racetrack toward the Firecracker IP station on the corner and spent the night.

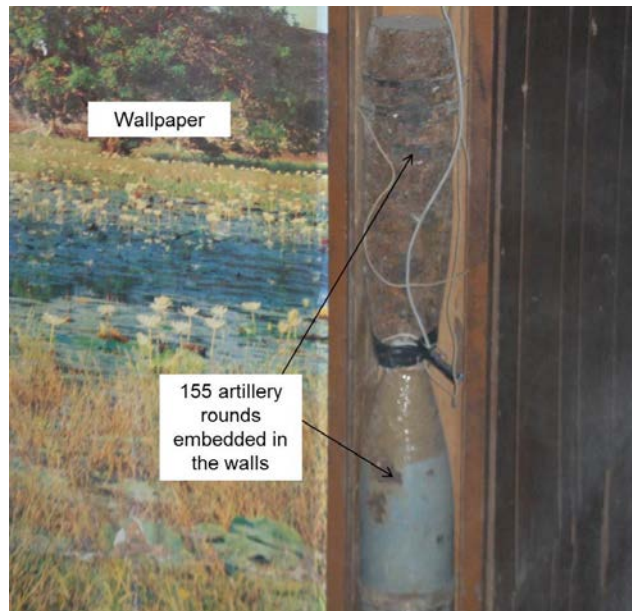
³⁶⁵ Captain Scott Graniero, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Camp Lejeune, 12 Jan 20120.

The next day, Graniero deployed his platoon back to Camp Ramadi and linked up with the 16th Engineer Battalion to re-plan the siting and construction of the Qatana Iraqi Police Station. This demonstration of insurgent determination and capability to deny the center of Ramadi to the Coalition complicated the challenge of establishing the police station. The building that was finally selected was one of the shortest ones in the area because it was the only one there determined to be clear of IEDs. With weeks the Qatana Police Station was manned, but it took several months to complete it.

To the east of TF 1/6 Marines was Task Force 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry (TF 1-9). As TF 1/6 moved west to east, TF 1-9 unexpectedly took a different tack and started from the eastern part of their AO to the west, or as the Task Force commander described it, “eating the donut from the outside in.”

H. Task Force 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment

TF 1-9, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Ferry, arrived in East Ramadi in October 2006. TF 1-9’s mission was to secure East Ramadi and, specifically, the Mula’ab area first and later the eastern sectors of Sofia and Julaybah (see Figure 7-12).



Courtesy 1/6 Marines

Figure 7-11 Insurgents rigged buildings to detonate when Coalition forces entered

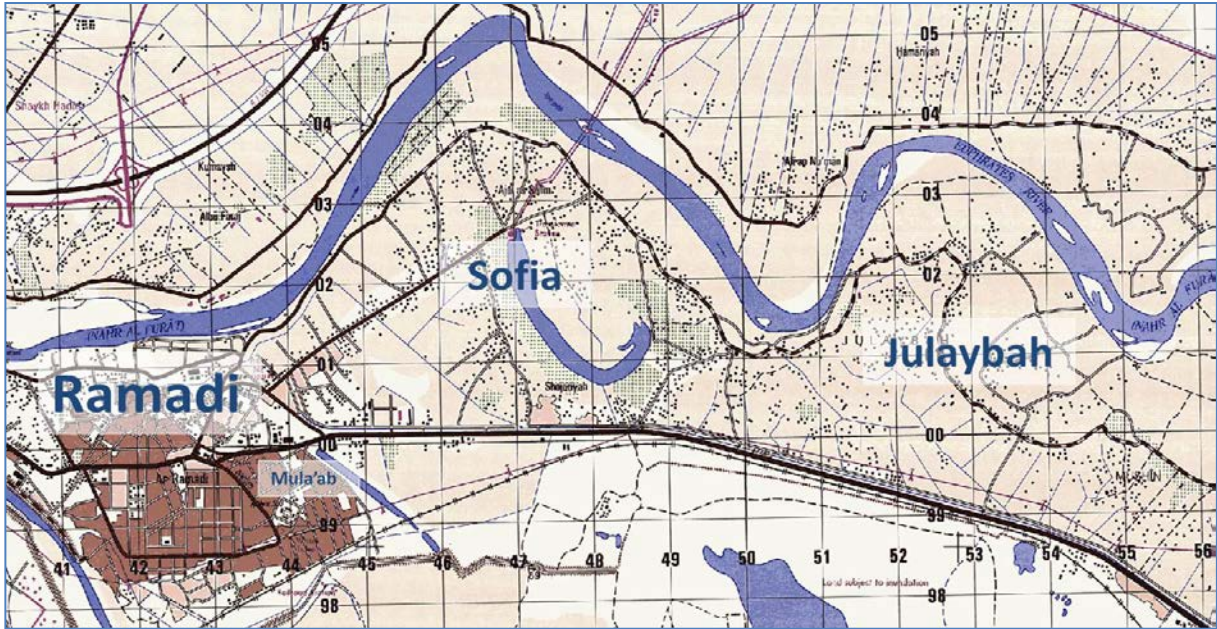


Figure 7-12. TF 1-9 AO, the Mula’ab section of East Ramadi and east through Julaybah

However, AQI’s vicious attack on Sheikh Jassim and the Albu-Souda tribe in Sofia on 25 November reprioritized TF 1-9’s missions into what Ferry would describe as “eating the donut on the outside first.” Instead of directly striking AQI in the Mula’ab area—the center of the “donut”—he attacked AQI’s sanctuary in the shark fins area to the east.³⁶⁶ This minimized AQI’s capability to resupply or reinforce the Mula’ab area. The subsequent fight for the westernmost shark fin, Sofia, has been described by MacFarland as another major turning point in the battles for Al Anbar. One indicator of the critical nature of this fight was that at a time when all Coalition forces seemed stretched to the breaking point, TF 1-9 received a plus-up of two companies from 2/4 BLT of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. According to MacFarland, GEN Casey saw an opportunity to “reinforce success” and additional troops were what TF 1-9 needed to accomplish the mission both in Julaybah, the eastern-most Shark Fin, and then in the Mula’ab. Due to its role, TF 1-9’s story is told in its own volume of this Awakening series, Volume IV-A.

³⁶⁶ See Figure 7-12. The Shark Fins define an area to the east of Ramadi where the profile of the Euphrates on the map resembles two shark fins, one at Sofia and the other at Julaybah.

I. Other Iraqi Leaders Who made a Difference

Security and ISF capacity continued to progress in Ramadi. However, to be effective and to endure, building Iraqi capacity had to be more than a bumper sticker. A number of Iraqis stepped forward to take the lead, knowing they were putting themselves and their families in jeopardy. Most people know of Sheikhs Sattar, Ahmed, Jassim, and others in the Awakening Council. But there were a number of Iraqis outside the tribal leadership affiliation who stepped forward. According to LTC Lechner, Col Khalil was the original Ramadi police chief dedicated



Figure 7-13. Colonel Ahmed Hamid Sharqi

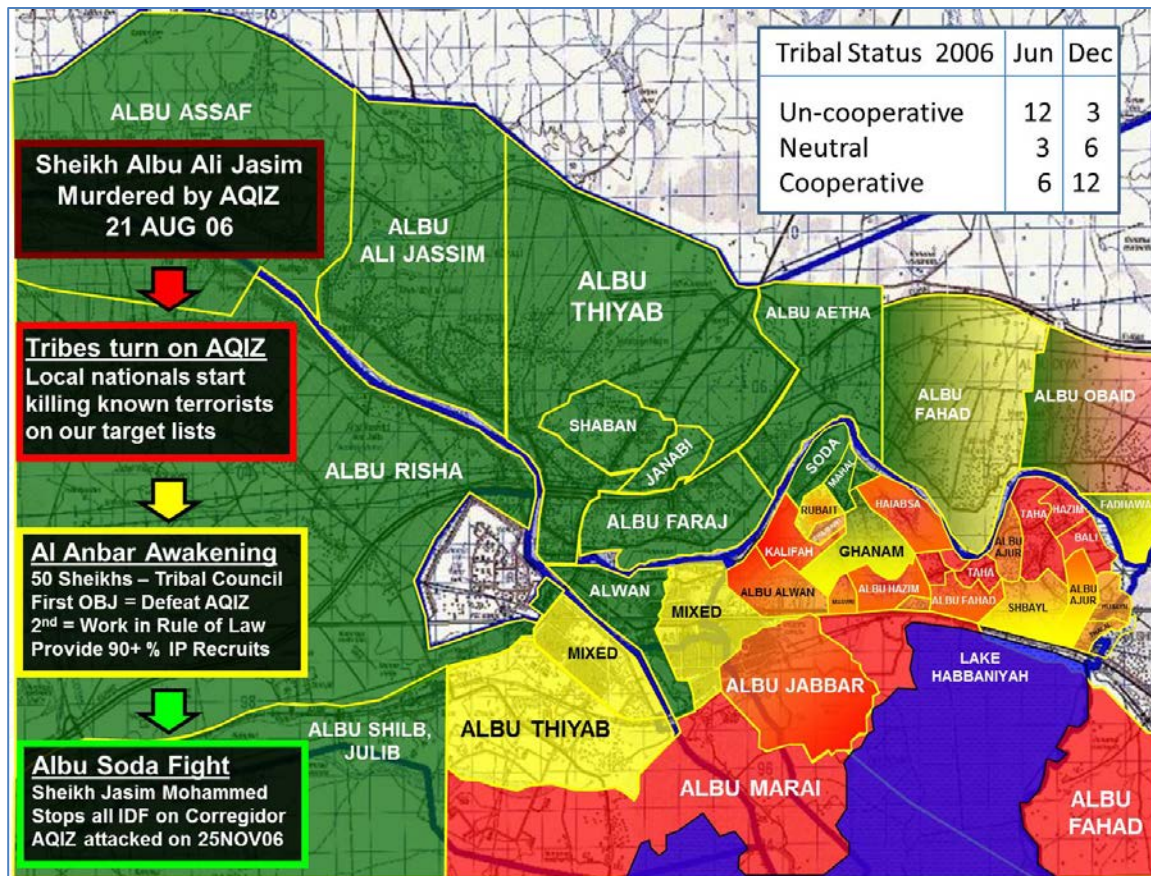
to building an effective force throughout the Ramadi area, starting first in the suburbs with two IP stations and a handful of police to over 5,000 and 25 IP stations in February. Instrumental in establishing the police in the city was LTC Salam al-Awani. According to Maj Zappa, LTC Salam was a “fire breather, he was awesome.” He was the first chief of police in Ramadi and the initial “Voice of Ramadi.” Unfortunately, he was killed in early 2007 by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

Another courageous Iraqi stepped up to take his place—his cousin, Colonel Ahmed Hamid Sharqi. Col Ahmed was relentless in the fight against terrorism and became known as the “Hatchet Man” (see Figure 7-13). Col Ahmed used an axe to break down doors. Soon after, rumors spread about him using the axes to cut off terrorists’ heads. Col Ahmed insisted it wasn’t true, but added that it probably didn’t hurt if the insurgents believed it to be so.³⁶⁷

J. Continued Progress in Ramadi

By December 2006, 12 of the 21 Ramadi-area tribes were cooperating with the Coalition and six more were neutral (see Figure 7-14. Status of Tribal Attitudes towards the Coalition in the Ramadi District in December 2006. The white section in the middle is Camp Ramadi.) This was a total turn-around in the number of tribes classified as cooperative, neutral or uncooperative since the June assessment.

³⁶⁷ Sharqi interview, 7 Apr 2012, and Alex Kingsbury, *US News and World Report*, “In Iraq, US Marines Rely on Allies Like a Hatchet-Wielding Colonel to Keep the Peace,” 30 Oct 2008.



Courtesy RFCT

Figure 7-14. Status of Tribal Attitudes towards the Coalition in the Ramadi District in December 2006. The white section in the middle is Camp Ramadi

COL MacFarland’s RFCT continued to expand its tribal engagement efforts. Despite the successes, there were several notable hard cases. The Albu-Alwan, located in west Ramadi and an area to the east of the city, was one of them. Despite Governor Mamoun’s affiliation with the tribe, they were one of the last to openly support the Coalition. According to MacFarland,

When the Alwanis came into the Awakening, Sattar said to me, “This is the beginning of the end for Al Qaeda. It’s all over now. Now that the Alwanis are with us, they can’t stop us, because now we have a secure part of the city to operate in.”

The other tribe that posed a significant challenge was the Albu-Fahad, located both north and south of the river, to the east of Ramadi city. According to MacFarland (and reflected in Figure 7-15), the northern clans were friendly but elements of the tribe to south were major AQI supporters, until TF 1-9 gained a foothold in the Julaybah area. According to LTC Ferry, Albu-Fahad members were well-educated and relatively well-off thanks to several tribe-owned construction companies. According to COL John Charlton, Commander, 1st BCT, 3rd Infantry Division, known as the “Raiders,” the unit that replaced the RFCT, Sheikh Sattar’s

influence had grown tremendously, and during their initial engagement with the Albu-Fahad leadership Sattar was treated like a “rock star!” The clincher, according to MacFarland, was the Albu-Fahad’s participation in the Ramadi Reconstruction Conference.

Establishing security, winning the confidence of the people, and developing ISF capacity all continued to improve throughout Ramadi and Al Anbar. The next major step was economic development. MacFarland was concerned that there may be a lag in economic development as security stabilized. The Iraqis would expect continued improvement and any lag or gap could offer AQI an opportunity. The first Ramadi Reconstruction Conference was held in January 2007. Not just for those areas in Ramadi in a position to benefit from reconstruction efforts, but also to show those in the embattled neighborhoods that joining the Awakening would bring tangible rewards. The first conference was held in Sheikh Sattar’s home and included local sheiks, local government officials, and contractors such as members of the Albu-Fahad tribe.

K. The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

The first development conference also served as a handover of sorts. COL Charlton, the incoming commander, attended the conference with MacFarland. Charlton wanted to sustain gains the RFCT had made and, in fact, scheduled the first brigade operations to coincide with the end-of-April RIP/TOA between the two units. In addition, he wanted to deny the insurgents the ability to sense any gaps in activity as a result of the changeover of units. To ensure that, the new brigade scheduled back-to-back battalion operations, titled “Secure the population and clear Ramadi” to keep the insurgents off-balance (see Figure 7-15).³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Charlton interview, 20 Oct 2010, and a presentation he provided on his work in Ramadi.



Courtesy COL John Charlton

Figure 7-15. Clearing Operations in Ramadi

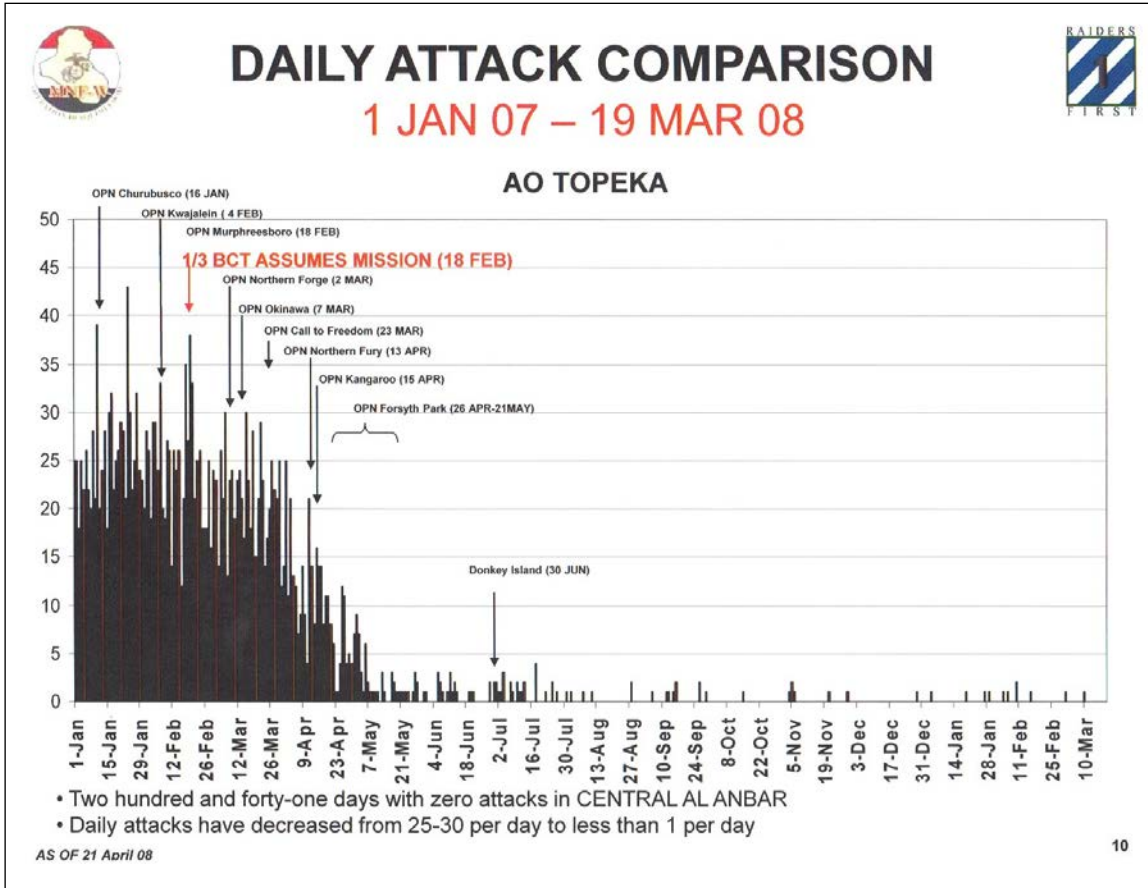
1. Operations in Ramadi

The new operations gave TF 1-9 Infantry the opportunity to turn away from the Shark Fins and eat the “inside of the donut.” The operation in Mula’ab, dubbed Operation MURFREESBORO, was scheduled for 18 February to 10 March 2007. COL Charlton described this area as the “worst of the worse.”

The second operation—OKINAWA—was planned for central Ramadi by TF 1/6 Marines and conducted from 9–20 March. The last was Operation CALL TO FREEDOM conducted by TF 3-69 Armor in south Ramadi from 17–30 March.

The near continuous operations fragmented AQI in Ramadi. Their sources of manpower and resources in the eastern areas of Sofia and Julaybah were locked down, and now the Coalition and the Iraqi forces controlled their so-called Caliphate in Ramadi. The remnants of AQI fled to the Tharthar area, east to the Fallujah District, and into Baghdad.

Evidence of the general success of operations in and around Ramadi is manifest in the precipitous drop in violence there. The reduction in daily attacks in AO Topeka from 18 February 2007 when they assumed the mission, to May 2007 was simply incredible (see Figure 7-16).



Courtesy COL John Charlton

Figure 7-16. Daily Attacks in AO Topeka from 1 January 2007 to 19 March 2008

2. Lake Tharthar region

By late Summer 2007, the security situation in TF 1-9's AO was considered excellent. It was so good, in fact, that the unit was tasked to conduct several air assault operations in Tharthar region to the north.³⁶⁹ Additionally, battalions of the 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army division assumed control for battlespace in the Ramadi area as well as locating a battalion in the Tharthar region in the late summer of 2007.³⁷⁰

3. Economic developments

Charlton and his "Raiders" kept the pressure on AQI by increasing security, ISF capacity, and economic opportunity. But economic opportunities require more than reconstruction. Ac-

³⁶⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Charles P. Ferry, Memorandum for Record, Subject: Summary of Task Force 1-9 IN Combat Operations from 6 Nov 2006 to 1 Dec 2007, 2.

³⁷⁰ Brigadier General Adel Abbas, Commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and LtCol David Graves, USMC, his office in Ramadi, 8 Apr 2010.

ording to Charlton, it is the “second economic layer”—things like an “entrepreneurial spirit,” getting the *souqs* (markets) up and running, expanding the bakeries, opening the business centers, developing skills training—that is the key. Then it’s the manufacturing and the big employers: glass and ceramics factories and others that can take hold and serve as an engine to economic development and expansion. After a while, the society can be self-sustaining.³⁷¹

4. A sustained movement

By early 2007, the movement began to accelerate throughout Al Anbar as the Coalition reinforced areas seeking help to defeat Al Qaeda. On 3 September 2007, one year after Sattar’s announcement, President George W. Bush met with the tribal leaders of Al Anbar and the leadership of Iraq to congratulate them on their successes.³⁷²

As if to drive home the point that freedom from the tyranny of terrorists comes at a price, Sattar was assassinated ten days later. By then the Awakening was essentially self-sustaining; a tribute to all of his work. On 1 September 2008, conditions were stable enough for the Coalition to hand over control of the entire province to the Iraqis.

L. Themes and Lessons

Each volume in this study provides themes corresponding to significant events in each AO. Below are the themes and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in Ramadi; events that were significant and similar or dissimilar to other areas of Al Anbar are also noted.

1. The experience of the Coalition force was extraordinary!

According to COL MacFarland, 40–50% of the brigade were veterans from the brigade’s previous deployment, and with new folks who had previously deployed with other units, the brigade consisted of more than 50% veterans.

About 35% of LTC Ferry’s 1-9 Infantry had served during its deployment as 1-503 AA, and approximately 70% had served previous combat tours. All of the company commanders had previous combat tours and all had come from the Ranger Regiment or the Ranger Training Brigade.³⁷³

LtCol Journey commanded 1/6 Marines in Fallujah from March to October of 2005. He deployed that battalion of veterans one year later to Ramadi.

³⁷¹ Charlton interview, 20 Oct 2010.

³⁷² Alissa J. Rubin, “Sunni Sheikh Who Backed US in Iraq Killed,” *New York Times*, 14 Sept 2007.

³⁷³ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010. Additionally, this was Ferry’s and Bergmann’s fifth combat tour. Bergmann had served multiple combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and had jumped into Panama with the Ranger Regiment. Ferry served a combat tour in Mogadishu as a young lieutenant (during the “Black Hawk Down” battles) plus multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Ranger Regiment.

2. The benefits of a dress rehearsal

The RFCT received word in May of 2006 that they were going to deploy from Tal Afar to Ramadi. Although the enemy's activity level in Tal Afar was not as high as it would be in Ramadi, according to COL Sean MacFarland, RFCT Commander, "it was a pretty good dress rehearsal for what we ended up doing in Ramadi."

3. Not all Awakenings are the same

The evolution of events in the Ramadi area illustrates that not all awakenings are the same. Typically, people associate the awakening with the tribes, but in some cases such as in the city, there were no dominant tribes or tribal leaders willing to take charge. In Ramadi, for example, the local leader who took charge was initially LTC Salam al-Awani, Chief of Police. When he was assassinated, Col Ahmed Hamid Sharqi took charge.

This also occurred in Hadithah. As Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, the mayor of Hadithah indicated, "there was no popular militia to fight the *sahawa*" in Hadithah as there was in Al Qaim or Ramadi.³⁷⁴ Baghdadi's awakening was also different in that a courageous Iraqi, Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin al-Ubaydi went home to Baghdadi and decided to organize a police force to fight AQI.

4. Combined, permanent, persistent presence

Several things were critical to this theme: Building partner capacity, population control measures, and engineer support. As mentioned above, both Coalition and Iraqi forces were critical to setting the conditions for developing the police force. LTC Deane made an interesting comment that had the American forces been more robust, they may not have engaged with the Iraqis as intensely as they did.

Unfortunately, population control measures such as berming because of the size, density, and sprawl of the city were not practical.³⁷⁵ However, Coalition forces used natural and man-made features, such as the Euphrates River, lakes, canals, and railroads, to their advantage as they planned and executed operational control over the city.³⁷⁶ They then moved, generally, from west to east to push insurgents from the areas.

Engineer support was integral to the strategy. Canalizing the enemy with barriers and building combat outposts allowed the Coalition and Iraqi forces to remain in an area and sustain large scale attempts to remove them.

³⁷⁴ Abd al-hakim Muhammad Rashid, Hadithah Mayor, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, his office in Hadithah, 14 Apr 2010.

³⁷⁵ This was done in Fallujah during and at the conclusion of Operation AL FAJR and also in the Hadithah Triad.

³⁷⁶ Typically analyzed as they developed their Modified Combined Obstacle Overlay.

5. Continuous narrative connected by relationships and events

The Awakening was much more than Sheikh Sattar's announcement on 14 September coining the term. Governor Mamoun Sami Rashid, Al Anbar Governor from 2005 to 2006 provided a sequence of actions throughout Al Anbar that culminated in the Awakening:

When we started fighting Al Qaeda in Fallujah [2004], the fight started to trickle down to Al Qaim [2005], then Hadithah [2006], then Anah, Rawah, and all these cities. The tribes with the help of the coalition forces, they took the fight to Al Qaeda. The last round of fighting was in Ramadi [2006/2007].³⁷⁷

Additionally, these areas were connected through the "Sheikh network," that unofficial grapevine of social connectivity that Americans were not part of. Rather than the starting point, Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* was the product of accumulating events.

6. Reinforcing success

The deployment of two companies from 2/4 Marines into the Ramadi area was critical to TF 1-9's expansion in their sector. According to MacFarland, GEN Casey saw an opportunity to "reinforce success" and additional troops were what TF 1-9 needed to accomplish the mission both in Julaybah, the eastern-most Shark Fin, and then in the Mula'ab.

7. The Fog of War?

Intelligence reports and assessments were not keeping pace with the realities on the ground. Many people scratched their heads over the MEF intelligence assessment in August and ultimately questioned the credibility of the intelligence system. If counterinsurgency is a bottoms up war, where the intelligence comes from the population, then why wasn't the intelligence staff listening to the commanders on the ground and community who were engaging the local leaders? Unfortunately, leak of the report was particularly damaging as it diverted leadership attention from the job at hand to responding to a questioning public and congress on the status of Al Anbar, not to mention the information operations victory it handed to AQI.

8. Engagement and relationships

Many people speak of engaging the population and the importance of relationships. Charlton stated that "your relationship with the population is your force protection" and described it as different "doors" into the society and what those doors provide. According to COL Charlton, the normal doors are the ones to security and government forces. Another door is to the elected or appointed officials. "We got those." But there are three other doors that are critical, in a country like Iraq in particular—"tribal leadership, religious leadership and recon-

³⁷⁷ Mamoun interview, 7 Apr 2010.

ciliation.”³⁷⁸ The Coalition’s problem for a long time was that it didn’t understand the importance of the tribal leader door.

Sheikh Sattar introduced Charlton to three key clerics in Al Anbar and taught “this dumb infantryman that Muslims aren’t bad people. And Imams are not bad people. They’re in fact greatly respected by the Iraqi population, and if you want to have acceptance by the population, you need to be accepted by these guys and have a relationship just like you do with the tribes.”

He went on to say that this also gives you a very powerful tool in combating terrorism. Al Qaeda’s main tool is ideology; when they move into a neighborhood, their first stop is the mosque, “it’s their ideological base. They will try to take whatever ideology is being preached to that mosque and replace it with their version.”

They will do it by coercing, replacing or just bypassing the Imam and will broadcast their own sermons on Friday over the loudspeaker. The mosque becomes their recruiting base because everybody goes there. They will get like-minded individuals who are vulnerable to support them from that mosque.

A first-hand account was provided by Dr. Thamir Ibrahim Tahir al-Assafi, Professor of Religious Studies, al-Anbar University, Senior Theologian to the Sunni Endowment (*waqf*), and member of the Council of Muslim Scholars:

Al Qaeda took over these mosques, and they put in their Imams. They would bring Imams preprinted statements...to read. Al Qaeda took over my mosque and put somebody from Al Qaeda into it. I had several attempts on my life [as did]...a lot of the good, moderate Imams. Al Qaeda basically occupied all the mosques.³⁷⁹

“So how do we fight that?” According to Charlton, you can’t unless you have a relationship with the clerics, keep attuned to what’s happening and being preached at the mosques, and work with and through those same clerics to understand and reconcile issues.

Reconciliation was Charlton’s third door.

In general it was Sunni/Shia or Arab/Kurd. But in Al Anbar it was getting the Ba’athists to no longer support the insurgency. A lot of them only wanted to rejoin their role in society and collect their pensions, go home and live in peace. According to Charlton, that was another door you had to go through.

M. Heading East

Although part of the Ramadi area, the events on the east side to include the Shark Fin areas deserve a chapter to itself because of their complexity and importance to the overall Awakening movement.

³⁷⁸ Charlton interview, 20 Oct 2010.

³⁷⁹ Dr. Thamir, interview with Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Albu-Risha compound, Ramadi, 12 Apr 2010.

8. East Ramadi and the Shark Fins³⁸⁰

The Sofia Shark Fin, the Julaybah Shark Fin, the Mula'ab, and the Sina'a were controlled by AQ, period...Julaybah was definitely hard core AQI territory; Sofia the same...It was like I was back in Mogadishu!

—Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Ferry, USA, Retired³⁸¹

A. Task Force 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment Deploys

Task Force 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment (TF 1-9) returned to east Ramadi in mid-October 2006 (see Figure 8-1 for a map of its area of operations). The unit had been there before as 1st Battalion, 503rd Air Assault Regiment (1-503 AA) in 2004–05.³⁸² The unit had taken more than 20 killed in action and 100 wounded in action during its previous tour; they had seen significant combat. Although many of the Soldiers had moved on to other units, some remained and remembered.

There were some veterans in the battalion who, understandably, the hair was standing up on the backs of their necks, because they knew what that meant. This included my Command Sergeant Major, Dennis Bergmann, who had grown up in the Ranger Regiment...Bird Dog is his nickname. I said, “Bird Dog, we’re going back to that exact same piece of dirt.” You could just see him hold his breath a little bit, because he knew what that meant.³⁸³

1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment (1-9) was an experienced battalion: About 35% of the battalion had served during its deployment as 1-503 AA and approximately 70% had served previous combat tours with other units. All of the company commanders had previous combat tours and all had come from the Ranger Regiment or the Ranger Training Brigade.³⁸⁴

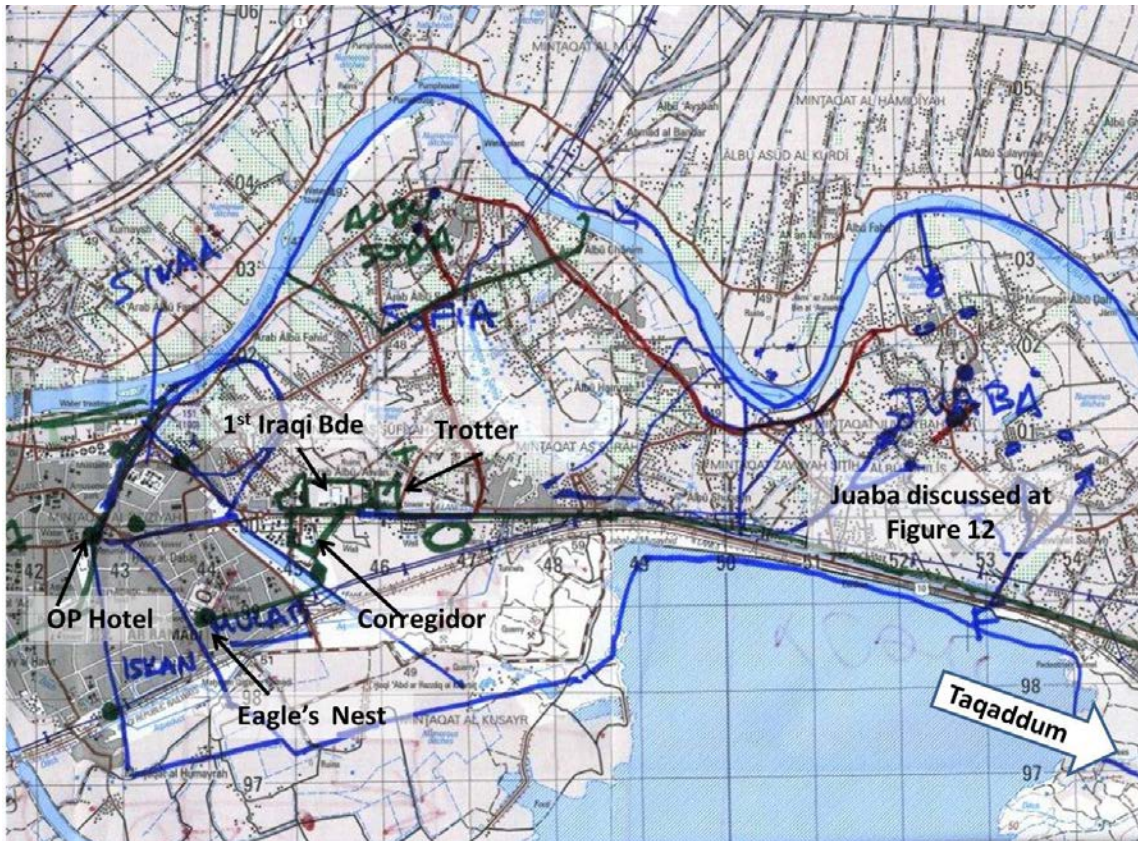
³⁸⁰ The “Shark Fins” were the troops’ descriptive term for the terrain of Sofia and Julaybah, as bounded by the bends in the Euphrates River. See Figure 8-1.

³⁸¹ Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Ferry, USA, Retired, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colorado Springs, 8 Nov 2010.

³⁸² 1-503 AA was reflagged 1-9 Infantry on 6 Dec 2005. Summary of Task Force 1-9 IN Combat Operations 6 Nov 2006–1 Dec 2007, dated 26 Nov 2007.

³⁸³ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.

³⁸⁴ Additionally, this was Ferry’s and Bergmann’s fifth combat tour. Bergmann had served multiple combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and had jumped into Panama with the Ranger Regiment. Ferry served a combat tour in Mogadishu as a young lieutenant (during the “Black Hawk Down” battles) plus multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Ranger Regiment.



Courtesy LTC Chuck Ferry

Figure 8-1. TF 1-9 Infantry Area of Operations

Home was now Camp Corregidor, located east of Ramadi along Route Michigan, a route highly IED'd that ran from Taqaddum Air Base to the southeast and through the center of Ramadi City. TF 1-9's wake-up call during its first morning—as it would be on many mornings to come—was the boom and shakes from 120-millimeter mortar rounds impacting around the camp. Full battle kit was the uniform of the day.

The Task Force was fortunate in its initial task organization. It had its four rifle companies (Able, Baker, Charlie, and Dog), forward support company (Echo), a tank company plus (five platoons of tanks with 22 x M1 tanks), and a mechanized infantry company (minus) with two platoons equipped with Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Additionally, the unit effectively had tactical control (TACON) of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Iraqi Army (IA) Brigade. Moreover, LTC Ferry acted as mentor to the 1st IA Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Abdullah.³⁸⁵ Ferry also had three military transition teams (MiTTs)—two from the Marines and one formed from the Task Force. Figure 8-2 is a photo of part of the command element.

³⁸⁵ The official advisor for BG Abdullah was Lieutenant Colonel Jim Minick, USMC, an officer who worked closely with LTC Ferry.



Courtesy LTC Chuck Ferry

Figure 8-2. Command element, (l-r): Maj Jim Lively, USMC, CDR of 1/1 IA MiTT; LTC Ali-CDR 1/1/1 IA; LTC Ferry; BG Abdullah, CDR 1/1 IA BDE; and Lt Col Jim Minick USMC, 1/1 BDE MiTT Chief

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, (1st BCT/1AD) also known as the Ready First Combat Team (RFCT) Brigade plan was for TF 1-9 to take down the Mula'ab district of eastern Ramadi and then move from west to east towards the Shark Fins. Events, however, dictated a new plan; as LTC Ferry called it, "eating the donut from the outside first." This plan-altering event involved Sheikh Jassim Salih, the Albu-Souda Tribe, and Sofia, an area east of Ramadi known as the *Shark Fin*.³⁸⁶

B. Sheikh Jassim and the Albu-Souda Tribe

Sheikh Jassim Salih was born in 1956, remained in the Sofia/Ramadi area most of his life and joined the Iraqi Air Force. As a non-commissioned officer (NCO) he was a mechanic/technician on the MIG 23 and MIG 29 fighter jet planes. He retired from the military after 30 years. According to Jassim, "military life educated us on respect; from the tribe we learned generosity, courage and to love our country."³⁸⁷ A father of 11, he struggled to make ends meet. Sheikh Jassim, his family, and the Albu-Souda tribe resided in the north end of Sofia next to the Euphrates River (Figure 8-3). Although most Americans would see this as prime

³⁸⁶ Ferry interview 8 Nov 2010. This is the first shark fin.

³⁸⁷ Sheikh Jassim Salih, Albu-Souda tribe, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Diwaniyah, Camp Ramadi, 9 Apr 2010, and at his house in Sofia, 21 Apr 2010.

real estate, the tribe was isolated from the Iraqi Government and Coalition support and vulnerable to AQI's intimidation and influence.

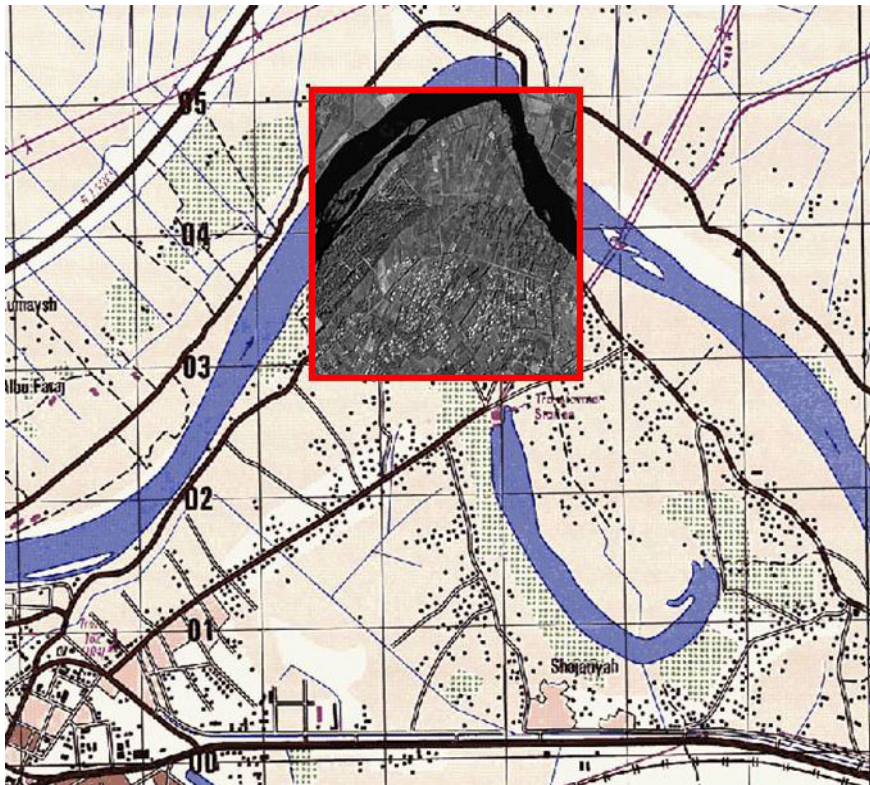


Figure 8-3. Albu-Souda Tribal area in the Sofia area

According to Jassim, when Al Qaeda entered the area, “they claimed they were a legitimate resistance, fighting against the Coalition for the sake of Iraq.” In 2005, however, AQI began killing innocent people. Finally, in June of 2006, several months before the announcement of the Awakening, Sheikh Jassim publically announced that he stood against AQI and asked for help from the Iraqi Government. He received no response. He felt that the Coalition was his only hope.³⁸⁸ So he elicited Sheikh Sattar’s help and through Sattar made a deal with the Coalition: Jassim would put up road blocks to prevent AQI from firing mortars from his area, and the Coalition would stop firing artillery rounds into the Albu-Souda neighborhoods (Figure 8-4). The deal worked: Jassim kept AQI out of the area and Coalition fires stopped. The terrorists moved and continued firing at the Coalition forces—they would deal with Jassim later.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Jassim interviews, 9 and 21 Apr 2010.

³⁸⁹ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.



Figure 8-4. Tribal Checkpoint



Figure 8-5. Jassim's route across the Euphrates

On 14 September 2006, Jassim attended Sheikh Sattar's *Al Sahawa* meeting and met with Sheikh Sattar and other council members. But it was physically difficult because of the multitude of insurgent, Iraqi Government, and Coalition checkpoints and patrols in the area. So, in October he received a River Badge: notes from both an Iraqi and Marine General authorizing him to cross the Euphrates River and carry a hand gun (see Figure 8-5). Additionally, Jassim sold one of his cows to purchase a Thuraya phone so he could communicate with the Coalition and Sheikh Sattar's people.³⁹⁰

In one of his rendezvous with Sattar, Jassim met a US Army captain "they called Hisham Albu-Risha, he was like a member of the Albu-Risha family."³⁹¹ Since almost all of their subsequent communications was through the Thuraya, Captain Hisham Albu-Risha provided him with rechargeable minutes for the phone.

By late September, Jassim had sold most of his livestock to pay for weapons and ammunition for his tribe. Although he had requested arms and ammo from the Coalition, he had not yet received anything. According to Jassim, Lieutenant Colonel Lechner, Deputy Commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, had offered to set up a police station in the area, but in return, Jassim had to provide 25 men to be trained at the police training center in Jordan.³⁹² Jassim only had 17 tribal members and they were used to man the checkpoints and patrol the village. Who was going to protect the village while the men trained?

³⁹⁰ A Thuraya phone is a satellite phone, and was the only means of communicating with Sheikh Jassim.

³⁹¹ This was Captain Travis Patriquin of the RFCT. Captain Patriquin was an Arabic-speaking infantry officer assigned to the RFCT as the S-9 responsible for engaging with the locals. He had won the confidence of many of the local sheikhs including Sheikh Sattar and his brother Ahmed. Major Niel Smith, USA and Colonel Sean MacFarland, USA, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* (Mar/Apr 2008): 47.

³⁹² Different sources tell different stories. Sheikh Jassim told the team that LTC Lechner said he would help if Jassim gave him 25 of his men to be trained as Iraqi Police (IPs) in Jordan. Another account from Jim Michaels in his book *A Chance in Hell* (St Martin's Press, June 2010), says that Lechner told Jassim *no* because Coalition forces were not ready to move into Sofia. Jassim was told he would have to wait for help.

By early October, Jassim's tribe increased the number of temporary checkpoints and patrols beyond the few static ones already in place to cut AQI's supply route through the area. Already feeling threatened by the spread of the *Sahawa*, and irritated that this "little man" would oppose them, AQI immediately retaliated. They kidnapped Jassim's brother and three of his cousins, killed them, and dropped their bodies in the river. This only drove Jassim to step up his operations. He raided safe houses and arrested known terrorists in the village. Selling personal possessions for money, with Government permission Jassim bought a boat and transported the detainees up and across the river to the Albu-Risha Iraqi Police Station, the only IP Station at the time that would accept detainees. When he moved detainees, he normally left his brother-in-law Sheikh Abbas Albu-Mahal, behind in the village to maintain security and protect the families in his absence.

On 24 November 2006, AQI tried to negotiate with Jassim to remove his checkpoints. Jassim offered to take down the checkpoints for 72 hours if the terrorists returned the bodies of his brother and cousins, but AQI wanted the checkpoints permanently removed. There was no agreement and, according to Jassim, AQI gave Jassim five days to think about its offer. Jassim, alerted to their plan to kidnap him immediately following the meeting should he refuse the offer, pulled out of the meeting prematurely to avoid their trap. He immediately called CPT Patriquin with the coordinates of the meeting place and asked for Coalition support. According to Jassim, within minutes helicopters were overhead. Despite the Coalition's obvious backing, AQI was not finished with Jassim.

The next day, AQI launched a large-scale attack against Jassim and the Albu-Souda tribe. At 1300, insurgents "launched 62 mortar rounds"³⁹³ and attacked the Albu-Souda tribal area. Jassim had only 17 men to stand against an estimated 250 AQI fighters. Seven of his men were killed, but they killed 63 of the insurgents.³⁹⁴ When they started running out of ammunition, Jassim called the Coalition.³⁹⁵

C. Battle for Sofia

Twenty-four hours prior to [Operation SQUEEZE PLAY into the Mula'ab area of Ramadi]...we started getting reports that there's this big fight going on up in the Shark Fin;...there's this guy called Sheikh Jassim; he's desperate. He's from the Albu-Souda Tribe, and he's getting his ass kicked from multiple directions. So I get this call at three o'clock in the afternoon... "Please help me. Come save me!"

—LTC Chuck Ferry³⁹⁶

³⁹³ Jassim interviews, 9 and 21 Apr 2010.

³⁹⁴ Numbers quoted are from Jassim's interviews on 9 and 21 Apr 2010. Other estimates include "30–40 gunmen in cars," Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," 49. The "Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award for 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment," 5 Oct 2007, 2, indicates 75–100 attackers.

³⁹⁵ Jassim contacted several people. In addition to LTC Ferry, he contacted CPT Patriquin, who in turn alerted LTC Lechner and Sheikh Sattar. Mr. Sterling Jensen, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Alexandria, VA, 20 Oct 2010.

³⁹⁶ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.

The day before the brigade operation into east Ramadi (and Ferry's operation into the Mula'ab), Colonel Sean MacFarland, Commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, also known as the Ready First Combat Team (RFCT) went on leave and left Lieutenant Colonel V. J. Tedesco, commander of the 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, in charge of the brigade. The afternoon before the operation was planned to kick off, reports indicated the beginning of a fire fight in the Sofia shark fin area. Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) overhead platforms confirmed the reports. Additionally, a group of civilians fleeing the Sofia area by boat, reported the attack to the 1st Battalion, 1st IA Brigade outpost north of the river. They then contacted the RFCT tactical operations center.³⁹⁷

While that was happening, Sheikh Jassim called Allan, Ferry's interpreter, pleading for help.³⁹⁸ The sheikh said that he was on the Coalition's side and that AQI was about to destroy his family and tribe.

However, at this point in its deployment, nobody in TF 1-9 had heard anything about a Sheikh Jassim or the Albu-Souda tribe. LTC Ferry found himself having to decide quickly based on little information. He explained his thoughts at the time:

I was unaware at this point in time of any communication or deals that had been made between my parent brigade and Jassim, nor was my interpreter Allan aware of them. All I know is this is the area that I haven't been in lately, because I just got there and the other battalion hadn't been up there. I know that all the roads are heavily IED'd to get up in there. I don't even know who this guy is. I'm like, "Holy crap, I could be walking into a huge ambush."³⁹⁹

LTC Ferry spoke with the brigade's Deputy Commanding Officer, LTC Jim Lechner and an Iraqi tribal expert located at brigade headquarters. Lechner, through discussions with CPT Patriquin, vouched for Sheikh Jassim.⁴⁰⁰ He also provided background information about Sheikh Jassim and his relationship with Sheikh Sattar.

LTC Ferry realized how "very, very" important the Mula'ab operation was to the brigade's overall strategy, despite how risky reacting to events in Sofia could be for the unit.

At the end of the day, I am like, "Man there is no way that I am going to stand in front of somebody and say, 'I didn't try to go help innocent civilians getting killed.'" So, "We're going!" It took about an hour and a half to sort through all this stuff. So we took off out of the gate...

³⁹⁷ Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," 49.

³⁹⁸ According to Ferry, the "real" sheiks were Jassim's two older brothers, who were likely hiding from AQI. Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010. Jassim received Allan's contact information from CPT Patriquin or Mr. Sterling Jensen.

³⁹⁹ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010, and email communication LTC Ferry and William Knarr, 9 Aug 2013.

⁴⁰⁰ LTC Lechner and LTC Ferry served together in combat in Mogadishu in 1993. As lieutenants, Lechner was with the Rangers and Ferry was with 2-14 IN, 10th Mountain Division.

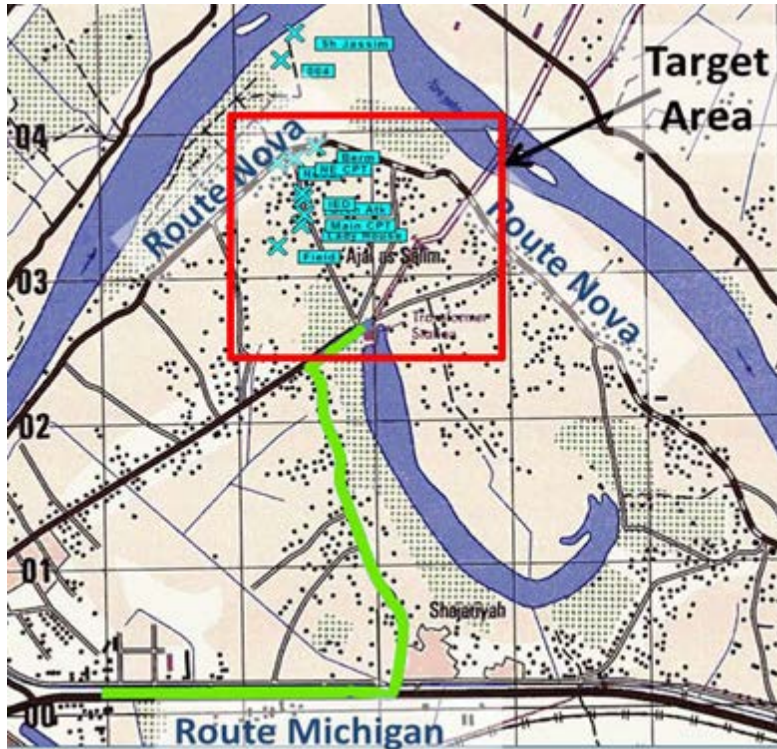


Figure 8-6. TF 1-9's route to help Sheikh Jassim⁴⁰¹

The line of march was the tank company commander with a platoon of three tanks, an Assault Command Post with Scout Platoon, and a rifle company (Baker Company) in Humvees. LTC Ferry was in a Humvee with his command post (CP) right behind the tanks. The brigade provided overhead ISR in the form of a Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle. A Predator with Hellfire missiles was in the area working another orbit. Additionally, two F-18s were overhead positioned for immediate close air support. All air assets were under Ferry's control during the operation, while on the move and with the help of his Battalion XO and S3

who remained in the Tactical Operations Center at Camp Corregidor.

The combat formation moved east on Route Michigan and then north (green line in Figure 8-6) towards Sofia. It was now dark and everyone was using night vision goggles.

As the formation moved towards the Shark Fin, Ferry was in continuous contact with Jassim via Thuraya phone. Suddenly, four cars appeared exiting Route Nova dragging something behind. The ISR validated what Jassim was yelling into the phone—that AQI was killing his relatives and dragging their dead bodies behind the vehicles. LTC Ferry cleared the airstrikes “hot” and F-18s destroyed three of the vehicles with the airstrikes impacting several hundred meters to the east of his position. The fourth vehicle was handed off and destroyed by the Predator as the vehicle moved out of Sofia towards Julaybah.⁴⁰² According to Ferry, “they were dragging those bodies over into this [Julaybah] area as trophies.” Later they found out that “16 hard core AQI guys” were killed in this attack.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ The light blue boxes with text in the target area are GPS coordinates marking significant locations designated by Jassim during the 21 Apr 2010 battle site survey/interview with Jassim in Sofia.

⁴⁰² According to LTC Ferry, *Julaybah* is pronounced *Ju* (long u) *a* (long a) *bah*. He spelled phonetically at Figure 2-1, Juaba.

⁴⁰³ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.

As the TF 1-9 formation continued forward, they came upon an abatis obstacle laced with IEDs. The enemy had cut down large palm trees as a barrier. Knowing that they didn't have time for EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) to remove the IEDs, Ferry directed the tank company commander to blow it away. Then the dismounted Soldiers of Baker Company conducted an in-stride breach of the obstacles with the tanks, and the team moved through the cleared area. This type of operation was risky and not normally authorized. Standard procedure called for having an EOD team come out and clear the IEDs before passing through the obstacle, but civilians were being killed and there was no time.

The fighting grew more intense and Sheikh Jassim was still on the phone with Allan the interpreter. Ferry ordered Jassim to build a bonfire to identify the Albu-Souda fighters. Jassim reported that AQI had already destroyed his home and were burning his brother's home (Figure 8-7 and Figure 8-8). He was prepared to evacuate tribal members across the Euphrates by boat, but hearing Allan's voice and the closeness of his rescuers as the tanks approached, he remained hopeful.



Figure 8-7. Remnants of Jassim's house



Figure 8-8. Burned interior of Jassim's brother's house⁴⁰⁴

After blowing through several more obstacles, the tanks and infantryman on foot reached Jassim's men and, for the first time, TF 1-9 was face to face with Sheikh Jassim. (See the battle template summary with timelines at Figure 8-9.)

Ferry describes his first interaction with the sheikh:

...he had his headdress on. He's got an AK47. He looked like any other guy; nothing special. He surely didn't look like a sheikh at the time. He was kind of in his combat clothes, and he was very scared. He was desperate, and so we get up to him. I've got other guys starting to spread out, and starting to gain control of all his guys, so to speak. I shake his hand, and kind of give him a big hug.

⁴⁰⁴ Both photos were taken during the 21 Apr 2010 battle site survey/interview with Jassim in Sofia.

Immediately Ferry had his interpreter tell Jassim the rules of this new relationship:

If any of his guys do anything to any of my guys, I'll kill him right here, dead on the spot...we will absolutely kill him if anybody does anything bad...all of his guys right now [need] to sling their weapons until we can sort things out.⁴⁰⁵

Jassim agreed that his tribe would cooperate completely with the unit, sharing intelligence, including any known sources and locations of IEDs, caches, and men.

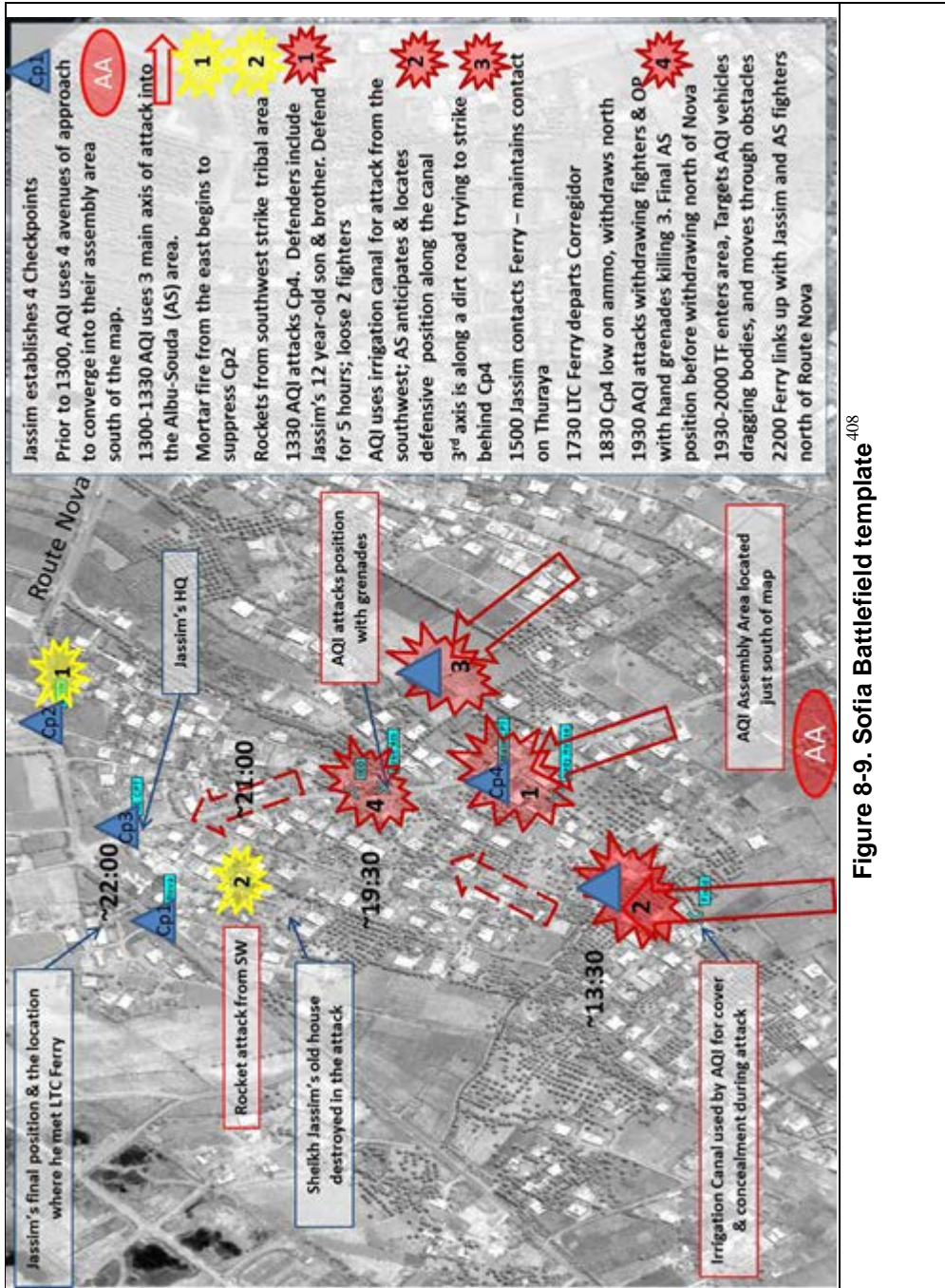
At midnight, CPT Patriquin arrived with 25 AK47s and ammunition. "The people understood that now we were not alone on the battlefield, it was the Coalition, my tribe and the Albu-Mahal tribe," Jassim said of the moment. Immediately he had 20 volunteers join his force.⁴⁰⁶

That night, the Albu-Souda tribe and TF 1-9 joined and cleared out remaining AQI supporters and materials. By early the next morning, the area was "relatively secure."⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.

⁴⁰⁶ Jassim interviews, 9 and 21 Apr 2010, and Jensen interview, 20 Oct 2010.

⁴⁰⁷ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.



408
Figure 8-9. Sofia Battlefield template

⁴⁰⁸ Times and locations in the template were derived and reconciled from several sources: a battlefield survey on 21 April 2010 when Sheikh Jassim escorted the JAWD team through the battle area, interviews with LTC Ferry and Jassim, and material provided by the Marine Corps History Division including several of their publications: Colonel Gary W. Montgomery and Chief Warrant Officer-4 Timothy McWilliams, *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume II: Iraqi Perspectives, US Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009*; and Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth W. Estes, *US Marine Corps Operations in Iraq, 2003-2006*.

D. Securing Sofia

Soon after the battle in November, the first combat outpost was put up in Sofia. Jassim and two lower-level sheikhs recruited police from local tribes.⁴⁰⁹ Again, Ferry's approach to the relationship was one of strength: we "did not play nice with them [Jassim and tribe members]" (see Figure 8-10). Ferry demanded the tribes' unyielding support in return for protection as well as humanitarian assistance and AK47s.



Courtesy LTC Chuck Ferry

Figure 8-10. LTC Ferry (l) and BG Abdullah (r) meet with Sheik Jassim's war council shortly after his rescue

After a while, the mood in Sofia changed. The population went from scowling at US troops and throwing rocks, Ferry explained, to waving enthusiastically as they drove through the town.⁴¹⁰ The improvement continued, but not without strong AQI pushback.

For about the next six weeks, we had to fight very, very hard. [We had] constant small arms attacks, and constant IEDs. [We were] constantly conducting targeted raids. The operations we were doing were designed not just to, if you will, go after the enemy kinetically, but in more cases than not, it was actually designed to go and recruit more sheikhs and tribes and get the people in this area to basically throw

⁴⁰⁹ Ferry commented, "I was calling them police, but...they were kind of a militia for a short period of time."

⁴¹⁰ Ferry interview 8 Nov 2010.

AQI out. It was a very deliberate, fist in one hand, but carrots in the other to convince these people that they needed to support us and not AQI. AQI helped us.

E. AQI's resistance

AQI's desperate attempts to regain control were evident in its extreme actions, similar to the fear and intimidation campaign they conducted during the run up to the Awakening in west Ramadi. One such example of AQI's horrific behavior occurred in late December.

A guy from the Albu-Ghannam Tribe had three sons....These three sons, 10, 12, and 14, came down to Eastern Ramadi to buy some stuff. AQI gets a hold of them, and chops these young boys' heads off.

They put their heads in a box, and forced somebody to take the box back to the sheikh....I was actually up there with one of my Iraqi Company Commanders, and all of a sudden the mosques' loud speakers start going off very, very loud...all the Iraqis in the outpost are grabbing their stuff, throwing their vests on, and grabbing their weapons. I mean they're going to 100% standup...I'm like, "Allan, what is this?" He's like, "Holy smokes! Sir, something really bad, really, really bad just happened. I can't tell what it is."

So, of course I put all my guys on alert. I got the QRF [Quick Reaction Force] stood up back at the battalion. Allan keeps listening and listening. The loud speaker was basically saying, "AQI has just slaughtered these three boys." It basically tells the whole area what AQI just did. The whole area was like, "All we want to do is go find AQI and kill them!"⁴¹¹

Although catastrophic, these types of events reinforced the Iraqi and Coalition commitment to defeat AQI; certainly the opposite reaction AQI had hoped for.

With increased local support, TF 1-9 focused its combat power in central Sofia around the recently established joint combat outposts. As it became relatively secure, LTC Ferry turned his attention to other areas. One area in particular was between the two Shark Fins. TF 1-9's Dog Company was conducting a clearing operation in this middle area when AQI engaged them in what would turn out to be a "knock down, drag out," eight-hour fire fight. On the north side of the river (the area that dips down between the two Shark Fins), AQI had established several mortar positions and shelled some of Dog Company's platoons. Additionally, AQI coordinated the activities of 20–30 fighters who managed to infiltrate between Dog company elements. Dog Company was reinforced with several tanks, Harrier Jets, and mortar fires. Two Soldiers were killed and many were wounded, in this firefight that ended up "seal[ing] off Sofia."⁴¹² This was a particularly vicious, close-in firefight. The company commander, James Enos, was awarded the Silver Star for his actions, and several other officers, NCOs, and Soldiers were decorated with valor medals for actions under fire.

⁴¹¹ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.

⁴¹² Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.

F. Julaybah, Operation CHURUBUSCO, 17–25 January 2007⁴¹³

In early January, COL MacFarland directed TF 1-9 to put a combat outpost in Julaybah, the second shark fin. Julaybah was suspected of hosting a command and control center for insurgent operations in Ramadi and Fallujah. Larger numbers of insurgents entered the Julaybah region in early summer 2006; never challenged by a permanent Coalition presence. For TF 1-9 to successfully attack the region concentrated with AQI and IEDs, the unit needed additional combat power.⁴¹⁴ To support TF 1-9, COL MacFarland attached two companies from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4)—Echo and Fox.⁴¹⁵ This plus-up contributed two rifle companies of more than 400 Marines.

The operation for Julaybah was a “classic infiltration attack followed by a search and attack operation to basically spread out and lock down control of this area.” Ferry’s plan was to reduce the TF’s combat power in other areas and mass them in Julaybah. Operation CHURUBUSCO began on the night of 17 January.⁴¹⁶

I put Echo 2/4 into the Sina’a area....I kept one of my companies down in the Eagles Nest in the Mula’ab. I had one of my companies barely holding on to Sofia with my new found friends there. I basically surged the entire battalion into Julaybah, and I did an on foot, night time infiltration attack from multiple directions, because the place is heavily IED’d on all the roads...I would absolutely get crushed if I went in there with tanks and Brads and stuff like that. So I basically had Fox 2/4 infiltrate here at night time. Then I had Baker Company infiltrate on multiple routes and my Assault CP right behind them. I had the Seal Team infiltrate by boats and come in on the top side.⁴¹⁷ [See Figure 8-11]

On the east side of TF 1-9’s AO, 3/6 Marines set up checkpoints to catch insurgents fleeing from the attack. Overhead, ISR along the eastern border spotted those escaping. There were also Apaches and Cobra Gun Teams “to help isolate the area.” The tempo and complexity of simultaneous operations in different sectors of the AO required two TF 1-9 battalion command nets, west and east. As expected, AQI began moving in vehicles probing for CF locations. As the insurgents moved they were easily detected, captured or killed. Fox 2/4 found a large house that they would turn into the first combat outpost. At first Baker and Fox were assigned the COP, but eventually, Baker Company was able to leave. A Joint Security Station was established on 19 January 2007.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹³ “Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award,” 3, provided many of the dates for this paper including operational summaries.

⁴¹⁴ Thomas Daly, *Rage Company, A Marine’s Baptism by Fire* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2010) 28.

⁴¹⁵ 2/4 was a part of the early 2006 Surge effort. The remainder of the battalion was deployed to Hadithah.

⁴¹⁶ Daly, *Rage Company, A Marine’s Baptism by Fire*, 193.

⁴¹⁷ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010.

⁴¹⁸ “Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award,” 3.

TF 1-9 did not succeed in Julaybah on its own. An “Iraqi face” was integral to the operation. BG Abdullah introduced Ferry to a former Iraqi general who lived in the area. Ferry made a deal that this general would provide “30 fighters that [could] positively identify everything in the area” for an upcoming infiltration, and in return, the United States would help clear the area that the general wished to be cleared.

Compared to Sofia, the Julaybah area was extremely hard to turn. “This is all Sunni area and very heavily populated by well-educated Sunnis either from the military or professional, engineers, or accountants... they were very highly educated compared to these areas over here [Sofia].”⁴¹⁹

So for the infiltration, every rifle platoon was paired with several of the General’s men. There were also IA platoons embedded within the US companies. The operation was successful, and by mid-February, Fox 2/4 was “very firmly entrenched in the area” and Julaybah was secure.

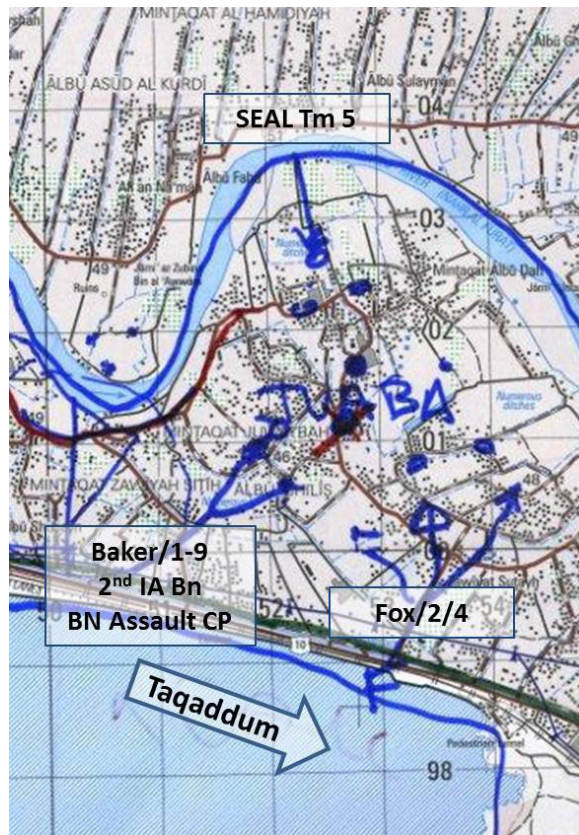


Figure 8-11. Operation CHURUBUSCO

However, things really turned around when a powerful sheikh from the Albu-Fahad tribe came back to the area after self-imposed exile in Jordan. Ferry’s “former Iraqi general officer,” BG Abdullah, and Brigadier General John Allen, Deputy Commanding General MNF-W, helped convince the sheikh to come back. As Ferry said, “as soon as he arrived...he put out the word, and they [the tribes] immediately flipped.”⁴²⁰

G. Mula’ab, Operation MURFREESBORO, 18–28 February 2007⁴²¹

LTC Ferry began to turn his attention westward towards the city, which, according to him was “still the heart of darkness.” On 18 February, MacFarland’s RFCT was relieved in sector with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, (1st BCT/3ID) commanded by

⁴¹⁹ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010

⁴²⁰ LTC Ferry is probably referring to Sheikh Khamis Albu-Fahad. See Lieutenant General John Allen interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Major General Tom Jones, USMC, Retired, 16 Mar 2010.

⁴²¹ “Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award,” 4.

Colonel John Charlton. During the transition, TF 1-9 was tasked with conducting offensive operations to mask signs of any seams in the changeover.

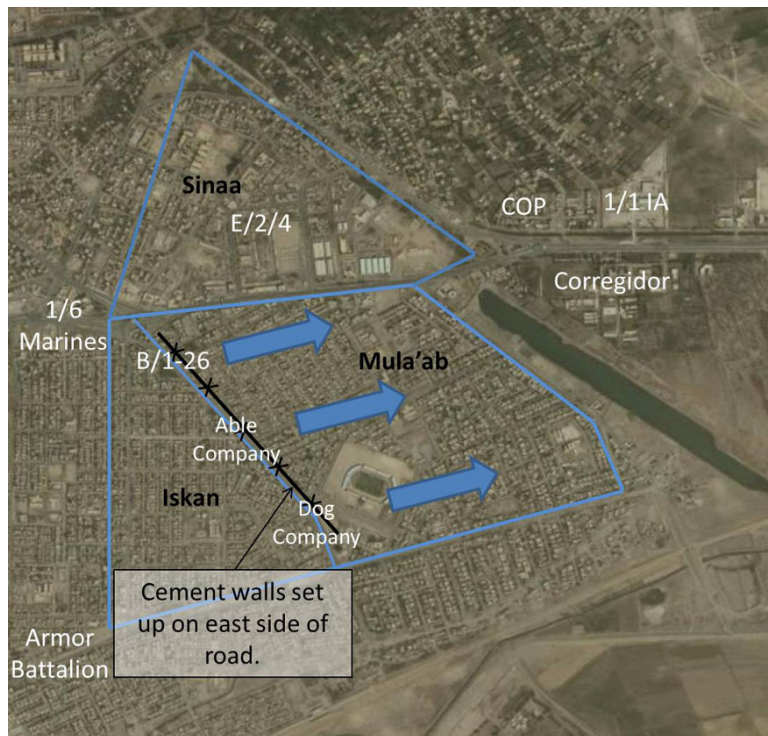


Figure 8-12. Mula'ab Area of Ramadi

When COL Charlton entered the picture, he immediately directed TF 1-9 to secure the Mula'ab area (Figure 8-12). *Mula'ab* means *stadium* in Arabic, and the area included the city stadium. According to COL Charlton, this area was the “worst of the worst” because AQI was deeply embedded. This operation kicked off a series of battalion operations throughout the city designed to secure Ramadi (the series is discussed in Volume IV).⁴²²

To prepare, LTC Ferry started drawing back combat power from the Sofia and Julaybah areas, which was risky because those areas were

still somewhat active with insurgents. Ferry used Able Company, Dog Company, the 1st and 2nd IA battalions and Echo 2/4 (that was in the Sina'a).

Ferry called the upcoming Operation MURFREESBORO.⁴²³ The first part consisted of the “night at the raids.” The TF struck targets for four consecutive nights, but necessarily staying in sector to “soften up the area prior to the hard core clearance operations.” Ferry didn't want to blindly infiltrate Mula'ab, so the unit came up with a “target matrix of places where I believed all the high pay off targets were.” AQI was in a defensive posture—“sub-surface IEDs were buried all through the city.”

My Navy SEALs, Able Company, Dog Company, and my Assault CP were out every night. I used my Iraqis. I would hit anywhere from eight to ten targets as near simultaneously as I could. Most of the time we were infiltrating on foot, and backed up by vehicles. I also had Bravo/1-26 Infantry down here, so I actually had three companies

⁴²² Colonel Charlton, former Commander, 1st BCT/3ID, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Alexandria, VA, 20 Oct 2010.

⁴²³ The overall operation was called “Operation MURFREESBORO”. The TF used the names of battles that the regiment had fought in during the civil war.

down in this area [Mula'ab and Iskan], plus Iraqis. I also had my tanks. So we did about three full nights of raids just kind of searching and attacking in an urban environment, trying to be as precise as we can. That is causing more intel to come up. My SEALs were picking it up through their HUMINT sources, and I was getting more intel from the [National SOF] guys who were observing my area closely with some of the assets that they had.

Upon returning from Camp Ramadi after a meeting at the brigade headquarters, Ferry's Assault CP was hit by a large IED that killed the Scout platoon leader and wounded several others. A QRF was activated and launched despite Ferry's attempts to stop it for fear of additional IEDs along the route. Unfortunately, they also hit an IED and lost three Soldiers and a number wounded. It was a hard night and it took a while to sort out. Despite the setback, the next evening they started their assault on the Mula'ab. Ferry assumed that the enemy knew what they were up to because TF 1-9 had been launching attacks every night.

I asked my Sergeant Major, "How have you guys cleared the Mula'ab before?" Because they know we're coming. He's like, "Oh yeah, they know. We'd always cleared it like this or like this." [Drawing on the map from north to south or from east to west.]

So Ferry decided to clear it from west to east. But first he was going to set up concrete walls along the border of Iskan and Mula'ab to trap the insurgents' vehicles in the Mula'ab area. He expected "squirters," but he wanted the vehicles and all the materials the insurgents needed to move by vehicle to remain.⁴²⁴

The unit began preparing to build a tall concrete wall. Multiple flatbed trucks brought the walls in. Some of the concrete was prepositioned so that it looked as though it would be used for another area. The unit was equipped with several forklifts to put the walls in place as well as an Engineer Platoon to install the wall. The point of the barriers was, obviously, to block off insurgent escape and infiltration routes. The barriers were high enough to prevent an individual on the ground from shooting over them, but were the perfect size for a Bradley main gun to pull up to and shoot over. Insurgents strongly resisted the setup. According to Ferry, "We had guys coming in here from the Iskan, you know, just going nuts trying to keep us from doing this." Ferry had the tank company providing escort for the engineers and others as well as Bradley's and snipers on top of roofs providing additional support and protection.

So that's what we did. B/1-26 in the north, Able Company was the main effort in the middle (followed by the battalion Assault CP—all on foot) and Dog Company in the south—all with their Iraqi counterparts.

I'm employing close air support. I'm putting in helicopter gunships [20mm from the Cobras and 30mm from the Apaches], danger close into multiple positions. My ACP [Assault Command Post] was under fire numerous times throughout the night. My

⁴²⁴ Individuals or small groups of insurgents that found that their way through the obstacles and out of the trap.

TOC [tactical operations center] is controlling multiple ISR platforms. I'd taken at least one more KIA [killed in action] that night. I had about 15 or so casualties and a number of other Iraqi casualties. We've killed a whole bunch of insurgents. But we throw the cement wall down here, so I have trucks coming down now. We were down-loading walls. I wanted to catch all the vehicles that were in here. I didn't want any vehicles to get out, because that's how they were moving their crap around.

After the initial round of fighting to emplace the cement barriers, the hard clearance began and lasted 3–4 days to conduct house-to-house clearing. Partway into the clearing operation, Able Company, exhausted and having sustained a number of casualties, was given several days of well-earned rest. A company from 3/6 Marines conducted a pass through and assumed the assault mission. Able Company was reinserted back into the assault later. During the clearing operations, Soldiers and Marines found “hundreds of caches...deeply buried IEDs, IED factories, propaganda factories, and AQI torture houses. This was truly the hammer and the nail in the coffin for AQI in the city.”⁴²⁵

H. Iskan, Operation CHICKAMAUGA, 24–28 March 2007⁴²⁶

The only major threat that remained in TF 1-9's AO was the Iskan area directly west of the Mula'ab (see Figure 8-1). Many of the AQI fighters that escaped from the attacks in Mula'ab went to Iskan. It was no surprise to TF 1-9 when they began to receive mortar and sniper fire from the area. A battalion of Marines (2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, 2/5) was scheduled to deploy to the area southwest of Iskan to offer infantry reinforcement to an armored battalion there. Ferry was waiting for them to overwhelm what was left of AQI. Unfortunately, 2/5 Marines kept getting delayed, and in the meantime, TF 1-9 was taking casualties from AQI in Iskan. After a Soldier lost both legs on the Iskan-Mula'ab border, Ferry decided to go in. He described this attack into the Iskan as “the most lethal fight that we had.” By that time, though, the rifle companies were well seasoned, extremely precise, and confident as they took control of buildings and pinned down the enemy. Using techniques perfected in the Mula'ab, Julaybah and Sofia, the TF drew out insurgents from their urban hideouts and eliminated them through a combination of fire, maneuver plus tanks, and air strikes.

I. Building on Success

The kinetic phase began to fade in May of 2007. The environment was non-permissive for AQI and it soon became inactive. Attention turned to the hold and rebuild phases of the counterinsurgency strategy. Rebuilding focused on the physical infrastructure, the government, and the local police force. Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) money came in to help with the physical rebuilding. The damage that had taken place throughout the

⁴²⁵ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010

⁴²⁶ “Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award,” 3.

previous years was extensive. Ferry described the damage saying “it almost made you cry just to look at it.” CERP funding paid Iraqis to clear rubble and repair sewers, power lines, and schools. The Coalition’s job was to assure that all of local tribes were represented in government and judicial institutions.

Ferry describes the Iraqis governing style:

My guys and I actually held, I think, four different elections and actually went through elections Iraqi style. It was more of a representative election, not like a full population election, but they elected representatives to the city council in a tribal way....When the guys were elected, they would have a big ceremony. They would put their hand on the Quran and swear to uphold in the Arabic way to represent their people.

Developing the local police force was critical, and the community quickly went from zero police to 1,500. The key attribute of this program was that the police were all recruited from the local tribes.

Ferry reorganized his unit because its mission dramatically changed. Also, he was having combat power taken out of his unit and moved to higher priority areas and missions. Ferry matched each rifle company with one of the three IA battalions in his AO. One company was placed in the four different sectors of Julaybah, Sofia, Iskan/Mula’ab, and Sina’a. Each sector had one to three police stations. The IA, Coalition, and IPs were required to work as a team. One company was the QRF/Training Company, which was Dog Company. They were responsible for running a police training academy. Initially, TF 1-9 ran the training, but after a while, they put a cadre of Iraqis from the Iraqi brigade in charge as trainers and just monitored the operation.

By December TF 1-9 was preparing to redeploy. Sofia was more stable than it had been in the past few years. The police force was “relatively professional.” The Agricultural College that TF 1-9 had taken over was given back to the Iraqis. Things were so good that Ferry was able to hand the Iraqi brigade that did QRF and training to a Marine Rifle Company. Things had become so quiet during the last four months of their tour, that the unit conducted multiple, battalion (minus) air assault raids into AQI held area outside of its AO.

J. Themes and Lessons

Below are the themes, lessons, and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in the East Ramadi and Shark Fins (Sofia and Julaybah) area. In addition, those events or approaches that were significant, similar or dissimilar to other areas of Al Anbar are noted.

1. Eating the doughnut from the outside in

From 2003 to much of 2006, AQI and supporting insurgent groups had controlled East Ramadi, and, in particular, the two shark fin areas of Sofia and Julaybah. As LTC Ferry said, AQI was “training guys in these two shark fin areas, to be pushed into the fight over in Baghdad. And then the local guys were being pushed down into the Mula’ab, the Sina’a, the Iskan, and into 1/6’s sector to fight inside the city.” His strategy was to first eliminate the sanctuary that fed, trained, and equipped insurgents into the Ramadi (and Baghdad) areas. This is not a new lesson, but it does have the strategic value of *first address the source* (the sanctuary) *not the symptom* (insurgent activity in Ramadi).

2. Every operation was a recruiting opportunity, every Soldier and Marine a recruiter

The operations were designed not just to go after the enemy kinetically, “but in more cases than not, they were designed to go and recruit more sheikhs and tribes and get the people to basically throw AQI out. It was a very deliberate, fist in one hand, but carrots in the other to convince these people that they needed to support us and not AQI.”⁴²⁷

This concept was recognized at the individual level. Captain Tom Daly, USMC, in his book *Rage Company* indicated “We weren’t simply clearing a district. The colonel’s task specifically stated that we were to find and recruit the tribal sheikhs. Rage Company was being ordered to engage the local populace and no longer treat them as neutral observers.”⁴²⁸

3. A mixture of rural (with tribes) and urban (no tribal elites)

TF 1-9 confronted both rural and urban conditions. In the urban environment, like LtCol Bill Jurney, Commander, 1/6 Marines in central Ramadi (Qatana/Government Center), the Mula’ab/Askin area was not tribal.⁴²⁹ So there was no single tribal elite to unite the people. This was a different story in the Shark Fins. Sofia was much like western Ramadi and Sattar, with Jassim taking the lead. So LTC Ferry had to deal with both conditions. The lesson is that even within a small area, the context of the human terrain (urban or rural) sets conditions on “how groups react.”

4. Combined, permanent persistent presence

TF 1-9 started with the force structure to conduct its mission and was plussed up when needed. As LTC Ferry said, “Sean MacFarland used to kid me, ‘Well as long as your brigade doesn’t get bigger than my brigade, then I’m fine with it.’ We would joke around about

⁴²⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Charles P. Ferry, “Memorandum for Record, Subject: Summary of Task Force 1-9 IN Combat Operations from 6 Nov 2006 to 1 Dec 2007,” 2.

⁴²⁸ Daly, *Rage Company*, 28

⁴²⁹ Colonel Bill Jurney interview with Dr. William Knarr, Joint Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia, 3 Mar 2010.

it...[But] there were a lot of really good reasons why it was like that. And we were effective with it.” He still had to take risks in areas when other priorities arose, but he was allowed to lead and manage his forces, and when needed, he received more. As an example, Echo and Fox 2/4 were provided as the TF extended its reach to Julaybah. When he was directed to take down the Mula’ab he had the force structure to leave companies in Julaybah, Sofia, and Sina’a as he focused his force in Mula’ab/Iskan. Additionally, those forces included experienced Iraqi battalions from the 1st IA Brigade. As TF 1-9 achieved success, LTC Ferry increased force structure as he built up the local police across the AO to increase local presence.

5. An Awakening

The progression and development of the Anbar Awakening can be characterized as “The Sunnis,

1. Rejected the terrorists (AQI),
2. Joined the Coalition in the fight against AQI and other insurgent extremists, and
3. Worked with the Iraqi local and national governments and their security forces.”

There are many specific examples of the Awakening events, each with its own local character. As an example,

1. Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha gained the support of 40 other Ramadi sheiks, rejected AQI in an Emergency decree on 14 September,
2. Partnered with the Coalition to fight AQI, and
3. Supported and worked with, albeit in some cases reluctantly, the Iraqi local and national governments and their security forces.⁴³⁰

Another example of this occurred in Al Qaim. In both situations the Sunni tribes took the lead and were reluctant to work with the Iraqi Government.

This characterization of the Awakening was reflected in the Sofia area and then in the Julaybah area with Sheikh Jassim and the former Iraqi general, respectively. There were also a number of similarities among these cases—the importance of the police as the anchor point for security in all locations. It was only after the IP were in place and the connection to the population strengthened that the conditions were set for local government to develop and operate. Again TF 1-9 encountered two different areas. One area that could be compared to other tribal areas but also an urban environment with no tribal affiliations.

⁴³⁰ Colonel Tony Deane, former commander, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor in Ramadi, Iraqi, June–Nov 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 12 Oct 2010.

6. A network of relationships and events

The Albu-Mahal relationship surfaced in the Al Qaim, the Corridor and Ramadi narratives as well as in Sofia. In August 2005, according to Colonel Ahmed Jelayan Khalaf, former Desert Protector, members of the Albu-Mahal tribe fled AQI as they were being purged from the Al Qaim area.⁴³¹ Some found refuge in the Ramadi area and Mahalawis worked with Sheikh Sattar and Sheikh Jassim Salih, supporting the awakening. Additionally, the relationship between Albu-Risha and Albu-Mahal was very strong, as described by both Sheikh Sabah and Sheikh Ahmed.⁴³² Sabah had indicated that he met with Sattar in Jordan to discuss the awakening in both Al Qaim and Ramadi in early 2006.

In addition to Sheikh Jassim's brother-in-law and second-in-command being Albu-Mahal, Coalition documents also generally reflect a strong relationship between the Albu-Souda and Albu-Mahal tribes in the Sofia area.⁴³³

As historians of the Anbar Awakening see no relationships between awakening events, they need to look deeper to understand that those events are connected via Sheikh networks and societal relationships. Americans are only seeing the tip of the iceberg.

K. Heading East

As this story began from eastern Al Anbar, it is now completing its journey from west to east, back to Fallujah.

⁴³¹ Colonel Ahmed Jelayan Khalaf, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Husaybah, 18 Apr 2010.

⁴³² Sheikh Sabah al-Sattam Effan Fahren al-Shurji al-Aziz, principal sheikh of the Albu-Mahal tribe in Al Qaim, interview with Dr. William Knarr, LtCol David Graves, USMC, and Mary Hawkins, Amman, Jordan, 3 Feb 2011.

⁴³³ "Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award," 3, 6.

9. Fallujah

Fallujah dominated the news coming out of Iraq in 2004. In March, General Abizaid's visit to Fallujah was cut short due to an insurgent's attack on him and his entourage. In late March, four US contractors were killed in Fallujah, their burned remains hung from the city's old North Bridge. The Coalition assault on the city "to make the insurgents pay" was aborted and left the insurgents in charge of Fallujah. This sent a signal to the rest of Iraq and the region that the Americans could be beaten.⁴³⁴ According to Dr. Mowaffak Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, Fallujah became a symbol of the insurgency.⁴³⁵

Fallujah became unbearable for the residents, who soon understood the horrors of living under AQI's extreme interpretation of Sharia. Instead of partnering with the Iraqi people to fight the occupiers, AQI, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, demanded to lead the jihad with the intent of first destroying and then transforming the social fabric of the province. Fallujah-area residents such as Farhan De Hal Farhan and Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli fled and carried the word to other areas of Iraq as well as Syria and Jordan, that the *takfiris*—extremists—were really the enemy of the Iraqi people.⁴³⁶

In November 2004, the Coalition launched Operation AL FAJR to clear the city of insurgents and eliminate it as their sanctuary. The fighting was intense; uprooting them required such extensive fire power that the city suffered widespread damage. Although the foreign fighters and supporting insurgents lost their sanctuary, some found refuge in nearby Habbaniyah, Ameriyah-Ferris, Zaidon, Karmah, and Saqlawiyah. Others moved west along the Euphrates towards the Iraq/Syria border and north towards Mosul.

During the next two years, war-weary communities, towns, and districts along the Euphrates would awaken to the facts that 1) AQI was not their friend, and 2) They could not defeat AQI on their own. One by one they turned to the Coalition for help—first in Al Qaim in 2005, in the Corridor in early-to-mid-2006, and Ramadi in mid-to-late 2006— not out of love for the

⁴³⁴ Capitalizing on the chaos, Muqtada al-Sadr and his militia contested GOI and Coalition power in the Karbala, Najaf, and Al Kut areas of Iraq. He was subdued by the Coalition's recall of forces that were deploying or had already deployed back to their home stations. He tried again in Najaf during August 2004 and was again subdued.

⁴³⁵ Dr. Mowaffak Al Rubai'e, Iraqi National Security Advisor, interview, Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, USMC, his home, 29 Jan 2006, Baghdad.

⁴³⁶ Farhan De Hal Farhan fled to Al Qaim and became the district mayor. He carried with him the horrors of AQI in Fallujah to the Albu-Mahal in Al Qaim, one of the first tribes to turn against the insurgents. Sheikh Mishan Albu-Jumayli was one of the key figures in his tribe's reversal in the Al Karmah area of Fallujah.

Coalition, but to survive the insurgents (see Figure D-3, Appendix D).⁴³⁷ As the insurgents fled and were driven east and northeast, they sought sanctuary in the Lake Tharthar and Fallujah areas. The Fallujah area was well suited for resourcing and launching attacks into Baghdad.⁴³⁸

At the start of 2007, Fallujah proper was not out of control like it had been in 2004, but it was not under control either. Since 2004, AQI had regained some of its influence there, taking advantage of the Marines' redistribution of forces—the Marines had turned over control of the city to two battalions of the Iraqi Army and the local police in October 2006. Without the Marines alongside them, the Iraqi Army units in the city became less effective in patrolling and controlling Fallujah's streets.⁴³⁹ Additionally, the tribal uprisings that had marked the Awakening movements in Al Qaim, portions of the Corridor, and a majority of the Ramadi area had little to no influence in Fallujah or its environs, except to 1) drive homeless insurgents further east to the Fallujah area, thereby increasing the number of insurgents there, and 2) With the influx of insurgents, further intimidate the locals and drive tribal sheikhs to Syria and Jordan.

AQI scaled up its operations in Fallujah in early 2007 with the February assassination of city council secretary Abbas Ali Hussein at his home.⁴⁴⁰ In March, AQI attacked the Government Center with mortar fire, small arms fire, and then two suicide truck bombs, the second of which was filled with chlorine gas. This was followed by a ground attack; 15 Iraqis and US Advisors were wounded in the assault.⁴⁴¹

Despite the setbacks, there were qualitative improvements in the Iraqi Police and Army. Fallujah police chief Colonel Faisal Ismail Hussein, himself a former insurgent, improved the local police's ability to target the insurgency. Col Faisal worked closely with the Anbar Revolutionaries to support the Fallujah police; as a member of the Albu-Zobai tribe, he would play a role in successfully co-opting the 1920 Revolution Brigade.⁴⁴²

The creation of the Iraqi Special Missions Group, a police unit aimed at capturing High Value Targets, enabled the Iraqi Police to more effectively target AQI leaders operating in the Fallujah area. The Group, created in November 2006, was the brainchild of a US Marine Re-

⁴³⁷ The Corridor defines a 70-mile stretch of communities along the Euphrates from Hadithah to Hit.

⁴³⁸ Fallujah was operationally important to the insurgents as a launching pad for attacks into Baghdad, where Tharthar became one of the last hiding places for AQI and the coalition of insurgents.

⁴³⁹ West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 243.

⁴⁴⁰ Fred W. Baker, "US Officials in Iraq Condemn Assassination of Fallujah Councilman," American Forces Press Service, 22 Apr 2007.

⁴⁴¹ Bill Roggio, "Fallujah Government Center struck by chlorine suicide attack," *Long War Journal*, 28 Mar 2007.

⁴⁴² Sudarsan Raghavan, "In Fallujah, Peace Through Brute Strength," *Washington Post*, 24 Mar 2008; Bill Ardolino, "Confidence is Key: The Evolution of the Fallujah Police Department Part One," *Long War Journal*, 3 Oct 2007.

serve sergeant in the Police Transition Team. An FBI agent when not in uniform, the sergeant had experience with such units.⁴⁴³

The Iraqi Army showed similar progress with the installation of a new commander. In January 2007, Brigadier General Khalid Jawad Khadim of the Iraqi Army was relieved of command for engaging in a variety of illegal activities ranging from pilfering his soldiers' salaries to stealing government property. After he was replaced, the Iraqi Army in Fallujah dramatically improved its accountability and eliminated the problem "ghost soldiers" that had plagued it throughout BG Khalid's tenure.⁴⁴⁴

But the solution to the insurgency in Fallujah was much larger than controlling entry into and movement within the city; it depended on controlling areas such as Zaidon, Al Karmah, and Saqlawiyah.⁴⁴⁵ Those communities fed insurgents into Fallujah as well as Baghdad, and the areas couldn't be stabilized until the source of the violence was contained. In January 2007, Regimental Combat Team 6 assumed responsibility for the Fallujah area. Although more than nine combat battalions had rotated through its area during its tenure, this paper focuses on two of those battalions: 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines (2/7 Marines) assuming responsibility for Zaidon, Al Karmah, and Saqlaqiyah in January 2007; and 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines (2/6) that assumed responsibility for the city of Fallujah in March 2007. The following sections outline a series of events that addresses the feeder communities and then focus on the city itself.

A. The Fallujah Environs: Zaidon, Al Karmah and Saqlawiyah

Fallujah was not new to 2/7 Marines, in particular to Lieutenant Colonel Joe L'Etoile, the battalion commander. L'Etoile was the 1st Marine Division (MARDIV) G3, in 2004 for both battles of Fallujah under Major General James Mattis and later under Major General Richard Natonski. LtCol L'Etoile deployed 2/7 Marines to the Fallujah area from July 2005 to January 2006 ('05 deployment) and again from January to August 2007 ('07 deployment). So he and the battalion were extremely familiar with Fallujah and its environs. Figure 9-1 reflects 2/7's area of responsibility for both deployments.

⁴⁴³ Bill Roggio, "A Day in Fallujah," *Long War Journal*, 8 Dec 2006; Bill Arbolino, "The Fallujah Police Transition Team Mission," INDC Journal, 12 Feb 2007, based on his personal reporting while imbedded with the police transition team in Fallujah.

⁴⁴⁴ West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 259; "General in 'Ghost Army' Inquiry is Still in Command," *Financial Times*, 24 Jan 2007; and Ned Parker, "How Ghost Soldiers Are Bleeding the Iraqi Army of Guns and Money," *The Times*, 19 Jan 2007.

⁴⁴⁵ Habbaniyah to the west of Fallujah and Ameriyah-Ferris to the south of Zaidon were also important, but this paper will concentrate on the three listed.

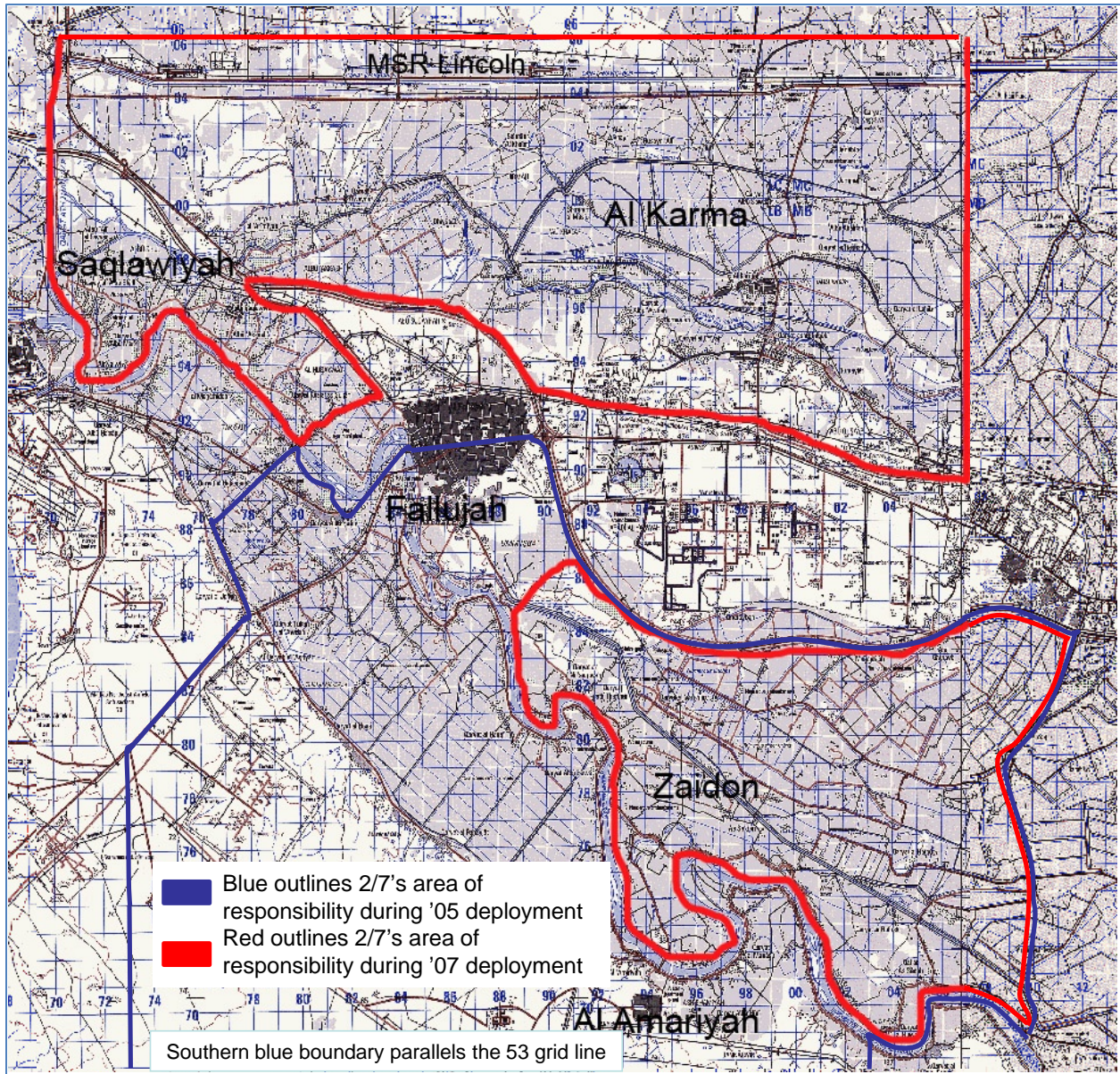


Figure 9-1. 2/7's Area of Operations⁴⁴⁶

1. Zaidon

Zaidon is a town where Islamist extremists thrived while Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq. Religious leaders preached hatred and jihad, and provided the ideological underpinnings for the jihad against Coalition forces. Zaidon was also the home of the Zobai tribe, who were known to be insular, restive, and prone to hijacking along the main highway. When Coalition

⁴⁴⁶ The '05 deployment was July 2005–Jan 2006, and the '07 deployment was Jan–Aug 2007. Two Iraqi battalions assumed primary responsibility for the city of Fallujah (center of map).

forces cleared Fallujah in November 2004, many insurgents escaped to Zaidon where AQI again sought to implement its fierce version of *Sharia*.⁴⁴⁷ Zaidon and the Zobai tribe were notable for other reasons, such as being the home of Dr. Hareth al-Dhari and the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade.

Dr. Hareth al-Dhari was the leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars, the leading Sunni religious leader in Iraq, and has been called the spiritual energy behind the nationalist insurgency in Iraq.⁴⁴⁸ He remained in Iraq until he fled in 2006 when the Iraqi Minister of Interior, Jawad al-Bolani, issued a warrant for his arrest for inciting terrorism and violence among the Iraqi people.⁴⁴⁹ His reputation is rooted in that of his grandfather, Sheikh Dhari who led the resistance against the British occupation of Iraq in 1920. Sheikh Dhari was also renowned for killing Colonel Gerald Leachman of the British army who was sent to Fallujah to quell resistance.⁴⁵⁰

The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade was one of the largest Nationalist insurgency groups in Iraq and derived its name from the Iraqi revolution against British occupation in 1920. It is a Sunni nationalist group with Islamic ties and was established in 2003 as the armed wing of the Hamas in Iraq. Sheikh Dhari's nephew of the same name was the leader of the organization until his assassination in 2007. The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade eventually broke ties with AQI due to AQI's brutality towards Iraqis—both Sunni and Shia.⁴⁵¹

The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade claimed the area to the north of the canal and AQI claimed territory to the south (see the Zaidon area on Figure and the canal diagonally bisecting the area). Not only did this split the Zaidon area, it also split the Zobai tribe. According to L'Etoile, the Coalition's presence made it a three-way fight. The 1920 Revolutionary Brigade would periodically go south of the canal to kill AQI and AQI would respond by going north and attacking the 1920 Revolutionary Brigade. LtCol L'Etoile explained the balancing of power in the area:

The dynamic was, if they had achieved some sort of parity they would fight for advantage for who was going to control what. But if one side would achieve an advantage through some sort of engagement where they would knock off a good dozen or two dozen of the other side, the reflections would indicate that they were talking

⁴⁴⁷ Bill Roggio, "Anbar Rising," *Long War Journal*, 11 May 2007; West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 259–60.

⁴⁴⁸ Dr. Hareth al-Dhari interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, on 8 Feb 2011 at his office in Amman, Jordan.

⁴⁴⁹ Associated Press, *Arrest of Sunni Leader Sought in Iraq*, 16 Nov 2006, accessed 21 Apr 2011 www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/World/20061116/sunni_leader_061116/.

⁴⁵⁰ Dahr Jamail, "Iraq: Support Grows for Sunni Leader," *Inter Press Service News*, 20 Nov 2006, accessed at www.ipsnews.net/2006/11/iraq-support-gathers-for-sunni-leader/ on 11 Nov 2013.

⁴⁵¹ 1920s Revolution Brigades, accessed at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/9#note10> on 17 Dec 2013, hosted on Stanford University's Mapping Militant Organizations web page. Also Bill Roggio, "The Sunni Civil War," *The Long War Journal*, 27 Mar 2007, accessed at http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/03/the_sunni_civil_war.php, on 17 Dec 2013.

about reconciliation. And we didn't want them to reconcile; we did not want them to coalesce into one entity, so we would do our targeting, do our operations based off of the feedback from the reflections as to who was talking to who about advantage, disadvantage, negotiations, etc....And so you have this three way donnybrook where our strategy was very simple, almost like the English strategy of kill the Germans to the last Russian. We were trying to kill Al Qaeda to the last 20th Rev.⁴⁵²

But just as the average Iraqi was war-weary, local AQI could be subject to the same affliction. L'Etoile indicated that the tribal reconciliation process was one of his greatest tools. If local AQI was not on some sort of list, i.e., "a really bad guy," then the tribe could take care of it as a tribal issue. He was not going to allow this to be a "one way door" and stand in the way. This reconciliation process would also help separate the locals from the extremists.

One day, AQI raided the north and kidnapped a 12-year-old boy affiliated with the Zobai leadership. According to L'Etoile:

[They] slaughtered him just like a lamb on the hook, gutted him and left him hanging there. I went home that night and I was thinking this is the dumbest enemy I have ever faced. This is not the way you fight wars amongst the people... You've crossed a cultural norm that doesn't allow you to go backwards. You've crossed the Rubicon at the tribal level. You've crossed the Rubicon of societal norms. And then it struck me that's exactly what they wanted to happen, because the response by the Zobai Tribe was, there is no more reconciliation. And so Al Qaeda through that act stopped the ability of their fighters to leave because the tribe wouldn't take them back. That was such an egregious act that everybody was tainted, so the line was drawn.

Shortly after, LtCol L'Etoile set up a meeting with the leadership of the Zobai/1920 Revolutionary Brigade and proposed they cooperate to defeat their common enemy. They started with a series of confidence-building measures to show that they could depend on each other. Next the Marines provided a train-up of indigenous forces to facilitate working together. On 5 July, they moved south to battle AQI; within 48 hours, it was over.

Before July 4, we had had over 100 real fights. I'm not talking about somebody throwing a round down range, or a random mortar, we had 100 direct contacts with enemy forces both 20th Rev and Al Qaeda. We did not have a single one after we had gone south of the canal and cleared it up. It was over! It was like hitting the switch. There was no tapering down. There was no 25 contacts this week, 15 the next, five the next, it was over. Not another shot was fired in the entire Zaidon.

To sustain the situation, MNF-W worked with the Iraqi government to legitimize and fund 300 Iraqi locals as an auxiliary police unit. 2/7 Marines then turned the Zaidon over to the Zobai leadership and 1920 Revolution Brigade. The success in Zaidon allowed them to focus on Al Karmah to include committing those forces from Zaidon to Al Karmah.

⁴⁵² Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L'Etoile, interview, Dr. William Knarr, 28 Sept 2013, Tampa, FL.

2. Al Karmah

AQI also maintained a strong and persistent presence in Al Karmah, using it as a center from which to attack Fallujah. One difficulty with securing the Karmah area was its proximity to where three Coalition operating areas connected: Multi-National Division–North, Multi-National Division–Baghdad, and MNF-W. Cognizant of the “seam,” insurgents used the boundaries to facilitate their attack.

The area north of Al Karmah had also been a harbor for AQI since 2004, given its remoteness and location along a major route connecting the Samarra area to the Fallujah area. Coalition forces had rarely ventured into the area, mainly due to the more pressing challenges in the urban areas and the lack of forces to spare.⁴⁵³

Additionally, the local Jumayli tribe had some strong AQI supporters. The tribal leader, Sheikh Mishan, lost a son to Coalition forces in 2003 and then ran afoul of the insurgents in 2004 over the radicalization and subsequent destruction of Fallujah. In return, he and his family were attacked and he lost a second son. The sheikh fled to Syria where he remained until AQI murdered his third son outside Fallujah in June 2007. The sheikh finally agreed to return and lead his people against AQI as part of the Awakening.⁴⁵⁴

According to L’Etoile, this was a “chicken or egg” situation. They wanted Sheikh Mishan back to help stabilize the area. But he wouldn’t return until the area was secured. So, with the help of surge forces from the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), they cleared the Karmah area in an operation called BLACK DIAMOND from June until October; during that period Sheikh Mishan returned. The Marines also helped obtain authorization for a new Provisional Security Force battalion to comprise Jumayli tribesmen to help secure the tribal areas.⁴⁵⁵

The Marines also used elements of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit to secure the Tharthar area. When AQI was driven to points further north, dozens of large, well-emplaced IEDs were discovered. As was now the habit, after areas were cleared, Marine and Iraq Army combat outposts were established to remain and keep the area secure.⁴⁵⁶ Although attention would turn to Saqlawiyah to the northwest of Fallujah, violence in Al Karmah would periodically spike. Some questioned Sheikh Mishan’s leadership to stabilize the situation, and felt that others, such as General Sadun Talib al-Jumayli, commander of the Al Karmah area Provisional Security Force, was better suited to lead. After the 26 June 2008 incident where a sui-

⁴⁵³ West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 280-281; Bill Roggio, “Anbar Rising.”

⁴⁵⁴ LtGen John Allen, former Deputy Commanding General, Multi-National Force–West, Jan 2007–Feb 2008, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Central Command, 18 Mar 2010, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. General Allen describes his engagement actions with the sheikh and his efforts to convince him to return.

⁴⁵⁵ Greg Jaffe, “Tribal Connections: How Courting Sheikhs Slowed Violence in Iraq,” *Wall Street Journal*, 8 Aug 2007; L’Etoile interview, 28 Sept 2013.

⁴⁵⁶ Bill Roggio, “The Battle of the Belts,” *Long War Journal*, 18 June 2007; Bill Roggio, “Operation FARDH AL AMIN: The Anbar Offensive,” *Long War Journal*, 26 June 2007.

cide bomber accessed a high level Al Karmah meeting and killed the mayor of Al Karmah, a Marine battalion commander and others, the Coalition turned more to Sadun for his leadership in the Karmah area rather than Mishan.⁴⁵⁷

3. Saqlawiyah

Captain Donnie Hazzeltine, Commander, F Company, 2/7 Marines in late 2005 and again from January to August 2007, described Saqlawiyah and the tribal dynamics of the area (see Figure 9-2):

Saqlawiyah was unique because there was only one tribe, the Mohamdi, located in a very defined area that you could geographically isolate very easily and, once you figured out the cultural landscape, you could gain momentum in the area.

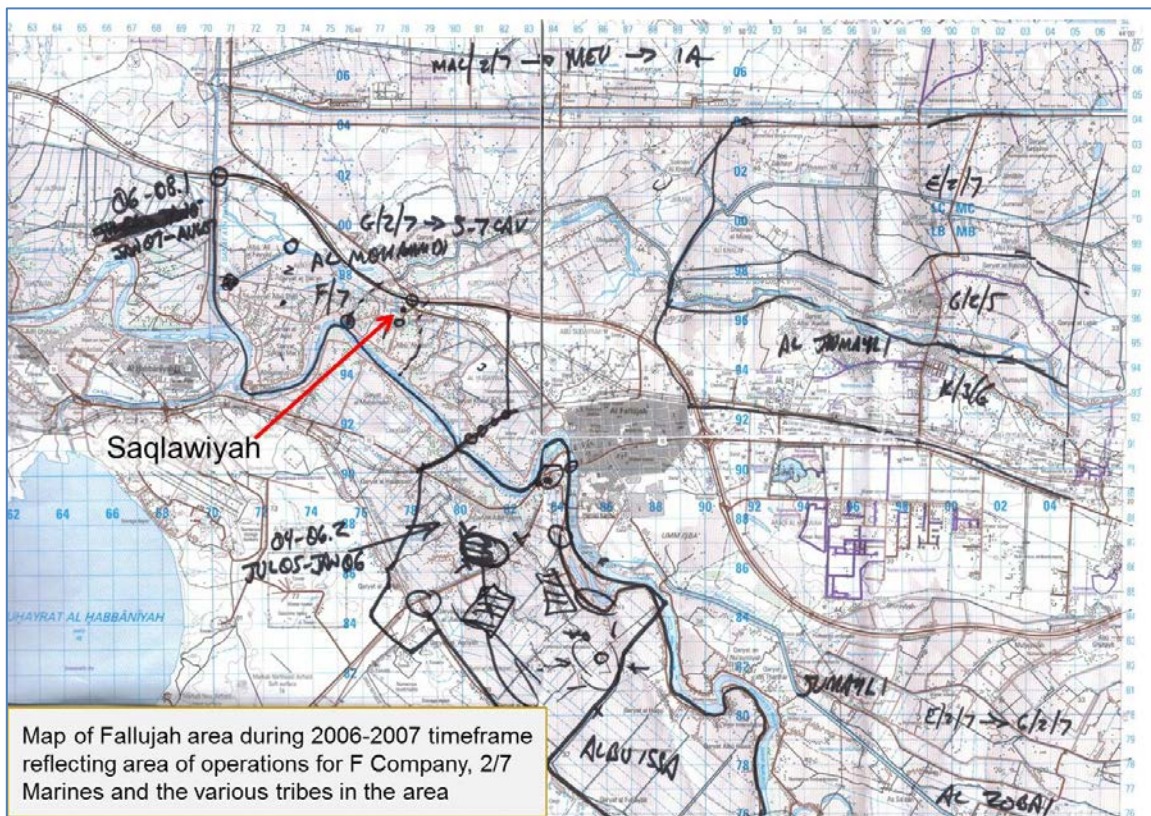


Figure 9-2. F Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, AO and interest 2006–07 timeframe

The Mohamdi tribe, according to Hasseltine, was laid back and content with remaining in their local area; however, other nearby tribes weren't as laid back:

⁴⁵⁷ Austin Long, "War Comes to Al Anbar: Political Conflict in an Iraqi Province," paper presented at the 2009 Intentional Studies Conference, 50th Annual Convention: Exploring the Past, Anticipating the Future, New York Marriott Marquis, New York City, NY, 15 Feb 2009

If you go out on the peninsula with Albu-Issa and deal with Sheikh Khamis, they were an aggressive tribe, and once you go out to Al Kharma you've got the Al Jarmayli who were extremely aggressive.

Captain Hasseltine also commented on mapping the human terrain, to include tribal relationships and insurgent activity. His area analysis also included the economic activities such as black marketing routes and fuel points that serviced that community.⁴⁵⁸

With the Mohamdi sheikh in Jordan, there was no one to stand up for the population. At one time an Emergency Response Unit was brought in from Ramadi, but they were viewed as foreigners and, according to L'Etoile, became part of the problem. The strategy in Saqlawiyah was to invest in the local police and police station. After a while, things improved. L'Etoile described "three overlapping conditions that conjoined to create the environment conducive to the Awakening:"

One is, overreaching by Al Qaeda. Number two is, is a war weary population that must make a choice. And Number three, is really that in choosing to side with the Coalition, that, that is an honorable choice which requires the Coalition to behave in a way that is honorable, so that choosing them isn't dishonorable.

But then something happened that accelerated the process. AQI hit the Marine compound in Saqlawiyah with a truck filled with "probably over 1,000 pounds of HME [home-made explosives]." Although the machine gunner blew the truck before it hit the compound, the explosion was powerful enough to collapse the building and it crashed down on top of the squad. "By the grace of God no one was hurt, but they're all bleeding through the ears, concussion injuries, broken bones...a mass casualty event." But what happened next contributed to Saqlawiyah's turning point.

Across the street from the compound was an Iraqi family that the Marines had gotten to know, not friends exactly, but friendly, and in particular, the Marines had connected with the young daughter. When the truck detonated, the little girl was playing outside and was wounded. The Marines did not tend to their wounds, but took care of the little girl. According to LtCol L'Etoile:

The first medevac called in by the Marines was for the little girl and it was a lie, because they knew that the policy was not to medevac civilians ahead of the wounded Marines...Unfortunately, she subsequently passed on. But the family of the little girl that survived told the population what had happened: that the bloodied, bruised, broken Marines tried desperately to revive their daughter and the first person on a helicopter out of there was their daughter, not the wounded Marines. They said, "The fight's over. You're our Marines."

⁴⁵⁸ Captain Donnie Hasseltine, interview, Dr. William Knarr, Alexandria, Virginia, 10 Sept 2007.

Within three days, AQI was gone. On the way out, AQI hit the overpass on Route Michigan with an suicide vehicle borne IED and sent another one into the market place—turning on the population.

B. Fallujah

The 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines had been in Fallujah before from October 2005 to April 2006. Although Marines had rotated out of and in to the battalion since that deployment, almost all had Al Anbar experience, and many had Fallujah experience. That was both good and bad. Previous deployments emphasized force protection and kinetic operations. Some equated the two—in many cases, during those earlier years, that might have been true. But conditions were changing. This time it would be different. Not only because of the added Coalition experience, but because conditions outside the city as well as inside had changed. Outside the city, 2/7 Marines started to gain the support of the Iraqi residents, security forces, and government to secure those bedroom communities surrounding Fallujah. Although Sheikh Sattar met with tribal leaders in the Fallujah area and offered his assistance, he, and his Awakening movement had less influence with the Fallujah tribes than he did with those in the Ramadi area. They were more independent, not necessarily of the same confederation and were not influenced by the Ramadi movement. Hence, the return of the sheikhs from Jordan and Syria contributed significantly to the coalescing of the tribes. Their leaders were back; decisions could be made, honored, and carried out.⁴⁵⁹

The return of Sheikh Khamis Hasnawi Aifan of the Albu-Issa tribe, one of the strongest and largest in the Fallujah area was another example of the impact of the tribal leader on a tribe with split loyalties between the Coalition and AQI. He had advocated engaging the Coalition in 2005 and AQI subsequently targeted him in June 2005 and March 2006. Forced to flee, he joined other expatriate sheikhs in Jordan and Syria. Only in early 2007 would he feel secure enough to return.⁴⁶⁰ After some intense intra-tribal fighting, Sheikh Khamis reconciled the various sub-tribe grievances and they were able to focus their efforts against AQI.

Within the city, the return of the Marines in and of itself was significant. The city had been turned over to the Iraqis in 2006; some say prematurely. Although the Iraqi Army, Police, and Fallujan government had qualitatively improved, there were still too much murder and intimidation. LtCol Mullen and the return of 2/6 Marines would adapt to the changed conditions by changing their approach to the Iraqis and adopting the “clear, hold and build” strategy from Ramadi. Mullen recognized that success in Fallujah depended on the Iraqis accepting responsibility for their own security and that meant working with and through them.

⁴⁵⁹ L'Etoile interview, 28 Sept 2013. Allen interview, 18 Mar 2010.

⁴⁶⁰ Greg Jaffe, “Tribal Connections: How courting Sheikhs Slowed Violence in Iraq”; Montgomery and McWilliams, *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume II*, interview with Sheikh Aifan Sadun al-Issawi, 92–93.

This was an attitude he and his sergeant major, executive officer, and operations officer had to instill in the battalion before Transfer of Authority.

In late May 2007, the battalion executed a plan of “clear, hold, win, won.” Named Operation ALLJAH, it consisted of dividing the city into 11 precincts. As described by Mullen:

One by one, a precinct would be swarmed by Iraqi Army and Police units backed up by 2/6 Marines. Cement barriers were placed around the precinct to restrict traffic entering and exiting the precinct to two openings, each guarded by Iraqi Police. A precinct headquarters was established and manned by all three forces. Local men were recruited from the precinct to form a neighborhood watch under the supervision of the police. Lastly, food bags (each of which could feed a family of 4 for several days) were distributed by the police while civil affairs teams made an assessment of the precincts infrastructure needs. These needs were then prioritized and addressed as quickly as possible.⁴⁶¹

This was a methodical, systematic clearing and securing of the city, followed by recruiting and training a local force to assume security responsibilities, and a slow withdrawal of Marines into tactical over-watch; they were close enough to respond if needed, but far enough away to allow the Iraqis to develop confidence.

The combination of addressing security in the environs of Fallujah as well as within the city itself, forced AQI out. Most moved to the north in the Tharthar area and into other provinces, looking for gaps in Coalition/Iraqi security. It was not necessarily over, but clearly, with the Sheikhs returning from Jordan and Syria, and their recommitment to secure the city, things were looking up.

C. Themes and Lessons

Each volume in this study provides themes corresponding to significant events in each AO. Below are the themes and leads gleaned from the events that occurred in Fallujah; events that were significant and similar or dissimilar to other areas of Al Anbar are also noted.

1. Perceptions are important, even if they seem preposterous

A number of high-level Iraqis thought that the American forces were working with Al Qaeda to destroy Iraq. According to Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi Tribe located in Fallujah, “most of the people started to think that Al Qaeda worked for the Americans” because of AQI’s brutality against Iraqis and the appearance, at

⁴⁶¹ William F. Mullen, III, “Turning Fallujah,” *Small Wars Journal*, 29 Oct 2009, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/turning-fallujah>.

least, that the Coalition was aware of and condoned that brutality.⁴⁶² According to Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars:

At first we thought, “The Americans are using Al Qaeda as an umbrella for them to torture and make the Iraqis suffer.” I want to emphasize that Al Qaeda had no place in Iraq before the invasion. And the blame for Al Qaeda entering Iraq lies with the Americans and the American alliance, and the Coalition’s. They opened the gates from the east to the west, from the north to the south for Al Qaeda and other terrorists who came into Iraq.⁴⁶³

Sheikh Mishan of the Jumalyi tribe was kinder. He told BrigGen John Allen, Deputy Commander, MNF-W in 2007 that the “US assists insurgents by taking away all their [the tribes] weapons and then the US does not protect the people.”⁴⁶⁴

2. Experience of the Coalition force was extraordinary

The Marines in general, and 2/7 Marines in particular, brought an extraordinary amount of experience to its deployment in the Fallujah area. LtCol Joe L’Etoile worked in the area during 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. As commander, 2/7 he led the battalion in the Fallujah area during two tours: from July 2005 to January 2006, and January 2007 to August 2007. As in other areas of Iraq, the Coalition’s combat experience was substantial. 2/7 Marines even more so, because they had back-to-back deployments in the same area.

2/6 Marines operated in Fallujah from October 2005 to April 2006. Although a number of Marines rotated out of and into the battalion as it prepared for its 2007 Fallujah deployment to include the battalion’s commander, most of the Marines were familiar with Al Anbar, if not specifically Fallujah.

3. Not all Awakenings are the same, but there are similarities

The evolution of events in the Fallujah area illustrate that not all awakenings are the same. Typically, people associate the awakening with the tribes, but in the Fallujah area power coalesced in various ways. In Zaidon, the 1920 Revolution Brigade as a Nationalist insurgent group turned on AQI with the help of the Coalition and essentially remained in charge of the area after ridding it of insurgents.

Al Karmah’s redemption depended on the Coalition establishing a window of security in preparation for Sheikh Mishan’s return from Jordan. This capitalized on tribal affiliation, alt-

⁴⁶² Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan.

⁴⁶³ Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 8 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan.

⁴⁶⁴ Sheikh Mishan, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan.

hough for many years, the Jumayli tribe's loyalties were split between insurgent and anti-insurgent.

In Saqlawiyah, the police force, enabled by the Marines, developed as a force, gained credibility, and finally established control in the area; however, in all cases, AQI did something so extreme, it catalyzed the population to choose the Coalition.

4. AQI Overreach: A different perspective

AQI's propensity to overreach is confusing. Some have suggested (the Awakening project task leader for example) that, had AQI not been so brutal and had they been more considerate of the population, there would have been no Awakening and the Coalition would either still be fighting or would have departed in defeat. Most (to include the authors) believe that AQI's overreach in intimidating the population was the catalyst for the Awakening. But consider that some of the extreme barbarism may have served a purpose other than intimidation. LtCol L'Etoile, reflecting on the killing of a Sheikh's 12-year-old son "slaughtered like a lamb" offered a different explanation, for at least this incident. War weary tribal members who had supported/joined Al Qaeda cells were ready to go home. But in order to do so they needed to reconcile with the tribal leadership. AQI, in slaughtering the young boy, the Sheikh's son, effectively stopped any reconciliation because "that was such an egregious act that everybody was tainted, so the line was drawn and it was final," there would be no further reconciliation.⁴⁶⁵

5. Addressing the source, not the symptom

Although Fallujah was cleared during Operation AL FAJR in late 2004, it would not be stabilized until the source of the instability was neutralized. That didn't happen until the first half of 2007 when 2/7 Marines came to the area. After that, 2/6 Marines launched Operation ALLJAH to clear, hold, and build Fallujah a precinct at a time.

6. The Surge made a difference

The Surge in Iraq was inaccurately credited with a number of successes. Most notably Senator John McCain credited Sattar's *Sahawa* proclamation in September of 2006 to the later surge of forces in 2007.⁴⁶⁶ That was inaccurate. However, the surge of forces in 2007 did make a difference in Fallujah as RCT-6 received two additional battalions to support operations in the Fallujah area.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁵ L'Etoile interview, 28 Sept 2013.

⁴⁶⁶ McCain interview, CBS, 22 July 2008

⁴⁶⁷ Major Craig R. Abele, *Tipping Point: What Caused Fallujah's Security Transformation*, Marine Corps Command and Staff College Research Paper, 1 Apr 2010.

D. The Last Al Anbar Hold-out

As other parts of Al Anbar Province improved, so did the Fallujah area, but much more slowly. The last “red” area to be secured was in the Fallujah area, with MNF-W listing Al Karmah as the “most significant insurgent operating area” as of August 2007.⁴⁶⁸ Additionally, the incident of 26 June 2008 in Al Karmah would delay Al Anbar’s transition to Provincial Iraqi Control from June until September 2008.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ Major General Walter Gaskin, Commanding General, Multi-National, *MNF-W 06-08 Stability in Anbar briefing*, Oct 2007 (estimated date).

⁴⁶⁹ On 26 June 2008, a suicide bomber detonated at a meeting of Al Karmah town council killing Mishan’s cousins, uncle, and brother. The battalion commander and other Coalition forces were also killed in the explosion. Mary Vorsino, *Honolulu Advertiser*, 29 June 2008, “Suicide Bomber Kills Three Hawaii Marines.”

10. Decline of the Insurgency in Al Anbar and Transition to Provincial Iraqi Control

By July 2007, the violence in Anbar had declined to almost nothing. Attacks across the province had fallen from 1,300 in October 2006 to 225 in June 2007. In Ramadi, insurgent attacks had averaged 30–35 per day and were down to one a day by June 2007. In July, MNC–I Commander Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno walked through the bazaar in the Qatana area of Ramadi welcomed by the local populace. Debris from demolished buildings had been hauled away, along with the mounds of garbage, trash, and burned-out cars. Shops were open, and the police walked around openly without protective vests. The same was true in Fallujah, where Coalition advisors could walk down clean streets without helmets and body armor.⁴⁷⁰

By August 2007, the tribes of Al Anbar were, to a large degree, united in their opposition to AQI and affiliate insurgent groups, although sub-elements and individuals from many tribes still supported those organizations. The Awakening efforts had spread beyond Anbar Province to other Sunni areas of Iraq such as parts of Diyala, Babil, Salahuddin, and Nineveh, provinces and regions with large Sunni populations.

For their part, the Coalition and the Iraqi Government were executing a sustained effort, using both conventional and special operations forces, to bring security to Iraq and simultaneously destroy AQI through several operations designed to first clear and hold areas of Baghdad and then the so-called “belt” areas around Baghdad. Those latter areas included the eastern, and most populous, parts of Al Anbar.⁴⁷¹

In Anbar, the combination of the increased numbers of police forces, Provincial Security Force Units, Iraqi Army units, as well as additional Marine elements enabled the Coalition to force AQI out of the populated areas along the Euphrates River Valley. As the summer of 2007 progressed into fall, the Coalition’s MNF-W pushed out further and further into remote

⁴⁷⁰ Additionally, the alliance with the sheikhs had increased the police forces across Al Anbar from 3,500 in October to 21,500 in June: John F. Burns, “Showcase and Chimera in the Desert,” *New York Times*, 8 July 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/07/08/weekinreview/08burns.html?pagewanted=print, In Ramadi alone the police force increased from 100 in 2006 to 3,500 in July 2007; West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 288, 290; Colonel John Charlton, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Ms. Mary Hawkins, 20 Oct 2010, Alexandria, VA.

⁴⁷¹ Institute for the Study of War, “Operation Fardh Al Qanoon,” www.understandingwar.org/operation/operation-fardh-al-qanoon; Bill Roggio, “Coalition, Iraqi Forces, Launch Operation Phantom Strike,” *The Long War Journal*, 13 Aug 2007; West, *The Strongest Tribe*, 327.

areas to the north and south of the Euphrates. The security turnaround, since Al Anbar had been assessed in August of 2006 as almost lost, could not have been more dramatic.⁴⁷²

On 3 September 2007, President George Bush met with Government of Iraq representatives and the Sunni Sheikhs at Al Asad Airbase in Al Anbar to congratulate them on their successes (see Figure 10-1). Although 10 days later Sheikh Sattar would be assassinated, the movement was self-sustaining. Conditions continued to improve, not only in terms of security, but also in the key areas of governance and economics.



Courtesy US Army

Figure 10-1. President Bush meets with An Anbar Sheikhs at Al Asad

One year after this historic meeting, on 1 September 2008, President Bush released the following statement:

Today, Anbar is no longer lost to al Qaeda—it is al Qaeda that lost Anbar. Iraqis—like countless other Muslims across the world—witnessed al Qaeda’s brutality firsthand and rejected it. As a result, Anbar has been transformed and reclaimed by the Iraqi people. This achievement is a credit to the courage of our troops, the Iraqi Security Forces, and the brave tribes and other civilians from Anbar who worked alongside them.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷² Roggio, “Operation FARDH AL AMIN: The Anbar Offensive.”

⁴⁷³ Statement released by the White House, 1 Sept 2008, accessed at www.socnet.com/archive/index.php/t-80307.html.

On that same date, Major General John Kelly, USMC, Commanding General, MNF-W, and Mr. Mamoun Sami Rasheed, the Governor of Al Anbar Iraq signed the provincial Iraqi control documents officially turning the responsibility for security of Al Anbar over to the Iraqi Government (see Figure 10-2).⁴⁷⁴



Courtesy of USMC

Figure 10-2. Major General Kelly and Governor Mamoun sign Provincial Iraqi Control documents on 1 September 2008 at a ceremony in Ramadi

Al Anbar was the eleventh of 18 Provinces to transfer to Iraqi control. On 23 January 2010, the Marines officially departed Al Anbar and turned over the remaining military commitments to units of the US Army. On 7 December 2011, the United States transferred Al Asad Airbase—its last base in Al Anbar—to the Iraqi Government.

A week later, on 14 December 2011, hundreds of demonstrators in Fallujah celebrated the departure of Coalition troops by burning the American flag, hailing Fallujah as the “Flame of the Resistance,” and claiming credit for driving out the occupier. Its reputation as feral and untamable continued.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁴ Stephanie Gaskell, “US Returns Control of Anbar to Iraqis,” NYDailyNews.com, 1 Sept 2008, www.nydailynews.com/news/world/returns-control-anbar-iraqis-article-1.324226.

⁴⁷⁵ Agence France Presse, “Hundreds in Fallujah Burn US Flag to Celebrate troops pulling out of Iraq,” *National Post*, 14 Dec 2011. Some would also argue that The Anbaris did not want their cooperation with an occupier (however practical and ultimately patriotic it might have been) to become the enduring memory of this period of time. This is quite the opposite of the Coalition’s desired memory. For reasons of Arab pride, etc – the locals will take every opportunity to separate themselves from the events of the Awakening to the extent those events center on the US Perhaps that is one of the biggest lessons – these kinds of wars, for reasons that are both practical and psychological, can never be about “us.” It is always their show, their initiative, mainly their blood, and, as this anecdote points out, their history.

This page is intentionally blank.

11. Collection and Analysis

Interviews for this project were conducted in the United States, Iraq, and Jordan. Each interview was structured around a series of primary research questions (PRQ). These questions were kept to a minimum (rule of thumb, five) but were supplemented with secondary research questions (SRQ) that provided more granularity to the research. The research questions, when answered, addressed the breadth and depth of the project and kept the project focused on the objectives. The structured nature of the research questions does not mean the interviews were sterile or that the exchanges were fixed—especially with regard to the SRQs. These questions stimulated conversational exchanges where new questions were introduced as new leads developed. Throughout this project, interview plans were tailored to each interviewee. Responses to some of the questions have been moved to the next chapter on thesis and themes.

A. Research Questions

Although the collection plan was much more detailed and complex, the initial PRQs, with SRQs are in the following table. This table is also located in Chapter 1 of each document.

Table 11-1. Initial Primary and Secondary Research Questions for the Awakening Project

Primary Research Questions	Secondary Research Questions
1. How, when, and why did the insurgency start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who participated? • Why did they join?
2. What was the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the prevalent definition? • Are there other definitions? If so, what are they? • Do different groups define it differently? If so why? • Was there more than one awakening?
3. What caused the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What events set the conditions for the Awakening? • Why did the Anbaris turn against Al Qaeda? • Why, and under what condition, did the Anbaris seek help from the Coalition? From the GOI? • What were the notable events of the Anbaris turning on AQI and joining with the Coalition? Was the GOI a partner in those events? Was there a relationship between those events? • Was there a “tipping point?” If so, when, where, how did it start, how did it evolve?
4. How did the Al Anbar Awakening reconcile the causes identified by PRQ 3? Who and what events contributed to the reconciliation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who and what events contributed to the reconciliation? What processes were used to reconcile the causes? • What were the strategies used by the actors to achieve their goals? • How did those strategies interact? • What resources were necessary/made available to the actors to implement their strategies?
5. What were the major themes and lessons from the Al Anbar Awakening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did these themes and lessons contribute to success in the larger context of Iraq? • Are they transferable to other areas such as Afghanistan or Africa? • Should they be incorporated into doctrine? • Should they be taught at the various Professional Military Education institutions? If so, how?

B. Responses to the Research Questions

What was the Anbar Awakening? There are a multitude of definitions; theories of how, why, and when it started; disagreements about the name itself, and how it evolved. The following summarizes responses to those questions as well as others indicated above during the collection and analysis of information. The reader should note that many of the responses are provided by Iraqis. Since the Awakening has been described as an Iraqi phenomenon, this part of the project drew heavily from Iraqi responses.

1. The Insurgency: How, why and when did it start?⁴⁷⁶

The response to this PRQ is complex and in most cases beyond the scope of individual experience. For a generalized description of early days of the insurgency and opinions about cause-and-effect relationships see Chapter 2, The Seeds of the Insurgency.

2. What was the Al Anbar Awakening(s)?⁴⁷⁷

Since Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha coined the term it's only appropriate that this start with his characterization. Unfortunately, he was assassinated in 2007 so we relied on others who knew him to provide his characterization. According to Colonel Sean MacFarland, "[Sheikh Sattar] defined it as them [the Anbaris] awakening to the fact that the Coalition was their friend and that the true enemy were the *takfiri* extremists."⁴⁷⁸ A slightly different version is provided by Andrew Lubin who quotes Sheikh Sattar as saying, "When the Americans came we thought they were our enemy. The Awakening came when we realized the Americans were our friends."⁴⁷⁹ Although less eloquent, but to the point, Lieutenant Colonel Tony Deane recalls Sheikh Sattar's declaration in early September, before the 14 September 2006 public proclamation as, "We have come to join you in fighting Al Qaeda."⁴⁸⁰

These are consistent with other characterizations, such as:

- Marine Corps University's *Al Anbar Anthology* generally described the Anbar Awakening as an "indigenous movement to partner with U.S. forces to rid the region of Al Qaeda ..."⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁶ Under this PRQ, SRQs were: Who participated and why did they join?

⁴⁷⁷ Under this PRQ, the SRQ were: What is the prevalent definition of the Awakening? Are there other definitions? If so, what are they? Do different groups define it differently? If so why? Was there more than one awakening?

⁴⁷⁸ Brigadier General Sean MacFarland interview with Dr. William Knarr, Ft Leavenworth, Kansas, 13 Oct 2010.

⁴⁷⁹ Andrew Lubin, "Ramadi, from Caliphate to Capitalism," in the U.S. Naval Institute's *Proceedings Magazine*, Apr 2008 Volume 134/4/1,262.

⁴⁸⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Tony Deane interview with Dr. William Knarr, Institute for Defense Analyses, at Fort Leavenworth, KS, on 12 October 2010. This was early September 2006, prior to the 9 September meeting with Colonel MacFarland and the public proclamation on 14 September 2006.

⁴⁸¹ *The Anbar Anthology*, Volume I, 2009, p. 1.

- Sterling Jensen and Najim al-Jabouri characterized the Sunni Awakening as the “Iraqi revolt against al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) in which Sunni Arabs partnered with U.S. forces to fight a common enemy.”⁴⁸²
- Mr. Mahmood al-Janabi, a former leader within the insurgent group, *Jaish al-Islami* (JAI), characterized it as recognition that “[We] started to realize that Al Qaeda posed a greater danger to Iraqi society than the Americans. So that’s how we stood and fought against Al Qaeda and began to work with the Americans...”⁴⁸³

What do those characterizations imply, include and exclude? First, they (the Sunnis) realized the enemy was AQI, and second, they realized their friend was the Coalition.

They don’t mention the Iraqi Provincial or National Government. One of the Ramadi movement’s initial objectives was to replace the standing Al Anbar Provincial Government and fire Mamoun Sami Rashid Latif al-Alwani as the Governor. The Coalition made it very clear that it couldn’t support that objective and that the movement needed to be within the context of the Iraqi national and provincial governing systems.

Implied in the characterizations and stated in the charter was a presumption that the tribes and tribal sheikhs would lead and represent the Sunnis. That begged the question; when and under what conditions was the Coalition willing or authorized to engage and work with the tribes to address security issues? What was the policy? The CPA rejected a plan in October 2003 to arm and pay the Anbar tribes to help fight the insurgents on the grounds that, “[t]ribes are part of the past. They have no place in the New Democratic Iraq.”⁴⁸⁴ This major unresolved policy conflict in the first few years of Coalition operations greatly complicated tribal engagement efforts. This will be discussed in more detail later.

There were a number of other Iraqi and Coalition definitions and characterizations of the Awakening. As an example, Sheikh Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman of the Dulaymi Confederation turned the object around and argued that, “We were awake....it was the Ameri-

⁴⁸² Najim Abed al-Jabouri and Sterling Jensen, “The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening,” *Prism* Volume 2, Number 1, accessed at <http://cco.dodlive.mil/prism-volume-2-issue-1/> on 17 July 2015. Mr. Sterling Jensen was a contract interpreter from May 2006 until June 2007 working in Ramadi with the command group of the RFCT and then, after transfer of authority, with the 1st BCT, 3rd Infantry Division. Najim abed al-jabouri was a major general in the new Iraqi police and mayor of Tal Afar, Ninevah, from 2005 to 2008.

⁴⁸³ Mr. Mahmood al-Janabi, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 7 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan

⁴⁸⁴ According to Mr. Keith Mines, Coalition Provisional Authority Governance Coordinator in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq (2003–04), Sheikh Bezi al-Gaoud offered to supply tribesman as security forces, if the Coalition funded and armed them. Mines saw this as a business deal and not as what occurred later with the Awakening. Although he and Major General Swannack, Commander, 82nd Airborne Division thought it was a great idea, it was disapproved by the CPA in Baghdad. Keith Mines telephone discussion with Dr. William Knarr on 13 Mar 2011. Klein, Joe, “Is al-Qaeda on the Run in Iraq?” *Time*, 23 May 2007.

cans that were not awake.”⁴⁸⁵ Lieutenant General Ra’ad Majid Rashid Al Hamdani, former Commander, 2nd Iraqi Corps during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, found the moniker offensive:

To me the word Awakening or *Sahawa* is an insult to Iraqis. It means that these people have been either stupid or ignorant in their acceptance of the hideous idea of Al Qaeda who had infiltrated them.⁴⁸⁶

There were many that thought that the linkage between the people and Iraqi Government was an essential part of the Awakening movement—both Americans, such as COL MacFarland, and Iraqis. As an example, Dr. Sadun al-Dulaymi, Iraqi Minister of Defense during 2005–06, linked the Awakening movement to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

In 2005, we were thinking about the Awakening and the role of tribes, and how to use the tribes to help the Iraqis and help Iraqi Forces, as we did with the Desert Protectors. That’s how we started. I don’t think either the Iraqis or the Americans originally called it the Awakening. Sattar Albu-Risha called it that.⁴⁸⁷

Mr. Mohammed al-Saady, Chairman of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation in 2009, linked the Awakening movement to the Iraqi Government and specifically to Prime Minister Maliki.

Eventually, the people realized that Al Qaeda deceived them and were actually hurting them. That’s why the Iraqis stood up and fought Al Qaeda. This first started in the Anbar area...in 2007 at Abdul Sattar al-Rishawi’s house...Prime Minister Al Maliki encouraged and supported them. He provided them funding and job opportunities to recruit *Sahawa* members into the Ministry of Interior (MOI).⁴⁸⁸

General George Casey, USA, Commanding General, MNF-I, characterized the Awakening from an MNF-I perspective:⁴⁸⁹

I would characterize the Awakening as the realization by the Sunni population, the leadership of the Sunni population, that we were no longer the enemy [and] that they had a greater enemy [who] was either the Shia extremists, Iran, or Al Qaeda.

Lieutenant General John Allen, USMC, former Deputy Commanding General of the Marine Expeditionary Force, Forward (MEF FWD) in Al Anbar in 2007, described three Awakenings:

⁴⁸⁵ Sheikh Majed interview, 3 Feb 2011.

⁴⁸⁶ Lieutenant General Ra’ad Majid Rashid al-Hamdani, former Commander, 2nd Iraqi Corps during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 6 and 11 Feb 2011, Amman, Jordan.

⁴⁸⁷ Al Dulaymi interview, 24 Apr 2010. An interesting aside that becomes important later when discussing relationships, Sadun is a member of the Albu-Risha tribe and grew up near the Albu-Risha compound in western Ramadi. He was Sheikh Sattar’s uncle. The Desert Protectors is discussed below.

⁴⁸⁸ Al Saady interview, 25 Apr 2010.

⁴⁸⁹ Casey interview, 16 Dec 2010.

One with a capital “A” was Abdul Satar and the *Sahawa*. Another with the little “a” when the tribes individually and collectively recognized that their future was not with Al Qaeda, that it was with us [the United States] in the short term and perhaps some kind of a future Iraq yet to be determined. The third awakening was our own. Our own awakening to the fact that there was the opportunity with the tribes that we hadn’t really anticipated I think, in allying ourselves with them ultimately to accomplish our objectives, vis-a-vis Al Qaeda...⁴⁹⁰

In summary, the Awakening was characterized in many different ways, but from a COIN perspective, the success of the Awakening was best characterized by Colonel MacFarland, LtGen Allen and Dr. Sadun Al Dulaymi.⁴⁹¹

In addition to partnering with the tribes to fight AQI, Colonel MacFarland ensured the partnership included the Iraqi National and Local Government. He made that point when responding to the Awakening Council’s desire to rid itself of the governor. If done, it had to be through the political/constitutional process, primarily the electoral process. This was in line with an exit strategy that dictated that the Coalition eventually turn over the province to legitimate Iraqi national and local governments.

LtGen Allen eloquently characterized it in terms of awakenings (lower case) and an Awakening (upper case). Dr. Sadun Al Dulaymi was the first to implement what would become the full three-part awakening concept in Al Qaim in 2005 when he brought all the parties together to form and field the Desert Protectors.⁴⁹²

Therefore, the characterization of the Awakening movement used in this paper is composed of the following premises: The Sunnis (the people as represented by the tribal leaders) 1. Rejected the terrorists (AQI), 2. Partnered with the Coalition in the fight against AQI and other insurgent extremists, and 3. Worked with the Iraqi National and Local governments and their security forces.⁴⁹³ This paper also defines the Awakening, with an upper case “A” as the overall movement and all others—Al Qaim, the Corridor, and Ramadi—as awakenings with a lower case “a.”

In most cases premise #1 and #2 occurred—that the Iraqis recognized the terrorists as the enemy and had to partner with the Coalition to defeat the terrorists. However, premise #3 did not always occur. Specifically, when the Awakening evolved to the Concerned Local Citizens

⁴⁹⁰ Allen interview, 16 Mar 2010.

⁴⁹¹ FM 3-24, “separate the insurgents from the people they seek to control [para 2-18]...supporting legitimacy for the HN [host nation] government [para 2-41]

⁴⁹² This seems to have gone unrecognized in published accounts.

⁴⁹³ In fact, Sattar’s proclamation made the connection between the Awakening and Coalition forces much stronger, as related by Colonel MacFarland, “if a Coalition member was killed in a tribal area it was as if a member of the tribe were killed.”

and Sons of Iraq programs, Iraqi tribe/citizen partnership with the Iraqi government did not occur, because they were contracted directly to the Coalition and not to the GOI.⁴⁹⁴

Was there more than one awakening? Most accounts of the Awakening begin with Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* movement in Ramadi during September 2006–07. Although some acknowledge other awakenings, such as the Albu-Mahal tribe's actions in Al Qaim during 2005–06, they characterize those events as "localized" and dismiss or make little mention of their contributions to the overall movement.⁴⁹⁵ The response to this SRQ is located later in the chapter.

3. What caused the Anbar Awakening?⁴⁹⁶

What events set the conditions for the Awakening?

The Iraqi resistance that manifested itself in the Blackwater incident in Fallujah in early 2004 quickly exceeded the Coalition's ability to control it. Violence directed at the Coalition soon exploded as it spread beyond Iraq's Sunni communities to the Shia communities in Sadr City, Karbala, Najaf, and Al Kut.⁴⁹⁷ It was a time of incredible chaos. LtCol Joe L'Etoile, G3, 1st Marine Division, said, "It's probably the closest the insurgency ever came to achieving an operational level victory or achieving strategic effects through military action."⁴⁹⁸

Although the Shia areas of Iraq were quickly brought under some semblance of control, the Sunni insurgents claimed victory over the Coalition during the first battle of Fallujah in April 2004. Regardless of the merits of that claim, the Coalition's withdrawal from Fallujah created an insurgent sanctuary in the heart of Iraq's most volatile region. The insurgency gained

⁴⁹⁴ This is significant. The link that was developed between the GOI and the local security forces in Al Anbar was severed when the program evolved into the CLC and SOI.

⁴⁹⁵ Accounts include those of James Soriano, Department of State, Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader in Iraq, 2006–09 See CWO-4 Timothy McWilliams and LtCol Kurtis S. Wheeler, eds., *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume I: US Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004–2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009), 120–37, 274; and Col Gary W. Montgomery (*Al Anbar Awakening, Volume II: Iraqi Perspectives From Insurgency to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004–2009*, Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009).

⁴⁹⁶ Under this PRQ, SRQs were: What events set the conditions for the Awakening? Why did the Anbaris turn against Al Qaeda? Why, and under what condition, did they seek help from the Coalition? What were the notable events of the Anbaris turning on AQI and joining with the Coalition? Was the GOI a partner in those events? Was there a relationship among awakening events, in particular, between the two major events, the one in Al Qaim in 2005 and the premier event in Ramadi in 2006? Was there a "tipping point?" If so, when, where, how did it start, and how did it evolve?

⁴⁹⁷ This is a story in and of itself as the CPA sought to arrest Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of the Mahdi Militia, in connection with the killing of Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei in June 2003. The Shia community reacted violently.

⁴⁹⁸ L'Etoile interview, 15 Jan 2006. This is not intended to imply that there was any central control or authority over the insurgency, but to highlight how pervasive it was throughout those areas.

tremendous *wasta* during the spring and summer of 2004, and, according to Dr. Mowaffak Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, Fallujah, became a symbol of the insurgency.⁴⁹⁹

It did not take long, however, (July to October 2004), for the first seeds of the Al Anbar Awakening to be sown—ironically by the insurgency itself. The Salafi Jihadist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's pledge of allegiance to Osama Bin Laden, the creation of AQI, the proclamation of Fallujah as an Islamic Caliphate, and AQI's brutality against the Iraqi citizens created the beginnings of the division between the extremists and the nationalists.

Why did the Anbaris turn against Al Qaeda?

There are several reasons why the tribes decided to turn against the insurgency; however, the one cited most often was simply AQI's brutality. Horrific examples of AQI's brand of "justice" and social control finally exceeded the Iraqis' tolerance for death and destruction. Colonel Rick Welch, USA, Chief, Reconciliation/Engagement Cell, United States Division-Center, described the Awakening movement as, "[g]rass roots, just pure self-defense survival. It was going to happen with or without us [the Coalition]. They have a duty to defend their homes and protect their families."⁵⁰⁰

Many Iraqis interviewed voiced that characterization as well. According to Sheikh Majed, the awakening was a "revolution of the tribes" in response to AQI's brutality and its attack on a Sheikh's daughter:

Al Qaeda started doing things far removed from Islam or any other religion. They started beheading people and throwing the heads in the street. The biggest mistake Al Qaeda made was when it pulled the hair of one of the sheikh's daughters...you cannot touch or attack a lady in the Province. It is humiliating for any male if he does not act to defend her. The tribes and Al Qaeda started attacking each other. The tribes managed to get the girl back from Al Qaeda. This is really how the Awakening started—the Awakening started by the gathering of the tribes.⁵⁰¹

Sheikh Ali Hatem, Sheikh General of the Dulaymi Confederation, reiterated the story of the "pulling of the hair of Sheikh's daughter," but added that Al Qaeda then assassinated a notable Iraqi near Ramadi [Summer 2006], cut off his head, and then refused to return the body to the family. Not allowing for a proper burial was a major affront to Islamic and local customs.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁹ Al Rubai'e interview, 29 Jan 2006.

⁵⁰⁰ Colonel Richard "Rick" Welch, USA, Chief, Reconciliation/Engagement Cell for the United States Division-Center (USD-C) interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, on 25 Apr 2010 at the 1st Armored Division Conference Room at Camp Victory.

⁵⁰¹ Sheikh Majed interview, 3 Feb 2011. This has been noted several times, but, the primary author (probably out of cultural ignorance) found it hard to comprehend that this incident, pulling of a woman's hair, was given such importance – "the biggest mistake."

⁵⁰² Sheikh Ali Hatim Ali Sulayman al-Dulaymi al-Assafi interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC at the Engagement and Reconciliation meeting room, Forward Operating Base Prosperity, Baghdad, Iraq on 24 Apr 2010.

While it is not hard to find general agreement that the Iraqis' decision to fight AQI was tied to its brutality, some point to additional factors. Regional and tribal economics played a surprisingly large role in causing the tribes to revolt. BrigGen David Reist, former Deputy Commanding General of the MEF (FWD) from February 2006 to February 2007, saw the Awakening as a turning of what he called "The Commercial Battlespace." He explained:

The time was right...because from an economic standpoint, Al Qaeda was coming in the area and those local tribes probably weren't getting a cut of the business that they had in the past. When you're not getting the cut you took beforehand, it comes down to the almighty dollar, and I think they just [realized that they] needed to retain that pecking order.⁵⁰³

Why, and under what conditions, did the Anbaris seek help from the Coalition to fight AQI?

First of all the conditions had to be right for the Iraqis to turn to the Coalition and the GOI for help against AQI. There was a time when the thought of partnering with the Coalition was just as repugnant and threatening as working with AQI. Although Sattar's Awakening referred to the Iraqis, Sheikh Majed said, albeit sarcastically, "that the Coalition was not awake." Former Prime Minister Al Jaafari characterized the Coalition treatment of Iraqi citizens as soldier misconduct and provided examples:

The misconduct of some of the Coalition Soldiers dealing with Iraqi citizens...it was an offensive way of dealing with people. The Coalition soldier would not condone any slight movement or any suspicious movement; right away he would point his weapon and shoot to kill.

The Iraqis had reached a point of confusion; some would say despair. As preposterous as it may seem, there was a period when some Iraqis were convinced, that the Coalition was working with AQI to destroy Iraq. According to Sheikh Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi Tribe located in Fallujah, "most of the people started to think that Al Qaeda worked for the Americans" because of the brutality and the appearance that the Americans were aware of, and condoned those actions.⁵⁰⁴ Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars and senior Sunni Cleric in Iraq until 2006 (when a warrant for his arrest for supporting terrorism prompted him to flee Iraq) commented on Al Qaeda in Iraq:

Al Qaeda was known to us in Iraq through the Americans and also through the media. At first we thought, "The Americans are using Al Qaeda as an umbrella for them to torture and make the Iraqis suffer." I want to emphasize that Al Qaeda had no place in Iraq before the invasion. And the blame for Al Qaeda entering Iraq lies with the Americans and the American alliance, and the Coalition. They opened the

⁵⁰³ Reist interview, 4 Oct 2010.

⁵⁰⁴ Sheikh Tariq, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves and Ms. Mary Hawkins, 3 Feb 2011

gates from the east to the west, from the north to the south for Al Qaeda and other terrorists who came into Iraq.⁵⁰⁵

Dr. Thamir Ibrahim Tahir al-Assafi was more passionate about what he characterized as the indiscriminate killing of Iraqis by Coalition snipers and collateral damage caused by using tank main guns to kill terrorists in the city. He contended that the Coalition forces were working with the terrorists or at least were condoning their actions and not protecting the innocent Iraqis.⁵⁰⁶

The terrorists have control of all the gas stations in Ramadi, including the gas stations on the highway. The American forces, right in front of these gas stations, will just look at the terrorists controlling them. They know they're terrorists, and they never bother them. The main focus for the Coalition forces at that time was to only respond to somebody shooting at them, but they didn't care about the terrorists that were killing other Iraqis. I witnessed with my own eyes, terrorists killing Iraqis on the highway, and the Coalition forces just drove by and did not interfere at all.

Shiekh Mishan of the Jumalyi tribe was kinder, he told BrigGen John Allen, Deputy Commander, MNF-W in 2007 that the "US assists insurgents by taking away all their [the tribes] weapons and then the US does not protect the people."⁵⁰⁷

To Dr. Thamir, the people were at a turning point:

The people couldn't handle it anymore. They were in a dilemma. They couldn't fight to protect themselves, because the Coalition forces prevented them from owning arms. They had to stop this thing even if it took putting their hands in the hands of the Coalition forces to stop this terrorism. This is what happened in September of 2006...this started the seed of the Awakening Council.

The people's dilemma to which Dr. Thamir refers, was a time, when in the estimation of some Iraqis, AQI's brutality increased as the Coalition became, comparatively, less violent, so that both were doing similar amounts of damage. This is noted as the "intersection of confusion" and a time of despair for some Iraqis. Then the Coalition became more sensitive to the atmospherics, and, per Mahmood and Allen, the Coalition saw the opportunity of working with the tribes; as a result they were more discriminate and perceptively less heavy-handed. Figure 11-1 attempts to illustrate that concept.

Although Allen describes it as an opportunity, it was more than that: it was reflective of a new level of maturity in dealing with a different culture. It was the Coalition gradually realiz-

⁵⁰⁵ Dr. Hareth al-Dhari, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Amman, Jordan, 8 Feb 2011.

⁵⁰⁶ On 12 April 2010, Dr. Thamir Ibrahim Tahir al-Assafi, Professor of Religious Studies, al-Anbar University, Senior Theologian to the Sunni Endowment (*Waqf*), Ramadi City Council Member, and member of the Council of Muslim Scholars was interviewed at Sheikh Ahmed Abu-Risha's guesthouse outside Ramadi.

⁵⁰⁷ Shiekh Mishan of the Jumalyi tribe was interviewed by Dr. William Knarr, Lieutenant Colonel David Graves and Ms. Mary Hawkins, in Amman, Jordan on 3 Feb 2011.

ing that it needed to work differently with the Iraqis, that honor and respect were important. The only way to change the course of the occupation was to understand, engage and work through the Iraqis. As only one example from the Coalition side, LtCol Mullen recognized the need for change and implemented a battalion-wide indoctrination during 2/6 Marines' pre-deployment training prior to its redeployment to Fallujah in 2007.⁵⁰⁸ Mahmood saw that happening in 2006, but it had started to happen in 2005 as evidenced by the Coalition's engagement with the Abu-Mahal in Al Qaim.

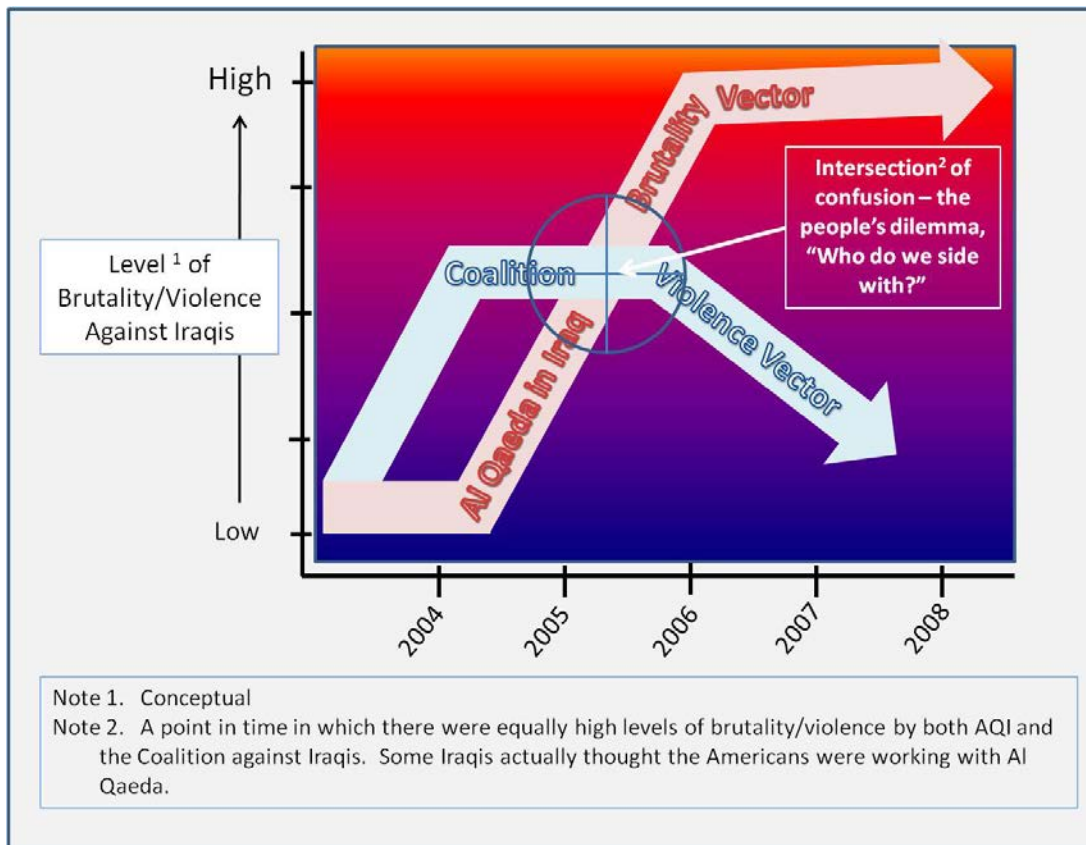


Figure 11-1. Iraqi Perception of Brutality/Violence Directed Against Iraqis in Al Anbar

According to Mahmood al-Janabi:

We wanted to save and secure Iraqi society from the killing and slaughter...and started to realize that Al Qaeda posed a greater danger to Iraqi society than the Americans. So that's how we stood and fought against Al Qaeda and began work with the Americans...

He went on to say that they couldn't fight both and AQI was much too strong for the Iraqis to fight by themselves, so they turned to the Coalition. He added,

⁵⁰⁸ William F. Mullen, III, "Turning Fallujah," *Small Wars Journal* (29 Oct 2009).

At the same time, in the middle of 2006, the Americans started to understand that the time had now come to start negotiating with resistance groups.⁵⁰⁹

What were the notable events of Anbaris turning on AQI and joining with the Coalition and the Government of Iraq? Was the GOI a partner in those events?

The most notable event, characterized by LtGen Allen as the “one with the capital A, was Abdul Sattar and the *Sahawa*,” in Ramadi, 2006. However, a lesser known but critical movement was underway—one that some say was the true beginning of the awakening. One that rejected AQI, worked with the Coalition, and worked with the Government of Iraq (GOI).

The first example of a tribe joining with the Coalition and the GOI to fight Al Qaeda occurred in a region in the very western portion of Anbar on the border with Syria, Al Qaim, in September 2005. The Albu-Mahal tribe, one of the major tribes in the Al Qaim region, formed the Hamza Battalion originally to fight the Coalition.⁵¹⁰ This would later become the Desert Protectors, the first legitimate military group of Anbaris approved by both the Iraqi Government and the Coalition Forces. According to Mahmood al-Janabi, that tribal support wasn’t out of love for Americans:

[The Hamza] brigade in Al Qaim...was organized by the tribes to fight the Americans. [But when AQI started their brutality and targeting tribal heads] the Hamza Brigade decided to fight against Al Qaeda. That was the beginning of the fight against Al Qaeda. Those who stood alongside the Americans and fought against Al Qaeda, did not fight for the love of the Americans...they stood with the Americans to fight Al Qaeda, as they had suffered more from Al Qaeda than from the Americans.⁵¹¹

The GOI, and in particular, Dr. Sadun al-Dulaymi, former Minister of Defense from May 2005 to May 2006, played a large role in helping the Albu-Mahal tribe. In fact, General Casey attributes the start of the Desert Protectors to Dr. Sadun. Dr. Sadun recalls Sheikh Sabah’s frantic phone call in August 2005:

So, at that time, Sheikh Sabah, the head of the Albu-Mahal, was in Amman [he had fled to Amman with his family] and gave me a call and he said, “We need help, because our children, our women, old men, are all surrounded, and within five or six days, the terrorists are going to kill all of them.” General Casey sent his private jet and brought him [Sabah] from Amman [to Baghdad]. We met together in my office and we put together a plan to help the Al Qaim people, not just Albu-Mahal, but all Al Qaim people that were affected by the terrorists.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁹ Al Janabi interview, 7 Feb 2011.

⁵¹⁰ This has been called a battalion, brigade, and group. Battalion seems to be the prevalent terminology.

⁵¹¹ Al Janabi interview, 7 Feb 2011.

⁵¹² Dulaymi interview, 24 Apr 2010

That plan included recruiting members of the Albu-Mahal tribe, training and organizing them as the Desert Protectors, and coordinating their use with the Coalition and ISF during Operation STEEL CURTAIN in early November 2005 to clear Al Qaim of Al Qaeda.⁵¹³

BrigGen Reist spoke of another occurrence in early 2006, with Colonel Shaban, known as the Lion of Baghdadi, located near Al Asad. In fact, Reist describes the Awakening as a movement from Al Qaim and down the Euphrates to Al Asad and then Ramadi and Fallujah to Baghdad.⁵¹⁴ This description of Awakening events is similar to Al Anbar Governor Mamoun Sami Rashid Latif al-Wani's description of events. According to Mamoun, the fight started in Fallujah, then "Al Qaim, then Hadithah, then Anah, Rawah," and then Ramadi.⁵¹⁵

Was there a relationship among awakening events, in particular, between the two mentioned events, the one in Al Qaim in 2005 and the premier event in Ramadi in 2006?

The Awakening was much more than Ramadi in 2006 or even Al Qaim in 2005. It involved Iraqi communities along the WERV from Al Qaim to Fallujah. This is discussed briefly above, but will be covered in greater detail later in this chapter.

Was there a "tipping point?" If so, when, where, how did it start, and how did it evolve?

Malcolm Gladwell describes "Tipping Point," as the name given to that one dramatic moment in an epidemic when everything can change all at once. He furthers that analogy by listing three characteristics: contagiousness; little causes can have big effects; and change happens not gradually but at one dramatic moment.⁵¹⁶ In *Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point*, Colonel MacFarland and Major Niel Smith cite Gladwell's Tipping Point in explaining the "radical change" of events in Ramadi.⁵¹⁷ This paper agrees that this was the major turning point in the fight against AQI in Al Anbar.⁵¹⁸ Additionally, this paper asserts that there were a number of events that made the Ramadi awakening even more difficult and dramatic than otherwise described. Those are discussed at the end of the chapter.

⁵¹³ Operation STEEL CURTAIN in early November 2005 was an RCT-2 operation to clear Al Qaim of AQI.

⁵¹⁴ Reist interview, 4 Oct 2010.

⁵¹⁵ Former Al Anbar Governor Mamoun Sami Rashid Latif al-Wani interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC on 7 Apr 2010 in Ramadi.

⁵¹⁶ Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2000).

⁵¹⁷ Colonel Sean MacFarland and Major Niel Smith, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review*, Mar-Apr 2008.

⁵¹⁸ Some have called it a turning point, others have described it as a Tipping Period (LtGen Allen), but given the articles' citation and use of Gladwell's terms, this paper has no issue with its use.

4. How did the Al Anbar Awakening reconcile the causes of the Awakening listed above (in PRQ 3)?⁵¹⁹

From PRQ 3, the primary cause of the Awakening was that AQI's brutal treatment of the people finally exceeded their threshold for death and destruction. Although there was a period of confusion when the Iraqis didn't know which way to turn, the Iraqis eventually sought help from the Coalition. But, as indicated, it was a two-way street. The Coalition also "awoke" and, in partnership with the GOI, engaged the tribes to recruit the Iraqis to help fight AQI. Once the Iraqis realized they could work with the Coalition to secure their communities, it became much easier. This section begins with tribal engagement because it was so important in connecting the Coalition to the population. It then discusses other themes that seemed so prevalent in reconciling the causes of the insurgency and ultimately the expulsion of AQI, or at a minimum breaking their control over the various population centers of Al Anbar.

a. Tribal engagement

The Coalition's strategy for building a new Iraq resulted in such chaos and destruction, especially of Iraq's key institutions, that it effectively caused Iraqi society to fall back on tribal laws and relationships as the only solution to stabilizing the province and ridding it of Al Qaeda control.⁵²⁰ This is the same tribal system that the Coalition had earlier attempted to marginalize and disconnect from the Iraqi governing system because it was deemed inconsistent with the Coalition vision of a modern, democratic Iraq. But questions remain. What was the Coalition's policy toward the tribes, who authorized it, what were the implications and when and why did the policy change? Although fingers point to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as early as the summer of 2003 when the CPA turned down a request from the Al Anbar CPA representative and Coalition forces that they work with the tribes to provide area security, it appears that the policy was never written down.⁵²¹ So, when did the Coalition start working with the tribes and to what extent? What part did the CPA play in that? Additionally, what was the practice at the lower and local levels? Did the policy and practical application collide, and if so when?

According to Colonel Rick Welch, the CPA opened an office called Office of Provincial Outreach in 2004. "Their job was to connect with national, tribal, confederation leaders, and national religious leaders." When the CPA dissolved on 28 June 2004 there was no one from

⁵¹⁹ Under this PRQ, the SRQ: What processes were used to reconcile the causes? What were the strategies used by the actors to achieve their goals? How did those strategies interact? What resources were necessary/made available to the actors to implement their strategies? Who and what events contributed to the reconciliation?

⁵²⁰ LTG Hamdani interview 13 Feb 2011

⁵²¹ Recall the offer by Sheikh Bezi of the Albu-Nimr tribe to provide security in return for arms and funding. Mr. Keith Mines, Coalition Provisional Authority Governance Coordinator for Al Anbar, discussion via telephone with Dr. William Knarr, 13 Mar 2011. He went on to say that this wasn't so much an Awakening as it was a simple business deal.

the Department of State to take ownership of that program in that same way.⁵²² Colonel Welch, assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad, had worked with some of the CPA members associated with the program and was asked if he would take it over. Major General Peter Chiarelli, 1st Cavalry Division Commander, approved, so Colonel Welch became the Coalition expert on tribal engagement, working the program in some fashion through 2010.⁵²³

Despite the establishment of the “Outreach” office, the American Embassy in Iraq seemed to disassociate itself from tribal engagement. Additionally, the State Department and Embassy in Amman, Jordan seemed to do the same. As another example, while engaging tribal leaders in Amman in 2004, MEF representatives also met with representatives of the insurgency. However, the State Department seemed opposed to those meetings and, according to Colonel Walker, prevented those meeting from occurring in the early fall of 2004.

It appeared that the State Department policy, albeit unwritten, changed with the departure of Ambassador John Negroponte in April 2005 and arrival of Ambassador Zalmay Khalizad in May 2005 in that a number of tribal engagement events occurred at that time. As an example, in May 2005, MNF-I stood up a Tribal Engagement Cell and General Casey tasked MG Rick Lynch, Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Effects for MNF-I and the MNF-I spokesman, to “reach out to some of the Sunni extremists?”⁵²⁴ Prime Minister Ayad Allawi had met with Sunni insurgent representatives at his house and, at the request of Lynch, used his connections to bring Sunni leaders with ties to the insurgency to Baghdad.⁵²⁵ Although, according to Lynch, the initial engagements with the Sunni leaders connected to the insurgents did not bear fruit, engagement did have impact at the tactical level. Recall that Colonel Davis saw this policy change in Al Qaim in August 2005 when the MNF-I authorized him to work with the tribes to provide security. That resulted in the Desert Protector program. Although the most visible result was the Desert Protectors in Al Qaim, the plan called for Desert Protector units to be established in the Corridor and in the Ramadi area.

But it wasn’t always easy to determine who actually represented the communities or the tribes and who were the “fake sheikhs;” in particular at community/tactical levels and early in the occupation. One example was Captain Heatherman’s working with the self-proclaimed *Mukhtar* (mayor) of the Karabilah community of Al Qaim only to find out several weeks later

⁵²² CPA worked for Secretary of Defense but was dissolved on 28 June 2004. The US Embassy was then stood up in July 2004.

⁵²³ Welch interview, 25 Apr 2010. Colonel Richard “Rick” Welch, USA is the Chief, Reconciliation/Engagement Cell for the United States Division-Center (USD-C). Colonel Welch has been serving in a similar capacity at the Division level since he first deployed in 2004 to support the 1st Cavalry Division in the Baghdad area. That period was interrupted by a few short breaks and a year at the War College.

⁵²⁴ Lieutenant General Rick Lynch interview with Dr. William Knarr and Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, Pentagon, Washington, DC, 25 Mar 2010.

⁵²⁵ Allawi interview, 6 Feb 2006. PM Allawi had met with insurgent representatives in 2004 as he tried to find a political solution to Fallujah before committing to Al Fajr, the second Battle of Fallujah.

that he really wasn't who he said he was. Unfortunately, the Coalition's engagement empowered him within the community. This was resolved later, but not without a great deal of confusion.⁵²⁶

There was also tension as elements of the MEF command and staff worked with the Iraqi notables who had fled to Syria and Jordan and as tactical commanders in Al Anbar worked with the "on-the-ground" sheikhs that remained in-country.⁵²⁷ In 2007 BrigGen Allen did a masterful job understanding the various equities and capitalizing on the capabilities and influence of both. These tribal leaders were key to recruiting security forces, military and, in particular, police.

At the lowest tactical levels, operationalizing tribal engagement and recruitment demanded the involvement of the Soldier and Marine on the ground. Capt Tom Daly, USMC in the Ramadi area in 2006 best described that concept as "every operation was a recruiting opportunity, every Soldier and Marine a recruiter." Per Daly, when his unit was attached to Task Force 1-9 IN, "We weren't simply clearing a district. The colonel's [LTC Chuck Ferry] task specifically stated that we were to find and recruit the tribal sheikhs. Rage Company was being ordered to engage the local populace and no longer treat them as neutral observers."⁵²⁸

On this subject, Mahmood al-Janabi noted:

The Americans started to understand that the time had come to start negotiating with resistance groups. There was a consensus of views between the two sides, the Americans and the resistance...that the time had come to start negotiations and stop the language of force, weapons and killing.⁵²⁹

But sheikhs were not the only leaders within the community. COL Charlton, Commander, 1st BCT, 3rd ID in Ramadi, indicated that the Imams were also important, "You need to be accepted by these guys and have a relationship just like you do with the tribes." Since Al Qaeda's main tool is ideology; when they move into a neighborhood, their first stop is the mosque, "it's their ideological base. They will try to take whatever ideology is being preached to that mosque and replace it with their version." Hence, connecting with the Imams and keeping attuned to what is being preached in the mosques is extremely important.

b. The Triad – Coalition, GOI, the People

Army FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency, addresses Coalition actions to bolster the legitimacy of the host nation government.⁵³⁰ Sattar's characterization of the Awakening, as conveyed by others, excluded the connection between the Awakening movement and Iraqi national and lo-

⁵²⁶ Heatherman interview, 24 Feb 2010.

⁵²⁷ Mr. Sterling Jensen, interpreter, RFCT, Ramadi, interview with Dr. William Knarr, at IDA on 20 Oct 2010.

⁵²⁸ Daly, *Rage Company*, 28

⁵²⁹ Al Janabi interview, 7 Feb 2011.

⁵³⁰ Field Manual 3-24, para. 6-1 to 6-3.

cal governments. In fact, one of the movement's initial objectives, as articulated by the Emergency Council, was to replace the standing Al Anbar Provincial Government and fire Mammoun Sami Rashid Latif al-Alwani as the Governor. The Coalition made it very clear that it couldn't support that objective and that the movement needed to be within the context of the Iraqi national and provincial governing systems. The Coalition reinforced that connection until 2007 when the *Sahawa* movement in Al Anbar evolved to the Sons of Iraq (SOI), a national program.

Mr. Mohammed al-Saady, in charge of transitioning Sons of Iraq into the GOI ministries, explained the difference between what he called "the *sahawas*" (the term he used to indicate individuals in Al Anbar *Sahawa* movement) in al Anbar and the SOI, instituted later. According to Al Saady Prime Minister Maliki encouraged, supported, funded, and approved recruiting the *Sahawas* into the Ministry of the Interior. However, the SOI, initially called the Concerned Local Citizens, was contracted directly and individually by the Coalition. The reconciliation of the SOI into the GOI started in 2008 when the responsibility for the SOI was transferred to the GOI.⁵³¹

According to former Prime Minister Dr. Ibrahim Al Jaafari, the "Awakening started and was established in a certain time, in a certain area [Al Anbar], in a proper manner, on the right path and accomplished great results. Versus later when it was established in other areas and it became a burden." He further stated that SOI became a social program in other provinces, "it turned into an operation to supply money and weapons, and, because there was a lot of unemployment, a lot of people joined."⁵³²

The reconciliation of SOI into the GOI remained a major problem in Iraq as of April 2010 with, according to Al Saady, 14,000–50,000 *sahawas* in the Baghdad area alone, left to transition into the ministries.

While it was difficult prior to 2007 to recruit Iraqi police and soldiers for a variety of reasons, recruiting them directly into an organization affiliated with the GOI alleviated the challenges of transitioning SOI into the GOI at a later time.

c. Sanctuaries, the bad and the good

When thinking of sanctuaries in the context of insurgencies, one thinks of insurgent "free zones" where they are protected by international boundaries and can train, refit and re-equip before going in, or returning to the fight. In Iraq, when looking at Al Anbar, that sanctuary was primarily Syria. There were also a number of in-country sanctuaries, areas where the Coalition simply didn't have the forces to secure. But, not all sanctuaries were bad. The follow-

⁵³¹ Al Saady interview, 25 Apr 2010.

⁵³² Al Jaafari interview, 30 Apr 2010.

ing discusses some of the in-country sanctuaries as well as some of the benefits of sanctuaries to the Coalition.

1) Addressing the source rather than the symptom

In Al Anbar there were a number of in-country sanctuaries. Fallujah became a sanctuary after the first battle of Fallujah in April 2004 and until the insurgents were finally expelled in November 2004. Some sanctuaries existed because there were not enough forces available to secure the area. Examples included much of Al Anbar until the return of forces in 2004, the increase in forces for RCT-2 in mid-2005 and the development of host nation security forces. Much of that has been previously discussed. In some cases, the sanctuary was the source of instability and eliminating that sanctuary was a more efficient way of alleviating the problem. Examples include eliminating the sanctuary in the Shark Fins east of Ramadi before focusing on East Ramadi and eliminating the sanctuaries in the environs of Fallujah before finally securing Fallujah.

2) A safe place where the belligerents can talk

Jordan's role as a sanctuary served a very different purpose. A war like the one in Iraq needed a sanctuary like Jordan, a safe place where people from all sides, combatant and non-combatant, could meet and talk without security requirements dominating the agenda. Jordan afforded that location. Many notable tribal leaders, former Iraqi military officials, and former insurgents already lived in or found sanctuary in Syria or Jordan, because living and meeting in Iraq was unsafe.

Jordan also gave the Iraqis an alternate link to the outside world. Whereas the official link was via the Government of Iraq, Jordan became an unofficial conduit for plans, meetings, and activities to address or connect to foreign interests.

a. Force Ratios and Capacity Building

When Senator Carl Levin asked General Shinseki for an estimate of the Army's force requirements for the occupation of Iraq after a successful invasion, the General responded:

I would say...something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers...would be required....We're talking about post-hostilities control over a piece of geography that's fairly significant, with the kinds of ethnic tensions that could lead to other problems.⁵³³

Later, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz adamantly refuted that estimate.

⁵³³ This was at a 25 February 2003 Senate Armed Services Committee. Eric Schmidt, "Army Chief Raises Estimate of G.I.s needed in Post-war Iraq," *New York Times*, 25 Feb 2003.

...the notion that it will take several hundred thousand US troops to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq, are wildly off the mark....First, it's hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself.⁵³⁴

Who was right? What is the right number? There are different estimates and approaches and, as always, "it depends." However, from 20/20 hindsight, Shinseki appeared to be much closer to the answer than Wolfowitz when considering the total number of counterinsurgent forces required.

While there are a number of approaches to estimating force, FM 3-24 suggests that the better gauge of force requirements is troop density, the ratio of security forces (including the host nation's military and police forces as well as foreign counterinsurgents) to inhabitants. Most density recommendations fall within a range of 20 to 25 counterinsurgents to 1,000 residents in an area of operations (or 1 to 40 or 50), but greatly depend on the situation.⁵³⁵

According to United Nations data in 2003, the population of Al Anbar was 1, 230,169.⁵³⁶ Accordingly, the 1/50 ratio, which FM 3-24 cautions is the minimum number of security forces needed, yields a minimum counterinsurgent force requirement of 24,603.⁵³⁷ In September 2006, Major General Richard Zilmer, Commander, MNF-W, in 2006, indicated he had approximately 30,000 troops. According to him, enough to accomplish his primary mission of training Iraqi Security Forces, but added that the computations were much more complex than just numbers and included political and economic developments.⁵³⁸

In addition to the 30,000 US troops, the 7th Iraqi Division and elements of the 1st Iraqi division supported operations Al Anbar. According to CSIS the 7th Iraqi Division in December of 2005 was at 73% fill with 5,514 Iraqi soldiers assigned.⁵³⁹ In addition, as reported by CSIS as of December 2005, "the Anbar province campaign has been firmly anchored by the 1st Iraqi Division...[which] continues to conduct operations in and around the gateway cities of the Euphra-

⁵³⁴ Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, testimony to the House Budget Committee, 27 Feb 2003.

⁵³⁵ FM 3-24, paragraph 1-67

⁵³⁶ United Nations data as recorded by the Coalition Provisional Authority, www.iraqcoalition.org/regions/south-central/provinces/english/anbar.html.

⁵³⁷ Applying this same formula to Iraq: Iraq population in 27,499,638 (July 2007 est.) at 1/50 yields a requirement for a 549,992-person counterinsurgent force.

⁵³⁸ According to "Now, if that mission statement changes; if there is seen a larger role for coalition forces out here to win that insurgency fight – then that is going to change the metrics of what we need out here." Although counterinsurgent experts would say that only the Iraqis can truly win the counterinsurgency fight, it seemed like a strange thing for Zilmer to imply, i.e., that we weren't there to win the counterinsurgency fight. According to Tom Shanker's article, "Yes, More Troops Would Help a Bit," *New York Times Week in Review*, 17 Sept 2006, Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, Commander, MNC-I, entered the discussion and set the record straight commenting, "I'll state emphatically that our job is to win in Al Anbar!"

⁵³⁹ Anthony Cordesman, *Iraqi Force Development, A Current Status Report, July 2005 – February 2006*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 51.

tes River Valley—Fallujah, Ar Ramadi, Rawah, and Al Khalidiyah.”⁵⁴⁰ In December 2006, the 1st Iraqi Division was at 86% strength with 8,589 Iraqi soldiers assigned.⁵⁴¹ These figures may be high for later in 2006. According to Major General Robert Neller, by September 2006, manpower in the 7th and 1st had decreased to approximately 70% and 50% respectively (7th authorized 7,583 and 1st authorized 10,029, yields totals of 5,308 and 5,015 respectively).

So, with a total of more than 40,000 counterinsurgent (not including on-hand police) forces, what was missing? The police. Although established in Al Qaim, they were still being developed in places like Ramadi and the Corridor. This was a critical link because the police are the connection to the people. Counterinsurgency requires a bottoms-up intelligence network, without the police the Coalition was practically blind. Demographics associated with the police force were much different than the army. The Iraqi Army consisted of mostly Shia while the police forces consisted of Sunni men from the local tribes/communities. Additionally, recruiting police from the local community provided employment to those unemployed military aged men.

Zilmer indicated that the primary mission was to develop the Iraqi Security Forces. The United States’ exit strategy depended on the Iraqis assuming responsibility for their own security. Major General Robert Neller, Deputy Commander, MNF-W, thought that was so important that MNF-W augmented, from their own forces, the transition teams for the Iraqi Army and the police.⁵⁴² Recall when Lieutenant Colonel Kris Stillings from one of the the MiTT asked LTC Deane for ten Soldiers to augment his team, Stillings said, “Hey, if you give me ten guys, I can give you 300.” Deane commented, “What a deal!”

Another approach to building capacity was the use of the Combined Action Platoons or CAP, known as the Combined Action Program in Vietnam—embedding Coalition forces with Iraqi forces. This was implemented by LtCol Dale Alford in Al Qaim, LtCol Bill Journey in Ramadi and LtCol Bryan McCoy in the Corridor.

b. Threat-centric to a population-centric strategy

According to Colonel Davis during August through October 2005, the RCT-2’s forces grew from 3,200 to around 14,000 as it received additional Coalition, as well as Iraqi, forces. Additionally, Special Forces (SF) detachments were reintroduced to AO Denver. These detachments began engaging the population to determine which tribes might be receptive to working with the Coalition and Government of Iraq (GOI). This led to forming the first tribal militia—the Desert Protectors. With the increase in forces in September 2005, Col Davis was able to move from a threat-based strategy to a population centric strategy and initiate his

⁵⁴⁰ Cordesman, *Iraqi Force Development*, 48.

⁵⁴¹ According to Major General Robert Neller, former Deputy Commanding General for Operations, MEF (FWD), Feb 2006–Feb 2007, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Quantico, Virginia, 24 Feb 2010.

⁵⁴² Neller interview, 24 Feb 2010.

combined, permanent, persistent presence. This also occurred in Ramadi in mid-2006. General Casey called it reinforcing success. But with the increased development of ISF through tribal engagement and additional forces, such as the 15th MEU in November 2006, the war in Al Anbar was tipping in favor of the Iraqis and Coalition. But military might wasn't the only answer to these types of conflicts.

All commanders made it very clear that governance and economic development had to closely follow military action of “clear, hold, build” to ensure continuity of operation and to preclude any gaps that AQI could take advantage of to regain a foothold. Hence, Prime Minister Allawi's insistence on a Fallujah Reconstruction plan before executing the 2004 2nd battle of Fallujah, LtCol Dale Alford's work in Al Qaim in 2005, COL MacFarland's insistence on the Ramadi Reconstruction Conference in Ramadi, in January 2007, BrigGen Reist coining of the term Commercial Battlespace—and many other examples. As LtGen Chiarelli would say, “this is not the kind of fight that is going to be won by military kinetic action alone. It's a combination across all the lines of operations.”⁵⁴³

5. What were the major themes and lessons from the Anbar Awakening?

The Awakening story is much more complex than this report might lead the reader to believe. The following are examples, to be discussed in more detail below: Engagement was important, but tribal engagement was not always the answer; Sanctuaries can be good and bad; Force requirements are more nuanced than doing the math of coalition force density computations; Some of the fog of war was self-generated; Joint relationships can benefit from other Service approaches and perspectives. These are some of the themes to be discussed below and may have implications for the future. Those that have been addressed above as a response to a research question are not repeated here unless they provide a different perspective or context. Those include Sanctuaries; Capacity Building; Threat-centric to a population-centric strategy; The Triad – Coalition, GOI, people, and; Other lines of operations.

a. Engagement versus tribal engagement⁵⁴⁴

“Tribal engagement” was discussed in response to PRQ 4. However, the challenge with dealing in an informal structure such as a tribal society is knowing who to deal with. For the Coalition, working with the “right” leader or community representative wasn't always easy. In some cases the most important tribal leaders and notable Iraqis fled to Syria and Jordan to escape AQIs purge. In all cases there were no “standard” answers, no easy template.

Even where efforts are made to connect with the informal power structures, challenges remain. For example, there was tension in the Ramadi area when at the tactical level the RFCT

⁵⁴³ Tom Shanker, “Yes, More Troops Would Help a Bit,” *New York Times Week in Review*, 17 Sept 2006.

⁵⁴⁴ In focusing on engagement, one must not lose sight of the initial causes of insurgency discussed in PRQ 1.

coordinated with Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha and other local tribes while the MNF-W was courting the Iraqi notables with ties to the same areas in Jordan. Eventually, it was Sheikh Sattar that brought together 40 other local Sheikhs and led the movement in Ramadi. Although he took counsel from the Jordan-based sheikhs and elicited their support it was his influence and that of several in-country peers that turned the tide in Ramadi and subsequently Al Anbar.

But as indicated before, there was value in working with the Iraqi notables in Jordan and according to COL MacFarland, it wasn't an "either/or," you needed both.

The Awakening consisted of Dulaymi tribes and could only go so far. It couldn't really affect Fallujah, and that's where you needed the sheikhs who were in Jordan to really propagate the movement into the Fallujah area towards the Baghdad belts. So, there was no right or wrong in that discussion. I think everybody was right.⁵⁴⁵

That was one of the reasons that BrigGen Allen made such an effort to bring the tribal leadership home from Jordan and Syria, in particular, those from the Fallujah area.

In general, there may have been a tribal connection but it wasn't the tribal leadership that always led the way. This was probably more prevalent in the city centers such as Hadithah, Baghdadi, Fallujah, and Ramadi where the population might be more heterogeneous or less effected by tribal influence. This is what Mayor Hakim meant when he said "not all awakenings are the same."

If one assumes that the people are the center of gravity in a counterinsurgency, then one needs to engage those leaders and representatives of the people. The theme of engagement is enduring, but the challenge is finding and "picking the right horse."

b. Force ratios

Force ratios, discussed previously, applied force density rules of thumb with the associated math. The problem with such ratios is that they discount the role of local auxiliaries and even independent local forces with a common objective. Perhaps the best example is the Iraqi police in Al Anbar. The local police are the most important link in the chain because they were closest to the people the indigenous government or counterinsurgent was trying to protect. A question for those that promote force ratios is to what extent is the process of developing and working with the security forces accounted for in terms of both inputs (the training/partnering mission) and eventual outputs (personnel capable of providing security).

Additionally, there are other approaches to trying to establish a reliable metric for sizing and structuring forces for such missions. On the training/education multi-media addendum to this project, Colonel Scott Feil, USA, Retired, discusses several approaches for consideration

⁵⁴⁵ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

and further study: mission-based force structures, population-ratio based force structures, and geographical based force structures.

c. Some of the Fog of War was self-generated

Intelligence reports and assessments were not keeping pace with the realities on the ground. Many people scratched their heads over the MNF-W's August intelligence assessment and ultimately questioned the credibility of the intelligence system. If counterinsurgency is a bottoms-up war where the intelligence comes from the population, then why wasn't the intelligence staff listening to the commanders on the ground and community who were engaging the local leaders? Unfortunately, the leaked report was particularly damaging as it diverted leadership attention from the job at hand to responding to a questioning public and congress on the status of Al Anbar, not to mention the information operations victory it provided AQI.

d. "Only force them to be brave once"

Recruitment postponements, cancellations, delayed reporting times put new recruits at risk as they exposed themselves and their families to AQI retribution for their affiliations with the Coalition and the Government of Iraq. An example was recruitment in Hit. The ODA was able to marshal a group from the tribes for pickup and movement by air to a training area but the air didn't show up. It's much more difficult to get them to come back a second time.

Ramadi recruitment suffered from a similar problem LTC Deane asked Sheikh Ahmed Albu-Risha why the numbers of recruits in Ramadi were so low. Ahmed explained that although the candidates would go to the recruitment drives, when they got home, they were subject to AQI intimidation and would not go back. Deane suggested that they conduct the drives in the tribal areas and ship the recruits out to training on the same day, that way, Deane observed, we "... only force them to be brave once." Ahmed agreed. This is an enduring lesson.

e. The Surge

I agree we need more troops, but they need to be Iraqi

—Lieutenant General James T. Conway, 2004⁵⁴⁶

Two-and-a-half years later in November 2006, Senator John McCain, when politicking for a surge of American troops into Iraq, asked COL MacFarland, "Do you need more troops

⁵⁴⁶ Lieutenant General James T. Conway interview with Dr. William Knarr at the Pentagon, Washington, DC on 1 Dec 2005. This was General Conway's response to Major General James Mattis in 2004 when General Mattis said he needed more troops.

here, Colonel?” MacFarland responded, “Iraqi Security Forces is what I really need; I’m developing about as fast as I possibly can.”⁵⁴⁷

There were a number of surges. There was the activation of two battalions of the Call Forward Brigade in June 2006 which deployed TF 1-6 Infantry and TF 1-35 Armor to support the RFCT in Ramadi. There was the deployment of two rifle companies from the 15th MEU to support the RFCT in November 2006. Then there was the much larger, better known and publicized Surge announced by President Bush in January 2007 which brought in a number of brigades primarily to secure the Baghdad area. But some, such as senior US politicians, have erroneously attributed the Awakening to the 2007 Surge announced by President Bush. It’s important to note that the Surge was important, but not for the reasons indicated.⁵⁴⁸ The Surge of 2007 allowed the Coalition and Iraqis to expand its successes beyond Ramadi into the environs of Fallujah and the Tharthar region.

The purpose of this section is to correct history and to reinforce the importance of developing the indigenous security forces.

f. Lioness teams

Lioness teams were first established, and the name coined, by the US Army’s 1st Engineer Battalion (1 EN) of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division in Ramadi in October/November 2003 while attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. As the 1st Engineers assumed their infantry mission to stabilize their assigned battle space in the restive city they quickly realized that the cultural demands of the mission required female Coalition support. As an example, the search aspect of cordon and search and searches at entry control points and traffic control points quickly turned the Iraqi populace against the Coalition as male Soldiers and Marines vetted families and mixed male/female groups. The 1st Engineers capitalized on their abundance of female Soldiers, in particular their female medics and started using them to support Coalition operations that required them to deal with Iraqi women. The female Soldiers would remove their helmet to show they were female and then direct the Iraqi females and children to another room as the male Soldiers conducted tactical questioning and the search of male Iraqis

The first units to use them, in addition to 1 EN, were 1st Battalion, 5 Field Artillery and the 1st Battalion, 16 Infantry Regiment. This was before I-MEF RIP/TOA’d with the 82nd (late March 2004). It appears that 2/4 Marines used 1 EN Lioness teams in April 2004 in Ramadi.

⁵⁴⁷ MacFarland interview, 13 Oct 2010.

⁵⁴⁸ Most notably Senator John McCain credited Sattar’s *Sahawa* proclamation in September of 2006 to the later surge of forces in 2007 that was sequentially impossible. In Senator John McCain’s interview with Katie Couric, CBS, 22 July 2008, he stated, “Colonel MacFarland was contacted by one of the major Sunni sheikhs, because of the surge, we were able to go out, and protect that sheikh and others and it began the Anbar Awakening. I mean, that’s just a matter of history.”

Women's participation in combat action to include their involvement in Lioness, FET and CST's, along with equal opportunity, were factors considered in the Secretary of Defense's 24 January 2013 rescission of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule that excluded women from assignment to units and positions whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground.⁵⁴⁹ Although the "teams" as they are known today, may fade away, the function and concept is enduring.

g. Joint Relationships

Sergeant Major was talking to this lance corporal, he says, "How do you like fighting with these soldiers?" This lance corporal said, "Sergeant Major, these soldiers are dynamite. They've got these Bradleys and M1s and they are right in the middle of it spanking them"...The sergeant major says something to the effect of, "So you don't have any problems fighting with Soldiers?" And this lance corporal, probably 19 years old, suddenly says, "You old guys need to get over that."

—Lieutenant General Sattler, Fallujah, November 2004⁵⁵⁰

And they did get over it. The US Marines and the US Army, for the most part worked well together, but their perspectives could be quite different and, according to MacFarland, a certain amount of latitude was afforded because they were in different military services.

I don't know if I would have been given the latitude to do what I did in Ramadi if I had been working for an Army Division Commander. I had more latitude than my Marine counterparts had. I think it was because I was from a different service working for somebody else. You know, I was an Army guy working for a Marine. They said, "Okay, we'll give you special Army dispensation, Joint dispensation to go in a slightly different direction, because we don't really know you or understand you as well as we understand Marines."⁵⁵¹

An example was tribal engagement. Not everyone agreed with the RFCT's engagement with Sattar, in particular the MNF-W headquarters. Even as late as February 2007 after the obvious turning point in Ramadi resulted from the RFCT's work with Sattar, the headquarters was still questioning the approach. Upon briefing General David Petraeus, the incoming commander for MNF-I, Major General Gaskin, Commander, MNF-W, recommended that Petraeus not meet with Sheikh Sattar. He insisted that Sheikh Sattar was a "little fish" and they, the MNF-W headquarters, were working with the provincial council and the sheikhs in Jor-

⁵⁴⁹ Secretary of Defense Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, Subject: Elimination of the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, dated 24 Jan 2013.

⁵⁵⁰ Lieutenant General Sattler's interview with Dr. William Knarr and Major Robert Castro, USMC, at Camp Pendleton, California, on 6 Dec 2005. This incident took place during the 2nd battle for Fallujah, Operation AL FAJR in November 2004.

⁵⁵¹ MacFarland interview 13 Oct 2010. MacFarland added, "The initial part of it [the Awakening] that happened around Ramadi would have remained a local phenomenon if not for the operational vision of guys like General Allen and General Gurganus and if not for the willingness to accept risk by guys like General Zilmer and General Neller.

dan. But Petraeus ignored Gaskin's recommendation and met with Sattar in March.⁵⁵² General Petraeus later commented that Sattar's *Sahawa* was "one of the most famous developments that there's been since I came back to Iraq."⁵⁵³

In fact it was so good that the template, with modifications, was adopted Iraq-wide. According to MacFarland, "By then, the strategic-level vision of General Petraeus, General Odierno, and General Chiarelli had come in, and now nurturing the Awakening and doing these kinds of things was okay. So, they were able to adopt that template in their areas of operation."

Is there a lesson in this difference in perspectives relative to consistency in following headquarters guidance? Consistency is normally considered a good thing. The problem with consistency, however, is that if you are heading in the wrong direction, you might continue. Inconsistency, in this case, was a good thing.

h. By 2006 and 2007, the experience of the Coalition force was extraordinary

Multiple tours in Iraq (and Afghanistan) resulted in an incredibly experienced force.

- In Fallujah, Lieutenant Colonel Joe L'Etoile, Commander of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines (2/7 Marines) worked in the area during 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. As commander, 2/7 he led the battalion in the Fallujah area during two tours: from July 2005 to January 2006, and January 2007 to August 2007. As in other areas of Iraq, the Coalition's combat experience was substantial. 2/7 Marines even more so, because they had back-to-back deployments in the same area.
- Additionally, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines (2/6 Marines) operated in Fallujah from October 2005 to April 2006. Although a number of Marines rotated out of and into the battalion as it prepared for its 2007 Fallujah deployment to include the battalion's commander, most of the Marines were familiar with Al Anbar, if not specifically Fallujah.
- In 2006/2007 in Ramadi, according to COL MacFarland, 40–50% of the brigade were veterans from the brigade's previous deployment, and with new folks who had previously deployed with other units, the brigade consisted of more than 50% veterans.
- About 35% of LTC Ferry's 1-9 Infantry had served during its deployment as 1-503 AA, and approximately 70% had served previous combat tours. All of the company commanders had previous combat tours and all had come from the Ranger Regiment or the Ranger Training Brigade.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵² Jensen interview 20 Oct 2010

⁵⁵³ AFP (Agency France-Presse), "The General and the Sheikh: Can they Save Iraqi?" *The Khaleej Times*, 14 Mar 2007.

⁵⁵⁴ Ferry interview, 8 Nov 2010. Additionally, this was Ferry's and Bergmann's fifth combat tour. Bergmann had served multiple combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and had jumped into Panama with the Ranger Regi-

- LtCol Journey commanded 1/6 Marines in Fallujah from March to October of 2005. He deployed that battalion of veterans one year later to Ramadi.

C. Conclusion

What was the Anbar Awakening? There are a multitude of definitions— theories of how, why, and when it started—disagreements about the name itself, and how it evolved. When the primary and secondary research questions were answered, those answers addressed the breadth and depth of the project and kept it focused on the objectives. In doing so, it revealed a number of themes, lessons, and findings. Probably the most significant finding was the narrative itself. Although parts of that narrative are found in the collection and analysis above, the narrative itself is provided in the next chapter.

ment. Ferry served a combat tour in Mogadishu as a young lieutenant (during the “Black Hawk Down” battles) plus multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Ranger Regiment.

12. Narrative Summary, Contributing Factors and Conclusions

Most accounts of the Awakening movement begin with Sheik Abdul Sattar Abu-Risha's 14 September 2006 anti-AQI proclamation. On that day he coined the term *Al Sahawa*. During the next year conditions—security, governance and development—improved dramatically. Although some acknowledge other awakenings before 14 September 2006, these were usually characterized as “localized”; those awakenings are usually dismissed or the accounts make no mention of their contributions or connections to the overall movement.⁵⁵⁵ The leaked classified Coalition report of 17 August of 2006, concluding that the Multi-National Forces and ISF were “no longer capable of militarily defeating the insurgency in Al Anbar,” only reinforced the perception that gains, if any, were limited, inconsequential, and offered little hope for success.⁵⁵⁶

This report suggests otherwise. It also offers two things that most other accounts do not. Generally, it reveals a narrative that reflects continuous improvement throughout Al Anbar starting in Fallujah in 2004 and ending in Fallujah in 2008. Specifically, it contends there was a connection—that events before September 2006—such as those in Fallujah, Al Qaim and the Corridor—helped set the conditions for the awakening in Ramadi through tribal connections, interactions, and events. The following summarizes the narratives found in chapters 2 through 10 and the analysis of Chapter 11 to provide a continuous, coherent narrative; it also discusses contributing factors to the Awakening, and offers some concluding thoughts.⁵⁵⁷

A. The Continuous Narrative of the Awakening

Conditions were being set for the awakening in Ramadi the moment the Iraqis recognized that AQI was not their friend in Fallujah in 2004. As insurgents fled to other communities along the Euphrates to escape the onslaught of the Coalition in Fallujah, they were pre-

⁵⁵⁵ Such individuals include James Soriano, Department of State, Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader in Iraq, 2006–09; and editors CWO-4 Timothy McWilliams and LtCol Kurtis S. Wheeler, in *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume I*, 120–37, 274.

⁵⁵⁶ Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq.” Officially, the report is known as the “State of the Emergency in Al Anbar,” I MEF G-2, 17 Aug 2006 (no author named). It was cleared for open publication 16 Dec 2010 by the Office of Security Review, Department of Defense, and declassified by US Central Command Memorandum 10-012, at the request of Dr. William Knarr. Although many now disagree with the assessment for Ramadi, and in particular the November update, few, if any, have questioned the assessment as it related to the rest of Al Anbar, such as Fallujah, Al Qaim, and the Corridor.

⁵⁵⁷ Recall that this section responds to several SRQs: What were the notable events of the Anbaris turning on AQI and joining with the Coalition? Was the GOI a partner in those events? Was there a relationship between those events, in particular, between the one in Al Qaim in 2005 and the premier awakening event in Ramadi in 2006?

ceded by Fallujan residents escaping to many of those same locations bearing witness to the true nature and agenda of AQI. As bad news travelled from east to west along the Euphrates, Awakening events subsequently developed from the west to east. They started in Al Qaim in 2005, migrated eastward through the Hadithah-Hit Corridor in early 2006 and peaked in Ramadi in late 2006. The Iraqis in Fallujah's environs, however, were not impressed or significantly influenced by these events until sufficient forces (GOI and Coalition) became available through the surge in 2007. The following traces the Awakening events from Fallujah in 2004 to Fallujah in 2008 and provides a coherent connected narrative.

1. Fallujah, 2004

The extremists' occupation of Fallujah from April through November of 2004 was an incredible morale builder for the insurgency.⁵⁵⁸ The Coalition's failure to expel the insurgents gave the impression that the Coalition could be beaten. As such, according to Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubai'e, the Iraqi National Security Advisor, Fallujah had become a powerful symbol for the insurgency.⁵⁵⁹ But during that period, the common Iraqi resident got a taste of AQI's extreme interpretation of *Sharia*.⁵⁶⁰ Coupled with the paranoia created by the Coalition's information operations campaign in preparation for the second battle for Fallujah in which the insurgents suspected everyone of being a spy, retribution for any infraction was severe. Many recall those days under AQI management, one of whom was Farhan De Hal Farhan. Farhan fled Fallujah with his family in September 2004. He was well aware of AQI's methods of operation and, along with many of the other residents, learned quickly that the extremists, rather than supporting a nationalist or anti-occupation effort, were simply the enemy of the Iraqis. He carried that story to Al Qaim where he was elected mayor in December 2005.

In November 2004, AQI lost its sanctuary in Fallujah to the Coalition forces' onslaught in the second battle of Fallujah, (Operation AL FAJR). There were a number of other benefits to the operation. It dispelled the myth that the Coalition was afraid to invade Fallujah and that Fallujah, defended by AQI, was somehow invincible. This operation undercut extremist propaganda in a way that no Coalition message ever could and it prompted other "renegade" cities to reflect on a Fallujah-like fate. It also built Iraqi confidence and opened a critical window of stability for the January 2005 elections.

Unfortunately, many insurgents fled Fallujah to Ramadi, to other communities along the Euphrates such as the Hadithah-Hit Corridor, to the north to Mosul, and to Al Qaim on the Iraqi/Syrian border.

⁵⁵⁸ "Many enlisted following a great battle they considered a great victory—the Apr 2004 fight for Fallujah," Abu Nour, insurgent and kidnapper of Jill Carroll; Carroll, "The Jill Carroll Story."

⁵⁵⁹ Al Rubai'e interview, 29 Jan 2006.

⁵⁶⁰ In October 2004, Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's *Jama'at Al Tawhid Wa'al Jihad* became AQI when Zarqawi pledged his allegiance to Osama bin Laden.

2. AO Denver, 2005: A View from Al Asad

AO Denver was the largest of the Coalition's AOs. Those who deployed there nicknamed it the *Wild West*—a 30,000-square-mile region in Western Iraq containing several major population centers along the Western Euphrates River Valley (WERV)—Hit, Hadithah, and the Al Qaim district—and sharing borders with Jordan, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Throughout 2003, AO Denver was occupied by Special Operations Forces (SOF) and Army units. The First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) took control of Al Anbar in early 2004, and Regimental Combat Teams (RCTs) were assigned to the area.

Regimental Combat Team-2 (RCT-2), commanded by Colonel Stephen Davis, assumed responsibility for AO Denver in February 2005 from RCT-7. RCT-2's command was based out of Al Asad Airbase, which is south of the river between Hadithah and Hit. Col Davis described the environment:

The Euphrates is a highway. It's been a highway for 4,000 years. These are business men out here, and you need to look at this area through a different lens. The solution out here will be found as a business equation. This is not good guys versus bad guys, although there were plenty of bad guys. Everybody's got a business angle up here, because that's what they do. And there are some great survivors up here. They've survived 35 years of Saddam. He couldn't tame them, and so by understanding this, you start to understand a bit about the environment that we were walking into.⁵⁶¹

Davis's mission was to "Conduct COIN operations in order to disrupt and interdict anti-Iraqi insurgent elements." The goal was to stabilize these areas to a point where the National Referendum on the Constitution in October and National Elections in December could be held.

During August through October 2005, RCT-2's forces grew from 3,200 to around 14,000 as it received additional GOI and Coalition support. That included elements of the newly formed 7th Iraqi Division. This allowed Colonel Davis to implement a strategy of combined, persistent presence within the AO. Additionally, during this time SF detachments were reintroduced to AO Denver; they began engaging the population to determine which tribes might be receptive to working with the Coalition and GOI. This led to forming the first tribal militia in Al Qaim—the Desert Protectors—that was approved by the GOI and US forces. The following provides the story for two of the major communities within the AO: Al Qaim and the Hadithah-Hit Corridor.

a. Al Qaim, 2005-2006

Although the district's population of 150,000–200,000 represents only 10% of the Anbar population, the area is strategically important because it is on the Iraqi border with Syria and

⁵⁶¹ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

along the Euphrates River.⁵⁶² Al Qaim is a lucrative smuggling route for black market goods, and was AQI's lifeline to Baghdad as foreign fighters, money, and other resources fueling the insurgency infiltrated Iraq. With the loss of Fallujah, Al Qaim also became AQI's newfound sanctuary.

The significance of this terrain was not lost on the Coalition. Blocking the Syrian/Iraqi border along the Euphrates at the Husaybah port of entry and securing Al Qaim was part of the Coalition's larger strategy to restrict the movement of foreign fighters and resources—including suicide bombers and IED materials—from Syria down the Euphrates to Baghdad. This was particularly important as the Coalition and GOI prepared for the constitutional referendum in October 2005 and for the elections two months later.⁵⁶³ CTF 3/6's ability to implement a combined, permanent, persistent presence in the Al Qaim district, starting in September 2005, was critical to the start of the Awakening in all of Al Anbar, and security in the Al Qaim District continued to improve. By March 2006, when 3/6 transferred responsibility of the area to 1/7 Marines, CTF 3/6 had established some 16 Battle Positions from Husaybah to Ubaydi. Each position included Marines and Iraqis with company areas assigned based on tribal distribution to link a company with a tribe.⁵⁶⁴ Additionally, the positions were located in such a way that the Coalition and Iraqi forces lived among the people. They were also transitioning the Desert Protectors, established in September 2005, from a semi-independent tribal force into regular units of the Iraqi Army and local police force.

LtCol Marano, Commander, 1/7 Marines, continued to build on that strategy. Seven months later, in September 2006, as 1/7 Marines prepared for transfer of authority with LtCol Schuster and 3/4 Marines, the Coalition and Iraqis had developed a fairly sophisticated operation to control the physical terrain. They had prepared the border with obstacles and the human terrain with Iraqi Army and police stations strategically placed throughout the AO. Some of those stations had already been turned over to full Iraqi control. COL Ismael, commander, 3rd Iraqi Brigade, indicated that security was so effective in the Al Qaim district that AQI had fled to Rawah, a city along the Euphrates River, 57 miles to the east of Husaybah. This did not mean that there were not pockets of AQI in Al Qaim, but by late 2006, the ISF and Coalition dominated the area. In addition to security, a local government had existed since December 2005 when Farhan De Hal Farhan had been elected as district mayor.⁵⁶⁵

Again, as this narrative demonstrates, by the time Sheikh Sattar coined the term *Al Sahawa*, Al Qaim was already secure with a functioning local government, its economic and so-

⁵⁶² Colonel Dale Alford, briefing on 3/6 Marines in Al Qaim Iraq, Aug 2005 to Mar 2006, Institute for Defense Analyses, 16 Feb 2010.

⁵⁶³ Davis interview, 25 May 2010.

⁵⁶⁴ It was not an exact science, but worked well.

⁵⁶⁵ Farhan De Hal Farhan, mayor of Al Qaim district, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Col Dale Alford, USMC, and LtCol David Graves, USMC, Ubaydi, Iraq, 17 Apr 2010.

cial systems recovered and developing. Follow-on units built on that success. But the awakening in Al Qaim, while enabled by the Coalition, was built by Iraqis like Sheikh Kurdi, Colonel Ismael, Colonel Ahmed, Major Mushlik, and Mayor Farhan who risked their lives and those of their families to take control of their destinies rather than forfeit their futures to AQI. They weren't there on short tours; they were there for the long haul.

The Bookends: Fallujah and Al Qaim

By the spring of 2006, developments in Fallujah and Al Qaim had restricted AQI's freedom of movement. Population control measures in Fallujah such as berming, checkpoints, and identification cards, coupled with the development of the ISF, all contributed to disrupting AQI within the city and east into the Baghdad area. Fallujah wasn't necessarily stable, but it was not the insurgent sanctuary it had been in 2004. Additionally, successes in Al Qaim restricted the flow of foreign fighters and their resources from the west across the Iraqi/Syrian border into Al Qaim. This, of course, did not end the insurgency. As an adaptive enemy, elements of AQI (especially their leaders) found ways around and through both Al Qaim and Fallujah, but the loss of major sanctuaries at both ends of the WERV, effectively bookending the insurgency, greatly reduced their efficiency and operational effectiveness. As such, the insurgents were forced towards "cool" spots, exploiting Coalition and Iraqi security gaps in the Corridor and Ramadi areas.⁵⁶⁶

b. The Corridor, 2006

Early Coalition efforts to build and train Iraqi security forces—particularly in the Hadithah area—generally succeeded. However, during 2004, the Iraqi civilian and Coalition relationship changed in the area due to events in Fallujah. Marine units assigned to the Corridor area deployed to Fallujah to support operations in April–June 2004 and again in November–December 2004. During their absence, insurgents seized control of the newly vacated space, and proceeded to hunt and punish Iraqis they found who had cooperated with the Coalition. The Corridor residents had been left unprotected by the Coalition twice; but they wouldn't be deceived again by AQI or the Coalition. They had realized early on that AQI was not their friend, and that intermittent Coalition security was worse than no security. They remained non-committal until they saw evidence and assurances of a permanent, persistent presence.

As a military economy of force area for much of 2003–05, the Corridor didn't have enough troops to execute a COIN strategy of clear, hold, and build. As one Coalition battalion commander described it, they were destined to a cycle of "clear, abandon, clear, abandon..." But, that started to change in October 2005 when RCT-2's forces more than quadrupled, to include additional Iraqi forces. The SF detachments assigned to Hit and Hadithah discovered

⁵⁶⁶ "Cool" spots are LtGen Allen's reference to gaps in Coalition and Iraqi security.

that the Albu-Nimr in the town of Hit was receptive to partnering with the Coalition under the Desert Protector program as had the Albu-Mahal in Al Qaim.

Brigadier General David Reist, former deputy commanding general of the MEF (FWD), coined the term “Commercial Battlespace” and contended that the Awakening moved from west to east, tied to the commercial routes along the WERV. He characterized it as “a wave coming ashore, not a singular event in any way, shape or form.” The wave, in this case, began in Al Qaim during summer and fall 2005. In early 2006, it followed the WERV to the area around Al Asad in the Corridor. Reist also credits the chief of police in Baghdadi—Colonel Shaban Barzan Abdul Himrin al-Ubaydi, also known as the Lion of Baghdadi—with leading the fight against AQI. Other Iraqis like Colonel Farouq and Mayor Hakim provided leadership and continuity for the Hadithah Triad and Baghdadi areas. Hit would suffer from a rapid turnover of forces from September 2005 to February 2006 with five different units assuming responsibility for the area. But in February 2006, it would be finally assigned a US battalion that would stay for an entire year, and then be followed by units also with long term commitments to the area.

With AQI resistance emerging in Baghdadi and Hadithah in early 2006, AQI was running out of places to operate and hide, and it migrated east to more favorable terrain in the Ramadi area and to the east toward Fallujah. Ramadi then became known as the worst city in Iraq.

3. Ramadi, 2006–07

The insurgency in Anbar suffered serious damage in late 2005 from successive Coalition operations in the western parts of Al Anbar targeting its leadership and network. This opened a window of opportunity for the elements of the Sunni Arab Resistance and other nationalists to politically engage the Coalition and elements of the GOI. Despite this, AQI regrouped in late 2005/early 2006 and targeted those insurgent and tribal leaders who sought political negotiation. AQI was so successful that it recovered from most of its losses in 2005 and became the dominant insurgent group in Al Anbar, and in Ramadi in particular. By March, AQI had eliminated much of the competing insurgent resistance groups in the Ramadi area, either by murder, neutralizing their efforts, or forcing those who resisted into their fold.⁵⁶⁷

Despite its dominance in Ramadi, there was, not surprisingly, little enthusiasm among Ramadi residents for AQI. The increased criminality that AQI brought, along with its murder and intimidation campaigns, meant that AQI was more feared than loved. The tribes and local leaders that remained anti-AQI, however, maintained a low profile until their window of opportunity would open. It would do so with the deployment of the Ready Force Combat Team (RFCT) to Ramadi in May 2006.⁵⁶⁸ Then, given the right conditions that included force struc-

⁵⁶⁷ Montgomery and McWilliams, *An-Anbar Awakening, Volume II*, 12.

⁵⁶⁸ There is a strong Coalition connection in these events. LtCol Bill Jurney, Commander, 1/6 Marines in Ramadi in 2006 built on the experiences and lessons of LtCol Dale Alford, Commander 3/6 Marines in Al

ture, experiences, strategies, and leadership—Iraqi as well as Coalition—it would accelerate into what would be called the Awakening.

We do not intend to tell the full story of the Ramadi awakening here, but certain considerations paint a much different picture than that of the MEF’s intelligence assessment of August 2006.⁵⁶⁹ Those considerations, in fact, paint a more formidable picture for the RFCT.

The leaked intelligence assessment, as of late August and revalidated in November of 2006, laments the loss of the province and marginalized any COIN successes throughout it. To the contrary, there were marked successes in Fallujah, Al Qaim, and the Corridor, but expelling the insurgents from Al Qaim and disrupting their operations in the Corridor also drove the surviving jihadists east, exacerbating the situation in Ramadi. AQI felt the pressure and Ramadi was its last significant urban staging area and the last, and largest, symbol of its power. Essentially, Ramadi was AQI’s Alamo.

The Ramadi awakening, detailed in Chapter 7, was dramatic and—as characterized by MacFarland and Major Niel Smith earlier—a tipping point for Al Anbar. Its success was made more dramatic by comparison to other areas in Al Anbar. Ramadi had now become the sanctuary; the Caliphate. The extremists had to be decisively defeated in Ramadi. The rest of Al Anbar could not improve without Ramadi “catching up.” And it did – dramatically. Its eruption, coined *Al Sahawa* by Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha and energized by him and his uniting of the Ramadi area tribes against AQI, quickly surpassed and accelerated improvements in neighboring communities such as the Corridor. As an example: In Ramadi, there were fewer than a hundred policemen in September 2006, but increased to 3,500 by July of 2007; correspondingly, incidents fell from 35 a day to less than one a day between February and April 2007. The movement was contagious in other parts of Al Anbar with the number of policemen in Al Anbar increasing from 3,500 in October 2006 to 21,500 by June 2007 and insurgent incidents falling from 1,300 in October 2006 to 225 in June 2007.⁵⁷⁰

But it wasn’t over yet. Although success in Ramadi positively affected other communities immediately to the northwest, it didn’t have as much effect in the east, as the Fallujah sheikhs and tribes were more independent and less influenced by events in Ramadi. Although

Qaim in 2005/2006. Upon arriving in Ramadi, Jurney briefed MacFarland on his plan. MacFarland commented that Jurney “was completely inside my head intent-wise...[and] took it to another level at the battalion.” It’s interesting that MacFarland had built on the lessons of McMasters in Tal Afar and Jurney built on the lessons of Alford in Al Qaim, but, at the time neither knew much of the other events, i.e., MacFarland had not heard much about Al Qaim and Jurney had not heard much about Tal Afar.

⁵⁶⁹ Dafna Linzer and Thomas Ricks, “Anbar Picture Grows Clearer and Bleaker,” *Washington Post*, 28 Nov 2006.

⁵⁷⁰ John F. Burns, “Showcase and Chimera in the Desert,” *New York Times*, 8 July 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/07/08/weekinreview/08burns.html?pagewanted=print, accessed 23 March 2014; Colonel John Charlton, former Commander, 1st BCT, 3rd Infantry Division, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Alexandria, VA, 20 Oct 2010.

the Surge in Iraq was inaccurately credited with a number of successes, it did make a difference as the Coalition and Iraqis expanded its successes beyond Ramadi into areas such as the environs of Fallujah.⁵⁷¹

4. An Awakening emerges: Fallujah, 2007

At the start of 2007, Fallujah proper was not *out* of control and was nowhere near the ungoverned insurgent sanctuary it had been in 2004, but it was also not *under* control. The solution to the insurgency in the Fallujah area and its significant impact on security in Baghdad was much broader than simply controlling entry into, and movement within the city. It depended on controlling its environs: Saqlawiyah, Al Karmah, and Zaidon.⁵⁷² These small towns, suburbs, and rural hamlets resourced and fed the insurgency. The urban areas of Fallujah and Baghdad could not be stabilized until these sources were isolated or eliminated.

Events in the Fallujah area illustrate that not all of the Anbar awakenings evolved similarly. People typically associate the awakening with the tribes, but in the Fallujah area, local political, security, and economic power manifested itself in many different ways. In Zaidon, for example, the 1920th Revolutionary Brigade (a Nationalist insurgent group) accepted the Coalition's help to defeat AQI and essentially remained in charge of the area after the fight.

Al Karmah's redemption depended on the Coalition establishing a window of security in preparation for a senior tribal leader, Sheikh Mishan, to return from Jordan. This case leveraged the typical tribal affiliations to defeat AQI, even though for many years the Jumayli tribe's loyalties were split between insurgent and anti-insurgent.

In Saqlawiyah, the police force, enabled by the Marines, developed, gained credibility, and established control over the area. However, in all cases, there seemed to be an AQI-perpetrated event, some called it an egregious act, an over-reach, that was the straw that broke the camel's back; an event that catalyzed the population to choose the Coalition instead of AQI.

During this period, the Coalition conducted a Ramadi-like "clear, hold and build" operation within the city of Fallujah. In coordination with operations conducted in the surrounding areas, Fallujah was the last area to be stabilized for turning over security responsibilities to the Iraqis in September 2008.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ Most notably Senator John McCain credited Sattar's *Sahawa* proclamation in September of 2006 to the later surge of forces in 2007, that was sequentially impossible. Senator John McCain, interview with Katie Couric, CBS, 22 July 2008.

⁵⁷² There were other critical areas such as Ameriyah-Ferris to the south of Zaidon, but the Awakening project concentrated on the three listed.

⁵⁷³ While there seemed to be very little tribal connection between Fallujah, and in particular the city, and other Al Anbar communities, there was a Coalition connection. In 2007, LtCol William F. Mullen, Commander, 2/6 Marines adopted a Ramadi-style "clear, hold, build strategy" from 1/6 Marines in Ramadi. In 2006, LtCol Journey, Commander, 1/6 Marines adopted a "clear, hold, build" strategy from LtCol Dale Alford, 3/6 Marines lessons in Al Qaim in 2005.

Section A outlined the events occurring from Fallujah in 2004 to Fallujah in 2008 that are critical to understanding the Awakening movement. Although it introduces a number of relationships—such as the movement of Iraqis from one area to another and carrying the story of AQI atrocities, as well as Coalition and Iraq successes—there is a much more complex, nuanced story of relationships and networks that provides a deeper, connected, and coherent understanding of the movement.

B. A Narrative Connected by Relationships and Events

We are not your enemy. Al Qaeda is your enemy. —The Messenger⁵⁷⁴

During the chaotic summer of 2004, when Fallujans were entering the Awakening by realizing that AQI was not their friend, meetings were underway in Amman, Jordan. Those meetings, facilitated by Talal al-Gaoud, a prominent Iraqi businessman that lived in Amman, brought together Americans and Iraqis. The purpose was to find a way out of the anarchy that gripped Iraq, and in particular Al Anbar. On 18 July 2004, Talal convened a conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Amman. The American invitees included representatives from the Department of Defense, American Embassy in Amman, the Coalition, and businessmen. The Iraqis included prominent businessmen and Iraqi notables from the various tribes and confederations, former Iraqi generals such as Ra'ad al-Hamdani, and former Iraqi government officials from the Saddam Hussein era. Although they spoke of reconciliation and development, there was a much more important objective.

According to David Rose, author of *Vanity Fair* article “Heads in the Sand,” Talal arranged a private meeting on 19 July 2004 to introduce the Americans to the face of the insurgency: a Fallujan they called The Messenger. Colonel Walker, USMC, commander, 3rd Civil Affairs Group in Iraq from February to September 2004, was at that meeting; according to him, the message to the Americans was, “We are not your enemy. Al Qaeda is your enemy,” and he urged the Coalition to work with the Sunnis to defeat them. A series of meetings ensued that convinced Walker of the authenticity and credibility of the participants and their strategy. Unfortunately, political infighting and turf sensitivities marginalized future talks. Although described as a major opportunity lost, it reinforced the deep involvement of Iraqis residing outside of Iraq (top down), as well as inside Iraq (bottom up) to find a solution. It also demonstrated the power of the Al Gaoud clan to bring together high level players as well as of their connections in Iraq to the insurgency. As Colonel Walker sees it, this dialogue was the start of the Awakening.

⁵⁷⁴ David Rose, “Heads in the Sand,” *Vanity Fair* (12 May 2009): 7. This is an incredible story. The project found nothing wrong in the account and was able to verify much of it through discussions with Colonel Walker, Ken Wischkaemper, Jalal al-Gaoud, and Ra'ad al-Hamdani.

The Coalition's November 2004 assault on AQI's Fallujah sanctuary forced insurgents to flee to communities along the WERV. AQI offered to partner with the tribes of Al Qaim to fight the Americans; most accepted. The Abu-Mahal found out later that this was no partnership and AQI was no friend. They initially drove AQI from the area in May of 2005, but AQI returned in July and August with a vengeance.

Calls for help went to MNF-W (via the Al Gaoud clan), MNF-I, and the Iraqi Government. When Sheikh Sabah, the leader of the Abu-Mahal, asked Dr. Sadun Dulaymi, then Iraq's minister of defense, for assistance, Sadun turned to General George Casey, Commander, MNF-I, for help. GEN Casey responded with funding, equipment, and training to develop the Desert Protectors. Additionally, ODA 582 was assigned advisory responsibility to develop those tribal forces. While most of the Abu-Mahal tribesmen fled to Akashat, some fled to the Ramadi area, and Mahalawis (Abu-Mahal tribesmen), joined with Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha, and Sheikh Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi in the Ramadi area to support the awakening movement there.

In addition to the refugees, there were other ties between the Abu-Mahal and Abu-Risha tribes. Sadun, the principal GOI coordinator for the Desert Protectors, was Sheikh Sattar's uncle, and had grown up next to Sheikh Sattar's family's compound in Ramadi. When Sheikh Sattar's successor, Sheikh Ahmed Abu-Risha, was asked about the first instance of an Iraqi tribe turning on AQI, he responded matter-of-factly, "Abu-Mahal in Al Qaim."⁵⁷⁵ He spoke of contacting Sheikh Sabah of the Abu-Mahal in 2005 and offering to help. Sheikh Sabah asked that they contact Dr. Dulaymi, the minister of defense and a member of the Abu-Risha tribe, to solicit formal GOI recognition of the growing anti-AQI movement. Sheikh Ahmed's brother Khamis travelled to Baghdad and met with Sadun to discuss support for the Abu-Mahal. There was also a direct connection between Sheikh Sabah and Sheikh Sattar. According to Sheikh Sabah, Sheikh Sattar met him in Jordan to discuss the Abu-Mahal's success against AQI. Sheikh Sattar was increasingly concerned about AQI's grip on the Ramadi area and was looking for ways to counter them.⁵⁷⁶

During his trip to Jordan, Sattar also met with other prominent sheikhs to gain their approval and support for his upcoming fight. Notably, Sheikh Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, co-regent to the Dulaymi Tribal Confederation,⁵⁷⁷ supported the Abu-Mahal tribe's revolt against AQI in 2005.⁵⁷⁸ He, along with other notable sheikhs in Jordan, approved Sheikh Sattar's request. This support convinced Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to back the Awak-

⁵⁷⁵ Sheikh Ahmed Bezia Fteikhan al-Rishawi, paramount sheikh of the Abu-Risha tribe and president of the Mutammar Sahwat al-Iraq (The Iraq Awakening Party—MSI), interview with Dr. William Knarr, Col Dale Alford, USMC, and LtCol David Graves, USMC, at Sheikh Ahmed's guesthouse, Ramadi, Iraq, 22 Apr 2010.

⁵⁷⁶ Sheikh Sabah's interview on 3 Feb 2011

⁵⁷⁷ The Dulaymi Tribal Confederation is the largest and most influential tribe in Al Anbar. The tribe has a rich history in Iraq, dating back before Islam was born.

⁵⁷⁸ Sheikh Majed interview 3 Feb 2011.

ening. Maliki reportedly said that there would be “no Awakening unless Majed and the sheikhs agree to it.”⁵⁷⁹

The types of people participating in and driving the Awakening went beyond traditional tribal leaders. Among those attending the meeting with Sheikh Sattar and Sheikh Majed was Numan Abdul Mahsen al-Gaoud, a prominent businessman and owner of the Doha Group in Baghdad.⁵⁸⁰ The Al Gaouds, a prominent clan from the Hit area, belong to the Albu-Nimr tribe. The Albu-Nimr and Albu-Mahal tribes are closely related and share ancestry.⁵⁸¹ Additionally, during the early stages of the Albu-Mahal’s fight with AQI, it was Fasal al-Gaoud, and former governor of Al Anbar province, who initially contacted the Americans at Camp Fallujah on behalf of the Albu-Mahal. Additionally, Fasal al-Gaoud was present at Sheikh Sattar’s Awakening announcement of 14 September 2006, and also served as an original member of the Awakening Council. Also in attendance, and one of the signatories of the emergency decree, was an Albu-Mahal representative from Al Qaim.⁵⁸²

Those connections and relationships were further strengthened by the return of Special Forces teams to the area in 2005 after a short hiatus. As indicated previously, an ODB was deployed to Al Asad with ODAs deployed to Al Qaim, Hadithah, and Hit to work with the tribes and develop those relationships from the bottom up. In fact, Major General James Mattis, 1st Marine Division commander from August 2002 to August 2004, credits Major Adam Such, Special Forces, with making initial contact with the Albu-Nimr tribe as early as mid-2004. According to Mattis’ account, Major Such and the efforts of these isolated SF detachments “actually began what eventually morphed into the Anbar Awakening.”⁵⁸³

C. Disconnected Perspectives, Rather than Disconnected Events

As this study has illuminated, the events in Al Qaim and Ramadi are connected. These connections flow through a web of subtle yet effective tribal communications, coordinations, and affiliations. This narrative of the Awakening runs counter to the common one (especially among American commentators) that the Ramadi awakening was disconnected and unrelated to previous events. So, why do so many Americans view the Al Qaim awakening and other events in such a limited way?

Colonel Walker offered one explanation. Walker attributed much of the Coalition’s inability to recognize the relationships to a “Coalition time versus Arab time” mind-set. On one hand, Coalition members perceived events in Iraq based on their deployments; Marines, for

⁵⁷⁹ Sheik Majed interview, 3 Feb 2011.

⁵⁸⁰ Numan al-Gaoud interview 13 Feb 2013

⁵⁸¹ Jalal al-Gaoud interview 5 Feb 2013.

⁵⁸² Relations within the Al Gaoud clan were not necessarily congenial. There were reported conflicts between the former governor Fasal and his cousin, Sheikh Bezi

⁵⁸³ McWilliams and Wheeler, *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume I*, 24–25.

example, saw the sequence of events in seven-month rotational increments. On the other hand, the Iraqis visualized and connected events during the entire time frame, which in turn related to their collective memories of events predating the 2003 invasion. They could bridge these events and see continuity where the Coalition could only perceive incremental and disconnected episodes.⁵⁸⁴

Another reason why many failed to recognize the connections can be traced to the classified intelligence report leaked to the press in September 2006, two weeks before Sheikh Sattar announced the Awakening in Ramadi.⁵⁸⁵ It reported that the tribal system “wholly failed in AO Raleigh and Topeka and has only limited efficacy in AO Denver.”⁵⁸⁶ The only exception noted in the report was Fallujah, where the tribes still functioned despite “local politics in Al Anbar [being] anemic or dysfunctional due to insurgent intimidation....”⁵⁸⁷ While a number of Coalition senior leaders in Al Anbar characterized the report as basically accurate when read in its entirety, the report unfortunately set a despondent tone when select elements of the report were headlined in the media. The report led many to conclude that there was no success.

However, on 14 July, COL MacFarland announced on a televised Department of Defense news briefing that “I think we have turned a corner here in Ramadi.”⁵⁸⁸ At a news conference on 29 September 2006, MacFarland gave a progress report: “The last time I talked to you [14 July 2006], I told you that we were at a tipping point in the battle for Ramadi. Well, I think we’ve actually tipped.” That comment was based on a reduction of incidents within the district and an increase in the presence of Coalition and ISF.⁵⁸⁹ As incredible as it may seem, a 17 November 2006 *Washington Post* article entitled, “Anbar Picture Grows Clearer and Bleaker” provided an update to the original August intelligence report, and indicated there had been no improvement, or that no improvement was expected in Al Anbar’s security conditions.⁵⁹⁰

Awakening events in 2004, Al Qaim in 2005, and the Corridor in early 2006 might have shone through if the media had not chosen to highlight the elements of the leaked report that so authoritatively and adamantly denied any successes in the Anbar area. Based on this report

⁵⁸⁴ Walker interview, 6 Jan 2011.

⁵⁸⁵ Thomas E. Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq,” *The Washington Post*, 11 Sept 2006. Officially, the report is known as the “State of the Emergency in Al Anbar,” I MEF G-2, 17 Aug 2006 (no author named). It was cleared for open publication 16 Dec 2010 by the Office of Security Review, Department of Defense and declassified by US Central Command Memorandum 10-012, at the request of Dr. William Knarr.

⁵⁸⁶ “State of the Emergency in Al Anbar,” 1.

⁵⁸⁷ “State of the Emergency in Al Anbar,” 4.

⁵⁸⁸ COL Sean MacFarland, DoD news briefing/interview, televised 14 July 2006; in a 29 September 2006 DoD news briefing, MacFarland announced, “I think we’ve actually tipped. Attacks are down 25 percent over the past couple of months, and coalition forces, together with the Iraqi security forces, have steadily increased their presence inside of the city.”

⁵⁸⁹ DoD News transcript, 29 Sept 2006, Presenter: Army Colonel Sean MacFarland, Commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

⁵⁹⁰ Dafna Linzer and Thomas Ricks, “Anbar Picture Grows Clearer and Bleaker,” *Washington Post*, 28 Nov 2006.

and subsequent high-level media coverage, much of the US audience was left with the impression that success could not have started in Al Anbar until the Army's Ready First Combat Team arrived in Ramadi in June 2006. As more detailed research makes clear, however, the Iraqis were well aware of the connections, relationships, and significance of previous events to include Al Qaim, and would count it as the physical starting point of the Awakening.⁵⁹¹

D. Conclusion

The Awakening was much more than Sheikh Sattar's announcement on 14 September 2006. Governor Mamoun Sami Rashid, Al Anbar Governor during 2005–06 described it best as a sequence of actions and events throughout Al Anbar:

When we started fighting Al Qaeda in Fallujah, the fight started to trickle down to Al Qaim, then Hadithah, then Anah, Rawah, and all these cities. The tribes with the help of the coalition forces, they took the fight to Al Qaeda. The last round of fighting was in Ramadi.⁵⁹²

These events were connected through the "Sheikh network," that unofficial grapevine of social connectivity that Americans were not part of. Rather than the starting point, Sheikh Sattar's *Sahawa* was the product of accumulating events.

Although many Americans perceive events in Ramadi as disconnected from previous events, this study showed that the Iraqis saw and leveraged those connections and relationships, thus creating a continuous narrative that:

- began in 2004 with the battles for Fallujah and the meetings in Amman, Jordan;
- sparked in 2005 in Al Qaim with the first significant revolt of a tribe against AQI;
- saw the emergence of courageous Iraqi leaders such as Colonels Shaban and Farouq in late 2005/2006 to organize and lead local police forces in the Corridor;
- was strengthened by the continued involvement of influential Iraqi tribes and families to connect the various events;
- set the conditions in 2006/2007 for the Ramadi *sahawa*, the turning point, where it accelerated throughout Al Anbar, and
- entered its final stages in Al Anbar in 2007/2008 with its return to the environs of Fallujah.

⁵⁹¹ Americans who saw continuity and relationships among those events were Colonel Walker and Brig Gen Reist. Colonel Walker attributed much of that continuity from 2004 to 2006 to the influence and commitment of the Al Gaoud clan and their involvement in every Awakening event starting in 2004. BrigGen Reist emphasized that money and smuggling were critical to the Anbaris survival. Calling it the Commercial Battlespace he contended that the Awakening flowed along the WERV from west to east, the major smuggling route, starting in Al Qaim, emerging in Baghdadi and culminating in Ramadi.

⁵⁹² Governor Mamoun Sami Rashid, Al Anbar Governor 2005 to 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, in Ramadi, on 7 Apr 2010.

Subsequently, the awakening, or *sahawa*, became the *Sahawa*, a collective effort by communities along the Euphrates. This collaboration, grounded in Iraqi culture and societal networks, albeit unrecognized by most outsiders, provides a deeper, more coherent and continuous narrative of the Anbar Awakening.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹³ The situation in Iraq was much more complex than anything that's been written. Even this project with more than 3,000 pages in transcripts and a multi-media addendum has numerous gaps. It didn't exploit the other Government Agencies or National SOF, both of which made significant contributions. Additionally, there are other themes and conclusions that can be drawn that are just as important depending on the reader's research questions and interests. As such, the reader is encouraged to delve into the other volumes and transcripts to explore and discover the uniqueness of all the perspectives, both Coalition and Iraqi.

Appendix A. Who's Who

Interviewees

- Abd al-Hakim Muhammad Rashid Muhammad al-Jughayfi**, Mayor of Hadithah
- Abdul Qadir Mohammed Jassim Obeidi al-Mifarji**, General, Minister of Defense from 2006 to present, preceded by Dr. Sadun al-Dulaymi, Sunni Arab, born in Ramadi
- Abdullah Jallal Mukhlif al-Faraji**, Head of Sunni Endowment for Anbar Province, Regent Sheikh of the Albu-Faraj tribe; Ramadi City Council Member
- Adel**, Brigadier General, Commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division
- Ahmad Jelayan Khalaf**, former Desert Protector
- Ahmed Bezia Fteikhan al-Rishawi**, Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Risha tribe, President of Muttamar Sahawat al-Iraq (MSI)
- Ahmed Hamid Sharqi**, Colonel, Chief, North Ramadi Police Precinct
- Aum Ahmed**, resident of Al Qaim
- Babakir Badr-khan Shawat al-Zubari**, General, Chief of Staff for the Joint Forces Command, Studied at the Iraqi Military Academy in Baghdad in 1969, served in the Kurdish Peshmerga 1973–91; Escaped to Iran as a political refugee in 1975; Acting Commanding General of Iraqi Joint Headquarters, 2004–05; Chief of Staff, Iraqi Joint Headquarters, 2005 to present
- Bakhit Arak Ali**, Lieutenant Colonel, Commander, Qatana Police Station, Ramadi
- Bezi Mujjil Nijris al-Gaoud al-Nimrawi**, eldest Sheikh of the Albu-Nimr tribe; one of the first tribal leaders to offer to arm tribesmen and support Coalition (Summer 2003); turned down by CPA over concerns of creating tribal militias; lives in Amman, Jordan
- Farouq Tareh Harden al-Jughayfi**, Colonel, Police Chief Hadithah
- Hareth al-Dhari**, (Dr.) Leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS) and Zobai tribe
- Ibrahim al-Jaafari**, former Iraqi Prime Minister, April 2005 to May 2006
- Ismael Sha Hamid Dulaymi**, staff Brigadier General Former Commander 28th Iraqi Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division
- Jalal al-Gaoud**, Iraqi Businessman from Hit, residing in Jordan

Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi, sheikh of the Abu-Souda tribe

Kurdi Rafee Farhan Al-Mahalawi, lower tier sheikh of Abu-Mahal tribe

Mahmood al-Janabi, a leader with the Jaish al-Islami (Islamic Army) insurgent group

Majed Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman, Sheikh of the Dulaymi Confederation

Mamoun Sami Rashid Latif al-Alwani, former Governor of Anbar; Anbar Provincial Council Member; Chairman of the Provincial Council's Economic Committee

Mishan Abbas Muhammad al-Jumayli, Paramount Sheikh of the Abu-Jumayli tribe

Mohammed Al-Saady, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation. Recently elected to the new Parliament.

Mukhlis Shadhan Ibrahim al-Mahalawi, Desert Protectors commander

Nathem al-Jabouri, former member of AQI

Numan al-Gaoud, businessman and member of the Abu-Nimr tribe in Hit

Raad Majid Rashid al-Hamdani, Lieutenant General, Retired Republican Guard Commander; Leader of the FRE Movement to Reintegrate with GOI

Raja Farhan, mayor of Al Qaim

Sa'fa Al-Sheikh, National Security Advisor

Sa'id al-Jughayfi, Sheikh of the Jughayfi tribe in Hadithah

Sabah al-Sattam Effan Fahren al-Shurji al-Aziz, principal Sheik of the Abu-Mahal tribe in Al Qaim

Sadun Juwayr Farhan al-Rishawi al-Dulaymi, Doctor, Former Minister of Defense 2005/2006, Doctorate in Social Psychology from United Kingdom's Keele University

Said Flayyah Othman al-Jughayfi, contesting Sheikh, Abu-Jughayfi, one of the top 17 influential tribes in Anbar, Hadithah

Sha'ban Barzan Himrin, Colonel, former Chief of Police in Baghdadi

Sheikh Ali Hatim Abd al-Razzaq Ali al-Sulayman al-Assafi al-Dulaymi, President of the Common Council of Iraqi and Arab Sheikhs, Lineal Sheikh-in-waiting of the Abu-Assaf tribe, Founder of the Iraqi National Front

Tariq al-Abdullah al-Halbusi, Principle Sheik of the Halbusi tribe located in Fallujah

Thamer Kadhem al Tamimi, closely associated with JAI; one of the first and premier Saha-wa leaders in Baghdad

Thamir Ibrahim Tahir al-Assafi, Doctor, Head of the Muslim Ulema Council (MUC) for Anbar and Senior Theologian to Sunni Waqf; Ramadi City Council member; Al-Anbar University (AAU) Professor of Religious Studies; Mutammar Sahawat al-Iraq (MSI) office of Religious Affairs

Thary Abed Alhadi al-Yousef al-Zobi, Deputy Governor, on the Awakening

Other Notable People

Abdul Sattar Abu-Risha, Leader of the Awakening movement in the Al Anbar Area, assassinated 13 September 2007

Abdullah al-Janabi, close supporter, organizer, and religious advisor to many of the insurgent groups growing in and around Fallujah during the summer of 2003; became one of the key influential insurgent leaders during both battles of Fallujah (2004)

Abu Ayyub al-Masri, replaced Zarqawi as leader of AQI following the former's death in June 2006; created Islamic State of Iraq in October 2006

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Jordanian-born founder of *Jama'at Al-Tawhid Wa'al Jihad* (JTJ – Group of Monotheism and Holy War) (2003) and later Al-Qaeda in Iraq (October 2004); killed in Coalition airstrike in June 2006

Amer Abd al-Jabbar Ali Sulayman al-Assafi al-Dulaymi, Co-Paramount Sheikh of the Albu-Assaf tribe and Co-Sheikh General of the Dulaymi Confederation

Faisal al-Gaoud, former Sheikh of Albu-Nimr; father of Sheikh Fasal

Fasal Rakan Nejris, Sheikh of Albu-Nimr tribe; appointed governor of Anbar by IIG November 2004; replaced as governor by Raja Nawaf Farhan al-Mahalawi (May 2005); Awakening Council leader; died 25 June 2007 in Mansour Hotel bombing

Hamid Farhan al-Heiss, from the Albu-Thiyab tribe; member of the Anbar Salvation Council; don't confuse him with his brother, Sheikh Muhammad Farhan al-Heiss and contesting lineal sheikh of the Albu-Thiyab tribe

Hatim Razzaq, current Sheikh of Albu-Nimr

Hikmat Jubayir, mayor of Hit; Sheikh of Albu-Nimr tribe

Karim Burjis al-Rawi, former governor of Anbar Province (April 2003–August 2004); forced to resign after his sons were kidnapped; replaced by Mohammad Awad

Khalid al Irak al-Jassim, leader of the Albu-Ali Jassim tribe, killed by AQI

Khalid Araq Ataymi al-Iliyawi, well respected Ali Jassim tribal leader brutally murdered by AQI (August 2006); his body was hidden preventing burial for three days, violating both tribal and Islamic custom; catalyst for tribal resistance to AQI in the Ramadi area

Lawrence Mutib Mahruth al-Hathal al-Aniza, Paramount Sheikh of the Abu-Aniza tribe, Mayor of Nukhayb, Anbar, Iraq

Mudhir Abdul Karim Thiab al-Kharbit, son of Sheikh Malik; assumed leadership of clan upon his father's death; Ba'athist supporter and strongly anti-Coalition following his father's death

Muhammad Mahmoud Latif, leader of the 1920 Revolutionary Brigades and Ramadi Shura council

Muqtada al-Sadr, Shia cleric and leader of the Mahdi Militia

Naim Abd al-Muhsin al-Gaoud, appointed by Coalition forces as first mayor of Hit (April 2004)

Nayil al-Jughayfi, seized control of Hadithah during initial invasion; subsequently recognized by Coalition as first mayor (April 2004)

Raja Nawaf Farhan al-Mahalawi, appointed governor of Anbar by newly-elected provincial council (May 2005); kidnapped by extremist elements to influence Abu-Mahal to stop fighting AQI; found dead in a home after Coalition-insurgent fighting in the area; replaced by Mamoun Sami Rasheed

Razak Salim Hamza, former commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division

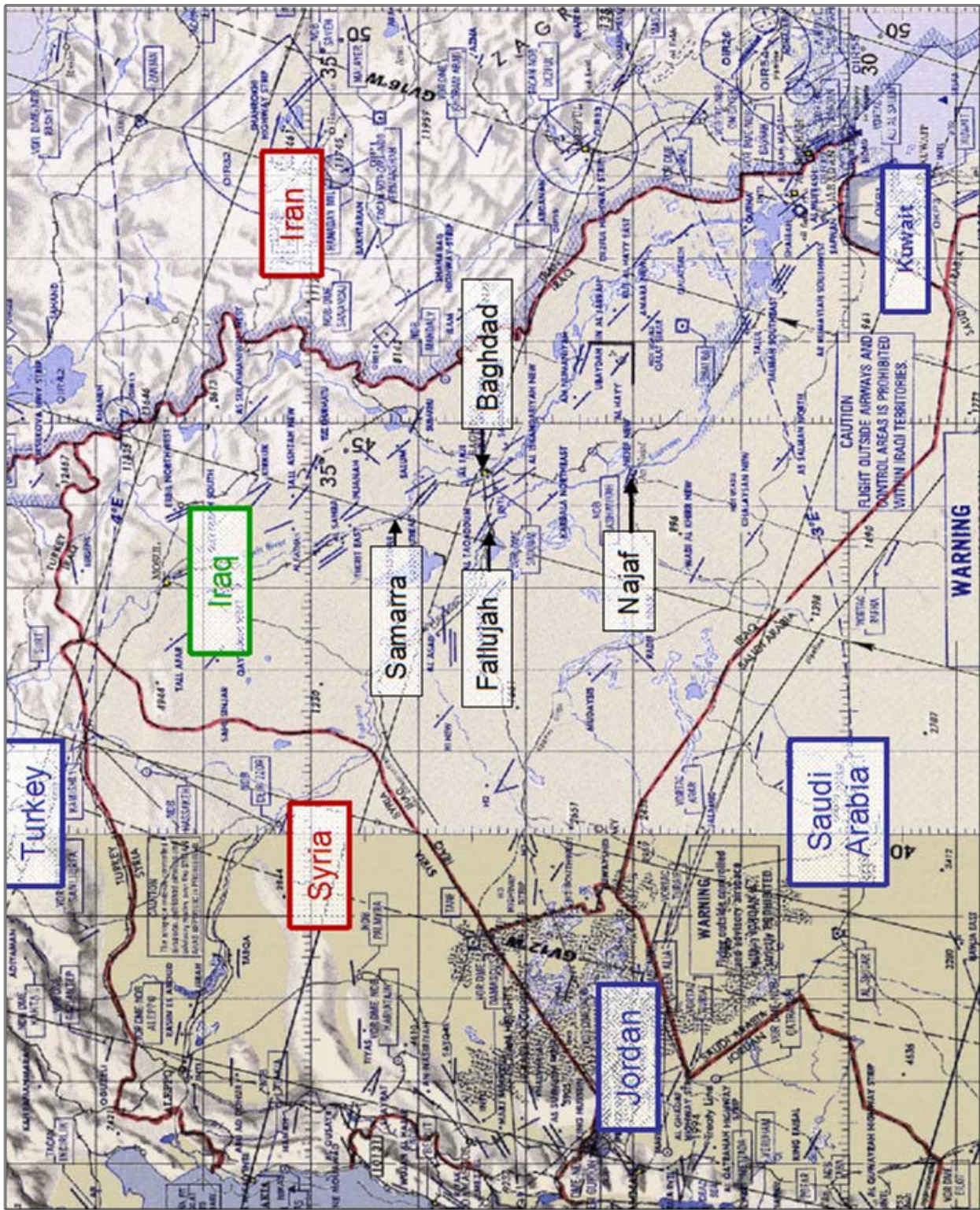
Sheikh Malik al-Kharbit, tribal leader of the Khalifawi (Ramadi area); head of one of the most important families in the powerful Dulaymi tribal federation; cooperated with Coalition forces before the invasion; tragically killed along with between 17 and 22 family members, including women and children during mistaken Coalition airstrike on his compound (11 April 2004); cited as motivating factor turning Ramadi-area tribes against Coalition

Talal al-Gaoud, son of Bezi al-Gaoud; worked with Marines engagements in Jordan in 2004; died suddenly in 2006

Tariq Abdul Wahab Jasim, former Commander Iraqi First Division

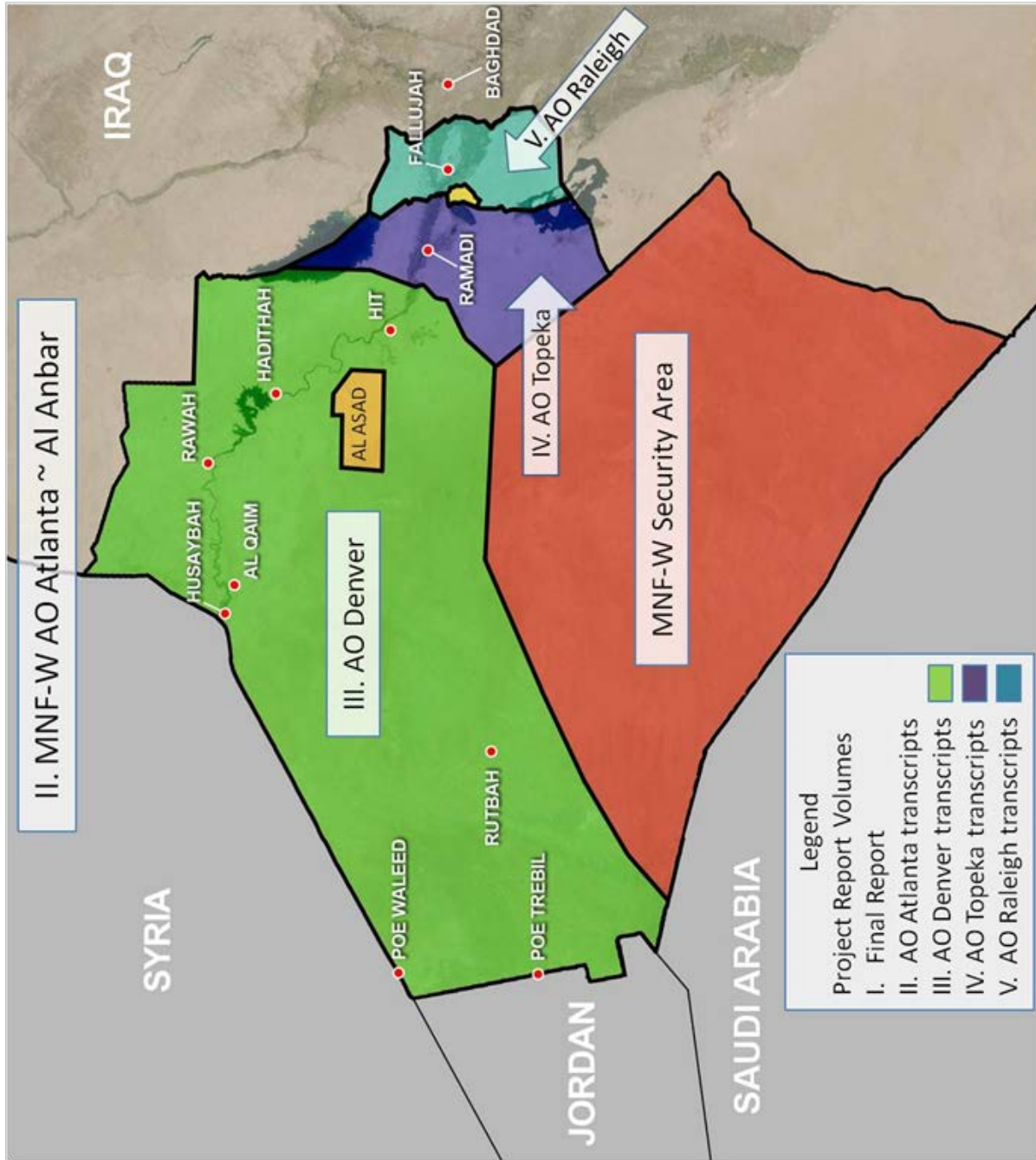
Appendix B. Maps

Note: North is towards the top of all maps as you read them.



Base map courtesy of National Geospatial Agency

Figure D-1. Map of Iraq and its neighbors



Area of Operation boundaries extracted from map courtesy of I-MEF and USMC History Division

Figure D-2. Map of military operational areas in Iraq during 2004

1. 2003: From Victory to Chaos – Sowing the Seeds of an Insurgency

2. 2004: The Year Starts and Ends Headlining Fallujah

Western Euphrates River Valley – WERV

3. 2005: The roots of the Awakening – Al Qaim.

4. 2006: The Corridor

5. 2006: Al Sahawa in Ramadi

6. 2007: Back to Fallujah - Progress in Al Anbar

7. 2007-2008: Implications of the Awakening

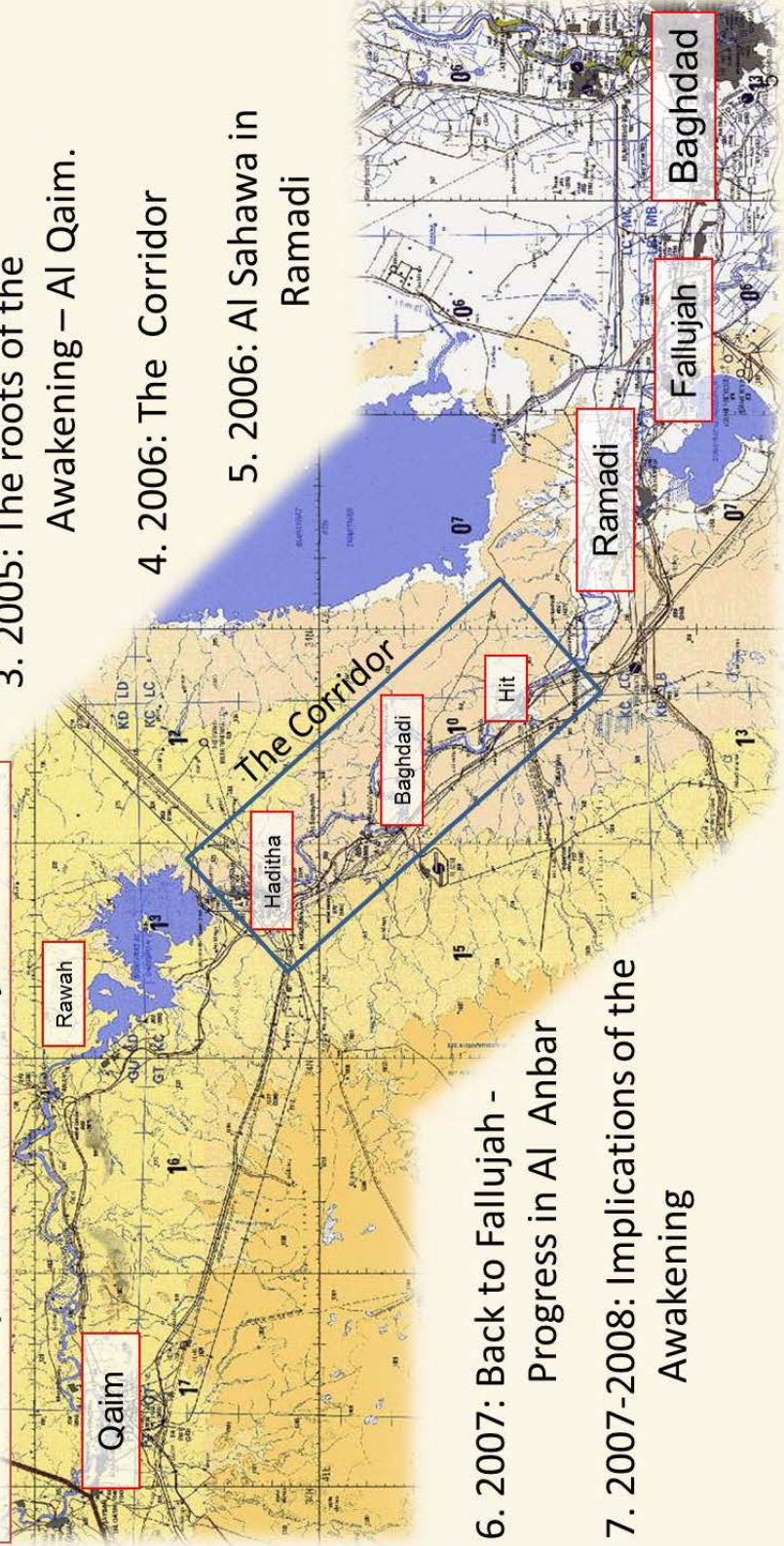


Figure D-3. Phases of the Al Anbar Awakening

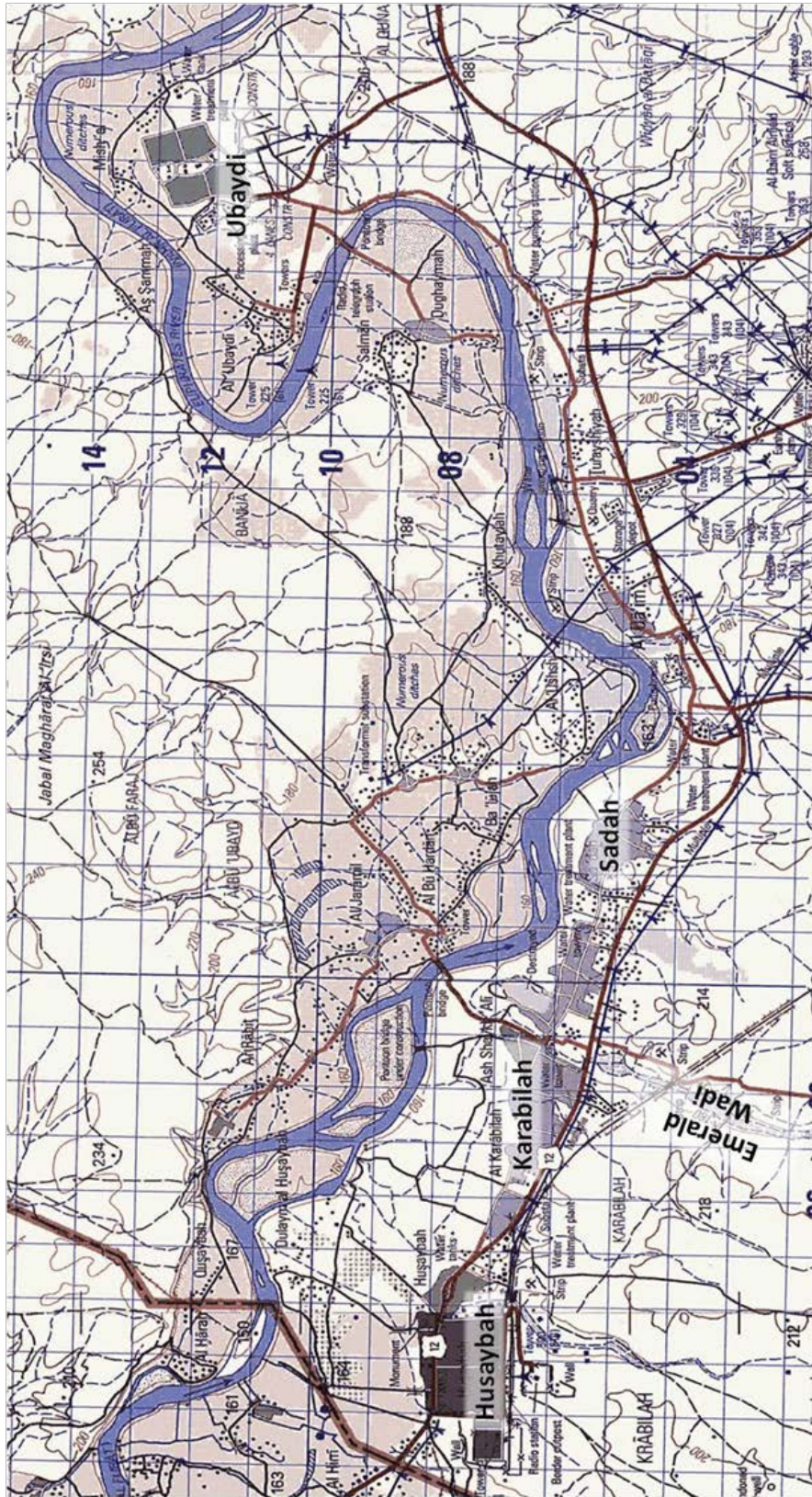


Figure D-4. Map of Al Qaim area

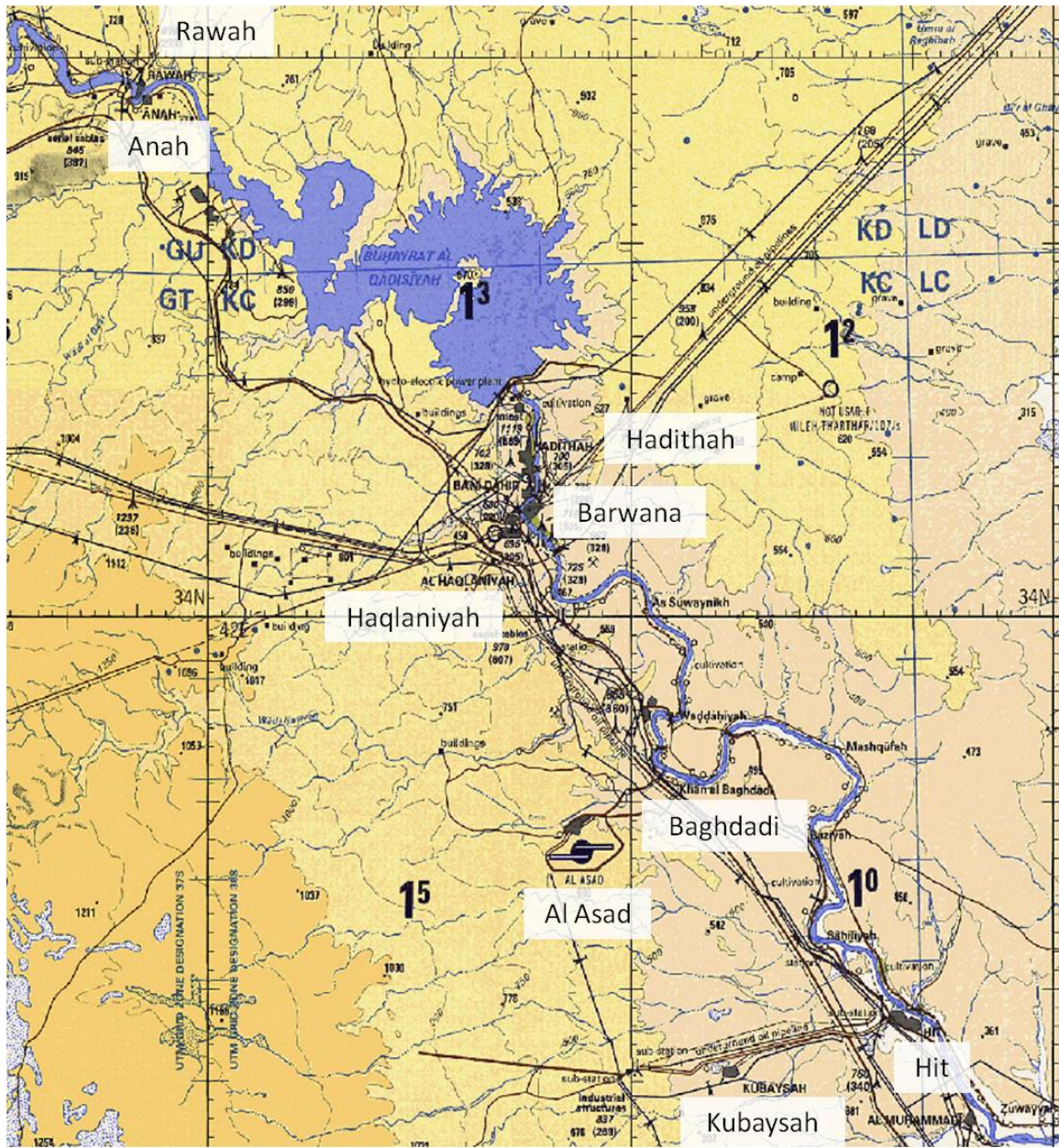


Figure D-5. Map of Hadithah area

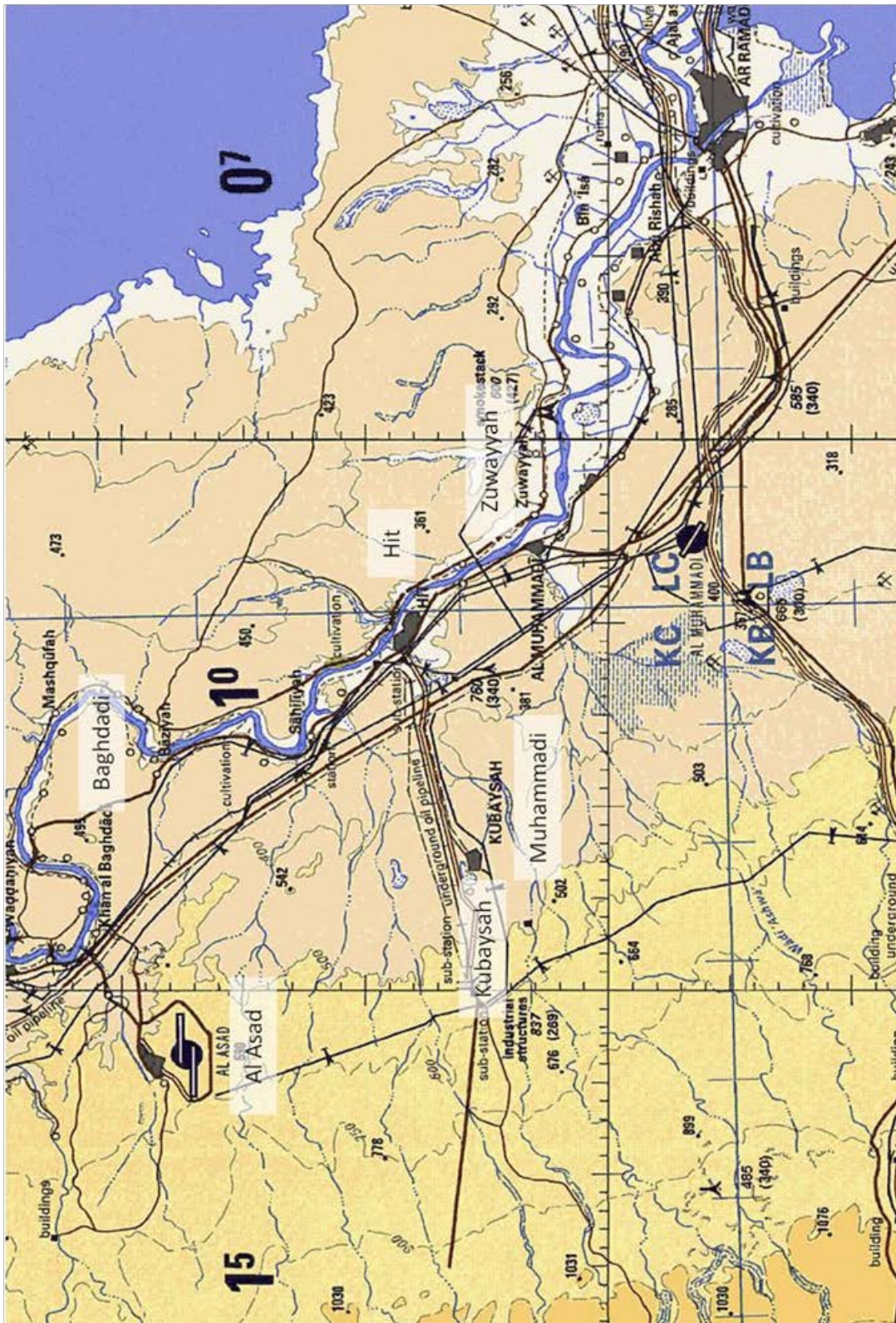


Figure D-6. Map of Al Asas/Hit area

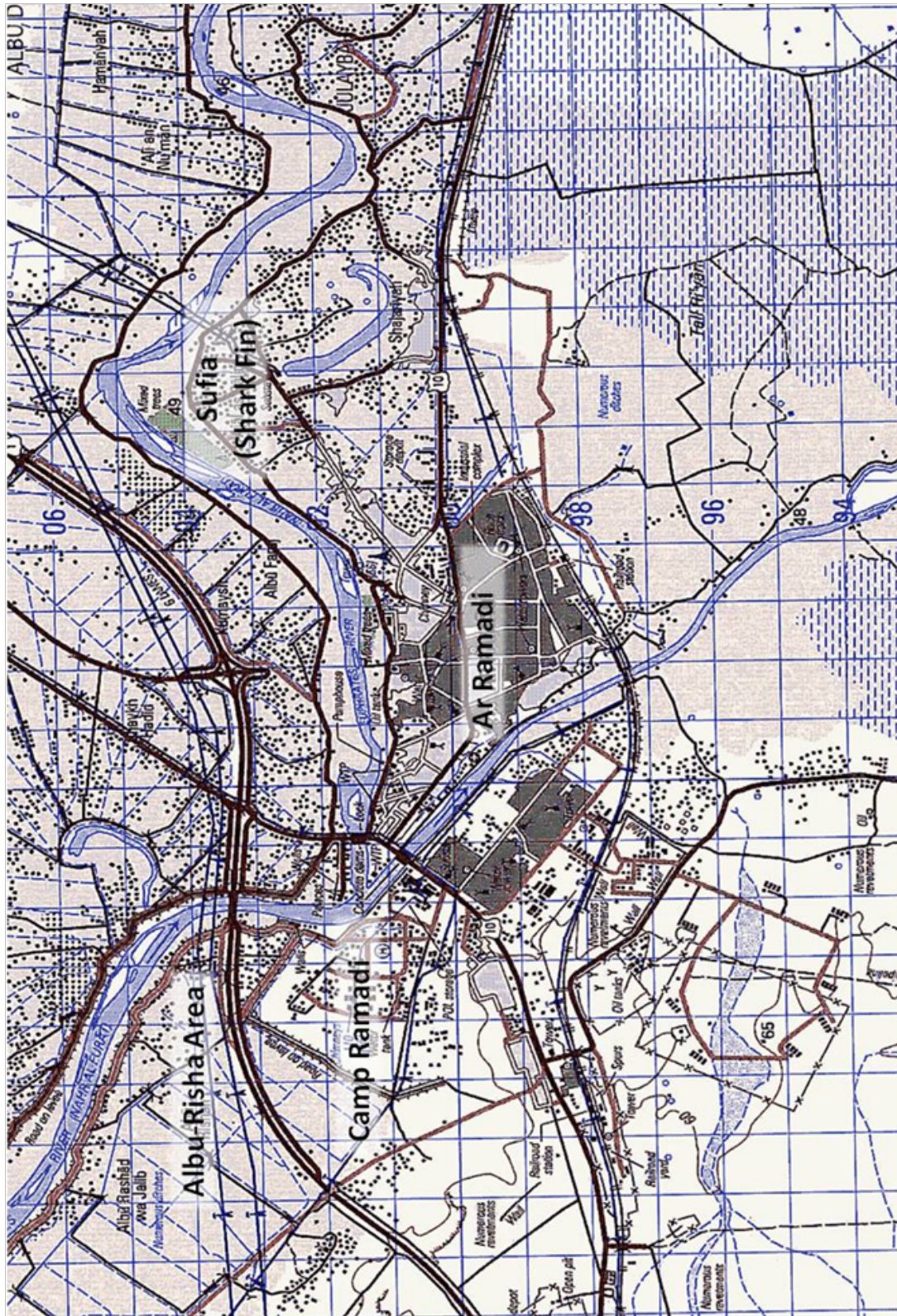


Figure D-7. Map of Ramadi area

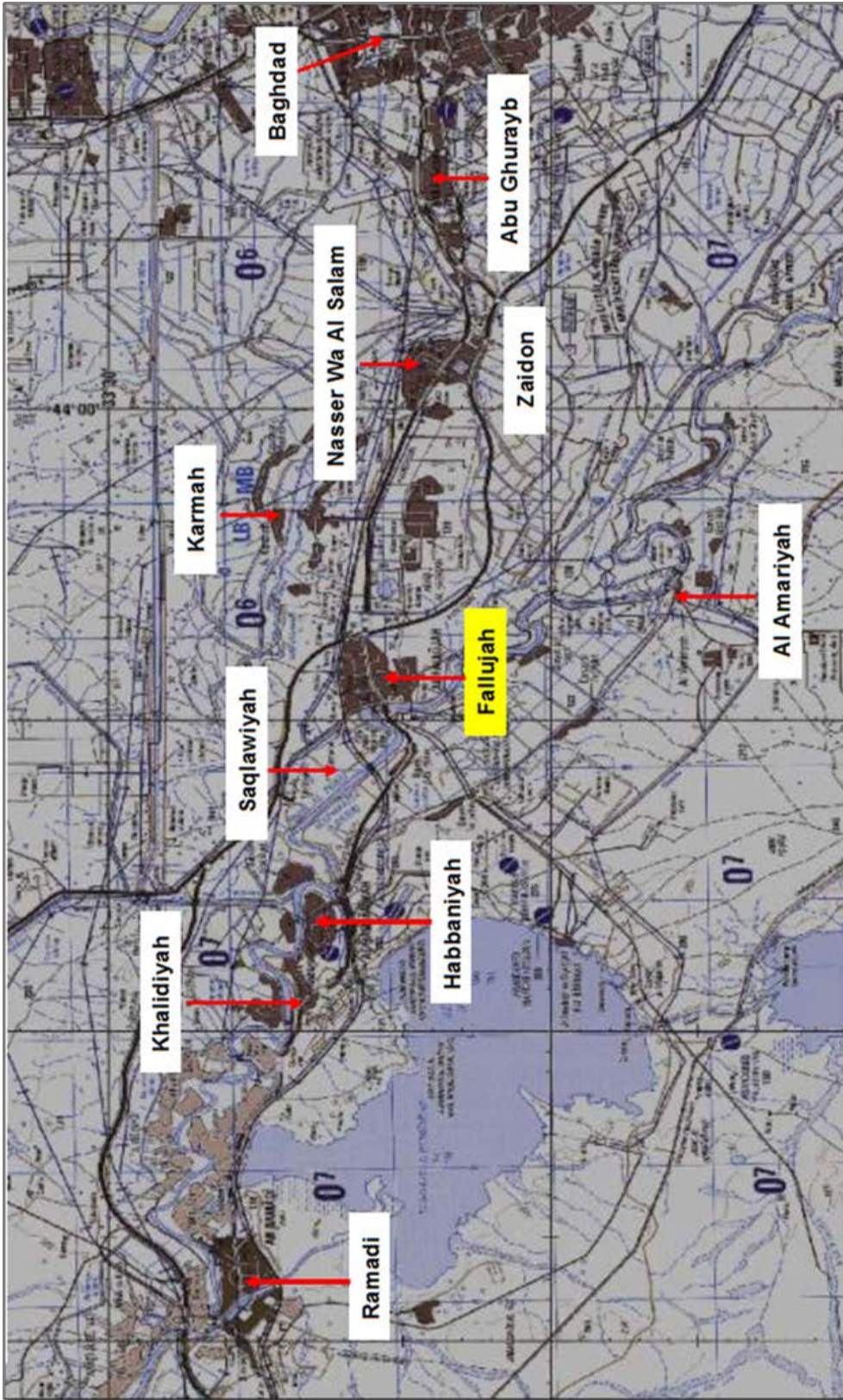


Image courtesy of 1st MARDIV

Figure D-8. Map of Fallujah and surrounding cities

This page is intentionally blank.

Appendix C. Illustrations

Areas of Operations in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes	vi
Figure 1-1. Areas of Operation in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes	1-4
Figure 3-1. Task Organization for AL FAJR.....	3-7
Figure 3-2. Operation AL FAJR, Phase II: Enhanced Shaping	3-12
Figure 3-3. 36th Commandos and 5th SFG Advisors during a mission rehearsal.....	3-13
Figure 3-4. 36th Commandos seize Fallujah Hospital, 7 November 2004.....	3-14
Figure 3-5. Al Jazeera broadcast of 36th Commandos' hospital seizure	3-14
Figure 3-6. Operation AL FAJR, Phase III-A: Assault, D+1.....	3-16
Figure 3-7. Iraqi soldiers raising Iraqi flag over Government Center in Fallujah	3-17
Figure 3-8. 12 November 2004 Press conference.....	3-19
Figure 4-1. Six interrelated fights in AO Denver.....	4-3
Figure 5-1. SVBIED Camp Gannon	5-3
Figure 5-2. Al Qaim Area	5-6
Figure 5-3. Disposition of Forces at Transfer of Authority	5-13
Figure 5-4. 3/6 Marines Disposition after IRON FIST, 7 October 2005	5-15
Figure 5-5. Task Organization, Operation Steel Curtain	5-15
Figure 5-6. Post-op STEEL CURTAIN Assessment	5-17
Figure 5-7. Desert Protectors Victory Celebration post-Steel Curtain.....	5-18
Figure 5-8. 3/6 Marines disposition after Operation STEEL CURTAIN, 22 Nov 2005	5-19
Figure 5-9. Tribal Areas.....	5-20
Figure 5-10. 1/7 Marines Circle of Trust, Al Qaim (2006)	5-24
Figure 6-1. Map of Hadithah in Western Al Anbar.....	6-2
Figure 6-2. Col Shaban Challenges Terrorists from his Hospital Bed.....	6-8
Figure 6-3. Iraqi Soldiers from 2/27 Patrol with Elements of 3/3 Marines in Haqlaniyah	6-9
Figure 6-4. Bermed area near K-3 Oil Refinery	6-11
Figure 6-5. Map of Hit and Surrounding Area.....	6-15
Figure 6-6. Hit Neighborhoods North of the River	6-17
Figure 6-7. LTC Crissman walks Cherry Street with the mayor and chief of police	6-22
Figure 6-8. LTC Crissman with General Hamid moments before he arrested him	6-23
Figure 6-9. Sheikh Sattar and Colonel Shaban meet	6-29
Figure 7-1. Status of Tribal Attitudes towards the Coalition in the Ramadi District in June 2006..	7-2
Figure 7-2. AO Topeka and RFCT's Initial Combat Maneuver Battalion Deployment.....	7-4
Figure 7-3. TF 1-35 Armor AO	7-7
Figure 7-4. TF 1-35 Task Organization.....	7-8
Figure 7-5. 20 July 2006 at Sheikh Sattar's house	7-11
Figure 7-6. 9 September 2006 meeting of LTC Deane, Sheikh Sattar, COL MacFarland and the Ramadi Sheiks representing the Awakening Council	7-13

Figure 7-7. Sheikh Sattar announces the Awakening from his compound.....	7-14
Figure 7-8. TF 1/6 Marines Area Orientation.....	7-16
Figure 7-9. 17th Street Security Station in the middle of AQI-held territory.....	7-18
Figure 7-10. Operation HUE CITY’s aim was to construct the Qatana IP Station.....	7-20
Figure 7-11 Insurgents rigged buildings to detonate when Coalition forces entered.....	7-22
Figure 7-12. TF 1-9 AO, the Mula’ab section of East Ramadi and east through Julaybah	7-23
Figure 7-13. Colonel Ahmed Hamid Sharqi.....	7-24
Figure 7-14. Status of Tribal Attitudes towards the Coalition in the Ramadi District	7-25
Figure 7-15. Clearing Operations in Ramadi	7-27
Figure 7-16. Daily Attacks in AO Topeka from 1 January 2007 to 19 March 2008	7-28
Figure 8-1. TF 1-9 Infantry Area of Operations.....	8-2
Figure 8-2. Command element	8-3
Figure 8-3. Albu-Souda Tribal area in the Sofia area.....	8-4
Figure 8-4. Tribal Checkpoint.....	8-5
Figure 8-5. Jassim’s route across the Euphrates.....	8-5
Figure 8-6. TF 1-9’s route to help Sheikh Jassim	8-8
Figure 8-7. Remnants of Jassim’s house	8-9
Figure 8-8. Burned interior of Jassim’s brother’s house	8-9
Figure 8-9. Sofia Battlefield template	8-11
Figure 8-10. LTC Ferry and BG Abdullah meet with Sheik Jassim’s war council	8-12
Figure 8-11. Operation CHURUBUSCO	8-15
Figure 8-12. Mula’ab Area of Ramadi	8-16
Figure 9-1. 2/7’s Area of Operations	9-4
Figure 9-2. F Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, AO and interest 2006–07 timeframe.....	9-8
Figure 10-1. President Bush meets with An Anbar Sheikhs at Al Asad.....	10-2
Figure 10-2. Major General Kelly and Governor Mamoun sign Provincial Iraqi Control documents on 1 September 2008 at a ceremony in Ramadi	10-3
Figure 11-1. Iraqi Perception of Brutality/Violence Directed Against Iraqis in Al Anbar.....	11-10
Table 1-1. Initial Primary and Secondary Research Questions for the Awakening Project.....	1-2
Table 4-1. Command History in AO Denver.....	4-2
Table 4-2. Units Moved to RCT-2 in September 2005	4-5
Table 5-1. Commanders and their units in Al Qaim.....	5-23
Table 6-3. Unit presence in Hit September 2005–March 2008	6-19
Table 12-1. Initial Primary and Secondary Research Questions for the Awakening Project.....	11-1

Appendix D. References

- “Al-Qaida in Iraq,” Country Reports on Terrorism, US Department of State, April 2008.
- “Operation Koa Canyon Update,” USMC website.
- Abedin, Mahan, “Iraq’s Divided Insurgents,” *Mideast Monitor 1:1* (February 2006).
- Abele, Major Craig R., *Tipping Point: What Caused Fallujah’s Security Transformation*, Marine Corps Command and Staff College Research Paper, 1 April 2010.
- Abouzeid, Rania, “US Allies Angry at Anbar Handover,” *Time* (1 Sept 2008).
- Ajami, Fouad, “You Have Liberated a People,” *Wall Street Journal*, 10 September 2007.
- Al-Ansary, Khalid and Ali Adeeb, “Most Tribes in Anbar Agree to Unite Against Insurgents,” *New York Times*, 18 September 2006.
- Ali, Rafid Fadhil, “Sunni Rivalries in Al-anbar Province Threatens Iraq’s Security,” Jamestown Foundation’s *Terrorism Focus* 5:10 (11 March 2008).
- Al-Jabouri, Najim Abed and Sterling Jensen, “The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening,” National Defense University, *Prism* 2, No.1, 2010.
- Al-Khalidi, Suleiman, “Iraqi Sunnis Set Up Fatwa Body to Combat al Qaeda,” *Reuters*, 09 April 2007.
- Allam, Hannah, “Fallujah’s Real Boss: Omar the Electrician”, *Knight Ridder Newspapers*, as printed in *The Seattle Times*, 22 November 2004.
- Allam, Hannah and Mohammed al Dulaimy, “Iraqis Lament Call for Help,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 May 2005.
- . “Marine-led Campaign Killed Friend and Foes Alike, Iraqi Leaders Say,” *Knight Ridder*, 17 May 2005.
- . *national Journal Of Middle East Studies* 29 (1997).
- Amos, Deborah, “Spread of Iraqi Insurgency Feared in Arab World,” National Public Radio, 3 April, 2006.
- Anderson, John Ward, “Iraqi Tribes Strike Back at Insurgents,” *Washington Post*, 7 March 2006.
- . “Sunni Insurgents Battle in Baghdad,” *Washington Post*, 1 June 2007.
- Ardilino, Bill, “Confidence is Key: The Evolution of the Fallujah Police Department Part One,” *The Long War Journal*, 03 October 2007.
- . “The Fallujah Police Transition Team Mission,” INDC Journal (12 February 2007).
- Associated Press, “Al-Khalayleh Tribe Disowns al-Zarqawi,” as printed in the *Jerusalem Post*, 20 November 2005.
- . “Governor of Anbar Province Killed,” 31 May 2005.
- . “Iraqis Urged to Join Security Forces,” 1 April 2005.
- . “List of Downed US Helicopters in Iraq,” 8 January 2004.

- . “Suicide Bombing Kills 6 In Iraq,” 20 January 2008.
- . “Two Locals Were Core of Fallujah Insurgency,” 24 November 2004.
- . *Arrest of Sunni Leader Sought in Iraq*, 16 November 2006.
- Badkhen, Anna, “Insurgents Seize 5 Towns Near Syria,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 September 2005.
- Baram, Amatzia, “Neo-Tribalism In Iraq: Saddam Hussein’s Tribal Policies: 1991-1996,” *International Journal Of Middle East Studies*, 1997.
- . “Who Are the Insurgents? Sunni Arab Rebels in Iraq,” Special Report 137, Institute for Peace, April 2005.
- BBC News*, “Iraq Voters Back New Constitution,” 25 October 2005.
- . “Jordan ‘Not Afraid’ After Bombings,” 10 November 2005.
- Beaumont, Peter, “Iraqi Tribes Launch Battle to Drive al-Qaida Out of Troubled Province,” *The Guardian*, 03 October 2006.
- Blom, Luke, “Marines, City Leadership Discuss Haditha’s Future,” USMC Website, 4 February 2007.
- Branch, Ricardo, Specialist and Lance Corporal Joseph Day, “Anbar Leaders Celebrate Awakening,” 7th Marine Regiment Public Affairs Office, 15 July 2007.
- Burns, John and Erik Eckholm, “In Western Iraq, Fundamentalists Hold US at Bay,” *The New York Times*, 29 August 2004.
- Burns, John F., “Iraqi Tribal Leader Is Killed, and Mourners Are Attacked,” *The New York Times*, 25 May 2007.
- . “Showcase and Chimera in the Desert,” *The New York Times*, 08 July 2007.
- Calvert, Paul, interviewed by John McCool with Operational Leadership Experiences Project at the Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 17 February 2006.
- Carroll, Rory, “First Results Show Victory for Iraqi Constitution,” *The Guardian*, 17 October 2005.
- Castaneda, Antonio, “Exiled Tribesman Turn to Marines for Help After Trouncing By Insurgent Clan,” Associated Press, 30 March 2006.
- CBS News*, “Bomb Kills Top US-Backed Sunni Sheik,” 13 September 2007.
- . “Bomb Kills US-Allied Sheiks,” 25 June 2007.
- . “Iraqi Blast Kills 23, Including 3 Marines,” 26 June 2008.
- Chandrasekaran, Rajiv and Vernon Loeb, “Battlefield for All Iraq; Intense Resistance Mounted in Fallujah,” *Washington Post*, 4 November 2003.
- Charlton, Colonel John. “Memorandum, Subject: Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award, Army for 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment.” Dated 5 October 2007.
- CNN*, “Coalition Forces Under Fire in Ramadi,” 6 April 2004.
- . “Iraq Gas Attack Makes Hundreds Ill,” 17 March 2007.
- . “Mastermind of Samarra Mosque Bombing Killed,” 6 August 2007.
- . “Outgoing Commander Questions US Strategy on Falluja,” 14 September 2004.
- . “Sectarian Violence Stalks Iraq on Holy Day,” 23 February 2006.
- . “US: 100 Insurgents Killed Near Iraq-Syria Border,” 9 May 2005.

- Coalition Provisional Authority, Order Number 1, De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society, 16 May 2003.
- Coalition Provisional Authority, Order Number 2, Dissolution of Entities, 23 May 2003.
- Cockburn, Patrick, "If There Is No Change In Three Months, There Will Be War Again," *The Independent*, 28 January 2008.
- Conley, Brian and Muhammad Zaher, "A Word from the Islamic Army", Inter Press Service News Agency, 16 May 2006.
- Cordesman, Anthony H., "Developing Iraqi Insurgency: Status at End-2004," Center for Strategic and International Studies, coordinating draft dated 22 December 2004.
- . "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," Center for Strategic and International Studies, working draft dated 05 August 2005.
- Crissman, Douglas, "Commander's Comments," *The Cottonbaler Newsletter*, Spring, 2007.
- . "Commander's Comments," *The Cottonbaler Newsletter*, Summer, 2007
- Cuomo, Scott, Captain, USMC, "The 'Wild, Wild West': Iraqi Lessons for Afghanistan," *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 2009.
- Dagher, Sam, "Sunni Muslim Sheikhs Join US in Fighting Al Qaeda," *Christian Science Monitor* (3 May 2007).
- Daly, Thomas P., *Rage Company, A Marine's Baptism by Fire* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2010).
- Danner, Matthew, "The Combined Action Platoon Seeds of Success in Iraq," *American Veterans*, n.d.
- Deane, Colonel Anthony E., USA, "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle," *Military Review* (January-February 2010).
- DeYoung, Karen, "Al-Qaeda Allies Claim Bigger Base of Support in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 23 December 2006.
- Dickey, Christopher et al, "Iraq: Unmasking the Insurgency," *Newsweek*, 7 February 2005.
- Dodge, Toby, *Iraq's Future: The Aftermath of Regime Change*, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 372, 2005.
- Dulaimy, Mohammed and Hannah Allam, "A US Ally is Murdered," *McClatchy Newspapers*, 26 June 2007.
- Ephron, Dan and Christian Caryl, "A Centurion's Emails," *Newsweek* (6 November 2006).
- Escobar, Pepe, "The Islamic Emirate of Fallujah," *Asia Times*, 15 July 2004.
- . "The Real Fury of Fallujah," *Asia Times*, 10 November 2004.
- Estes, Kenneth W., "US Marine Corps Operations in Iraq, 2003-2006," Occasional Paper, History Division, United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 2009.
- . *US Marines in Iraq, 2004-2005, Into the Fray, US Marines in the Global War on Terrorism*, History Division, United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 2011.
- Fattah, Hassan M., "3 Hotels Bombed in Jordan; At Least 57 Die," *The New York Times*, 10 November 2005.
- . "Jordan Arrests Iraqi Women in Hotel Blasts," *The New York Times*, 14 November 2005.

Fayloga, Mark, "2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment Returns to Isle," www.marines.mil.

Ferry, Lieutenant Colonel Charles P. "Memorandum for Record, Subject: Summary of Task Force 1-9 IN Combat Operations from 6 November 2006 to 1 December 2007."

Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency, published 15 December 2006, University of Chicago Press.

Filkins, Dexter, "In Ramadi, Fetid Quarters and Unrelenting Battles," *The New York Times*, 5 July 2006.

Finer, Jonathan and Bassam Sebti, "Sectarian Violence Kills Over 100 in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 24 February 2006.

Finer, Jonathan, "How US Forces Found Iraq's Most-Wanted Man," *Washington Post*, 9 June 2006.

Fishman, Brian, "After Zarqawi: The Dilemmas and the Future of Al Qaeda in Iraq," *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2006.

Fletcher, Martin, "Fighting Back: The City Determined Not to Become Al-Qaeda's Capital," *The Times*, 20 November 2006.

Freeman, Colin, "Horror at Fallujah," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 April 2004.

Gambill, Gary, "Abu Musab Zarqawi: A Biographical Sketch," *Terrorism Monitor*, 2:24 (15 December 2004).

Gamel, Kim, "US Commanders Welcome Fallujah Revival," *The Seattle Times*, 9 February 2008.

Garamone, Jim, "Soldiers See Successful Iraqi Army as Ticket Home," American Forces Press Service, 2 June 2006.

Gettleman, Jeffrey, "Mix of Pride and Shame Follows Killings and Mutilation By Iraqis," *The New York Times*, 2 April 2004.

Ghosh, Bobby, "Being Careful of Your Friends in Iraq," *Time* (1 June 2007).

Global Resources Group, "Iraq Tribal Study: al Anbar Governorate," 18 June 2006.

GlobalSecurity.org, "Coalition forces kill Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," 8 June 2006, Release A060608a.

———. "Operation Iron Hammer."

———. "Operation Smokewagon."

Goodale, Jason and Jon Webre, "The Combined Action Platoon in Iraq: An Old Technique for a New War," *Small Wars Journal*.

Hashim, Ahmed S., *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

———. *Iraq's Sunni Insurgency*, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 402, 2009.

Hendawi, Hamza, "Insurgents Show Hostility to Extremists," *Associated Press*, 10 April 2005.

Hess, Pamela, "Analysis: Iraqi Heroes Pay High Price," *United Press International*, 15 March 2007.

I-MEF G2, "State of the Emergency in Al Anbar," I MEF G-2, 17 August 2006.

Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-338–31 Oct 1998).

Jaber, Hala, “Sunni Leader Killed for Joining Ceasefire Talks,” *The Sunday Times*, 5 February 2006.

Jaffe, Greg, “Tribal Connections: How courting Sheikhs Slowed Violence in Iraq,” *Wall Street Journal*, 8 August 2007.

Jamail, Dahr, “Iraq: Support Grows for Sunni Leader,” *Inter Press Service News*, 20 November 2006.

Jensen, Sterling and Najim al-Jabouri, “The Iraqi and AQI Roles in the Sunni Awakening,” *Prism* vol. II (December 2010).

Joel Roberts, “Iraqi Forces Taking Over Fallujah,” CBS News, 30 April 2004.

Johnston, Adam, “Rise and Fall of a Hero,” DVIDS News, August 15, 2007.

Kagan, Kimberly, “The Anbar awakening: Displacing al Qaeda From Its Stronghold In Western Iraq,” Iraq Report #3, Institute for the Study of War, 5 April 2007.

Kami, Aseel, “Iraqi Rebels in Western Town Turn Against Qaeda,” *Reuters*, 23 January 2006.

Karon, Tony, “How The Prison Scandal Sabotages the US in Iraq,” *Time*, 4 May 2004.

Kazimi, Nibras, “Of Tribes and Men,” *New York Sun*, 24 September 2007.

Kessler, T.G., “California-based Marines, ‘Magnificent Bastards,’ Continue to Turn Up Weapons Caches in Iraq’s Haditha Region,” Marines website, 26 December 2006.

Khalil, Lydia, “Anbar Revenge Brigade Makes Progress in the Fight Against al-Qaeda,” Jamestown Foundation’s *Terrorism Focus* 3:12 (28 March 2006).

———. “Leader of 1920 Revolution Brigades Killed by al-Qaeda,” Jamestown Foundation’s *Terrorism Focus* 4:9 (10 April 2007).

———. “The Transformation of Ansar al-Islam,” Jamestown Foundation’s *Terrorism Monitor* 3:4 (21 December 2005).

Killcullen, David, “Anatomy of a Tribal Revolt,” *Small Wars Journal.com*, 29 August 2007.

Klein, Joe, “Is al-Qaeda on the Run in Iraq?” *Time* (23 May 2007).

Knickmeyer, Ellen, “Insurgent Attack US Base in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 12 April 2005.

———. “Insurgent Violence Escalates in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 24 April 2005.

Knickmeyer, Ellen and Bassam Sebti, “Toll in Iraq’s Deadly Surge: 1,300,” *Washington Post*, 28 February 2006.

Knickmeyer, Ellen and K.I. Ibrahim, “Bombing Shatters Mosque in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 23 February 2006.

Knickmeyer, Ellen and Omar Fekeiki, “US Warplanes Target Alleged Rebel Havens Along Iraq-Syria Border,” *Washington Post*, 31 August 2005.

Knickmeyer, Ellen and Othman Mohammed, “Governor in Iraq Is Found Dead,” *Washington Post*, 1 June 2005.

Knight, Sam, “Bombing of Shi’a Shrine Sparks Wave of Retaliation,” *The Times*, 22 February 2006.

Kohlmann, Evan F., “State of the Sunni Insurgency in Iraq: August 2007,” NEFA Foundation.

Kohlmann, Evan, “Al-Qaida Continues Campaign of Accusations Against Fellow Sunni Insurgents in Iraq,” couterterrorismblog.org, 1 October 2007.

- . “Inside Iraq, Ansar al-Sunnah Chooses Sides... With Al-Qaida,” counterterrorismblog.org, 19 May 2007.
- . “Iraqi Insurgent Faction Breaks Silence, Accusing Al-Qaida of Fanaticism, Torture and Murder,” counterterrorismblog.org, 4 October 2007.
- . “Islamic Army in Iraq: A Response to Abu Omar al-Baghdadi,” 5 April 2007, as translated and posted at www.globalterroralert.com.
- . “The Sunni Insurgency Has Become a ‘Disaster’: An Estranged Former Ally Lashes Out, Accusing Al-Qaida of Torture and Murder in Diyala,” counterterrorismblog.org, 6 October 2007.
- Koopman, John, “Marines Seal Bonds of Trust/Special Unit Wants to Win Hearts and Minds,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 July 2004.
- Krane, Jim, *Al Jazeera*, 16 July 2003.
- Kukis, Mark, “Turning Iraq’s Tribes Against Al-Qaeda,” *Time* (26 December 2006).
- Langewiesche, William, “Rules of Engagement,” *Vanity Fair* (November 2006).
- Lasseter, Tom, “Iraq Town Blames US Troops for Fatal Explosion at Cadet Graduation,” *Associated Press*, 7 July 2003.
- Lindeman, Brent, Major, USA, “Better Lucky Than Good: A Theory of Unconventional Minds and the Power of ‘Who’,” Naval Postgraduate School Thesis, December 2009.
- Lindsay, John and Austin Long, “Counterinsurgency Theory and the Stabilization of Iraq’s Anbar Province,” draft dated 7 October 2009.
- Linzer, Dafna and Thomas E. Ricks, “Anbar Picture Grows Clearer, and Bleaker,” *Washington Post*, 28 November 2006.
- Long, Austin, “The Anbar Awakening,” *Survival* 50:2 (April-May 2008).
- Lubin, Andrew, “Ramadi from Caliphate to Capitalism,” *Proceedings*, US Naval Institute, April 2008.
- MacFarquhar, Neil, “In Iraq’s Tribes, US Faces a Formidable Wild Card,” *The New York Times*, 5 January 2003.
- Mahdi, Omer and Rory Carroll, “Under US Noses, Brutal Insurgents Rule Sunni Citadel,” *The Guardian*, 22 August, 2005.
- Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, *Study of the Insurgency in Anbar Province, Iraq*, Quantico, Virginia, unpublished manuscript dated June 2007.
- Marshall, Andrew, “Leave Iraq, Tribesman and Sacked Troops Tell US,” *Jordan Times*, 2 June 2003.
- Martinez, Michael, “New Offensive Launched against Iraqi Insurgents,” *The Seattle Times*, 26 May 2005.
- Mazzetti, Mark and Solomon Moore, “Insurgents Flourish in Iraq’s Wild West,” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 May 2005.
- McCary, John A., “The Anbar Awakening: An Alliance of Incentives,” *The Washington Quarterly*, January 2009.
- McGirk, Tim, “Collateral Damage or Civilian Massacre in Haditha?” *Time* (19 March 2006).

- McWilliams, Timothy S. (Chief Warrant Officer-4) and Lieutenant Colonel Kurtis P. Wheeler eds., *Al Anbar Awakening: Volume I American Perspectives, US Marines and Counter-insurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009).
- Meijer, Roel, "The Association of Muslim Scholars," *Middle East Report* 237 (Winter 2005).
- Michaels, Jim, *A Chance in Hell: The Men Who Triumphed Over Iraq's Deadliest City and Turned the Tide of War*, First Edition (St. Martin's Press, June 22, 2010).
- Montgomery, Gary W. Colonel and McWilliams, Timothy, Chief Warrant Officer-4, *Al Anbar Awakening, Volume II: Iraqi Perspectives, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009*, (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2009).
- Morin, Monte, "Interpreter has seen good and bad of Operation Iraqi Freedom," *Stars and Stripes*, 8 December 2005.
- . "Suicide Bomber Kills Dozens of Iraqi Police Recruits and Two Americans," *Stars and Stripes*, 6 January 2006.
- Mosher, Andy, "Insurgents Set Sights on Fallujah," *Washington Post*, 4 August 2006.
- MSNBC, "Saddam Hussein Executed, Ending Era in Iraq," 30 December 2006.
- Mullen, William F. III, "Turning Fallujah," *Small Wars Journal*, 29 October 2009.
- Multi-National Corps–Iraq, Public Affairs Office, "Additional Coalition Forces, Construction of Dirt "Berms" Increase Security in Iraq's Hadithah Triangle Region," 15 December 2006.
- . "Air Strike Kills Terrorists East of Ramadi," 02 November 2006.
- . "Al Qaeda Attacks Al Anbar Tribe," 26 November 2006.
- . "Coalition Forces Establish New Security Station in Ramadi," 29 October 2006.
- . "Coalition Forces Combat Extremist Fighters," 03 July 2007.
- . "Emergency response Unit Compound in Ramadi Attacked by SVBIED," 30 January 2007.
- . "Fallujah Government Center Attacked by Chlorine Truck Bombs," 28 March 2007.
- . "Four Civilians Injured in Ramadi," 27 November 2006.
- . "Four Terrorists Killed, 48 Detained in Ramadi Raid," 08 November 2006.
- . "IP Detains Six During Operations Near Fallujah," 25 January 2007.
- . "Iraqi Army Assumes Control of Northern Ramadi," 24 October 2006.
- . "Iraqi Police Conduct Operation SHURTA NASIR to Clear Hit of Insurgents," 21 February 2007
- . "One Terrorist Killed and Seven Detained in Ramadi," 21 October 2006.
- . "Operation DEALER Discovers SVBIEDs, Large Weapons Cache in Western Ramadi," 13 October 2006.
- . "Police Deliver Medical Supplies In Ramadi," 20 November 2006.
- . "Ramadi Police Battle Insurgent Ambush," 13 December 2006.
- . "Ramadi Police Capture Insurgents in Ta'meem," 8 January 2007.
- . "Two Dump Trucks, One Pick Up Truck Containing Chlorine Explode in Al Anbar," 17 March 2007.
- Multi-National Force–Iraq Press Release, "Victories in May," 9 June 2005.

- Multi-National Force–West PAO, “Provincial Council Reconvenes in Ramadi,” 6 May 2007.
- Murphy, Dan “In Fallujah’s Wake, Marines Go West,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (24 February 2005).
- Murphy, Kim, “Tribes Heed Call to Join Battle for Iraq,” *Los Angeles Times*, 5 October 2006.
- Musings on Iraq, “A More Complicated Picture of Iraq’s Tribes,” 18 September 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com>.
- . “Anbar Dispute Between Sunnis Growing,” 18 July 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com>.
- . “Anbar Under Political Control, But Political Disputes Continue,” 02 September 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com>.
- . “Iraqi Weekly Interviews Sheikh Ali Hatem al-Suleiman of the Anbar Awakening,” 7 November 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com>.
- . “The Anbar Awakening Splits,” 23 December 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com>.
- . “The Demise, But Not Death of Al Qaeda In Iraq,” 19 June 2008, <http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com>.
- Nathan, Elizabeth A. and Kevin M. Woods, “Saddam and the Tribes: How Captured Documents Explain Regime Adaptation to Internal Challenges (1979–2003),” *Joint Center for Operational Analysis Journal* 12:1 (Spring 2010).
- National Public Radio, “Spread of Iraqi Insurgency Feared in Arab World,” *Morning Edition*, 3 April 2006.
- Naughton, Philippe, “Bodies Pile Up In Morgues as Iraq Spirals Out of Control,” *The Times*, 23 February 2006.
- Negus, Steve, “Border Region Offers Glimmer of Hope for Post-Insurgency Peace,” *Financial Times*, 7 May 2006.
- Oppel, Richard A., “Iraq Bombing Kills Sunni Sheiks Allied With US,” *The New York Times*, 25 June 2007.
- Oppel, Richard and Ali Hameed, “Province Leaders Call Iraqis Unready to Handle Security,” *The New York Times*, 13 July 2008.
- Otterman, Sharon, “Iraq’s Governing Council,” Council on Foreign Relations, 17 May 2004.
- Parker, Ned and Mohamed al-Kubacy, “Arm Tribes to Fight al-Qaeda, Say Sunnis,” *The Times*, 13 September 2006.
- Parker, Ned, “General in ‘Ghost Army’ Inquiry is Still in Command,” *Financial Times*, 24 January 2007.
- . “How Ghost Soldiers Are Bleeding the Iraqi Army of Guns and Money,” *Financial Times*, 19 January 2007.
- Partlow, Joshua, “Iraqi Troops, Tribesmen Kill 50 Suspected Insurgents,” *Washington Post*, 2 March 2007.
- . “Sheiks Help Curb Violence in Iraq’s West, US Says,” *Washington Post*, 27 January 2007.
- . “Zarqawi Group Vows to Press Attacks,” *Washington Post*, 12 June 2006.

- Partlow, Joshua, Ann Scott Tyson and Robin Wright, "Bomb Kills a Key Sunni Ally of US," *Washington Post*, 14 September 2007.
- Partlow, Joshua and Bassam Sebt, "Iraqi Leader Outlines Plan for Reconciliation," *Washington Post*, 26 June 2006.
- Partlow, Joshua and Michael Abromowitz, "Officials Detail Zarqawi's Last Hour," *Washington Post*, 13 June 2006.
- Perry, Tony, "A Two-Pronged Approach in Ramadi Neighborhood," *Los Angeles Times*, 05 January 2007.
- . "Polls Stand Empty in Sunni Stronghold," *Los Angeles Times*, 31 January 2005.
- . "Possibility of Tribal Militias A Concern for Marines in Iraq," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 January 2008.
- Raghavan, Sudarsan, "In Fallujah, Peace Through Brute Strength," *Washington Post*, 24 March 2008.
- . "Maliki, Petraeus Visit Insurgent Hotbed in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 14 March 2007.
- . "Rise of Awakening Group Sets Off A Struggle for Power Among Sunnis," *Washington Post*, 4 July 2008.
- Rassan, Dhiya, "Patchwork of Insurgent Groups Runs Fallujah," Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 17 September 2004.
- RCT-2 Briefing, 15 September 2006, Regimental Combat Team 2, Viking in the Valley, presentation to Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA.
- Reid, Robert H., "Official Acknowledges Election Woes," *Associated Press*, 23 January 2005.
- Reuters, "350 Said Ill From Chlorine Bombs in Iraq," 17 March 2007.
- . "Iraq Goes On War Footing, Divides Nation Into Four Areas," 15 February 2003.
- . "Iraq Rebels Shifting Towards Syria," 7 May 2005.
- Ricks, Thomas E. "Situation Called Dire in West Iraq," *Washington Post*, 11 September 2006.
- Ridolfo, Kathleen, "Iraq: Insurgent Groups Differ On Talks With Government," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 30 June 2006.
- . "Iraq: Samarra Bombing Sets Off Year of Violence," Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty, 12 February 2007.
- . "Iraq: Tentative Support Given to Premier's National Reconciliation Plan," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 27 June 2006.
- Roggio, Bill, "1920 Revolution Brigades Turns on al Qaeda in Diyala," *The Long War Journal*, 12 June 2007.
- . "A Day in Fallujah," *The Long War Journal*, 8 December 2006.
- . "Al Douri Forms Nationalist Sunni Coalition," *The Long War Journal*, 4 October 2007.
- . "Al Qaeda on Sunni Violence in Anbar," *The Long War Journal*, 25 February 2007.
- . "al Qaeda's Anti-Aircraft Squads," *The Long War Journal*, 8 February 2007.
- . "Al Qaeda's Chlorine War Continues in Ramadi," *The Long War Journal*, 24 March 2007.
- . "al-Zawra vs. al Qaeda," *The Long War Journal*, 20 February 2007.

- . “Amariyah, the Anbar Salvation Council and Reconciliation,” *The Long War Journal*, 1 June 2007.
- . “Anbar Rising,” *The Long War Journal*, 11 May 2007.
- . “Choosing Sides in the Sunni Insurgency,” *The Long War Journal*, 6 October 2006.
- . “Coalition Forces Rout al Qaeda Elements South of Ramadi,” *The Long War Journal*, 3 July 2007.
- . “Divisions in al-Qaeda in Iraq,” *The Long War Journal*, 13 October 2006.
- . “Habbaniyah and the 3/3-1 Snake Eaters,” *The Long War Journal*, 19 January 2007.
- . “HVT #6—al Qaeda’s Emir of Anbar Province Killed,” *The Long War Journal*, 26 September 2006.
- . “Insurgent Counterproposal to Reconciliation; Offer to Lay Down Arms,” counterterrorismblog.org, 29 June 2006.
- . “Islamic Army of Iraq Splits From al-Qaeda,” *The Long War Journal*, 12 April 2007.
- . “Islamic State of Iraq—al Qaeda Front,” *The Long War Journal*, 18 July 2007.
- . “Minarets of Samarra’s al-Askaria Mosque Destroyed; al Qaeda Prime Suspect,” *The Long War Journal*, 13 June 2007.
- . “Operation FARDH AL AMIN: The Anbar Offensive,” *The Long War Journal*, 26 June 2007.
- . “Operation PHANTOM THUNDER: The Battle for Iraq,” *The Long War Journal*, 21 June 2007.
- . “Operation SPEAR in Anbar Province,” *The Long War Journal*, 17 June 2005.
- . “Sheikh Sattar Assassin Captured by US Forces,” *The Long War Journal*, 16 September 2007.
- . “Sheikh Sattar, Leader of the Anbar Awakening, Killed in Bombing,” *The Long War Journal*, 13 September 2007.
- . “Sunni Clerics Turn on Association of Muslim Scholars,” *The Long War Journal*, 17 November 2007.
- . “The Amariya Battle,” *The Long War Journal*, 2 March 2007.
- . “The Anbar Salvation Council Goes Expeditionary,” *The Long War Journal*, 2 May 2007.
- . “The Battle of the Belts,” *The Long War Journal*, 18 June 2007.
- . “The Sunni Civil War,” *The Long War Journal*, 27 March 2007.
- . “Unconfirmed Report: Al Qaeda in Iraq Al-Masri Killed,” *The Long War Journal*, 1 May 2007.
- Rose, David, “Heads in the Sand,” *Vanity Fair*, 12 May 2009.
- Rosen, Nir, “Inside the Iraqi Resistance: Part I- Losing It,” *Asia Times*, 15 July 2004; “Inside the Iraqi Resistance: Part III- The Fallujah Model,” *Asia Times*, 20 July 2004; “Part IV—All Power to the Sheikh,” *Asia Times*, 21 July 2004; “Part V—The Tongue of the Mujahideen,” *Asia Times*, 22 July 2004; “Part VI—Mean and Clean Streets,” *Asia Times*, 23 July 2004.

- . “The Many Faces of Abu Musab al Zarqawi,” posted 9 June 2006, accessed at www.truthdig.com/dig/item/20060609_abu_musab_al_zarqawi.
- Rubin, Alissa J. and Damien Cave, “In a Force for Iraqi Calm, Seeds of Conflict,” *The New York Times*, 23 December 2007.
- . “7 at a Baghdad Wedding Are Killed by a Car Bomb,” *The New York Times*, 2 March 2007.
- . “Sunni Sheikh Who Backed US in Iraq Killed,” *The New York Times*, 14 September 2007.
- . “Iraqi City on the Edge of Chaos,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 September 2004.
- Sattler, John F. (LtGen.) and LtCol Daniel H. Wilson, “Operation AL FAJR: The Battle of Fallujah—Part II,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2005.
- Searle, Thomas, “Tribal Engagement in Anbar Province: The Critical Role of the Special Operations Forces.” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, July 2008.
- Seigle, Roe, “Progress Steady, Marines Meet with Iraqi Leaders, Discuss Security in Haditha Triad Region,” USMC website, 5 May 2006..
- Semple, Kirk, “Iraq Premier Meets Leaders In Area Torn by Insurgency,” *The New York Times*, 14 March 2007.
- Shadid, Anthony, “In New Iraq, Sunnis Fear a Green Future,” *Washington Post*, 22 December 2003.
- . “Iraqi Fighters Keep Up Attacks,” *Washington Post*, 12 December 2004.
- Sly, Liz, “Rifts Deepen Within Iraq’s Insurgency,” *Chicago Tribune*, 24 January 2006.
- Smith, Elliot Blair, “Violence is ‘Off the Chart’ in Area on Iraq Border,” *USA Today*, 18 April 2005.
- Smith, Niel, Major and Colonel Sean MacFarland, “Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point,” *Military Review*, March-April 2008.
- Stanford University’s Mapping Militant Organizations website, “1920s Revolution Brigades.”
- Steele, Jonathan, “Iraqi Insurgents Regrouping, Says Sunni Resistance Leader,” *The Guardian*, 3 December 2007.
- Steinberg, Guido, “The Iraqi Insurgency,” SWP Research Paper, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, December 2006.
- Strategic Forecasting, “Iraq: Downed Pumping Station Should Have Limited Impact On Exports,” 19 June 2003.
- Struck, Doug, “Sunni Clerics Offer Their Cooperation,” *Washington Post*, 3 February 2005.
- Tavernise, Sabrina and Dexter Filkins, “Local Insurgents Tell of Clashes With Al Qaeda’s Forces in Iraq,” *The New York Times*, 11 January 2006.
- Tavernise, Sabrina, “For Sunnis, Dictator’s Degrading End Signals Ominous Dawn for the New Iraq,” *The New York Times*, 1 January 2007
- Teslik, Lee Hudson, “Profile: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” Council of Foreign Relations, updated 08 June 2006.
- The NEFA Foundation, “Exclusive: An Interview With ‘Al-Rashideen Army’,” June 2008.
- . “Exclusive: An Interview With ‘ Hamas al-Iraq ’,” June 2008.

The New York Times, "Abu Ayyub al-Masri," 19 April 2010.

Tilghman, Andrew, "U.S. Call for Iraqi Police in Haditha Goes Unanswered," *Stars and Stripes*, 5 June 2006.

Todd, Linn, et. al., *Iraq Tribal Study—Al-Anbar Governate: The Albu Fahd Tribe, The Albu Mahal Tribe and the Albu Issa Tribe*, Global Resources Group, June 2006.

Torres, Paul, "Oil Refinery Fuels Al Anbar Forward," USMC website. 7 August 2008.

Totten, Michael, "Anbar Awakens Part 1: The Battle of Ramadi," www.michaeltotten.com, 10 September 2007.

———. "Anbar Awakens Part 2: The Battle of Ramadi," www.michaeltotten.com, 18 September 2007.

Tyson, Ann Scott, "In a Volatile Region of Iraq, US Military Takes Two Paths," *Washington Post*, 15 September 2006.

US Central Command Press Releases, 03 December 2003 and 11 December 2003.

US Department of Defense, *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, Washington DC, February 2006.

US Department of State, "Al-Qaida in Iraq," *Country Reports on Terrorism*, April 2008.

Vick, Karl, "Fallujans to Begin Returning Home," *Washington Post*, 18 December 2004.

———. "Insurgent Alliance is Fraying In Fallujah," *Washington Post*, 13 October 2004.

Washington Post, "Bombing an Iraqi Accord," 10 January 2006.

———. "Sunni Leaders Attacked in Iraq," 19 August 2005.

West, Bing, "The Road to Haditha," *The Atlantic* (October 2006).

———. *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq* (Random House, 2008).

White House statement on 1 September 2008, accessed at www.socnet.com/archive/index.php/t-80307.html.

Wing, Joel, "The Demise, But Not Death of Al Qaeda in Iraq," musingsoniraq.blogspot.com, 19 June 2008.

Wisam M. Karim al-Jaf, "Governorate West of Baghdad Shrugs Off Instability and Insurrection to Hold Peaceful Ballot," Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 21 February 2005.

Wong, Edward, "The Struggle For Iraq; In Lawless Sunni Heartland of Iraq, a Tribal Chief Opposes the Jihadists, and Prays," *The New York Times*, 3 March 2007.

Wong, Edward and Eric Schmitt, "Rebel Fighters Who Flew Attack May Now Be Active Elsewhere," *The New York Times*, 10 November 2004.

Woods, Kevin, et. al., *Iraqi Perspectives Project: A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership* (Institute for Defense Analyses, 2005).

Woodward, Bob. *The War Within* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008).

Worth, Robert F., "Muslim Clerics Call for an End to Iraqi Rioting," *The New York Times*, 24 February 2006.

Yon, Michael, "The Final Option," Michael Yon Online Magazine, 17 August 2011.

Zabriske, Phil, "Taking the Battle to the Enemy," *Time* (25 October 2004).

Zoroya, Gregg, "Fight in Ramadi Exact Heavy Toll on Marines," *USA Today*, 12 July 2004.

Appendix E. Abbreviations

ACR	Armored Cavalry Regiment
AID	Agency for International Development
ANGLICO	Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company
AO	Area of Operation
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
AST	Advisory Support Team
AWOL	absent without leave
BATS	Biometric Automated Toolset System
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
BLT	Battalion Landing Team
Brig Gen	Brigadier General–US Air Force
BGen	Brigadier General–US Marine Corps
BG	Brigadier General–US Army
C2	command and control
CA	Civil Affairs
CAG	civil affairs group
CAP	Combined Action Platoon
Capt	Captain, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
Cav	cavalry
CE	Command Element
CENTCOM	US Central Command
CERP	Commander Emergency Response Program
CF	Coalition forces
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command
CG	Commanding General
C&GS	Command and General Staff
CI	counterintelligence
CIR	Critical Information Requirement

CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CJTf	Combined Joint Task Force
CLC	Concerned Local Citizens
CLIC	company level intelligence cell
CMATT	Coalition Military Assistance Training Teams
CMO	Civil-Military Operations
CO	commanding officer
COC	combat operations center
COIN	counterinsurgency
COL	Colonel, US Army
Col	Colonel, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
CONUS	Continental United States
COP	Combat Outpost
COR	Council of Representative
CP	command post
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CPATT	Civilian Police Assistance Training Teams
CREW	Counter RCIED (Radio Controlled IED) Electronic Warfare
CT	counterterrorism
DCO	Deputy Commanding Officer
DHS	Defense HUMINT Service
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
ECP	entry control point
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
FA	Field Artillery
FB	Fallujah Brigade
FMF	Fleet Marine Force
FM	field manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
G-3	Army or Marine Corps component operation staff officer (Army division or higher staff, Marine Corps brigade or higher staff)
GEN	General, US Army

Gen	General, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
GOI	Government of Iraq
HACC	Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center
HIIDE	handheld interagency identification detection equipment
HIMARS	High Mobility Artillery Rocket System
HME	Home made explosives
HOC	Humanitarian Operations Center
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IA	Iraqi Army
IAD	Iraqi Army Division
ICDC	Iraqi Civil Defense Corps
IDA	Institute for Defense Analyses
IED	improvised explosive device
IG	Iraqi Government
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IIF	Iraqi Intervention Forces
IIG	Iraqi Interim Government
IIP	Iraqi Islamic Party
IMA	Individual Mobilization Augmentee
ING	Iraqi National Guard
IO	information operations
IP	Iraqi Police
IR	Information Requirement
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance
ITG	Iraqi Transition Government
JAI	Jaish al-Islami [Islamic Army]
JAWP	Joint Advance Warfighting Program
JCOA	Joint Center for Operational Analysis
JFCOM	United States Joint Forces Command
JIC	Joint Intelligence Center
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command

KIA	Killed in Action
KLE	Key Leader Engagement
LAR	Light Armored Reconnaissance
LNO	liaison officer
LOC	lines of communication
LOO	Lines of Operation
LtGen	Lieutenant General, US Marine Corps
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel, US Army
LT Col	Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force
LtCol	Lieutenant Colonel, US Marine Corps
LTG	Lieutenant General, US Army
MAJ	Major, US Army
Maj	Major, US Marine Corps or US Air Force
MajGen	Major General, US Marine Corps
MARDIV	Marine Division
MARSOC	Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command
MCLC	Mine clearing line charges
ME	main effort
MedEvac	medical evacuation
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Force
MG	Major General, US Army
MiTT	Military Transition Team
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps–Iraq
MND	Multi-National Division
MND-CS	Multi-National Division–Central South
MNF-I	Multi-National Forces–Iraq
MNF-W	Multi-National Forces-West
MNSTC-I	Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MRX	Mission Rehearsal Exercise

MSG	Master Sergeant
MSR	main supply route
MTOE	Modified Table of Organization and Equipment
NCO	non-commissioned officer
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSC	National Security Council
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OGA	Other Governmental Agencies
OIF	Operation IRAQI FREEDOM
OODA	observe, orient, decide, act
OP	operations order
OPORD	operations order
OVR	OPERATION VIGILANT RESOLVE
PAI	Personnel Asset Inventory
PLST	Provincial Liaison Support Team
PME	Professional Military Education
POC	point of contact
POO	point of origin
PRQ	Primary Research Questions
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Teams
QRF	quick reaction force
RADM	Rear Admiral, US Navy
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
RIP	relief in place
RFCT	Ready First Combat Team
ROE	rules of engagement
RPG	rocket propelled grenade
PsyOps	Psychological Operations
S-3	battalion or brigade operations staff officer (Army; Marine Corps battalion or regiment)
SAW	School of Advanced Warfighting (USMC)
SE	secondary effort
SEAL	Sea, Air, Land
SFG	Special Forces Group

SFODA	Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha
SIGACT	Significant Activity Report
SIPR	Secure Internet Protocol Router
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOI	Sons of Iraq
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SRQ	Secondary Research Questions
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
TACON	tactical control
TF	Task Force
THT	Tactical HUMINT Team
TO	Table of Organization
TOA	Transfer of Authority
TOC	tactical operations center
TTP	Tactics, techniques and procedures
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command (US Army)
UA	unauthorized absence
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicles
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USF	United States Forces
USMC	United State Marine Corps
VBIED	vehicle-borne improvised explosive device
VTC	video teleconference
WERV	Western Euphrates River Valley
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
XO	Executive Officer

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YY) 01-07-15		2. REPORT TYPE Paper (Final)		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) Jan 09-Mar 14	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <i>Al Sahawa—The Awakening</i> <i>Volume I: Al Anbar Province Final Report</i>			5a. CONTRACT NO. DASW01-04-C-0003		
			5b. GRANT NO.		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NO(S).		
6. AUTHOR(S) Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Task Leader; Col Dale Alford, USMC; Ms. Mary Hawkins; LtCol David Graves, USMC; Ms. Jennifer Goodman; MajGen Thomas Jones, USMC, (Ret); Col Tracy King, USMC; Ms. Carolyn Leonard; Mr. John Frost; Mr. Matt Coursey; LtCol Russell Keller, USMC, (Ret)			5d. PROJECT NO.		
			5e. TASK NO. AI-8-2827.37 & BE-8-3035, Anbar Awakening - COIN		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Advanced Warfighting Division Institute for Defense Analyses 4850 Mark Center Drive Alexandria, VA 22311-1882			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NO. IDA Paper P-5100 Log no. H 13-001793		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Director, Joint Force Development (J-7) 7000 Joint Staff Pentagon 2D763 Washington, DC 20318-7000 703-695-6478[61]			10. SPONSOR'S / MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) J7		
			11. SPONSOR'S / MONITOR'S REPORT NO(S).		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (U)					
14. ABSTRACT The objective of the Anbar Awakening project was to create an unclassified, accessible resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles. The project presents the Awakening movement's phases from the development of the insurgency in 2003 to the Coalition's transfer of responsibility for Al Anbar to the Iraqis in 2008. In addition, it offers analysis and lessons, many of which are transferrable to current and future conflicts. Most popular narratives of the Anbar Awakening associate the beginning of the movement with a 14 September 2006 proclamation by Sheik Abdul Sattar Albu-Risha where he coined the term <i>Al Sahawa</i> . This project contends that there was a robust connection in terms of events and relationships from Fallujah in 2004 to Al Qaim in 2005 to the Hadithah-Hit Corridor in 2006, to Ramadi in 2006/2007 and back to Fallujah in 2007/2008; that connection was based on Iraqi culture and societal networks that Americans were not part of.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Awakening, Sahawa, Anbar, lessons learned, Operation Iraqi Freedom, battle reconstruction,					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NO. OF PAGES 268	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON LtGen Thomas D. Waldhauser, USMC
					a. REPORT U

This page is intentionally blank.