



Joint
Advanced
Warfighting
Program

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**Al Sahawa—The Awakening
Volume IV-A: Area of Operations Topeka,
East Ramadi and the Shark Fins**

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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*.¹ In doing so, it will show that there were a number of poorly understood or little known developments throughout Al Anbar Province, Iraq between 2003 and 2008 that significantly contribute to the overall Awakening story. It takes the reader before and beyond the better known 14 September 2006 *Sahawa* pronouncement of Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha and events in Western and Central Ramadi that most people associate with the Awakening movement.

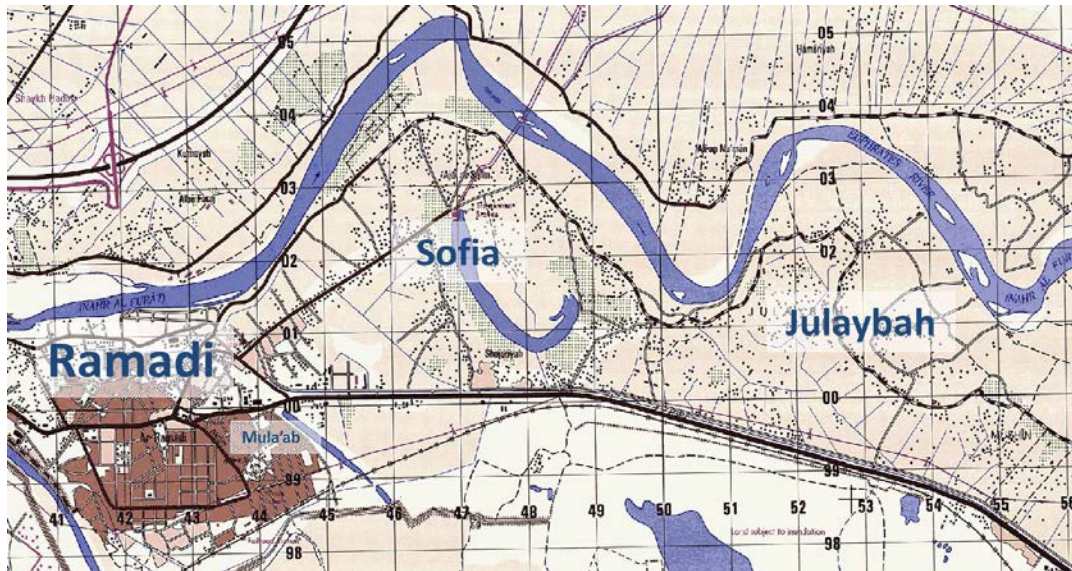
This document, Volume IV-A, addresses events in East Ramadi and the area known as the "Shark Fins," Sofia and Julaybah respectively, of the Coalition's Area of Operations (AO) Topeka.² From 2003 to early 2007, AQI and supporting insurgent groups controlled East Ramadi and the two shark fin areas to the east. The Shark Fins were important to AQI because they provided sanctuary. In close proximity to Ramadi, the provincial capital of Al Anbar, and Baghdad, the Capital of Iraq they were used as training grounds for recruits. They were also staging areas that fed insurgents to the fight in Fallujah and Baghdad to the east, as well as to the battlegrounds in Ramadi to the west. After the Sattar led awakening movement started in Western Ramadi, the villages of Sofia and Julaybah (to the east of Ramadi) became decisive points in the fight for Ramadi (See Figure. Area Map).

Task Force 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment (TF 1-9) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Ferry arrived in East Ramadi in October 2006. Although tasked to secure East Ramadi (specifically the Mula'ab area), TF 1-9's mission was reprioritized into what Lieutenant Colonel Ferry would describe as "eating the donut on the outside first." Instead of directly striking AQI in the Mula'ab area of East Ramadi, he first attacked AQI's sanctuary in the Shark Fins thereby minimizing their capability to resource and reinforce the Mula'ab area.³ This was an area that Colonel Charlton, Commander of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and TF 1-9's higher headquarters described as "the worst of the worst." The fight for the Mula'ab was the most lethal clearing action in Ramadi because it was AQI's last stand in the city, a city it recently claimed as the heart of its new Caliphate.

¹ *Sahawa* means Awakening in Arabic.

² 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 the Ramadi area map below.

³ The analogy was that the center of the donut was Ramadi and, according to the Brigade Strategy, needed to be stabilized first, and from there they would move east into Sofia and then the Julaybah area.



Ramadi Area Map

Objective

The objective of the Anbar Awakening project is to create an unclassified, useful resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.⁴ 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 applicable 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; next (or simultaneously, if possible), multimedia materials need to be collected; and then those materials have to be woven together to bring the case study to life. Much of the information came through interviews. Chapter 2 of this document summarizes the transcripts of those interviews contained in the appendices. That summary and those of the other volumes provide the script—the storyboard—with quotes that identify potential “characters” and video or audio clips for the multimedia product.

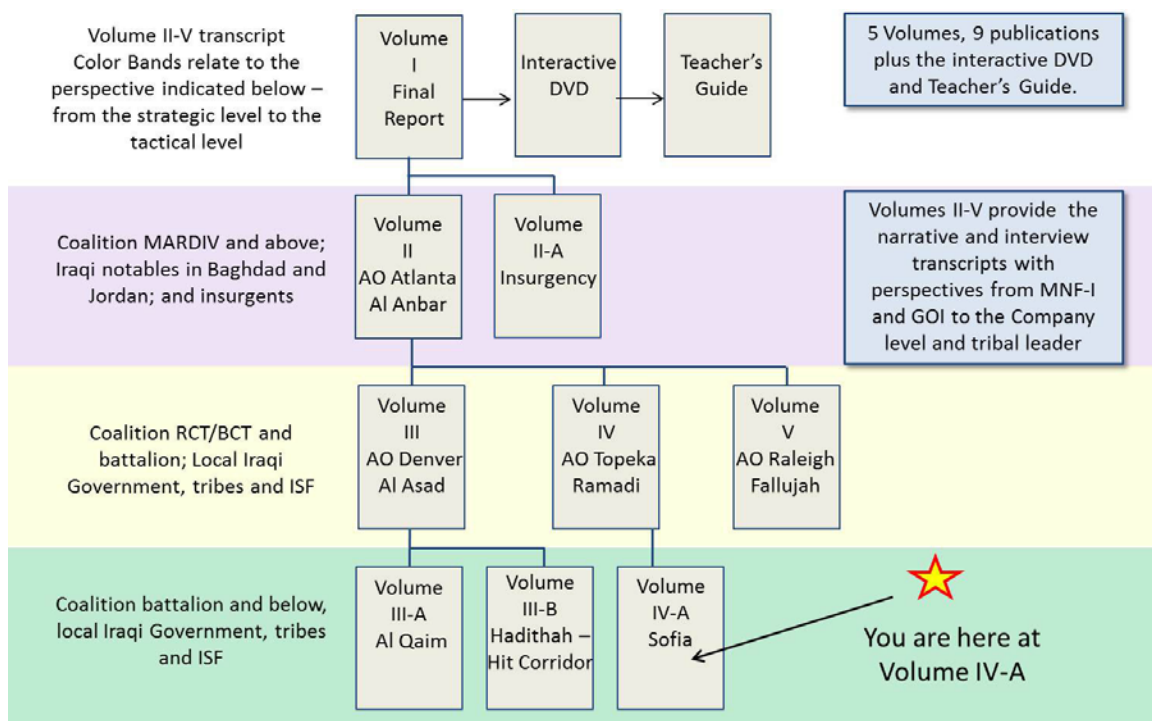
The Awakening project comprises five volumes of supporting documents and an interactive DVD with a Teacher's Guide. The purpose of the Teacher's Guide is to suggest how an instructor might use the DVD and the various volumes to support and inform research, training and education. It provides storyline experiences that may be relevant to on-going conflicts and

⁴ Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public releasable material to be used in their seminars.

examples that allow students to see, using the Awakening experience as a guide, how the strategic implications are born of tactical actions. Volume I is the final report and Volumes II–V, arranged by AO, from strategic to tactical levels, contain background on each AO, transcripts from interviewees who worked in those AOs, and summaries of those transcripts (see Figure).

This Volume

This volume addresses events in East Ramadi and the Shark Fins during 2006 and 2007. It provides both Iraqi and Coalition perspectives, in Appendices A and B respectively, on events in the area that impacted the evolution of the area from an insurgent stronghold to an area that supported the Coalition and GOI.



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

Themes, Lessons and Leads

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 East Ramadi-Shark Fins area. In addition, those events or approaches that were significant and similar (or dissimilar) to other areas of Al Anbar are noted.

Eating the donut from the outside in

From 2003 to much of 2006, AQI and supporting insurgent groups 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.” Ferry’s 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 enduring strategic value – first address the source (the sanctuary) not the symptom (insurgent activity in Ramadi).

Every operation was a recruiting opportunity, every Soldier and Marine a recruiter

TF 1-9’s operations were designed not just to go after the enemy kinetically, “but in more cases than not, they were designed to recruit more sheikhs and tribes and get the people to throw AQI out of their areas. 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.”⁵

This concept was recognized at the individual level. Captain Tom Daly, 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.”⁶

Combined, permanent, persistent presence

TF 1-9 started with sufficient 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 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 risk 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, he received two Marine Infantry companies when the TF extended its reach to Julaybah.⁷ When he was directed to take down the Mula’ab Ferry 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.

An Awakening

The progression and development of the Anbar Awakening can be characterized as: The Sunnis,

⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Charles P. Ferry, Memorandum for Record, Subject: Summary of Task Force 1-9 IN Combat Operations from 6 November 2006 to 1 December 2007, p.2.

⁶ Thomas Daly., *Rage Company, A Marine’s Baptism by Fire*, John Wiley and Sons, Hoboken, New Jersey, 2010. p.28. Daly’s company was Fox Company, 2.4 BLT, 15 MEU (SOC)

⁷ Echo and Fox Companies of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines Battalion Landing Team (BLT) of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC).

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 reluctantly, the Iraqi local and national governments and their security forces.⁸ Another example of this occurred in Al Qaim.⁹

This characterization of the Awakening, was also true of the Sofia area and then the Julaybah area with Sheikh Jassim and the former Iraqi general, respectively, as discussed in Chapter 2. There were also a number of similarities among these cases—the importance of the police as the anchor 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.

In both situations, the Sunni tribes took the lead and hesitated to work with the Iraqi Government.

A network of relationships and events

A key set of tribal relationships connect the Awakening events in Al Qaim, the Corridor, Ramadi, and 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.¹⁰ Some found refuge in the Ramadi area and Mahalawis worked with Sheikh Sattar and Sheikh Jassim Salih, supporting the awakening. As presented here, evidence shows that senior leaders of these tribes, Sheikh Sabah's Albu-Mahal and Sheikh Sattar's Albu-Risha, met in Jordan to discuss the awakening in both Al Qaim and Ramadi in early 2006.

⁸ Colonel Tony Deane, former commander, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor in Ramadi, Iraq, from June to November 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr at Deane's office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 12 October 2010.

⁹ See Volume III-A, Al Qaim, or this series.

¹⁰ Colonel Ahmed Jelayan Khalaf interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, in Husaybah, 18 April 2010.

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1. **The Awakening**¹¹

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 *Sahawa*—the Awakening.¹² 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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 cradle of the Sunni insurgency and the birthplace of 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, credible resource for trainers and educators. It is presented in multimedia to accommodate different teaching and learning styles.¹⁵ The project presents the Awakening movement’s phases from

¹¹ 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.

¹² Thomas E. Ricks, “Situation Called Dire in West Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 11 September 2006.

¹³ 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).

¹⁴ Alissa J. Rubin, “Sunni Sheikh Who Backed US in Iraq Killed,” *New York Times*, 14 September 2007, <www.nytimes.com/2007/09/14/world/middleeast/14iraq.html>.

¹⁵ Professional Military Education institutes have asked for unclassified, public releasable material to be used in their seminars.

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. 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 and why did they join? • How were they supported within Iraq and/or by other countries? |
| 2. What was the Al Anbar Awakening? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a single definition? If so, what is it and if not, what are the other definitions? Do different groups define it differently? • What are the various perspectives—Coalition, Iraqi, Insurgent, others? • 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? • Who and what caused those events—Coalition, Al Qaeda in Iraq, insurgents, Iraqis (residents, tribes), the Government of Iraq, Iraqi Security Forces, and others? • Was there a “tipping point?” If so, when, where, how did it start, and 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"> • 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 completed; 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 storyline that follows the organization of the DVD. Volumes II–V contains 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 D.)

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 storyline 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 storyline, regardless of which volume they read first.

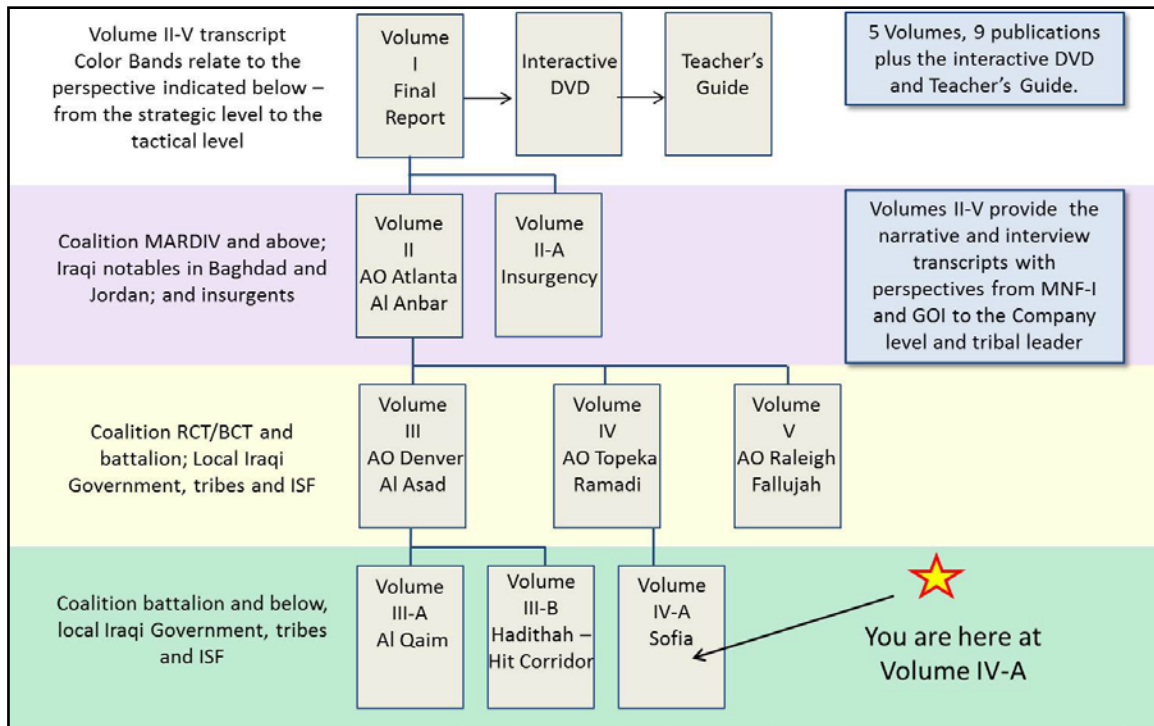


Figure 1-1. Areas of Operation in Al Anbar provide the structure for the Awakening volumes

This Volume

The volume you are reading (Volume IV) presents Coalition and Iraqi perspectives on events in Ramadi. Table 1-2 provides the list of Coalition and Iraqi interviewees for this publication. Their interview transcripts are provided in Appendices A and B.

Chapter 2 of this paper provides the storyline of events, responds to the research questions posed in the collection plan, and provides themes and lessons relevant to the Anbar Awakening.

Appendices include:

- A—Transcripts: Coalition Perspectives
- B—Transcripts: Iraqi Perspectives
- C—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.
- D—Maps. Map showing areas discussed during the interviews.
- E—Illustrations
- F—References
- G—Abbreviations

Table 1-2. Transcripts appearing in Volume IV-A¹⁶

| # | Interviewee | Position in Iraq | Interview Date |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--|----------------|
| Appendix A: Coalition Transcripts | | | |
| 1 | LTC Charles Ferry | Cdr, Task Force 1 st Battalion, 9 th Infantry Regiment (TF 1-9), East Ramadi and Shark Fins, October 2006 to December 2007 | 8 Nov 2010 |
| Appendix B: Iraqi Transcripts | | | |
| 2 | Sheikh Jassim Salih | Contesting Sheikh for Albu-Souda Tribe, Sofia, Iraqi | 7 Apr 2010 |
| 3 | BG Adel Abbas | Executive Officer, 1 st Brigade, 1 st Iraqi Division | 8 April 2010 |

Note: The convention used throughout the study in the text is to refer to the ranks of officers, particularly American officers, during the time of deployment being discussed, corresponding to their positions indicated in the center column of Table 1-2. The references and footnotes will refer to their ranks at the time of their interview indicated in the left column of Table 1-2.

¹⁶ Coalition ranks are at the time of the interview; Coalition command positions and timeframes are in Iraq.

2. **East Ramadi and the Shark Fins**¹⁷

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, Retired¹⁸

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 2-1 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 2004–05.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

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.²¹

¹⁷ 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 2-1.

¹⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Ferry, USA, Retired, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colorado Springs, 8 November 2010.

¹⁹ 1-503 AA was reflagged 1-9 Infantry on 6 December 2005. Summary of Task Force 1-9 IN Combat Operations from 6 November 2006 to 1 December 2007, dated 26 November 2007

²⁰ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010

²¹ 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 2-1. TF 1-9 Infantry Area of Operations

Home was now Camp Corregidor, located east of Ramadi along Route Michigan, a route highly IED'd (improvised explosive devices) 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.²² Ferry also had three military transition teams (MiTTs)—two from the Marines and one formed from the Task Force. Figure 2-2 is a photo of part of the command element.

²² The official advisor for BG Abdullah was Lieutenant Colonel Jim Minick, US Marine Corps (USMC), an officer who worked closely with LTC Ferry.



Courtesy LTC Chuck Ferry

Figure 2-2. 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*.²³

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."²⁴ 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 2-3). Although most Americans would see this as prime real estate, the tribe was isolated from the Iraqi Government and Coalition support and vulnerable to AQI's intimidation and influence.

²³ Ferry interview 8 November 2010. This is the first shark fin.

²⁴ 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 April 2010, and at his house in Sofia, 21 April 2010.

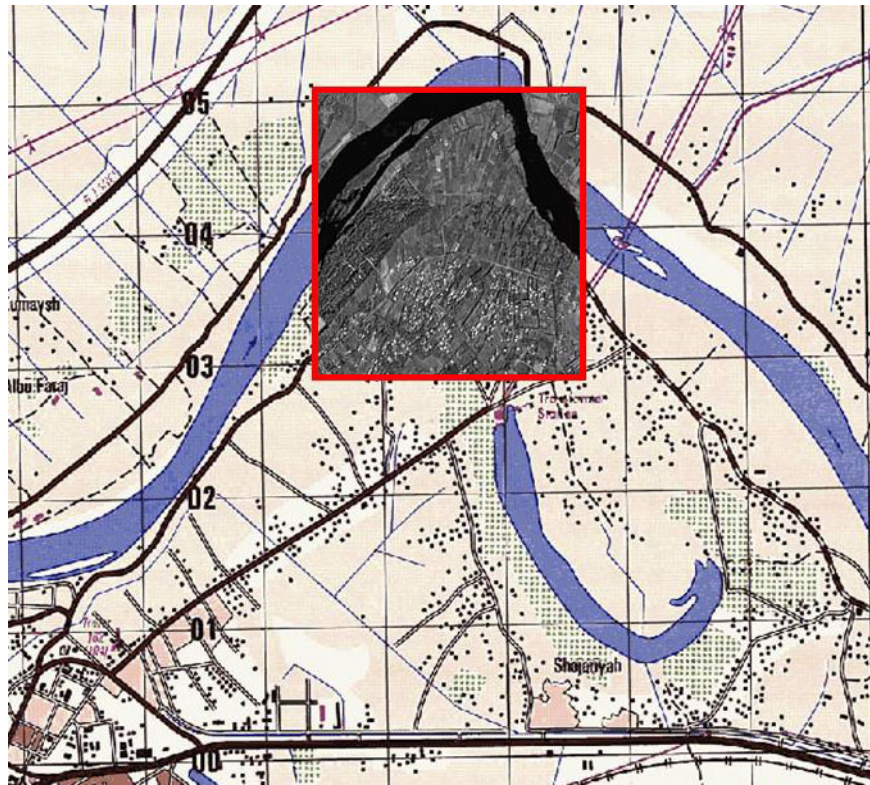


Figure 2-3. Albu-Souda Tribal area in the Sofia area

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.²⁵ 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 2-4). 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.²⁶

²⁵ Jassim interviews, 9 and 21 April 2010.

²⁶ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.



Figure 2-4. Tribal Checkpoint



Figure 2-5. 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 2-5). Additionally, Jassim sold one of his cows to purchase a Thuraya phone so he could communicate with the Coalition and Sheikh Sattar's people.²⁷

In one of his rendezvous with Sattar, Jassim met a US Army captain "they called Hisham Abu-Risha, he was like a member of the Abu-Risha family."²⁸ Since almost all of their subsequent communications was through the Thuraya, Captain Hisham Abu-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.²⁹ 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?

²⁷ A Thuraya phone is a satellite phone, and was the only means of communicating with Sheikh Jassim.

²⁸ This was Captain Travis Patriquin of the RFCT. 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.

²⁹ 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"³⁰ 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.³¹ When they started running out of ammunition, Jassim called the Coalition.³²

³⁰ Jassim interviews, 9 and 21 April 2010.

³¹ Numbers quoted are from Jassim's interviews on 9 and 21 April 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 October 2007, 2, indicates 75–100 attackers.

³² 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 October 2010.

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 Ferry³³

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.³⁴

While that was happening, Sheikh Jassim called Allan, Ferry's interpreter, pleading for help.³⁵ 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."³⁶

³³ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.

³⁴ Smith and MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," 49.

³⁵ According to Ferry, the "real" sheiks were Jassim's two older brothers, who were likely hiding from AQI. Ferry interview, 8 November 2010. Jassim received Allan's contact information from CPT Patriquin or Mr. Sterling Jensen.

³⁶ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010, and email communication LTC Ferry and William Knarr, 9 August 2013.

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.³⁷ 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...

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.

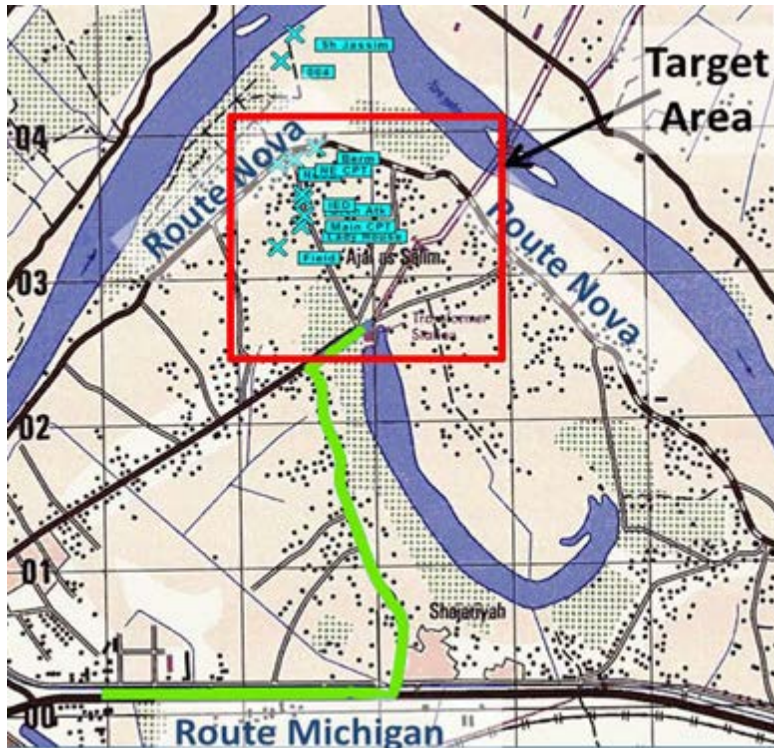


Figure 2-6. TF 1-9’s route to help Sheikh Jassim³⁸

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 2-6) towards

Sofia. It was now dark and everyone was using night vision goggles.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ The light blue boxes with text in the target area are GPS coordinates marking significant locations designated by Jassim during the 21 April 2010 battle site survey/interview with Jassim in Sofia.

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.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰

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 2-7 and Figure 2-8). 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 2-7. Remnants of Jassim’s house



Figure 2-8. Burned interior of Jassim’s brother’s house⁴¹

³⁹ According to LTC Ferry, *Julaybah* is pronounced *Ju* (long u) *a* (long a) *bah*. He spelled phonetically at Figure 2-1, Juaba.

⁴⁰ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.

⁴¹ Both photos were taken during the 21 April 2010 battle site survey/interview with Jassim in Sofia.

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 2-9.)

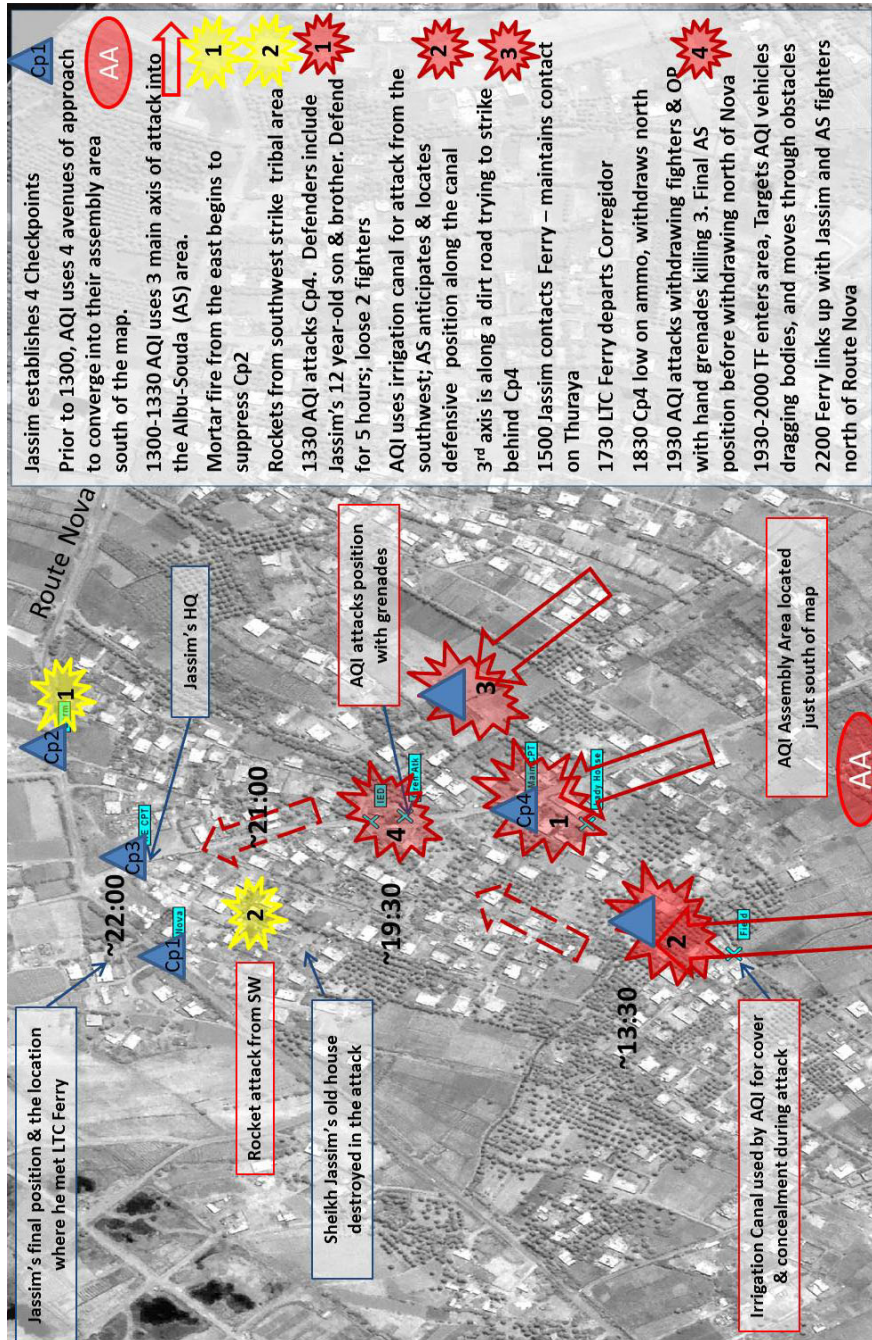


Figure 2-9. Sofia Battlefield template⁴²

⁴² 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, U.S. Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009*; and Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth W. Estes, *U.S. Marine Corps Operations in Iraq, 2003-2006*.

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.

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.⁴³

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.⁴⁴

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."⁴⁵

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.⁴⁶ Again, Ferry's approach to the relationship was one of strength: we "did not play nice with them [Jassim and tribe members]" (see Figure 2-10). Ferry demanded the tribes' unyielding support in return for protection as well as humanitarian assistance and AK47s.

⁴³ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.

⁴⁴ Jassim interviews, 9 and 21 April 2010, and Jensen interview, 20 October 2010.

⁴⁵ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.

⁴⁶ Ferry commented, "I was calling them police, but...they were kind of a militia for a short period of time."



Courtesy LTC Chuck Ferry

Figure 2-10. 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.⁴⁷ 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 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.

⁴⁷ Ferry interview 8 November 2010.

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!"⁴⁸

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."⁴⁹ 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.

⁴⁸ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.

⁴⁹ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.

F. Julaybah, Operation CHURUBUSCO, 17–25 January 2007⁵⁰

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.⁵¹ To support TF 1-9, COL MacFarland attached two companies from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4)—Echo and Fox.⁵² 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.⁵³

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.⁵⁴ [See Figure 2-11]

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 2007.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ “Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award,” 3, provided many of the dates for this paper including operational summaries.

⁵¹ Thomas Daly, *Rage Company, A Marine’s Baptism by Fire* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2010) 28.

⁵² 2/4 was a part of the early 2006 Surge effort. The remainder of the battalion was deployed to Hadithah.

⁵³ Daly, *Rage Company, A Marine’s Baptism by Fire*, 193.

⁵⁴ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010.

⁵⁵ “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].”⁵⁶

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.

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.”⁵⁷

G. Mula’ab, Operation MURFREESBORO, 18–28 February 2007⁵⁸

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)

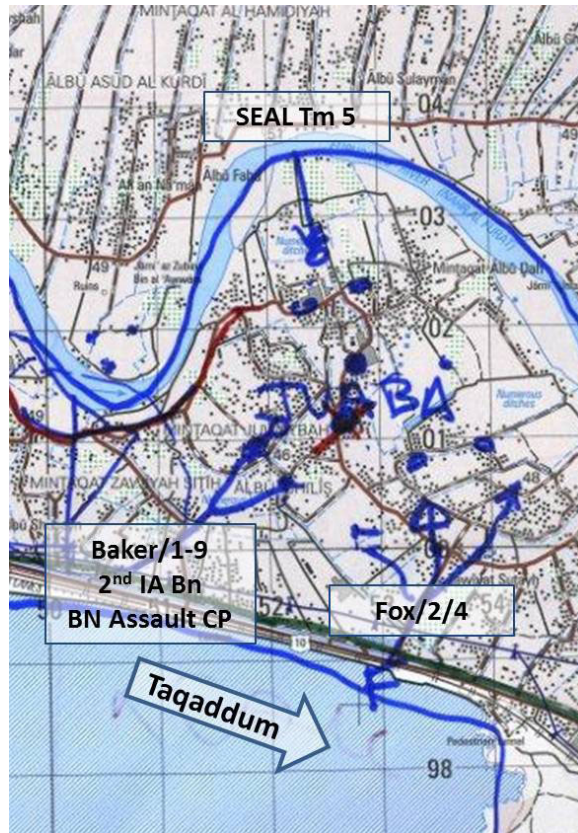


Figure 2-11. Operation CHURUBUSCO

⁵⁶ Ferry interview, 8 November 2010

⁵⁷ 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 March 2010.

⁵⁸ “Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award,” 4.

commanded by Colonel John Charlton. During the transition, TF 1-9 was tasked with conducting offensive operations to mask signs of any seams in the changeover.

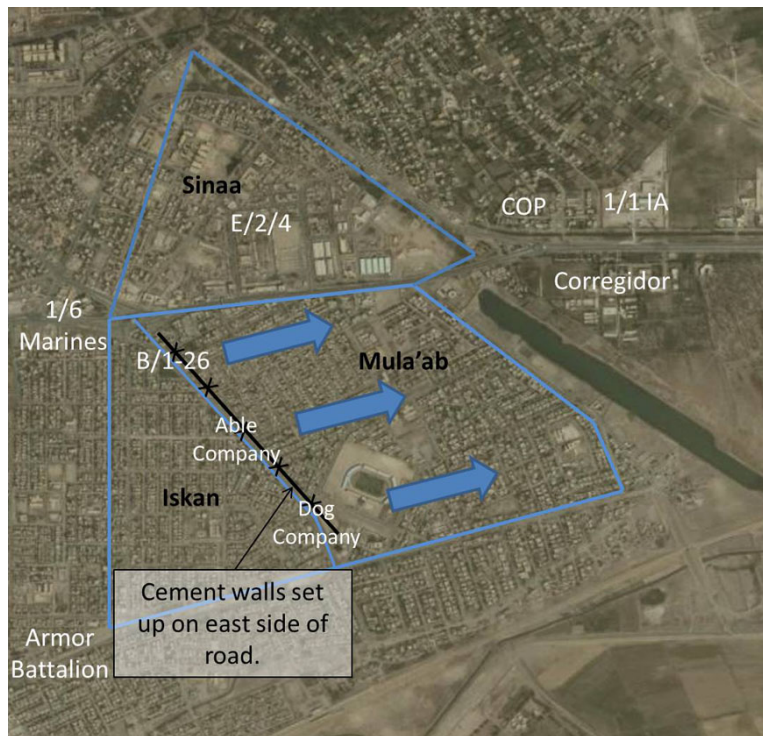


Figure 2-12. Mula'ab Area of Ramadi

When COL Charlton entered the picture, he immediately directed TF 1-9 to secure the Mula'ab area (Figure 2-12). *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).⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰ 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 actu-

⁵⁹ Colonel Charlton, former Commander, 1st BCT/3ID, interview with Dr. William Knarr and Ms. Mary Hawkins, Alexandria, VA, 20 October 2010.

⁶⁰ The overall operation was called “Operation MURFREESBORO”. The TF used the names of battles that the regiment had fought in during the civil war.

ally had three companies 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 other 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.⁶¹

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.

⁶¹ Individuals or small groups of insurgents that found that their way through the obstacles and out of the trap.

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 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 loading down 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.”⁶²

H. Iskan, Operation CHICKAMAUGA, 24–28 March 2007⁶³

The only major threat that remained in TF 1-9's AO was the Iskan area directly west of the Mula'ab (see Figure 2-1). 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.

⁶² Ferry interview, 8 November 2010

⁶³ “Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award,” 3.

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 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, Lessons and Leads

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 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.”⁶⁴

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.”⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶ 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 con-

⁶⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Charles P. Ferry, “Memorandum for Record, Subject: Summary of Task Force 1-9 IN Combat Operations from 6 November 2006 to 1 December 2007,” 2.

⁶⁵ Daly, *Rage Company*, 28

⁶⁶ Colonel Bill Jurney interview with Dr. William Knarr, Joint Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia, 3 March 2010.

ditions. 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 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. 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.⁶⁷

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 al-

⁶⁷ Colonel Tony Deane, former commander, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor in Ramadi, Iraq, June–November 2006, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 12 October 2010.

so 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.

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.⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰

As historians of the Al 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.

⁶⁸ Colonel Ahmed Jelayan Khalaf, interview with Dr. William Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC, and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, Husaybah, 18 April 2010.

⁶⁹ Sheikh Sabah al-Sattam Effan Fahran 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 February 2011.

⁷⁰ "Recommendation for Award of the Valorous Unit Award," 3, 6.

Appendix A. Coalition Perspectives

Notes on conventions used in the transcripts

- Ranks. The first time a service member is identified, their rank is spelled out; subsequently, their rank is abbreviated in accordance with their service affiliation. Ranks are spelled out in the footnotes.
- Time “hacks” on transcripts correspond to video so they can be used to identify areas to use as clips for the movie, the DVD and for further research into specific areas.
- For al- or Al- or Al in a proper name: When “al” is in the middle of the name, in a last name, for example, it should be lower case with a hyphen, such as Nuri al-Maliki. If the name is by itself then the “al” is capitalized, as in Al-Maliki.
- The majority of tribal names begin with the term *albu*, a formal characterization of *the*. When the tribal name is included in an individual’s name, the prefix “al-” is added and the tribal name changes slightly, usually with the addition of *awi* or *i* at the end. For example, Albu-Risha becomes al-Rishawi and al-Assafi denotes a member of the Assaf tribe or Albu-Assaf.

Table A-1 gives the reader an appreciation for the units responsible for AO Topeka from 2003 to 2008. Readers can refer to it to see what brigade-sized unit was assigned responsibility for the area.

Table A-1. Brigade/Regimental Units Responsible for AO Topeka, 2003–08

| Deployment Dates | Unit Commander | Unit |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| May – September 2003 | Colonel David Teeples | 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment |
| September 2003 – August 2004 | Colonel Buck Conner | 1st BCT/1st Infantry Division |
| August 2004 – August 2005 | Colonel Gary S. Patton | 2nd Brigade/2nd Infantry Division |
| August 2005 – June 2006 | Colonel John L. Gronski | 2nd BCT, 28th Division |
| June 2006 – January 2007 | Colonel Sean MacFarland | 1st BCT/1st Armored Division |
| January 2007 – March 2008 | Colonel John Charlton | 1st BCT/3rd Infantry Division |

Subject: Interview with LTC Charles Ferry, former Commander 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment (1-9 Infantry), East Ramadi, October 2006 to January 2008

LTC Charles Ferry commanded 1-9 Infantry Battalion in East Ramadi from October 2006 to January 2008.

LTC Ferry technically took command of the 1st of the 503rd Air Assault (1-503); on the day that he took command it was reflagged to 1-9 Infantry. The 1st of the 503rd Air Assault, had been part of 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (2/2), and they were stationed in Korea. 1-503 deployed to Ramadi with 2/2 in 2004/2005 in essentially the same area as LTC Ferry deployed the battalion in 2006. In the below transcript Ferry explains why that was both good and bad.



LTC Ferry, USA, Ret. Former Cdr, 1-9 Infantry Battalion

During the 15 month tour 1-9 Infantry was in daily contact and made significant contributions to the Awakening as they cleared the Sofia and Julaybah areas to the east of Ramadi and the eastern section of Ramadi city—all significant Al Qaida strongholds. Although mostly known for the Battle of Sofia, some have said the Operation MURFREESBORO in Eastern Ramadi City was the final operation that broke the back of AQI in Al Anbar.

LTC Ferry was interviewed by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr in Colorado Springs, Colorado on 8 November 2010. The following is his account of events during that period.

Ferry: This is an area we call Sina'a, this area right here. A lot of heavy, heavy, heavy fighting in here; we called this the Sina'a. This area up here is called the Sofia. This is Shark Fin... We had what we called two Shark Fins, and you can see them on the overall larger map. [See Figure A-1]

Knarr: Yeah, and Julaybah or whatever it is down here.

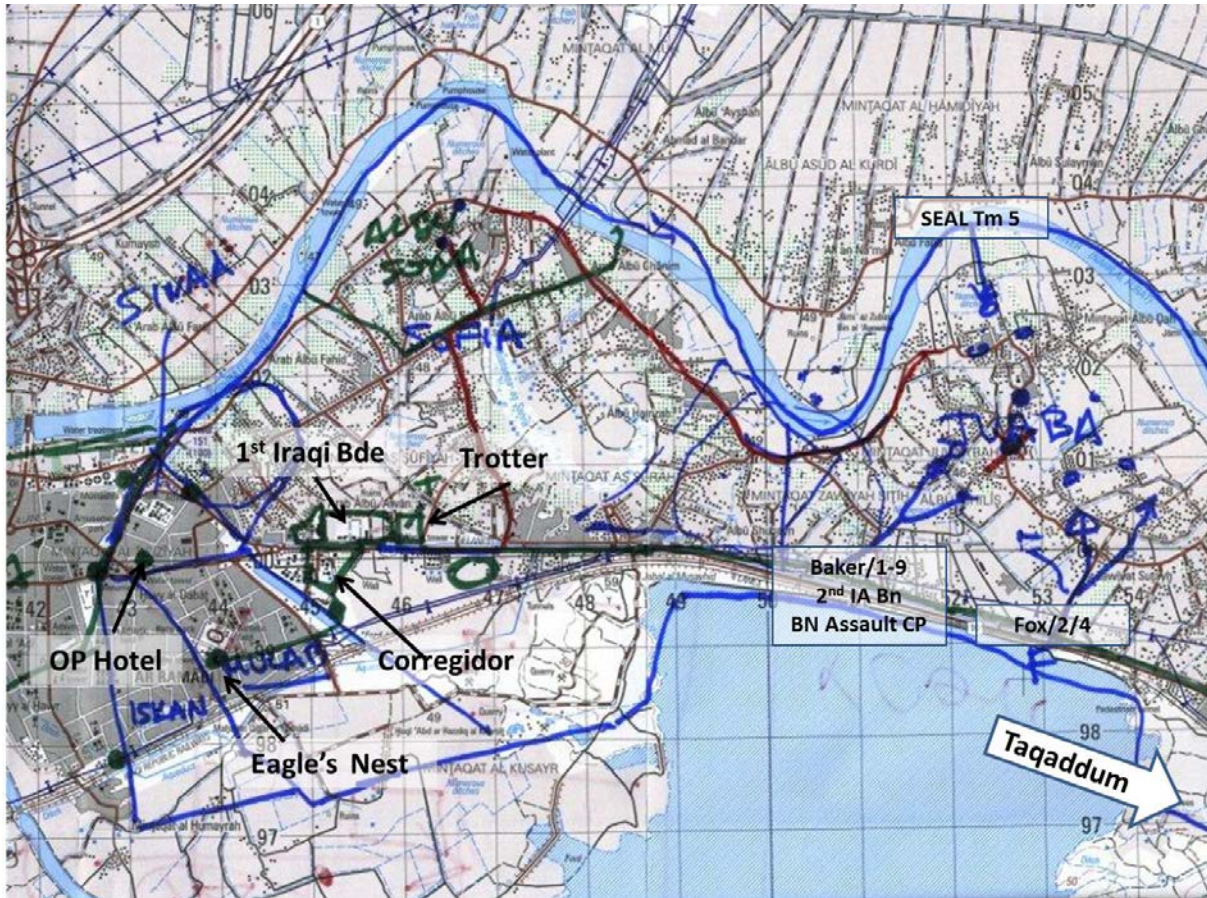
Ferry: We called it Julaybah [he pronounces Juaybah]. It is just out here. I thought it was Julaybah, too until the Iraqis all corrected me. This is the very large, well, it used to be called the Saddam Mosque. We actually refurbished this thing. With one of my Iraqi Army Battalions, we ended up literally bringing it back to life and getting it going again.

Knarr: Now you worked with the 1st Brigade...

Ferry: Yeah. Basically the entire time I was there, for all intents and purposes, I had TACON [Tactical Control] of the 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, which for a Battalion Commander is a

little unusual, but I had three full up battalions: 1st, 2nd and 3rd, under my control. I mean, they were mine. I could direct them to do things. I was responsible to mentor and train their Battalion Commanders, and then the Brigade Commander, General Abdullah...

Knarr: Who was Adel?



Courtesy LTC Chuck Ferry

Figure A-1. Area of Operations, 1-9 Infantry, Ramadi, Iraq

Ferry: Adel was the XO [Executive Officer]. I worked with him [Abdullah] side by side. From day one we had him. For a period of time I took this Al Iskan area.

Knarr: You call that Iskan?

Ferry: Yeah, it's called Al Iskan. Every day I am getting hit along the side of the road. My battalion was exhausted by the time we had taken down the Mula'ab. We had just done consecutive, consecutive, consecutive ops to the point that I had actually relieved in place one of my companies in contact with another Marine company. My A Company had come out, and they were so tired and had taken so many casualties that the Brigade

Commander said, “Hey man, I’m pushing you another Rifle Company.” I think it was 1/6 or 3/6 out here. And so I literally had...

Knarr: From 1/6. Bill Jurney?

Ferry: Yes, from 1/6, my sister battalion that was up over here on this side. They were so exhausted from fighting; I had literally pulled them off and put this other rifle company in. I’m kind of trying to hold what I’ve got here in Mula’ab, well I’m just getting hit every day. I had one kid get hit, lost his eyesight. Another kid lost an arm or a leg. Finally I told the Brigade Commander, “Hey, let me take it down. I want to take it down, and I’ll do it right now.” He’s like, “Yep. Go do it.” So they cut this boundary to me, and I went in with two of my companies along with one of the Iraqi Battalions, and we finally cleared this. We killed like another 18 guys in here. So I can kind of lay the sequence of how we did all this stuff, but everybody loves to hear all about Sheikh Jassim and Sofia.

Knarr: Yeah, but there’s so much more.

Ferry: That was just one small event of, really, a combination of stuff. There’s a lot more to it... But all the book writers like to write about that, because it sounds cool, I guess.
[5:03]

Knarr: Did you read *Rage Company* by Tom Daly?

Ferry: No I didn’t.

Knarr: He was a Lieutenant. I think it was a Lieutenant in *Rage Company*. He talked about Julaybah. It was interesting.

Ferry: He must have been in Fox 2/4. That was their call sign, “Rage.”

Knarr: Yes!

Ferry: Yeah, the Surge didn’t officially start until about a month or two or three after I got there with my battalion, and so the result to me was 2/4 Marines was the MEU [Marine Expeditionary Unit]. It was the Marine Corps contribution, well, part of their contribution, to the overall surge. Again, I’m looking through a soda straw.

Ferry: So, if I say something wrong...Correct me. And so 2/4 came in offshore. The battalion commander got sent out to Al Qaim or something like that with one of his companies. I got his other two companies.

So, I got two thirds of his combat power. I had both Echo and Fox 2/4. I had Echo for about 45 days or so. Then I had Fox almost the whole time of their surge. We took casualties in those units as well. So, yeah, *Rage Company* was in my Task Force for quite some time. And for a good majority of that, we went and took out this Julaybah area. And then they remained in that Julaybah area to develop the follow on hold/build part of that, and

they did a fantastic job. [They had a] good company commander and good NCOs [Non-commissioned Officer] in that company, very well led with that particular company.

Knarr: I understand some of the laydown, but please start at the beginning? You talk about the reflagging of the battalion to 1-9, so 35% of your people had already experienced combat.

Ferry: That's right. I took command of 1-9. Well it was technically 1st of the 503rd Air Assault and on the day that I took command it was reflagged to 1-9 Infantry. There's a little bit of history that needs to be said about this particular battalion. The 1st of the 503rd Air Assault, then reflagged 1-9, had been part of 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, and they were stationed in Korea. Up until about 2004 that unit was in Korea, and quite frankly, a lot of the members of that unit had not seen combat yet, either in Afghanistan or Iraq. Some of them had, but a lot of them had not. A lot of the leadership had not been to combat at least in GWOT [Global War on Terrorism]. The brigade that went with that battalion was activated. A lot of those guys had already spent a year-long tour in Korea. At the end of the tour they were then locked in and then they went to a combat tour. I think it was between August 2004 to August 2005. That brigade as a whole was commanded by then Gary Patton, who's still on active duty. They ran Ramadi. So, Gary Patton basically had Sean MacFarland's job. He had the responsibility for Ramadi. During that timeframe 2/2 as a brigade had some extremely heavy fighting in Ramadi, as you're probably well aware of. My Battalion 1st of the 503rd was in the exact same Area of Operations from 2004 to 2005. We went back to that exact same footprint in late 2006. That was both good and bad. The bad part about it was that 1st of the 503rd, and I may have the figures off a little bit, but they had taken about 20 KIA [Killed in Action] in that battalion alone during that tour. Justin Googler, who commanded the battalion, had well over 100 wounded in action. So, they had seen some significant combat in that footprint. [10:00]

So when I came in, we started figuring out, hey, we're going back to the exact same place. There were some veterans in the battalion who, understandably, the hair was standing up on the back of their neck because they knew what that meant. [This included] my Command Sergeant Major, Dennis Bergmann, who had grown up in the Ranger Regiment. When he and I matched up we hit off very well, a very strong team. 'Bird Dog' is his nickname. I talked [to him about it:] "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.

Now the good part about that was at least 35% of my guys, I never took an official census, had served on that exact piece of dirt before. So, as a commander I decided to capitalize on that and take advantage of their knowledge of the terrain, the politics, and their knowledge of the people. And so quite frankly, we stepped into a very, very, very kinetic fight in that area in Ramadi. We did so with a pretty good understanding, having taken advantage of these guys who had been on that piece of dirt before. Now that was 35%.

Now I will tell you, at least 70% or more of my battalion had already served previous combat tours. This was my fifth combat tour. It was my Command Sergeant Major's fifth combat tour. Both of us had served in Iraq and Afghanistan. I had served in Moga-dishu as a Lieutenant. He had served in Panama as a younger NCO with the Rangers. My Executive Officer, this was his second combat tour in Ramadi. He had been in Ramadi before on the Brigade Staff. My Battalion S-3, a guy name Jerry Nurell, I think this was at least his fourth combat tour, and I had served with him in the Ranger Regiment in both Iraq and Afghanistan. For my company commanders, all of them had either come from the Ranger Regiment or from the Ranger Training Brigade. All of my company commanders were at least on their second combat tour. I had one or two guys that were on their third combat tour. Several of them had served in combat with the Ranger Regiment. So I had this, and then a lot of NCOs with all this experience. I was blessed, if you will, with this highly talented group of guys that somehow I had been fortunate enough to pull into this 1-9 Infantry Battalion. That was kind of where we started when we got in there. That's kind of a little bit about the battalion.

We had a very good 'Train Up,' My Brigade Commander, Jeff Banister, and I served, I think, three different tours in a Ranger Regiment together. I knew Jeff Banister very well and he also knew me very well, both the good and bad he probably knew about me. But, because of that strong relationship with Jeff Banister I was allowed to, if you will, train the battalion up in the way that I saw fit. If you talk to any of the guys, they all told me later on that they had never gone through such an intense train up before. I knew we were going back to a lethal area. I was getting beat up a little bit for training what some senior officers felt was a little too lethal. But in my mind, this is my fifth tour, I knew what I had to do. I knew what I was getting ready to go into, because I had these veterans telling me what I was going to go into, and so we were allowed to train. We did the typical light infantry stuff: extensive live fires all the way to the company level. We were able to do a lot of practice on close air support, attack helicopters, and artillery prior to going into the sector which paid off big later on: a lot of foot marches, a lot of PT [physical training], a lot of marksmanship, all the basic stuff.

Knarr: Where did you train up at?

Ferry: At Fort Carson. It wasn't a perfect train up, but regardless my Brigade Commander set us up pretty good. We went into this area pretty confident. We weeded out a lot of soldiers, unfortunately. I was surprised, quite frankly. This may be an undertone, not part of this story, but I was surprised. I came out of the Ranger Regiment. I had been away from the regular Army for some time. Now I had expected that I was going to have some, if you will, the normal discipline problems, but I was a little shocked quite frankly at the amount of indiscipline that I was dealing with and the level of it up until the time of deployment. So between myself and my chain of command, up to the brigade command

level with Jeff Banister, we had a pretty heavy weed out phase, which was sometimes a little distracting during a train up! [15:23]

Knarr: So, you did all your train up at Carson. I guess it drove your Sergeant Major nuts too, coming from the Ranger Regiment and then running across the disciplinary problems...

Ferry: Yeah he had served in the 101st during the first part of the war, and he had already been the Command Sergeant Major of this unit. He took over about half way through their first combat tour with this battalion.

Knarr: So that's why you said their hair stood up!

Ferry: That's right! He was the Command Sergeant Major for this battalion on that piece of dirt. 1st of the 503rd had a good combat tour. They had done very well, but what happens is units come back from combat deployments and they...*poof*...They disappear. They're completely dismantled and then rebuilt, so it's not fair to judge how that unit did in combat based on how they look in garrison when they come back. That's one of the things that I learned, because they're just not the same unit. So, that unit was completely broken apart. And so my poor Sergeant Major, quite frankly, he was embarrassed sometimes by it. He [felt like he] was the guy responsible for this, and it was driving him nuts. He was almost embarrassed by it. He shouldn't have been. It wasn't his fault, but you know. So, like any other unit we had to rebuild this team and weed it out and then by the time we went back into Ramadi, I think we were on top of our game pretty good.

Knarr: PDSS [pre-deployment site survey]?

Ferry: Yeah, summer of '05 brigade commander along with all the battalion commanders from 2/2 conducted a PDSS. Everybody else went into Kuwait initially, and then we thought the entire brigade was going to go into Baghdad. Most of the brigade did go into Baghdad. So, my parent brigade ended up going into the eastern side of Baghdad, which included the Sadr City AO [Area of Operation]. While we were there that summer, I began to figure out, hey, 1st of the 506th, which is the battalion I was supposed to replace, was out in Ramadi. Well, all the planners in Baghdad were like, "Oh, no, no, no, we're not replacing those guys. The whole brigade is coming into Baghdad."

At the time, Baghdad was relatively quiet compared to Ramadi and the Anbar Province. The Anbar Province was like on fire. I mean, it was just a kinetic fight every day. I'm like, "There's no way the 1st of the 506th is not getting replaced." In my mind and in my Sergeant Major's mind, I'm like, "I don't care what anybody says, dude. I'm telling you we're going back. We're going in to replace the 1st of the 506th unless something drastic happens." Even though everybody else above me was saying, "Nah, no, I want you to do a recon in Baghdad and go check things out." So I was like, "Okay, that's fine." So I spent my PDSS basically riding around with the units that were in Baghdad, but in the

back on my mind I was like, “We’re not coming here. We’re going to Ramadi.” That was my PDSS. So, unfortunately, I didn’t get to go see Ramadi. I was okay with that, because my Sergeant Major had been there. So I was like, “We’ll be okay.” We came back from the PDSS and immediately went to the National Training Center in the summer time. That was a lot of fun as a light infantry unit.

Knarr: Your MRX [mission rehearsal exercise] was there? [19:38]

Ferry: Yeah. You know I’m out of the Army now, so I’ll just say it right up front: that was a waste of my battalion’s time. Yes, there was some good training there, but I could have come back from a PDSS and instead of taking the five weeks that we spent spinning up to get to NTC [National Training Center], pulling all the vehicles out of the motor pool, getting out of the box, getting back from the box, I could have done another two weeks of hard training at Fort Carson focused more on what we now knew from the PDSS. And I could have rested my battalion better before we went into a fight.

That National Training thing was good training, but not as good for the battalion as what I could have done back at Carson. I could have rested my battalion better, and quite frankly we could have just simply given the brigade another good hard BCTP [Battle Command Training Program] type exercise to exercise that piece of the pie that the brigade obviously needed to exercise before we went in. Anyway, we came back from that and got about a two week break, and then started going into the deployment flow.

[Recording interruption]

Ferry: So we will talk off this map just for a little bit. Then we’ll go to a little larger, more macro map, because at the end of the tour we started doing out of sector missions and assaults.

It was about late August when the Brigade Commander confirms what I already knew. He said, “Hey, Chuck, you’re going back into Ramadi. You’re going to replace 1st of the 506th.” I’m like, “Yep. Roger that. I knew it was coming.” And for whatever reason there was some discussion about the Brigade Commander, Jeff Banister, was understandably concerned about putting my guys back into that same piece of dirt, because he knew it was going to be very kinetic. 1st of the 503rd had taken a lot of casualties there, so there was some baggage, so to speak, that we had talked about earlier. I think he toyed around a little bit with putting my sister battalion 2-12 into that piece of ground and taking me with him over into Baghdad. I think that decision was taken out of his hands, basically it was directed. So, my parent brigade went into the East Baghdad sector. I think they replaced 4th Brigade, 101st. My sister battalion 2-12 Infantry, which saw their own share of heavy fighting although it was a little bit later in their tour when they saw the heaviest part of it, they were actually detached from the brigade and sent into Southwest Baghdad, which is where they operated from, my good friend Lieutenant Colonel Steve Michaels. My battalion was detached from the brigade and sent out to replace the 1st of the 506th and attached

to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Sean MacFarland's Brigade inside the MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force]. So, when you look at this whole thing, if you'd do it all over again, you know, you train a brigade and you let that brigade go fight as a brigade, but that's just not what happened. Jeff Banister, my Brigade Commander, essentially lost his two infantry battalions, sent them to other places. Then he inherited other battalions that were from other places that he had to figure out what their strengths and weaknesses and stuff like that. So, there were a lot of reasons why that happened, but in hindsight, it would have been nice to have fought as a brigade wherever it was.

So we get detached and we got attached to now 1st Brigade, 1st Armored, MacFarland's Brigade. Straight up on camera, on the record, Sean MacFarland is one of the best officers I've ever worked for and what an absolute pleasure to command for him. Probably, part of the reason why, is he pretty much let me do whatever I wanted to as long as it stayed within his left and right limits, inside his intent, and I was doing what it was that accomplished his overall mission. He didn't let me do whatever I wanted to do, but I say that I had a lot of freedom to operate inside his intent. In my opinion, he and his staff did an amazing job of, if you will, resourcing this real heavy fight that I had on this side of the city. So, my S-3 and I flew early from Kuwait, probably about mid-October, 2006, and made our way up into Al Taqaddum Air Base, which is right up over here. That's the major hub here for the Anbar Province that supports primarily Fallujah as well as Ramadi, at least it did at the time. It was relatively secure to operate from. [25:53]

We get in and had to fly by helicopter at night time, because the only time you could get into the east side of the city at night is either you had to drive along route Michigan, which was heavily IED'd [improvised explosive device]. It was one of the biggest IED spots in all of Iraq at the time. You had to drive it like right after one of the big large engineer Path Finder units went through and cleared the sucker. It was a very, very dangerous ground route, and it was our main supply route that supplied Camp Corregidor. Or you had to fly. The only time you could fly into Corregidor was at night time, because if an aircraft flew in there during the day time, they got shot at consistently. So I mean, Corregidor was a bad place at the time and very difficult to operate from. The other interesting thing about the east side of Ramadi, which was basically run out of Camp Corregidor, was that route Michigan runs from Al Taqaddum Air Base into Camp Corregidor, which is sitting right here. That was its main line of supply. Now the other side of Ramadi is really run out of Camp Ramadi and Blue Diamond and all that sort of stuff while their supplies didn't have to come through the city. Their supplies either went around to the south, much more secure route or they went around to the north on this alternate route.

So, the only reason that you came down this section of Route Michigan was to get to Corregidor. For about the first six months I was there, Corregidor was isolated. You just didn't come there unless you were coming to specifically operate with my battalion. I

didn't even have reporters coming there. It was too dangerous for them. They didn't even come. We were kind of a little, I don't want to say real isolated, but, you know, there had to be good reason to come on to the east side of Ramadi, let's put it that way. And the route between Corregidor and Route Michigan, which went across the city to get over into Camp Ramadi, man, was really dangerous. It was super bad. We actually had this alternate route that went around to the south that avoided some of the real bad areas. You could get up over into Camp Ramadi to go get with the brigade to do coordination, get small levels of supplies, and so forth and so on. For those first four or five months, that was part of the reason why I ended up having such a large task force. The Brigade Commander, Sean MacFarland at first then John Charlton afterwards, I don't want to say struggled with, but just the way this whole thing was laid out, it made more sense to give me more combat power to try and deal with the situation as opposed to trying to move another battalion footprint. So in 2006 basically the situation was this: my AO consisted of two Shark Fins. It basically cut about right here at the 55 grid line. And then basically if you kind of draw a line down, [it] ran across the lake. So I had what was called the Julaybah Shark Fin right here, and then I had the Sofia Shark Fin, which is right in here as I described. [29:27]

[Drawing on map, Figure A-1] So I basically, had the river that went down here, okay, and I owned this area right in here and then came down, kind of something across like this. Okay, so this is Julaybah, Sofia, and then I had this little spot right in here. That was called the Sina'a or industrial area is what that means. And then I had the Mula'ab. And this area actually extended out down a good part of the ways down here. [It was a] very, very, heavy, heavy, heavy urban area. Then like I said, for a period of time I had what was called the Iskan that we did this large operation in. So generally, when we first got there in October of '06, the very first thing that I awakened to was that Corregidor was a pretty rough camp. My S-3, Jerry Nurell, and I were in kind of what they called the 'Guest Quarters' there. Corregidor was not anything like a lot of these other more nice developed camps. It was a pretty crappy camp. But we liked it, because it was our home. It got mortared every day. I got woken up the first day at about six o'clock in the morning to the sound of mortars. I had slept about maybe three hours. There were 120 millimeter mortars hitting the camp. Jerry Nurrell was a combat veteran, and he woke up and was like, "Man, Sir, what the heck is that?" I'm like, "I'm pretty sure we're getting mortared!"

Because we were still guests on the camp, I had met the Battalion Commander just very briefly, the 1st of the 506th Commander, his first name was Ron. He was a great guy. So we woke up, and by then the sun was up. Jerry and I get up on top of this parapet on one of the cement barriers. We're looking around and we're like, "Holy Smokes!" This camp is remote, and it's under fire all the time. Understandably, you were not allowed to be outside the FOB [Forward Operating Base] unless you were in full kit, because it was

just too dangerous. We were getting hit too much. Small arms fire typically would spill up into the FOB. It was a place that was under siege. There was regular, active contact, multiple times per day. Guard towers were typically in contact throughout the day as well as various outposts. Ron had been in some good fighting, but he basically had a combat outpost that was called The Eagle's Nest right down in here that he had fought extremely hard for. He had a small line of communication opened up into here. He had another small Iraqi combat outpost there. We owned this place called 'OP [Observation Post] Hotel' right there. We had another small outpost, I think it was called "ECP3" right here. And then of course we had Corregidor here. There was another combat outpost here, and there was another place called "OP Trotter" right in there. We'll just put a 'T' there. And then the Iraqi Brigade, 1/1, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, basically owned this area right in here for all intents and purposes, right in there.

The Sofia Shark Fin, the Julaybah Shark Fin, the Mula'ab, the Iskan, and the Sina'a were controlled by AQ, period. Now we may have gone and operated there for short periods of time, but we did not control those areas. In ranking these things, Julaybah was definitely hard core AQI territory. AQI held that area big time. All the roads had deeply buried IEDs into them. The battalion as well as I was aware of had not made any operations in that area for at least some time. Sofia was the same deal. There were some short term operations that had been done up into there, but not a lot. This is where Jassim and the Albu-Souda tribe kind of owned an area up here. You want to talk about being isolated, this guy was really isolated! Okay, the Sina'a area, if you wanted to go down and go earn your CIB [Combat Infantry Badge], that's where you went, down to the Sina'a. There was guaranteed contact down in that area. It was very, very dangerous, and the Marines from my sister battalion initially 1/6 and then 2/7, later on had two out posts up here and then up in here. And then there was another friendly outpost that was down here. But there was constant contact in this area right here. It was every day, and you could almost set your watch by it. We used to basically take our snipers up into OP Hotel. They could over watch this big traffic circle here with Saddam Mosque. They would go up and practice shooting guys putting in IEDs. I'm not exaggerating. I'm telling you it was... [35:41]

Knarr: ...amazing!

Ferry: It was unbelievable. My fifth combat tour, and I'm like, "Holy smokes man. It's like I am back in Mogadishu. This is just like full up, like Stalingrad type stuff, just crazy!" The Mula'ab area during the day time was what I would call semi-permissive. In other words you could go down there and do patrols during the day time; it was what I considered no-go terrain. In other words, if you wanted to go and earn your CIB again, you went down to the Mula'ab in the daytime and did a patrol, guaranteed contact. In fact, the first day I was there I went down to go see the Eagles Nest, an Iraqi unit down there with some of the MiTT [military transition team] Team guys. They were in there in a big

ole' fire fight and they almost put in a 500 pounder [bomb]. The first day I arrived on the job, I'm watching Ron go through the clearance drill process to help these guys out. So I mean the Mula'ab, again, just extremely, extremely kinetic. At night time you could get in there and do operations for a period of time and potentially get on target, but once you got on target you were going to take contact.

The Al Iskan area was an area that, as far as I could tell, was rarely patrolled. I mean just very heavy kinetic area. You were going to get shot up in there pretty much day or night in that area. Then around this area here, this is kind of very cleared up area right here. It's kind of south of Corregidor. I had this place, it was another OP I had up in here; it was not too far from Trotter and it over-watched Route Michigan, which again was very important to the battalion, not quite as important to some other folks, at least not initially. This went over into TQ, Taqaddum Air Base. This location here was kind of cool, because I had my own small arms range. I could go up there, and I could shoot my tanks. I could shoot my brads [Bradley Fighting Vehicle]. I could shoot anything I wanted. My tankers and stuff would go up there. They loved it, because they could go up and do their stuff. I liked it because everybody in the whole area could hear my tanks shooting, and so it kind of sent a message: "Hey if we really want to, we're going to come down, and we can lay it onto you." So that's the layout of the sector.

When I first got there and the battalion first got there, we went back to the same exact footprint. We essentially did a relief in place at a couple of these small outposts here. I was organized with this huge, enormous task force. So I had my own four rifle companies: A, B, C, and D, Able, Baker, Charlie, and Dog. We used the World War II call signs. I had my own Echo Company, which was our Forward Support Company from my parent brigade, a brigade support battalion. Then I had a tank company plus. I think it was from 1-68 Armored, War Lord Company, phenomenal tankers! These guys had already been in the area, so they knew the place like the back of their hand. They were just a phenomenal company, very well liked company. So I had a tank company plus. So, I had five platoons of tanks with about 22 M1 tanks. Then I had a Bradley Company minus from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 26th Infantry [1-26]. They were detached as a company and then pushed out here. They came in with one of the other mech brigades.

Along with that I had, basically, TACON of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Iraqi Army Battalions. Now I didn't have TACON of the brigade, but for all intents and purposes, I was matched up in a mentor role with that brigade commander, and since I owned his battalions, you know it was kind of fait accompli so to speak. I had three MiTT Teams. When I initially got there, they were manned by Army National Guard. The Marine Corps made a decision to put their own MiTT Teams in, which I think was a good decision on their part. So two of the battalions, if you will, were MiTT'd by Marine MiTT Teams. All of them at that time were active duty officers, which was a great help as opposed to

the National Guardsmen and reservists that we had had seen or taken there before. Then I had to man out of my own battalion one of the MiTT Teams for one of the battalions. And then the brigade MiTT Team was led by a guy named Lieutenant Colonel Jim Minick. Marine Corps Officer Jim Minick had previously commanded a battalion in Iraq. Jim and I were best friends. He was a former battalion commander, and I couldn't have been luckier to have been matched up with him. He was very good, because he never got in the way of me commanding the battalion, but he was always there to be able to talk to and bounce off advice, because again I was somewhat isolated. I was the only guy on that side of town. I mean, I did see my brigade commander at least once a week, but for all intents and purposes, it wasn't like I could go to the mess hall and go talk to another battalion commander. So Jim was a very good friend of mine. [See Figure A-2] [40:50]



Photo courtesy LTC Ferry, USA, Ret.

Figure A-2. L–R: MAJ Jim Lively USMC, CDR of 1/1 IA MTT; LTC Ali-CDR 1/1 IA; LTC Ferry; BG Abdullah, CDR 1/1 IA BDE; LTC Jim Minick USMC, 1/1 BDE MTT Chief

Knarr: He was a MiTT Team commander for which unit?

Ferry: He was the MiTT Team commander for 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division.

During 1st of the 506th time there, my initial assessment when I was kind of looking at everything was, number one, Ron and the Iraqis that he had attached to him were spread out in a very, very defensive posture. For a lot of reasons, they were in a very, very defensive posture, despite all of this tremendous amount of combat power. I was like, “That’s a

brigade sized zoning. Why couldn't you take care of this stupid little area here?" Well, we were laid out in this defensive posture, and Ron was doing some offensive operations. Just to get these combat outposts put in, he had spent a lot of energy. I think he had taken seven or eight KIAs [killed in action] during his tour, along with a number of wounded.

The other reason why he was in that position was because I believe in the grand scheme of things, he had been told to hold what he had to allow the rest of the brigade that MacFarland was leading to get after the rest of Ramadi. Western Ramadi under these other battalions that MacFarland had, had made some significant progress in the previous eight months that I had been there. So, when I got there, we were a fresh battalion. MacFarland was just getting himself positioned with conditions set to start biting off East Ramadi, which included not just my sector, but also 1/6 Marines had this sector that was kind of extended in here, which was also the heart of darkness right here. This initially was 1/6 and then 2/7 Marines came in after that. So, I think that's the situation that we inherited.

My initial assessment when I came in, again with the benefits of having guys that had been in that sector before, was we were not taking full advantage of the Iraqis. We were not taking full advantage of the Iraqis, so I met General Ali. I met his guys. You know, I had been around a lot of Afghans and a lot of Iraqis before. My Sergeant Major had found the previous battalion commander's interpreter who was not currently being used by Ron. He pulled him in to where I was staying, and said, "Sir, this is going to be your interpreter. He's the best interpreter on this camp. He's been here for three years."

Knarr: Is this Allan?

Ferry: This is Allan, who I just talked to two days ago.

Ferry: So of course I pick Allan's brain. He's been here [Ramadi] like three and half years. He and I spent some long sessions, you know, him telling me everything there was to know about the Iraqis, the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Police, the history, all this stuff. I very rapidly came to the conclusion that we are not taking full advantage like we should be of the Iraqi brigade here. We were missing out. That was one thing. So I determined immediately that I was going to pull the Iraqi brigade into the Manchu team. They weren't just going to be kind of some unit I was partnered with, they were going to be on my team—full up and full blown. We were going to do whatever it took to make them part of the battalion and the task force, not just some unit that operated over here. [45:03]

I had no police. There were zero police, and no police stations. There was nothing on this side of the city. There were few if any HUMINT [human intelligence] contacts. I speak from authority, because I have done a lot of HUMINT in my Special Operations background, so I know what HUMINT is supposed to look like. We had just about zero of it, almost nothing. The only HUMINT contacts that were being worked at the time

were guys over with the agency and over with the [remove] Special Operations Units that were operating out of Blue Diamond.

Knarr: Did you have an ODA [Operational Detachment Alpha] associated? Did you have any HETs [human exploitation team] or any THTs [tactical HUMINT team]?

Ferry: Yes. I did not have any Army Special Forces; I had a Navy SEAL [Sea Air Land] Platoon. We actually operated with the SEAL Platoon, and it's going to kill me, but it's well described in this book by a guy who talks about SEALs operating in Ramadi. I'll think of it. But these guys were from SEAL Team Five, the initial team that I had. It just so happens that this SEAL team actually went out to NTC [National Training Center] during our train up. I had that SEAL Platoon for about a five day period at NTC, so I knew them very well. The guy was an O3 by the name of Lieutenant Burke. He was a big huge mountain of a man. I do remember his name, because he was a fantastic guy. Anyway, we hit it off, because I had spent a significant amount of my time in Special Operations. I had been around SEALs before, and so he understood that. Instead of being a little stand-offish, he and I hit it off very well. Low and behold that was the SEAL Team that came to Corregidor. Again, because they were very isolated on that side of the city, for all intents and purposes, I did not have official control over them. But unofficially, I did have full control of them, and we fully used them to all of the advantages and skill sets that they had.

The first day I arrived over to Camp Ramadi, of course, I met my brigade commander and brigade staff. I was a little uneasy, because again you're walking into a brigade that has already been there about eight, nine months by the time [we got there]. I was a light infantry man, Ranger, SOF [Special Operations Forces] background. Now I'm stuck with joining a unit that's really an armored mechanized brigade, so there's a little bit of butt sniffing going on there. It was a little uneasy, because they didn't know who we were. We got through that pretty fast. The very first day that I arrived there, I met [a guy] whose name I cannot mention, but he was commanding the [removed] SOF element that operated from West Ramadi. He and I were very good friends from previous combat tours, so one of my goals was to get tied into and fuse, if you will, with those operations. And so, literally, it happened on the first day. Within three days I am now fully introduced to the Agency Chief of Base. I am now fully integrated with a direct line of communication to the SOF element leader that's operating there. The level of intelligence that is now flowing into my battalion in about a week's time has quadrupled. I was then tied in with the SEAL SOF guys who had their own set of HUMINT contacts, because their headquarters was over at Ramadi. I was tied in to the Chief of Base. I was tied in with the SOF element. Obviously I was tied in with the brigade.

Then I made a point to go over and [talk to] General Ali, my Iraqi Brigade Commander. The day that Ron left, just me, Allan, and the General met privately. I said, "Look. I don't know what was going on here before, but I am not spending a year here to walk

away status quo. We are not here to do that. We're going to come here, and we're going to win! But we're not going to win unless you and I work together as a team. I want you to be on my team, General. I will treat your Iraqi soldiers the same as my own or better. We will take care of them. We're going to train them. We're going to feed them if we have to. I don't care what it takes, but you and I are going to fight hand in hand in this sector here for the next year, and we're going to win" And I said, "Are you with me?" And he's like, "Absolutely," with a big grin on his face. So, from that time on, the General and I literally planned everything together except for some very sensitive operations. Every time I went to go ask him for combat power he [said], "Give it to him. Give it to him. Give it to him." That's kind of how we started that relationship right there. It became a very powerful synergy of fusion in this area over here.

So, Sean MacFarland's plan was for me to immediately attack the Mula'ab and take that down. I was waffling on him, so you can tell him that. I can tell him now, but I was waffling on him, because I knew that my battalion had just arrived. This is not my first combat tour. I had fought real hard in urban areas before. I knew that if I took the battalion, as good and as well trained as they were, only two/three weeks in the country, straight into an urban fight, I was going to take a lot of casualties. If I could just wait a little while, and maybe set some conditions and get my guys a little more adjusted, we would be more successful. That's not how the brigade commander saw it, because that wasn't part of his plan. He needed to take the Mula'ab down, because that was his next logical step on controlling greater Ramadi. So I kind of, you know, very tactfully tried to whine a little bit to get out of it. I proposed to him what I called the donut approach. I said, "Hey Sir, instead of eating the center of the donut first, how about if I eat the outer part of the donut?" I'd put a lot of thought into this, and asked a lot of people. I really thought that what I really want to do was take down Sofia and Julaybah first and isolate this area off and cut it off. What I had figured out was these areas here were safe havens. They were training guys in these two shark fin areas here, 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. So I had this clever plan that I was going to convince Sean MacFarland: "Hey, I think you should let me do all this stuff and get them off of this." He's like, "Hell no! Get your ass into Mula'ab!" So, I'm like, "Yes, sir. Roger that!"

So we did what we were ordered to. We went to this extensive planning process with 1/1, Iraqi Army, to go in and do a deliberate clearance in the Mula'ab, and I think that was slated for, I want to say late November-ish time frame. [We] had gone through all the rehearsals. I did joint operation orders with 1/1. We did the full nine yards. Literally, the next day, I'm supposed to go take out the Mula'ab. It's a major, major, major operation. It's kind of exciting. We'd done some raids and stuff in here to get their feet up underneath them, and give them a little taste of combat. I called them warm up missions,

but this was the first major operation for the battalion as a battalion. So this is when, Sean MacFarland takes leave. He had not taken leave yet. It had been like nine/ten months, and he's got to take his leave. So, he goes and takes leave. Actually the commander of 1-37, VJ Tedesco, was left as the official brigade commander, but Jim Lechner, who I knew from Somalia, was the DCO [deputy commanding officer]. Jim Lechner and I also got along very, very well. He was running the brigade staff and all the other stuff. Jim Lechner was the guy who was responsible for engaging with all the tribes with Travis Patriquin. At the time, I was not really aware of a lot of the stuff that Jim Lechner and Patriquin had been working.

So 24 hours prior to going down and kicking off this thing, it's about three o'clock in the afternoon, and we started getting some reports up in the battalion that said, "There's this big fight going on up in the Shark Fin." I'm like, "Okay, it's none of my units," so we started checking it out. Well, we start talking to the brigade, and they gave us very little information. They were kind of like, "Well, you know, we think something's going on, but we're not really sure." I said, "Okay, let's put some ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] platforms up over it." I think we put a Pioneer or one of the other brigades assets up on top to take a look. Well, low and behold there was this fire fight going on, and we can hear it from my position. And guys from OP Trotter are also reporting. They're just down the street. They're also reporting contact. And we're like, "Hey, it's got to be green on green or something like that, you know?" Well, my interpreter, Allan, who in my opinion is the hero of this battle, has two phones on him all the time. He was like my RTO [radio telephone operator] to all the Iraqis. That's how much I trusted him. He had two phones on him all the time so Iraqis could call him whenever they wanted, so they could talk to him and so they could communicate with me. By the way, there was no cell phone coverage back then. There was no cell phone coverage at all in Ramadi. It was nothing but Thurayas, satellite phones, at the time. So there's this guy called Sheikh Jassim, and he's calling up. [55:15] He's desperate. He's from the Albu-Souda Tribe, and he's getting his ass kicked up there from multiple directions, Al Qaeda is getting ready to take care of this guy. What was interesting about this area was before this phone call, the brigade used to have what they call, "free fire areas" and basically they used to put in what we used to call "Old Fashioned H and I [Harassment and Interdiction] fires" right into my sector from a 155 battery over at Camp Ramadi. So that was another little thing that used to happen about every six times a day. We'd have a full fire-for-effect come in from these 155's right into my sector. So, like I said, that kind of added to the whole ambiance of this full-up combat zone.

Knarr: Ambiance!

Ferry: Yeah! We'll call it that! My interpreter Allan and I confirmed this two days ago. I said, "Hey, did you know Sheikh Jassim before this ever happened?" He's like, "Absolutely

not; absolutely not!” He knew there was a Sheikh Hamid and there was a Sheikh Muhammad or something like that. They were the two older brothers, but they were the real sheikhs. Sheikh Hamid is the real sheikh of this tribe up here. Jassim is kind of an underling who just happened to step forward and make himself a target for AQI while Hamid hid out. So Allan and my battalion were completely unaware of any of these deals that had been cut over here, so this whole idea that we knew what was going on—we had no clue!

Knarr: What deals had been cut?

Ferry: Well, from what I understood later on was that Jassim had been crossing the river to the north in the safer sector here and meeting with Sheikh Sattar. Sattar, of course, had been recruited by MacFarland, Patriquin, and Lechner and had started this, what they called the Sahawa or the Awakening. Jassim was cutting this secret deal, because mortars were constantly being launched from the Albu-Souda area into areas to include my camp. So MacFarland put in free fires areas. He just started lobbing 155’s in there all the time. Well, it’s scaring the living crap out of people up in the Albu-Souda. It wasn’t causing casualties or anything, because they were in these isolated areas for the most part, but from time to time it did kill animals and stuff like that. What that did was that caused Jassim to go across and find Sattar and say, “Hey look, I’m ready to cut a deal. You guys stop the 155 H and I fires, and I’ll put up road blocks. I’ll keep AQI out of here. I’ll keep them from launching the mortars.” I didn’t know about this at the time. So what happened was AQI was kept out of this area for a short period of time. We quit putting the 155 fires in there, and of course AQI just went to alternate launch points and just kept hammering us with mortars. Well to AQI this is a big deal, because they’re trying to stop this Sahawa, Awakening. This was their safe haven, so they’re like, “Screw this. We’re going to go in, and we’re going to teach Jassim and his boys a lesson!” So they basically mount up a complex attack here from Julaybah and cut across in here. This is from a place called the Albu-Fahad Tribe, which is a much larger, more powerful, more educated, and well to do tribe. These guys cut across over in here, and they proceed to basically kill and burn everything that they can find in their path. That was the situation there.

So, I get this call at three o’clock in the afternoon. We were trying to firm up preparations to go down in Mula’ab, and there’s this sheikh who I don’t even know who he is. I don’t even know who the Albu-Souda tribe is. I don’t have any HUMINT contacts up there. I’ve just got this guy calling me on the phone saying, “Please help. Come save me!”[59:12]

Knarr: So he’s calling Allan?

Ferry: He calls Allan, and Allan says, “Sir, there’s this guy. His name is Sheikh Jassim. He’s somewhere up in here.” I’ve got ISR platforms out now looking at the area, and I’m like, “Yep. Okay, that’s right. Something bad is happening up there.” I don’t know what. All I know is I’ve got a green on green going on up there, and I’ve got a guy asking me, “Hey

please come help me.” I do not know anything about this deal. 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. You know, I’m like, “Holy crap, I could be walking into a huge ambush.” Well, the talking went back and forth, and we started getting a picture on the ground that “Hey, I’m the tribe that has been friendly to you, blah, blah, blah. You know, I’ve got AQI attacking.” We confirmed that by the ISR. I finally called over to Lechner, and I sort of figured out Lechner’s point of view and what was going on.

So Lechner is kind of vouching for him, I think through Patriquin, but I was primarily talking to Lechner on the phone while I am still with my TOC [Tactical Operations Center] here in Corregidor. So in the mean time I was like, “Okay I’m not sure what I am going to do yet, but let’s get ready to go regardless.”

So I tell War Lord Company, my tanks, “Let’s get three tanks lined up.” I think maybe it was a platoon of tanks. I wanted the company commander with that set up of tanks, because I wanted some real strong leadership with it. We put my Assault CP [command post] with my Scout Platoon. I used my Scout Platoon as my Assault CP/Battalion Reserve. They were always with me. I put them right behind the tanks, and I had my Baker Company, B Company line up behind them at the gate, ready to go, planning out the routes in the event that I made the decision that I was going to go up in there. So, we kept talking. I’m like, okay, this is madness, because I’ve got civilians that are being killed up here, but I am potentially walking into an ambush. I am supposed to go do this other attack. MacFarland was not there. Lechner and VJ Tedesco, who I had then talked to is like, “Hey, dude, this is your call, man.” I was like, “Okay, if I go up there, this is going to pull me away from Mula’ab, which is really, really important. 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...

Knarr: About what time?

Ferry: It was. I actually have the logs, believe it or not. Yeah, I actually have the logs. I could probably actually give those to you.

Knarr: I would love to see those.

Ferry: ...which lays out the time. It was, I want to say around five o’clock in the afternoon. The calls started around three o’clock in the afternoon, so maybe about five o’clock in the afternoon or so and we’re moving. I’ve got ISR platforms up over here. I had either Pioneer or the brigades asset up overhead,

Knarr: Shadow?

Ferry: It was a Shadow, yeah. I had the Shadow up. I had a Predator up. It was armed with Hellfire working in another orbit, and looking at other stuff. I had two F-18s up overhead to target. Then I had to link up with the guys actually in contact. It started to get dark, because again it's winter time. The only time I have this guy is through his Thuraya phone, that's it. So, I had my S-3 and my XO [executive officer] back in the TOC. I was forward now moving right behind the tanks with my Assault CP, Baker Company behind me, and we push up this route right up in here. We basically move up this route right here. I don't remember the exact name of the route. I took all my graphics back out. You've got to turn to the right here, and you've got to move up. Jassim's house is about right there. So we get up in there, and it's relatively quiet up on the way. While we're moving up and I'm talking to my XO, we start seeing vehicles that are exiting out Route Nova, and we can tell through the multiple ISR platforms these vehicles are dragging dead bodies out of the target area.

I call it the target area, it's the top of the Shark Fin. Now that's not PID, that's not Positively Identified Threat, but it's like, "Holy smokes, what's going on there?" Well, on the phone Jassim is telling me, "Hey, my relatives that have been killed are being dragged away behind vehicles by AQI." So, again, a little bit of risk there, but again, the brigade was leaving the fire fight [to me] so between myself and my XO, we cleared, four different strikes on four different vehicles from the F-18s, while we're moving up to make this link up. So, what we did was we tried to have the vehicles that are driving through here. The F-18s got locked on to them, and basically we tried to wait until they got into an isolated area where we would minimize the collateral damage and put hellfire missiles into each of these vehicles.

The fourth vehicle got away, and I actually did a battle handover. This is actually pretty cool, joint ops, did a battle handover, because now the Predator that was on station was actually not mine or the brigade's. It was my SOF buddy. Well he and I talked, because again we're good friends. He's talking to my S-3 on the phone that's back in the TOC who's telling me, "Hey so and so has got that target on Predator Hellfire, but now they're up over in this area over here. Do you give him permission to engage?" I'm like, "Yeah, Roger that. Tell him to take the shot." So my buddy put another hellfire shot into a fourth vehicle over here. Later on we found out that we had probably killed about 16 hard core AQI guys. They were dragging these dead bodies over into this area as trophies. We, in fact, had decimated these guys coming out of here. In the meantime, while that's going on, my lead tanks are coming up in here. We had vehicles that are starting to squirt out and starting to engage, not necessarily tanks, but the infantrymen I've got clearing obstacles in here on foot. So the tanks basically, I'm pretty sure he destroyed two different vehicles up in here with their coax [Coaxial Machineguns].

Once we got up above here, I'd never seen anything like this in combat ever. They've got these huge palm trees up in this area, and they literally cut into abatis obstacles, just by the book. [01:06:07] I'm like, "Holy smokes, this is supposed to be Iraq, not the Fulda Gap or something like that." But no kidding, they had cut these down into the abatis obstacles. There's IEDs inside these obstacles. I didn't have time to wait for a two hour path finder unit to come up here and clear this thing. I had civilians that were being killed. I didn't have time to wait for EOD [explosive ordinance disposal] to come over and take care of this stuff. It was at night. So, I asked the tank company commander, "Hey, can you shoot a round or something into these things and blow these things away?" He was like, "Oh, Roger that, at point blank range, I'll do my best to blow these obstacles away." I said, "Okay." So, right up in front of me the lead tank is putting rounds into the first obstacle, and then I've got my Baker Company infantrymen coming up now on foot, taking out houses and then moving up and clearing by flashlights to make sure the tanks are not going to drive...you know, we were doing an in-stride breach with my tankers and dismounted infantry. We got through the first obstacle, and we started pushing out further.

My interpreter was continuing to talk to Jassim, who was, literally, desperate. He was getting ready to get into a boat and go across the north side of the river. Everything was being slashed and burned. We were hearing the contact and feeling some spill over fire coming from the contact. It was night time. I've got all these platforms attempting to figure out who's who. I basically told him, "Hey, tell that guy to build a huge bonfire." I was trying to get him to also give me the GPS coordinates off his Thuraya phone. So, we bump into another abatis obstacle and for all I know is, it could have been Jassim's obstacle. We blow through that obstacle, do another in-stride breach, and then not too much longer, the tanks come up on this huge bonfire. There were guys all over the place. It was at night, and all of them looked like insurgents. All of them were armed, you know. And of course, Allan was still talking us in, so to speak, on the Thuraya. He said, "Sir, sir, Jassim is at the lead tank." So, I [said] "Hey, don't shoot anybody right now. Hold what you've got." And so me and a couple of my scouts and Allan move up to the front with my Sergeant Major, and we get face to face now with Jassim. [1:08:23]

So, Jassim is a relatively small guy. He's an interesting guy, but at the time I didn't know who he was. He was wearing kind of a man dress. I think he had a pair of shoes on. He had, if I remember, an olive drab coat. It was cold; it was very cold at the time.

Knarr: A lot of dark clothes.

Ferry: Yeah, 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. I said, "Allan, you tell him that if any of his guys

do anything to any of my guys, I'll kill him right here, dead on the spot." [I said,] "Tell him, we will absolutely kill him if anybody does anything bad. You tell him to tell all of his guys right now to sling their weapons and chill out until we can sort things out," something to that effect. What I wanted Jassim to understand was that I was in charge, not him anymore. I'm in charge and you're going to do exactly what I tell you to or people are going to get killed. Again, I was still concerned I was going to be in this ambush. He immediately did [what I said]. So, all of his guys chill out. My guys get control of them.

Jassim and I start talking, and we very quickly formulated a plan where we were going to take Jassim's most trusted guys. We literally put engineer tape on their left arm, and I matched them up with each of my rifle platoons from Baker Company. I kept a couple of them with me, and then I kept Jassim. I told him, "Anything bad happens, you're going with me." So, he's talking to all his guys, and we basically fan out to secure the area. We did have some of what I would call relatively minor contact. These guys [AQI] finally figured out after this contact down here with my tanks and infantrymen that, holy crap, we were about to get boxed in here. They started squirting out, and that's where we killed these four vehicles and all this other stuff. We're all making this up on the go, so I'm like, "Holy smoke!" Jassim basically tells me, "Hey look, I need help up here." And I just told Allan, "Hey, you tell him the only way I am going to give him help is I want complete cooperation from his tribe. I want all your sources. I want to know where Al Qaeda is. I want to know where your caches are. I want to know where your IEDs are, and I want to know where it is right now. Otherwise I am leaving your tribe, and Al Qaeda can come back in here and wipe you off the face of the earth." He understood.

Jassim was like, "Yes, yes, I will do anything it takes. I'll do anything it takes." So we throw a map down, and he starts marking down: right here, right here, right here, right here. Baker Company Commander is like, "There's your target. Go get them." And I said, "I want guides to take me to each of those targets right now. So he starts fanning out. All night long we're out finding guys that are allegedly AQI and pulling them out of their houses. We were finding IEDs, we were finding caches, and we were finding weapons. You know, so I mean this is an area that was madness! [01:12:11]

I started to talk to Lechner. "Okay, here's what we're going to do. We're going to adopt this tribe here. I am going to keep a combat unit with these guys, and I am going to pull the sheikh out of the area so I can actually, no kidding, really debrief him." This is my first opportunity to get some real intel on my area instead of just plodding around like a bunch of morons! I left my Baker Company up there. I get a Path Finder unit in here to actually clear this route. They found some huge, enormous IEDs along the road that we had just driven across that were command detonated. We chased them off with our infantrymen, which was like, "Wow, holy smokes! We got really lucky." These guys cleared the area. So, probably by about five o'clock the next morning, we had the area relatively secure.

I had Jassim back in my headquarters. So then we get him fed, and get him a little bit of sleep. The next day, me personally along with Allan and my intel guys basically debrief him. [He] showed us everything he's got, [and we] found out what was going on up in the area. I ended up putting my first combat outpost, which I didn't really think I was going to do, into a guy's house who used to be AQL. [We] took over his house with permission and concurrence from all the tribal leaders up in here. Then I used Jassim and there were one or two other lower level sheikhs, all loosely related, up in this area. I used them now as my recruiters for other tribes in the area. I said, "Congratulations. I am going to stay with you. I am not going to leave you. I am going to secure your tribe. I am going to do this, this, and that." But, again, it's under conditions. I did not play nice with them. I was like, "You are going to give me this, you're going to give me this, you're going to give me this, and you're going to give me this. And in return I will give you this, this, and this if you give me this. That's the way this thing works."

We did bring up some humanitarian assistance, blankets, and such. We brought up AK47s, and we armed the initial police force of the Abu-Souda under direct supervision of my guys. I ended up taking the SEAL Team and put them up in there to initially vet and start the initial training for these guys up in the tribal area. I was calling them police, but for all intents and purposes, they were kind of a militia for a short period of time. But, what it did was it flipped that area. These people here [pointing to map the area south of the target area] all hated us, so you'd drive through here and they'd throw rocks at you trying to IED you. But as soon as you crossed this line [into the Abu-Souda area], the tribes were waving, "Oh we love you!" It was just a complete reversal, complete reversal. So, MacFarland gets back. Obviously this got on hold, so I tell him what happened. He's just like, "Oh, this is just absolutely wonderful! I am so glad you did what you did!" I am like, "Whew, that's good. I still have my job! "

Knarr: And what about Mula'ab?

Ferry: Well, yeah. I was trying to tell him, "Sir, I swear to God that I did not plan this. I swear it just happened!" Sean MacFarland was very understanding, very, very understanding.
[1:15:50]



Photo courtesy of LTC Ferry, USA, Ret.

Figure A-3. LTC Ferry and BG Abdullah meet with Sheik Jassim's war council shortly after his rescue

Ferry: Yeah, so he was good to go. We ended up doing his eat the donut on the outside approach. 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 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 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. A guy [from the] Albu Ghannam [this spelling comes from Iraq tribal study] Tribe up here had three sons. We were having a lot of bleed over. We got some constant bleed over coming from Julaybah still coming up in here at night time and getting nabbed and stuff despite the heavy presence I had up there. These three sons, 10, 12, and 14, for whatever reason come down here. I think we used to call this Route Apple. They came down here and got down to this area to go 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 up here. When this occurred it just so happened that I was up checking out... When I say combat outpost, I am talking about both Iraqi and American outposts, and in every case they were always combined. I had both

Iraqis and Americans living together, pulling guard together, and operating together in these combat outposts. I was up in this northernmost outpost. I was actually up with one of my Iraqi Company Commanders up in here, and all of a sudden the mosques' loud speakers start going off very, very loud. I can't tell where it is, but 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. It was also not the time they did the call for prayer, so I knew that something was wrong. 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." He keeps listening and listening. So, of course I put all my guys on alert. I got the QRF [Quick Reaction Force] stood up back at the battalion. 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!" I was like, "Okay, this could be a good thing."

Knarr: When did this happen? [01:18:55]

Ferry: This happened probably late December, probably just before Christmas. We had been in this area now for about a month working it real hard. In all of these other areas where I had these combat outposts I was continuing to have daily contact, daily fights, daily stuff going on, but I was trying to concentrate my combat power up in here. I was taking some risks in these other areas here, because it's taking a lot of combat power to do this. Around late December, I finally flipped this area pretty good. It still wasn't completely good. I still had some issues up in this area here. I had some significant issues down in here. I had my Dog Company, and we ended up doing a large clearance operation in a sector right in here, which was the boundary between these two areas. These two areas were having a lot of problems. My Dog Company had probably about an eight hour firefight. It was a knock down, blow out fire fight including multiple units. What AQI had done here from Julaybah was he had basically two or three mortar positions on the opposite side of the river over here, and started shelling all of my small sized platoon positions over here. At the same time, they'd coordinated that with probably about 20 or 30 fighters who had gotten into position in here and had gotten in the middle of my company. They were throwing in rockets and RPGs [Rocket Propelled Grenades]. Dog Company was in heavy, heavy, heavy contact. I reinforced them with a couple tanks. I was actually back in my TOC. A lot of times I was out right behind the companies when we did this. I've got Harrier Jets that come in and we employ them along with mortar fire from the unit that's up in here to basically destroy these mortar positions over here. And then these guys are getting away in boats, so again, we strike them with close air support and artillery fire. In the meantime, I reinforced with, I think, four tanks from War Lord Company. Dog Company basically finishes off this eight hour firefight. I had two killed and a number wounded, but a tremendous, tremendous action there by Dog Company, you know stuff that you'd write books

about. I mean, it was just unbelievable. That essentially sealed off and finished off Sofia. James Enos commanded that company, and he earned a Silver Star for his action in here.

Knarr: James Enos?

Ferry: James Enos. He's a Major now. [See Figure A-4] [01:21:42]



Photo courtesy of LTC Chuck Ferry

Figure A-4. Supporting the local economy.
L–R: Allan, Ferry's Interpreter; CPT James Enos, CDR Dog CO; LTC Ferry

Ferry: He was the best combat company commander, absolute phenomenal young man with a company who loved to fight, and did it very well. A number of his other soldiers won other awards, but this was a tremendous battle right here. That battle right there finished off Sofia, and so now I've got a pretty good tentative hold on this. So, I think it was kind of late December, early January [when] MacFarland said, "Okay." He is into this eat the donut from the outside first. He wants me to put a combat out post into Julaybah. I'm like, "Sir I do not have the combat power to go put a combat outpost into Julaybah and still be able to then go after the Mula'ab, the Sina'a, and hold Sofia. It's just not going to happen." He's like, "Chuck, I don't care how you do it, but you're going to do it. So go figure it out." So I went back with some guidance from Sean MacFarland, because he knew we would figure it out. He was just trying to push me.

So I just tell him, "The bottom line is I've got a plan on how to do this, but I just don't have the extra company." So this was when I got Echo and Fox 2/4. I got 400 plus Marines, two rifle companies. I already had a lot of Marines in my Task Force, because I had HETs, I had Dog Teams, and I had support guys. I had a pretty good mix already of

Marines and Soldiers in my Task Force. My EOD Team was Marines. They were phenomenal guys! I loved them, and I think they liked being on our Task Force. We treated them good. So I get Echo 2/4, I'm like, "Here's what we're going to do. We're going to peel away combat power and take risk in my other areas in order to mass combat power to go take down Julaybah."

Julaybah is like the heart of darkness. My SOF buddies over here had been continually pounding this area with targeted raids, because they were going after high level AQI guys that operated in this area. I put Echo 2/4 into the Sina'a area to basically hold this area here. 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 where all these roads that come up on these canals. 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 my Baker Company with my Assault CP infiltrate. These guys actually used multiple routes to get in here. [See Figure A-1]

Baker Company infiltrated on multiple routes and my Assault CP was right behind them. I had the SEAL Team infiltrate by boats and come in on the top side to get in. We had a plan where we took down multiple targets. The whole idea was we were going to infiltrate at night and get in there, so that when the sun came up these guys were going to be like, "Holy smokes! I've got 12 different units across this entire Shark Fin area, and they are in my backyard!" Then we were going to wait for them to move, and then we were going to kill them when they moved. So basically we got in these strong points, and then waited for Al Qaeda to start moving around in their vehicles and that's exactly what happened. So we got in and had little to no contact to actually get in. This is an all-night operation. It doesn't look that far on the map, but it's a very difficult on foot movement for all of these companies—Fox and Baker and then the SEALs up here on the top with the boats. And then I had my sister battalion over here. I think it was either 1/6 or 3/6. They actually put some checkpoints in here on their side trying to cut this thing off. And then I had ISR and stuff trying to cut off or at least kept squirts from coming out. At night time, I had CAS [close air support] up, but I didn't employ any CAS at least not yet here.

Then in the morning, I had Apaches and Cobra Gunship teams switching on and off to help isolate these areas with the fight. Then I got Path Finder Teams, and I've got my tanks and stuff ready to come up and push resupply and all this stuff as soon as we get these major roads all cleared out. While I'm infiltrating them, I'm getting contact down in here. I actually had two command nets. I actually had to have one command net that ran all this, and then I had another command net that was run from the TOC that I could

switch on that basically commanded the rest of this sector while we did this massive surge operation. [4:11]

So the sun came up, and sure as heck AQI is like, "Woe, holy smokes," you know. We're picking up their conversations and all this other stuff, and now we're in the population. We were basically saying, "Hey, we're not leaving." And of course they don't believe us. So AQI starts moving mostly in their vehicles, trying to probe our positions, and when they do, we kill them or we capture them. We start getting information that starts leading us, so we've literally done almost what I would call a "classic infiltration attack" followed by a search and attack operation to basically spread out and now lock down control of this area. So then I told all the companies, "I'm looking for the nicest house in the entire sector to control and to dominate the area; go find me a house." I've got all these guys looking around for houses, coming back with their nominations on which house we're going to essentially take over and make into a combat outpost. This is AQI city right here, so we'll pay them later for it and that sort of stuff... in the course of rules of engagement.

We found a very nice house, a very nice gentleman by the way...an enormous house. Fox 2/4 found it. I was on foot primarily for about three or four days in here moving around talking to folks. I got down there, and I was like, "Oh man, this house is a honey house right here. This is great!" So Fox 2/4, Rage Company, Captain Smith was his name. He was a great company commander...very, very COIN [counterinsurgency] oriented. We take this house and we build this combat outpost. Now fortunately, Marine companies are much larger than Army rifle companies. So at first, I keep both my Baker Company and Fox Company up there to keep getting after this area and developing things. But eventually, through the month of January, I get to the point where I can just leave Fox 2/4 there and have them hold it.

Now, there's something really important here that needs to be brought out and that is, we didn't do this by ourselves. My Iraqi General had been met by a former Iraqi General, and I don't remember the guy's name, but he had been like a Three Star General. Well, his stuff was over here [in Julaybah]. Well this guy had come in and had started shaping some deals with my brigade commander, and he said, "Hey look, I want my area back. I want AQ out, and I want my area back." And so my Iraqi Brigade Commander brings me in and he introduces me to this guy and says, "This guy will bring in 30 fighters that can positively identify everything in this area." We didn't want to go to this area unless we could get Iraqis who are going to walk me around and point out all the bad guys, point out all the caches, and help me figure out, no kidding, how to hang on to this area. Otherwise, it would be a waste of time. So, I cut this deal with this guy. Again, [it was] the same deal. I was like, "I'm telling you right now, you double cross me, I'm coming after you, and I'm coming after your family. I'm coming after your house. I know where you live!" Just to emphasize that I am not playing around here. This is our last chance to

take this area down. He says, "Oh no, no, no!" So, I did some other things to vet the guy and make sure he was the real deal. So, before we go on this infiltration, I now have 30 guys that live in the area, and they're commanded by this former General, who gets to travel with me all night long by the way! [07:42]

Knarr: Was that the former General's house?

Ferry: It was not his house, but he lived very close nearby. He had relatives in this area. Again, this is all Sunni area and very heavily populated by well-educated Sunnis either from the military or professionals, engineers, or accountants, so forth and so on. They were very highly educated compared to these areas over here [Sofia]. And AQI had a strong, strong grip on these guys...a very strong grip on these guys in here. So I go in with this force of 30 guys I have split out. Every rifle platoon has got a couple of these guys, you know. They're ready to take them to the targets and point out everything on these targets. This is really what I call a Combined Joint Operation. I put a lot of combat power into it. I also had Iraqi Platoons embedded into each of those companies to include the SEALs. The SEALs had their own Iraqis that I had switched off to them for the same deal. All of them had these guides marked with engineer tape, and they were under very strict supervision. We were concerned that they were going to go in and try and assassinate and kill people, so they had to be very closely supervised.

That's how we took down Julaybah. I want to say by about mid-February timeframe or so, I got Fox 2/4 very firmly entrenched in this area. The population was really hard to flip in here, really hard to flip! The first thing we did in an operation was, "Where's your Sheikh?" They would say, "Well, you know..." I'm like, "I don't want to hear excuses. Where's your Sheikh?" "Well, I've got so and so" And Allan would be like, "He's not the real Sheikh. I want to see the real Sheikh, and I want to see him right now." I said, "You either go get him or we're going to have issues for you."

It actually took me about two/three weeks to actually find somebody who could actually pass off as a real sheikh and start negotiating with this guy. I don't remember his name right off hand, but Allan will remember his name. This was the real guy, the tribal leader for the Albu-Fahad Tribe. Allan will remember all of these tribal names. This guy was actually in Jordan. We were really getting into tribal politics in here now. We were really, really, really embedded with tribal politics. Everybody was all the way from pretty much like platoon sergeants and above.

The Albu-Fahad Tribe was very well educated. They had lots of money, and lots of construction companies. They had lots of former Military officers...guys that could, if you wanted them to, actually run things around here. Over a period of time and with the help of my former General Officer here and probably some help from General Allen and some other folks that were doing things that I wasn't aware of, we convinced this sheikh to come

back into this area. When he came back into this area he and I had some long chats over chai and chow along with my Iraqi General. My Iraqi General was the guy I also used as my recruiter in the Iraqi way. So, between my sheikhs and my Iraqi General Officer, they were my, if you will, my IO [information operations]. They were my recruiters, and I provided the muscle behind all the stuff. They convinced this guy to stay here, and as soon as he arrived and he put out the word, they flipped, immediately flipped. Again it was the same deal, "Hey look. I will help you, but you have to help me. Don't help me, you're done! And oh, by the way, now that they know you're back here, AQI will probably kill you. So if you don't have my help right now, you're done." [11:31]

So, it was kind of a Tony Soprano-ish arrangement with very, very good intentions. All of my guys from down at lower level, they got it. Younger level soldiers, NCOs, and Lieutenants know COIN better than most of our General Officers do right now. From the ground level, they get it. They completely get it! So my guys were all getting into HUMINT and dealing with the tribes and do this, and doing that, and being very more precise. It was just a true joy to watch it.

Anyway, these guys completely flipped. So now that I've got all these tribes, all these areas down here, they're a complete mix of tribes. So then I started to tee up. This was about the time that MacFarland was getting ready to leave. I was getting ready to turn my attention back to the heart of the city, which was still the heart of darkness. I'd been taking a lot of contact and a lot of efforts down here. 1/6 was replaced by 2/7, and was also having their own set of issues over here. These areas had gotten so good, my friends over at SOF were chasing targets up over in this area, up over in here. These guys were starting to push out of these areas and were starting to expose themselves in some of these non-urban areas over here. We were synchronizing all these efforts. We were also synchronizing the efforts that we had going on here with the tribes with the OGA Chief of Base.

So, every week I went across, and I talked to the [removed] SOF guys, the SEALs, as well as the Chief of Base to kind of coordinate our efforts, not only with the tribes, but also with targets and with what a long term future would look like in conjunction with my Brigade Commander, Colonel MacFarland. He was getting ready to swap out now with John Charlton. 1/1 and 1/3 [1st BCT/3rd Infantry Division] conducted their relief in place, and part of my mission while they conducted their relief in place was to stay real, real active and very, very offensive in my area to keep these guys heads down to allow these two brigades to swap out in these other areas. In February we did a series of targeted raids that were much, much more precise, because I was starting to get some real good intelligence. I was able to go after targets with a much smaller sized force and a much better Iraqi face on these things. I was going in a little bit softer now, because I had much better intelligence going after these little low level targets. We were still getting a lot of firefights, but we were starting to isolate this area now.

Okay, so the first thing, John Charlton wanted to do, and I knew it was coming because it was the next logical step, was to take down the Mula'ab and the Sina'a area. John Charlton was another great Brigade Commander, and he was highly supportive of my battalion and my ability to command. So what I did was, again, I had to strip down combat power. I left Fox 2/4 in Julaybah. I think I had Charlie Company holding down all of Sofia, which was a huge risk, because there was still a lot of crap going on there. So I basically had A Company, Dog Company, 1st and 2nd IA Battalions, along with Echo 2/4, who was still in the Sina'a holding that down. I was going to go in there and isolate and clear out the Mula'ab. This was a real major, major combat op for my battalion. It was quite frankly, the week I took the most casualties. That was the week that was kind of described in some of the documents that I gave you. [15:25]

Kind of kicking that week off, I was coming back from Camp Ramadi on the southern route that we used to use to kind of bypass here. This place was going to be so bad I was like, "We can't just go in there *ladidah* with everybody on line and just clear this thing out. We'll completely miss the enemy. "So what I had done was create a target matrix of places where I believed all the high pay off targets were inside these neighborhoods here. I used all the contacts I had developed with my staff and all my company commanders and such. My idea was instead of just going in there face first, let's be a little more precise here and let's cull the herd up a little bit and soften this place up a little bit. They had defensive positions here. Sub surface IEDs were buried all through the city. Early on in the deployment, I had a tank destroyed down here. That was actually right before I took command. My tank was destroyed down here by an IED, so this was no kidding...it was a bad area.

I called it 'Night at the Raids,' and over a course of about three days, I probably hit about ten targets in a span of about three hours per night. I used my Navy SEALs, my A Company, my Dog Company, and my Assault CP was out every night and I used my Iraqis all combined. 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 then we were backed up by vehicles and things like that. I also had Bravo 1-26 down here, so I actually had three companies down in this area, plus Iraqis and they had their Bradleys. 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. Again, that is now causing more intel to come up that I was picking up. My SEALs were picking it up through their HUMINT sources, and I was getting more intel over here from the SOF guys who were observing my area closely with some of the assets that they had.

So we took a break to just take a breath. I went over to Camp Ramadi. Unfortunately, on the way back my ACP [Assault Command Post] was hit on the southern route by a large, deeply buried IED at night time in an area where we shouldn't have had one, but they did. They got in there and killed my scout platoon leader Sergeant Josh Hager in the ve-

hicle right in front of me. It wounded a couple other guys. So then I was isolated in, as you can tell, a very bad part of town, with just my Assault CP, which is my scout platoon. I also had Jim Minick, the MiTT leader, with me that night. We used to go to meetings together over at Camp Ramadi. D Company who was down in this area here tried to send out a QRF. I didn't have real good comms with them. Like I said, I made a couple of mistakes that night. We were trying to deal with a situation here.

I was right there at the point of impact, and I was trying to get this QRF that was coming in to not [come], because I knew there was another IED. I was like, "There's another one. I'm telling you there's another fricking IED in here. They always come in pairs. Don't come into the target area. We're okay right now." I could not make comms, and no one could make comms with this platoon. So this platoon was coming. They had their battalion commander allegedly in contact, so they were coming. I couldn't stop them. They hit another large, deeply buried IED with their lead armored personnel carrier, their APC, and they had M113's. It killed one guy immediately and it eventually killed another guy who died of wounds. Then I had more wounded guys laid out all over the place. I brought down a couple of tanks, and eventually we sort the whole thing out. So we were talking about doing all this stuff, but this was coming with casualties and KIAs. My Assault CP got hit pretty hard, and oh, by the way, the next day we were supposed to attack. This was not a real fun week. It was a tough week for the battalion. [19:50]

Fox 2/4 was getting in heavy contact every night. The enemy knew what I was doing, because they figured it out on their own or just because I was working with Iraqis. Word gets out, and I know that. So they were pushing me hard up here in the Sofia area, pushing me hard in Julaybah, and they were pushing me hard down in Sina'a. Every single night we were having battles back and forth with my elements that I had left up here. In the meantime, we were trying to hit all these areas down in here. So we cleaned all that up. I think I was then up to three KIAs for that week. The next night, we got everybody all lined up. This is the night of the big huge attack. Our plan in the Mula'ab area was basically to... I've got Camp Corregidor here. I've got Michigan coming in here. The Sina'a up in here, and I've got the Iskan here. So 1/6 and the other units basically isolate this whole area up over here. I'm watching the road down here.

Mula'ab's been cleared a couple of times, trust me. I asked my Sergeant Major, "How have you guys cleared the Mula'ab before?" Because they know we're coming. They know how we're going to do it, because we've done it before. He's like, "Oh yeah, they know. We'd always cleared it like this or like this." Well, it made sense, because you've got your friendly elements over here. So, I said, "Okay, we're going to completely throw them off." Oh, by the way, we'd been hitting targets over in the Iskan as well. That battle space is now cut to me. So I said, "What we're going to do is we're going to attack. We're going to throw barriers down here. I'm going to attack in through multiple direc-

tions, again. I'm going to get companies up here and here and basically cut this thing off. We're going to throw barriers down, and I want to attack at the opposite direction." I did that because I had all these friendly units over here. I was like, "Well, the one friendly unit I can control are my own guys and my own FOB." So when I basically gave the order, everybody here and here, up in combat outposts, hunker them down, get them in cover, stop all movement. That way any spill over fires that were coming up over here, at least I had control over, because I had to take care of that.

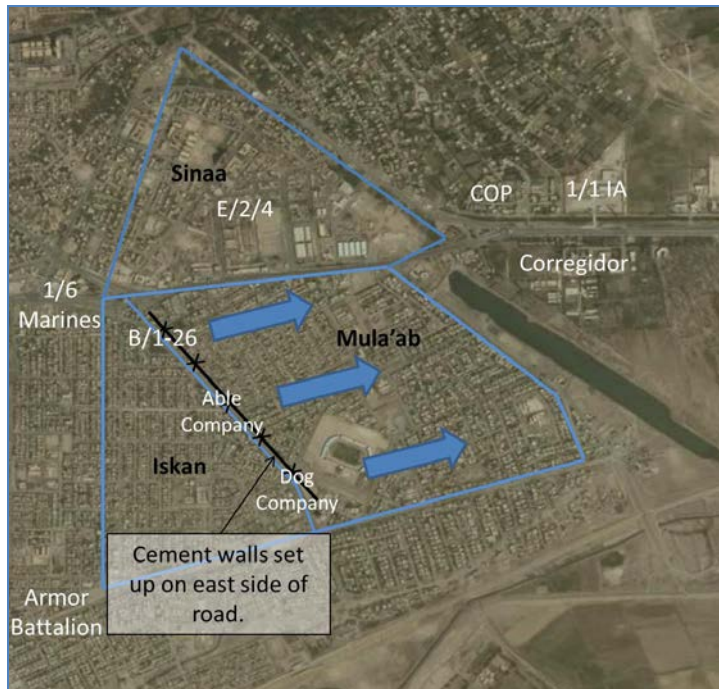


Figure A-5. Mula'ab Area of Ramadi

So that's what we did. I infiltrated up. A Company was supposed to come down here into the middle. D Company was supposed to come down here [south] and then Bravo 1-26 up here. [See Figure A-5] Basically this turned into an all-night firefight, full up, all three companies in heavy contact with their Iraqi Army counterparts to get down into these locations. I'm employing close air support. I'm putting in helicopter gunships, you know, danger close into multiple positions all in here. My ACP is, under fire numerous times in here throughout the night. My TOC is controlling multiple ISR platforms. We finally get down to about sunrise down to these locations. I'd

taken I think at least one more KIA 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 loading down 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. [23:38]

Knarr: Who was giving you engineer's support?

Ferry: First off, I had my own Engineer Platoon that was with me all the time. I got a couple of 10K forklifts. I had one of my own. I think I had two 10K forklifts working and then this massive engineer package. I think MacFarland used to call it Combat Outpost in a box. Well, it was a big long wall in a box. So, I had my Battalion XO controlling multiple flatbed trucks. We'd already prepositioned a lot of the concrete over here, and we

had done some things to make them think that it was going to go somewhere else, but actually it was designed for the Mula'ab. We had more trucks lined up that were ready to get escorted in and brought in to do this. Once my rifle companies took this down, I had my Tank Company Commander, who was providing QRF, escort all these flatbed trucks in and provide immediate over watch and stuff over these things. This was kind of a cool op, because I was trying to get cement barriers in here to block off all these roads, but I wanted to be able to still shoot over the barriers. So we picked this barrier, I can't remember either Texas barriers or whatever. It was just tall enough that a man can't shoot from behind it, but a Bradley main gun can pull right up to it and look right over the barrier with its thermals and then just take care of business, which is exactly what happened. We had guys coming in here from the Iskan, you know just going nuts trying to keep us from doing this. I had Bradleys and sniper positions up on top of the buildings all up and down here, just moving from barrier to barrier doing, barrier, up, up, up, up drills, just I mean...Firing back into this way.

Knarr: Into the Iskan!

Ferry: Yes. I've got friendly units over here, so I had to restrict their fire. I was like, "Okay, no 50 cal." I've got these guys on the command net] and they had to call out their shots on the command net, so everybody can hear it. I'm not a Bradley guy, but I learned how to use it pretty fast. The 25 millimeter HEDP [high explosive dual purpose] round explodes on contact, which is very bad for the enemy, but it's also good for us, because that helped limit the surface danger zone that was spilling over into the units over here. And again, the units that were over here understood. They got everybody hunkered down because we had this massive fight going on. So these guys with their 25 millimeters were slaying insurgents who were swarming around these walls here. It was quite a fight here. We got this barrier wall in and then everybody in the Mula'ab was like, "Oh Crap," because they're stuck. For sure we had squirters get out, no doubt, but no vehicles got out. So, when we got in here, for about the next three or four days we go through this battalion clearance operation.

We found hundreds of caches, hundreds of deeply buried IEDs, command detonated, IED factories, propaganda factories, AQI torture houses. We found all the stuff that you could think of. This was about a three or four day process of really, really hard house to house clearing. It was so tough that A Company who had taken a number of casualties, were so exhausted that when I was meeting with my Brigade Commander, the Ground Forces Commander from the Marines...I think it was General Gurganus. I've got a picture of him. But anyway, he came down and I gave him the assessment: okay here's what we've done, here's what we're getting ready to do, here's how it's going. They're like, "Hey get after it. Let's go!" Well I kind of told them, I was like, "Man, my rifle companies, they are just worn out." The whole battalion had been fighting for like four

or five straight days on nothing. And so they actually peeled off a rifle company from my sister battalion. I actually RIP'd out one of my rifle companies in the fight and replaced them with a fresh Marine company to continue and push this thing and finish it off. Right after this happened, reporters started poking their heads around us. I had couple that came in from time to time.

Knarr: So this was in March. [28:50]

Ferry: Yes, this is kind of in March. And right about the time we had established this other big huge combat outpost in here and had buried this thing off and really just gained control, we were still dealing with a lot of mortar fire coming in. Were still dealing with a lot of sniper fire coming in. General Odierno helicoptered in and met up with John Charlton. He brought in Brian Williams, I think from NBC. He brought in some press with him and that's actually on the news if you look up Brian Williams...

Knarr: I saw you. I saw it.

Ferry: It's on there. You will see the whole little thing going over there. I loved having General Odierno around. He came to visit our battalion two or three different times throughout the deployment. Of course he had to bring the press around and stuff like that. What was always cool about him was how he always made a point to take us to the side and just talk to us and listen to us... kind of do that no kidding personal, General Officer leadership that I thought he did extremely well. It at least kept me motivated enough to keep doing all this fighting. He got down there and we take him to this combat outpost. We brief him up on basically everything that I've already covered with you to where we got to here. I showed him the Task Organization that I had, because I literally had this brigade sized organization. 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 it a little bit! You know? And Charlton inherited this. There were a lot of really good reasons why it was like that. And we were effective with it. But Odierno looked over to Colonel Charlton, and said, "Dude, you need to peel some of this combat power away and get some more command and control in here." Rightfully so, he could see we were probably a little stretched. We were pulling it off, but we were a little stretched. If I was a Brigade Commander, I am not sure if I would have done it, but whatever! I was having a great time.

Knarr: It worked. [31:07]

Ferry: I was having a great time; as good as you can when you're doing this. So he got in there, and we laid the whole thing out for him. This was truly the hammer and the nail in the coffin for AQI in the city.

Knarr: Well that finished Ramadi, didn't it?

Ferry: Just about. The problem was that I still was taking a lot of mortar fire and sniper fire from this last little pesky little area called the Al Iskan. Anybody that hadn't made it out had gone into here. We knew they were desperate, and they were trying to figure things out. So, like I said before is I was locking this thing down, waiting for 2/5 Marines to arrive in country. Part of what was happening was that there was an armored battalion over in this sector from John Charlton's Brigade.

Knarr: We have Bear Johnson down there right?

Ferry: No, Bear Johnson was here initially. He had been replaced. I can't remember the name of the Battalion Commander down here, but he had an armored battalion. Quite frankly, he didn't have enough infantry. He had plenty of vehicles and all that stuff. These places were taken down by a lot of infantry, not a lot of vehicles. Just a few vehicles and support, a few tanks and support, a few Brad's. This was done by infantry men on foot, in your face, and all that sort of stuff. He just didn't have that. So, Charlton rightfully said, "Hey, I am going to put 2/5 Marines in here and just flood this area and finish it off." Well, 2/5 Marines kept getting delayed. In the meantime, I was taking casualties from the Iskan. This was a very difficult decision for me, because my battalion was very tired. I took five KIA's that week alone to include my own Platoon Sergeant from the scouts. I had been in continuous contact myself, personally, with my Assault CP pretty continuous now over several weeks, and we were tired. We were very combat fatigued. We were still trying to hold down this huge area. But every day, I was getting casualties. So my Sergeant Major and I talked about it and finally I went over. I was worried that if my Soldiers and my Marines perceived that I had volunteered to go and do another major operation that they would perceive that as I was trying to maybe grab too much or I guess showboat or whatever it was. I mean we fought well, but it came at a cost. If it was going to be two more weeks I was like, "Man that's another two weeks that I am going to take casualties every day from this place. Is it worse to go in and do another op and just finish it off and take a few casualties or just stay there and take more and more casualties?"

Finally I had another kid from my Baker Company loose both legs, fighting along this wall area here. I was like, "screw that! We're going to go in there, and I'm going to pound the crap out of that area. "I went over and told the Brigade Commander, "I want in there, and I want in there now!" So I basically lined up Baker Company on one side with 2nd IA Battalion and Dog Company on this side. Then it was isolated on this side by the armored battalion that was over here. We basically went in here, where we had some good fire fights on that one, too. This place is probably the most lethal fight that we had, but by the time all my Rifle Companies had been through all this contact, they were good! They were very precise, and they were very, very good tactically at pinning down an enemy in a building and going in there and killing him. I didn't take any U.S. KIAs. I had two of my Iraqi Army, and I called them mine, two of my Iraqi Army Lieutenants were killed leading their

platoons. A number were wounded, but no U.S. KIAs. And we killed for sure 18 insurgents. I know because we counted them. The people normally would take casualties after you killed them and take them into their houses and stuff. The population was then at the point where they didn't want to touch them. These guys got left out in the street dead where we actually had to go get them and return them back to take care of them. They wouldn't even touch them. They were like, "No, Al Qaeda. I'm not touching them!"

Knarr: They'd had enough. [36:04]

Ferry: They were at a point where, "I don't even want to be associated with these guys." There was a huge CMO [Civil Military Operations] effort behind this stuff. For example, we used to have, we called them 'CA Speedballs,' so any place where my platoons had to spend the night or take a break, they'd order up the speedball. A speedball would be pushed into them, and they would leave a speedball, which basically fed a large Iraqi Family, probably for about a month. It was filled with Iraqi food, chai, sugar, and all the things that they needed, as the Iraqis eat. Plus, we paid them. I can't remember how much money it was, we basically paid them rent. Then my platoons were ordered to make sure that, as best as they could, they tried to clean the houses up. You know, platoons tend to make houses a mess, but they'd do their best to clean it up, pay the family, thank them, and then leave this big huge speedball for them and they'd write their name down. People were inviting us to come, "Hey come stay in my house!" That was one example.

This thing was again hand in hand. As we were going through and we were doing these clearances, we were trying to find out, who are the sheikhs, who are the local leaders, who was the neighborhood leader, where are your engineers, where are your electricians, where are your guys who used to operate these dump trucks? Where are all these guys? We were starting to pull in this information. This was now where my Iraqi battalions really, really came into their own. I would have the Iraqi Battalion Commanders along with their Company Commanders take the lead. In this clearance I actually had 1/1, my 1st Iraqi Army Battalion, as my main effort battalion to do this clearance. I had rifle companies up on the side, again with a mix. But this was kind of big deal for my Iraqi Army General. I said, "General, your Battalion is the main effort." So for the Task Force, 1st Battalion, they are the main effort, and everybody else is there to support them in their clearance operations.

Knarr: They must have been proud!

Ferry: I gave them the toughest part of the city. Now, obviously they had lots of back up, but it was a really big deal for them. The Battalion Commander there, he and I again were very good friends. He also had a lot of combat experience. Boy, he was an absolute master at talking to the people. He went in there, not just in this kinetic way, but in a very deliberate approach. The General and I had already premade our own information opera-

tion messages. We had flyers that were in Iraqi Arabic. I had them vetted by the sheikhs up here. My information operations messages were supposed to get approved up in Baghdad. I was like, "Hey, screw that. This is a commander's message. I can say whatever I want to the people." So I actually had a couple one or two of my good sheikhs actually help formulate this letter. On the back of it was a letter from the sheikhs that said, "Hey, Al Qaeda is out of here. We're going to take our city back over...Da, da, da, da." So we're handing them all this stuff out on the street, close up and personal.

Okay so that was a long time, but that took us up to about April of 2006, early May 2006, and that's how we took down Ramadi. And that closed out, if you will, the super kinetic phase. And then from about April to October, we went into a, what I'll call the "hold and build phase." There was extreme battle damage all throughout Ramadi. I mean, you've seen it, it was just unbelievable. It almost makes you cry just to look at it. The one good thing about that was, now money was starting to come in from various sources. We used a lot of our CERP [Commanders Emergency Response Program] money now to help them pick up all the rubble, to help them bring the sewers back up, to help them bring the power lines back up, to help them get their schools stood back up, to help them get their lives back to normal. We went through a period, and Colonel Charlton was the lead in this, to stand the city government back up. The City Center was stood back up with the Justice Center and all that sort of stuff. From our side, our responsibility was to get all these tribes represented.

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 fair, the tribal way. That was just so cool to watch. 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. So this whole time between April and October was this whole period of now building on what we had. AQI basically had to go underground in our area and throughout the city. They were still there, but it was a non-permissive environment for them. They had to operate under cover to even get into these areas, even communicate in these areas. Anytime they did get in there and got exposed, a lot of times, they'd just get snapped up by local folks.

The other key thing we did during this phase is build a police force. [42:11] I went from zero police to about 1,500 police. They were all recruited from the local tribes. I started getting combat power peeled away from me, because A, I didn't need it anymore, and B, there were other things to do with it. I reorganized my area. I basically matched up each rifle company with an Iraqi Army Battalion. I had three of them. They had their different sectors in here. I had one company here, one company here, and one company out here, and one company here. Basically, I matched them up with police stations, so you had a

company, a rifle battalion of Iraqis, and then you had one, two, or maybe even three police stations and they had to operate as a team.

One of my companies was kind of my QRF/Training Company, Dog Company, and I ran my own little police training academy. We ran the first couple of them with US instructors, and then after that the Iraqi Army Brigade ran the police training with us just watching. So I was, "Hey General, these are Iraqis. You guys know how to do this stuff. You guys train the police. "He's like, "Absolutely!" So we trained a cadre of Iraqis from the Iraqi brigade to actually run this little thing. Simultaneously across they had another Police Academy on Camp Ramadi. Then we would rotate guys out of the police force to go out to either Jordan or eventually over in Camp Habbaniyah they started running a larger Police Academy. Over time, we went through a couple different police commanders. We struggled a little bit, because the police had their own chain of command. Charlton's Brigade had a Lieutenant Colonel who was supposed to run all police, but at the end of the day, it was like, "Hey, if you're in my sector, you work for me." Because I was the only guy that could really stay on top of them to make sure that they were doing what they were supposed to do.

Knarr: Makes sense.

Ferry: We eventually got police stations built and a relatively professional police force that, over time, developed. We did some raids and stuff, which I'll get to, but I handed my sector off from that brigade sized organization off to a Marine rifle company and the police. I gave the Agricultural College back. That's how good it got there. Starting about October through December things were so good. It may have been General Gurganus was his name, I would like to think, he kind of liked me and he liked my battalion, because you know the Marines, from their perspective, had seen a lot of different battalions. Their experience was mostly with the armored and mechanized battalions that just didn't have enough combat power to get on foot, which is a little anti-Marine-ish if you will. Quite frankly it's anti-light infantry-ish, which is where I grew up and that's the kind of battalion I had. So, he just loved the fact that I've got this Army battalion that A, they like to fight, A, they win, and A, they get it done, and A, they look more like my own rifle battalions than they do this armor battalion.

We hadn't been in a fight for probably about five or six months and quite frankly we were getting a little bored. Boredom was good, but you know, it causes other things like complacency and things like that. So he said, "Hey Chuck, you think you guys could do some air assault operations?" I'm like, "Well of course we can do air assault operations. That's what we're built for." And we'd already done a couple during this time period here. He said, "Okay." So I think we did about three or four, I'll call them "battalion minus out of sector Air Assault raids". Basically what I had done was I recruited police in here. One of the elements I recruited, I called them my Special Police Force. My Special Police Force consisted of about 50 guys, and they were hand selected from guys that I knew had been

former Saddam era Intelligence/Special Police Officers. These guys were incredibly good. They had their own HUMINT sources, because that's what they did. They were experts at it. I wanted them to recruit at least two or three guys from each of the tribes, so this small group of 50 represented probably about 20 different tribes. This small group had access now, because they were from all of the different tribe areas. I could just put my finger on a map: "What tribe is that? Oh, that's that tribe. Who do we have that can go in there and do a close target recce [reconnaissance]? Oh I've got Joe and Jim Bob." We'd set them up with our policemen. We would send them in under cover. They'd just go visit their relatives. We might give them a GPS or a phone or something like that, and just have them go visit their relatives and go find out what was going on in the area. They'd come back out, get with my intel guys, and they'd lay out a full IPB [intelligence preparation of the battlefield] of who's there, what's going on, where's the cache, and all this stuff.

So, we did these out of sector raids. My police force had been trained on how to do this special type of reconnaissance. They were very good at doing HUMINT, more importantly, they were very good at building what we called target packets. Even more importantly, they built prosecution packets before we went into the area. We'd find out who was there. And so with this unit here, which was run by an extra special guy who used to be a Lieutenant Colonel, the Iraqis now would build prosecution packets and evidence packets on guys before we went into an area. Now we're getting even more precise, even though it's out of our sector, we already had guys in these areas, and so now these guys that have done all these target recces, some of them stayed up on the target area, then we'd link up with them later. The main commander would normally go with me. Then we would Air Assault into this area and then drive in with vehicles and stuff to isolate. We basically dropped into these AQI infested areas that were kind of butted up between Baghdad and Ramadi, that little triangle right there, and just raise all kinds of havoc. Now I couldn't stay there, however. I mean we really put a shellacking on some AQI guys that thought they were safe. Again, a lot of times I coordinated this with the Special Operations and the agency type guys, but we were able to drop into these areas we knew who we were going after. It was a combination of Americans and Iraqis in all of the maneuver elements. Instead of having THT, American THT, or if you will...

Knarr: Your HET?

Ferry: Battlefield Questioning Teams.

Ferry: I had my Iraqis. My Iraqis were my THT Teams, and oh boy they were good! [49:39]

They had already set up how they were going to do everything. We'd police up a group of local military aged males, and just temporarily hold them. We would be as polite as you can be in that environment. You could almost see them snickering to themselves, "Ah, these Americans, they don't know nothing!" Well, in would walk my Iraqi THT Team with

my Iraqi Special Police Commander and you could just see their faces just drop, “Oh crap!” So the Commander would just turn to me, “Oh yeah, that guy right there, that’s this guy right here.” We caught intact a ten-man IED-producing cell in the act. We caught the whole cell all in one shot! It was just a gold mine. The only reason we were able to do that was because we worked these counterinsurgency tenants of finding out what the Iraqis talents are and using them and using all these other little out of the box ideas to employ these guys. If we had come in with an air assault with just an American unit and the Iraqi Army guys, we wouldn’t have found 75% of the stuff that we found. We had guys that literally walked us to an AQI torture chamber that was buried under the ground. The only way you would know it was there was because some guy had to know exactly where it was at and take you to it. So, we had some tremendous success doing that.

At the same time, however, my battalion was exhausted. We were at about the thirteenth or fourteenth [month] mark of the deployment. We were all extremely tired and very worn down. At the same time that we were doing these fly away raids, we were trying to hand over our area. I had the mission to turn Camp Corregidor back over to the Iraqi Agricultural College. So while we were doing all this Air Assault stuff, disrupting AQI outside of our area, which essentially was also protecting this area by the way, we were trying to go through the throws of getting the battalion ready to redeploy and basically hand over the entire sector to nothing but a bunch of police and the Marines. [52:18]

So, that was a very challenging time for us. On one of our air assault operations I had a couple of guys trying to move a cache. A guy by the name of Sergeant Schoff from Dog Company was killed by this cache that exploded. There were a number of other casualties. My Physician’s Assistant, who had flown in with us, was almost killed. He fortunately has mostly recovered now. That was a pretty challenging time. Finally, I went to my Brigade Commander, Colonel Charlton, who was a very, very aggressive commander. He was all about pursuing Al Qaeda even outside of his sector. The Marine MV-22s had just come in. They hadn’t done any air assault operations yet. We had just been continuously doing air assaults with both Marine and Army helicopters like they were going out of style, and we were getting pretty good at it. Colonel Charlton said, “Hey Chuck, what do you think about doing at least one last mission on these MV-22s, so it will be like an Army unit that does the first air assault on these Marine MV-22s?” I’m like, “Sir, we are done. DUN, stick a fork in it. If you order me to go do it, of course I’ll go do it, but I’m just telling you we’re exhausted. I’m worried that we’re going to make another mistake,” like we’d done with that cache I was telling you about. He said, “Okay. Focus on turning your area over and getting ready to go back home.” So, that’s my battalion’s story right there.

Knarr: That’s something. You really had a full 15 months. Incredible!

Ferry: Yeah. And then that little letter I gave you, that little memorandum for record, that’s a memorandum for record, because General Odierno was going to come down and pin on

medals and stuff like that just before we went home. That memorandum was actually directed to him, which kind of rolled up all the different stuff that went on there.

Knarr: And then of course your Unit Valor Citation had a lot of stuff in it too.

Ferry: Yeah and I think the Valorous Unit Award was actually, for whatever reason, never accepted. I don't know why at this point. Colonel Charlton actually wanted to put us in for a Presidential Unit Citation.

Knarr: Yeah, in fact, that's what I was wondering, why it wasn't put in for that.

Ferry: There was discussion about it, and I'm not even going to try to get into the politics. I don't know why. I felt in my heart that I would have traded any medal that I have ever gotten in my entire life in the Army to definitely include the Silver Star, that I got that I don't really think I deserved, to get that Presidential Unit Citation for the unit. It would have meant a lot to a lot of guys. But, that just wasn't in the cards. I think we ended up getting an overall Navy Unit Citation, kind of with all of the other units that had operated in the Anbar Province at that time, but that doesn't really matter now.

Knarr: Incredible! What a story!

Appendix B. Iraqi Perspectives

Notes on conventions used in the transcripts

- Ranks. The first time a service member is identified, their rank is spelled out; subsequently, their rank is abbreviated in accordance with their service affiliation. Ranks are spelled out in the footnotes.
- Time “hacks” on transcripts correspond to video so they can be used to identify areas to use as clips for the movie, the DVD and for further research into specific areas.
- For al- or Al- or Al in a proper name: When “al” is in the middle of the name, in a last name, for example, it should be lower case with a hyphen, such as Nuri al-Maliki. If the name is by itself then the “al” is capitalized, as in Al-Maliki.
- The majority of tribal names begin with the term *albu*, a formal characterization of *the*. When the tribal name is included in an individual’s name, the prefix “al-” is added and the tribal name changes slightly, usually with the addition of *awi* or *i* at the end. For example, Albu-Risha becomes al-Rishawi and al-Assafi denotes a member of the Assaf tribe or Albu-Assaf.

13 May 2010

Subject: Interview with Sheikh Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi of the Albu-Souda tribe on the Awakening

Sheikh Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi is the contesting sheikh of the Albu-Souda tribe in Sofia. The Albu-Souda is a small tribe primarily located to the east of Ramadi along the Euphrates. Although reportedly anti-coalition after the fall of Saddam, the tribe is clearly supportive of the Coalition since the battle of Sofia in November 2006. During the battle of Sofia, Sheikh Jassim with 17 fighters held off a much larger Al Qaeda force, estimates range from a hundred to hundreds. During the battle Sheikh Jassim's house was burned down and he lost seven fighters and 10 other tribe members, to include women and children. The immediate response of 1-9 Infantry, commanded by LTC Charles Ferry, US Army probably saved the remainder of the tribe and sealed Sheikh Jassim's support to the Coalition.



In addition to the interview, Sheikh Jassim escorted us through his village on 21 April, provided us a detailed account of the battle and then graciously hosted lunch at his house along the Euphrates.

On 9 April 2010 Sheikh Jassim was interviewed by Dr. William [Bill] Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC and Lieutenant Colonel David Graves, USMC, at the Diwan at Camp Ramadi. An interpreter was used for the interview. The following is his account of the Awakening.

Dr. Bill Knarr: We are honored that you have come to tell us the story of the Awakening.

Sheikh Jassim Muhammad Salih al-Suwaydawi: I will speak in general and then specifics about my sector.

Knarr: Thank you. You are well known because of the Battle of Sofia.

Jassim: I was responsible for that battle. Mr. Obama called me the "Lion of East Ramadi."

Knarr: To start off could you talk about your background, where you grew up, and your tribe?

Jassim: I am Sheikh Jassim Salih from Albu-Souda tribe. I was born in 1956. I started my elementary education in Sofia and then for my middle education I studied in Ramadi city. After that I volunteered for the Iraqi Air Force as an NCO. I got an equivalent of a mid-

dle school degree from the Army. I specialized in MIG23 and MIG29. I worked in military service for 30 years. Military life educated us on respect and the military; from our tribe we learned generosity, courage and to love our country.

Until the invasion in 2003 when American Forces invaded Iraq and the military was dismantled, we all stayed in our houses trying to make ends meet. I'm a father of 11 kids, and I have a large family of 11 members. Most of my sons and daughters got married. A lot of my daughters' husbands died in the famous battle of Sofia. In the end I had to feed 27 mouths. To add to this, I handled all their matters and all their issues, plus the tribal and the country's issues. [5:11]

Knarr: What caused the insurgency and then the Awakening?

Jassim: The terrorists claimed they were a legitimate resistant, but they were not. They were terrorists that had been backed and paid by Iranian and Syrian intelligence for a special purpose: to prevent democracy from spreading in Iraq, which, they were afraid would trickle down to other countries. In 2005, Al Qaeda started killing people. Every time we met, all the tribe leaders would say, "This is not sufficient, and it's not legal. What they're doing is not ethical, killing people left and right."

The sixth month of 2006, I announced publicly that I am against the terrorists. At that time I started communicating with the Iraqi government in Baghdad. I tried to cooperate with them, because they are responsible for security in Iraq. I did not receive any respectful response from the Iraqi Government at that time. They didn't cooperate with me. We [tribal leaders collectively] said, "We tried to reduce the effect of the terrorists in our AO [area of operations], and the only way to do it is through Coalition forces." That was our last option. [08:10]

On September 14th, 2006, Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha announced a huge meeting and invited all the tribal leaders. A lot of the tribal leaders didn't show up, but I showed up. We all agreed and promised to fight terrorism, to keep the infrastructure of the city, and [to protect] the lives of the Iraqis in the Al Anbar province. At that time my AO was declared the emirate or home of the terrorists and I didn't have enough manpower or resources to fight them openly; I kept in contact with Sheikh Sattar and the Awakening Council Members. [9:42]

On September 28th, 2006, when I was going to meet with Sheikh Sattar and the Coalition forces' representative, I had to swim across the river. I didn't have a boat, and I couldn't walk around, because it was a very hot, terrorist area. I had to swim the Euphrates River even though the river is wide.

On October 28th, 2006, I got a small hand written piece of paper from General Mardi from the IA [Iraqi Army] and one of the American leaders General Zilmer. [11:18] That

piece of paper, a river badge, gave me permission to swim across the river and to carry one hand gun. [See Figures B-1 and B-2] That made my mission much easier, because the Al-Jazeera area [north of the river] was full of Coalition forces, and my AO didn't have any Coalition forces. When I approached any [Coalition] checkpoints I had to do a little charade coordinating with Coalition forces and the Iraqis. They took my gun and badge, and had me raise my hands and be searched, so, in front of the other people I could look as if I wasn't cooperating with Coalition forces.

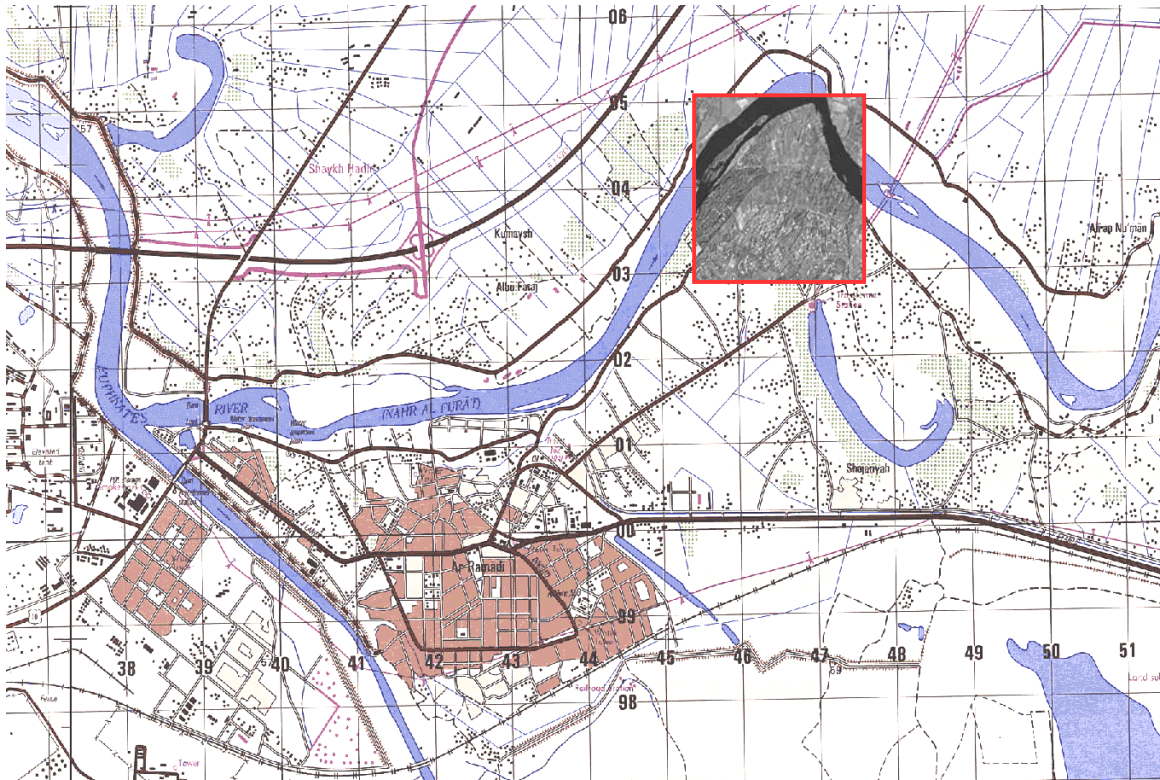


Figure B-1. Map reflecting Ramadi City and Sofia (Shark Fin) area where Sheikh Jassim lived and operated

In one of my meetings with Sheikh Albu-Risha, I met an American captain. We gave him an AKA name, Hisham Albu-Risha. [12:40] We did this because he was extremely concerned about the security situation in Anbar and he was like a member of the family or the tribe. All our communication with the Captain Hisham Albu-Risha, or with the Sheikh Albu-Risha was through Thuraya, or satellite phones. [The captain] helped me out. He gave me rechargeable minutes for the Thuraya phone. We couldn't buy any of these rechargeable phone cards, because they were not allowed to be sold in the market. The only source was the Coalition forces. When I got my own Thuraya phone from Baghdad, I had to sell one of my cows, because I used all my money to purchase weapons and ammunition. I had to sell most of my vehicles and a lot of my herds of sheep or

animal stock. I used the money to arm my tribe for at least a short period of time to prevent Al Qaeda from attacking us. [14:33]



Figure B-2. River Crossing Site North of Shiekh Jassim's home

On September 28th, 2006, I decided to cut Al Qaeda's supply route through my area, so I established checkpoints on all the routes entering my AO.

I had to put 17 of my close family members to control these ECPs, so it would not be infiltrated by the Al Qaeda. At that time I asked for support from Lieutenant Colonel Lechner from the Coalition forces, because he was responsible for the Iraqi Police [IP] in Anbar province. I advised the Lieutenant Colonel that I wanted to open an IP station or substation in my area and that I wanted weapons, ammunition, and an official order, so I could open my IP station in a proper way. It was a compromise and some kind of dealing and wheeling between me and the Lieutenant Colonel. The Lieutenant Colonel said, "I will help you, but you have to give me 25 of your members to be trained in Jordan as IPs." I told him, "I only have 17, and if I give you these 17, who's going to control and protect my area?" [16:49]

The terrorists kidnapped my brother and three of my cousins and killed them and dropped their bodies in the river. When this happened I told Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha

that I would be conducting raids on the terrorist's homes, and I will be executing them. I was in a hard place at that time; I said that I was going to do these raids, but on the same token, I only had 17 guys. I couldn't reach my goals with only 17 guys, and these 17 guys needed more weapons and more ammunition. I also had these four checkpoints, and I was always caught in a dilemma. How was I going to work with only 17 guys and limited ammunition and weapons? So I started with my own sons, doing raids at the houses of terrorists, arresting them, and giving them to Abu-Risha's IP station. That was the only IP station that would accept prisoners or detainees at that time.

When I started delivering detainees to the Abu-Risha IP station, I needed a boat to transport them. That was my only way out. I got permission to purchase a boat, so I could transport detainees from one bank to another bank and up to the police station. I manned it with some of the 17 members I had. Every time I went there, I had to leave one of my tribal members, Sheikh Abbas Abu-Mahal, the brother of my wife, behind. I had to leave him behind me when I went to do the detainee delivery to keep my tribal members feeling safe, that leadership remained there. Either I or Sheikh Abbas would leave [and the other remain], but there would be no power vacancy and the tribe will still have the morale. [20:54]

I stayed with only the 17 guys for up to three months without any help from anybody else. On November 24th, 2006, the terrorist tried to communicate and negotiate with me for the first time. They said they would give back my brother and three of my cousins, if I took out my four check points from the AO. But, we knew that they that had already killed [my brother and cousins]. The negotiation was just to bring back the bodies of these individuals, my brother and three cousins, not to bring them back alive. I told them, "We'll take the checkpoints [down] for 72 hours if you bring back the bodies of my relatives. Just 72 hours. I just need the bodies of them so we can bury them."

At the same meeting, they tried to pay me off, bribe me with money. They offered me one billion Iraqi Dinars. This was because they made a mistake by killing my brother and the three cousins. It's a tribal thing. If you kill somebody, you have to pay them money for that. I asked them, "Where are you getting this money? I need to know where this money is coming from," I said. "I bet Iran is doing very good with you guys, supplying you with all this money." I refused to deal with them, period.

At that meeting there was a plan by these terrorists to kidnap me in that specific meeting, but I was smart enough. I pulled five of the 17 guys I had, and I told them to stay around me as a PSD [personal security detachment]. They [the terrorists] had 14 vehicles with fighters, ready, on standby to kidnap me. I knew that the five guys I had with me were not going to stand up to 14 vehicles with each vehicle containing three to four fighters, so I pulled out of the meeting just before they could execute the plan. I immediately called Captain Hisham Abu-Risha from the Coalition forces. I told the Captain that Al

Qaeda leaders were sitting in this place, negotiating with me to take the checkpoints out. I immediately called him and gave him the exact location. [25:34]

In five minutes there were helicopters all over the place. I instructed the Coalition forces to hit the house, whoever was in that house. One of the Sheikhs from my own tribe was in the house. He was cooperating with these insurgents. He wanted to pull out of my tribe and make his own sub-tribe, so I told them [the Coalition] to take them out, the whole lot. He just wanted to get rid of me, and that was why he was cooperating with the insurgents. He considered me a tribal rival.

The insurgents advised me during the negotiations that I had one week to think about what my actions would be. They told me that if I agreed with the Mujahedeen and the resistance and if I stopped standing up in their faces, they would give me and my sons any positions in the government that I wanted. I refused. I also knew that if I ran away from the fight I would be called a coward. I had to stand there and fight. [27:54]

November 25th, 2006, the day after the meeting, we had 250 insurgents try to attack my property, the land where my tribe is, with all kinds of weapons. At the beginning of the attack, they launched 62 mortars rounds. We kept fighting even though the first mortar wave killed a couple of my guys. They were stronger than us; they had more weapons and more people. The battle started at 1:00 PM in the afternoon and lasted until 10:00 in the evening. I called Sheikh Abdul Sattar Abu-Risha, and I asked for backup. I told him that my AO was being attacked. I told the Sheikh that I was running low on ammo, and I need any kind of help, either more ammo or Iraqi Army [IA] or Coalition forces. The Coalition forces sent some helicopters on top of the battlefield. Through Sheikh Sattar Abu-Risha, I communicated with one of the Coalition forces' officers. I didn't know him, but the Sheikh Sattar told me that this officer was responsible for the air raid. When I talked on the radio with the Coalition forces' officer, he asked me to locate any target and he would take it out.

Because of the long period of time that the battle lasted, from 1 to 10 p.m., some of my fighters only had 10, 15, 20 rounds, so we were out of ammunition. [Despite] this lack of ammunition, we killed almost 63 insurgents, but they killed seven of my guys and ten civilians, females and kids. I told my guys to withdraw from the battle field, so they wouldn't get killed. We ran out of ammo. The insurgents reached my family house, and they burned it down with the furniture and everything inside. They destroyed 11 vehicles. [32:53]



Figure B-3. Remnants of Jassim's house



Figure B-4. Burned interior of Jassim's brother's house next door

At around 10:00 PM Lieutenant Colonel Ferry, Battalion Commander, 1-9 Infantry arrived, and then at midnight on the day of the battle, Captain Hisham Abu-Risha arrived to help. Captain Abu-Risha brought me 25 AK47s and ammunition. The people understood that now I was not alone on the battlefield, it was the Coalition, my tribe and the Abu-Mahal tribe. I had 20 guys volunteer to be with me when they saw this show of force. Now I had 30 fighters, the 20 volunteers, plus ten guys who were left from the original 17. [34:30]

We established a joint operations center between me, the IA, and Coalition forces, and we started executing raids on all the targets in my AO. When we caught any of the insurgents we would pass them to the Coalition forces at the Joint Operation Command. The Joint Operations would pass the individual to [Camp] Bucca or to the airport [for transport to another location]. I asked them, after these guys finished their sentences, to deliver these insurgents back to me, so we could try them for their crimes against the Iraqi people.

Now I need to make a small correction. After I caught these individuals and they confessed, I would deliver whoever attacked Coalition forces or IA to the IA at the Joint Operations Center. But we would hand over the guys who did crimes against my family or my tribe to the Abu-Risha IP station. From the raids, we found huge weapons caches and many terrorists. We delivered whatever we found, all the IEDs, mortars, and mortar rounds, to the Coalition forces.

Slowly we were clearing my area. I had Coalition forces living with me in my AO. Whenever we did a raid, the Coalition forces would give us permission to clear the road in order to engage our target. Because we were wearing civilian uniforms, we didn't have any distinguishing uniforms, so the Coalition forces gave us small patches [points and draws a small area on the center of his chest as if that is where they wore the patch],

for safe passport through their checkpoints. Because most of our raids were at nighttime, I asked Coalition forces to supply me with chem lights [chemical lights, glow sticks], so my fighters would have it with them when they go to the fight.

My AO was divided into 12 areas for 12 tribes or sub-tribes, but it was still my AO. I would get information, for example, that there were five terrorists staying in one sector. So I had to go and make a raid at nighttime. But it appeared that I got a lot of bad information; the people would tell me that there were five or six terrorists in one location. I would communicate with Coalition forces, and tell them I was going to do a raid at a specific time on that night. I would go there, but I would not find any terrorists. I was getting impatient with that. I thought about the people who lost loved ones, and I depended on them to give me the actual intelligence. These guys would never lie, because they got hurt personally from the terrorists. [40:40]

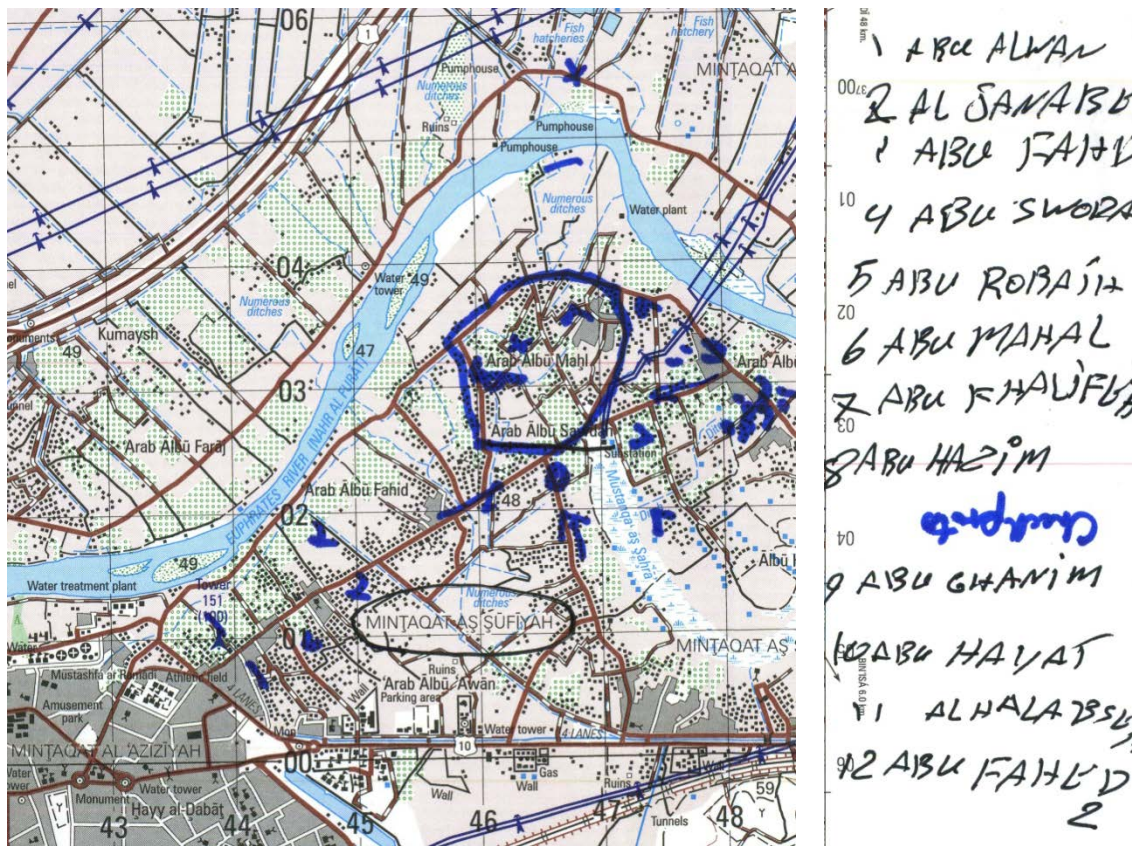


Figure B-5. Shiekh Jassim lists the 12 tribes in the Shark Fin area.

I began thinking, maybe there's a leak somewhere in my tribe. I would go and not find the terrorists. I started thinking that maybe our communications were compromised? I

got confirmation that the terrorists had the ability to listen on our radio phones and walkie-talkie calls, [45:31]. So, I started giving false information on the radio to trick Al Qaeda, because I knew the system was compromised. I would say that I was going to attack Al-Junabi [42:08] area, and then I would actually hit another target, where all the people left and went to that specific target. It's funny, because when I would say I am going to hit that specific area to attack or do a raid to catch five, I would go to the other area and I would find 30!

Within three months I cleared my AO, which consisted of 12 sub-tribes, by using maneuver, secrecy, and intelligence. In one of my raids, I discovered 11 Motorola radios. Some of them had belonged to the Coalition forces and some of them had belonged to the IA. The terrorists obtained those radios by either stealing them or capturing them in a fight where they were left behind in the battle field. This is how they were listening to my communications with the Coalition forces and the IA. This is how I was 100% sure that my communications were infiltrated.

Lieutenant Colonel Ferry used to come to my house all the time. One time he came and asked me, "What's the secret? How did you do this? How can you walk right through your AO without any PSD [personal security detachment] and any protection? How did you clear your sector?" Lieutenant Colonel Ferry would tell me, "I go with my platoons or my force to attack specific target that I have positive intelligence information on, but I cannot find anybody. But you go and find everybody." This is when I provided the Lieutenant Colonel with the 11 radios, and I told him that these radios were compromised from Coalition forces. I said, "That's how I did it. I did not rely on typical communications. I used the old fashioned communication." He was very impressed from my performance in this area. [45:51]

I need to go back and tell you that in the beginning of the fight, there was not a lot of trust between me and the Coalition forces. The Coalition forces had some doubts about why this little man with no power and not enough people under his command [would want] to protect and save his AO, which was in the heart of the Al Qaeda territory, so they had doubts. One week after the battle, Captain Albu-Risha brought some press members to document the battle. On his way to meet with me an IED went off and killed Captain Hisham Albu-Risha and some of his guys [on 6 December Captain Travis Patriquin, Marine Major Megan McClung, MEF PAO and SP4 Vincent Pomante, High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, HMMWV, driver]. I felt like I lost one of my brothers. I sent my condolences to his family, one through the Washington Post and one through the Middle East News Paper.

When it comes down to interrogation with the terrorists, I did the interrogation myself. I didn't depend on anybody. I became a professional technician in taking confessions from suspects. I would tell them that I would give them peace and not hand them over to Coa-

lition forces or IA if they would tell me the truth. I would let them know that I would let them go.

One of the confessions I got was from this person that knew where the hideouts for Al Qaeda were. They withdrew from the Sofia area, and were in east Ramadi in an area called Julaybah [49:31]. He told me exactly where the hideouts were. I contacted Sheikh Jabbar al-Fahadawi.¹ He was conducting the same business in his area that, in the Jazeera area, that I was conducting in my AO. I told him that I got some information from a specific person that was conducting all this business in his AO. I called Sheikh Jabbar and told him, "If you help me, we're together. We're going to destroy and take out Al Qaeda from all the east of Ramadi." [50:23]

Knarr: When was this? [Change of translators, Louie need a break and the cultural advisor stepped in]

Jassim: In the beginning of 2007. To be specific February 2007.

Knarr: Was the Captain's real name Travis Patriquin?

Jassim: I don't know. It's a long a name, but we usually called him Hisham Abu-Risha. I took a suspect, and I recorded him on CD.

I took the suspect and the CD to Sheikh Jabbar. He looked at it, and then he took his forces and went to Julaybah and we arrested 37 of them. It was a very complex operation. Thirty of my fighters and I went by boat from my place to Sheikh Jabbar al-Fahadawi's place. Then we went by boat to Julaybah to fight them. [52:53]

After this happened the Abu-Fahad tribe [north of the river and southeast corner of the Shark Fin] decided to join us. Abu-Fahad tribe was the last one to join to fight the terrorists. We started opening municipality and police guards. Karama Center was the first center to be opened in eastern Ramadi. That was on November 28th, 2006. In March of 2007 we opened three more centers. You can see that it took us five months to open the centers. During these five months, only the Karama Center was open, and we were the ones who were against the terrorists. We did 150 raids. With all these raids, we did not get any casualties, not even injuries, because I was the one who was in charge of doing the planning. The Coalition forces helped a lot with the raids, the security, and with everything. I am very thankful for them.

We had some problems with Lieutenant Colonel Ferry, and it got to a point where he almost boycotted me. But then the IA went back to him, and we took over. He didn't really believe that the way I was doing it was the right way. He got information that I was killing the insurgents, the suspects. He knows that I didn't give him all of the suspects

¹ Abu-Fahad is located north of the Shark Fin and across the Euphrates and in the southeast section of the Shark Fin.

that I captured. The truth is that the insurgents who killed Iraqis, I would not give to him. I gave them to the Albu-Risha people, because executions are allowed in our country. But if the suspects committed the insurgent actions against the Americans, then I would give them to the Americans. So Lieutenant Colonel Ferry was suspicious because he was not seeing all the people.

He also heard from some people that I was cooperating with the terrorists. I let a lot of terrorists go. I heard that there was this insurgent who planted an IED a long time ago. When I went to capture him, I found out that he had a big family with a lot of people depending on him to feed them and everything. I felt sorry for them and let him go. If I did not do that, I would not have been able to secure the whole section with only 17 people. By doing this I gained the trust of other people and tribes. They started coming and joining me because I was merciful to some of these insurgents. [59:57 first video session ends, second begins]

No IED of any kind went off in my section for three years after that. The reason is because they found me very respectful to them, and they knew that if they did anything bad I would have destroyed them.

In our society it's hard for us to understand democracy in this short time. I used to use force and other means at the same time, like carrot and a stick. My relation with the Coalition forces got really good. They came often to visit me at home. Our relationship is good. I did not get a lot of services [Coalition and Iraqi contracts and services] in my section where I am, but still, the security in my section is really good. As a matter of fact, I did not get recognition from the Coalition forces until now. I got 85 informants to give me information about the insurgents in my section and other sections of the Anbar. Fourteen of them got killed in Salah ad-Din Province.

They could not tell by their appearance that they were working for me, because it was a very secretive operation. Because I don't have the money and resources, I had to go from 85 informants to only five, because I could not afford anymore. I felt very bad about that. [05:06] I helped with anti-terrorism in seven provinces: Baghdad, Basrah, Ninewah, Salah ad-Din, Al Hilla, Babil, Diyala, and of course Anbar. My fingerprints were all over these places. Now, because of my limited sources I cannot do it all.

I'm very open, but I know that my informants have to be very secretive. Because of the informants that work for me, we've found more than 4,000 IEDs. The last two months we've found 200 IEDs: 120 in one place and 80 in another place. [7:21]

Knarr: You said in the last two months, what do you mean? Are you talking about the last two months?

Jassim: Yes, till now. If the terrorists find me they are going to cut me into small pieces.

Knarr: I have some questions. On the 24th of November, when the terrorists met you in the house and had the vehicles outside waiting for you, you said the Coalition sent in helicopters? Did they strike the house then when you left? Did you escape and then the Coalition struck that house?

Jassim: It was a house of one of the Sheikhs. They got word not to strike the house, so they waited for the terrorists to leave the house and kill them, but I don't think that they got any of them.

Knarr: I have a map. Can you draw where your area was on the map?

Jassim: Yes. I can do that. This is my new house. The battles happened in this area. When it comes to maps I am very good.

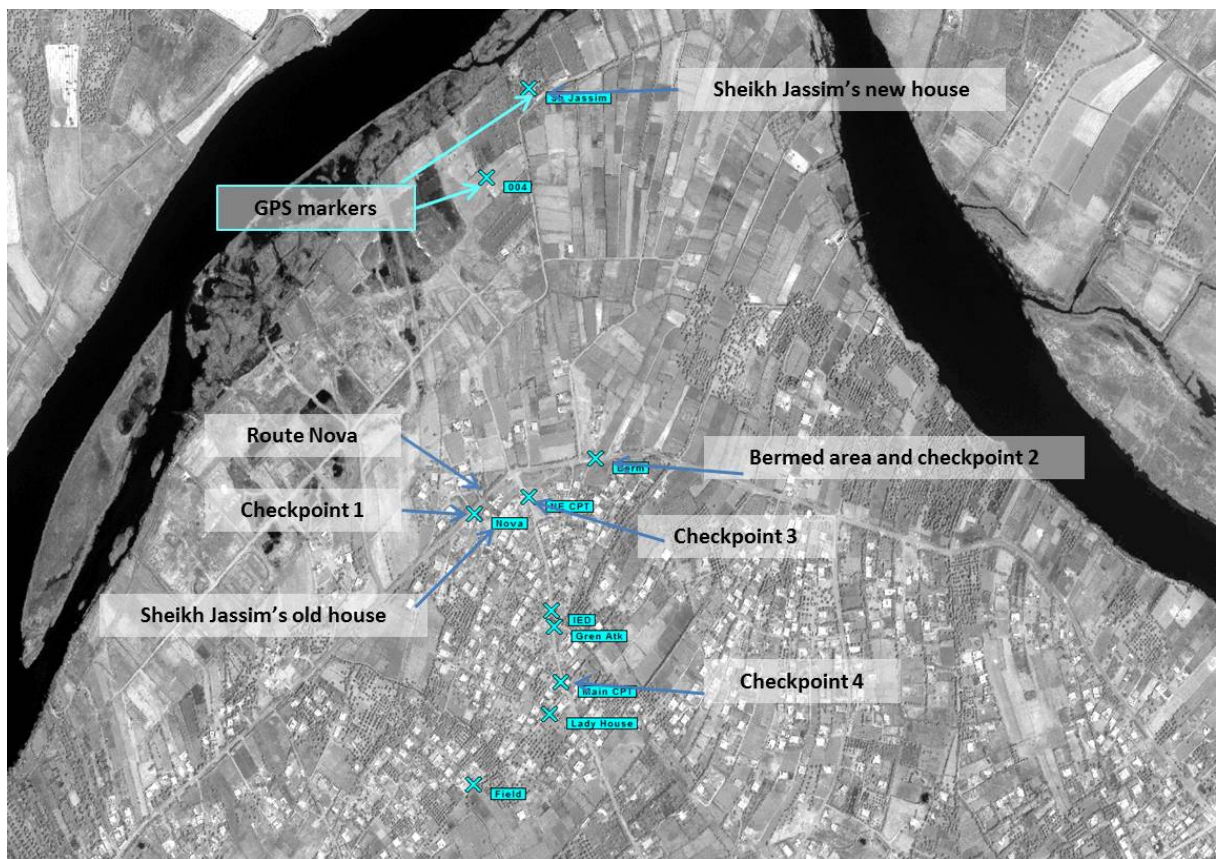


Figure B-6. Map by Sheikh Jassim of the Battle Area in Sofia

Knarr: I would love to see this area.

Jassim: You can visit me anytime.

Knarr: I would like to video tape it, and I would like you to tell me what happened at the different locations.

Jassim: This is Nova Route. I will take you to see where exactly we have the checkpoints, too. Checkpoint from here, here, and here, almost five checkpoints right there. [11:08]

Previously, People came in from the Coalition forces, and I took them on foot to go and checked all these areas.

Don't even think that you can succeed controlling any area if you don't get the local help. Without local help you're not going to succeed.

Any time you want to visit, just let me know. I can give you accurate information. I only own 16 AK47 and one PKC. Those are the only weapons I had when I started, but I gained commitment from the Coalition and the tribes and that is greater than additional weapons. I know the aggressors will lose. They attacked my house and my family. These terrorists, they're going down.

I am ready for any questions. This is the battle that really broke the back bone of terrorism.

Knarr: Yes. I believe that was the final straw. When you talked about swimming the river, where did you swim it, and where was the Jazeera or Albu-Risha IP station?

Jassim: This is where I used to swim from here, and the IP station was here. [15:13]

I used to walk all this way inside the woody areas, so I could reach here. They asked me, "Why did you walk all the way to here?" I walked all the way here, because I didn't know which driver was going to be friendly and which would be a terrorist.

Knarr: What was here? Why did you come here?

Jassim: I had to walk all the way here so I could pick up a taxi driver, and so I could go to Albu-Risha.

This was the checkpoint I used to obtain permission from them to swim over the river. So I would swim over here, walk all the way here, pick up a taxi cab, and go all the way to Albu-Risha. Every time when I left Albu-Risha's compound, Albu-Risha Sheikh Sattar would say to his guys, "Sheikh Jassim's wife should prepare her black clothes, because the minute he leaves here I consider him as missing in action. There's no way he will go all the way to his house safely."

Knarr: Now when the terrorists attacked you on the 25th, where did they attack you from?

Jassim: This is the street. They attacked me from all four corners: from here, this street, and this here, and from here, too. I had only 17 guys and these guys had almost 800. All these terrorists they found fierce, fierce resistance from my guys. It took us from one o'clock in the afternoon till 10 o'clock in the evening to reach my house. That was my old house, before I took this new property. When you come to visit me, I will show you the burned down house and the checkpoints. You can take your own video from all the sites that I am going to show you.

Jassim: From Karama IP station with my guys, I would send some of my 30 guys out with Coalition forces and IA. I would send them with these patrols spreading out from here all the way to the Anbar area. They cleared all this area. Out of my 30 guys, they will have knowledge of who attacked Coalition forces. They can identify terrorists by face. [19:47]

Knarr: When you talked about the 12 areas, and the sub-tries, what area was that?

Jassim: This is Abu-Alwan. This is Janabi. If it was a bigger map, I would be writing.

They have two sides of the street, Abu-Fahad family, even the Abu-Alwan, too. Number six is Abu-Mahal. Abu-Fahad, again; in fact they have two areas.

So this is the 12 sectors of tribes, and each one has its own thoughts, ideas, and situation. So, I gathered all these guys and was successful in joining them to fight terrorism within three months.

My house was open 24 hours; it was busy like you've never seen before. Nighttime would be interrogation all night long, and day time would be welcoming guests and dealing with people who were asking about their family members and their sons. It was a busy house. I have pictures to show you. When you see the way I was suffering at that time, and you will think I am my father, not me. You'll think I am my father.

Just call me and we can arrange a time to visit.

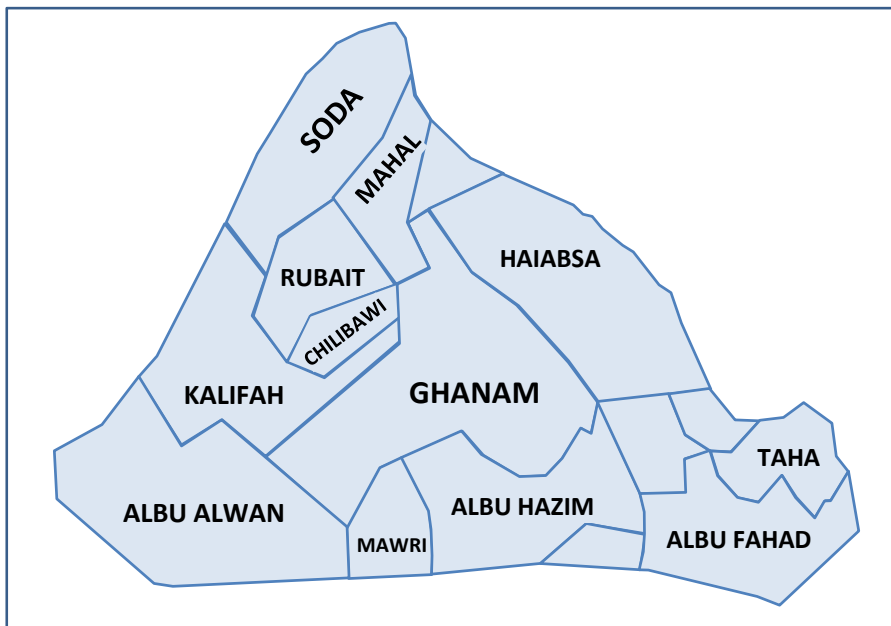


Figure B-7. Tribes/sub tribes in the Sofia area²

² This map was extracted from the Ready First Combat Team (RFCT) briefing. Sheikh Jassim listed 12 tribes: Abu-Alwan, Janabi, Abu-Fahad, Abu-Souda, Abu-Robaih, Abu-Mahal, Abu-Khalifga, Abu-Hazim, Al-

Knarr: Thank you. I am in awe of what you and your people have accomplished.

Jassim: Some of my people are still alive, and you can meet and talk to them.

Knarr: Yes, I would like to have them talk about their experiences.

Jassim: Hopefully when you come in, maybe, you'll have some symbolic gifts that you can give them just to encourage them and give them more morale. We're coming to an era that we don't know what's going to happen with all the political craziness. Symbolic coins. Journey did it from the Marines. He gave them the symbolic coins, and they were extremely happy and proud of these.

Knarr: I don't have any more questions right now. I need to now study this and understand it before we meet next.

Jassim: Please put it in a nice wording, so that history will remember us. [26:20]

Knarr: Thank you. How is your family now? [28:11 on the second audio file but not the .wmv file]

Jassim: They are all good. I wish I could go back to being 18 years old and find some help to assist me, to conquer terrorism. [.wmv file picks back up at 28:35] I had so many informants at the time, but with my lack of assets now, I cannot pay these sources. When you have sources you have to pay them. A month ago, 23 detainees escaped from the Mosul Detention Facility. [29:03] I have information that these 23 guys are entering Ramadi today. But the problem is that I don't have anybody to work with to pass this information to, so I can't close the roads and arrest these guys.

Translator: Sir, [translator is talking to the Captain that is with us] you heard this? They're talking about the 23 detainees that escaped from Mosul area. He has information that they're coming into Ramadi, but he doesn't have any unit that he's working with to pass this information along. They can't do road blocks. He said that we gave up the security agreement too early. We can take some information from him. Maybe we can pass it on to the S2 at the brigade. [30:05]

Jassim: These guys will enter Ramadi from one of the desert roads with the assistance of local terrorists. I don't think your S2 will get that specific information.

I have communication with Captain Cat. Captain Cat: she's on one of the intelligence teams in the Army, not Marines. I'm trying to call her to pass this information, and she's not answering. I'm calling her Terp [interpreter], and I cannot get through on my phone. My phone is not open to pass this vital information.

bu-Ghanim, Albu-Hayat, Albu-Halabsa, and Albu-Fahad. They seem to match the RFCT tribal map except for Albu-Hayat.

Captain: S2's interpreter? You can at least call us, because our battalion has the battle space.

Jassim: If you want more help in Ramadi when it comes to intelligence, you have to do like the Marines did to support me, so I can support my informants. I need fuel for my car, phone cards. By sitting on the side lines doing nothing, assisting nobody, all these sacrifices are going to go to waste and we will be back to square one. Terrorism is returning to Anbar and Baghdad. I think that Anbar is going to have a terrorist related catastrophe. Camp Ramadi will be the first target to be shot by missiles. You can pass it on to your higher ranking officers. Let them pass it on to the higher ranking officer. You have to engage to stop what's going to happen in Anbar. Go back and open the bridges of cooperation with these guys just like before.

Captain: Did he say that he was passing this information on the 23 escaped detainees to the local police station as well?

Jassim: I don't have any trust in the IPs. The only two people I trust are General Baja and Colonel Shaban. I am not going to pass this information. They have so many things to do; they're extremely busy. I did not pass on this specific information to General Baja and Colonel Shaban yet. By the way, if you [Coalition] don't put your hand with the IPs' hands, they're going to fail. They're not going to succeed. [34:46]

Knarr: We met with Colonel Shaban yesterday.

Jassim: He's a hero! He has more guts than me; he's braver than me! This is the truth. He's the one who stood up before me in the face of terrorism. Colonel Shaban took a security position. He continued and he stayed to take care of the tribe business, and he was in the back scene of security information gathering.

Knarr: We saw where he was wounded.

Jassim: He's a hero. I have shrapnel in my hand. That's mortar shell. It entered from there and exited from the other side.

Knarr: Was that on 25, 26 November?

Jassim: Yes. It didn't prevent me from stopping fighting. I just wrapped it up and kept fighting. The person who has a goal and has principles, it doesn't matter even if he loses both of his arms. He's going to keep going.

I will give you an example. I know that we are limited on time, but I love sitting with you. The worshipper was worshipping God, and he was praying. While he was praying until midnight, he was watching an insect trying to reach to the light. The surface of the wall is very smooth, so he counted almost 700 times this insect will go up, fail, fall, go up and fall, so he went to sleep. By the time the morning came, he woke up and saw the insect on the light. He said, "Oh my God, the insect has more determination than me!"

So he was reasoning. Security work will have to be like a chain, open to each other. If one chain is missing, the whole chain is gone. I'm working like an empty circle right now, because I am working by myself. I am not connected to anyone else. Before I used to work hand in hand gathering intelligence with Coalition forces. We were successful finding targets and insurgents. Now it's not like before. It's not my fault. I don't have anybody to work with in my field of information gathering. There has to be hard work and a lot of cooperation to reach the target. The problem is not reaching the target; it's keeping the target after you reach it.

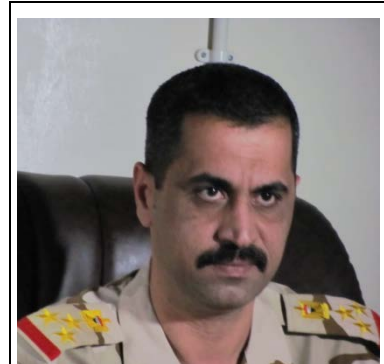
We've reached a decent percentage of security at this time. I will say 90%. But any mistake from our side will bring us back to zero. We need to keep the cooperation going, and the security forces need to focus on their job. The IPs are accepting bribes, and that's creating loop holes and corruption. With my intelligence, we reached one of the princes, an Amir, the head of a group or area. He was the Ministry of Health to Al Qaeda, and I got him. The Coalition forces and I went in a raid and brought this person in. We captured him, and after the interrogation, which took place in the Al-Karam IP station in my AO, he confessed to 21 crimes. After that an order came in to deliver this person to a different judicial jurisdiction. After three months of being detained, he got released. This guy is going to come back more determined, because now he knows that he can leave the jail anytime with money. His people can pay his way out of there. This is why I love to work with Coalition forces when it comes to security and intelligence, because I know it doesn't leak to the wrong people. [41:57]

[Remainder of discussion is between Captain Martin and Sheikh Jassim on the whereabouts of the 23 escaped detainees from Mosul and who should receive the information. Ends at 45:05]

Subject: Interview with Brigadier General Adel Abbas,
Commander 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division

Brigade General Adel is currently the Commander of the 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division. He joined the Brigade as the executive officer in January 2006 and was appointed commander in 2008.

BG Adel was interviewed in his office on 8 April 2010 at Camp Ramadi by Dr. William (Bill) Knarr, Colonel Dale Alford, USMC and LtCol David Graves, USMC. An interpreter was used for the interview. The following is his account of the Awakening.



**BG Adel, Cdr, 1st Bde, 1st
Iraqi Division**

Dr. Bill Knarr: Sir, first of all, please provide your background? Where were you born, and then when did you join the Army? [4:26]

Brigadier General Adel Abbas: I graduated from military school in 1987. I got to the Special Forces. The classes I took were in Egypt. After that I went to Human Frogs classes. Then I went to scout deep ground reconnaissance. Then I parachuted and conducted 21 jumps in the Parachute Infantry Regiment [PIR]. I started as a platoon leader. I was staff officer when I finished in the brigade. I was a lieutenant staff colonel. During the war, I was given the command of battalion 606 up in the north. I was part of the first Gulf War. I was with the Human Frogs, Brigade 26. I was part of the invasion to Kuwait. I was in the Republican Guard. My presence in Kuwait was very short, because my platoon, the Human Frogs, had a mission to occupy two small islands, Failaka and Bubiyan. These two small islands didn't have any fights because it was almost vacant. When we finished we retreated to Iraq. When Desert Storm started, and we fought the American Forces, I was part of the Special Forces.

In the war of 2003, my brigade was up north. My battalion was north of Mosul. There was not too much invasion from the north from the US Forces. The order came to the whole brigade, the 16th Division, to go back to Baghdad. We were in the new Baghdad area, which is the southeast portion of Baghdad. My division had contact with US Forces approaching from the south at the Diyala River. My battalion sustained a lot of casualties. The battalion commander escaped and a lot of his guys were either wounded or killed. The Joint Staff for that division, the division commander and the brigade com-

mander, escaped. I knew that we had lost the battle. So on April 8th, 2003, I gathered my guys and advised them, to go back to their homes. After the battle, I went home. [11:43]

I stayed home until I saw a solution for the Iraqi Army. The solution wasn't for the best of the Iraqi Army. There was so much political influence in the Iraqi Army [IA]. The decision was made to dissolve the Iraqi Army, and I was part of that. At the end of 2003, the Iraqi Army had been called back to duty and I was one of the first ones to respond. The meeting happened in Muthana Airport, and there was a US General that had several meetings and interviews with several officers. I was one of them. I didn't like what I heard at the meeting. The general said that one of the options was to bring the old officers back to Jundi enlisted ranks or less ranks than they had before. I didn't like that. It wasn't fair. I was a little bit harsh with the general. I told him that I had a bachelor degree in Military Science and that I would not be honored to work in this Army. I assumed that I had more knowledge than the General, and I left the meeting and went home.

I waited until the Minister of Defense was completed in April of 2004. I was called by the Minister of Defense, and they assigned me to lead a battalion of Special Forces because of my previous combat. My battalion was 824 personnel in 2004. At that time there was no significant influence of Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda wasn't present in any noticeable numbers or effects. My battalion and a portion of the 3rd Brigade trained in Taji. The Marines started training us. At that time I didn't have a good command of English, only a few words. We started with basic training for my battalion. It wasn't the same training that I learned with the Special Forces. It was training for urban warfare and counterterrorism. It was tough training for eight months. The battalion numbers reduced to 650. We were ordered to move the brigade to Mosul. It was very tough conditions in Mosul. I assumed that Al-Qaeda started in Mosul. [17:01]

Knarr: When was that?

Adel: It was around November 2004. I stayed in Mosul for seven months. I might not be exact on the dates. When I first entered Mosul it was nighttime, and it was a miserable situation. The whole town looked like a ghost town. Al-Qaeda had full control of the city at that time. I met with General Rodriguez. My first meeting with General Rodriguez was done the same way as it is done with all other commanders that are about to take over a new Area of Operations [AO]. They took us in helicopters, and I got a brief from General Rodriguez about the new AO. The North Command Center was in the old palaces of Saddam Hussein, but we called it the area of the palaces. We met with the Executive Officer [XO], too, which is the head of the Stryker Brigade. When they were going and doing their scouting and AO circulation or reconnaissance [RECON] they got attacked by Al-Qaeda. It was a very hard day. And it was very close to the Mosul Airport. They called it 'Diamond Back.' The General told me, "You see this attack... what happened to us while we're doing RECON? This is what you're going to face. This is the actual situation." [20:20]

I had a reaction at that time. I knew that in other provinces like Baghdad and the rest of the country, they didn't have that much of a dire situation. I was concerned about the reaction of my forces. We didn't want the morale to go down. We started going all the way to Mosul. When we went back we joined our forces, and we started sending all our soldiers. My battalion was the last one to go to Mosul.

It was very hard in the beginning, because we didn't have any sources, and we didn't have any intelligence on the city. It was the beginning of establishing Iraqi Police [IP] Forces there. I wasn't very lucky with the sectors I got. Two battalions took the west side of the city, and only my battalion took the other side. My battalion joined the Stryker Team. They had a battalion out there, so I took a building right in front of their building and settled my soldiers there. My MiTT Team stayed as a Marine MiTT Team. The MiTT Team came with me from Taji to Mosul. This is why I was saying Marines earlier. They were with me from 2004 all the way through to 2009. We lived together as friends and brothers for a long period of our life. The most important thing was the mutual trust between us. That's basically the reason for the successful operation of the 1st Iraqi Army [IA] Brigade of the 1st IA Division. I'm not undermining the Army, but we worked shoulder to shoulder with the Marines. Most of the teams that worked with us [received] casualties in war. We started cleaning up Mosul, starting from my section. I wrote down all of the successes that we had. I documented everything I did, to include video documentation. Most of my team got medals at that time. I was presented a medal by Secretary Rumsfeld. Even though in Saddam's era I had nine medallions for courage and bravery, I don't care about them. I don't know how much they are worth financially, but the value personally represented the difference. A description of the medal: it was silver coin with three stripes on the piece of cloth that was on the top. It had two green stripes from the outside, and one white from the inside. I have a very much respect for that medal. [26:22]

Adel: I still have it from my previous medals from previous wars. At that time, my battalion started clearing operations by itself. By the time we were done, we had almost 640 Al-Qaeda enlisted and Princes. The District Chief of Police [DCOP] at that time was Major General Amad Jabouri and there were a lot of threats against him. I gave the DCOP at that time a whole company for his Personal Security Detachment [PSD]. Colonel Murray was the company commander that I sent to protect the DCOP. At that time, he was a lieutenant Company Commander. All of my company commanders were Lieutenants. The operation officer, Colonel Ahmed, is now the commander of the 2nd Battalion. Colonel Ahmed was with me for a long period of time. I trust this officer and his work. Within seven months, we got good results from Mosul. At that time we had a brigade called 'Wolf Brigade.'

Knarr: Yes. I've heard of it.

Adel: After a while that brigade was dismantled. I used to arrest insurgents, and I passed them to the Wolf Brigade. They used these guys in the media, so they got all the credit. I

didn't want to show off too much. It was to serve Iraq, not to be a well-known face in the media. If I knew that this movie was going to be shown in Iraq, I would not be in it. Not because I'm afraid, but because I don't like the media. I have my principle, "Work in silence and let your work talk on your behalf." [30:44]

After finishing Mosul, we went back to Taji to regroup after seven months ...it's going to be somewhere in 2005; I don't remember exactly. We only spent two weeks in Taji to regroup at that time. We got orders to move to Habbaniyah in Al Anbar. When we came in to Al Anbar, we found it even worse than Mosul. I was still in the 3rd Brigade, and I hadn't reached the 1st Brigade yet. General Razak wanted me to be the XO for the brigade. I refused at that time. He asked me why. I said I refused to do that, because most of his officers had a higher rank than me. The higher ranks had been given to them by Coalition forces. I was more senior with one, two, or three ranks higher than these guys. Now they're all working with higher ranks; it doesn't work with him. I refused in the beginning. Then I changed my mind, and I agreed. I became the XO for the brigade. [33:15]

My battalion got one of the hardest assignments, which was Al Kaldiyah Island, across the river. It had never been touched by the IA or the Coalition forces. It was a very concentrated AQI area. It took us more time than usual to plan the mission. The first attempt to infiltrate the island was across the bridge. We had two battalions that tried to attack, but they had a fierce resistance from Al-Qaeda. We were not successful, and that was the only way to get in. At that time, I ordered the retreat, and I got blamed by the brigade commander and the battalion commander. I knew that if we went in to that huge ambush, me and the Americans, both battalions, would have suffered huge casualties. I didn't have the availability to sacrifice any of my soldiers. My point of view was the area would still be there and we could re-plan and attack again. At that time, because of my point of view, they had an investigation committee. General Abdul Amir was the one who started the investigation against me. He was ordered to do this investigation committee. At that time, I thought more about my soldiers than myself. I knew that if I proceeded with that plan we would have lost a lot of soldiers and we would have received a lot of unnecessary casualties. The irony is that the battalion commander, who was with me and had the same decision, did not get the same investigation I had. The investigation ended [in my favor].

The second plan was to attack the island with boats through the river. The first group was me and 40 of my guys to go and attack as a first wave. At the first clash I got injured, and one of my soldiers got injured. He got injured in his legs, and I got hit in my face, too. My advisor for the MiTT Team also sustained some casualties. We found a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive device [VBIED] at that time...a white, super Ceylon. It was fully VBEID'd. We killed two of the Al-Qaeda guys, and we retreated with the boats. We transferred them to the hospital. We then emplaced a bridge where we had used the boats. The whole battalion was working to slowly and gradually cover the whole area. As a reference

time frame, this happened on October 4, 2005. I got Medical Evacuation [MEDVAC]ed through the air to Taqaddum [TQ] Base. I got treated there, and took almost a month to recover. Just five or six days shy from my whole month vacation, I got the order to join the first brigade in Al Qaim. The back of that place all the convoys will go from Rustamyah in Baghdad towards Qaim. The first convoy I took towards Al Qaim got hit with an IED. I lost two of my guys, and one of the guys is still with me right now; all of his intestines are plastic right now. Usually the colonels come and assist me as a convoy PSD and take my convoy all the way from Baghdad to Qaim. The Colonel's escort, we call it the PSD, took me from TQ, not from Baghdad. At that time my MiTT Team was Army, but the PSD was Marines. We're now talking about the 1st Brigade. Simpson... [42:59]

Knarr: Simpson!

Adel: You know Simpson?

Alford: Yeah, we know Simpson.

Adel: He was the MiTT Team. Usually it took us two days to go from Baghdad to Al Qaim. We had to make two stops: one at TQ and one at Al-Asad. We had to stay over in Al-Asad for security reasons.

[Power outage interruption] [43:55]

Adel: I cannot forget that first convoy. After we got hit with the IED and gave those casualties, we got lost in the desert. We got lost in the desert, because the platoon leader at that time discovered that the whole road was full of IEDs. We had to veer off the main road. Maybe you remember that? The platoon leader was asking me, "What's your decision?" I said, "This is my first day in the brigade. I'm not going to make that decision; it's up to you now." We had so many problems, because my vehicles were heavy and full of soldiers. We all got stuck in the sand. Then the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle [HMMWVs] came and pulled my guys and our trucks out of the sand. We couldn't do it anymore: getting lost and getting stuck in the sand. We had to go back to the main road and take the chance with the IEDs exploding on us. We had to drive extremely slowly, and every time we suspect an IED we would send a foot patrol to check it. We were right. We found so many IEDs along the route. There is one shepherd who was herding his sheep there and he advised us that there were so many IEDs in front of us. We had a small Explosive Ordnance Disposal [EOD] Team that detonated these IEDs along the route.

From the time the Iraqi Army was reconstructed to the time frame I am in right now, the Minister of Defense was very weak. All the divisions were under the Coalition forces command. We were under orders of the Multi National Forces – West [MNF-West]. At that time we didn't own any HMMWVs. We got our first five HMMWVs and it was, wow, it was a surprise for us. We think it came from your battalion.

Alford: Yes.

Adel: We were very impressed that we got five HMMWVs, but still most of our patrols were done by truck, big trucks.

Alford: I got in a little trouble over that, but Colonel Davis backed me.

Adel: One of the major problems at that time, we couldn't get food rations. The [Marines] split their food with [us]. I cannot forget when you split your own food with us.

Alford: We were brothers. We lived together. [49:09]

Adel: At that time the contractors were so scared to deliver food to us. I remember the Marines filling my stock, two meals a day. They filled my storage with all food. The 1st Brigade had three battalions, not like now with four battalions. At that time I was the XO, and the head of the brigade was Colonel Razak. He is a very sufficient officer, and he was one of the heroes from the Special Forces [SF]. When he led and commanded the battalion, it was a very successful brigade. He has his battalions spread out in three areas. Each of his battalions, four battalions, had a company of Marines. I don't remember, one of my battalions close to...

Alford: Lima?

Adel: Lima.

Alford: Kilos went first.

Adel: The presence of the brigade there before us and then when I joined them, we were very successful. All my battalions worked in Rawah, Hadithah, and all the west of Anbar. We worked as an independent battalion without coming back to the brigade. We all worked independently with the battalions of Marines before. We only had one battalion which is the 1st battalion stayed with us. The commander was Colonel Ali, Second battalion was Lieutenant Staff Colonel Ammad. He is now the Battalion Commander. He was the XO. Lieutenant Colonel Yasir was the head of the 3rd Battalion. Now he's the Staff Colonel, 24th Brigade XO in 6th Division in Baghdad. At that time there was nothing called the Awakening. Al-Qaeda was building itself faster than the Army was building itself. At that time we stopped all the operations of Al-Qaeda, but unfortunately most of Al-Qaeda started focusing on Ramadi City and other cities. [54:17]

Adel: At that time in Al Qaim we had Mayor Farhan. He's an officer in the old Army.

He started meeting with the tribal sheikhs, and making all these meetings. I think we reached security a level of almost 80% because we started talking to the people and going to visit the schools. We established a good security level even though we sacrificed a lot of casualties. The Marines paid more than us. I don't know the exact numbers, but they did.

Alford: Eleven dead, 78 wounded.

Adel: I don't know if we had the same numbers. At that time we established the 28th Brigade out of the 7th Division. That's the one that be replaced 1st Bde in Al Qaim. You know that the 1st Brigade is the Quick Reaction Force [QRF].

Alford: Fire Brigade.

Adel: We will leave in the southern areas. The whole division, the 1/1, had to move from one place to another; you cannot stay anywhere for a long time. The 28th Brigade had their orders, and we switched with them. We took their positions. We got another order to go back to regroup in Baghdad. Again, it was a very, very brief regrouping. It didn't take more than 21 days. Then we got our orders to move into part of Anbar, which is Ramadi. [57:35]

[Break]

Knarr: Now we're in Ramadi. [1:01:10]

Adel: Yes. February 2006 was the first day, the first month we got into Ramadi. We used the facility of the college. There was no college at that time. It just was a building that had been occupied by a Company from 1-9 Infantry. We stayed for a whole month in that location just defending ourselves. We would have three meals a day, but not food. We had mortar rounds three times a day. The G2, Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed, got hurt. The best way to defend a place is to attack. The commander Colonel Razak and Lieutenant Colonel Ferry had a plan to open up their battalions to go into the city. We had the first battalion to go to Mula'ab area, second battalion will take over the commercial district and Sufia, and the third battalion will take Julaybah and Sajar area. We had so many casualties, because suicide attacks were the most effective weapon. We didn't have any IPs at that time. We had the governor and General Khalil, he's the head of the IP, but there was no actual IPs. We were sitting at that Government Center with US protection around us. In my capacity as an XO, I had to go and attend a security meeting every Wednesday. When I went with Lieutenant Colonel Ferry every Wednesday to attend that security meeting, we had to have a tank in front of us, and a tank behind us. [1:05:14]

Knarr: Where was the meeting?

Adel: At the Government Center. Even though it's only like a 1,000 meters, one click. We planted a whole platoon at an old hotel in the City Center and attacked.

Alford: This is the summer of '06?

Adel: Yes. We started clearing the area, but it wasn't the way we wanted. We and the enemy had a lot of casualties. At that time we didn't have artillery. I am trying to get the specific day. It happened in the holy month of Ramadan. There was a huge battle in the Sufia area. There was the 2nd Battalion at Entry Control Point [ECP] 8. The 2nd Battalion got attacked while I was in a defensive position. They attacked them from the Sina'a area.

The whole battalion was fighting for a continuous 40 minutes, defending the enemy attacking from a Sina'a area. The only reason they won that battle was because Lieutenant Colonel Ferry brought his tanks into the fight. We didn't lose any casualties, but we killed 17 insurgents. This is how much the insurgency was building. That was the size of the enemy. It attacked at the battalion level. Normally, you know, the attacker has to be at least three times the size of the defender. It was very fierce fighting. We even used our QRF, and Lieutenant Colonel Ferry used his QRF in that fight. At that time, we started to build up the police. Please excuse me if I am giving too many details.

Knarr: No, no. Do you know what month it was when that battle happened?

Alford: Sufia?

Knarr: Was it November?

Adel: Before November. I can give you these dates. I have it in documentation. It's all documented through my charts. I have a 162 gigabyte hard drive, and all the paperwork. You can look it up. I will give you the whole thing, and you can look it up and see what you like.

Knarr: Great! [1:09:37]

Adel: We decided to build up our IP at that time. We got everybody ready. We had a place for the IP to welcome the recruits. We had all the official paperwork done. We waited, and the first day, we only got one recruit. I don't want to be unfair about other people, but to be specific, in my area there was no Awakening Council; no Awakening at all. It could have started somewhere else, but I don't have any information about that. In 2006 in my AO there was none. We made a plan to clear the Mula'ab area. On October 21, 2006, we had the planning to attack Mula'ab, which is in the southern region. I apologize, it was March 21, 2007; scratch the November. At that time there was no Colonel Razak anymore. General Abdulla took over. Lieutenant Colonel Ferry was still there. We were planning a big attack on Mula'ab. You remember that the Army used to have a deployment of 15 months?

Knarr: Yes.

Adel: Our plan was to clear Mula'ab area starting here from south, or southeast towards north and northwest. We had fully set up. Everybody was organized, ready to attack the Mula'ab area. But, what happened in the Albu-Souda area changed all our plans. Just four days before we attacked Mula'ab, Sheikh Jassim came to us. He was completely devastated. He was devastated, because Al-Qaeda attacked his area and his tribe. They killed 17 of his family members. At 10:00 or 11:00 at night, we called Lieutenant Colonel Ferry to come and talk to us. General Abdulla made a very, very brave decision to get approval from Colonel MacFarland. We had two companies from 2nd Battalion, 1st Bri-

gade and one rifle company from 1-9. Al-Qaeda was preparing for another attack on Al-bu-Souda. I remembered that Lieutenant Colonel Ferry worked his artillery to shoot behind the insurgents. We had to move our guys to a safe distance with the help of all the tribes there. We had anybody who could fight from these young guys with the tribe. We gave them ammunition and weapons. It was a very, very brave decision from General Abdulla and Lieutenant Colonel Ferry, because we didn't have any information on these guys; we didn't clear these guys. And we gave them weapons and ammunition. It was a brave decision. But, we had to take advantage of the success. And thank God, we successfully cleared Sufia in a very, very short time. We even celebrated. [1:16:36]

These guys, at that time, couldn't move between the mosque and ECP8 [even though] it was a very, very short distance. They didn't have any knowledge of the AO. They got shot at from the hospital. They had full control of the hospital, too, high grounds. We took over the hospital. I went to the hospital, and we found 49 dead bodies that were rotting because they didn't have electricity. When we took over the hospital, we gave them fuel, and we started the generators. We helped the hospital. At that time the general manager for the hospital was Dr. Abdir Raheme [phonetic] His brother Adol Fayhon [phonetic] was also a doctor, but he was a doctor for Al-Qaeda. When you deal with somebody like this, you have to be very careful. When the general manager found out that the general's brother was head of the hospital in 2003, 2004 and before that, he left the city. They even followed his brother, all the way to Baghdad, but he moved to somewhere else.

After we took control of the hospital, we put a whole platoon in it. Coalition forces assisted the hospital with first aid and a lot of medical equipment. At that time, life was almost normal, almost. The guys who fought with us, who never covered their face, enrolled in the IP. At that time I was in contact with the Colonel. I didn't know what was going on in Al Qaim, what problems were there. We had our own problems to deal with. [1:20:24]

Alford: Ramadi was a rough area.

Adel: Then the people started volunteering to join the IA. I had to train these newcomers. It was the 1st Brigade. I had contact with the Sheikh Albu-Risha, God bless his soul, Sheikh Sattar Albu-Risha. I brought him here to my brigade several times. We started working at the Ramadi level at that time, not the Anbar level. The sheikhs of tribes started giving us back up. People from Julaybah called us. In the Sajar and Julaybah areas, I supported these tribal guys with uniforms, ammunition, cell phones, and communications with satellite phones. This was how we started clearing Sajar. Then we had our back covered, and we had a good base. Plus we had continuous meetings with the all the guys I have now. We started opening IP stations.

I am going to go back to 2006. I remember an incident when the old Governor Mamoun was trapped in the big mosque by Al-Qaeda. He was so lucky that we came and saved his life in the last minute while he was fighting with his gun. At that time, we had forgotten completely about Mula'ab. We had to invest in our success in these areas. I had battalion number 26 from the 26th Brigade from the 7th Division right here.

Knarr: Was Jalal injured at the same time Mamoun was in the mosque?

Adel: Yes. Exactly! The 26th Brigade had half of the AO all the way to the mosque. We had from the mosque all the way to the Mula'ab and Husaybah. I had the other part of the AO. The 3rd SF, my old brigade was with me all the way from Husaybah to Habbaniyah. This is going to give you a layout how the sectors were divided. [1:24:55]

Knarr: I have a map. I want you to use the map please. You can draw on the map.

Adel: After we cleared Sufia, Sajar, and Julaybah, we established IP stations in there. Then we started to focus on the heart of Ramadi: Mula'ab and this area. The areas I mentioned earlier have the big problem of having too many tribes. It's mixed tribally. The city is different from the outskirts. The outskirts and the villages have very strong ties with the sheikh of the tribes, but the cities don't have strong ties. We had several times to try and give a role for, what they call it, the Civil Leadership or Mayor to take charge in there, but they were so afraid they couldn't. We tried to put IPs there and build an IP station, but we failed to do that, too. We had to move two companies from 3rd Brigade all the way from our battalion. We controlled the outside defense for Mula'ab area. We start slowly to set up checkpoints to infiltrate the area. The first checkpoint we established was near the Mosque, right next to the stadium. It was called Haji Daher Mosque. That first checkpoint got hit with a VBIED-Truck. Al-Qaeda had shot this incident in a movie, and it was spread all over. We got a copy of it. It had a very bad morale effect on the Coalition forces and my guys, but that didn't stop us! [1:28:35]

We started giving the citizens of that area some services. We always changed strategies, it depended on the situation. One of the disasters was that Al-Qaeda had full control of all the trucks in the city that belonged to the government and to the trash collecting. All of the trucks were full of IEDs as VBIEDs. We retrieved all these vehicles, dismantled the explosives, and reused these vehicles to clean all the streets. I have pictures of my own people cleaning trash from the streets of Ramadi. We started focusing on medical help and assistance, and the Coalition forces supported the financial aspect of that. We started building small clinics. We used local contractors from the same area to liven up the economy. We would bring the famous people and tell them, "Okay, you clean this area, and we'll give you that much money" from our sources. We started benefitting slowly from this area. We found and discovered a lot of people from the old regime. Officers that were sitting at home doing nothing. They were fed up with the terrorists, and

they want to do something for their country. We started hiring sources and gave them financial support to get information. We started bringing human assistance as food rations. We helped Sheikh Latif, who is the mayor in Anbar. He's a hero. He used to walk with us in the Mula'ab area and meet with the people. I still have a video of the first election we did to pick up the local City Council for that Mula'ab area. I have it right here in my desk top. I will give you a look after a while. [1:32:28]

The population began cooperating with us, and they started arresting Al-Qaeda left and right. Al-Qaeda took their stuff and moved to another place. We had to move our battalion all the way to Tharthar, because Tharthar became very, very danger zone. People were getting killed left and right. It was incredible when we went to Tharthar, and we found a lot of people dead there. We found massive graves. Right next to the Tharthar Lake was a lot of caves in the mountains. We found a lot of merchandise in the caves, and we wondered where the merchandise came from. Apparently AQI would kill truck drivers and take the merchandise with them in the cave. This area was a death area. This is the main road. It will take you all the way to Samarra; it's called 'Death Road.' These two roads were the major routes for Al-Qaeda's movement in this area. All these areas here are full of bamboo plants. It was a breeding area for Al-Qaeda. We got one battalion from Julaybah to Camp Howas. We moved the 3rd Battalion out of this camp all the way to the left towards the Tharthar Lake and to the right. The 2nd Battalion stayed on foot in Sufia. They didn't go anywhere. The 1st Battalion stayed in Mula'ab. The brigade moved to Baghdad, so we got the 2nd Battalion to take the AO from the 3rd or the 4th. [1:37:09]

Alford: Oh that's the summer of '07.

Adel: Yes, exactly. When we took over the AO, we stayed with the people in stores. Each guy that left, the other guy took over of his area and spread out to cover. Our battalion covered all that area right there. The 1st Battalion in Mula'ab and Sufia area. Julaybah, that's the AO, all the way to Husaybah. The 2nd Battalion covered all the way from Husaybah to Habbaniyah. We stayed doing that all the way until March 2008. Things started changing.

Adel: At that time, we started building and helping the population. The major mistake we made was establishing a police force too quickly. It was a brief training. We didn't check their background IDs 100%. We didn't have information about them. We made mistakes. This is why we have a sick police force until now. The Under Secretary asked me, "Since you have served for a long time in Anbar, how can we fix the IPs in Anbar?" I gave them a whole file full of suggestions on how to fix the IP force in Anbar. [1:47]

On March 23rd 2008, we got ordered to move the 2nd Battalion out of my AO to Basra, because Basra was getting hot. The 2nd Battalion moved all the way to Basra. I was appointed as the Brigade commander in February 7th, 2008. General Abdulla left us in the

last month, December of 2007. I worked for almost three months as assigned, until I got the orders to make me the BC. I got the orders to move two battalions all the way to Mosul. That was early in the morning. The same night, the same order that we got early in the morning, changed from Mosul to Basra; they want me to go, the same night, all the way to Basra. Within 16 hours, I was in the heart of Basra. At that time I had 138 HMMWVs. Sixty-one of those HMMWVs, I got from MNF-West. It was under contract, like we were renting it and it was a Minister of Defense contract. The first day I was in Basra, I met with the Prime Minister who was staying at Basra Palace. It was a direct order from the Prime Minister; his exact words were, "Please rescue Basra from the Iranians."

Alford: General Flynn tells that story. [5:49]

Adel: When I went there, General Flynn wasn't there yet. I was dealing only with the Brits. To tell the truth, it was very hard to deal with them. Either you keep it or you delete it. It's up to you, but it was hard to deal with them. The reason why Basra was failing so badly in their hands was because of the British. They stayed inside their camp; they didn't go out. They were just getting hit at their single airport, until the cancer, the sickness spread all over Basra.

The route I took to meet with the Prime Minister, I got hit with mortars and RPGs. Even when the Prime Minister was visiting, he got hit with mortars. He stayed one week there. His office manager died, and most of his vehicles were destroyed, all from the mortars. He had three ministries with him: Defense, Justice, and State. I promised the Prime Minister personally and told him, "I am one of your soldiers. I give you my word. I'll clear Basra for you." I went with Lieutenant General Mohan, he is the senior advisor for the Minister of Defense, and at that time he was the head of the operations center in Basra. We stood at the Surhaba Bridge, (at that time the bridge was right next to the highway in the far west corner of Al-Basra) and the guy was looking, I cannot forget his words. He told me, "From this point all the way to the end of Basra, it's all in the terrorist's hands. It falls under terrorist command." He told me, "You don't have any time. I want to start 0600 tomorrow. Do the RECON. If you RECON in the morning, I want you to come and present your plan to the Minister of Defense that night." [The previous Iraqi brigade in Basra (Brigade number 14)] was all gone, only the structure was left. The actual people were gone. The enemy took the HMMWVs for themselves. All the IPs went with the enemy, and a lot of battalions went with the insurgency. I, as a Brigade, was fighting divisions of terrorists and supporters. [10:37]

My plan was to hit the strongest hold-outs for Al-Qaeda there. That was Hayaniah and Qiblah areas. I had to be right smack in the middle, and for that reason, I had to occupy the broadcasting building. When I reached the broadcasting building, the building was completely burned out and all the military vehicles were burned. I had a team [MiTT] with me in Basra, and I am still in communication with them, they are now deployed in

the States. The Marines suffered a lot of injuries and one head casualty. At that time the Prime Minister gave the people ten days to bring their weapons without punishment. During this period we received casualties, because we were getting hit. They got hit with 82 rounds of mortars. The operations room had a big hole in the ceiling from these mortars. I wasn't there at that time. In the same order, remember I told you about one of my Marine officers, the one who was with me in Mosul. He was my operation officer. The explosion threw them out of the operation room. Thank God nobody died, but there were injuries. I couldn't wait until these ten days finished. [13:37]

Alford: Sitting ducks!

Adel: Some of the guys established communication with the Mahdi militia. I started dealing with the Mahdi militia and started paying them from my own money, out of the battalion money, to buy their weapons from them. The colonel with the battalion, Colonel Matt, went and grabbed the entrance of Basra. He was directed by General Mohan, to control the entrance of Basra at any cost. He suffered a lot of casualties. He was in various battles, and he lost a lot of guys there. The guys from the 14th Division, the one who gave up their weapons, were retreating. They used to come from his area. Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed who is currently the head of the Basra operations room, was in a very sad situation. I respect this man, but unfortunately his division dismantled. He's very brave, and I have respect for him. I will not ever forget General Darr because he was my Division Commander. He had a very good force. I supported him step by step all the way. I walked beside him, shoulder to shoulder, while they were attacking. I have all this on video tapes. I told you, I would love to get things put on paper and media documentation. [16:48]

The ten days are over. The Prime Minister had left from Basra. He went to a meeting with the Minister of Defense. The Minister of Interior and General Flynn came and attended the meeting, too. We had a British General, too, and we were all gathering in the meeting. At that time, General Flynn was the leader of the whole operation. He took command of the US Coalition forces and the British Forces there. I explained my plan in front of the Defense Secretary and the first reaction from the Minister was he refused my plan. He said, "No, you have to enter in the Al-Hayaniah area." I insisted to enter Al-Qiblah instead of Al-Hayaniah. The Minister of Defense ordered me, because I was negotiating with him, and I was talking back to him. He said, "No, I am ordering you to enter Al-Hayaniah." I told him, "I have my reasons to enter from Al-Qiblah." He asked me, "What are your reasons?" Thank God General Mohan helped me, and General Flynn backed me up on the plan. They are the ones who convinced the Minister of Defense to allow me to give my reasons. I told him, "I already surrounded Al-Hayaniah area. They are only getting air as logistical support. Their morale is starting to weaken. Let me take out Al-Qiblah, then I'll take them and they'll be finished by that time. If I take Al-Qiblah down, Al-Hayaniah area will go down immediately, and quietly." Within six hours I

took over the Al-Qiblah area. It was a very dangerous area. I lost three of my guys. One of my company commanders, Major Willit, got injured. He is now a Special Commander. The Minister of Defense was came here and was extremely happy. I have a CD to prove that. He was amazed that we got it. [20:54]

[Power outage interruption]

Alford: That's good history, though. That's what you were looking for!

Knarr: That's the best run down of Ramadi and Basra that I've had.

Adel: I can explain to you as much as I can, but nothing like the exact suffering with the battles right on the ground. What I explained to you about Qaim was in minutes, it was days of suffering. The plan was for me to clear areas and then I would pass it on to IA. After I got the Qiblah area, I passed it on to the Ali Battalion, Ali McKnight; 9th Division that came from Baghdad. [23:20]

So, I started day-by-day. The first day I would make a plan, give it to them, and get approval; it was almost like a factory. I would bring the maps from FalconView, and I would show the circles of how we were going to spread my forces. I would go to the guys and get permission. Hayaniah Plan is on TV, too. You can see it. It never had any IA or British Forces enter Al-Hayaniah since 2003, until I first conquered it. You can ask anybody in the IA or Basra, and they will tell you about that story. It took some extra careful planning, but my leadership didn't give me that time. General Flynn was almost like my dad, very close to me. I always noticed how much pressure he got. The most important thing for him is the safety of his soldiers. The 26 Brigade joined me, and followed me to Basra. We left Ramadi, and they followed me all the way to Basra. Now we had more units. I had to take care of Hayaniah, and the 26th had to take care of the Jamayat area. I still have all the plans from the operations. I told the general that I would start my attack at 0600. From 0500 to 0600, I want a noise bombing from the planes. There are so many things I hid when they heard about Qiblah. We lost Qiblah. With the air attacks on them, I had some of these guys dealing with me on the side. In return for not arresting him when I was taking over, they would not dismantle us down in Hayaniah. [27:18] We ran through whole Hayaniah, which is an area of seven lakes. We took it over in seven hours. Just before the elections, the Prime Minister mentioned that thing on TV. The Prime Minister was on TV saying that the British advised them that nobody can clean Al-Basra within less than six months. The Prime Minister said, "No. I called a brigade out of Ramadi and they came in and cleaned Basra in one month." After I finished from Hayaniah, I gave it to the 3/6, and I just relaxed there.

I moved to Jumhuriyah neighborhood. I finished that, cleared it, and went to [Five Kilo] area, Five Mile. I am mentioning the cities that I was in; I cleared and gave it to the other guys. We started building a division from other IAs, another division starting from the

10th from Baghdad. We brought back 14 together. I kept pushing the militia all the way to the Iranian Border at the [Rotta] area in that picture. That's me right there. At that time the Americans came in and told us that all the terrorists were now in the Al-Khora area, the marshlands. The Minister of Defense refused the Coalition forces to hit these terrorists there, because he didn't want a diplomatic incident with Iran. This area that we're talking about, it's like international water between Iran and Iraq. [30:54]

After the victory in Al-Basra, the whole brigade got promoted. The officers get one year of seniority towards their ranks and the soldiers and the NCO got two ranks. The order came in to finish cleaning up Basra, and go to Amarah, including all the area between Basra and Amarah. It was very fast. We arrested a lot of people, so much weapons. We didn't even shoot one bullet. We called it "Ashad Sallam," which means the beginning of peace.

I am going to go briefly back to Basra. Part of the logistics help I got from the General Flynn at that time was 200 tractor trailers, 18 wheelers full of food and water to give to the people. We were distributing these. The security forces conducted security operations while they served the people. Every time you used my engineers to go down to the city and clean up the trash, you open seven camps of hospitals, medical centers. We provided the medicine and all the health support for them. So, we're basically winning the heart and minds, and conducting operations at the same time. We did the same thing in Amarah. We worked for a whole month on that. After the success in Basra the morale of the IA was so high. At that time I was in Basra. When we went into Basra the morale went up as well as our credibility so this is why it was very easy for us to do Amarah. [35:40]

The Prime Minister came in into Amarah and gave us the order to move to Diyala. We were finished with the militias, and were fighting Al-Qaeda. The 3rd Brigade went to Diyala, too. They gave us a large AO, again. I started cleaning Diyala from north to south and from east to west. Then, whatever I cleared, I would pass it on to the 5th Brigade. It took me three months, and I gave up a lot of casualties, especially in south of Kana'an area. I reached all the way to the mountain of the Hamrin area, cleared it, and passed it on to the IA. Then they felt sorry for me and sad for me. They said, "This guy's brigade is really tired. He needs to relax, because he sustained a lot of casualties including vehicles, too." Between Basra and Diyala, I lost 27 HMMWVs and some trucks, too. But thank God all the vehicles that got destroyed, were rented from MNF-West. Insurance! So, I brought them back the vehicles, but they were burned out.

We then got the order to go back to Ramadi to reconstruct and regroup in Ramadi for three months. Unfortunately, that was not the truth. The minute I came here, they took the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division all the way to Diyala to replace. So, I got the bigger AO. This is why I had to spread out and take my positions. It's a huge AO, almost the same AO that a division should take. When I came back, I got ordered to start the 4th Battalion. Immediately, I reconstructed it and created the 4th one and sent it to my AO. I used

all the information, experience, and knowledge that I assumed from other provinces, and I implemented it here by helping the citizens and the people of the area. At the same time I came over here, Colonel Lopez was taking over in Ramadi. They made a plan of two brigades getting together, one Iraqi and one US. I don't think this kind of plan has ever happened in history. There was a huge dangerous area at that time, like Al-Karmah. Colonel Lopez lost a lot of people there. I think one of the battalion commanders lost his life in that area. Do you remember? In 2007? [41:22]

Alford: Yes. Galeia, Lieutenant Colonel Galeia, 2/3 Marines.

Adel: And the sheikh meeting.

I talked to Colonel Lopez and told him, "I'll present my plan. You present your plan, and maybe we will get a mutual plan to establish something." Colonel Lopez told me, "You have 15 million dollars to spend in Ramadi to improve it." I told him, "We're not going to do anything in the center of Ramadi. We're going to work in Karmah area and Saqlawiyah." I said, "These guys have been out of the focus, because first of all they are away from the Government Center. By the same token, they're very, very supportive of Al-Qaeda." I told him, "Hand in hand we're going to work together on that." We built them 22 schools, and we put in nine water refineries. We had a big meeting for the tribal meeting. To back up the Awakening Council in this area, we built a small meeting facility for all the tribes to be close to them.

Knarr: What year is this? When was this?

Adel: In the end of 2008 and 2009.

Knarr: Wow, Saqlawiyah.

Adel: Yeah, Saqlawiyah. I had two battalions: one battalion inside Ramadi and the second battalion outside, north of Mobile, that area. I had so many troops on the ground. We had the provincial security forces battalions. It was almost dead. I was in control, and I gave it an electric shock and brought it back to life. We started working together. Now I have, of course, my IAs, and I have Provincial Security Forces [PSF] and IPs in my hand. Hand in hand with the Marines, of course. We got the city really under control, almost to the last time of the last election. Until now, I think that Al-Karmah is under control. To tell the truth, Karmah is better than Baghdad at this time. Maybe I will get one or two incidents per month in Karmah, compared to Diyala and Baghdad; it's a very good percentage. I have a lot of sources. I have so much work, and so many patrols. I'm getting things under control. My brigade is getting bigger and bigger. I'm getting more battalions, and my operations center is expanding. I have ten battalions under my command. Four of them are provincial security forces, and now we have three. Two are federal police, and I have my own four. [47:23]

When the Marines left, the Army came in to take over. We worked with them hand in hand, with the same effectiveness like we worked with the Marines. The first day that I met with the brigade commander, I told him, "We need to work shoulder to shoulder, and we don't need any vacancy." The man has been very cooperative, and he's still very cooperative.

Adel: He's one of my best friends here. We have been working hand-by-hand and today, just today, Colonel Stammer brought me humanitarian assistance, so I can give to the people. Hopefully, we will have a good working relation when we have a new operation in the future. Sorry it took me too long to explain, and if you have any questions you can ask me now!

Knarr: Thank you very much! You have been so kind in providing all of this information.

Appendix C. 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

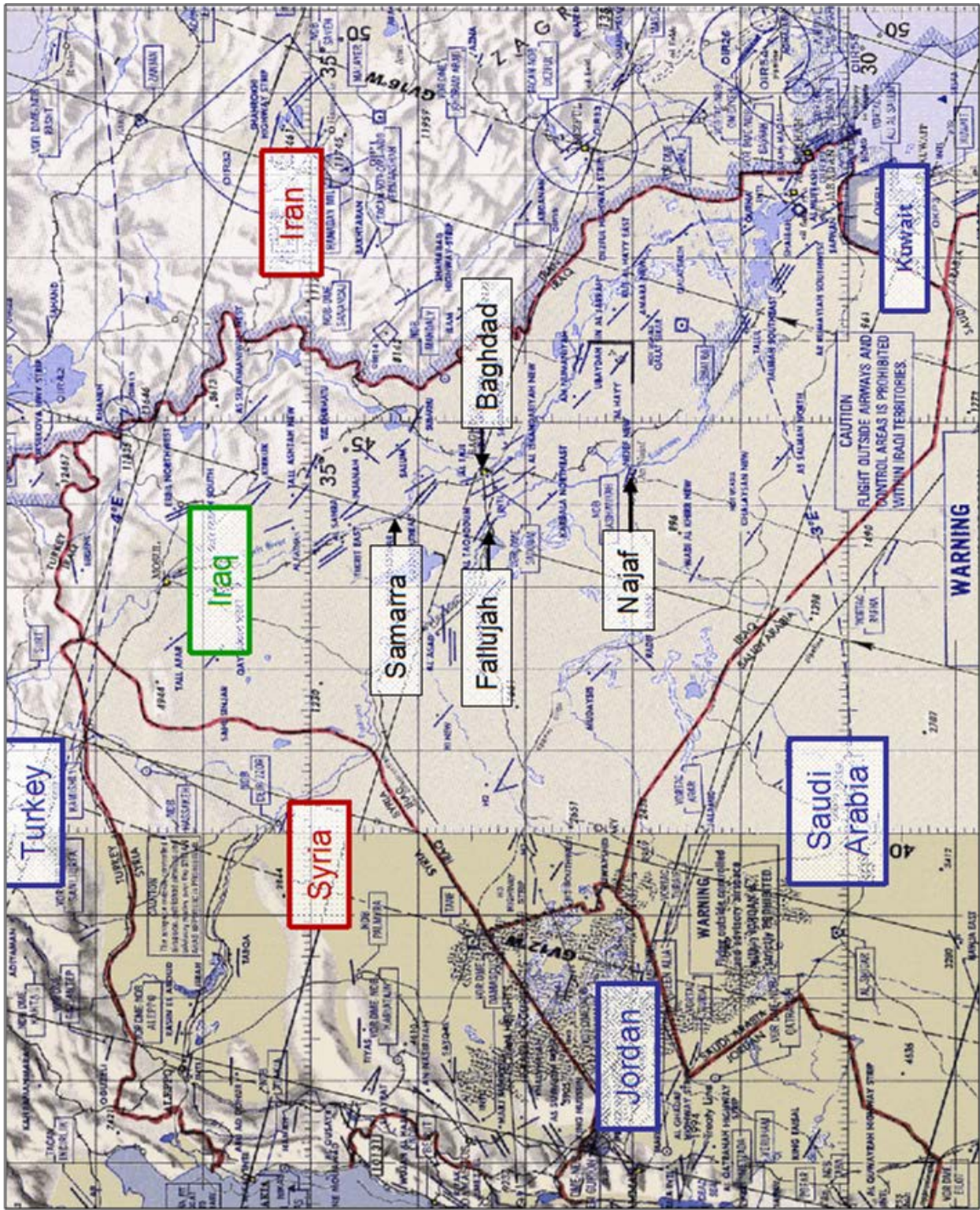
Sheikh Malik al-Kharbit, tribal leader of the Khalifawi (Ramadi area); head of one of the most important families in the powerful Dulaymi tribal federation; cooperated with Coalition forces before the invasion; tragically killed along with between 17 and 22 family members, including women and children 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

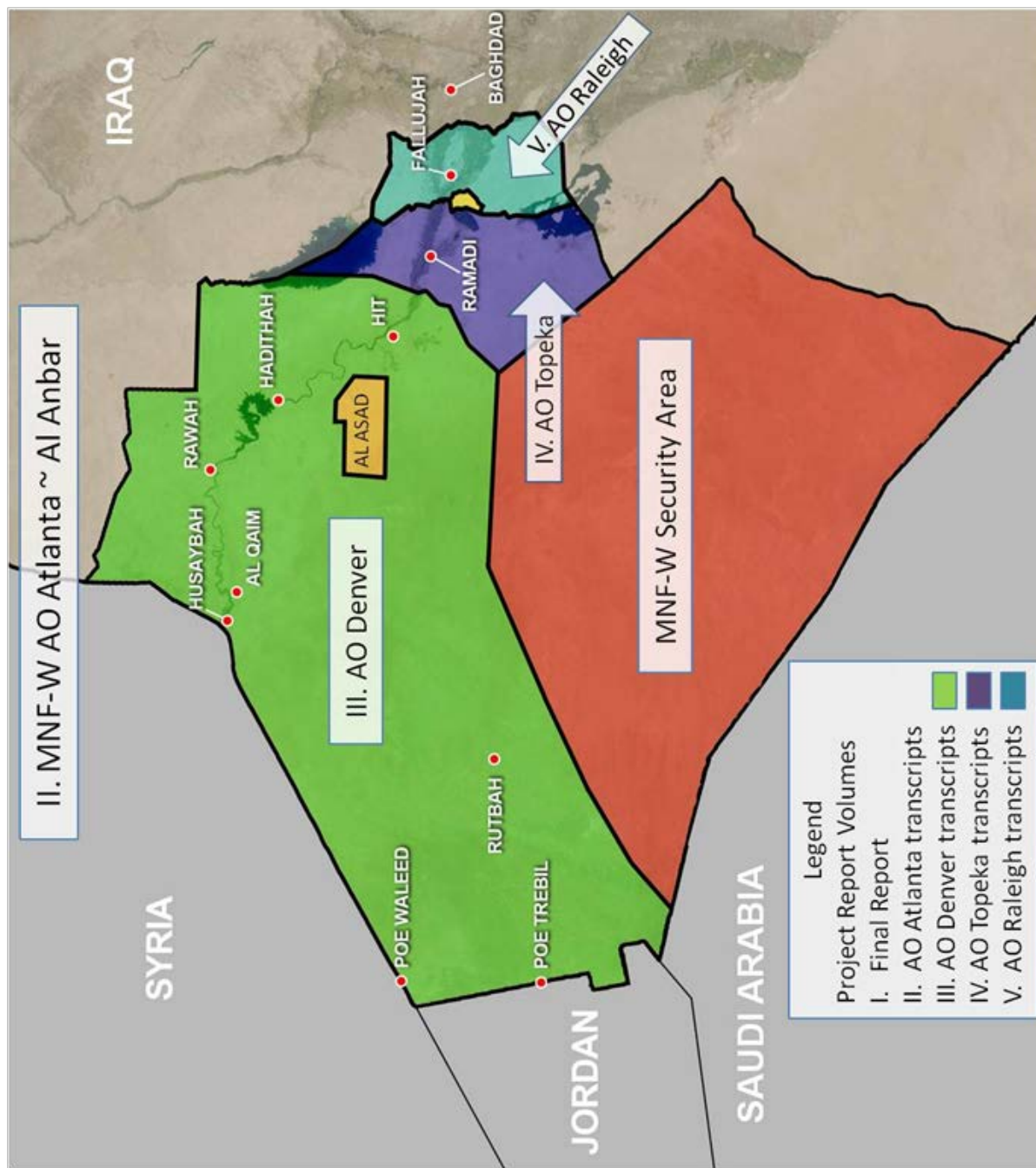
Appendix D. Maps

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

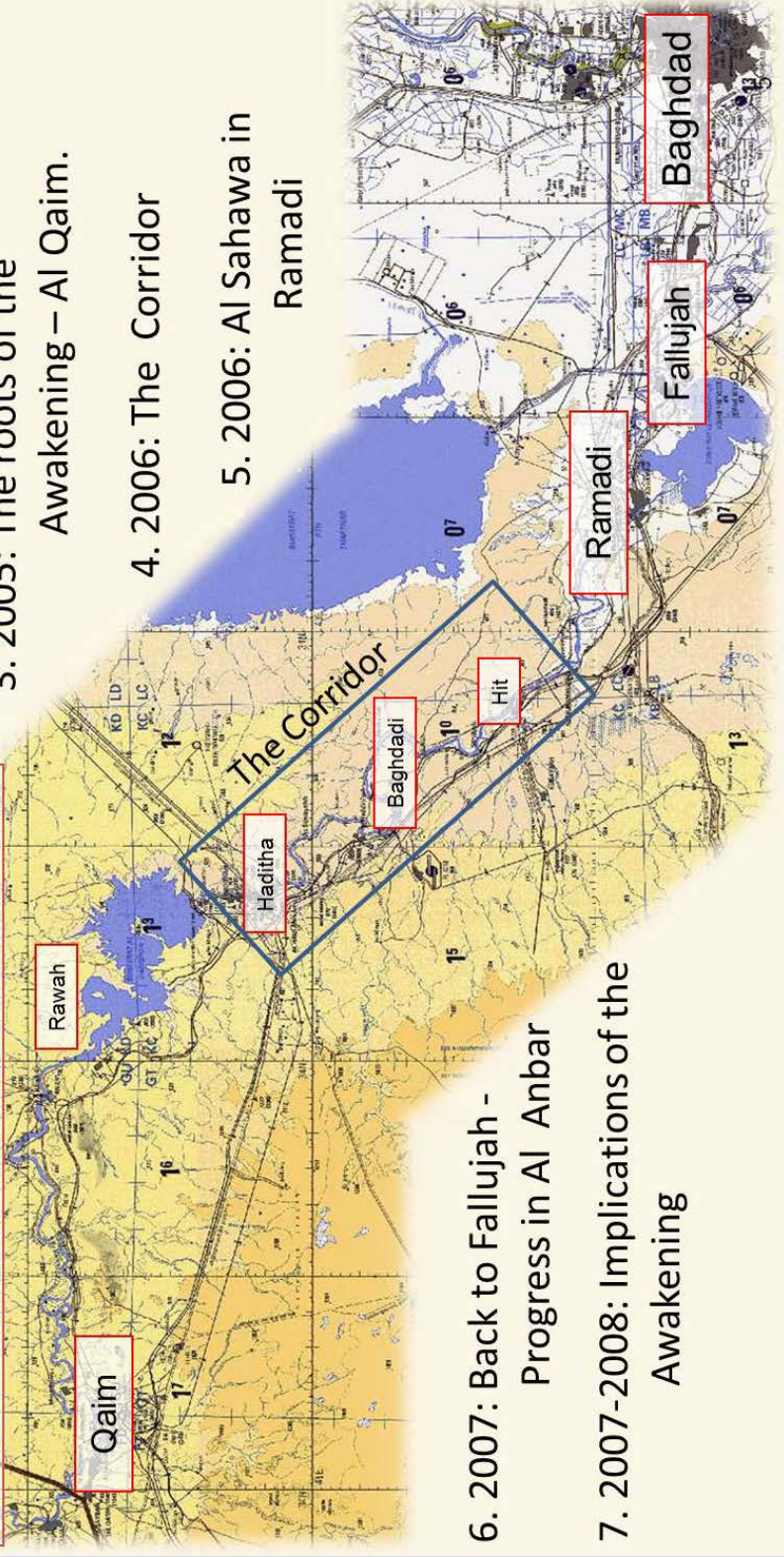


Figure D-3. Phases of the Al Anbar Awakening

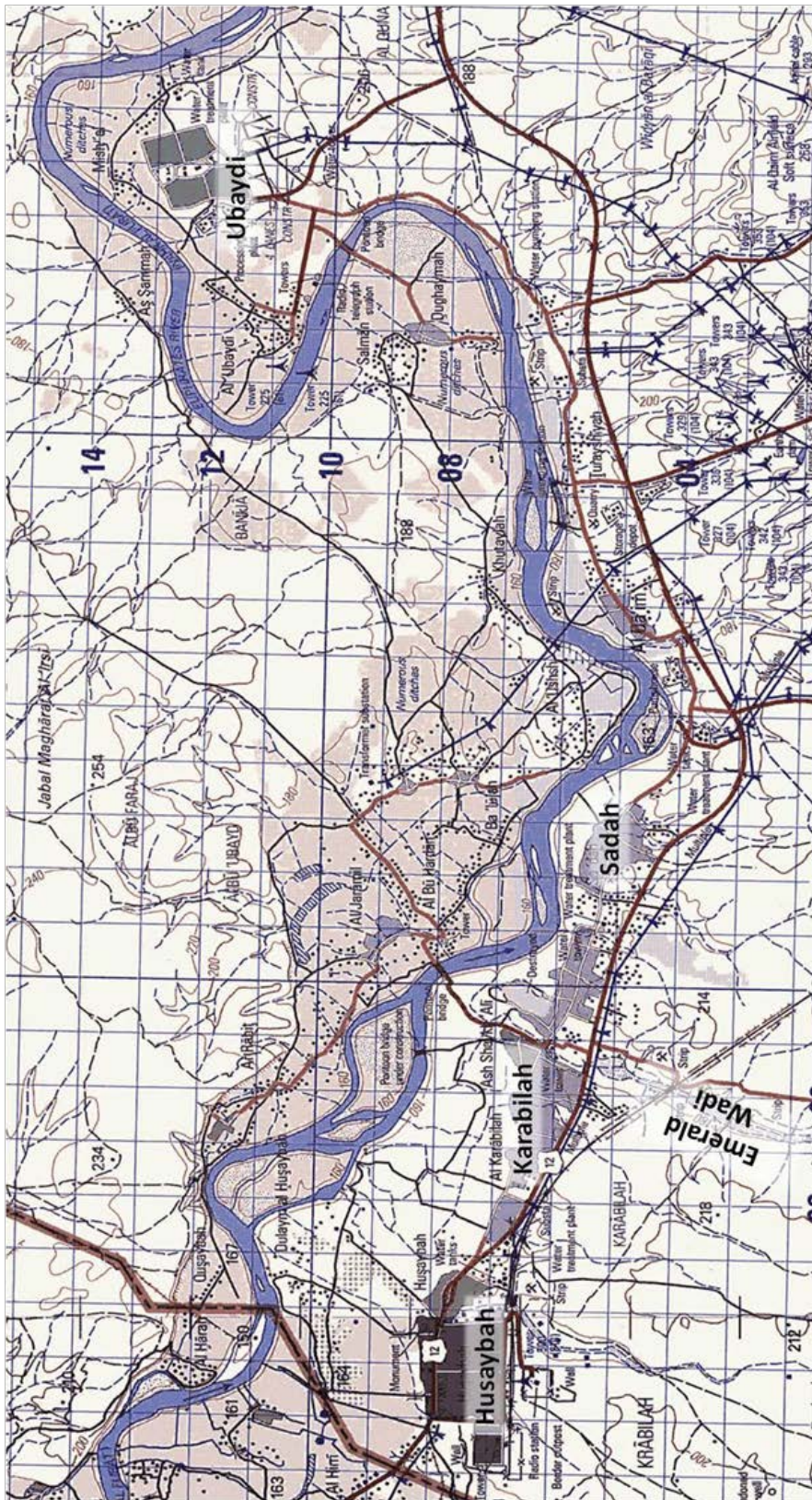


Figure D-4. Map of Al Qaim area

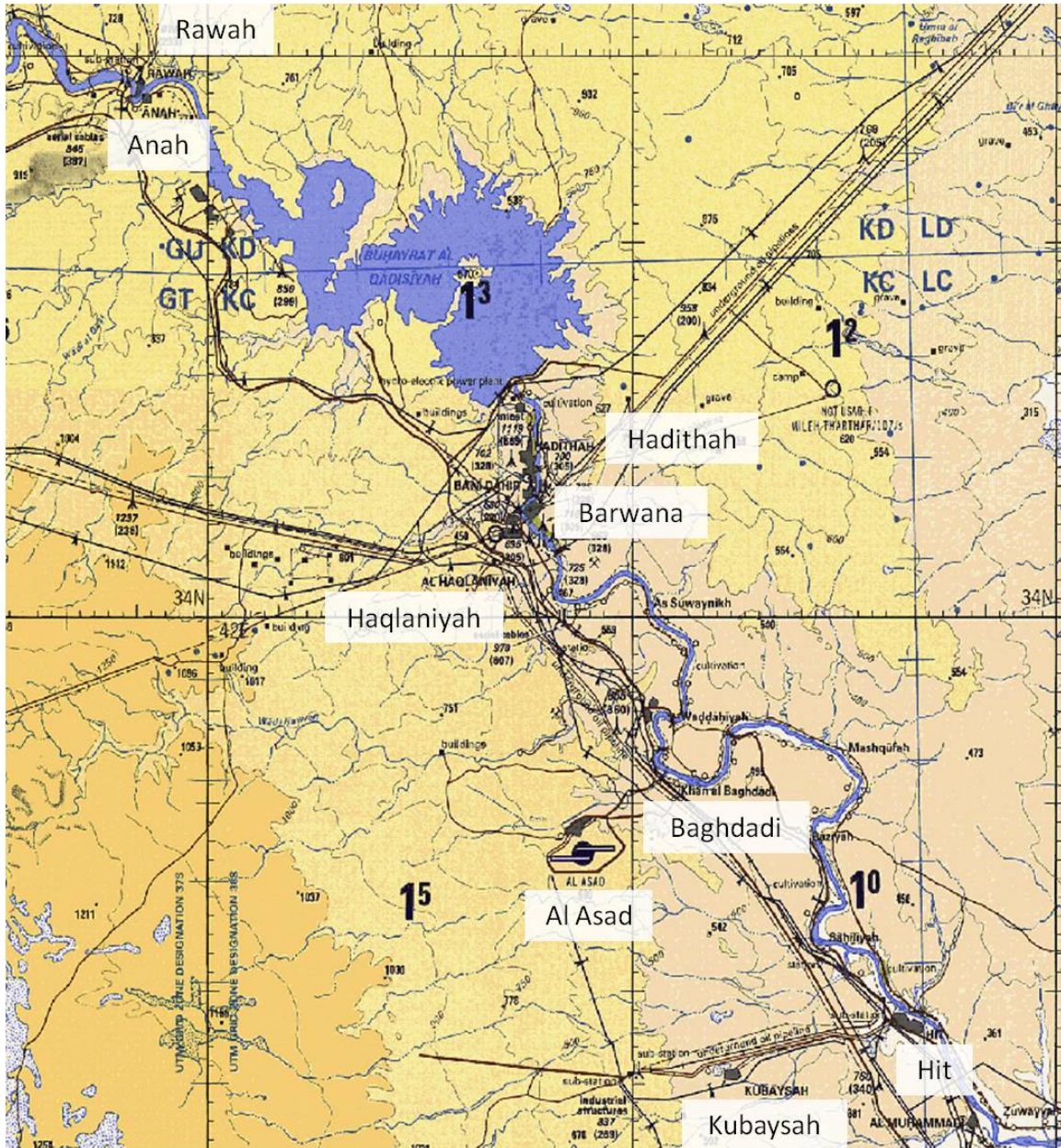


Figure D-5. Map of Hadithah area

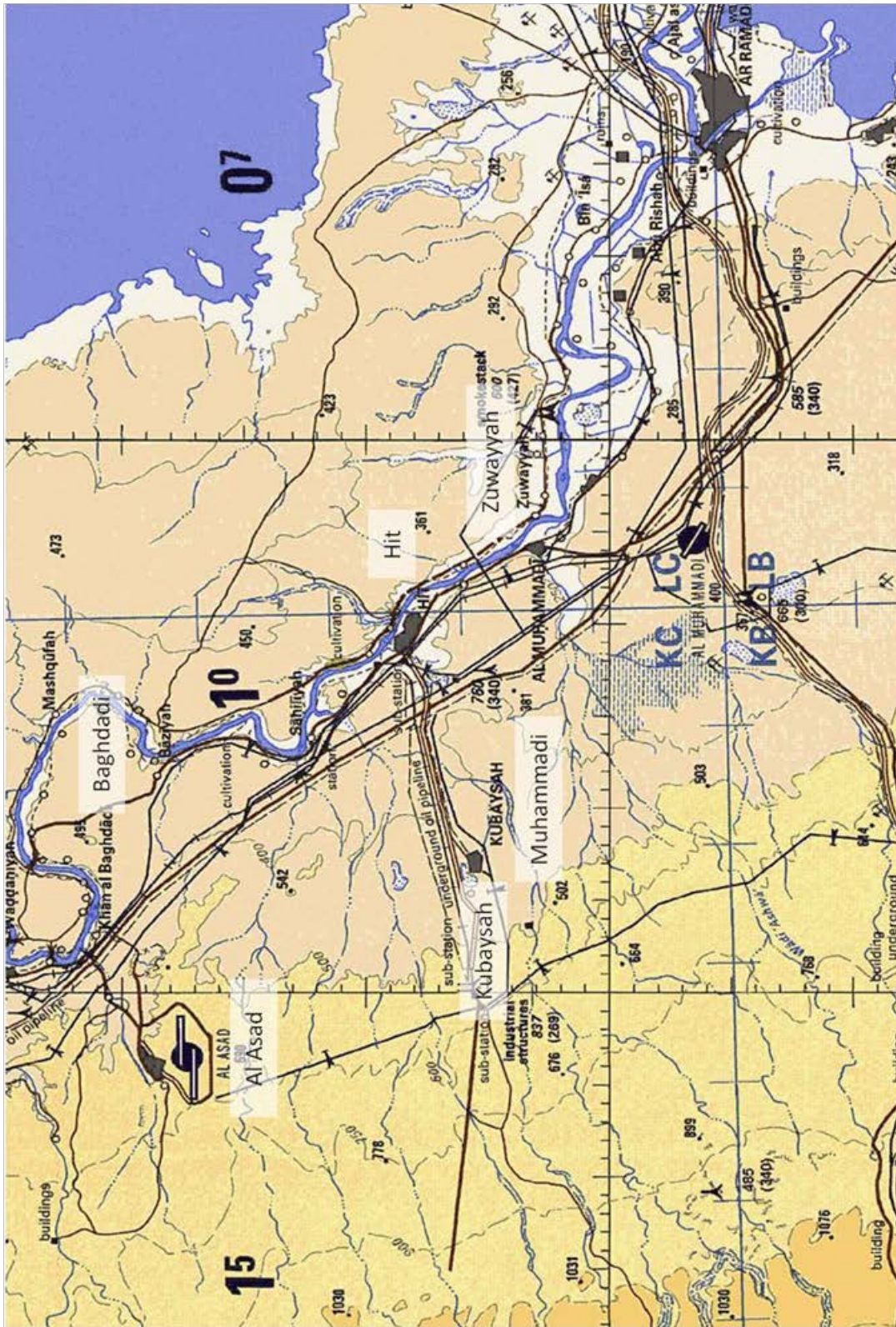


Figure D-6. Map of Al Asas/Hit area

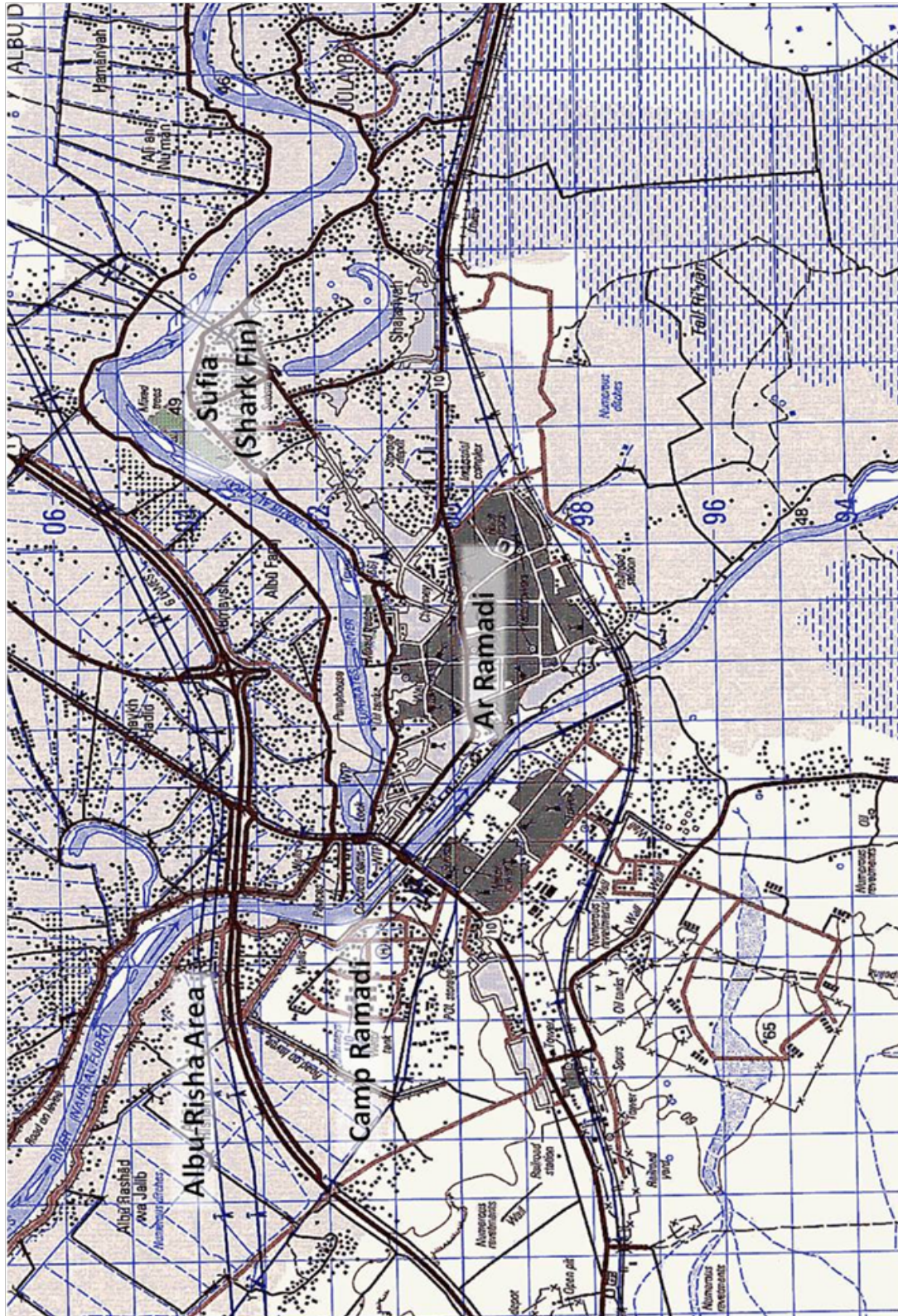


Figure D-7. Map of Ramadi area

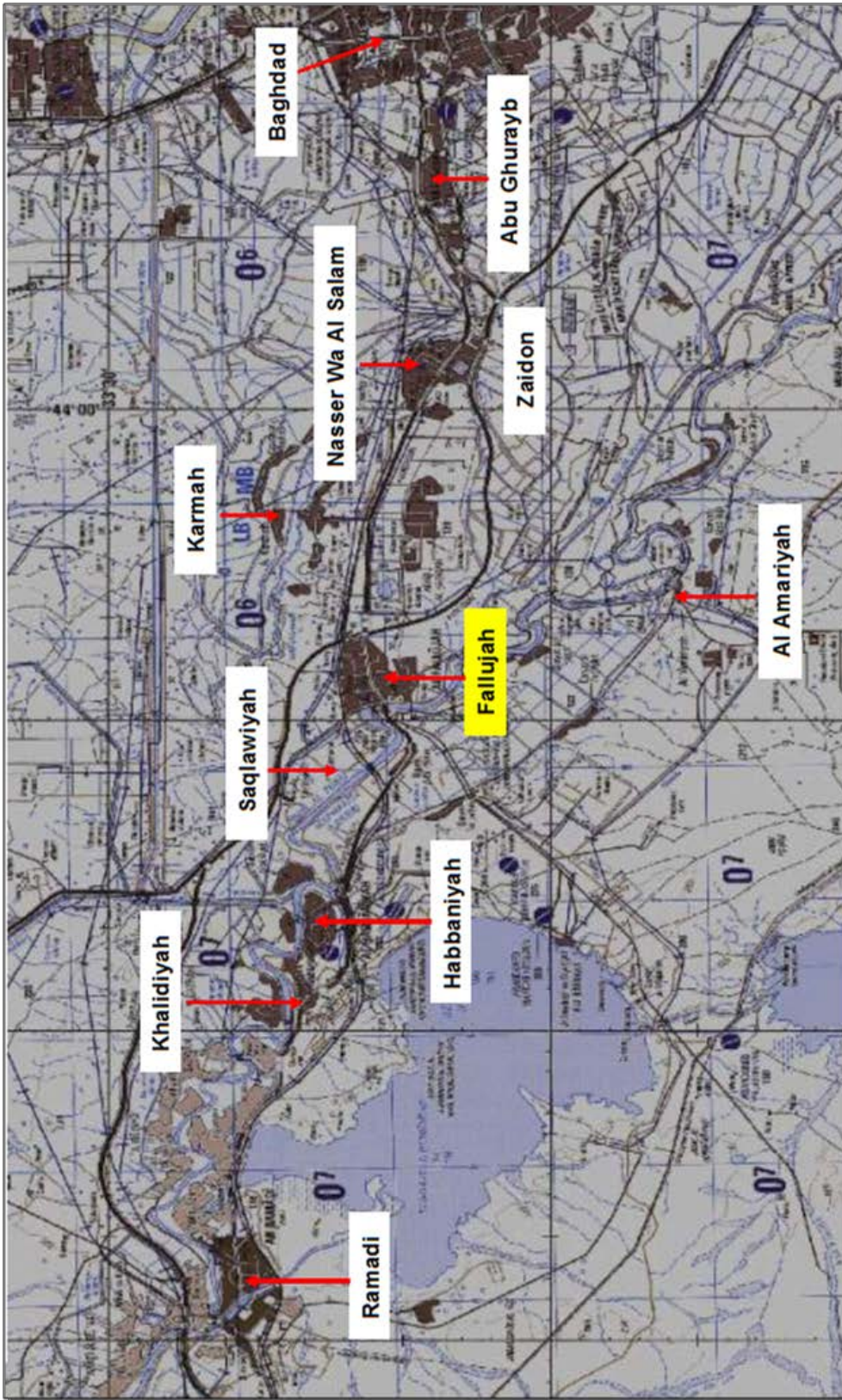


Image courtesy of 1st MARDIV

Figure D-8. Map of Fallujah and surrounding cities

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Appendix G. Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|--|
| AO | Area of Operation |
| AQI | Al Qaeda in Iraq |
| BCT | Brigade Combat Team |
| BLT | Battalion Landing Team |
| BrigGen | Brigadier General–US Marine Corps |
| BG | Brigadier General–US Army |
| C2 | command and control |
| Capt | Captain, US Marine Corps or US Air Force |
| CAS | close air support |
| CENTCOM | US Central Command |
| CERP | Commander Emergency Response Program |
| CF | Coalition forces |
| CG | Commanding General |
| CO | commanding officer |
| COC | combat operations center |
| COL | Colonel, US Army |
| Col | Colonel, US Marine Corps or US Air Force |
| CONUS | Continental United States |
| COP | Combat Outpost |
| CPT | Captain, U.S. Army |
| CT | counterterrorism |
| DCO | Deputy Commanding Officer |
| ECP | entry control point |
| EOD | Explosive Ordnance Disposal |
| 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 |
| HUMINT | Human Intelligence |
| IA | Iraqi Army |
| ICDC | Iraqi Civil Defense Corps |
| IDA | Institute for Defense Analyses |
| IED | improvised explosive device |
| IG | Iraqi Government |
| IIP | Iraqi Islamic Party |
| ING | Iraqi National Guard |
| IO | information operations |
| IR | Information Requirement |
| ISF | Iraqi Security Forces |
| ISR | intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance |
| JAWP | Joint Advance Warfighting Program |
| JCOA | Joint Center for Operational Analysis |
| JFCOM | United States Joint Forces Command |
| JSOC | Joint Special Operations Command |
| KIA | Killed in Action |
| LNO | liaison officer |
| LOO | Lines of Operation |
| LtGen | Lieutenant General, US Marine Corps |
| LTC | Lieutenant Colonel, US Army |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| MSR | main supply route |
| NCO | non-commissioned officer |
| ODA | Operational Detachment Alpha |
| OGA | Other Governmental Agencies |
| OIF | Operation IRAQI FREEDOM |
| POC | point of contact |
| POO | point of origin |
| PRT | Provincial Reconstruction Teams |
| QRF | Quick Reaction Force |
| PsyOps | Psychological Operations |
| RCT | Regimental Combat Team |
| RFCT | Ready First Combat Team |
| ROE | rules of engagement |
| RPG | rocket propelled grenade |
| S-3 | battalion or brigade operations staff officer (Army; Marine Corps battalion or regiment) |
| SEAL | Sea, Air, Land |
| SFG | Special Forces Group |
| SFODA | Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha |
| SIGACT | Significant Activity Report |
| SOF | Special Operations Forces |
| SOI | Sons of Iraq |
| TACON | tactical control |
| TF | Task Force |
| THT | Tactical HUMINT Team |
| TOA | Transfer of Authority |

| | |
|-------|---|
| TOC | tactical operations center |
| UAV | unmanned aerial vehicles |
| 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 |

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