The al-Anbar Awakening: Comparative Assessment of Strategies and Tactics Used to Instigate the Awakening Movement

The Center for the Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL)
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Project Overview

In 2012, the Translational Research Group in the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) began a project to complement Marine Corps University's two volumes of interviews related to the al-Anbar Awakening Movement (Sahwa al-Anbar)[1] and stabilization in al-Anbar Province. The initial goals of the project were:

- To provide to the Marine Corps a comparative assessment of tactics and strategies used by a variety of groups to instigate the al-Anbar Awakening. The lead researcher, Ms. Jennifer Clark, hypothesized that one singular tactic or one single entity did not initiate the movement, but a variety of tactics and strategies, combined with the overall social overlay of the environment, provided the setting for the Awakening Movement.
- To provide information that might be of use to CAOCL in its training and education curricula.

The project was cancelled after interviewing was complete, but before the lead researcher was able to conduct significant analysis. Despite the project's cancellation, CAOCL feels the interviewees provided valuable information on a number of topics of interest to the Marine Corps and hopes that other researchers may find the information useful.

Project Materials Include:

- Summary of Preliminary Findings
- Transcript Processing Methods Overview
- Interview Transcripts

Questions regarding this collection should be directed to Dr. Kerry Fosher, Director of Research, Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning at kerry.fosher@usmc.mil or caocladmin@usmc.mil.

[1] 2009. Timothy S. McWilliams and Kurtis P. Wheeler, eds., *Al-Anbar Awakening, Volume 1, American Perspectives: US Marines and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004-2009*. Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press.
2009. Col. Gary Montgomery and Chief Warrant Officer-4 Timothy S. McWilliams, eds., *The Anbar Awakening, Vol. 2: Iraqi Perspectives*. Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press.

Preliminary Findings

In her preliminary review of the transcripts, Ms. Clark highlighted the following issues based on comments from interviewees (12 Marines, 4 active or retired Army, 1 National Guard, and 2 active or retired Special Forces). Many of the themes she identified are confirmatory rather than revelatory. However, we believe further analysis of the transcripts could yield additional recommendations and/or useful detail.

Themes identified in interviewee comments:

- Events leading up to the Awakening started as early as 2002 with discussions in Washington DC and Jordan. However, this early momentum was impeded when the talks were cancelled due to a lack of cultural understanding of the tribes and of the Ba'athist Party.
- Marines were hamstrung early on by CENTCOM instructing them to "hold" al-Anbar, rather than win it.
- CENTCOM also discouraged a strong tribal role in the future of Iraq, but Marines went with the ground truth and engaged key tribes anyway. Working with tribes and militias was important, despite CENTCOM guidance to do otherwise.
- A mismatch between U.S. political and strategic objectives, as well as the inability of Marines to distinguish friendlies from enemies, impeded the Awakening.
- Successful coalition engagement in Anbar rested on strong leadership and techniques developed in al Qaim and Tal Afar involving immersion with the populace and force as necessary, rather than just winning hearts and minds.

Recommendations for counter-insurgencies based on interviewee comments:

- Provide more training in body language and using and vetting interpreters.
- Increase and improve cultural training and education for enlisted personnel.
- Provide cultural subject matter experts and cultural advisors to troops at brigade, battalion and company levels.
- Create an accessible database of cultural training information.
- Give greater consideration to patrols when distributing interpreter resources.
- Leverage unofficial doctrine (e.g., Kilcullen, Galula) as much as official doctrine.
- Identify certain attributes (e.g., good listener, good critical thinking skills, maintains continuity of effort with colleagues, conducts effective relief in place/transfer of authority) and past experiences (e.g., recruiting) for effective leadership.
- Employ specific tactical and operational approaches for improved COIN operations:
    - In joint operations, establish a clear unified command structure as well as clear boundaries with respect to areas of responsibility. Implement organizational techniques to encourage vertical and horizontal communication, a match between policy and strategy, and a fusion between the service branches both in personnel and information.
    - Live with the population on Combat Outposts rather than commuting to work from Forward Operating Bases.
    - Immerse with the population in order to track community finances, conduct more civil affairs projects, and accurately designate funds to projects that will directly benefit the community.
    - Place a local face on projects through the use of local police and politicians, and conduct joint operations with local security forces.
    - Engage in honorable behavior - keep your word, respect the other person, demand respect in return, and understand others' perspectives.
    - Do not react when fired upon unless you can visually identify a target.
    - Temper a hearts and minds approach with a clear show of willpower and force when necessary.

- Use influence operations to highlight positive images such as completed projects and open markets instead of bombed buildings and bullet holes. This can help people develop a sense of a return to normalcy rather than a deteriorating security situation.
- Employ Special Forces techniques such as surgically removing key leaders from the enemy's command structure, but do so in the least harmful way to family and community. Empower local unit leaders to act as de-facto warlords.

Transcript Processing Methods

This is a description of the methods used to process transcripts for long-term storage and sharing with other researchers and institutions.

The al-Anbar Awakening: Comparative Assessment of Strategies and Tactics Used to Instigate the Awakening Movement. Protocol # MCCDC.2012.0002-IR-EP7-A.

The approved informed consent document describes the potential for subjects to be identified as follows:

> *No reference will be made in oral and written reports that will link you to the project, unless explicit authorization has been provided by you. However, please note that it may be possible for people to recognize your participation through contextual information or other means. Therefore, you can refuse to answer any question or to stop the interview at any time. You also may request that information you have provided, including the entire interview, be removed from the study at any point up until data analysis begins.*

The primary method (verified by 2 researchers) used to process transcripts in accordance with the protocol was as follows.

1. All names are removed unless the person named is a well known public figure, well known published Sheikh, or military leader who has already been published or listed in the literature repeatedly as having conducted certain actions in Anbar, and is not the interviewee. This is done to specifically protect Iraqis who are mentioned in the transcripts.

An effort was made (by 1 researcher, not verified) to further reduce the chances that subjects could be identified through the following actions.

2. Remove Units if they are the interviewee's unit, the previous unit, or the following unit from a RIPTOA with the interviewee's unit.
3. Remove MOS and/or billet if it identifies the interviewee, especially if the MOS and/or billet is very specific. Alternatively, an MOS and/or billet will remain if it is common and has many people within the billet, but any other identifier (like a unit or company) will be removed.
4. Remove location only if it is known that it will explicitly identify the interviewee.
5. Remove mention of another commander or officer in a corresponding unit in an adjacent AO if it is known that it will explicitly identify the interviewee or potentially compromise another interviewee.

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Interview 1: 03201202

Interview [recorded via speakerphone] 03201202, 15 March 2012
Location of Deployment: Ramadi; Date of Deployment: (all of) 2005 & 2006, into 2007
Billet: Intel Officer

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you received the Informed Consent, and you have sent it back, but I just want to reiterate that you have received the Consent, you are aware that I am audio-recording this, and do you have any questions or concerns with the Informed Consent or the project at this time before we start?

03201202: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, very good.

I sent you a copy of the thematic questions. So you have a general idea of what it is that I am going to be covering today, but did you have anything that you would like to start off with or start by discussing?

03201202: No, not really. I mean, it is such a broad topic that you could take it in practically any direction. So rather than set you off where you don't want to go, you can start where you want to go.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, very good.

I have the themes broken down between engagements, operations, and cultural knowledge, but the primary question that I am trying to get at with this project, because there is so much information about the Anbar Awakening, is I am trying to identify the dynamics, the interactions and/or the actions that were used by specific teams, units, or service branches to instigate or support the Awakening.

03201202: Right.

INTERVIEWER: And the objective is to try and see if there is any lessons learned or any specific types of things that were done that can be applied globally in other settings, either where insurgencies exist or where we're practicing counterinsurgency but not necessarily mutually exclusive.

03201202: Right. Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Did you want to comment on any of that?

03201202: Well, just, you know, first reaction is I hope we don't find ourselves in another such counterinsurgency for a very long time, because the information requirements to do it well, to even have a fighting chance, are absolutely enormous, and I think a lot of the places where we would be engaged in our counterinsurgency campaign are borderline non-permissive to non-permissive right now. That's the problem. By the time we start looking at a place where we might have to do a counterinsurgency, that has already become difficult to acquire information that we will need to operate successfully in that area.

We had to fight for our information out there. I mean every bit of information. So I think you probably well appreciate that with the studies you have done on it already.

So every time we stepped outside a FOB big or little in a movements context, and we typically weren't disappointed, some sort of fighting or engagement every time we were out on the road. So that meant acquiring information was extremely expensive and difficult, which really slowed us down tremendously, and the level of detail of information that we required to be successful was pretty acute. And that just took a long time to collect.

I think someone could really be well aware of the cultural norms that were operating out in Al-Anbar, but some good book-lore (*muffled, inaudible, believe word was "book-lore"*) on that would be very, very familiar with Arab culture, particularly in that part of the Arab world. But still, you really needed to understand the politics, the microscopic local politics to really make any headway out there, and that was simply acquired on the ground. That really was next to impossible to teach before someone deployed.

INTERVIEWER: So did you have any type of cultural training that did assist you in any way prior to your deploying?

03201202: We did. Everyone had cultural awareness training. That was useful. Everyone had their stock Arabic phrases that they could recite. That was also very helpful, but it just -- it took a long time to understand the nuances of what was happening on the ground, and that was dynamic as well. So that would change from month to month, and that was very difficult.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any IPB or left-seat/right-seat with other units that were able to provide you with information about what the ground conditions were?

03201202: We did, but this was -- I was at the MEF level. So we were taking a macro view of the entire province, and the sort of cultural nuance that I'm talking about would go right down to at least the battalion level and usually below, right down to the company level. And they would remain fairly static in an area that they could work in and become familiar with.

But I would say one of the things that really just annoyed me to no end out there was that we had so few FAOs with us, and that didn't seem to change. I was out there twice with the MEF G2 and the second time was no better than the first time. We still lacked well trained FAOs, and it didn't seem the Marine Corps would make a concerted effort to increase their numbers.

And I can say the same thing, for Arabic linguists. I thought that was absolutely pathetic, and I brought it up. And what I was told several times was that the Marine Corps was not going to increase numbers of Arabic FAOs significantly nor the number of Arabic linguists significantly, because there was a manpower problem and finding work for these people after Al-Anbar.

So, yeah, so that's brilliant. So, you know, we got to win today to worry about tomorrow, and that's not helping us win today. And I just thought that's extremely shortsighted, bureaucratic manpower management philosophy that cost us and slowed us down at Anbar.

Why don't we have hundreds of FAOs out there, not there at any one time, but just hundreds to call upon? Because you really needed these guys down at every battalion, and I could make a strong argument, you needed an FAO or a really talented staff NCO to fulfill that role down at the company level.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any other cultural assets? Like I know what's in theater now is there's several contracting companies, and there's the Human Terrain System, and then the Marine Corps is using the CULADs. So did you have anything like that, or was it just the FAOs available to you back then?

03201202: Yeah. We didn't have any of that then. So I was there in 2005 and then all of 2006 into 2007, and the Human Terrain Teams were just being developed when I left.

I can see what they can do in Afghanistan. I really like them. I think that really would have helped out there, because in the absence of them, what we had to do just to make sense of the situation on the ground was to conduct our own literal censuses out there. I mean house to house, counting people, photographing buildings, photographing of all the military age males that lived in that building or work in that shop, et cetera. I mean kind of from the Syrian border right down all the way past Fallujah, and we did it. And that was infantry battalions doing that. So we just had to assemble the data just so we could make sense of precisely where the tribes were, tribal interactions, the economy, as well as, of course, that would help with our trying to finish, assess, process as we targeted insurgents.

INTERVIEWER: With that census, did you do any of the fingerprinting or the biometrics, or did that come much later?

03201202: No. We were doing that then, but it wasn't tied in specifically to the census. The census was just a pure census, names of individual, data, and we'd take a good picture. I suppose the picture was good enough for BATs, for biometrics, but we didn't do iris scans or fingerprints as part of the census, at least not systematically.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I ask is because Bing West wrote an article about that, and one of his theories is that had the fingerprints and the biometrics been taken and actually tied into a central system instead of information getting stovepiped, that would have actually allowed you guys to separate out the insurgents and then actually make extensive headway.

But, having -- I am actually an anthropologist, and part of my background in undergrad was in forensics. And I know how long it took for them to set up a central system and actually get something like the BATs together for the United States. So I couldn't imagine that being done that quick in Iraq. So I'm interested in why he thought that that would have been a key point that would have turned the tide.

03201202: Well, it's kind of like a lot of the interesting theories that are -- I know Bing West spent a decent amount of time there, but the trouble with BATs was that it was not ready for the campaign when we needed it. You know, it was still an idea and had not been perfected, not even close.

So as you probably heard with BATs, we had an extreme data management problem, whereas -- I'll just give you an example. The infantry battalions, companies, would round up insurgents with good cause, probably more bad guys, do a decent enough job, which got better later in collecting up forensic evidence and sensitive site exploitation. Send the detainees to the detention center where they were properly entered into BATs, and all the evidence arrayed against them was also entered in. So we have -- and then, of course, we interrogate these people, so that would become part of the database as well. So we had a fairly robust data set on each individual when after 2, 3 weeks, we had to send them to the central detention facility in Baghdad, Camp Cropper, or we'd have to send them down south. So either way, they were going to the central detention center.

The trouble with BATs was that as we sent our records to the central detention center, they were delayed. There just wasn't sufficient bandwidth or data management tools to allow those records to be transferred quickly. So the detainees would show up, and they would look for their records in BATs, not find them. They would have to register them, just to in-process them, so there was some skeletal record on the individual based on what he had in his -- on his person, basically, his identification tags from our detention facility. And then an hour or two later or the next day would come our records to populate the database. Well, it's old information now, because what they just typed in, the skeletal record is now newer, and all our information was dumped. I cannot tell you how often that happened. That was almost guaranteed to happen. So, you know, Bing West, nice theory, but that's just not what happened out there.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Did you have problems with just the cross-over with the different types of networks? Because when I was there in 2008, we had significant problems between MarineLink and then trying to use CIDNE.

03201202: Yeah. That exists to this day in Afghanistan. It was so bad that -- I mean, this is not Iraq; this is Afghanistan now -- that we had to use a commercial system, Palontir, just to make sense of our data. Which Palontir is an absolutely incredible tool. Boy, I tell you what, if I had had that thing in Iraq, that would have made a huge difference.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have stovepiping or anything like that between the different branches, though? I mean, I know the Marines tend to talk to each other, but were you able to get any information from the Army units that were around you?

03201202: We did. Really they're -- depending on what time frame we're talking about, there wasn't a whole ton of information we really had to pass to them, so that wasn't a huge problem. If we needed to change information, it was usually analyst to analyst. Our cross-border team would talk to their cross-border team, and they were usually pretty good about that, but as far as accessing a database and making sense of the information, no, that was extremely painful. It could be done. It wasn't impossible, but an analyst really would have had to have wanted that information badly to go through that pain and effort, and that's, again, as an aside why Palontir was so phenomenally successful in Afghanistan, because it made that data mining very, very easy, very fast.

INTERVIEWER: So at the MEF level, were you able to get out and actually participate in any of the engagements, talking with sheikhs or high-level personnel or even just the locals that were in the community, or were you pretty much at the MEF and doing the analysis?

03201202: It was both. I would get out. I'd go out with the general a lot, and they -- after Sheikh Sattar was discovered, I met with him several times. I'd meet with Governor Mamoun in Ramadi. Actually, I met with a couple of insurgent leaders actually -- [laughs] -- at one point or another. That was always interesting. So, yeah, I'd get out and about. I wasn't actually walking through the bazaars or the sauks, but like an infantry company would on practically a daily basis. So didn't have that kind of interaction. It was usually key leader engagement.

INTERVIEWER: So with the amount of engagements that the infantry were doing during the foot patrols, I mean, usually that would come up through the OPs reports and DIIRs and stuff like that to you. Did you get a chance to see just the amount of information that was coming towards you, and how did you vet any of that information to make sense of it?

03201202: Actually, we saw quite a bit of that. That was one of our key sources of information. So we'd get that through a variety of channels. Sometimes that was just the battalion intelligence officer incorporating those reports in his battalion intelligence summary, which would then get forwarded up. I would often have our human exploitation teams, our HUMINT guys out there with the infantry units, they stayed “phonetically” busy. They would carry off and just get atmospherics reports, which details the sort of thing if you're thinking about what was the attitude of the people, the price of chicken, you know, willingness to talk about just anything, you know, common complaints heard, rumors on the street, all that sort of thing, as opposed to like meeting with the source and delving information off of a specific insurgent we were trying to target.

So between what I was getting from the infantry battalion as to what I was reading and infantry battalion operational summaries, my HET guys were telling me, and then, of course, I'd listen to -- you know, another great source of information was all the PiTTs and the PRTs that were out there as well. Anyone who had to articulate a coherent thought about what they were seeing was useful information that -- to tell you the truth, I would read it, which is why I am practically blind today, but, you know --

INTERVIEWER: So with all of that information, what I would expect to see is just thousands of reports that would show a level of engagement from the Marines that were not necessarily seen in the literature. And I've read many articles on the Awakening. And what I am seeing is, there's a lot of authors that will take credit for things. A lot of folks like to place blame. But what I'm not seeing is information that shows just the huge amount of daily engagements that were going on with the population.

03201202: Well, I think -- and I agree with you. That's absolutely true, but the great story is the Anbar Awakening and Sheikh Sattar, and I can definitely comment on that, because I had a ringside seat on that one. I've watched that from day one. Because all the other engagements were boring, I mean, they didn't really amount to much immediately, and it was very difficult to see if they were having much of an effect whatsoever. I mean, it was a broken record, I'm sure you thought. I mean, they'd have a key leader engagement. They would -- like a kabuki dance, they would list all their complaints, which were about the same complaints they had the month before. There might be one thing that was different. There would be a scream about the Shia government in Baghdad, you know, attempting to wipe out the Sunni, the rightful heirs, to governance in Iraq, align themselves with Persians, et cetera, et cetera. So, I mean, that was the typical key leader engagement, and we had to keep reminding ourselves that, you know, one of the major points here is to keep talking. You know, somewhere, somehow, in one of these key leader engagements, there is going to be some sort of minor breakthrough that will lead to something else. So that was the patience and faith that we had to have in doing key leader engagements, and, of course, we would learn. There would be -- snippets of conversation would come out that would reveal relationships in the local area between tribes, between sub-tribes, et cetera, and that was all very useful information. And if nothing else, they were able to blow off steam, because they'd talk to us and yell at us and complain to us, because we were the guys in charge, and that's just what happened when you were in charge. You got yelled at by the people.

INTERVIEWER: So did you have any type of training on how to interpret your interpreters or how to work with your interpreters, or was that all pretty much self-learned?

03201202: Self-learned, but the CI/HUMINT marines were particular valuable on that regard, because that was part of their training, so -- but, you know, we crossed our interpreters too. So one interpreter would check on another interpreter. A Marine might have a good proficiency in Arabic, and we didn't find too many interpreters that were slanting the interpretations. They were generally pretty good.

INTERVIEWER: Good. Now, when you talk about key leader engagements, because of the level that you were at with the MEF, I would expect more of that than just your local Sunni on the street, but did you have -- was it an understanding that you were definitely going to go like right out the gate and talk with the government officials, or were you actually seeking out sheikhs, or did it just kind of naturally happen that you were talking to everybody?

03201202: Well, we would talk to everybody, so -- and we'd try to be neutral. So we'd talk to Governor Mamoun, and he was an interesting individual. I don't think he gets nearly as much credit as he deserves holding that place together in a sense. We discovered sitting in Ramadi during those terrible times. But then we'd talk to the tribal sheikhs, and what is interesting is we found ourselves trying to strike some sort of workable balance between the political demands and the capability of the tribal sheikhs and what we were trying to do to and development government, governance in the province through Governor Mamoun and the Provincial Council, because the two were arch rivals, which wasn't apparent when I first got there. [Laughs.] There was no local government. I mean, this is right after the Second Battle of Fallujah.

So governance really -- as you saw by the time you got there in 2008, it took a good 18 months to get them up to any sort of meaningful level, and the Anbar Awakening gave up enough breathing space as well. And then really just if resources had flowed from Baghdad to Ramadi for Governor Mamoun and the provincial council to do something, it would have made a lot more headway, but, I mean, even the provincial council were a bunch of Albu-rejects that were sent from Baghdad down there. I mean, Governor Mamoun couldn't even appoint his own provincial cabinet, so he was badly hogtied, which I thought was kind of interesting, because we were trying to promote governance out there as one of the primary goals, but the central government of Baghdad wasn't going to allow that to happen.

INTERVIEWER: There's a lot of discussion on whether or not he was actually -- and the tribes actually did believe that he was part of the insurgency himself.

03201202: There's no way. No way.

INTERVIEWER: Because there's other people that write about how he was this hero and he was really great and how he did this impossible job and still came to work every day, even though he was threatened constantly --

03201202: Right.

INTERVIEWER: -- and was facing resource challenges. So when you talked with the sheikhs, how did you resolve that? How did you try and lead them towards governance or working with the government when you knew that this animosity existed?

03201202: It was a series of compromises really. So the Anbar Awakening is illustrative of that. Initially, Sheikh Sattar wanted to be made in charge of security all through Ramadi, you know, the Ramadi area because he had enough tribes and allied tribes to make that happen. So we weren't about to let him basically subcontract out security for Ramadi to Sheikh Sattar as much as, you know, we basically liked him at that point. So it was a compromise where he would encourage the friendly tribes in Ramadi to join the police force, and of course, he would stand up his militia forces “The

Sons of al-Anbar" that would work under the auspices of the police in the local area. So, I mean, that's a good compromise where we maintained the fig leaf of governance over tribal demands. So, I mean, I don't think people appreciate what we struggled with in those initial days of the Anbar Awakening, because here we had a guy we had been looking for, for really since we got to Al-Anbar, and yes, the Army found him. It was not the Marines who found him. That was Captain Travis Patriquin, I'm sure you've read an awful lot about him.

There's even another book about -- that just came out about him that I haven't read yet. In any case, he was an FAO, brilliant, very talented, very hardworking, extremely perceptive, and he found Sheikh Sattar just through -- just one key leader engagement after another, finally tracked him down, and, you know, like fate smiled in destiny when al-Qaeda over-played their hand and killed that tribal leader, wouldn't give his body back. There was just a whole series of events that was just a perfect moment for Sheikh Sattar to come out of the woodwork finally, you know, grasp the mantle and lead to this uprising. But the -- at the same time that that's going on, to our east, the United States Army is engaged in a fierce battle with Muqtada al-Sadr's JAM, and some other Shia militia forces out there. So, on the one hand, we're fighting militia forces that are in no way aligned to al-Qaeda. This is, you know, the JAM, but on the other hand, now in Anbar, the Marines are standing up militia forces -- [laughs] -- you know, an extra governmental body that is really not supporting one of our primary goals of developing good governance in the province, you know. So it's like what do you want. Are we driving this back to some 8th century tribal structure, or are we trying to develop a modern western society that adheres to rule of law? Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, they often are considered militias, but some of the literature and other folks I have talked to say that -- when I ask how did you link this to the primary goal of linking it to the government, the answer typically is, that Sheikh Sattar was getting us police, and they were police and trained as police, and they were police officers. And that certainly falls in line with standing up the government organization and government goals. So your --

03201202: Yeah. Yeah, it was, but, I mean. Ya know, here's the crux…Actually, to tell you the truth, I don't buy that. I think we were being utterly disingenuous with ourselves and just wouldn't admit what was really going on, which really annoyed the living crap out of me, and, you know, I had memos to that effect assessment memos to my commanding general explaining the distance between what we were doing and what we said we were doing.

Yeah, they were police. Right. They were not police. They were tribal militias, you know, right out of classical Arabian culture. So -- the only thing it lacked was the camels and the flintlocks, and you could have made -- you could have been extras on the set of "Lawrence of Arabia." So, no, we painted a fig leaf over that by putting them underneath the auspices of the police. Now, ultimately, they did work together, but they were not cops. They were tribal militias, and I think maybe we really should have just recognized what works in Anbar province, because clearly they don't get the rule of law. They just don't get it, and being a cultural anthropologist, I'm sure you realize how we try to project our views of government and society on other cultures (32.30?). And that was just -- I won't say it's arrogant. I think we're being too hard on ourselves there, but, you know, I don't think -- there was just a real reluctance to admit that our construct of what was happening out there was wrong. It was not going to work. It was acceptable what could work in their society would bore little resemblance to what we thought was good governance and democracy. Yeah, that would just take generations to develop, and that would come from the urban elite spreading their values to a better educated rural population. That just takes a long time.

So we wouldn't admit that. We were to go in there. You know, Donald Rumsfeld was going to fix it overnight and get out, and he wouldn't back down. So -- and I'll tell you, the general officers out in the field were under tremendous pressure for the more senior general officers than our overall defense leadership to tow the party line, which I thought was reprehensible, because it was wrong. You know, rather than making an honest assessment of what really was going on in Anbar Province as far as what could be achieved and what we were doing, they were forced just to twist and contort everything to set this preconceived idea of what good governance was out there. And that caused a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Did any of that get relayed up the chain? To the policy-makers back in D.C. who were clearly not in Iraq, were they getting reports from the general officers that let them know what it was like (*in Iraq*)?

03201202: No. No. That's why when someone leaked my assessment, it was Tom Ricks of the Washington Post that created such a firestorm, which actually surprised me, because, I mean, I was too busy to worry about things, but I basically assumed this sort of thing was making it inside the Beltway. Apparently, it wasn't. You know, what you have to realize is when -- I'm not sure if you're familiar with that whole episode.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

03201202: Well, those beliefs, those conclusions, that sort of assessment, which is common knowledge -- and no one batted an eye in Anbar when that was circulated around -- that was part of my standard brief to visiting VIPs, and I think the first one who really was shocked by that was General [*name and position removed*], when he came out to visit in August of 2006. He hadn't heard anything like that before And the -- for the final lines, my brief, when he came out of visit was, I said, "At this rate, we will be unable to physically eradicate al-Qaeda from Anbar Province. Just can't do it," and he physically recoiled in his seat. So that's when I realized I had to put together a written assessment that explained why I said that, because if he reacted that way -- and I knew General [*name removed*]-- I had worked with him before. I knew he was going to go back to the Pentagon and start asking some questions, and I had better be ready to go. So that's the assessment that I got posted on SIPRNET that someone grabbed and gave to [*a reporter*], and the rest was history.

Yeah. So, on, they weren't hearing that. I was telling people about that, but, you know, I guess it took a journalist to make it happen, which is really unfortunate.

INTERVIEWER: And the thing is, though, if you speak to or read any of the assessments or reports or the articles that are coming out of the Army, when I talk about blame or credit, a lot of what is said about that particular report is, "Well, the Marines were losing, but we were winning." And it's because the Army was engaged with Sheikh Sattar and the Awakening as it was coming together. So there's these different perceptions about what is winning and what is losing.

Now, I look at the situation from my perspective and say, "Well, what were your mission requirements? Is winning and losing compared to and lined up against what your LOOs are and what your mission requirements are, and is that how

you assess it, or are you looking at the big picture and trying to line that up with what policy-makers are saying? Is that how you assess success?"

03201202: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So there's multiple versions, clearly, and it's interesting to me why this idea of fingerpointing exists. And it's not to say that I'm naive and that the different service branches work together easily, but I find it fascinating that instead of looking at the big picture and saying this is what was happening in all these different areas and each area was different and different service branches approach different things differently. Instead, it's, "No. The Marines did this," or, "No. The Army did that." So I did pay attention to your report, what is on the unclass side, but I did read how the Army responded to it, and they said how they were winning significantly in comparison to what the Marines were doing.

03201202: Well, yeah. Actually, I didn't see that when I was out there. I thought the Army and the Marines got along extremely well. There might have been -- you know, it would have been very difficult to compare -- it's unfair to compare the fights in the various provinces, because they were so different. I mean, the Army down in Baghdad clear all the way down to Al-Qut was dealing with the JAM, Shia insurgency. I mean, for instance, we didn't have any of the Explosively Formed Projectiles in Anbar, where they were just devastating Army units. You know, it just shows you the tremendous divide between the two different insurgencies that were out there.

We get along -- I always thought it was kind of interesting why the Army brigade was put into Ramadi. I never really -- I don't know the background how that happened, because when we showed up, they were already there, and actually, it was a National Guard brigade that was there, the Pennsylvania National Guard, and so 1-1AD would have been Colonel Sean MacFarland. They relieved them. They had come down from Tal Afar to relieve the National Guard brigade, and I thought they did a great job. We just integrated all the intelligence with them, and, you know, let's face it. I mean, Sheikh Sattar was living in their (*Colonel McFarland's Ready 1st's AO*) area, and they had Captain Travis Patriquin. So they were bound to find him, but I think if there had been a Marine regiment in there, maybe with someone who was like Captain Patriquin -- and they probably would have found him too, because they're all doing basically the right things.

I never found fault with how we were trying to conduct key leader engagement and all the patrolling out there. For a counterinsurgency, they were doing all the right things. You know, the NCOs right to the junior officers were doing a very good job, both Army and Marines. So that's all there is to it. The thing (*articles written by various members of each service branch that place blame or claim credit*) between the Army and the Marines is not helpful whatsoever, and I certainly didn't see it out there.

INTERVIEWER: Well, see, that's interesting, and I think a lot of that just goes back to the fact that it's been several years later, and, you know, memories change. And so when people write about things, they have a different perspective of what it was like while they were actually participating in it.

03201202: Yeah. Well, to me, the one huge key for understanding the insurgency out there from a historical perspective, if there's any lesson learned from this to anyone who reads that at all is that we got lucky. And, you know, as the old saying goes, we have to make our own luck, and we certainly did. But we got lucky. Had Sheikh Sattar decided not to come out of the woodwork, not to lead the Anbar Awakening, had Captain Travis Patriquin been assigned to another unit -- you know, this is like great-man/great-time kind of thing -- we'd still be duking it out there to this day, no doubt about it. We were doing all the right things to conduct a counterinsurgency campaign out there, right by the book, and developing new and better tactics along the way, but we had to be lucky, absolutely had to be lucky. There was that Sheikh Sattar out there, and eventually, we found him. We made our own luck, but it didn't have to happen that way with just one guy. One guy made all the difference in Anbar Province.

So if I ever read -- and I haven't read this yet, and I watched the literature like hawk -- well, I shouldn't say like a hawk. I used to, not anymore. Just waiting for the first volunteer to come out with some sort of triumphalist's view of how we won the west through a proper application of counterinsurgency techniques…like no, no. That was part of it. The better part of it, though, was we got lucky. So I think that fact has to be appreciated, which is why, as I've heard comment, was, "Oh, we don't do this for a very long time, because you just can't count on luck."

INTERVIEWER: And going back to the intent of this project-- if it is because we had the perfect set of circumstances -- and I do believe that social conditions actually contributed quite a bit-- but if it was the perfect set of circumstances, whether AQI was screwing up or whether or not the economy was bad enough or the security situation was bad -- whatever it was, I think that if it comes down to it being a certain group of people or a certain person or a certain set of circumstances in a certain environment-- then I'm concerned that we may not necessarily have a replicable pattern here that can be used elsewhere. I mean, there's certain things that we can certainly extrapolate from Anbar that can be used in other environments, but I think it should be applied carefully.

03201202: Yeah. Well, put in that context, I have to agree with you that -- anyway, it's kind of depressing, really. [Laughs.] We did all the right things, but we still had to be lucky. Yeah, I don't think there was any sense of inevitability that we were going to find Sheikh Sattar had come to our side, if all we have to do is 2 weeks before Captain Patriquin had his first real substantial meeting with Sheikh Sattar. I wrote the assessment based on General [*name removed*] visit. Just look at how -- look at the tone of that assessment and what we were thinking. I mean, it was bad out there. All the indications, everything that we were measuring, they determine if you're making any sort of progress whatsoever were -- not universally so but generally bad, and certainly, the police were coming along. I mean, there were encouraging signs out there, but still, the assassinations of government officials and other local leaders and attacks against U.S. and the Iraqi Security Force were just getting worse by the week. I mean, it was going up at a 45-degree angle on our charts, and we did an extremely good job with our metrics. So this was really good data.

So, you know, there you have it. But do you write that into the next version of COIN? First is to be lucky. I mean, compare that to the British Malaysia, which is always held up as the best counterinsurgency campaign in history, but, I mean, there the British really controlled so many things, from the economy down to the local government. We didn't have that sort of control in Iraq, and we won't again, either. I mean, the world is getting so much bigger, and besides, The United States Armed Forces has been static for generations. [Laughs.] You know, wade into a country of almost 30 million people and try to make sense of what's going on and throw your weight around, no way.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. But, the British they basically created camps that were cordoning off locals, so they were able to control the population much better than what was necessarily happening in Anbar, maybe to the exclusion of Ramadi, who had the walled city.

03201202: Right, right.

INTERVIEWER: But if you're going to create scenarios where every city becomes walled off and has infiltration and exfiltration points, that's different, but that's pretty much what, Galula describes, is that they had extreme control and understood and knew how to separate out the bad guys from the local population because of understanding who was who in the zoo. So I think that there were differences in the examples of what happened in Anbar and what Galula writes. On that thread, you have already said a couple of things in terms of COIN manual, but overall, if you had the opportunity to change that, you have already mentioned that you would say be lucky, but really, if you had some lessons learned that could be actually put into the COIN manual, what would you provide?

03201202: First thing is -- before I'd actually start touching the COIN manual is -- because, I mean, heck, if you look at the Small Wars manual, that would be fantastic. [Laughs.] You know, it's like, wow, they were pretty smart back then. But actually, the first thing I'd do before I'd even touch doctrine is I would make foreign area officers itself a primary MOS, for Marine officers at the field grade level, and I would make it a pretty robust MOS. Just look at the size of the Marine Corps and we can't come up with a couple hundred officers -- more than that -- let's say 4- to 500 officers be no kidding foreign area officers. They are worth their weight in gold when you need them. It would be amazingly interesting. It would be a great job. Right now, it's a secondary MOS, and these officers have to compete within their MOSs, to certify for promotions, and it's hard to get MOS credibility when they're spending so much time perfecting their skills as FAOs. So I think it's laughable, and you might be part of this -- so I might be insulting -- that we're going to teach our -- every staff NCO officer has got to have like an area of specialization that they're going to study on and develop, you know, some basic language proficiency, but become culturally aware in a broad geographic area. You know, what a laugh! That's like, you know, the great leap forward in China where everyone is going to make pig iron in their back yard. They could be the biggest steel-producing nation in the world. Man, you must be kidding me.

We are pressed enough as it is to do our basic combat proficiency, MOS proficiency skills, to go out there to any unit in the fleet and just look at how they struggle to train themselves, just what they absolutely, positively must do, yet they are going to find time to become culturally aware? No. We need professionals to do that, people like you. Now, if you can run the 3-mile real fast, we'll take you on board. [Laughs.] You know, forget about it. The Marine Corps is going to have to invest in enough people that could be effective immediately in some sort of COIN-type campaign. It doesn't even have to be COIN. It could be somewhere in humanitarian assistance operations, minor stability operations. If we have to go into the Niger Delta to help sort things out there, you know, who knows anything about the Niger Delta?

INTERVIEWER: Have you heard much about the CULAD capability that the Corps is developing?

03201202: I might have heard it in another term. Describe it.

INTERVIEWER: It's the cultural advisor, and the idea of the CULAD -- right now, they're referred to as "heritage CULADs," because they are contractors who are basically naturalized citizens. For example, you have CULADs that work in Afghanistan, but they're from Afghanistan and have also lived a significant amount of their time in America, so they have ideas about both cultures, and they speak the language. But they go out and embed with the Marines. It's a relatively small capability at this time, but it seems to be showing some progress.

03201202: Yeah. That would definitely help. You know, of course, when I'm imagining just a really robust population of FAOs -- and they're pretty much scattered around the world -- they're the guys that are valuable immediately when problems start arising. When people are doing operational planning, these are the guys to tell them precisely -- well, not precisely if they're not there, but like really inform their decision-making about various campaigns, even if it's like theater security cooperation. They just go out and, you know, help teach a class or something. So we've got enough of that (*meaning, so they would have enough of the cultural knowledge to effectively perform their duties*). The cultural advisor that you're talking about, that helps once you're on the ground. Definitely, I think it's a great idea. I'm thinking like the "Lawrence of Arabia" officer, his job is to spend an awful lot of his or her time abroad, living in embassies and doing assignments out there, and it would be a pain in the neck, it would be hard to manage, but, boy, when you needed these people, you would thank yourself that you actually did it.

INTERVIEWER: So you would think that having a more robust FAO capability would actually be the best way to provide cultural advising to the Corps?

03201202: Absolutely. We should have it to the point where we could get FAOs down to the battalion level if we were going to Iraq of Afghanistan again, right down to the battalion level. I mean speaking the language, understanding the culture. It might not be a no-kidding expert, because they might not have been in that particular area before, but they could get up to speed very quickly. You know, plus some money, they could keep an eye on the cultural advisors, the other translators as well. I mean, why don't we do that?

INTERVIEWER: Would you think that maybe in terms of training general troops, do you think that language would be more important or cultural, just having some generalized idea of culture? I know you have commented already on the training, on how much they have to do.

03201202: Yeah. I think just general cultural training, develop a sense of cultural empathy would be really useful, but that's ambitious, because you've got some really bright guys that are with the United States Marine Corps but also have an awful lot that really don't think in those directions. You know, they're just not interested in that, with no inclination to study those sorts of things. We can't even figure out our own culture. You know, like Marines don't connect the Waffen-SS slash with anti-semitism. They just think it's they were like really cool, tough troops. [Laughs.] See what I mean? We just don't even get ourselves, yet we're supposed to get these exotic cultures, which we've got real connection to, but just to have us think about it, that's hard. That's really hard to have a class that could be taught to them on how not to project their values on others, how others really look at themselves, their society, how they look at Americans. That's pretty tough. That would be several classes, actually.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Now, with these engagements that you had, the key leader engagements, did you find that any of them -- especially in the beginning, did you find any of them to be problematic or detrimental towards later missions, or were all of them pretty much, a good idea and something that works towards mission success?

03201202: They were all worth doing. Some, we knew were going to be more difficult than others. An awful lot of them were singularly not productive at all, other than the fact that we were still talking, which is always key. It was always bad if they didn't want to talk to you. That was bad, and there were definitely some hostile tribes out there that didn't want to talk to us whatsoever, and then you couldn't make any progress. You had no chance to make progress with them if that was the case. So it's always good to extend yourself, no matter if it seems like a fool's errand to get out there and talk to them.

INTERVIEWER: Did any of those tribes that were hostile in the beginning wind up coming over to your side and joining in and participating with coalition efforts?

03201202: A little bit. You know, the Albu Issa around Fallujah were pretty instructive. They were generally pretty hostile right to the end, but then there are, of course, some of the big tribes, and there were a lot of sub-tribal dynamics going on there. So some parts of the Albu Issa actually supported us, and then they'd have like these roaring gun battles out there. So Marines at a FOB, usually southwest of Fallujah, were reporting these pretty substantial firefights, which didn't involve us or al-Qaeda. It was Albu Issas duking it out amongst themselves. And again, so you'd hear that going on, you know, and read the reports and just think to yourself, you know, "I really have no idea what's going on out there."

But I suppose the other thing I really wish I would have had when I got out there, culturally, would have been solid framework just to hang all the incoming information on. To tell you the truth, I found out more about the tribes in al-Anbar after I redeployed for the last time when I was there, because I finally had time to kind of sort it out and read more about it. Maybe it was because people like you, that were out there after me (*referring to interviewer's work as a deployed social scientist in 2008-09*) that really kind of finally put the jigsaw together about what the tribes were doing. Sometimes it was 2 or 3 years after I left before I found something really good that really made sense. Once I read that, then everything else sort of lined up that I was seeing in a particular area. Who had time to put that together? We went in there to lead the 82nd Airborne, and the next thing you know, it was the First Battle of Fallujah. And then it was a fight for information after that. We didn't have a really good framework of who the tribes were, who the tribal leaders were, how they interacted, sub-tribes. [Laughs.] It had to be developed. That was really unfortunate. That was frustrating.

INTERVIEWER: So when you did do these engagements and you finally did start working with the tribes and you're saying the militias, at what point did you guys really start actually doing any type of operational planning with them in terms of missions, or did that just not occur?

03201202: No, it occurred, but that was at the lowest level. There was -- there were a few things going on there that's going to remain classified for a very long time, but suffice it to say that through some very local initiatives, the -- it was actually up like a proto-Sons of Al-Anbar movement out there that was particularly around al-Taqqadum or eh-- Habbaniyah. That's kind of where it first started. But anyway, what they -- it was a bunch of local men offering -- former security types, Army types, that just worked with the Marine battalion that happened to be there, and that those are the guys -- I don't know if you even recall it, because this lasted just very briefly, that wore the balaclavas and walked with Marine-Iraqi combined patrols down around Habbaniyah particular, and they knew who all the al-Qaeda guys were. And that's when they'd go -- we were getting the -- you know, the night letters being put underneath the doors of al-Qaeda operatives and supporters out there, and that's when headless bodies were found of al-Qaeda guys in the alleys instead of like the local leaders that were talking to us. So that was Habbaniyah. That didn't have much of an effect in Ramadi, even though it was only like about 20 miles away -- no, it wasn't that. It was 50 miles away.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember about what time frame that was in Habbaniyah?

03201202: Yeah. This -- oh, yeah. This was July, August, September 2006.

INTERVIEWER: So it was before the big Awakening announcement?

03201202: Right. And it was a different group of people, and they didn't have any direct connection with Sheikh Sattar out there or the Albu Rishas, et cetera.

INTERVIEWER: Gotcha. In the literature, there are discussions about the Albu-Mahal and the Albu Nimr, up in al-Qaim and the Hit areas.

03201202: Oh, yeah. Well, the Albu-Mahals were -- that happened right after I left in 2005. So it was like the summer of 2005 Jugafi launched his (*Jugafi was the Sheikh*) own, like rebellion against al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda just stuffed them. So the Mahals really just were on their backs, and they had to flee. I don't think we really appreciate how many of them actually left the Husaybah - al-Qaim area. But from my perch back at Camp Pendleton in California, I could not believe that we were allowing that to happen, that we just didn't dogpile additional combat forces way out west to support the Albu-Mahal. Now, they were in it for themselves. This was a lot of tribal rivalry going on, and it just so happened that -- and the Mahals were -- had often fought us as much as they support us up to that point too. [Laughs.] But still, it was obvious that things were becoming polarized, and the Mahals were getting the worst of it from al-Qaeda and some of the smaller tribes there were out there. But we didn't support them, and they were run out of town. Al-Qaeda had a firm grasp on al-Qaim and Husaybah, and that made us do-- really II MEF and 2nd MARDIV do (*Operation*) "Steel Curtain" out there, which was -- that was a pretty tough operation.

INTERVIEWER: Even though they were fighting you and you kind of saw what was happening, was the reason that the Marines didn't support them because they didn't recognize it, or because they had been fought before and so didn't know to trust what was happening?

03201202: I think -- I don't know. But I think that we were so focused on find, fix, finish, assess that we didn't see the cultural -- the tribal war for what it was. It was just something that was playing off in the background, that it was a bunch of Arabs, you know, duking it out, and we're really out here trying to find, you know, the leaders of al-Qaeda cells in our various areas (*of operation*). See what I mean? We didn't pick up on that. Maybe a year later -- I'm not picking on II MEF or 2nd MARDIV whatsoever. Maybe a year later, we would have seen that. Actually, I have to say we did see that, because it was a year later during the al-Anbar Awakening that we did see the intertribal dynamics and tried to seize upon them, you know, like poking Sheikh Sattar to take advantage of the situation, in other words.

INTERVIEWER: So it was more like building upon the lessons of the Mahal to help support Sheikh Sattar?

03201202: Right, exactly. And with the Albu-Nimr, they were -- it was always my opinion that they were a lot easier to work with than the Mahals. The Special Forces worked a lot-- (*with the Albu Nimr*). You probably saw the Albu-Nimr up there. Yeah, I didn't really have -- they weren't really a concern. I mean, you could kind of count on those guys (*the Albu Nimr*) out there for the most part. They were-- I mean, there were some battles out there, but it wasn't anything like what the Mahals had to endure.

INTERVIEWER: Was it just that you guys kind of felt that the SF were their (*the Albu Nimr*) POC and taking care of [*the Albu Nimr*], and that's why [*the Albu Nimr*] weren't a primary focus for you guys?

03201202: That's exactly it. When I was out there, I thought the Special Forces did a brilliant job working with the Albu-Nimr, absolutely. In fact, in Hit, the SF tried to tell—it just so happened that it was an Army battalion that moved into Hit-- how they should engage with the Albu-Nimr and some of the other smaller tribes in the area, and the battalion commander would hear none of it. He was extremely kinetic and just turned his place to Fort Apache out there in Hit, and they paid the price, because Hit turned into a horror story while they were there. And this was despite what I told them was very, very good advice from the SF guys. So they just wound up alienating the Albu-Nimr and everyone else in that city.

INTERVIEWER: You had said that you took a front-row seat with the interactions and engagements with Sheikh Sattar. Is there anything that you'd like to provide on that? I mean, I know some of the literature talks about them actually pulling out the Iraqi constitution and some legal documents and saying that they were actually enacting law which legitimized the formal Awakening, and, you know, that's the first time I had heard of it. I read it in one article and was totally surprised that they actually had something that was legalized (*referencing Col. Tony Deane's article "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle" in Military Review, Jan-Feb 2010*).

03201202: No, they did not do that. [Laughs.] It's like you kind of wonder where some of this stuff comes from. Captain Patriquin and Colonel MacFarland arranged a meeting of all the -- well, most of the tribal sheikhs for the area north of Ramadi. It was going to be chaired by Sheikh Sattar, right in his compound, which was, of course, right across the street from Camp Ramadi, which was kind of nice, convenient. We only had like two M-1A tanks, and we're always like providing overwatch of his house too, which I think made Sheikh Sattar feel a little nervous about things. [Laughs.] But, you know, in there, the -- by the time they really had that meeting, though, it was predetermined what the outcome was going to be. You know, Sheikh Sattar had -- I mean, he was a good guy. I really liked him, but let's face it, he was in this, a lot of it, for himself, to protect his oil smuggling business. Al-Qaeda was hijacking some of his convoys that were crossing the Syrian border, taking the Iraqi crude from the Beiji refinery out to Syria and selling it for a song. The Syrians were more than happy to facilitate this. But in any case, al-Qaeda was starting to tax that, that they were -- they really tried to take over significant parts of the local economy around Ramadi, particularly fuel distribution. That was his (*Sittar's*) business.

So they (*al Qaeda*) started getting bad about that about the same time that they were really starting to become insufferably arrogant to the tribal leaders in the area, and that was a confluence of events right there. It was Sheikh Sattar's self interests plus the wounding of the pride of the tribal sheikhs, of which he was one, although he was a minor sheikh, and his brother was really, of course, the -- Albu Risha -- paramount sheikh. So they had this meeting, and it was sort of goading all the local sheikhs out there. Again, 1-1AD, Captain Patriquin and Colonel MacFarland did all the right things meeting with all the sheikhs. [Laughs.] Eventually, one of them is going to say the right thing, and they eventually got around to Sheikh Sattar. They talked to his brother but not him, because he wasn't the paramount sheikh, you know. But when they finally did meet him and they found out he was really a force to be reckoned with, you know, sort of like the Al Capone, to a certain extent, of Ramadi, they found, of course, he was the one who added sufficient personal gravidas. He had the name, you know, amongst the Albu-Rishas, which were one of the tribes that rebelled against the British in 1920. So he was like a blue blood, like a Rockefeller or a Kennedy sort of thing, a lot of cache amongst the local people.

And the idea forming tribal militias has been broached before, but that was really around Habbaniyah about 6 months before. It would have been about April. I forget the name of the tribal sheikh, but he was a member of the Iraqi Parliament at the time. He was an MP, and he said the same thing. He'll stand up a tribal militia, and there won't be any problems any longer, "Just put me in charge." And we just didn't trust him flat out. You know, that idea really hadn't really had its time yet. So the idea had been out there. This wasn't like a genesis of some new thought. They had been thinking along these lines for quite a while, and they had their meeting, Sheikh Sattar just had obviously seen enough of the situation, had enough talks with Captain Patriquin, figured that if he could get the Americans to back him up, he'd be the most powerful tribe, and he probably could run the al-Qaeda guys out of the area, protect his business, and then extend his patrician network throughout the province, which is what happened.

INTERVIEWER: So with this meeting, you're talking about the one that was the final, where they actually did the big announcement, and there's photos of Colonel MacFarland and Sheikh Sattar and a bunch of other sheikhs holding hands?

03201202: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Because that's the same one where they said that they actually did pull out a copy of the constitution.

03201202: Yeah. No. That didn't happen. If someone might have produced a document like that, I was not at that meeting. I got very detailed notes from that, and I talked to the people who were at the meeting, because that meeting happened pretty fast. We had just about a couple days' notice that it was going to go down, and we knew what the deal on the table was going to be. [Laughs.] (*Interviewer later learns that the referenced document was a legal document referencing how to legitimately remove Governor Mamoun from power, and declaring the right to form their own council of sheikhs*, *however, other interviewees referred to the document as a map that sheikhs signed which was a promise to Colonel MacFarland and the brigade to protect or "Awaken" an area, and to provide police recruits*).

Like I told my boss when I heard that Sheikh Sattar wanted to be put in charge of all security at the greater Ramadi area, that not only was that -- that was far worse than putting the fox in the henhouse, that was putting the grizzly in the cattle pen. You can't let him away with that. There's got to be some severe restrictions put on it. And then, again, we talked about now we're standing up our own militia where we're fighting militias in the rest of the country. I mean, really, what are we doing here? (1:12:33)

INTERVIEWER: But, again, that was an Army -- the Ready First team, although that was a mixture of different military service branches, but it seemed like it was led by Colonel MacFarland. So, in the literature, it says how he really did go against his superiors in creating this militia, but it was a chance he took that wound up panning out. But also, Travis Patriquin, everybody I have ever talked to has said that this guy was just a genuinely great human being, but he was only there for a limited period of time, before he died?

03201202: Yeah. Yeah, he was. Yeah. It just shows you. I keep saying right man, right time. He was -- they got there -- in June is when they relieved 2-28 BCT, but he got to work right away. He had had -- he had learned his lessons up at Tal Afar where they had done fairly well for themselves. He was kind of reprising his role as a great FAO down there, which he did successfully. But I have actually talked to producers in Hollywood about making a movie about Sheikh Sattar and Travis Patriquin, and somebody out there has got the right to a movie, because a couple books came out. That's how they do these deals nowadays, and you're going to see a movie on it. And if they do it well, it's just an amazing story.

And that's where I get back to kind of like what. I mean, can you really count on this confluence of events occurring again in a COIN campaign? Wow! You know, what would the British have done in the Middle East without T.E. Lawrence? I mean, that's kind of interesting. I don't know. So no one whipped out a copy of the Iraqi constitution. Someone might have forged a document out there and they all swore on it or something -- [laugh] -- you know, along those lines, but it wasn't anything more than a prop for their discussions.

INTERVIEWER: Now, what about -- Sheikh Sattar was dealing a lot with the tribal areas that were outside of Ramadi. Can you speak to what was going on inside Ramadi? That seemed to be Governor Mamoun's area.

03201202: Yeah. Well, he had -- Governor Mamoun only had limited influence in there in any regard whatsoever, both politically and tribally. So it was really one tribe after another eventually joined the Awakening, and it was a game altering event. We were just looking for a momentum shift somewhere, and Sheikh Sattar provided it. So once they really started rolling back al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda looked like they were in the losing end -- and as almost everyone has said, the typical Anbari did not like al-Qaeda whatsoever. It wasn't an alien concept to the moderate Sunnis that were out there. They were more than happy to just go with the flow at that point. And interestingly enough, when you look at the attack trends, it was March of 2007 when they pretty much fell off a cliff in Anbar. They were going up at a 45-degree angle, and then they just dropped precipitously once Sheikh Sattar came on the scene, and one tribe after another inside Ramadi began coming over to his side forming militias that were parts of the Sons of al-Anbar, you know, pure game momentum that was, of course, helped along by all U.S. units in the area.

INTERVIEWER: You've talked about the Sons of Iraq. Is it the Sons of Anbar is what Sheikh Sattar was calling it, and that then turned into the SOI after it hit Baghdad?

03201202: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. The reason I ask is because it's my understanding the SOI became something that happened after General Petraeus visited Anbar and took that pattern out to the Baghdad area, and then that's how it spread across the rest of Iraq. Is that kind of a decent understanding?

03201202: Yeah. I don't think they had any problems calling themselves "Sons of Iraq," because the typical Anbaris see themselves as really Iraqi nationalists. They had strong patriotic feelings, but the sense of Iraq as a nation more so than the Shia compatriots to the east. So they were the Sons of al-Anbar at first, absolutely, and later on -- this was after I left -- the idea was propounded to change their names to "Sons of Iraq," because the movement then was extending beyond al-Anbar, so -- you know, like up into Ninewa in particular. So they agreed.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any -- were you there with the surge, or did you have any experience with the surge?

03201202: [Laughs.] We didn't need the surge. Unfortunately, I haven't seen anyone say that the surge had any effect in Anbar whatsoever, because it didn't. The attack level dropped off in March 2006, and the first surge units showed up a couple months later. They really didn't have much to do relative to their predecessors in the province. Things were massively calmed down from March 2006 -- oh, I'm sorry -- March 2007 onwards. Now, the surge, made a big difference in the rest of the country, absolutely, but in Anbar, it was too late. It was already over.

INTERVIEWER: So why -- if Sheikh Sattar was not the premier -- and I do know that his brother actually had higher ranking. He was the elder brother. So I always find it fascinating that his younger brother is the one that kind of took the lead, because that is atypical in Sunni tribal order. But what was your experience with his brother? Why did he not take the lead, do you think?

03201202: It was just personalities. He was a very quiet, unassuming guy who is just trying to stay alive, because any tribal leader that opposed al-Qaeda, particularly where he lived, didn't live long.

INTERVIEWER: Did he participate pretty heavily, though, maybe behind the scenes, or did he stay unassuming until after his brother died?

03201202: No. No. In fact, he didn't even do much after his brother died, it was Sheikh Sattar's younger brother that picked up his mantle after Sheikh Sattar was killed.

INTERVIEWER: I know that the Albu Risha family after Sattar had died, they really turned (*the Awakening*) it into a political movement quite rapidly. (*Researcher's note: there is much to suggest that the Awakening was always supposed to be a political movement which would eventually get into governance.*)

03201202: Right.

INTERVIEWER: I have gone through all of my questions, but are there any additional things that you'd like to talk about? Because, anything that you provide to this is (*project*), is going to go into the entire [*collection of perceptions*], not just from Marines but from everybody I can talk to, including some of the Iraqi interpreters have contacted me. I'm trying to get a really holistic idea of what happened, so that hopefully we can pull together a better understanding of [*events*] and, if able, extrapolate some of these lessons (*for training*)

03201202: Well, by the time the -- it was pretty apparent that the Iraqi -- the al-Anbar Awakening had succeeded -- and that took several months, really, and it really happened September. It didn't really have much effect until October. So by November, December, it was looking really promising, but it was too early to call. But by the time March rolled around, it was obvious that it had worked. I don't know. Again, we were pretty lucky with all that, but really, when I looked at it just before I left, everything that had happened, one of the thoughts that struck me was kind of what T.E. Lawrence had said, "Better to allow the Arabs to do things themselves tolerably than for you to do it for them perfectly," and I think just all long is just what we knew is these people are going to have to do this for themselves, and if they don't want it badly enough, there's just really nothing we can do. As I've said several times, fortunately, there was a confluence of events where they did want it badly enough at some point. I don't know. It was kind of interesting how brutalized the people have to become before they actually have got nothing else to lose and they rebel. That would be kind of an interesting study. I haven't really read anything on that.

INTERVIEWER: That is why I brought up social conditions, but social conditions are not the best way to describe it. But unless you have cultural training, it's (*a way of describing it in*) layman's terms. But when I think of social conditions, a lot of that goes into what is the social history, and if you look at the Sunnis in Anbar, a lot of Americans tend to think

that they had it really great while Saddam was in power, but that really is not the case….So that's why I asked about the social conditions. It's not just the economy. It's more about what the culture is and what they had to live through over several generations. (*Researcher's note: there was a segment removed in which the interviewer/researcher is speaking about Iraq history and the difficultly it would be for troops to learn all they would need to know. It was edited out for conciseness.)*

03201202: Yeah. I think we probably would have been better off had we -- this sounds terrible, but if we governance in the back seat, find the tribal leaders, invigorate that aspect 'cuz of how they really were, and then just almost adapt or encourage them to adapt their tribal structure into what would approach a modern state. So this is making the poor Governor Mamoun, and there he is, getting holed up in the government center getting shot at. Like okay, this is making sense? Like no. Not to abandon it, but just call it like it is, not what you want it to be. What is it? They're going to have to make it what they want it to be.

INTERVIEWER: With the militias, that went against our own policy goals, how do you think that the Marines or the military as a whole, commanding officers -- how do you think that you can or should or will try to resolve situations on the ground, success or mission or tactical success on the ground, when the policy objectives at the highest levels are not necessarily the same?

03201202: Oh, you got to say something, absolutely. As soon as you can properly articulate the dissidence, the better. Absolutely. That has got -- that is the duty of every officer [*inaudible- sounds like "the TAC" or TAG" staff"*] to send that up the chain, and repeatedly until they get it. You know, and the senior officers have to be educated, and I think they are, to listen to what's coming up from the field. I don't think it's the problem so much -- when you start getting to like three- and four-stars, that's when you start running into the problem, because that's where you start getting into policy. So, yeah, it's -- I don't know. I suppose the other thing that kind of -- that would support this, which is tangentially related to what you're studying, is just teaching our officers, particularly intelligence officers, how to tell proper metrics to measure progress in anything. I mean, they should do that in any case. That's important even in a conventional site, but even more so because it's harder to do in a counterinsurgency campaign. Whatever you can, because eventually someone has got to protect this dissidence between policy and actions on the ground. But if it's just a matter of opinion based on anecdotal information, you've kind of got a weak hand there. You're trying to compare the teaspoon with the pot. However, if someone knows what they're measuring and develops good metrics and knows why they are measuring it and what it shows and has got sufficient data to prove their point, then oooh, that's pretty hard to ignore. That's what I had in Anbar, which I thought made the assessment we be put together so compelling really. You know, it was that hard facts that were incontrovertible. I think if an officer is well armed with the facts that they have carefully cultivated, developed, or described, they'll be a lot more confident in confronting dissidence between policy and actions on the ground and otherwise.

INTERVIEWER: Were your metrics SIGACT based?

03201202: That was a lot of it, but that would -- it was then just sort of interpreting that carefully. But, you know, it went beyond that. It was all sorts of things, key leader engagements, you know, positive or negative the outcome, how the price had changed particularly of fuel, kerosene, diesel. I mean just numbers of assassinations. We would go out

there and solicit for this information on a regular basis. We weren't just passively sucking in the SIGACTs out of CIDNE and using that data. We were actually pursuing information, namely by talking to the infantry units out there.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I thank you so much for your time, and I do want to extend the invitation that if you have anything additional you'd like to add or if there's any questions you have, if later on you feel that there's some things you need me to redact, please feel free to give me a call or an e-mail, you know. I'm always available to talk, and any information that anyone wants to provide is just going to make this project a lot better.

03201202: All right. And time for me to leave the Marine Corps. So it's 30 years, and I got to go.

INTERVIEWER: Enjoy your retirement, and thank you so much for talking to me before you left.

03201202: Well, my pleasure. Good luck with all your studies, and, you know, just please help the Marine Corps.

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Interview 2: 03201203

14 March 2012
Location of Deployment: Ramadi

Interviewer: It's March 14th and I'm speaking w 03201203. (asks if 03 has read IC and if 03 has any Q's or concerns)?

03: I have read and understand it. I have no Qs or concerns.

Interviewer: (*explains that she has read a lot about the AA and presented the material at the SWF and one of the articles "Providing Security Force Assistance in an Economy of Force Battle*") is from Col Deane and he talks about your unit and mentions one model here which is living in small outposts, focus on protecting pop, investing in ISF, and working with tribal leaders. So this is one example of a model and then there is the Ramadi Model written by Col McFarland and Bing West's model on COIN. (*goes on to explain these are examples of models and they explain locations in Ramadi, but it is unclear exactly where these locations are*). "I'm not exactly sure, so if this goes into the realm of classification you have to stop me (Ok)- he, Col Deane mentions in the article route names but he does not have a map and I am not sure and I have asked my security officer if having the route names with the map makes it classified, but I know that the route names themselves have been documented in the literature. So, I'm trying to understand, he tried to explain in the article, where al-Tame'em was, where Ready First was located throughout the city, and basically from the article this is how I kind of think things lined up (shows 03 the map of Ramadi she has built). So, I am trying to get an idea and the reason I think this is important is it shows how many people truly were in Ramadi. There were tons of players in the city but the literature really only describes one or two groups in a city and describes scenarios that don't accurately describe the true number of active forces in an area and provides a perception that there was little to no coordination or cooperation and I think that was not the case."

03: I can speak to some of that. 1st of all in the summer of 2006 um, ya know when we 1st got in there the city itself as defined by the canal on the s edge and the river on the n edge of town, the Tameem canal and the Euphrates, that was a different battalion's battle space. Ya have it written down there. This over here is Camp Ramadi, and then Blue Diamond was on the far side and Hurricane point is what looks like downtown Pittsburg (*He describes where they all are and shows on map*). That highway, the pink line is Michigan. It's not really a secret that that road was Michigan. The deal with us, is whenever you put tactical info on a map it becomes classified, but when it comes to- But, I don't know the name of that road is now- I can tell you that all of these roads had weird names, which is an indicator of how haphazard the planning was in 2003-04 and initially after the invasion there was no one there and back in Jan 04 when the MEF went in, they put in 1 Battalion, that was 2 Bat, 4th Marines and that was led by [*name removed*], he was there and they had all of us, everyone from (that was I MEF?), well I MEF had all of Anbar when they went back in Jan of 04 and so he was there and they had everything from Hurricane pt to the COP to the east and they were spread, I mean 1 battalion had all of this. When we got there it went from over time 2-4 to 1-5 to 3-7 to 3-8 to us (1-6) over 2 years, those are the Marine infantry battalions that served there. (*That's a lot of RIPs*) Yeah, that was every 6 months- 7 months, there was a

RIP. And, what happened was the whole thing blew up over that time and the typical mil strategy using intel to conduct ops against the enemy Just went on and on and on. It really didn't- I mean, there were some attempts to do some reconstruction but the spring-winter of 04 when things got really bad for 2-4 the government said it was functioning and life was kinda going on as normal, then for whatever reason factors that sort of played out throughout Iraq at that time, especially out West, AQI came in and started targeting us, for whatever reason, things weren't improving, they were bored ya know, things got bad.

When we got there we were responsible for the northern area, about 9 square kilometers. The government center is here in the middle all of that was government compound and police HQ. There was a battalion to the south and then 1-3-7 was down there in the s part and they turned over with 2nd battalion 5th Marines in winter of 06-07 cuz they were one of the surge battalions, the two battalions that came to Anbar with the surge. They got there in Jan-Feb 07.

Anyway, when you say 'in the city' things weren't a lot of places, not a lot of positions, and there were no security forces in the city and what we did was said 'hey, we're gonna do things differently, obviously we have to do security opps to defeat insurgency we identify, but you cant defeat an insurgent you cant identify. The key to that would be the pop and the key to pop would be providing folks from own town to provide security so everything we did we did while partnering with the Iraqis and getting, eventually a locally recruited police force to police their own city, their own neighborhoods.

We continued to work the IO and CMO LOOs to support everything we did security wise. So we did not do everything as clear-hold-build, which has been marketed as the way you do COIN, we said, well listen, we gotta do a little bit of each with every step. So, as we clear, we are bringing in support in the form of relief to the population cuz Just doing clearing has constantly Just pushed the people to the other side (*of the city*) and targeting- the enemy was playing that against us and also we had no way to compete w the word on the street. So we did things with what we thought was an easily understood purpose like 'hey we're doing this to provide you with ___this' and they (*AQI*) could easily relate that (*the Marine's message*) into whatever they wanted. And so we wanted to compete for that and we thought of ways in which we could.

Interviewer: Ok, I'll talk about the police (*and the article- describes what the author says and how he sees things through a cultural lens and tries to make soldiers relate to their own homes in order to partner with police*)

03: Oh yeah, we used to say 'what's the sense of normalcy?' If you're standing in front of a house and you see a humvee drive down the street, what's that look like to you? Pretty abnormal. Even in this country you wouldn't expect to see a humvee drive down the street. When a police car drives down the street, if it's a state or federal police car you are kind of alarmed by that, but if it's a local sheriff or a city police officer, well, that's normal. It's comforting and it's someone maybe you'd wave to, who may wave back. (12:43)

What we wanted there was to say, hey look, we want nothing more than to help those people get to that level. So that they don't see us driving down the street in humvees, they see people that they know walking around. Those are the guys they are gonna trust, and those are the guys who are gonna fight for their neighborhoods much more than say, someone who is brought from the rural areas outside the city. That was the difference- ya know, Sheikh Sittar and the tribal awakening was a factor for sure but none of the guys that they got to Join the police force were from the city. It took trust between our Marines, particularly our commander, and people like the governor of al-Anbar Province who said 'I'm gonna bring you these names' and those were the first ones from the neighborhoods who would say "these are the guys you want" and "will you help them" and when we committed to helping them and then that became our building block sort of across the city, getting people from those neighborhoods.

Interviewer: So you had the locals from this area (points to map) became the police for this area?

03: yes

Interviewer: Did they serve in any other area?

03: nope, they were there and that was the first thing that we did was we built a position. This was called, this street, was 17th street and that's the other thing, this was Racetrack and there was Brittany Spears Road, and we said ' well what do They call this'? and this one was called the Firecracker because it was such a dangerous place and we identified some of these areas as places where we wanted to have more influence and wanted to interact more with the locals. In order to do that we needed to establish these Joint posts but we called them Joint security stations from the get go. This is where we were going to be there but there was also going to be Iraqi police and army to an extent, because everyone had been there, everyone had been outside and we built one here, it was Nov, Halloween- Oct-Nov 2006 and we called it the 17th St security station and it was right in there in that compound right there. That was like when we said, this is going to be a Joint sec station and we are going to go block by block and we are gonna continue to do sec missions, operations clearing operations, and they are gonna be partnered and every time we do it there's gonna be a way to get word to the population and we're gonna use them and we're gonna give them people from their neighborhoods. And, we're gonna advertise. We're gonna market what we're doing. And that was not easy. We had to compete with the word on the street and that was very diff in a place where we did not have language or cultural knowledge. We had to figure out how to do that.

Interviewer: Before you ever went over there did you have an idea of what policing was like before you went over, or what it was like during Saddam's era so that you had an idea of what 'normalcy' looked like before we came? (16:05)

03: very limited. Only once we went there and talked with the folks we were relieving and surveyed the area. It didn't make sense to us that no one had tried that and we fell back on the books we had become familiar with Just based on our own research, on COIN and how it progresses, and what are some of the ways and methods you can employ and those were methods we thought would work. Plus, we had experience from the previous deploy and had the same battalion CO, the Ops officer and myself (from prev dep) were company commanders on previous deployment, one of our company commanders was in the same company he had before, so we had a lot of continuity in some key billets and were able to leverage our own experiences and also we talked w our friends and peers in their experiences across the country and things they accomplished in areas like al Qaim in particular and the things we had done in Fallujah and outlying areas. We knew what we knew and we were able to plan and come up w way forward and I think that helped us a lot.

Interviewer: Did you get any additional training?

03: I cant say that anything other than the PDSS- the predeployment site survey, we took myself , the CO, the Ops, the 2, all the company commanders and S4 A, we all went forward for 2 weeks in the summer, June-July of 06 and we were able to see for ourselves. I didn't have to go to the COIN leaders course myself because I was the XO so me and the 4A went and spent the whole time with the unit we were relieving and we both learned a lot. We learned what they were doing and some of the things they were doing were really good and other things were lines of effort we thought we could improve upon, then we came back and refined our plan a bit. This was before Mojave Viper is what it is now. This was back when it was a combined arms exercise with some COIN stuff thrown in there, and we were teaching as much as training. There was no SOP for non-kinetic effects org and WGs at battalion level. It was all made up. We made up a lot of this as we went along.

Interviewer: Sounds like it worked though

03: it did. It was very different from the 1st deployment. As soon as I, personally identified that hey! There are Iraqis here, there are decision makers who want to make a change, who want to make a difference and they are ready to commit to it. As soon as I knew that I knew we were going to be successful. There were some significant moments along the timeline that was clear that we were going to win what we were responsible for. Now, we are talking about tactical, tactical level ops and concepts, connecting those into an op strategic framework, I cannot speak to that. It is really fashionable to say that Patraeus saved the day, or the Awakening saved the day- and we talked about this (during other off-record conversations on Anbar). To me it was the ability to have these tactical successes and reinforce them so that they did not go down the drain cuz the world's full of great ideas that never get off the ground or when they have some initial success no one can capitalize on them or no one can support them. So getting the support of our brigade was important and the CO was- and the BCT Ready 1st and the 1st of the 3rd infantry both of them had good commanders, staffs and ideas. Before us, those who supported us, and those who came after us kept it up and when we'd have

something (do something) that had tactical success they'd say 'keep doing it' and 'oh, BTW I'm gonna FRAGO the rest of the battalion to do what you're doing.' So they were able to cross pollinate the ideas.

Interviewer: It seems like there are often examples of when a RIP occurs a new commander will try something different and won't necessarily do right seat left seat or build upon what's been done before. It sounds like what you're saying is the opposite, that there was coordination that may have led to success.

03: We all had friends that served there over the years and it was a very, very, uh, horrible place. Success there was really hard to find and we thought we had a lot of factors the fell into place for us. Our experience and all the missions that had been done prior to our getting there had somehow contributed to us being able to do some of the things we were gonna do.

The support from higher HQ, from the areas, we felt like we had a good plan and it worked and I guess some of those things played into our favor. It never would have worked if the governor of the area had not said "Here's 120 names from the city who are going to Join you" and then we had to follow up with that.

Now, I told you about 17th street and soon after that, we'd build another one. We built one closer to Hurricane Point that was really only about a kilo down the road. It was where the Governor lived up there and he had his own little PSD to protect his family and area so that was good to go, but then expanding that all the way to 17th were these local tribe guys that were pretty brutish and we said we'd built stuff there and we'll put up barriers and give you guns and radios and then you can come in and then we'll work together out of this place.

Then these guys would show up and some of them had rifles, some of them had like, no kidding, axes, and they'd be good to go and they were pretty interesting, so we threw blue shirts on them and deputized them and had to work to get them paid. We had to work that bolt to get them official and if not then they could easily become a militia and that was the "M" word- we never wanted to use that word. We still had these PME people who said we had militias and we'd say no- we have police. That was the way we were. They turned those neighborhoods and they were willing to come out every night and patrol and it was like- imagine if it was your neighborhood and took over and you had someone who said they had your back, and you'd take it- you'd take it (the neighborhood) back, and they did.

Then when the enemy started targeting them w indirect fire and suicides and threats and IEDs, That's when I knew- This is good- because they (AQI) view them (neighborhood police) as more of a threat than they view us (Marines) and so we are 'all in' with them and we had a nice symbiotic relationship with them and we were gonna make that happen all across the city. (24:46)

They had a good guy, a charismatic leader who knew the area, was a good leader, was tough, and we trumpeted him too. We started a campaign to put loud speakers on the police stations and we'd buy the same speakers they'd use to do call to prayer on the mosques and periodically we'd play music and soccer scores and al-Jazeera reports and occasionally we'd record this guy giving messages to his people saying 'hey- this is who I am' and he was all for it and became a super star to the people.

Interviewer: Was he a sheikh or was he police?

03: He was Chief of the police station we had set up. We had given all the IP chiefs the opportunity to do the same things and then we brought the sheikhs in and the mayor and the governor, the chiefs- the higher chiefs of police to record messages if they wanted and then we'd play them. Our cultural advisor who was our cat 1 terp, ya know- he lives in Florida and is of Lebanese descent- and cat 1 is the one with the security clearance, or it's cat 3 I can't remember (it is cat 3) but he had the highest one and he was trained in classical Arabic. He would say to these people, you can't speak like a dummy to these people (*local Ramadis*), you have to be a voice of authority, and so he'd coach them (*the people recording messages*) in the way they'd speak but not in what they'd say.

It got to the point where these guys would go out at night Just to talk to the locals and to visit houses and the locals would say 'you're the guy- you're the voice on the radio! Come in, come in!' and they'd let them in and drink tea. And, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood they'd start flipping, and quickly, once it started.

Interviewer: So you were building influence through the use of the speaker systems. Interesting. So, with the uniforms, were they provided by the got so there was some small support or were they provided by you guys? And the salaries, and equipment- did you provide that or did the govt.

03: Eventually. The brigade worked with us on that and helping us, and then the MEF to plug in and get these guys officially listed as police and we'd have to filter some out to Jordan to get trained. You had to either be trained or getting ready to attend a course to be a policeman and then they'd get their paperwork squared away and then get weapons and uniforms and pay, ya know all that stuff.

Interviewer: Did that become a problem, sending them to Jordan?

03: Oh yeah, problems, but they were Just details and to me that's just bureaucracy getting behind something that's working, but it's important. And, if you don't have the right people supporting you or recognizing (what you're doing), I mean, we had general officers that said 'this is good and we're gonna support this' and so they made sure their staffs supported us.

Interviewer: In terms of the police and the governor and them being ready for this- you have heard me talk about my belief of the social conditions being necessarily set for the change in events to occur- did it seem to you like any of the social conditions played into any of this or was it entirely a desire for security? How much did economy, Jobs- or lack of Jobs, religion, the environment, any of that contribute? The reason I ask is because in the literature the coming forth of the sheikhs is listed as a prime contributor and other authors state the social conditions didn't support the change at 'that' time, but in your case it does not seem to be the case.

03: I can't speak to anything but our focus, which was security. That was our Job. We used civ-mil operations to support security and that was our Job. We weren't there to rebuild the infrastructure of the city but we did facilitate that happening. I mean, if you have sewage flowing through the city and neighborhoods then that a problem and you're not gonna be happy and you'll blame the govt. Everything we did we had to make sure the GoI was getting the credit at some point and we wanted to focus on that.

Religion was never a major motivator for people from where I sat. Religion for Iraq had been used as a tool at some level but these people are an educated people and they are a cosmopolitan people and I know it didn't seem that way to us, but it really was cosmopolitan. They wanted to move forward. They were not interested in caliphates or whatever.

In the city, there weren't a lot of sheikhs who had influence in the city because it was 'the city' and the rural outside areas were better suited for that. Sittar and his brother were good at bringing people together and that because of those pastoral relationships and that helped, out there (beyond city) and it was easy to go to them and say 'hey do you know where this guy is' and they knew everybody so they'd ask if we wanted to talk to them and they'd say 'I'll bring them here (to Sittar's house) and other small time sheikhs, I mean, lower case sheikhs would help us get stuff done in the city- project-wise. We'd sit with them like once a week and we'd ask 'what do you want to do' and he'd say' I want to clean up this or build that, and we'd say ok we can do some of that but we need this, and the sheikh would say ok (negotiations). We'd say we'd need to get into areas and we'd ask him (lower sheikh) if we could get in and he'd say yeah- I can get you in. I'll meet you there.

Interviewer: Did you use CERP for those projects or did you have PRT coming in for that?

03: No there was no PRT I mean we had a PRT at Blue Diamond but it was a PRT in name only. It's like they were waiting

for something. I mean this was back when there was no security and nobody did anything until there was security. They were starting to get ready to have these E PRT is which was like a DST. They were not up when we were there so CERP was the way. When we figured out that we could use Iraqi money for Iraqi projects that was the way too. We figured that was a way to engage the mayor when they got a mayor, so we went to him and said hey Mr. Mayor my name is XXX and we like to do XYZ. We then would say "hey what do you need do you need a desk do you need something for your office?" and he'd say "yeah" and so we would take things down there and we would set up his office and then we talk about what needed to be done. After we brought down things like a new big printer scanner, a rug, cappuccino maker and set it all out the mayor was like "wow you guys must be really important" like he didn't realize that we were Just a Battalion and not really that big in the food chain within division or even Ready 1st. And those sheikhs that we spoke with they may have been out of our lane but to speak to them was of benefit to us and so we did. Now at the time there was no PRT and there was no one telling us that this is how you run a meeting. There was no one this is how you saying hey these are the people you need to get to these meetings it was literally me. And then I would ask " hey who is your Sewer guy?" And they would say while we can't get him and I'd say okay well where can we get him and I tell them let's meet them at Sittar's house. And they would save that they would get them to sitar's house and then we would start parliamentary procedures at least what we thought were parliamentary procedures which were again just made up. So they the PRT were not there and I think that's a lesson we had to learn the hard way. But civil engagement was very thin at best. There was no DSD. The PRT were provincial PRT but there was no provincial government the provincial government had all disintegrated except for the governor and he was being threatened and being told hey you're not doing a good Job because you're not bringing in more people so there was very little of that type of work (PRT) going on.

Interviewer: in the literature there's a lot of debate about Gov. Mamoun and whether or not he was supporting AQ I. Also that the sheikhs did not like him and wanted him overthrown but the literature also says that he came to work every day have 30 assassination attempts and was doing his job no matter what and that some people thought he was a hero. Do you think that any of the debates may have affected your ability to do your Job or to engage between the sheikhs or the Governor?

03: yeah it. To a degree and mean what we did and I spoke a little bit to it in that book (reference *Ambar Awakening Volume I*). Col. [*name removed*] used to ride with him to work every day and we put him in humvees and we drive him and Gov. Mamoun to the government center and they go inside and talk. And he meaning Col. [*name removed*] would stay on this side meaning legitimate governance I and the CMO guy- we'd go and talk to the sheikhs and the contractors who also were sheikhs, and we'd work that informal network of leaders to a degree. So that allowed Col. [*name removed*] to stay in his lane while I worked the other lane and we worked parallel to each other. And I'd bring him stuff and we talk and I go out and come back and tell him who I had seen, and what happened, and who I had talked to, and what was going on, and he would take that and he'd get out of it what he needed. So yeah there was animosity but it was your typical power struggle stuff. I mean everybody accused everybody of being involved in Al Qaeda. And Al Qaeda was effective at threatening the provincial Council and the potential ministers and mean there was this one guy who was the minister of oil and I was told he was the key to everything that he took off so we had to get this guy and that he was bad, but the sheikhs said "hey you wanna talk to this guy then we'll get them here. You can talk to him tomorrow." And they'd say "he's not a bad guy it's Just that the insurgents put a gun in his son's mouth and told them not to come to work and if you don't do this then I'm gonna kill your family so what is he gonna do?" And we would say "you know we

understand that and he's in a bad position". The governor knew that this guy was on HVI list and he wasn't bringing him in, so that makes him an insurgent or a supporter of Al Qaeda Just because he protected this guy? I mean it was not a clear it was it was not a black and white situation.

Interviewer: There was nothing clear in the war and the Iraqi's had self interests. We all did. And, even if you build up networks, you are still part of the "network of the Other" and you are still an American, and not an Iraqi. So, they may be friends with you, but not really because there are various levels of friendship and network. The reason I ask is because when you are trying to connect mission goals and policy objectives with the truth on the ground and you sometimes have to go with what you have. So, how do you resolve the fact that he A) might truly be corrupt but he is the elected official, or B) he may be fine but the locals don't support him because they have this perception that may be influenced by the agenda of the tribal leaders?

03: Yeah, I also saw the strongman was what they were used to culturally. For 40 years they had a dictator. So even when we have meetings there were supposed to be representative of the district or neighborhood councils and we were having people come in from all over the area all of the districts we'd going to these meetings in there be a guy who we thought was good sitting at the head of the table. And he'd be delegating and doing things and getting things done but we had to consider that some people were getting bullied. So some people were getting pushed aside and some people were sitting there with their mouths shut and not saying anything and we have also consider that they were just used to that guy at the head of the table telling them what to do. So we had to be prepared for that and constantly asked people are you satisfied? Are you getting what you need? Do you need us to do something? Are you getting the contracts that you need? Is your neighborhood getting the supplies and the contracts or the contractors that it needs to get work done? Is this fair? Is this being vetted the right way? Because they were used to somebody saying that this is the way this. Some of that stuff that you want to mess with because those are the people that are going to be there after we leave getting stuff done and that's the way it's can be after we leave. And there's things they're going to have to settle themselves. But when there were people who told us that we should let them figure it out for themselves we were like "no!" we have to help them because they don't know how to do this stuff so we we have to help them learn how to do it. We just lopped off the government and the political party that was running the government and we lopped off the military and we didn't give them an alternative. So we better hold their hands on this little bit. And you know that's what was disappointing not having any experts here to tell us how to do this. We didn't have anyone to tell us city planning or how to run a meeting or how to set any of the stuff out. It was really sloppy.

Interviewer: So with so many different service branches inside Ramadi - in reading some of the material from the Army vs. the Marines, the Army threw their lot in with Sheikh Sittar and they said "it's the way and leading with the sheikhs was the way to go (with militias) but the Marines chose to work with the Governor", which implies animosity. So what I am interested in is whether or not there was coordination challenges, or issues between partnered coalition- between the Army and Marines- which may explain why the tone in the literature is often unfriendly or critical.

03: It's Just people grabbing for headline. It's service culture. It's competition. We do not experience anything like that other than we were in infantry Battalion of Marines attached to an armored brigade who almost all of their subordinates were armored battalions so they were used to having smaller companies more battalions different TTs, centered around tanks, and having tanks in the city there's some good and some bad. Our mentality as Marin is as a dismounted infantry. They did those same kind of things but they had different training than we did. But those are factors that we are always going to compete with them on. So those articles I think are Just a service grab for attention and honestly, we worked fine with them.

Interviewer: Good. So what are some of the things we can pull out of these different experiences that can be potentially applied globally- and/or where insurgencies exist?

03: I think the short answer is be flexible. Be doctrinally sound but not doctrinally bound. You want to anticipate the fight before you go but be ready to adjust when you get there. No training event, no M V or Robin sage will be perfect. It is going to stress the limits of what you are trying to do and you have to be ready to continuously plan and evaluate the effectiveness of your plan. And, we train to that. I don't know if- I cant name a thread and apply it everywhere except have a plan, have a plan to have feedback on your plan and have a way to figure out if your plan is working and what the next steps are. I think our doctrine and planning does that. Training wise you need to be able to block and tackle. I don't think there was a single silver bullet that we fired in what we did other than the things we did. I think you need leadership and part of leadership is supervising, which is a messy business but it involves knowing what your marines are doing and knowing how they can hurt you- what your risks are and what risks you are taking. For example, what is going on in AF- it is easy to say, but those are failures in leadership. When we were here in 2006 the Facebook era hadn't started yet and we were able to control thing. My boss had said, "I will personally court-marshal anyone who takes personal pictures or videos of anything, especially detainees." We learned from Abu Ghraib.

So, where do you accept risk and being a good leader helps with that. In the Marine Corps we bet heavily on leadership. (46:21) We bet on not just someone who has been through a variety of jobs but at the same time we go over what a guy – or girl- is gonna do and if they are the kind of decision maker we can put our trust in who is going to make good decisions in that kind of scenario. Managing risk was a big deal to us. Something that seems like a small action can have huge consequences, as you've seen, and we looked at every action, every IED attack and we thought "was it avoidable- could it have been avoided and did we do something wrong that allowed them to get at us?" Every action should be that way- it should be deliberate. And that's leadership. Because, if you're in a place like this, that's 130 and you're 150 days in and you say "I'm just gonna do today what I did yesterday" and nobody's checking you or challenging you then you become complacent and lazy and mistake prone, and then things happen. Usually when things happen you can trace it back to some type of leadership failure, and that's the way I see it and we preached it. It started at the top and they'd get it from somewhere and I am sure somewhere at the top someone's pressing him (the CO) the same way and saying 'Hey don't let this happen, don't let this happen' and be deliberate at what you do. It seems a little belt fed and knuckle-dragger, but it's what leads to success when it's 130 degrees and you've been there for 8 months.

Interviewer: you talked about policing and how you would tie it to what we (Americans do) and what looks like normalcy, but it doesn't seem like training on 'how to be police" is part of training protocols for USMC or even the Army. How did you guys address that level of training, did you try to pick up more training or have SMEs or advisors come in to teach? How did training get relayed back to the MiTTs because I know that was some of the complaints they had- having to teach 'how to be a police officer' when they weren't police themselves, or trained on how to be police? It seems like an effective thing that occurred in Anbar and later on in Baghdad with the SOI, so it seems like this is something we may need to prepare for when entering future COIN environments.

03: I don't know the answer to that. I mean, I know that policing is not part of the COIN bag but you need to be able to do certain things and we don't have a lot of training on that. At least I didn't and my Marines didn't, at least at the time. Now we do a lot of sensitive site exploitation stuff and we use everything- every search we do is meticulous and we changed a lot of things. Um, back to if you know you are going to go do something you should plan to it and train to it before you go do it. It doesn't means you should always plan and train to it because it doesn't mean we're going to do it again and it doesn't mean you'll know how, when, and where. It's hard to get that kind of detail down. And you might go in to a place where there's infrastructure that'll support that. This goes to the argument of whether or not we're going to do that kind of thing again, counterinsurgency again. Ya know you say you won't but you always end up doing it anyways. It's political decisions that are made. So, it's a good question but I don't have the answer. I know we were trained to do policing, but not beyond get out there and talk to people, then find out where the bad guys are and go get them. If you can take them off the street then it's a win. That's what we thought of policing. It's much more macro level. Getting down to reading people their rights and building a case- we didn't have any idea of how to do that.

Interviewer: Iraq had a pretty destroyed Judicial system, so after you would pull these guys off the street, a lot of times they would go to detainment centers, but Iraqis work off of word of mouth, vouching, networking and the use of community leaders and tribal leaders to get their people released to them on their word. So was it just the act of pulling guys off the street and showing the people you were trying or was there some methodology behind it?

03: Yes there was, I wasn't involved in it much but I know that we had who we thought was bad and we had our HUMINT guys working stuff too. But then there was the Iraqis and they were much more in tuned with who to focus on and once we got in with them we would share that information. It was funny- we had this list of who we were looking for and half of them they (the Iraqis) were like "Hey, you want to talk to him, I'll bring him in. he's Just scared" and they would bring them in and we'd talk with them and then take them off the list. Or our HUMINT guys would talk to them and either get what they needed from them or send them up to get rid of them. And, it was helpful (the Iraqis) and it was part of the friction, the fog of "are they bad, or are they really bad, and what is bad?" I mean, the prisons had been emptied before we got there so there were a lot of people who were running around as AQI but they were Just criminals and they were from bad families. That was the thing, there were bad families. Like, dad's bad, kids are bad, their kids were bad, and we'd go and get them all.

Interviewer: So with the policing, would you coordinate missions with the IP, partnering missions, or would you have them take the lead?

03: Everything that they did we needed to know about, know where they were going because we needed to know if we could support them. We'd have to support it (the mission) with MedEvac, with air coverage, ISR, those kids of things. So we would still do mission storyboards and planning and plan it as if we were doing it ourselves and then most of them- I can't remember any of them we weren't there for- but I can't promise there weren't some we weren't there for. But we wanted to make sure we were able to support the things that were legal- at least the things that were legal to us, the things that would empower them but also to be aware that they could be corrupted so we had to make sure our guys were not involved in those activities. So we'd supervise. We would plan with them and help them prioritize.

Interviewer: Was there any follow up or debriefing afterwards that you were able to use as some measurement of success, in terms of training them to be effective?

03: I don't know. I can't talk about training. To us success was "where are we going to go build another station?" We measured success by the number of people that we got. So when we got another station up and he brought in another 25 guys to protect that area, that was success to us and that was as far as we went.

Interviewer: Were you able to see any significant change in security after you started building those stations?

03: Oh yeah. The number of police we were getting in there and then how many had been trained in Jordan at the police academy there and then there was another at Camp Ramadi where they could get more training- they had to have one of the two- but yes, success. I mean in March and April of 2007- there was a big event in April of 2007, April 20th I think. Colonel *[name removed]* said "I'm tired of this area in the middle being such a sore spot. We had progressed up to the edge right here (indicating spot on map of Ramadi) and we had a foothold here and a foothold here next to the hospital but we still had this area in the middle that we were really concerned about because it was really bad and it seemed like there was still a no-go for us. He brought in the chief of police for the province and for the city and all our local guys and the army and he put them all at the table and he got some food and some tea and we gave them a brief where we congratulated them on everything they had done and then he said, "there's this thing I want to do and it's a shame that we hadn't done it yet" and he had a white board up behind him and he asked "who wants to help me do this and how many people can you bring?" (He= Colonel [*name removed*]).

One by one these leaders started going up there and each one wrote "I can give you…. 50 guys" or "I can give you 200 people" and then soon we had close to 500 Iraqi police that said "We're gonna go out and do this mission" and we hastily put together this plan to do this mission a few days later. We had gone into overwatch and we had ISR and air but

these guys for the most part, by themselves with some of our guys in there at key decision nodes pushed from west to east through that city and emerged on the other side and they said they killed 50 guys and did all this, but we never got a no kidding count of KIA. But, we quickly turned a story, sent it up, Brigade got it to MEF and from that moment on there was not another IED in the city of Ramadi that I know of. At that time what happened was that all the ones that had been out there- the IEDs- we had a map with all these pins up with the known and suspected locations, and one by one we'd start plucking them off the map because they had either been found by these guys (the police) or by civilians who were telling them (police) where they were. They (police) were digging them out of walls in some of the buildings, pulling them out of the streets, they were all gone.

We spent the next three weeks before we ripped just walking around, buying food from the market and building more stations. When 3-7 came in to replace us, they had been there the previous year; they just could not believe what had happened. They spent their whole deployment there without a single casualty. That's a measurement of success and that's a huge sense of success for the Marines. We kept hearing that every month afterwards there was nothing, no kinetic events, no kinetic events, no SIGACTS, and then Sittar was killed in his compound and under really strange circumstances whether that was an inside job who did it, who was responsible. Now, it was a tragedy, there was no question about that. He had been instrumental and his brother stepped into that role and he was always the guy behind the guy, at least in my opinion. I talked to him about once a week and the people who were working with him. We spent a lot of time together. But when we left the place was quiet. There were still attacks on the outskirts and at checkpoints. Now, then it was time to turn and burn on development- we had to start providing them with the rewards for siding with us. Now they have security so now we have to work the civil-governance and get that functioning. We knew it was going to be a problem all along, but we'd think "what can we do to make this happen?"

Interviewer: (1:01:21) So did you at that point have PRT come in or did you continue to lead the charge on that one?

03: We left in May so we had been there, we got extended and I don't know what happened after that. The PRT- the extent of the engagement with the PRT was me going over to Blue Diamond and grabbing a few of those guys to go out, because they were not going out into town otherwise. I'd take them to meet the governor or mayor Just to a couple informal parties people would have for us. That's what would happen- all these district police chiefs, which were neighborhood guys realized they needed to get in good with us too and stay in good standing for contracts and all that stuff. That's what they wanted. But, they were also taking back their neighborhoods. So they'd have these little get togethers and we'd drink tea and eat and talk, and get stuff done.

Interviewer: When you first got out there, especially since you came up with a plan before hand, did you hit the ground running when it came to engagements?

03: No. Not really. It was slow at first but then we met a couple of people who helped us get things started. We didn't know exactly how it was gonna go and although we sorta had an idea, we didn't know how much we were going to be able to get done.

Interviewer: Did you talk to people on the street or did you already know who the most influential people were. I don't want to say the "wasta holders' or Key leaders.

03: yeah, we did. That helped us. We had a couple guys, one of which had been there for- he said- since 2/4 was there cuz he said he knew Colonel [*name removed*]. So, we worked with him and he started doing little things and through him at this JCC (Joint coordination center) people who were willing to come in started coming in and some of them were the 'no kidding real deal' but others weren't going to help us get anything done. We just then sorta branched out. Then there was one guy who was named Sheikh Raad who I considered our level of engagement even though he was on the Provincial council but he wasn't going. He was a lower-case sheikh for sure, but he could get things done. He lived down the street from the Governor and he and the Governor were friends, but I'd go to his house and he'd bring people in. He'd say "this guy used to be a teacher, this one used to be a scientist, this one was the sports coordinator for all youth sports" and we'd talk and I'd say what do you want to do? They'd tell us they'd want the soccer field back up or buy some uniforms for the team, or get books, or renovate this school and that way the were picking the projects, not us. We were doing good things for them and we'd always bring in the police and the mayor and we'd take pictures and cut ribbons and we'd broadcast about it and made sure they'd get the credit. The whole time our intel guys would be walking around asking questions and trying to find out how it was in the neighborhoods- if anyone was causing trouble. We were building our database from that.

Interviewer: Bing West wrote an article and references that had a census been taken and had the population been segmented (as referenced in Galula) that the bad guys could have been isolated from the population earlier. He said you had the capability and had it been utilized and fingerprinting been done then it would have made life infinitely easier for you and you would have automatically been able to identify the bad guys. Was that capability really available? Not Just the biometrics, but the fingerprinting and having a database that linked it all together? And didn't you do a census?

03: Yeah, we did plenty of census' all the time. We were going around trying to figure out who lived where. Now, a central repository for that information (maybe not) but we had databases that we used and that other people used. What that comes down to is just plain information management and having a plan and a priority for that plan. That's something we learned the hard way, is if you're going to send people out to gather information what are you going to do with it? How is it going to be incorporated into the ops and intel cycle? To me census information and patrol data, that sort of thing should have a plan and a residence somewhere where it can be analyzed and searched.

Interviewer: And not get stove-piped.

03: And get thrown in the trash! I mean as a company commander I remember taking Excel printed out sheets and going house to house and writing down who lived there and writing in Arabic and then handing that off and then never receiving anything from it (from internal sources). I know in Afghanistan the RCTs did a good Job of getting it (the census materials they collected) into Marinelink and CIDNE's got this kind of thing. But, without an information plan you don't know how valid that information is. So, I could be a serial killer and you guys could have my fingerprints and it could be in a database, but if that info doesn't get shared then I can go into a convenience store and use my credit card and no one would know because this database isn't linked with that database and so no one knows who I am. That's why we have, heh, people getting on planes who shouldn't be getting on planes. So, if we can't even do that at the national resource level, it's REALLY hard doing it at the tactical level.

Interviewer: In forensics it took over 100 years to begin sharing information and getting fingerprints and profile data into a database. So why would we think that in a country without infrastructure or information infrastructure having BATTs, fingerprinting, biological profiling would provide a solution (to capturing insurgents)? (1:09:05)

03: Pop control is where that comes from, Small Wars manual, Galula, COIN manual now talk about pop control. They way you control the population is to map the population and so you know where they are, you know where you can get them and you control their movements and we did that to a degree when we blocked off the city with concrete barriers and checkpoints. That was the way we went block by block and that was a huge effort but it isolated huge neighborhoods. We called them gated communities. That took the freedom of movement away from them and another way to take away freedom of movement is to get everyone's name into a database and issue them ID cards. That's how you control the population and that's a valiant effort if you have a plan and a means to enact it.

Interviewer: Did you also spend a lot of effort on berming (in addition to the concrete walls)?

03: No, we were in the city and we could get as many concrete barriers as we wanted. I mean at one point we had them lined up outside the city. They were making them out in the desert and bringing them into the city and over night we'd truck them into the neighborhoods. We'd do route clearance and put up security, bring them in, unload them, and our engineers would work these crazy hours- I mean we put them in these awful conditions- but that's how we did it. That's how we established these little outposts, these stations as well as blocking off streets. Cuz we'd look at our ISR and we'd say 'we have no way to interdict this. They can drive this all day long and come in, do something bad, and drive out' How do we counter that? Berming in the city wasn't as effective as in the rural areas/

Interviewer: Bing West wrote about what worked, in his opinion, in Ramadi and it sounds like it was what you were doing

03: He got it from us. He came out and at first thought we needed to do another al FaJr type offensive in Ramadi and Colonel [*name removed*] laid out what his plan was and what we were going to do. He left with that idea in his head (about the offensive) and came back 8 months later after we had done what we planned. He was with General Mattis at the time and he was there and we briefed him and he said ' this is fantastic and we need to take this and do it in other places' and he quickly recognized that this was something that needed to be spread out. And, Patraeus even, he was there (*references a March 2007 NY Times article*) and he says 'this is it, you guys are doing it' and this was before the effects of the Surge had taken place, before the Sons of Iraq. These were elements that helped influence the strategic thought that went into those programs: the Surge, the Sons of Iraq, the strategic Joint security stations that went up in Baghdad- they hadn't been done when we were doing our stuff. I don't say that to look for credit but there is no question that what we were doing was influential and that's where he (Patraeus) got it.

Interviewer: The literature supports that, that he got the idea for the SOI from what was going on in Ramadi (paraphrasing a lengthy reference to the articles, testimony, etc.)

03: But ya know some people give him ALL the credit. If you read T. Ricks- the one he wrote after Fiasco. He credits Patraeus with everything and he's got his facts mixed up. He mentions that broadcast system that we set up to other people- to the Army, the Army did that. But, no, we did that… and they copied it. That is fine, and it was good, a good TTP but it was ours, and it was not that simple as he said, but… he sold a lot of books, so well…

Interviewer: You had mentioned a billboard, whiteboard system in previous discussions. Can you elaborate?

03: Yeah, The main entry control points that we had going in and out of the city has search points. You know, you drive in, you get out of your car, the car gets searched, and while you are standing there- there were billboards and fliers of who the bad guys were and then there was a huge whiteboard with up to the minute information, like a ticker. It was meant to give you breaking news and influence you while you are coming in. You were going to stare at it anyways, and if you could read you could see what we posted. So we'd put the temperature, advertising, messages for the community, etc.

Interviewer: That sounds like a good idea

03: it was and it was the result of that working group we formed. I mean, it was a way to get the word on the street. We were getting our butts kicked in information operations. The enemy could attack us, and no kidding story- an IED could

go off and kill Marines and property but the enemy could spin it instantly to the "Americans did that" and the people would believe it.

Interviewer: Why do you think that was, did the people want to believe it? Or was it Just that they (enemy) were quicker…

03: They were quicker, and they were there and we were not there offering a competing story because we assumed the people would automatically know what happened. But, they didn't and they loved rumor and they spread it. It was how they got their information.

Interviewer: how did you guys combat the word-of-mouth networks? Did you have RIABs (radio in a box)

03: The radios- no, we didn't have those. It's a huge force multiplier for the guys in Afghanistan though. But, we didn't have it, but those are the evolution of the speaker system we created. I mean, we had done hand bills and such but you have to target these things the right way. We were doing these broadcasts and we'd have other battalions calling us up and asking for our Mp3 players and we'd say No! You can't use this; you have to make your own for your AO. They have to be local and specific to what's going on in your own area. It's like firing artillery into somebody else's AO, you have to consider the target. I mean, some of it you could probably copy, paste, and send around but really we were targeting people who lived in the city and they were in…other areas. You have to know your audience, know who your targets are.

Interviewer: were you using any cultural advisors or were you using the Cat I, 2, or 3 linguists?

03: yeah, we used him (the linguist) almost exclusively and then literally we got our feedback from the police, from the sheikhs, from their guys who spoke English that I used to speak to all the time. It was much like talking to your peers here who have different perspectives. They'd ask me 'why did you do this, this was not good' and then tell me why and what we should do. And, we'd say 'yeah, that makes sense. Thanks for the feedback, but this is what we need to do right now.' You gotta do what you need to do. I'd also talk with the companies and get a feel for what was going on.

Interviewer: With the sheikhs you said you spoke with Sittar's brother. Did you have a lot of interaction with him or with them? I know you said that Colonel [*name removed*] dealt with the governor, and mayor

03: both. I spent a lot of time with the Mayor too but he (Col [*name removed*]) spent most his time with the Governor.

Interviewer: Did you spend more time with the government officials or equal time with them and the sheikhs?

03: Every day I was at one or the other. I was either at the JCC which was kinda like the Mayor's office; well it was the mayor's office- he worked out of there until we left when they were getting ready to develop another building. I was either there or at one of the sheikhs houses, or sometimes both. I split my time pretty evenly then at the office doing my job.

Interviewer: Finally: I am sure there were lots of engagements going on that are not reflected in the literature and instead there is a lot of mention of specific people having done specific things, which may not reflect the whole story. Do you wish to comment?

03: Everybody has an impact and I believe in fractals- what happens at this level is the same thing that happens at that level and I believe that things sort of line up and the actions that are taking place at the smallest levels need to be in sync with things that are happening up the chain. Our actions- I can tell you what I did, and what our actions were, but for every action there was a company and a company commander, and a company XO, and a gunnery sergeant and first sergeants, doing similar things and a platoon commander and squad commanders- they were all having these similar engagements. And the thread was our talking points and our leadership and this line of effort and that line of effort. They all held it together (the LOOs) for us. Now, once it went higher than me, that's where I think there needs to be a way to link all those things so that those tactical actions are being linked in a way.

I know we are all products of our experiences and that's why when I came home and started hearing 'this is what caused it' or 'that is what caused it' I said ok. I can't talk about Baghdad because I wasn't there. I can't talk about any other province. I can speak about where I was. Beyond that I was never in a position where I could sit and make those kinds of claims or Judgments. So I can't say what caused us to successfully exit Iraq. I can tell you what I think made a huge ripple in the pond and that is our efforts here and had pretty far and wide influence, and we felt that way when we left. But I'd never say what we did was more important than what they did in FalluJah in 2004. I have friends who were company commanders there and what they did and the efforts they did- I mean there were a lot of bad guys there and a lot of bad guys got killed because they were trying to take a stand in that city. I would never say that our efforts were more influential than all the efforts in Baghdad during 2008. There was still some bad stuff going on and a lot of things had to be done and some of it I'll never know about. But what we did I know was right and it worked and we all feel pretty satisfied by. It's rare that you get to spend 8-9 months in a place and see the kinds of things we got to see. Most people show up, they work hard, they leave and they see small changes, maybe. Maybe they don't see any changes because they can't or don't identify what they should be monitoring. We were fortunate because we had a good team and good leadership.

Interviewer: Where the LOOs being transmitted down to the lower echelons in a way that they could be nested within the overall mission objectives and did yours nest within the LOOs and objectives of higher command and policy objectives? I ask because in the literature there appears to be some references to a divide between the perceived objectives of division and the objectives at the battalion and brigade?

03: I felt that way too. I didn't feel like we were getting much strategic guidance. We were the bid for success. I felt like the battalion level and below was where it was it. The people above us were just there, I thought, to coordinate with us and get us what we needed. So I really don't know, I think we've made some progress on the way we train regimental combat teams now for Afghanistan and to do operational art a little bit better. I don't want to speak beyond my experience but I saw the brigade but we didn't get too much from them. I mean, logistically we got everything we needed from them and that maybe was what they were there to do. As far as them saying "do this mission and accomplish this objective I felt like it was all on us. It was like 'hey you're here let's go do counterinsurgency, develop the ANSF (*slip of the tongue- he means ISF*), protect the population and kill bad guys but not necessarily in that order.' It was like, yeah, ok, got it. It wasn't like do your staff processes, develop and identify the causes of instability and then prioritize the causes of instability and target each one with what you have. No, it wasn't like that. We didn't get that level of specificity. It was "hey you're a big boy- you figure it out." Again, I think they really had confidence in our CO. 23:12

Interviewer: Do you think there should be any changes to the COIN manual or Small Wars manual any other doctrine?

03: That wasn't even written (COIN manual) yet

Interviewer: yes, it came later but as it is now, do you think it is effective giving your experience in Anbar, especially as we apply it to future environments and engagements?

03: I was in the working group the USMC put together to revise the COIN manual and I told them I thought it was fine the way it is. It reads well, it is understandable, it puts the ideas in your head for planning, for training and that's the point of doctrine. I think there's ways to help tactical units get things done that we didn't see or receive. I think there's things that can be done. Brigade leadership had an idea of how to win on their level and they did, which is commendable because I think there are a lot of people who are just satisfied with maintaining the status quo or they don't have vision for it. General McFarland had a vision for it. He's done what he was supposed to do- he came out and said what he did and that he had a plan and a vision for what he was going to do, and it worked. I agree with him. He took risks, he defied his superiors, and that's great. You need to be able to do that. That's all I really know about that.

Interviewer: Do you have any final points you'd like to add?

03: Well, it's been seven years so some of this stuff is murky so I am glad we wrote a lot of this stuff down. I don't think we wrote enough down. When we finished we did some MCCLL interviews but we did not do a battalion after action. We Just all split to the winds because we all extended. All of us had orders, and we were gone. We had a change of command within three weeks of getting home.

We all get together now and talk about this and how we can use the things that we've done, cuz experience helps. It's been five years since I've been home so… I'm gonna try to be better and write more. I value that. Your subjective mind changes over time and you remember things you want to remember and it's hard to be objective about what happened. So, when you want to remember these experiences, if you don't write them down then the experience loses focus. I'm glad that when I read that *(The MCU book Anbar Awakening Vol I*) now I'm like "wow, I had forgotten about that" and I am glad that they captured that. So that is something that I learned, that over time, as I progress (in USMC career) I am going to try to document more for myself and for whatever staff I'm in because I think it can be beneficial.

Interviewer: I agree that is valuable and I appreciate that you will do that. It will be beneficial to marines, but also to researchers like us who are trying to pull lessons from documentation in order to affect training. I do think that lessons from the field are extremely valuable.

(*Personal discussion regarding experience of researcher in Iraq, about MotoMail, about participant's wife- removed for lack of relevance*)

(…resuming discussion on Anbar and in reference to exemplary people: Captain Travis Patriquin in particular…)

Interviewer: In reading about the Awakening I have found there are a variety of versions of what occurred that is not reflected in what I am hearing in these interviews. There are a few nuggets that have been written well and I keep being told I need to read "A Soldier's Dream" about Travis Patriquin, which is interesting, and he may have been given rock star status because he was a really good guy but he was there (in Ramadi) for such a short period of time

03: yeah, well I knew him. I knew Travis because we hung out a handful of time at Sheikh Sittar's house, drinking tea and eating with the group and Megan McClung. She was the… do you know who she was?

Interviewer: Yes, but she is not widely mentioned in the literature, which I find interesting especially because she was influential and died at the same time.

03: Yes. She was in the vehicle with Travis and she was a Marine Major. She was the PAO for the brigade. She was an amazing individual. She came in and was quickly made a believer in what we were trying to do. I was nervous before meeting her because we had a public affairs corporal who was assigned to our battalion and he was our PAO and he started the deployment wanting to write about all the kinetic engagements. We were like, "no," and it sounds kind of horrible, but we were not going to let him write those kinds of articles.

Speaking of- this may be of interest to you. The media's presentation and wow talk about info operations- the media's presentation being counter productive to what you're trying to do. So, we told this PAO you are not going write these kinds of stories. We're not going to trumpet how many kills the snipers had or how bad it is here. And he said "but Sir! It's what we do!" and we said no, you're going to write a bio about Marine Joe so and so who did something, and you're going to write a piece on the mayor, and about the civil affairs project we are doing with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi police. He was a good marine and I hope he is still around, but he went to her (McClung) and told her "they're censoring me" and she came down to talk to me really early in the deployment. I was nervous. She said "ya know the public needs to hear about kinetic involvement from time to time." And I told her "no they don't. Not in 2006 they don't." Maybe in 2003 and 2004, but not now. I told her no kinetic stories coming out of our AO and she said "well, we'll see. You're trying to make me an IO officers and I am a Public Affairs officer and they are not the same things." I told her "yeah they are. Here, they are the same thing." She quickly drank the Kool Aid and got right on board with what we were doing. I give her credit because she didn't try to get that out of us and I credit her.

This plays into what other media and other reporters and such would do. They'd show up at Hurricane Point and these were guys who had been coming to Ramadi for years and wanted to write about how bad it is and they'd come in and say "I want to go to the government center because that's the most dangerous place here." And we'd tell them they weren't going to the government center and they'd argue and ask why not, that they'd always go there and that's where all the bad guys are and I want to write about that. Well, first of all it's not as bad as it was before and we want you to go over to this checkpoint and south and write and see how the Marines are working hand in hand with the Iraqis and we are gonna take you to see this civil affairs project and see what's being done. And the reports would say they aren't going to go and we'd tell them, you're going to do this or we will send you back to brigade. They'd go and what that did was it took away- part of the lifeblood of the insurgency was fear- don't forget about the international audience, the American public who have a perception that Ramadi is a cesspool and the worst place in the world. And that's what people had trumpeted for bravados sake and it was counter productive.

That was something we rolled in with, was a plan (about media) right from the get-go. Right from our PDSS we thought this place isn't that bad. I mean those guys acted like the sky was falling down on them and I mean, it's bad and people were dying and it's violent but your winning as much as- you're holding your own. So we were going to deny to the insurgency their lifeblood, which is fear, intimidation, and free press. And ya know what that did? It took some of the pressure off of the government center. They 'd attack and they'd put 30-40 people against the government center and right after we got there they were like 'hey, let's see what this new unit is like' and 'we're gonna assault the government

center and that'll give us some media attention. We made sure no stories were written about it. They had like 30 guys die and not a single one of ours was seriously injured and we didn't get any press. It's not worth it now, and those type of attacks- petered out. There were no more NY Times articles or CNN. We took that all away from them and it was deliberate, and we had the backing of the brigade and higher HQ on that, because we did send some people out. Whenever a NY Times reporter would come out Col [*name removed*] would take him out with him, wherever he went. He didn't let the reporter go to where they normally go. He wanted to shape that guy (the reporter). NPR came and they had a guy who had a microphone and I took him to buy kabobs and to see the mayor and to see the CA projects and the guy recorded the sounds of kabobs and stuff. They still put their spin on it like "we don't know if this will hold" but it wasn't like Boom Boom Boom bombs going off either. That was a different change of mindset and I think we learned that lessons because in Afghanistan we have been deliberate with how we do that, where we did not before and we were being shaped by it.

Interviewer: That sounds like a really good tactic

03: Yeah, I can't believe I didn't talk about that before

(*They have a lengthy discussion on social media that is outside the scope of this project and relates to future wars*)

03: If I was a battalion commander in Afghanistan I'd have them all deactivate their accounts. I'd go radio silence on it, or, you're in trouble. Because nothing good can come of it. I don't know if I could do it, legally. I don't know if I could pull it off, but I would try because nothing good can come of it, nothing. At least from where I sit. You can't control what Pfc Jones is going to write on any given day or what pictures he's going to upload and that's how this whole thing comes crashing down on our heads.

Interviewer: Well, I have taken a lot of your time, but I really appreciate your participation in this research.

-end recording-

Interview 3: 03201204

Interview 03201204, 06 April 2012
Date of Deployment: 2004-2006; Location of Deployment: Ramadi and later Fallujah

INTERVIEWER: It is April 6th. I am interviewing 03201204, and he has been provided Informed Consent. Do you have any questions, concerns, or anything about the Informed Consent at this time?

03201204: I do not.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. You know that if we go into anything that's classified, you have to let me know. If you think it might be classified, then we will initiate TECOM classification spillage rules. If there's anything that you have questions or concerns about later on, you can give me a call. We will redact whatever issues or points you want to redact, or if you have additional information, we can add that on later.

03201204: Sounds good.

[*Section edited: interviewer sets up table and explains a bit about project. Not relevant to transcript*]

INTERVIEWER: Where were you located? What was your job? What did you do?

03201204: This is my second tour and part of my third tour, I was located at Camp Blue Diamond, which is on the north side of Ramadi, right across from Hurricane Point, and also from Camp Ramadi and right across the bridge going into the western part of the city. It essentially is you could consider it part of the city, but there's a rural area right around the side. So I arrived there for my second tour with the 1st Marine Division in February of 2004. I was an Intelligence Operations officer [*additional information removed for protection*]. So I spent a lot of time working with the Civil Affairs folks, and I was one of the principal liaisons to the Governor of Anbar Province.

INTERVIEWER: So Governor Mamoun?

03201204: No. It was Governor Burjis at the time.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. So Mamoun replaced him?

03201204: Mamoun was the -- no. No, there were two in between, I think, Mamoun. Burjis was the first governor after we – after 182nd came in, before his sons were kidnapped and then he was taken out. Mamoun was the chairman of the Provincial Council at the time I was there. So I did deal with him.

INTERVIEWER: Was it just the Marines in there at that time, or did you have Army or -- I know Pennsylvania National Guard came on at some point in time, and then there was a reserve unit in there, although I am not exactly sure which reserve unit, but I was told that there was an Army reserve.

03201204: Right. There was no time -- I don't think there was any time during the entire campaign where it was only Marines in Anbar Province or in Ramadi. I think that Ramadi, at least in my memory, always had an Army BCT in charge of the region around the city and of the city itself. Typically, there was one or more Marine battalions operating under the Army brigade in the city. When I was there, it was 1st Infantry Division under Colonel [*name removed*], I believe was his name. That should be easy to check. So that was, I think, The Big Red One. Again, my memory might not be accurate on that one.

Then you are talking about -- the Pennsylvania National Guard was 228 BCT. They did -- they came in for my third tour. They were there from 2005 to 2006, middle of '05, middle of '06, and they were, again, responsible for the area around Ramadi, and they primarily operated in the Tam'eem area in southwest Ramadi, southwest of the river. But they also had responsibility for the Jazeera area and, again, in that time period. This was third tour, so this would be '05, '06. There were two Marine battalions and one Army -- I think it was a parachute infantry battalion. The first of the 506th or second of the 506th operated inside the city in various locations inside the city, but that was, again, my third tour. I was located -- so for my third tour, I arrived in December of 2005, and from December through January, I was at Camp Blue Diamond again, and then I moved to Camp Fallujah when the division combined and the MEF became the sole Marine Corps command element.

INTERVIEWER: What we have in the literature are gaps in understanding of the level and amount of engagements, level and amount of engagements with locals versus the key leaders that we typically tend to hear about. So I am interested in how the effect of having that interaction with locals early on and then later, how it may have changed things or affected things, and then how did it change over time. Was it hostile first, then passive later? Was it hostile all the time, et cetera? I am trying to get a good basis for understanding how our coalition forces actually interacted with locals and whether or not that had any type of impact on the Awakening or setting up the Awakening.

03201204: Okay, that's a good question. The first thing is, of course, nothing is completely generalizable for any statement that I make. Each unit operated differently. Each commander had a different command theme or philosophy that he brought with him to the area that he was operating in, and then, of course, each area was different over time. For instance, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines was in a very highly kinetic environment in the second half of their tour. In the first half of their tour, it was somewhat less kinetic, and they were able to do -- Colonel [*name removed*] was able to do more engagement. 2/4, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, was I think the sole -- solely responsible for the internals of Ramadi, other than Tam'eem, during early 2004 through mid 2004. But engagement was a standard practice across the board for every unit, other than the ones that were completely wrapped up in high-intensity kinetic operations, like say for one of the Fallujah battles. So from the squad level, if you had people dismounted -- so, again, some units were mounted, some units dismounted, and again, it varied by unit. For the squad level, platoon level, company level, and battalion level, the units were engaging from the day that we got there. So I am talking now February of 2004.

We picked up some of this from the 82nd, but a lot of it was done based on experience that the Marines had at the end of the invasion down in Hillah in southern Iraq. So the 1st Marine Division relocated at the end of the invasion, was in Diwaniya and other areas, in Hillah, with the MEF. So engagement was, again, daily practice during that 2003 time frame. So that was a theme the Marines brought with them into the 2004 time frame, so yeah.

INTERVIEWER: The engagements that you had, though, was there any type of guidance that you had? Was there any type of plan that you had prior to going in, and what cultural training backed that plan, if any?

03201204: Yeah. There wasn't much cultural training. However, General Mattis was aware of the fact that we were short on cultural training. I think the real driving force behind the engagement strategy -- that's not fair. There was no engagement strategy. The real driving force behind the impetus to engage and the impetus to apply what would later become standard COIN technique in the 2006 manual was initiated at the Stability and Security Operations Conference in December of 2003. I can give you the talking points from that conference. They are really critical to understanding the philosophy of the division as it went into Anbar. You can also look back at the time frame right before the division deployed, so we're talking December, January. There was a lot of -- there was some pretty intense dialog going back and forth between the 1st Marine Division and the 82nd Airborne Division. 82nd Airborne Division had control of Ramadi and most of Anbar, and 3rd ACR was there as well during the time period that we assumed responsibility. We assumed responsibility from the 82nd. And the Marines were talking a lot about engagement and finding ways to do things. Marines are more savvy and in depth at counterinsurgency than the 82nd was. I think not all of that was fair, but some of it was accurate. So when we showed up in February, I saw a mix of behavior from the 82nd, and the Marines picked up on this as well. And I think some of that set the tone for the Marine engagement strategy.

So I saw at the division level at the 82nd an intense engagement effort, but I don't really think it had a theme to it. I think it was just they were engaging to engage, so it was here is what you do. You have meetings, and I don't think there was a plan to any of those meetings. I don't think that there was a command philosophy behind those meetings. I don't think that they saw "key leader engagement," and that term didn't exist at the time, by the way. I don't think they saw key leader engagement as a military mission. I think the Chief of Staff under General Swannack made some great efforts to go out and meet with people. He was doing it on a daily basis. I met with -- my counterpart on the FAO level was Captain [*name removed*]. He was engaging with the people right outside the base, right outside Camp Blue Diamond. And I went out with him on numerous engagements during our turnover process, and that help set the tone for my engagements with the locals, particularly with people right outside the camp, just to get a sense of what the security situation was in our immediate area. But on the other hand, the 82nd Airborne is a door-kicking organization, and they were extremely violent. And there was a lot of animosity between the 82nd and the people of Ramadi.

So the SASO conference, though, so with that in the background, the points in the SASO conference amongst and then being if you are going to enter a house, you knock first, you separate the women from the men, you don't insult them, don't stand on their backs, all sorts of things we had seen go wrong in between the 2003 and 2004 period. I don't remember if it said anything specifically about engagement, but it did set the tone for that kind of activity. I don't remember any training anybody got in engagement. I don't remember there being any plans for engagement. I don't remember any -- I don't remember there being any kind of training opportunities or focused courses or anything like that for engagement.

INTERVIEWER: To what extent was the IPB useful, or did you have any type of cultural briefings, even if it was later on in your later deployment, something that you think may have been helpful or should have been better, in terms of how you would have operated or done your job or the Marines in general having done their job?

03201204: Yeah. I think certainly an awareness of why some of these things matter and a better understanding of the inner workings of the Iraqi tribes, and I think that that would have been necessary across the board, so to really understand what the power structure was and how the tribes had been broken apart by Saddam. But to be fair, I don't think anybody really truly appreciated the actual power structure that existed in early 2004. I don't think the Central Intelligence Agency understood it at the unclassified level. I don't think any of the sociologists understood it.

I engaged quite a bit with Pheobe Marr prior to deploying. I mean, she was prolific and Pheobe's great, and I have a tremendous respect for her, but I don't think she really understood the degree to which the power structure had been broken apart. And I think that most Americans are fairly naive when it comes to engaging with foreign nationals, and they don't understand what -- they don't understand their method of communication. They don't understand that dissembling -- I don't want to use the term "lying" -- that dissembling is a natural part of discourse, and so there's kind of a Manichean approach by Americans to discourse. If you tell me exactly, if you tell me the truth exactly, then you are a good person, and I can trust you. If you lie, then you are a bad person, and I can't trust you. And I am always going to give you the benefit of the doubt when I first meet you and that you are going to tell me the truth, with a capital "T," American version of the truth. And then I become disappointed because I have set high expectations when I discover you are not telling me the truth.

So for engagements, the first time somebody -- you find out somebody is telling you something that is not objectively accurate, you lose faith in them, you don't want to engage with them anymore, and the relationship starts to break apart. There is a serious disconnect between American and Iraqi culture in terms of cross-cultural communication. Training in that would be extraordinarily difficult, but I think it would have been useful. When I conducted -- I trained at the Joint Special Operations University. I conducted training for them for about -- or education for them for about 4 years. I taught a course in Iraqi culture, and I didn't spend any time talking about Iraqi culture per se. I spent most of my time talking about the way Iraqis think and their method of communication. That would have been extremely helpful.

As a [*removed for protection*] Middle East cultural expert, you know, with quotes around "expert," I spent a lot of time just with the guys I was dealing with prior to going across the border trying to bring them up to speed on certain things, but I was pretty naive as well. That first year that we were back in there in Anbar Province was kind of a year of discovery for everybody. I think we could have had a much more robust and effective key leader engagement strategy if first Fallujah and second Fallujah had not happened. Our entire plan got thrown off the rails. If you recall, neither General Mattis nor General Conway wanted to invade Fallujah after the Blackwater incident. They were pushed into it.

We had a pretty good plan for engagement that had just begun in Fallujah. Fallujah in particular was a pretty rough area, but Ramadi, it was going on from day one. I immediately began engaging with folks. I was immediately out to the government center as soon as -- even before we assumed control. I would routinely patrol out to areas around our base at Blue Diamond and engage with folks.

Colonel [*name removed*] was having -- so this is the commander of [*unit removed*]. So from the time he got there in early 2004, I know for a fact that Colonel [*name removed*] was having routine engagements with tribal leaders in Ramadi. He was having routine engagements with tribal leaders around Ramadi. All of the guys in 1st ID had engagement meetings.

Now, again, very little of this, I think, was effectively structured. There were problems across the board that probably still continue to this day in terms of layering, especially in a provincial capital, because you have the local security force that is providing security for the physical aspects of the capital. Then you have the command element that is collocated in the capital, and you have a brigade that's there as well. All three layers were engaging with the same people, and so, of course, the Iraqis were attempting to take advantage of that. And none of the three layers really understood the tribal or power structure.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any intercommunication between those layers, or was that a challenge?

03201204: That was a tremendous challenge. It was a tremendous challenge. You know, we were basically just trying to figure out what was happening and trying to fight and trying to keep ourselves protected. We had no armor on our vehicles, and by early April, things had gone completely kinetic. So that threw a lot of the engagement strategies or -- again, I'm using the term "strategies." That threw a lot of the engagements off the rails, especially for 2/4. They went highly kinetic after that, just because they had to. But that does not mean that engagements weren't talking place, because I continued to engage all through that period as the cultural advisor, as a liaison to the governor. I was in the governor's office three times a week conducting engagements. I was at tribal leaders' houses four, five times a week conducting engagements. I had tribal leaders come onto the base to conduct engagements with them, and a lot of these conversations -- so this is the critical piece for the Awakening movement. A lot of these conversations paralleled the kinds of conversations that Sattar Abu Risha had with 1-1AD.

INTERVIEWER: Earlier.

03201204: I'm talking early 2004. I can't even count the number of tribal leaders I spoke with during that time period who approached me, either at provincial council meetings on the side, at one-on-one meetings in their houses, at the Camp Blue Diamond at the base, at the governor's office at the government center, came up to me or one of my counterparts or one of the civil affairs officers and said, "I can provide 200 guys. I can provide 500 guys. I can secure my area. Pull your troops out of my area. I can provide security. If you do this, I will provide security. I can give you guys for the police force," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. These were daily conversations.

So the kinds of conversations that took place that people were kind of painting as a miraculous one-off event in 2006 had been taking place since probably 2003 when General Swannack and his folks were there, but I can only speak to when we were there. Certainly, in 2004, it was a daily event across the province.

So parallel to the Ramadi piece, Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*] was the commander officer of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines in Hit, and I think when you talk about Hit, this is a really, really interesting case study.

He was approached by the city elders and asked if they could assume control for their own security, and if 2/7 would pull out of the center of Hit and go to the periphery and provide external security, then they would assume security for the city. And it was an extremely controversial discussion. I remember there was a lot of going back and forth at the division level about whether or not he should be authorized to do this, whether or not it was a good idea.

In the Marine Corps, commanders down to the battalion level are given a lot of leeway in the choices that they make. Ultimately, General Mattis, I think he went out there and spoke with them, but General Mattis said, "Okay. You can go ahead and cut your deal and see what happens."

Now, it didn't pan out. I think it was too early to do something like that.

INTERVIEWER: Was this the Mahal and Nimer or --

03201204: No, this is way before that. This is just with the people in Hit. This is -- I'm talking this is, you know, maybe April-May 2004. Yeah. I'm trying to stay in the 2004 time frame for you here. But I'm just also trying to drive home the point that these things were taking place from day one. This is -- and I mean literally day one from when we arrived. Now, it didn't work. I mean, Hit became kind of a hot bed and it failed, but there was [*name removed*], a Marine lieutenant colonel, battalion commander, in 2004 taking that kind of risk that the 1-1AD guys were saying nobody had taken up to the point that they arrived in Anbar Province. So the narrative there simply is not accurate, and I'd say that that took place many times over the course of the campaign. I mean, you'd have to interview other folks to get to those stories.

In Ramadi, certainly that took place a number of times. I negotiated a -- well, God knows how legitimate this was or not, but I negotiated a piece deal between two tribes or two families that were at loggerheads over some major issues and actually had General Mattis present them with a brick of $100,000 to compensate them for family losses during the 2003 battle. There was a whole engagement with the Kharbit family and with the Suleiman family who were at the upper echelons of the notional Dulaim tribal confederation. It really didn't exist in any meaningful way.

We were doing these engagements. I was engaging with Kharbit and Suleiman on a regular basis. We thought we were engaging with the upper echelon of this imaginary tribal confederation. We thought that that would give us leverage. One of the ostensible leaders of the federation had fled to Jordan. A lot of the key leaders had fled to Jordan. So we are trying to engage during a period where there is incredible flux within the tribal structure. A lot of the guys that you would assume on paper had authority had fled, and the ones that were claiming to have authority at that time really hadn't established any authority with the tribes.

Particularly in the urban areas, the Iraqis -- this is my observation. The Iraqis had not divorced themselves from the motion of a strong Iraqi state to the point that they had fully associated themselves with tribal leaders, and the tribal leaders to that point had not proven themselves to their own people. The title of "tribal elder," the title of "tribal leader" did not convey coercive power.

INTERVIEWER: In the urban areas or all around?

03201204: Primarily in the urban areas. In the rural areas, they were more tribal. They tended to be more tribal, and I think this is why you saw earlier effectiveness in key leader engagement with the Abu-Nimer -- it was more rural in general -- and Abu-Mahal out west.

In the Ramadi area, so again kind of circling back to what you are really focused on here -- in the Ramadi area, the tribes are intermingled. They are internally divided. A lot of the tribal elders had very little power under the Saddam period. The ones that Saddam had put in place had fled. So there was a period of about a year and a half, 2 years, where they had to gel their leadership, if they weren't killed. A lot of them were killed. A lot of the guys we engaged with successfully were killed along the way. It's just that happens. So not only did we not have a clear engagement strategy -- I'm not sure anybody did all the way to the end of the war, to be frank with you -- that's not true. 2008-2009, they had a pretty good strategy.

We had no strategy. We had very poor intelligence on the tribes. So we didn't really understand the relationships, the internal relationships, and that was across the board all the way through until the kinetic died down. I can go back to that.

Even if we did have a decent understanding, I am not sure there are any tribal leaders -- and this is a really critical point -- I am not sure that there were any tribal leaders that were willing to engage or that were engaging or even ones that weren't engaging that actually had the kind of coercive power that Sattar had in 2006.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that that's why the other little risings -- you know, when you had the tribal leaders coming to you and saying, "Hey, we can give you this," do you think that that's why they failed, or was it our lack of trust or understanding or may be a combination of the two? Because you did say that he was given -- or Commander [name removed] was given some leeway to set up this, in essence, militia, but it failed. So what contributed to that?

03201204: Well, I'm not sure he set up a militia. He gave the city elders a little responsibility when we were --

INTERVIEWER: And there is a lot of discourse about what was the militia, what is a militia, is it legitimate, so that --

03201204: Oh, God. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- we can get to that later, if you want.

03201204: Yeah, yeah. Sure. That was a painful discussion.

INTERVIEWER: But why do you think that these things had limited success and didn't catch on?

03201204: Well, first of all, al-Qaeda was rising during that time period, not falling. So, again, there are so many variables at play here that it's almost impossible to tease out cause and effect. Really, I think it's going to take decades for historians to tease out the cause and effect that led to the Awakening movement ultimately. So this is only a step in the process. So for the Abu-Mahal, they were an isolated tribe out in the west. They had battles, an ongoing struggle with other tribes, the Karbuli and the Salmoni. Their ability to succeed depended on their internal cohesion, and again, in the rural areas, the tribes were more cohesive than they were in the urban areas. This is, again, my personal perspective. So they were successful over time. Again, they had their struggles. There were some attempts and failures, both because the Marines backed them but also because of that cohesion that did not exist to the same extent in the urban areas.

So when you start talking about Ramadi, you have -- I can't remember how many tribes had presence in Ramadi, but it was well over 10, and then if you get into subtribal groupings and prominent families, it becomes extremely fractious. There were maps that we inherited from the 82nd Airborne Division of the tribal areas in Ramadi that were -- I think they were precise but inaccurate and therefore misleading. So we had an impression that these color blobs, these polygons that the 82nd had created for us actually represented control. If you saw a polygon over an area in Ramadi and it said Abu-Fahd, then you assumed several things. You assumed that everybody in that box, that polygon, was member of the Abu-Fahd tribe; that they all fought the same, acted the same, behaved the same; and that they all responded to the recognized elder of the Abu-Fahd tribe. None of those things were accurate. The problem is we have this appetite for graphic briefing slides, and that leads you to believe that aren't actually true on the ground. And that leads you to make poor decisions.

In terms of key leader engagement in Ramadi, what that led us to do was to assign tribal elders -- you know, we weren't really sure who they were anyway, but we assign tribal elders authority that they did not have prior to going in to engage with them. So if somebody said, "I am the leader of the Abu-Fahd tribe," we assumed that he controlled that polygon like a dictatorship or almost like a prison or something or a military unit.

INTERVIEWER: Was the assumption more like -- and I've heard this a few times, that some folks went with the assumption of their understanding of what Native American tribes are like in North American, and so it was kind of like you have this tribal chief and then you have your semistructure and the multi layers, or was there just on assumption of what the tribal structure was like except that there was a big --

03201204: Yeah. No, that's kind -- I don't think any -- I didn't -- never heard anybody draw that exact analogy, but I think everybody kind of takes things are face value, and the problem is the Iraqis are not only more than willing to let you believe that, but because they have a survival mentality and because they knew that they would derive power from our belief in their authority and that they would actually derive money from that belief, because we would give them contract money, they actually actively encouraged us to believe that they had that kind of authority. So not only did we believe it on our own, but then we were encouraged after meeting with them to a greater extent.

The problem is then we would discover that it wasn't true, and then we would say this guy is a liar, he's a liar, he's a bad guy. I mean, I can think of probably two or three guys whose nickname became "The Liar." Now, the Iraqis would also talk badly about each other, and that also fed right into our preconceived notions, et cetera, et cetera. The whole staff has to understand at a very general level the game that's set afoot here, and if the whole staff doesn't understand the game that's afoot, then somebody is going to make a mistake. And the Iraqis were incredibly adept at finding the one guy on the staff that really didn't get it or was really naive and could be easily coerced, because we didn't have a structured training and education plan prior to going in.

This was particularly true when conducting -- you know, so many people were conducting key leader engagements across the board that they just had to wait until the right guy walked through their door that had some kind of contracting authority or power, "Hey, can I get a weapons card from you? Hey, can I get a contract bid?" et cetera, et cetera, that they played us off against each other. And then we would discover that, and we would become even more frustrated with them.

So there was certainly an element of failed expectation management, but, you know, to a great extent, I think we had to learn these things the hard way. We would have benefitted greatly from better intelligence collection, and I mean across-the-board intelligence collection. One of our big failings was focusing intently on what we perceived to be enemy forces. Now, I say that very carefully, because we were in a pretty heavy kinetic fight in that time frame. Guys were getting killed all the time. 2/4 took tremendous casualties. So to tell a battalion commander he needs to focus on tribal elders while his Marines are getting killed is an extremely contentious thing to say. When you have limited collection assets and you tell the commander you want to apply some of them to understanding the tribes and not the kinetic right, that's an extremely contentious request.

This fight, I carried through on this fight all the way through 2006. I had a 3-hour pissing contest with our radio battalion officer about whom we should be targeting for collection, and I lost. I lost the debate because he controlled the assets, and we still had ever limited insight into the real relationships that existed. Also, our human intelligence capabilities were focused on the enemy as well. So what that did is it gave us a false perception that somehow the enemy was disconnected from the tribe, and that there was this group of Iraqis that didn't belong to tribes and that didn't have these other affiliations. And so we almost applied a system of systems, an analytic approach to understanding the tribes that is this kind of structural functionalist approach to understanding the world? That is completely false, particularly in such a complex environment.

It always amazed me when you say, well, there's the insurgency and then there's the tribe. No. Of course, every Iraqi is a member of a tribal. Now, whether or not that matters to them, that tribal affiliation has any coercive effect on their

behavior or if they have a strong identity with that tribe, that's another question, but that's the kind of question you need to answer through pretty robust intelligence collection and through key leader engagement as well. So you need to have multiple inputs. You need to have multiple sources coming in that you can then compare to each other. We didn't have that. So any key leader engagement we did was hampered by all of these factors, by our naiveté, by the Iraqis' aggressive disinformation efforts, and by our lack of intelligence collection. That does not mean these things were not happening.

INTERVIEWER: Did anyone try to map any of these things, so there was education over time for your units, or was it just "This is my experience, and we are going to build on our experience," and, “it's that learned, shared, collective knowledge from having lived through it?”

03201204: We had maps, social network diagrams, link analysis charts --

INTERVIEWER: Did everybody get to see that?

03201204: -- ad nauseam. I mean, our systems were filled with these things. Yeah, they were readily available to just about anybody that had a SIPRNET connection, which was certainly available down at the battalion level. But if you don't know why you should be looking at them and how to look at them critically, I'm not sure how helpful they are.

INTERVIEWER: Because that links up to now this -- you know, I'm sure just on our experience with each other, we are both familiar with the nifty newness and loveliness of the Human Terrain mapping programs. And it's not just the Army that does it. You know, DARPA, of course, has jumped on the band wagon, so has DIA, et cetera, et cetera.

03201204: And CENTCOM, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But you're right that you can map until you are blue in the face, and you can show some really nice patterns, but if you don't have the ability or the persons to ask the "why" or to put those linkages together, then you're kind of missing the biggest piece of the puzzle. Did you have folks that were kind of intuitively starting to look at that?

03201204: Yeah. I mean, I was -- at the division level, we had FAOs down at each regiment. We had FAOs down at the battalion level. We had advisors --

INTERVIEWER: You had FAOs at battalion?

03201204: In a couple, in a couple places, yeah. [*Name removed*] went down to a battalion. I can't remember the other guys that went down to battalions. We had [name removed] up at the MEF, who was very helpful. We had [*name removed*] up at the MEF who was very helpful with that. We had some of our interpreters who were U.S. citizens and had clearances who were very helpful with explaining some of these things to us. Some of them were not. Some of them could be a little bit deceptive, and you just had to be careful and understand who you were getting your information from.

But the staff officers themselves and the commanders themselves have to have that understanding, and if they don't have that basic understanding, if they don't -- they themselves have to have in their tool kit, in their education, background, in their training prior to deployment, and they have to exercise it in their predeployment workup. If they don't have that background, training, education, tool kit, if they haven't exercised it prior to deploying, then they are not going to be able to effectively apply it from the day they get there, and they are going to have to learn some painful lessons over time. Some will learn it, because they're smart, and some will not learn it. The idea -- so a FAO, an HTT, whatever, none of these things can -- none of these advisory capacities can make up for the lack of staff capacity. If the staff doesn't get it and the commander doesn't get it, you are still going to fail, because all of these things are advice. Everything that is external is simply advice.

My advice to General Mattis was something, it was on top. He could take it or leave it. [*names removed*] advice was on tap. They could take it or leave it. And so what it really came down to at the end of the day in terms of key leader engagement, in terms of understanding the tribes, in terms of really understand the nuance of the tribal relationships and power relationships, there had to be some kind of baseline of understanding there inherent, organic in the staff. What it came down to for the Marines -- and I think there is a narrative in Marine Corps culture about small wars that is important, and I think it has to be taken into consideration when you talk about key leader engagement in Iraq. The small wars narrative came to life almost immediately when major combat operations ended. There was an almost instinctive move into what Marines would call "small wars activity" or, you know, what you could also term "counterinsurgency." Right away, they started setting up combined arms platoons, immediately get the Marines out into the local areas and start setting up local forces, police forces, et cetera. That was an instinctive behavior, and it seemed perfectly natural to everybody on the Marine staff. I am not sure if that would have seemed natural to another military organization.

INTERVIEWER: Were you guys setting up those IA training and police training pretty much right off that bat, even that early?

03201204: In Tikrit in 2003, within 2 days of the end of kinetic operations, we had started to set up a police force. So April of 2003, we were already setting up a police force. The day after kinetic operations ended in 2003 in Tikrit, I was General [*name & position removed*] for Task Force Tripoli. I was engaging with tribal leaders literally the day after kinetic operations ended. Matter of fact, we might have had engagements with them while the kinetic operations were still going on. That's actually true. There was heavy artillery fired at us one of the nights after we had a key leader engagement. So this is, again, not just a key leader engagement piece, but all of the associated things like knocking on doors instead of kicking them in, et cetera, et cetera. Now, did every Marine unit follow this to the letter? Absolutely not. Were some commanders super aggressive? Yes. And I think we actually -- you know, command tone has a significant influence on the degree to which the subordinate commanders are willing to and desire to engage with locals for constructive purposes.

I got there are the tail end for my second tour in Ramadi in 2005. I got there on the tail end of General Johnston as the MEF commander and General [*name removed*] as the division commander, and I don't think either one of them cared a wit about key leader engagement. I have an indirect -- so this is hearsay but an indirect quote from General Johnston, "I don't have any use for culture. This is a gunfight," and that's the way they treated the campaign. Now, one could argue that 2005, there was a gunfight, and there was a lot of frustration with -- the degree to which we had engaged with a lot of these tribal elders that either came to naught or had fallen apart.

General Williams, whose interview is in the Anbar Awaking piece, was the key leader engagement officer, was a brigadier general during that time period, and I saw him really try earnestly to engage with tribal leaders, even while the philosophy at the top, two-star, three-star level was pretty kinetic. General Williams continued to engage. All the subordinate commanders continue to engage, the FAOs I knew out there. [*Name removed*] was a fluent Arabic speaker, native Arabic speaker. He continued to engage on a daily basis. They had a lot of the same conversations in '05 that I was having in '04, again, with guys saying, "I'll help. Give me some weapons or give me the authority, and I'll take care of my own area." And it was fairly commonplace even in the most kinetic periods.

There might have been a shift in the amount and the quality of the engagement, but it never stopped, and this is particularly also true in Ramadi where because you had the multiple layers of command collocated right there at Blue Diamond, Hurricane Point, and Camp Ramadi, you had the one-two-three punch of engagement, it was not stop. There is probably engagement fatigue to a certain extent. But going back -- so I'm sorry. Going back to '04, there were unstructured engagements down at the squad level where a squad would go out and engage with locals in their area of operation. They would ask people on the streets. I know this, because I was out on the streets with these guys on a pretty regular basis with 2/4, with the field artillery, Army field artillery unit that was attached to the BCT. Every time they went out, they would stop and talk with people. That's at the squad level. I know for a fact that it was going on, on a regular basis at the battalion level, and I know that Colonel [*name removed*] was engaging with people probably on a daily basis at the brigade level, and again, a lot of those discussions paralleled the ones that I was just having.

INTERVIEWER: So they were actually getting out of their vehicles and talking to people? Because that is a criticism that I see a lot in the literature. That the military, including the Marines, were not really getting out of their vehicles and talking to folks until 2006.

03201204: Now, that is a fair criticism that there were more mounted patrols than dismounted patrols during that time period. However, that does not mean they never got out of their vehicles. So they would mount, and they would move mounted from place to place, which is -- They would move from place to place in their vehicles, right? Speed was a measure of security, because we didn't have any armor or anything like that. Now, you could argue that they should have been completely dismounted, but it was -- it was a pretty intense kinetic right. I think it's a fair argument to have. I would want infantry battalion commanders to have that argument, not me. I don't think I am qualified to have that argument. But they would, when they got to where they were going, dismount and talk with people. I mean, that was a regular thing.

So, now, the structured engagement programs that I was involved in, in 2004, we had an engagement program with all of the imams in Ramadi. We had a hostile imam, [*name removed*] who we tried to engage with on a regular basis to try to get him to stop preaching negative stuff. I mean, I've listened -- his speakers were right across the river from us. I'd just hear him say, "Kill the Americans," which was rather unpleasant, and then we would get hit with mortars. But we had the chairman of the endowment. We had a regular engagement program with him. We set up a program to -- this was in '04, again, early '04. Colonel [*name removed*] was the head of the G-X staff element, which was civil affairs and information operations put together into one group. That was ad hoc. I think that got taken apart after he left.

We paid him money for mosque improvement and mosque security that they would the hire security guards and cleaners, as long as the imams were not hostile. So they could say whatever they wanted as long as it wasn't violent, and so that was one of the engagement programs.

We engaged with former general officers. We recognized that there were a significant number of retired general officers from the Iraqi military, including Republican Guard folks, who lived in Anbar Province, had retired in Anbar Province, and had lost their retirement stipend when the government collapsed. They were necessarily hostile. We knew quite a few of them were actually supporting and working with the insurgency.

We set up a Gray Beard Board, and we brought them in and paid them to provide us with advice on how better to engage with their Iraqi counterparts in the civilian world. We had the first gray beard board, I want to say, in March. I am not positive about the time frame, but that was a pretty robust engagement effort. And during those engagements, they would say the same things to us, "Let us take care of our own security, and we will -- you can step outside the cities." That kind of engagement is what eventually led to the Anbar People's Committee work.

General Mattis frequently brought in all the major tribal leaders for big conferences and would basically let them complain to him and berate him publicly, and then he was very patient, and he would listen to them. It was interesting to see that side of General Mattis. It is not what you normally associate with General Mattis when you think about a guy who's caused some of this chaos, but he was very patient. He would listen. He stayed on message, and he had a lot of one-on-one engagements that I would set up as well for him, and other people would help. You know, the civil affairs guys would set things up with him too. I was not the only one doing this. But there were some very productive, very informative engagements. The whole process of trying to bring the Kharbit and the Suleiman together, which may have been -- you know, that may have been a Kabuki play that we were just innocently partaking in, but --

INTERVIEWER: [*edited for clarity*] There was an economic conference in Jordan that has been referenced, with a Japanese businessman who talked to the sheikhs about business and economic development. Were any of those starting out that early in 2004?

03201204: Yeah. We had [*name removed*], who was a reserve officer, businessman. He was the MNF-West -- or I can't remember. I think we had some -- we weren't called "MNF-West" at the time, but he was the Marine component liaison officer in Amman, Jordan. And his job was to try to get businessmen to come and tribal leaders to come back into Anbar, and he'd facilitate some engagement during that time frame. And then there were meetings that took place

fairly early on there. We also flew a number of tribal elders to, I think it was, Bahrain or to Qatar [*it was Bahrain*]-- this is in one of the histories, and you can probably dig it up -- to show them what an advanced Arab country looked like and to show them what -- and to have them engage with Arab businessmen, to give them ideas for business development. So that took place as early as 2004. That went on.

I know that there were a number of efforts to do that and also to fly. By '08 and '09, we were flying tribal leaders in and out of Jordan on a regular basis, but I think '04 to '06 time frame, we were spending a pretty good amount of time meeting with expatriate or displaced tribal leaders in Amman, and there were also communications going back and forth with those tribal elders.

Of course, there was even at that time some recognition that because they had fled, they did not have the kind of coercive behavioral power that we were looking for. So I'm talking about Majid Suleiman Al-Dulaimi, Al-Safiya Dulaimi, and other folks like that.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I know that Sheikh Sattar said he was in Jordan for a while and then came back, but his brother Ahmed was kind of leading things for a while. Did you have any interaction in 2004-2005?

03201204: Bezia was still alive during that time period. Their father was still alive during that time period. He was the guy who was influential.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. When did he die?

03201204: I can't remember. I think he was killed. There were two Bezias. This is what makes things complicated. There was the elder Bezia, and there was Bezia the liar. I always have trouble. I mix them up. You know, it's been a while. Have you interviewed [name removed]? You got to interview him. He knows these names. He knows the names of these guys and all the personalities inside and out, and also I would interview Namir Jumaili. He's in Jordan right now. He's a private businessman now. He was under MNF-West contract at the time. Namir knows all these guys personally, all of them, has all of them on speed dial, and he had been working this since '04. So Namir is a tremendous resource in terms of who's who in the zoo.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So Bezia the elder was still alive.

03201204: Bezia was still alive, and we've looked at Sattar, and I met Sattar, you know, in one of these meetings. Sattar was a sideline character at the time. I don't think -- certainly, none of the tribal leaders we were engaging with overtly identified Sattar as a tribal player, as a tribal elder, as a man of influence, other than the fact that he was an effective smuggler and had a lot of money. I distinctly remember him wearing a really nice watch. But all of our analysis, including our -- I'll be careful what I say here. My understanding of Sattar was that he was a sideline guy.

INTERVIEWER: So Sattar was in Iraq at the time in '04?

03201204: Oh, he came back and forth, yeah. All these guys came back and forth. None of these guys that eventually became prominent were big players in the '04, '5, or '6 time frame. It doesn't mean we didn't engage with them or that nobody spoke with them. There were a lot of conversations with everybody. Again, we engaged with everybody. One of the pros and cons of our lack of an engagement strategy was that we engage with everybody, right? There was no discrimination, other than you get pissed off at somebody and you didn't want to talk to them anymore, which in retrospect is a rather childish way to engage.

INTERVIEWER: Well, without an engagement strategy, would you say it's a fair statement or an inaccurate statement that during that time period, anyone -- so Marines, Army, anyone -- was actively looking for “that guy”, “that tribal guy”?

03201204: Oh, God, we were. We were desperate to find that guy. We were actively asking people to take responsibility. If there was any kind of strategy, that was it. We desperately wanted them to take responsibility for security primarily by having their people join the security forces. The problem was we made the security forces extremely unattractive to join, and they were extremely ineffective. You start layering in other variables here. There's a timing issue as well that was extremely kinetic. The Iraqis were not ready to set up a security force early on, so we went through these various waves. There was the Iraqi National Guard Corps -- or an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, which was a complete failure. The initial Iraqi Police were a complete failure. I wound up getting our chief of police in Ramadi arrested, who was actually the provincial chief of police, but he acted like the city chief of police, [*name removed*], who was working very close with the insurgents. In retrospect, I just feel bad for the guy, because he really had no choice. I kind of feel bad that I had him put in jail. I don't know what happened to him, but he's just a, you know, pathetic kind of figure. And then we went to the Iraqi National Guard. That kind of fell apart. We had the New Iraqi Army, that kind of fell apart. So there wasn't tremendous incentive to try to get people to join up here, but also, again, the tribal leaders didn't have that kind of coercive power.

So this ties in directly to [*your*] question: What dynamics, interactions, and actions used to instigate or support the Awakening movement do you feel are globally applicable?

So the idea here of an engagement strategy is really critical, because it can cut both ways. There is always a desire to find the right guy to talk to, right? So that's what drives engagement strategies, especially as commanders become more and more frustrated with failed engagements. They become consumed with finding the right guy to talk to, who is the right guy to talk to, and Iraqis fed that concept as well. They would say, "You are talking to the wrong people. These are the right people to talk to." You have probably heard it a million times too. It almost became a knee-jerk thing for them to say, is you're talking to the wrong people. Now, of course, who are the wrong people? Their enemies. Who are the right people? Them. And that, you know just depended who you were talking to, which if you think about it makes perfect sense.

The problem is we don't think very deeply. So we just take everything everybody says at face value, and then we get disappointed when we find out that they're not being completely straightforward with us -- by our standards. So what

you do then is you start discriminating and looking for people that make you happy, and you look for people that speak English, are educated, and sell themselves really well, and so then your engagement strategy becomes this guy must be the guy, or your engagement strategy purposefully looks for people that have a lot of influence. Now, that makes sense in that if they can actually influence things in the right direction, you may be able to make a sea-change difference in the flow of the campaign. However, insurgencies are not fought by the majorities of populations typically. If they are, you're in big trouble. You're probably already losing. They're typically fought by minorities, and so when you engage with the most prominent and effective people and part of that engagement strategy then also leads you to not engage with that person's rivals, that person's rivals can stay in the insurgency for an extended period of time. And, by the way, that person you have identified, because your information is imperfect necessarily, you never, ever have a clear understanding of what's happening in a counterinsurgency environment, ever, period. You have to go under that assumption. You may be wrong, and so your decision to exclude people from the engagement process can be critically counterproductive, right?

So what happened with Sattar? Maybe we had sidelined him at some point or people just dismissed him because nothing productive had come out of previous conversations. A new unit comes in. The Army unit comes in and says, "I'm willing to talk to this guy. Let's give it a shot," you know, and so it was the guy you didn't expect. Nobody expected Sattar Abu Risha to be the guy that led the Awakening movement. I'm sorry. If you show me the predictive analysis that said that that was going to happen prior to that meeting, it was happenstance, but it was happenstance, it was positive happenstance, because we didn't exclude him.

Now, if 1-1AD says the MEF absolutely refused to engage with Sattar, then they have a valid point about cutting people out of the engagement process. I think there is a mixed story there. I'm not sure that that is entirely accurate, and I have heard people on the MEF staff saying that we encourage them to do it but within limits. I will leave that story to people that were actually physically there when it took place, but it was happenstance.

Colonel [*name removed*], the guy that actually started engaging with him, I sat next to him at a conference for 2 days, and he said, "Yeah. He came up to me, talked to me, and said I can do this, and I said let's give it a shot. What do we have to lose?" That conversation that [*name removed*] had with Sattar Abu Risha had taken place a thousand times before, probably from 2003 all the way through the time that he had that conversation. It just happened to stick that one time, right? But if you have a strategy that excludes guys like that, that's not helpful. That's no more helpful than having a positive strategy that finds guys like that.

INTERVIEWER: And it also, I assume, takes a lot of that willingness to trust that -- willingness to take a risk, your risk assessment.

03201204: But I don't think we had a risk assessment process. We were engaging with everybody and their mother. I mean, there was no discrimination other than personal privilege. I mean, you know, I didn't -- you know, there was some guys we labeled as bad guys, but we still met with them too. I met with the Kharbit family on a daily -- almost-daily basis, but we had labeled them as bad guys.

As a matter of fact, so you want to talk about an engagement strategy, the 82nd Airborne identified this family as a bad family when we first got there. General Mattis said who can we focus on, and the 82nd Airborne said the Kharbits, and for a number of reasons which I can't get into here. But he turned to me and said, "Go engage with those guys," and I executed a pretty comprehensive engagement strategy with them that led to some pretty positive outcomes for us.

Now, it turned out to not be that significant at the end, because they were only relevant when the Bath Party remnants were relevant, and that started to fade pretty quickly in 2004. So a lot of the things I was pretty proud of really didn't matter in retrospect, but that's life.

But that was a positive engagement strategy for guys that we intentionally wanted to sideline. We were still engaging with them. So I didn't see a risk management strategy that led to exclusion of people from the engagement process ever. I didn't see a conscious effort to exclude groups or people or people or leadership. I saw the same characters and new characters appearing at meetings and conferences over and over and over again. We didn't control access to these meetings. People would just show up, whether we invited them or not, and that was it. I mean, that's who was there at the meeting. You know, you hope they didn't have a suicide vest strapped around them or something, but that wasn't common back then. Yeah, this was happenstance.

[*Edited for conciseness: interviewer talks about interpreters trying to help and getting blown off by CF military and being called "F-ing 'terps"*]

INTERVIEWER: As I look at the lessons learned from this project, I am going to start looking at FAO programs, CULAD programs, individual augments, the cultural training that we would give our Marines, things that may have provided some assistance and possibly turned things around in Anbar sooner. Maybe the answer is it couldn't have, but maybe our cultural training needs to put some meat or weight behind our interpreters and stop treating them like "F-ing terps." Maybe if boost up the CULAD program it would have an impact later on, and maybe that is a lesson. Do you have any feelings or comments about that?

03201204: Yeah, I do. Here's a problem with lessons learned. If you don't incorporate things in a comprehensive way into training, education, and exercises, and they don't become a way of thinking, then they're -- and they are simultaneously counterintuitive to a standard American service member, so engaging positively with somebody that's lying to you is counterintuitive. Thinking tribally is counterintuitive. Thinking in the nonlinear fashion is counterintuitive. Using manipulative discussions to get ahead is counterintuitive. Setting false expectations is natural. So if you don't completely reshape the way people think, they are going to be bad at it, no matter what you do. So if you throw a couple of predeployment classes at them right before they go, it's utterly irrelevant. It can actually be worse, because then you go in with just, you know, this surface-layer understanding of things. So you actually have to reshape the way people think.

So the military is great at reshaping the way people think. You are a civilian, and then you become a Marine. Now, graduating boot camp doesn't make you a Marine. It takes years of kind of processing and learning and education and behavior, and you learn from your peers, and you become acculturated, and all these things happen, right? If you don't

take what we've learned in the last 10 years and weave it through everything, then you're still going to have commanders and staffs at the onset of a new conflict that are going to be equally daft as the ones we had going in the first time, and then it's are they smart, are they quick, can they get it, are they intuitive, those guys will succeed, and the ones that aren't won't. And then it just comes down to personality, right?

So what do you do with the lessons we learned from the last 10 years? First, you have to look at how did we learn them? They would learn them because we created really good training and education. No, we never did. We never invested heavily in training and education. We never really incorporated culture into our exercises, except the Mojave Viper for the Marines Corps, right? And then it's kind of like you get out there, you do a week, and you get like a quick hit, right? But are they doing it back at Lejeune and Pendleton in a really comprehensive way before they go? Not really. And there's some valid arguments to be had there in terms of incorporating stuff like this, because you say, "Okay. You want me to do this kind of cultural training. You want me to reshape the way people think and to be thoughtful and to think counter intuitively." What do I not do? Do I do less marksmanship? Do I do less physical conditioning? Do I do less communications training? Do we just do fewer field exercises?

The right answer is, "No, I want you to incorporate this into everything you do," and that's the argument that I've been making for years. I am now coming to the conclusion that general purpose forces should have absolutely nothing to do with counterinsurgency, and that it doesn't matter what kind of advisory capability you layer on top of things. Again, I don't think that -- it doesn't matter what flavor it comes in. If you don't have a staff that understands the issues and a commander that understands the issues and is trained and educated to think that way, it may not be that effective, regardless. So these guys, the way they learn this stuff was by trial and error, and the intuitive guys got really good at it fast. The non-intuitive guys either never learned it or got good at it slowly. The problem with the military is that people leave, and so the culture of the military either changes with that generation or it does not. So there has to be a "remain behind."

Now, the "remain behind" can be an intangible and then they pass this thing down. [*Name removed*] could be in on this conversation and articulate this much better than I could, right? But they pass this knowledge and this behavior and this way of thinking down through the acculturation process, and that instinctively -- "No, Lieutenant, that is not what you do in this situation. This is what you do," so outside of the formal training and education process. Some of that will take place, but that will fade over time. Like the lessons of Vietnam, some of them stayed with us. Some of them faded over time. Lessons of World War II, some of them stayed with us, because they became part of the culture, and then some of them faded over time.

Because some of this is so complex and nuanced and difficult, a lot of it is going to fade quickly if we don't embed it. So then the question becomes, okay, more key leader engagement training, more understanding of how to apply intelligence capacity, collection capacity to understanding the way people think and act and interact with each other. That piece of it, I think we are actually doing much better at, right? So in terms of social network analysis, in terms of the cheaper version, which is link analysis, we are getting better at that piece.

INTERVIEWER: But I don't know if we are necessarily getting better at trying to teach or train how to ask "why," how to put the pieces together. Would you agree or disagree to that?

03201204: No, we're not getting better at that, because, again, in order to ask why, you have to understand the answer, and you have to know why you are asking why. You have to understand why it's important to do that. So the commander's education process throughout his entire career has to lead him to the point as a lieutenant colonel, a colonel, a general officer, that it becomes instinctive to him the same way an enveloping movement becomes instinctive to him in conventional combat. Does that make sense? If it is not instinctive, if it doesn't make sense at some basic level, then the fog of war strips it away, or it becomes a surface level thing that has potential to be counterproductive, right?

The question becomes for all of us here, the people that have been working on cultural training, cultural intelligence, really that care about this stuff, that wants to see us succeed, that saw the failures that evolved from the lack of understanding, the lack of appreciation. The painful question now is budgets decline as we start refocusing on Iran, China, and Syria. The real painful question becomes is it too late, because we haven't done it already, because we put our money into other things -- you know where my opinion is on that one but is it too late and is it worth it. Is the juice worth the squeeze?

Now you got to think. So you look at the President's 2012 security review, and he said counterinsurgency is something we're going to do, irregular warfare, something -- I don't know why those two things are different, but, I mean, okay, got it. Irregular warfare is something we're going to do, okay, but if you look at the counterinsurgency section, it says, "But we're not going to do large-scale counterinsurgency." What does that mean? I haven't seen that parsed out by anybody in the administration or in DoD yet. So what that means to me is we are not going to send general purpose forces in to conduct counterinsurgency campaigns for the near future or for the extended future.

Well, if that's the case, then do we force-feed a massive training and education program to the general purpose forces to get them to shape the way that they think, the way that they are acculturated to understand these processes, knowing full well that if we don't do that, that they are going to fail in that kind of environment for about 10 years or maybe 6 or 7 years, whatever the learning curve is, right? Now, if we do it tomorrow, we'll be much better at it than if we do it 20 years from now. Twenty years from now is a full cycle. Then people are gone. That's a tough call. So if you're looking at what training and education can we incorporate here, half-ass ain't going to do it.

INTERVIEWER: No. That's why I think pulling some of these lessons -- and I am going to continue to say "lessons," because I really want to stay away from the idea of “models from Anbar”, to see if there is global applicability. I am not really necessarily convinced that there is, but I am going to let the analysis tell me what that answer is.

So far, I have gotten some suggestions, which are this one is interesting, and I will tell you it's a real hot topic. It is “the Marines need to get back to the way they used to be, which is kinetic, and then let the softer forces, other guys, do the armed humanitarianism, state development, state building, nation building”, including DOS, which whenever the DOS decides to get a huge budget and put people in the field, that will be interesting.

But the Marine Corps does a wide variety of things. So if you look at just kinetics, which is not the full scope of what the Marine Corps can do, then you are excluding stuff that the MEUs do, which I think is the Marine Corps’ bread and butter.

So if we're looking at how to assist the MEUs in their training [*you have a challenge*]. I mean, you have a MEU that might be on their way to one mission, and then halfway through, they're redirected to go do something else. So where does your culture training assist in that?

03201204: What's your depth, though? I don't think it's right to say go back to being kinetic, because if you look at the history of the Marine Corps, that's not the --

INTERVIEWER: Exactly, but, think about some of the Marines who would say that, their type of culture or understanding of what the Marine Corps means to them.

03201204: There's a valid point there. There is a very valid point. Because, ultimately, you only send people in uniform in for a reason, because you need to resort to violence at some point. Think about it this way instead, though. Think about the duration of Marine missions. I would have to look back at the history of the Marine Corps in terms of their operational history to determine the length of the average mission for a Marine unit, to include MEU. So a NEO, an extended land combat operation like Vietnam, et cetera, et cetera, the idea of the Marine, the concept of the Marine Corps dating back to the 1947 National Security Act, if you read Marine Corps literature and doctrine, the idea is short duration. So MEUs are set up to work for 15 -- I think it's 15 or maybe 30 days unsupported. A MEB is a certain -- it's past that, and a MEF forward is a piece past that. So, you know, okay. Do you need to be able to have this depth of understanding of tribes and tribal behavior and social interaction to do that? No. There's something you need, right? So where is the middle ground there?

INTERVIEWER: Well, that's why we look at culture in general, but then the idea of cultural concepts as a generalized thing may or may not be effective. There are some folks that present the idea of maybe segmenting the Marines so you have this more kinetic, hardcore, heavy-hitting force, and then maybe there is a segmented part of the Marines that just does the state building.

03201204: Never happen.

INTERVIEWER: Because of the size of the Marines and the budgetary aspects that that will never happen?

03201204: It's a culture of the Marine Corps that will never happen. The commandant will never allow the Marine Corps to be segmented like that, ever.

INTERVIEWER: So there's another suggestion, that the COIN manual and Small Wars manual is perfect. We never have to change anything. We can just focus on them for all engagements, all things we do from here on out. That doctrine is perfectly fine right now.

03201204: If that was the case, we wouldn't be having a conference next month to rewrite the COIN manual.

INTERVIEWER: I've been asking interviewees: if you had the opportunity to sit in on that conference and participate, what things or in what ways would you change the COIN manual to having these 10 years worth of lessons learned? Is the COIN manual effective in its current format, or how would it be modified for future theaters? I've gotten some really interesting answers out of that. Others have suggested that because the Marine Corps tends to pull in individual SMEs or individual augments, that that might be one answer, so that they can focus more on being kinetic and being Marines and having their advisors, boosting the FAO program, boosting the CULAD program, or just trying to find locals that are going to be their [*cultural*] diamonds in the rough. Those were suggestions. Any thoughts?

03201204: That should be done also. That's not the solution, though.

INTERVIEWER: [*Edited for conciseness & clarity*] I have also asked about cultural training, language training, and training on the use of interpreters. Would you like to comment?

03201204: Absolutely. I say throw language out the window entirely other than for specialists.

INTERVIEWER: Really? Even as a [job removed], you would say that?

03201204: Other than for specialists. So, honestly, I just went out and spoke with the FAOs. My language ability was not the most important ability that I brought with me, and I told these guys. I said, "The strength you bring with you is your understanding of human nature," and history of the region, that's critical. I mean to really understand the background, the history of the people and the region, so a historical understanding, regional knowledge, updated regional knowledge, but a knowledge of human behavior and the personal ability to interact with other people and to understand the way that they think, that's crucial.

Now, is language a useful tool to understand the way people think? Absolutely. The cost that that comes with is tremendous for a Category 4 language. So, for a FAO? Okay, yeah. I'm not going to argue that FAOs don't need language. Okay, it's still useful. But I will argue that most FAOs aren't fluent, and so what you wind up with is the ability to be a really good interpreter manager, which is what I was. I think I was pretty good. But for interpreting -- yeah, absolutely. Stop training general purpose forces in language and particularly in Category 4 languages. Not only are you never going to achieve fluency, you're barely going to achieve zero-plus competency in people, and it's going to be you're giving them the ability to say "hello." I can teach guys to say "hello" when we're on ship getting ready to go. I mean, it's completely irrelevant to your mission.

Now, managing an interpreter, absolutely. So not only do you break down the barriers, you don't alienate the interpreters. You treat them like human beings and understand that they are not machines, that they don't just -- you can't just turn them on and off. They are not perfect. Each one of them brings capabilities and weaknesses with them. They all have personal biases. Some of them are really good. They can talk for 4 years and never run out of energy. Some of them are really, really good for half an hour, and then they run out of steam. Some of them speak fluent dialect, and some of them speak fluent, you know, formal whatever it is, right?

They are quirky. They are not military people, so they bring with them all sorts of personal issues, and you need to treat them like your -- you can't treat them like Marines, because you can't hold them to the same standard, but you need to treat them like they're your responsibility as human beings. And so, yeah, that's absolutely critical, and I think certainly officers and senior staff NCOs should be trained in interpreter management without a doubt, and that's something you can do with minimal cost.

If you eliminate the bullshit language training from things like Command and Staff College, what a waste of time. Get it out. Drop it completely. Sending members of your unit away for 8 weeks right in the middle of your deployment workup? What a disastrous idea that is. I mean, they come out with almost no capability, and now you've broken your team up right at the most critical part of your predeployment process. It's a terrible idea. It's absolutely terrible. DLI won the war over the big "L" little "c," big "C" little "l," because they are a well-funded, well-structured organization, and because Secretary Wolfowitz gave them primacy on cultural and language in the 2005 Defense Language Transformation Roadmap -- Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, not Defense Culture, right? And I think we've lost that fight. I hear people talking big "L" little "c" more and more often.

INTERVIEWER: Because we often have this belief that language is synonymous with cultural understanding and that is not the truth. So getting back to how this relates to Anbar, I've often heard, especially from the lower ranking [*officers & enlisted*] that there weren't enough interpreters. So you have companies going out, platoons going out, and trying to interact with locals but not having cultural understanding, cultural training, any idea about what's going on except what they're able to extrapolate themselves, and not even having an interpreter available to them that's helping them navigate the area.

03201204: Right. We were at 25 percent. I was the interpreter manager for 1st Marine Division. I wish I -- maybe I do have all of those documents. I might have e-mailed them back to myself, but I did a full study on -- or requirement -- I did a requirement study based on the number of patrols we went out on a daily basis across the province. We were at 20 percent of what we needed. The vast majority of our patrols left the gate in Anbar Province in 2004, in Ramadi and in other cities, without an interpreter.

INTERVIEWER: And without any type of language capability or fluency, how do you interact with the locals to even get some level of meaning from --

03201204: Hand and arm signals, or there's one Iraqi that kind of speaks broken English. That's it.

INTERVIEWER: [Edited for conciseness & clarity] What are your thoughts on body language training?

03201204: Incorporate that into Combat Hunter. Think about it, right? So I would talk to the -- I wouldn't -- don't take my word for it, but talk to the Combat Hunter guys, you know. Is that something that makes sense? If you're plotting, you're tracking, you know, is talking to human beings and understanding, you know, hidden signals something that fits in within the Combat Hunter mind-set? I don't know. It's something to think about. Let me take you back to first principles, though.

I'm going to throw an even weirder idea at you in terms of how do you get really good at this kind of stuff. The Marine Corps has a warfighting doctrine and a philosophy called "maneuver warfare." There's a great debate, a lot of it unarticulated, I think, but a lot of it goes on in our minds, the degree to which we actually follow maneuver warfare theory, the idea that you are issuing very loosely structured orders and giving people distributed control and you're encouraging initiative.

Now, in my experience in the Marine Corps, that was often true, sometimes it wasn't, but I saw a tremendous amount of initiative given to junior folks. I think that is a legacy in the Marine Corps. I'm actually doing my dissertation on this, and I think it is a cultural schema in the Marine Corps cultural mentality or whatever. Again, I can ask [*name* removed] for the right language. But it is a way of thinking in the Marine Corps. You are encouraged to adapt and to take initiative.

The guys that were more adaptive and more curious were more successful in the absence of cultural training. They just said, "Okay. This isn't working. Let's try this," and then they got it, right? "This isn't working. Let's try this," right, so not a Marine, but he still figured it out anyway. Okay. God bless him.

But it was guys like [name removed], like, "Man, let's just try this. Let's give it a shot. Let's see what happens. You know, I might fail, but I'm going to be bold." So it's that combination of factors that go into making the maneuver warfare philosophy, and General Krulak in his foreword to the updated version of MCPD-1 said, "This is the philosophy of the Marine Corps." You train people to be better at maneuver warfare thinking, and the rest of it will come.

Now, you then need to give them tools, right, and some of those tools might be interpreter management, body signal reading, whatever those things might be. I don't think one of those tools is organic language capability, other than with FAOs, signators [ph], et cetera. But teaching people to be adaptive and to understand, you know, if this isn't working, you go find another way, don't be frustrated -- you know, one of the things, you can't be defeated, easily defeated by any situation, right? And so if something is not working, it surfaces and gaps, right? I hit a surface. I meet a guy. Nothing is working with him. Now, I can go meet somebody else and look for a gap there, or I can try to find this guy's gaps.

INTERVIEWER: Is co-development inherent in that type of training?

03201204: Yeah. Well, it's called the "Marine Corps planning process." that's an inherent part of the Marine Corps planning process.

INTERVIEWER: But even at the lowest ranks is that taught, or is that just officer training?

03201204: No. I mean, I can remember back to my earliest training days right after maneuver warfare first came into play. Yeah, we're taught to kind of think through options. Now, again, the Marine Corps does not do that perfectly, and some would argue -- I think name removed] has argued that we don't do it well at all and based on his interviews with some Marine commanders. Marines are inherently self-critical. So, I mean, some of that, I think he took a little bit too literally, but he has a valid point in that we can get better at it. And I think if we get really, really -- we focus our efforts on being really good at being adaptive, that pays benefits across the board, and it's an easy sell, because an adaptive tactical combat leader is something we want. So an adaptive engagement guy who happens to be doing an engagement is also something we want, right?

Then you can start applying specialists on top of that. Then you can start applying training and education and all those other things, but if you take it back to first principles, I think that is the root of the success that the Marine Corps has or has had with the engagement strategy, even though the big payoff win was an Army engagement. I mean, who gives a shit? I mean, the bottom line is, like I said, these engagements were taking place, a lot of them successfully, both in the Army and the Marine Corps across the board in that province from day one. Sattar was happenstance, right? So I would look at the guys who are -- I would look at the guys who were particularly adaptive for their lessons in success, right?

INTERVIEWER: I've spoken with a lot of the folks from 1/6. Now, I think that was after you -- that's after your time, but 1/6, 2006, and they were inside the walls of Ramadi. And a lot of what they did was literally -- I mean, it was just by-the-book COIN manual and Small Wars manual, and it was effective, and it worked. But it's an example within the walls of Ramadi proper in the urban areas under Governor Mamoun that didn't follow the same pattern of what the Army was doing outside the walls in the rural areas. So I think you have two different things that occurred, both following different strategies but both equally effective.

I know in terms of this project I think I have to segment Ramadi into an urban example and then a rural example

03201204: Over time?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, because both had a lot of engagement strategies. 1/6 did have an engagement strategy that was effective, and they went in with a plan prior to being deployed, but they also had the advantage of being deployed together, at least the officers had been deployed before. So I think that's a really good example of the Marines doing

what Marines do well. So that's why now I think I might have to look at that as a case sample because 1/1 and 1/6 were acting differently in and around Ramadi [*edited for clarity*].

03201204: Go back to this piece in the COIN manual and read what it says about the mosaic nature of the counterinsurgency environment. To me, that is the most effective concept to come out of the COIN manual and the most useful in terms of both applying distributed operations and mission command concepts and maneuver war concepts to counterinsurgency, but also in understanding the flow -- ebb and flow of the campaign, right? So the idea here is that it's a mosaic like a tile, like different colored tiles or a quilt or something like that, and each tile is distinct from the other one in terms of shape, color, consistency, et cetera.

So you get a polygon or a tile here that took place in this 6 months that's very different from this one. It's very different from this one. So it's not -- yet you can chunk it into urban and rural. You can chunk it into central Ramadi and southern Ramadi, but really, each one of those tiles is distinct and unique and dramatically so in a lot of ways. So it's not like a conventional fight where they are distinct and unique because the terrain is a little bit different, but we still did the same shit. You know, you moved contact, you made contact. You envelope, you know, et cetera, et cetera. This is unique and distinct in a whole new range, right?

INTERVIEWER: Well, if it's unique and distinctive, do you think there is global applicability?

03201204: Yeah, there always is, but it has to be more general.

INTERVIEWER: Colonel MacFarland states in his article “Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point” that there is a Ramadi model and says that this is how you would do effective COIN. Now, I can look at it and say they're pretty general principles, but at the same time, it's not what was applied by 1/6, and they were highly effective too.

03201204: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: So I think there's pieces missing about the amount of engagements that occurred over time.

03201204: That's right. It actually kind of claims that no engagements took place prior to the engagements that he did. Pretty disingenuous. [*Removed at request of interviewee*] So back on the record here. Whether anybody claims these things to be generalizable or not, one person's viewpoint, like my viewpoint, is no more generalizable than a single anecdote for any study, right? So you have to go back to first principles. The more general the concept, probably the more applicable it's going to be, and because COIN is so complex and mosaic, you have to be even more general than you would be for any other kind of operation, right? So it's much harder to get into specificity. Now, you can create a huge tool kit of different things you can do, and that's useful to a certain extent, but I can't claim that I've thought this

through all the way on what we do next. I mean, I'm kind of leaning in the direction that general purpose forces need to stay the hell out of this kind of environment, but --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, but our policy-makers may have other ideas.

03201204: Well, they may -- they may not even have other ideas and walk backwards into it like we did in both Iraq and Afghanistan without thinking about it, right? So to say we're not going to do large-scale counterinsurgency anymore is -- you know, good luck.

[*Section removed- not relevant, discusses a lunch appointment*]

The really important thing to understand from a research perspective is not to lead to cause and effect, and I know you know this, but I want to drive home that point. It's that there are so many variables that we see and don't -- that we see and understand, that we see and don't understand as individual variables. The interplay between those variables, even between two of those variables, so trying to find some kind of correlation here, is also an extremely fraught process. To do something like a multivariate regression analysis with distinct quantitative variables, you can't even quantify half of this stuff. You can't even quantify most of it. So the cause and effect for the Awakening is going to be an open question for eternity. It will -- I think it can get refined considerably over time. What that means for the tool kit that you want to create for the lessons learned for the timeline is that -- and it's just like all these different patterns and these different tiles are different. That means your understanding is so -- such a surface level that you're also forced into broad generalizations in your research findings, and if you go deeper than that, you got to be really, really careful.

INTERVIEWER: What I don't want to have happen is that -- I don't want the takeaway for this project to be that somebody looks at it and says, "Oh, so I can take this and put it over here in Libya" and say "I'm going to have the same effect."

03201204: The strength of what you're finding is already coming out in what you just told me, that 1/6 did something completely different than 1-1AD and was equally successful, but not just 1/6. But also, there are tremendous lessons to be learned from 2/7 in Hit in 2004. Just because it didn't succeed doesn't mean it wasn't a good idea.

[*Section removed for relevance- discusses other people who have done research*]

(*Regarding Hit in 2004*) I disagreed with it at the time. In retrospect, I'm like, you know, what the hell, you know, good for you for trying. And I think that's really important to understand is that the failures have positive lessons in them too, and the timing just wasn't -- maybe the timing wasn't right. Maybe it was a shitty idea, you know. Maybe you need to really go in depth to look at that. I think you can do real well here by providing a -- by painting a mosaic, right, and to say these things worked here. These different things worked these different times in these different places. These things

failed, but they had interest. As a matter of fact, here is something that they try here and failed, and then it succeeded here. And then your overarching theme is everybody was trying similar shit across the theater at various different times and to varying degrees of effectiveness and effort, and all these other variables somehow in ways we don't know came together to make the Awakening happen, right?

But if you can kill it in narrative about this magical genius in 1-1AD, that the command just suddenly came in and realized we should engage with tribal leaders and that nobody had done it before and that they were fighting against all odds to just be allowed to talk to somebody, and that this great success occurred because of their engagement, because of something they did, it's just not even close to accurate, and it's insulting to not only all the Marines that gave their lives in trying to make this thing work, but also the soldiers that came before them too, you know, because this was a joint operation, again, from day one, so --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And we do -- I have a -- my colleague is looking at YouTube, Arabic YouTube, and also articles off of all the major media sources and looking at the number of times or the instances where the Iraqis are coming forward and saying we spoke with folks at this time period. So we have some, you know, information that supports that engagements were occurring with the sheikhs prior to 2006.

[*Final section removed for relevance- discusses having to run for a meeting*]

-end of interview-

Interview 4: 03201207

Interview 03201207, 09 March 2012

INTERVIEWER: OK. I have your informed consent, but I just want to make sure that you don't have any questions. If you do I can answer them now.

03201207: I have no questions, and I have fully released this, and you can feel free to quote me on anything that I say.

(*Break in tape- interviewee had to call back on different phone*)

03201207: Literally the two biggest guys in my battalion are my PSD, you know, so you never trust them. It's a business deal. It's a straight up business deal with them. You do this, I do that, no money involved, but, you know, hey, you're going to do this for me, I'm going to do this for you, OK. And so everything that they did, we -- it was, "Hey, you said you were going to give me 200 (*men for the police*)." "OK, well I'll bring 300 next time." "OK, well let me see the names," and we forced (inaudible) of OK...

And they would hand me handwritten sheets that, you know, had a thousand names on them, and then, you know, none of them would show up, but hey, I got three more policemen than I had last time. You know, it's not... It's not pass/fail, it was incremental. We just kept chipping away at them, and they kept, they kept producing what we wanted them to produce (inaudible). Up until September, when they didn't put any policemen -- I think it was September... Maybe it was August. They didn't put any policemen in the police force, and they said, you know, like 20 [people?] showed up and said, "Hey, what gives?" And they said, "Hey, we're out of guys." And so then once they got their initial bunch of, you know, the initial like 4-500 came back, then I think in October -- because the Awakening was taking off by then -- I think we got close to 1,000 that month. Then sooner or later we ran out of, we actually ran out of slots, and that's when the whole neighborhood watch thing started up. But that was after I left.

But yeah, there was no... You know, they were playing us and we were playing them, and if you, if you didn't think that those guys were trying to play you from every angle, again, you're a little naïve in the whole drill. But you know, that's good. If you know that going in -- I mean, so it's kind of like, you know, a used car salesman. You know, do you trust that guy? No, but you get the best deal you can.

INTERVIEWER: OK. I want to jump ahead a little bit to some of the, the other questions, especially some of the things that are in your articles. There's discussion -- let's see -- when you talk about the Anbar Awakening and the meeting for the Anbar Emergency Council –

03201207: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: -- yours is actually the first article where I've seen that referenced. Instead, it's typically referenced as, "There was a meeting over at Sittar's house and there was a bunch of sheikhs," so you're the first one that's actually laid this out, and stated that they brought out the constitution and made this a legal action. Could you describe that a little bit?

03201207: Yeah, there's actually three different meetings you're talking about. OK, the one... I guess the thing is there's a whole lot of people who fancy themselves as experts, but the Awakening documents got handed to me. OK? And despite how, you know, Nagle and the little Australian guy that worked for [trades?] and all these other knuckleheads want to claim winning the war, you know, they handed the paperwork to me. So in the (inaudible) of the paper -- basically we're driving around, we said, "Hey, let's -- I just came off R&R." Said, "Hey, let's go see Sittar." We pull in there, and there's all these sheiks there. And they're like, "Ah, Colonel [03201207], we've been meaning to call you. We now side with the Americans, and we volunteer to fight AQ." And I said, "Great."

And they said -- and they kind of went off. They talked about rural law, and they talked about, you know, legitimate use of force and, you know, everything,... The Secretary of State could not have written a better Awakening document, up until it came down to the last point of Mamoun, who was the Governor. Then they're like, "And Mamoun's got to go." And I was like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!" I said, "We cannot get rid of a sitting governor who's been duly elected by the people." And they said, "Oh yes, we can." And the first two dudes I've seen in Iraq in a suit come busting out, and they were lawyers, and they were in, they were in Western suits. As they pulled out the Iraqi Constitution, they were showing the paragraph in there where somehow in the Iraqi Constitution when the people something, something, something, and the people can [raid?] together and form an emergency council, something, something, something, something. And I was like, "Ooh!" And I kind of didn't [want?] myself in (inaudible) territory, so I said, "Well, I need to go talk to MacFarland about this, because, you know, we're not getting of no..." I told him, I said, "Hey, we're not getting rid of no governor." So, you know, thanked him, (inaudible) with him, and they were much heavier than we ever were.

And Sittar's like, "Hey, we want to have this meeting in two days, and can you get CNN here?" And I said, "Well hey, you know, Sittar, let me look at this thing and see what we got, and we'll get back to you." So I left, didn't make him any promises, went back, told MacFarland, you know, "Good news, bad news." And then, and then we kind of stretched it out a little bit because, you know, we weren't just going to throw in with them. And then the big decision, you know, when you read the thing on Wikipedia, Sittar actually asked for me, for me and MacFarland to be at the Awakening, the actual Awakening meeting, which happened I think it was like on the 14th of September, where all the sheiks got together, and Sittar... And, you know, me and MacFarland both [the same guy?] were like, "No. This needs to be [this?] Arab answer. We can't..." Because if they get a picture of one of us in uniform, (inaudible) can just turn that on us and say that we were actually just stooges. They'd say, "These guys are the stooges of the Americans," which, I might add, there was a documentary that was on HDNet, that Comcast cable documentary network, which I can no longer find, but I saw this documentary that basically alleged that Sittar was a -- that there really wasn't a Sittar and it was all like some

CIA plot, with, of course, a five minute intro to the thing from Dan Rather, but I digress.

So we had this meeting. They handed the paperwork to me. There was probably 40 sheiks in there. I didn't even know it was going on. We just kind of stumbled on it. And they were going to give it to me later. I went back, I talked to MacFarland, and then we set up a date. I think it was the 9th of January, or 9th of September, 2006 where Sittar -- I got MacFarland there, and that's where that picture where there's -- it's in [Darko?], where we got our hands up with Sittar and Albu Risha. I don't know what they -- He was the guy in the suit, and then Jabar, Sittar's younger brother, and -- actually, I'm looking at a picture now -- the [tribe?] (inaudible), and then some other guy who was the President of the... He was the President of the Police Chief.

And so we had that meeting, and then they said, "OK, we're good, you know..." MacFarland basically said, "Hey, you guys fight with us, you know, get your boys in the police, and then together we'll figure this thing out." And then there was also -- you know, the government had also completely collapsed at that time, and the poor Marines out there at the Government Center, they weren't getting the -- you know, no one's going to work, they were getting shot at every day, but, you know, nothing was happening down there governance-wise. So we kind of talked them into like, "Hey, you guys got to help prop up the government, tell your ministers to get to work," because nobody was, nobody was coming to work for the government. So that was on the 7th, and then on the 14th we had the Arab only meeting with all the sheiks.

Well, like I said, I mean, they were upfront. "Hey, here's the CD. Here's everything that happened." But we had this meeting, and then -- or they had their meeting, but we had, you know, my battalion locked down, in and out of, in and out of there, and there were two Apaches flying over top of that damn thing. So although, you know, I mean, we supported it, but we wanted it to be Arab only. And after that, you know, things just kind of took off.

INTERVIEWER: So in your article you say that Sheikh Sittar then contacted the government, the GOI, President Maliki, or Prime Minister. Did the President or Prime Minister, did they support the Awakening in that regards? Because later on they say that they didn't and they didn't want to arm the tribes, and it was a bad idea, but did they at the time go along with it?

03201207: They did. They, they presented... They presented a letter -- and this all kind of came... Well, they sent a letter basically saying that Sittar -- Maliki sent the letter saying that Sittar was in charge of security and economic development in Anbar, and -- which is funny, because Mamoun, the Governor, is like, "Hey, I'm still governor, right?" [It's sort of like?], "Yeah, you're still governor," and he's like, "OK." So Maliki gave all the -- he sent a letter down. They were on board with that stuff. They [sent it later?] when they started seeing how... You know, I think like everyone else they didn't think it would work, and then all the sudden it spread across the country, and, you know, they're like, "Oh shit, you know, now we got all these... You know, we got all these armed Sunnis," and that, and that's where things kind

of went wrong in my mind was when we stopped being, you know, Awakening dudes and then became Sons of Iraq, because then you started... Because up until they became Sons of Iraq, which was 3rd ID's watch, them boys were doing it all for free. And people say, "Oh, you know, we just paid off the tribes and bought them off." No, no, we didn't buy them off until later. Those boys were in it from the start. Sometimes we just don't give, you know... And I'll tell you what, I mean, you've been to Iraq.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

03201207: Were you scared to ride around in a Humvee?

INTERVIEWER: Oh no, not at all.

03201207: You weren't?!

INTERVIEWER: No (*I was there in 2008-2009*)

03201207: Yeah, well, I mean... Yeah, and... Well, I mean, we were taking probably five IEDs a day in what little my battalion had, just in my battalion, at least, and that was a good day. So, you know, I mean, everyone wants to say, "Hey, the Iraqi Army did this, and the Iraqi Police that." Hey, those guys were out there riding around in pickup trucks. God bless 'em. Knock yourself out. So, you know, there was a couple of meetings, and then after that there was a meeting where... Then the MEF got involved, and [*name removed*], who has -- excuse me -- I believe the term's "Revisionist History".

So [names removed] had this meeting, which they never mentioned, but we were off -- you know, I was there, MacFarland was there, some of the brigade staff dudes were there, and I brought in all the sheikh dudes and (inaudible), and I brought them over to Camp Ramadi, and [names removed] brought in Governor Mamoun, who the tribe hated Mamoun. The tribes were convinced that Mamoun was AQ, OK, so when you talk, you know, dilemma, the dilemma was the Marines were behind him because he was the, you know, duly elected Governor of Anbar. The sheikhs hated him. They thought he was AQ, and they thought in the big shoot-up of 2006, [anyway?] 2006 where that guy, you know, he tried to have an Awakening kind of thing. You know, he tried to throw off AQ without the help of the Americans. They all felt Mamoun sold them out on that deal, so they all hated Mamoun. Even the guy, even when it -- I can't remember what tribe he's in, but this sheikh came up to me and said, "Kill him. We do not want him. He is not part of our tribe anymore."

And Mamoun, you know... If you just took a picture of the guy, because he's like wearing a cheap suit and stuff most of the time, he looks like your typical sleazebag small town politician. I mean, he just fit the bill of... But the sheikhs hated him. So they had this big powwow. The Marines were incredibly reluctant to let General Zilmer talk to, talk to him. They thought it was some big trap, because the Marines were convinced that the answer lied in these sheiks that were in Jordan. And the bottom line is, you know, the people in Ramadi said, "Hey, if you went to Jordan you've lost your vote." And so they really -- that's how, you know, some second order sheikh ends up being in charge of this whole thing.

[*Section removed for lack of relevance*]

But [*name removed*] got up there and he said that, you know, there is Jordan, and there... Now, they were convinced that the guys in Jordan were the answer, because they really were the big, you know, kind of fat cat sheikhs that people were tracking on. And he said, "You know, and the sheikhs would look me in the eye, they'd tell me how their tribe members would plead with them to go to Jordan and save their life, and to get out... That's why they were in Jordan. They didn't want to leave, but their tribe members just cried and begged for them to leave." (laughter) Well, you know what? What else are they going to tell you? They're a bunch of cowards and they all [asked?], they had the money to? You know...

But I digress again. So the Marines were tied with Mamoun, so we had this meeting, and it was kind of toward the end of September, I think, with Mamoun... And, you know, the other thing about Arabs is, you know, Arabs know where to sit. I'm sure you figured that one out, right? You get 20 Arab sheikhs in a room around a conference table, everyone knows where they're supposed to sit at that table. You get 20 Americans, they'll be milling around forever and everyone's going to try and sit in the back row, you know what I mean?

So they sit in there, and they come in there, and so now they're all talking, and this (inaudible) goes back and forth, and the tribe members are calling Mamoun names, and it's kind of typical Arab meeting, right? So the sheikhs all talk. Then Mamoun talks. Then Sittar goes to talk, right, so Mamoun has deferred to Sittar to get the last word in, and Sittar starts speaking, and freaking [*name removed*] cuts him off! He cuts him off, and he starts speaking -- first he starts speaking in Arabic, and this guy who was sitting next to me, one of the sheikhs was like, "Hey, what's he saying?" (laughter) And I'm like, "I didn't know you spoke English, number one, and number two, I have no idea. He's speaking Arabic." And the guy just looks at me and goes, "Damn it." So then [*name removed*] switches to English and he says, "You know, OK, I understand you guys don't like Sittar, or like Mamoun, but give me three things that Mamoun can do to prove to you that he's worthy." And we went back that night, and Sittar said, "Get on TV and renounce AQ. Get on national media and renounce Al Qaeda. That's all you got to do." And he never did it. He never did it. And so there was always...

And then, you know, that played out over time. You got to talk to one of the [very first?] guys about that, but that continued, you know -- that kind of drama played out, and then ultimately -- I think that third (inaudible) -- well actually, they had another set of elections. They got Mamoun out, and they got some tribal... He wasn't a sheikh, but I think he was a cut out for the sheikhs that ended up being the governor, who was actually a very competent, you know, kind of businessman that actually did a lot of good stuff out there, from what I understand. But, you know, there was a huge reluctance on the part of the MEF to support the Awakening really up until General Allen got in there, and then, you know, in my conversation with Colonel MacFarland he said, you know, once General Allen came in things just took in, and I think he came in like in November or December.

INTERVIEWER: There are Marines and ODA who maintain the Awakening happened earlier, that the engagements over time set up events for when you got there. That the Awakening in 06 was set up over a long period of time. Can you comment to that?

03201207: If the, if the plan was to take the economy of force battalion and to get them to find an obscure sheikh to lead a popular uprising against Al Qaeda and not tell anybody in that battalion, then the plan worked. OK? So again, with the revisionist history, there's a lot of people taking credit for what they did, so if the plan was to make things so desperately hopeless -- and I point that out by the MEF's internal assessment that was leaked to Tom Ricks, who should be tried for treason -- but if you look at the MEF internal assessment that the war is lost in Anbar, which was leaked two days after we had this meeting where, or about two weeks after the sheiks first came to me and said, "We're on the team," then... And then the MEF defended it, defended that report for the next four months in the media, then the plan worked. So, you know, let's say history is about fathers, right? So a lot of dads here. But, you know, that... I mean, yeah, I'm a little close to the fire on this one, too, but [the setup?] (inaudible) -- yeah, there's people that were trying to work with it. No one just ever figured out how to get him to work with it. And (inaudible).

INTERVIEWER: Once you guys actually made these agreements and the tribal sheiks started promising security, how much alignment was there, or operational planning…

03201207: We did no operations with any tribal force. We did it with the police. And what we did was with the –

INTERVIEWER: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) the militias or anything, like the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

03201207: Militias... No, no, that all kind of came later. But what we did was we had guys in the legitimate police force. I took my best Company Commander, who was a [TECOM?] Company Commander, [*name removed*], who was an Army Officer -- I sent him out... We built the police station in Tway, which that's in the article, too, where we got this incredible pushback of building this police station, which we finally got through and got it built, that my battalion built

itself, which was basically a house with a bunch of T barriers around it, and we called, and we put -- and the Iraqis came up with what is perhaps the biggest Iraqi flag ever made, stuck that thing on the roof, and that was, you know, the tribal police station. And the tribal area police station there in Tway, I put a Company Commander, an MP Lieutenant that I had working for me, and six MPs, half of them females, and we put them out there, and we built us a police station. Were they the cops you'd want in your neighborhood? Nope, but, you know, it was what it was. And we only did operations with legitimate Iraqi security forces.

INTERVIEWER: So then were they completely involved in the operational planning process? Did you partner with them, or did you guide them in what was happening after they were trained?

03201207: My goal was to get them out front, and I basically told them -- I had a PiTT team out there so we could keep going on, and they had radio coms where -- you know, there weren't any cell phones so, you know, what little radios they had and everything else in case they got in a jam. But I had my police training team out there, and I told those boys, "Go out there and go catch some terrorists," and they did. Part of it, they probably knew, you know... They all knew who they were, so it was fairly easy for them, but they were... We did joint operations with them, and then when we did a big operation... I don't know if you got my article, those pictures there where I'm sitting there with the Iraqi Battalion Commander, and there's dudes walking in a [board?]?

That was Operation [Dealer?], and we did a full up (inaudible) rehearsal with the Iraqi Army Battalion, and we treated them... Actually, I probably treated them more like one of my companies, but I treated Colonel [*name removed*] like a peer, and I treated his unit like a company, because they only had like 300 guys anyway. They had about 200 guys, actually. But I would go out there, I would treat their leaders like a peer. If they had -- they were all Lieutenant Colonels, so I would -- you know, I'd treat them like peers, I wouldn't treat them like subordinates, and we'd use their units -- I treated their units like, you know, like a subordinate unit in that, you know, I led the rehearsal with Colonel [*name removed*] at my side, but we went through, you know, shoulder to shoulder with those dudes. And there's actually a picture in there with (inaudible) sort of the same thing going on in Iraqi [rate?]. We bring them in, we brief them up, and they had better intel than we did.

INTERVIEWER: How many of them were from the previous army? Did any of the former Iraqi Army join?

03201207: Yeah, most of them had like some previous military experience, but they had conscription, so pretty much every man unless he had something wrong with him was in the Army at one point or another. You know, so... But, you know, some of them were professional soldiers. You know, you can kind of tell, you know, when you look at them, (inaudible) military guy or not, and some of them were, you know, whatever, did their two years and, you know, were kind of (inaudible) about the whole thing.

INTERVIEWER: Were they locals? Because I've noticed in the literature there's a lot of discussion also about where we would send the Army and the Police out for training, and then we'd bring them back, and that was causing problems, and we'd assign them to different areas of operation not local and that became a problem. And it seems like from what I'm reading and from your article that keeping them local is what really worked, because they were protecting their own area and it was an investment. So did you have any outside forces at all come in?

03201207: Well, we had the 117 Iraqi Army, which was basically Shia... They were Shia soldiers with the Sunni officers that was there, and they were somewhat effective, but the Police was a real tipping point. The police guys were all local. I mean, they were all local boys. And, you know, the Police was the key, when you get right down to it. And, you know, and it goes back to the nature of the beast and everything else. Not to pry, but where did you grow up? Big city or small town?

INTERVIEWER: I grew up in an outskirt of Cleveland, so it was kind of a smaller community.

03201207: OK, so when a car that (inaudible) drove down your street, did you know that or not?

INTERVIEWER: Oh, absolutely.

03201207: Yeah. So by getting the police in there, by getting the locals in there, they know who belongs and who doesn't, and that -- I mean, that really, that's what tipped the tide. They could tell... You know, and it took me, you know, it took me six months to figure out that the term "foreigner" meant the guy from the next town over, you know. They'd be like, "Oh, foreign fighter, foreign fighter..." Well, you know, some guy from three blocks away. But yeah, the whole thing is the police. It really comes down to getting the police, and then getting... And trust me, I was nowhere near confident to be, you know, minting out police forces, but there was no one else to do it. And so, you know, one of the other points of this whole thing is we allowed the Special Forces guys to abandon the FID mission, the Foreign Internal Defense, and we put out well meaning, untrained, and not really equipped dudes in these MiTT teams and these PiTT teams. And all the Special Forces guys who got all these special training, they're supposed to be real smart guys, they're out kicking in doors. But, you know... But one of my favorite generals -- you can teach a monkey to do a four man stack, you know, in an afternoon. So, you know, why did we let those guys abandon their PiTT mission and go out and hunt people down? I have no idea, but we did. So...

INTERVIEWER: [*revised for clarity*] But, Special Forces, the ODA—have written articles that is unfavorable to other service branches. They say they used their cultural training and worked with tribes in Al Qaim and got things settled

down…

03201207: Yeah, I've read that -- I think it was Armed Forces Journal. I just read that thing a couple weeks ago. It just came out about two years ago. I was livid that, you know -- and no one's checking the comments on it. OK, so they had the Desert Protectors at Al Qaim, and part of the thing is Sittar kind of (inaudible) don't know, because, you know, it started in Al Qaim, but then they figured out that, well, the Desert Protectors were actually thieves and they were just stealing, they were just highway robbers, and so they ended up shutting it down in like August or September of '06. So, you know, there's a lot of guys that -- and if you read that article, there is nothing attributed. There's some big gaps in, you know, in his logic in... You know, that was kind of a B- paper, I thought. Actually, it was kind of a -- it was really kind of not true. I mean, even... Despite the fact that it was not true, it was actually a very poorly written paper as far as citing any cause and effect on anything that happened.

INTERVIEWER: But I think that the idea behind it -- that was one of the first papers that I read where credit and blame was so obvious throughout the entire paper. You are referring to revisionist history, but revisionist history, the idea of credit, blame, who's saying what and why. One town says that they started the Awakening whereas another town says, "No, we did it." But what I'm not seeing a lot of is any discussion on IPBs or what type of cultural preparation anybody had going over there. So what type of information or inspiration did you guys have before you even had boots on the ground that would've assisted you in the fight or trying to figure any of this tribal stuff out? Or was it all ad lib?

03201207: OK, so here's my theory: When you look at the places where there was really success on the Army side, right, where was it? It was Tal Afar, right, and then it went into Ramadi. OK. What units were there? The 3rd Armored Calvary Regimen really tipped the tide in Tal Afar, and the 1st Brigade 1st Armored Division, which was mainly made up of a bunch of tankers, like myself, in Ramadi. OK, oddly enough, all three of us are kind of 1st or 2nd generation Irish guys, right? (inaudible), Sean MacFarland, and me. OK, so one, we kind of understand that... And the other thing is all of us spent a lot of our time and career in Germany, right? So we have been exposed to other cultures.

My hypothesis on this whole thing is that you can never, you will never be a cultural expert until we never tried to be. OK? So, you know, I've got an Italian wife. She's been here for 22 years. There are things in this country that she does not understand, she will never understand, OK, and if you think you're going to give some guy a six week class and then turn him loose in Iraq, the best he's going to be is, you know, Steve Martin, wild and crazy guy, you know, when him and Dan Aykroyd were the guys on Saturday Night Live that were the foreign guys who were trying to pick up chicks. That's the best you're ever going to get. So don't try to be an expert in their culture.

You know, I went through the training -- hey, don't show the bottom of your feet, don't (inaudible), OK, got it. I was sitting down one day talking to the sheikhs, and I realized I was showing the bottom of my feet, and I kind of snapped up, and they all started laughing at me. And they're like, "Ah, you Americans! They told you that whole bottom of the

feet thing." They said, "You're not an Arab, so it's not an insult from you." You know, the best training that I had -- this guy named [*name removed*], he works for [ELDICEP?], and he teaches negotiation training, and that was pretty valuable. The rest of the stuff was terrible. I mean, and he got -- you know, I guess I read what went wrong, and I made it through most of 12 pillars that, you know... [Lawrence?] wasn't the -- you know, the thing is not exactly a page turner to me, but, you know, because it kind of repeats itself over and over, but the... I think what you need to go is go there and understand that you will never understand their culture, but you need to understand it's a different culture, and somewhat you've got to take things at face value. And if you can communicate with those guys on what you're trying to get, do, and actually get, get through to some communication level, then you'll, then you'll be successful. But to think that you're going to go to some class and walk in... I mean, the best you're going to be is like, you know, a cab driver or something where you don't really understand what the heck's going on.

And you need to learn their language, you need to learn their... No, you don't. I'm telling you, you don't. I mean, they handed the papers to me. You don't. (laughter) What you need to do is be respectful of them, you know, and, "Why are you guys doing that?", you know, and just... And if you have built the relationship with them by putting in the time, then you can ask them hard questions.

You know, one of the things in the Awakening was me and Sittar actually past the "I hope to work with you for a peaceful and prosperous Iraq," which they told everybody, you know, just keep saying that over and over, it'll come true. Well, it won't. So, you know, me and Sittar actually got to be kind of -- I mean, I like the guy. I mean, me and him actually kind of got along. Didn't really trust him but, you know, got along. And I said to Sittar, said... One of the things (inaudible) was like, "Sittar, why can't this be like Germany or Japan?" And I talk about that in that article. "Why can't this be like Germany and Japan?" You know, why can't it be peaceful and prosperous? And he ended up saying that word for word when he gave his Awakening talk.

So, you know, the cultural lead-up to it, I think, you know... You don't, you don't need an Eastern education and a bunch of guys with advanced degrees from Howard and Brown, or Harvard and Brown and Eastern schools, because, well, you know, the guys are kind of -- well, HR had a big brain, but the rest of us didn't. But you know, part of it goes to where people are assigned. You know, have you been assigned...? You know, I did three years in Italy, in NATO, so I went down to Naples. To me, that was [JV?] ball. You know what I mean? That was, that was living in another culture. I've lived in Germany. I've traveled in the Middle East. So if you look at, you know, internal in the Army, and the Marines the same way, you may be 20 years and never leave Camp Lejeune, right? You know, if you're in the Army you may do 20 years and never go anywhere but Fort Bragg or Fort Benning, and if you do an overseas tour you go to Hawaii, you know? So part of it is, are we sending our best and brightest into these NATO and joint assignments and just understanding the different culture more than like, "Hey, I'm an Infantry dude, I'm just going to sit here and do squad live fires until I become a General."

INTERVIEWER: So then it sounds like you're supportive of language training, and then basically what the FAO program

does or the CULAD program does, which is, you know, they --

03201207: No, no, no, absolutely not. I don't think... I mean, if you have a FAO that, the guy's going to live there for, you know, eight or ten years out of his career, that's a good thing. If you're going to take an Infantry Company Commander and Tank Company Commander and give them the six weeks of language training, absolutely not. Absolutely not. You'll... All you'll be is the guy that speaks bad English. You'll be like a cab driver.

INTERVIEWER: So what about training and the use of interpreters?

03201207: I'm with you on interpreter training. That's one of the things that [*name removed*] did with that [ELDICEP?] program was not only was it negotiation training, it was also how to deal with your interpreter, right? And like I said, I was very lucky. I had [*name removed*], you know, and I think I would've failed my [ELDICEP?] class, you know, my -- I would've failed at my MRE because I probably gave him a little too much latitude in, you know, making the point in interpreting and not just translating. But that came after time. You know, I just didn't do that from day one.

But yeah, I'll give you that one that, you know, you need to know how to control your interpreter, but unless you're like, you know, a native speaker or somehow a 3/3... And you know, I had a, I had a former Iraqi Arabic enlisted -- you know, he was a former enlisted dude, Arabic translator as one of my captains, [*name removed*], and I'd bring him out to these meetings, and he was kind of my checks and balances to make sure that there wasn't, you know, some sort of back deal going on, but he had a heck of a time keeping up. And so, you know, I think you need to have interpreter training. I think, you know, treat people with respect, kind of, you know...

To me -- and I think I wrote that in the paper -- I think the biggest thing, you got to act -- you know, it really comes down -- a lot of it is empathy, and, you know, just kind of ask yourself, "Well, what would I do if I was in that situation?" And you know, and the way, you know, the way you treat people... And, you know, you say, "Well, why aren't these guys supporting us?" Well, why would they? Why would you support the Americans?

The other thing I'd tell you (inaudible) is, you know, one of the things that we kind of figured out that we thought we could do early on when we got the Police [joining us?] is to me there were two, there were two camps, right? There was the AQ guys, and there were probably some guys that were 1920 that I was calling AQ, but there was the hardcore AQ guys, and then there was the Mujahidin. And I was telling my guys, I said, "You know, if I was a 20 year old Iraqi, I'd be in the Mujahidin, and so would you guys all." And, you know, one of the, actually one of the best counterinsurgents training films ever made, Red Dawn, right, so, you know, Patrick Swayze, he's Wolverine, you know! And... And so what we, what we really did in the end was made it cool for... We made it cool to side with the Americans, but we were never going to do that. It took them to decide that themselves. And I work in these sheiks, their community leaders -- you know, if you take the word -- if you get them all lined up and you say, "Sheik," if you take their community leaders, and

they say, “Hey, it’s cool to be on the side of the Americans,” then all of a sudden it was cool to be on the side of the Americans and it wasn’t cool to be AQ anymore.

INTERVIEWER: So getting back to the original question about global application, what dynamics, interactions, or actions that were used to instigate or support the Awakening do you feel are globally applicable? It seems like you’ve given me several, but are there some that you’d like to just summarize?

03201207: I would say there’s probably four -- a couple things you can take out of this thing is: one, we as the American Military, when we go into someplace, you know, we need to have a way to get the people to take control of their own lives, whether we’re liberating a country or, you know... I mean, there’s a couple examples that are not inconceivable that you see on the news every day, right? So you know, setting up democratic institutions, and, you know, Sittar’s a big democracy guy. He didn’t quite understand it completely, but he kind of got the gist of democracy and thought it was pretty cool. So setting up democratic institutions that have free elections, and then getting the locals from that community to be in charge of their own security, and a little self-determination there. And actually you’re starting to see some success in that in Afghanistan with this -- what is it -- is it the AUP or the local village? Something or other.

But it really comes down to getting a police force, not a, not their army developed, not their national police force, but from their local police force, you know, democracy the ground up, ground up, you know, enterprise. So, you know, local elections and local police providing security in their local area, and we actually got that exactly backwards by trying to build a national army and then a national police force, and really not putting any effort behind the local police force.

And the second thing is we cannot, you know... If there is a military force of the locals around, then there’s absolutely no reason to do an independent operation. Right? So every operation that we should’ve been doing should’ve been a joint operation, and it’s a matter of -- because then it’s not, you know... There’s a place called [Galai apartments?] that was on Route Kilo on the west side of Tam’eem. I’ve probably been through that place 15 times, couldn’t get anyone to talk to me, couldn’t find Sittar, couldn’t find nothing. We got shot at in the place every day for seven months. I took the Iraqi Army in there. I took the Iraqi Army Battalion Commander in there. All the sudden people are pulling out tea, they were giving up people for... I mean, you know, we ran out of ink writing down the names of guys that they were giving up.

And I got mad, and I actually left Dragon in the room. I got mad, and I said, I said... And some guy looked at me, (inaudible) the guy who was like bringing out the tea was (inaudible). I said, “I talked to you three days ago and you told me you didn’t know nothing.” I said, “This is (inaudible).” And he looked at me and he spit on the ground and he said, “I just don’t like Americans.”

And then, I mean, you know, there was a Grinch moment right there for me. My heart reduced two sizes. And I said, you know, we are going about this all wrong. We need to get the Iraqis out there out front, and we need to just help them out, get moving... I mean, we got guns, we got backbones, we got the (inaudible) supporting everything else, but we need to get out of the killing people business and get into the getting them to provide security for their own area. So you know... And, you know, and we tend to look down our nose -- you know, and we look down at these people, but, you know, you know, "Oh, their leaders are corrupt." Really? Really? Kingfish Huey Long. You know, Governor Blagojevich. Actually, what, the last four Governors of Illinois are in federal prison right now. Really?

INTERVIEWER: Actually, (laughter) yeah, I went to school in Chicago when Barack Obama was the City Planner and Blagojevich was running things with the Daleys, yeah, so I absolutely understand what you're saying. (laughter)

03201207: Well hey, hey, I grew up an Irish Democrat, man. You know, my brother got a job at the Post Office in 1972 making $23 an hour. Tell me how that works. (laughter) 'Cause we brought out the vote. So, you know, I mean, I mean things like -- you know, there's tribal politics, (inaudible) small town politics. That's all it is. (inaudible), you know, corrupt politics, and [it's inside?] the city, but you know, you know... But what's good enough in Chicago is what's good enough. You know, what's good enough in Omaha is good enough. What's good enough in, you know, King Parish, Louisiana is good enough, so -- for the people there. And they know, you know, when things get too bad, then the people kind of rise up and the guy goes to jail, you know what I mean? (laughter)

So, so, you know, I think, you know, one, we need to cut these guys a little bit of slack on some of this stuff, but it really comes down to getting a, getting the people there, you know... And trust me, I'm no neocon but, you know, democracy works when people buy into it. And if you can get them to buy into what you're selling, which is democracy and self determination, and you can have the rule of law enforced by the police... You know, it is one thing, it is -- I mean, I've been thinking this over for the past couple months, because I'm still kind of involved in this stuff. So we're trying to enforce rule of law, but we're operating off of the rules of our conflict. That doesn't make any sense. Right?

So, I mean -- but I'm a soldier. I mean, I should be, I should be... You know, I don't need to be acting like a cop, but when I get in these counterinsurgency things, you really need to start thinking more like a policeman than a soldier. And nobody wants to hear that, but, I mean, that's kind of the cold hard truth of it.

INTERVIEWER: From what I understand you guys aren't taught or trained in any way to be police trainers, and that's one of the problems the MiTT has. Did you receive any kind of training on how to actually set up and train police forces?

03201207: No. No, and I think that's part of what happened here, too, was instead of doing a police force, we kind of set up -- we set up like [JV?] Infantry teams, you know what I mean? We set up really bad Infantry squads and called them policemen. But the problem was, who's doing it? And that was the rub was, you know, the Army will say, "Well, we'll do it." So, you know, it really came down to when the MiTT (inaudible), that's how I ended up -- and in (inaudible) out there, the police station in Tway was -- there was just no one else to do it. And was it right? And did the guys have the proper amount of training and (inaudible)? No. And did it cause, did it cause problems later on down the line? I am certain it did. But at the time it seemed to make sense, and it might've been good at the time. Because there was absolutely no one else to do it, and the contractor police advisor is not the advisor.

My understanding is that it is a State Department mission that the Army took over because the State Department wasn't there to do it, and you're exactly right, and the problem with those police trainers is there is a huge bell curve on those dudes, and some of them were really, really good, and some of them dudes, you couldn't get them out of their hooch if you had, unless it got hit by a mortar. And we ran into that all the time. And, you know, and -- I mean, they're contractors, so sometimes the guys are really good, sometimes the guys are really motivated, and sometimes they just weren't. And there wasn't any oversight, and then who do they report to, and how do they fit in the operational picture, and did you, did you train the Army guy on how to use this police guy? And the answer a lot of times is like no, so then it came down to personalities of people and, you know, people trying to figure stuff out on the ground, and hopefully the guy shows some initiative on both sides, and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't.

INTERVIEWER: Now, you had said, you had given me two points, and maybe wrapped three and four into it, but was there a point three and a point four? You said there was four points initially.

03201207: Well, I guess, I guess it's really three. I hadn't really thought out my comments fully. But I guess the third thing is we should really look at where we assign people [so?] they're not in (inaudible), and, you know... You know, and it's not -- you know, General Petraeus (inaudible) PhD from Brown, but I, you know, I don't necessarily agree with that. I think what really helps is if guys have assignments that are outside of their kind of comfort zone, and we start sending some decent people to places like NATO and to [UVAN?] and all these other places, and you understand... You know, I learned a lot, you know, just having to work with, you know, all the Southern Europeans there.

And to get people to understand, you know, you may never understand their culture but as long as you just show a little empathy and understand that it's not your culture, you know, it all kind of works out. And Colonel MacFarland, a brilliant man in his own right, you know, myself not so much, but we managed to figure this out, mainly, I think, because we were both looking at it not from... I mean, we're all cavalry soldiers, too, and you're fighting for information. People think that this is an infantry fight. It is not. It is a cavalry fight. We are fighting for information. And there's a whole 'nother part of how things, you know, how a Battalion Commander can be leading, you know, getting a bunch of sheikhs on board and tipping the scales while their headquarters is riding off the whole theater and leaking reports to the media, you know, that may be left for a better day.

But, you know, part of it is we kept looking at things in terms of intelligence, and we didn't look at, you know, the human aspect of it, and I think it got better over time. But you know, it was just -- I would set up these reports, and I think that me and Colonel MacFarland and in some level General Zilmer knew what was going on, but, you know, [*name removed*] and the guys in Intel Shop, they weren't looking at that because that was embedded intel and they had no idea what was going on.

INTERVIEWER: Finally how much do you think social conditions like the economy, religion, the temperature or climate of the people's beliefs: how much do you think that may have played into the initiation of the Awakening or the support for Sheikh Sittar so that he was able to lead the people in that direction?

03201207: I mean... (pause) At the time, you know, there was basically genocide of the Sunnis going on in Baghdad (inaudible), and then, you know, it was on (inaudible) death squads, you know... I guess there was (inaudible) but, you know, you talk to some of the dudes that were in Baghdad at that time, and basically there was ethnic cleansing going in Baghdad, right? So the Sunnis were -- I mean, things were bad for the Sunnis, and they kind of figured out... The other thing, too, goes back to this election business. So we tell the Sunnis there's going to be an election, right? OK, (inaudible) that election, right? On 99% of the vote. Who do you think stuffed the ballot box? (laughter) The Sunnis!

So again, you lived in Chicago, you know how this works. So... So when we know we're going to have an election they're like, "Man, I know how this election works." And then all the sudden Mamoun gets elected, they're like, "Hey, wait a minute! They actually counted the votes!" And so they realized that by not voting in the elections they kind of screwed themselves. So... I got off on elections here. But the conditions were absolutely...

Two things happened: one, the Sunnis were taking a beating up in Baghdad; two, they had realized, really probably the year prior, that they made a huge mistake by letting these AQ guys in. You know, the 1920 guys, you know, I think in their hearts they probably weren't that bad of guys, you know what I mean? They just didn't like Americans. But they led these AQ guys in there and the AQ guys, you know, (inaudible) and then these hardcore AQ got in there.

Actually, like Al Anbar used to be a 1920, you know, training camp and breeding ground, university, but the AQ guys would even force them out of there. So I think they realized the [TPAT?] is, you know, uprising that was short lived at the end of '05. They had realized they had made a huge mistake by throwing in with AQ. And they couldn't really figure out how to get out of it, so we gave them the out with the police. So the other thing was the government was absolutely non-existent. Government Center, absolutely non-existence.

Mamoun was just, you know, finding himself to work every day, get attacked by, you know, protected by the Marines, get attacked, you know... Government Center would get rocked about every three days with these enormous, you know, attacks by AQ [VAC?] dudes, the... You know, they were trying -- you know, the AQ guys try and dismantle the legitimate... And that's one thing we figured out kind of quick was the really big VBIEDS, they would hit the Government Center and they'd hit my police stations with. So if that's their operational strategic weapon, they're not using that on us. They're using that on the Iraqis. Right?

So there was no government, and I think it really was the last best hope for these guys. And the people were tired of the violence. They realized they'd made a mistake with AQ. They'd realized, you know, that this huge, you know, ethnic violence was going on in Baghdad, and I think they saw that fighting the Americans wasn't -- you know, despite, you know, our, you know, our elected leaders, some of our elected leaders, including one prominent one today, the President saying we had no business being there, they kind of saw that the Americans weren't leaving anytime soon, and they saw that, hey, fighting the Americans just isn't working out.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think the surge played into that? Because the surge came later, and there's a lot of discussion about whether or not the surge was the tipping point, but there's just as much discussion about how it came late, and in particular for the Marines, they only saw I think half a battalion. It was very, very small support coming in for them in terms of troop support because the surge hit Baghdad. So do you think that that had any part of this?

03201207: You know, I am speaking now as, you know, a military historian, so not, you know, not a participant, because we left right at the start of November. So in my mind, the surge -- the Awakening set the conditions for the surge, and you needed the tactics that came out of what happened in Ramadi, both the tactics of going back out into the villages and going back out into the combat outposts, but also the political movement, because there was even Shia that were part of the Awakening. You know, it was almost a political movement across the country of... A political movement across the country saying, "Hey, you know, enough's enough." And actually, they built a Shia -- I read that in the paper one day -- in some Shia village, they named it the Sittar [Abariciu Grade?] School. But the Awakening set the conditions for the surge, and I think you can draw a parallel between the surge in Afghanistan without an Awakening and the surge in Iraq with Awakening.

I mean, that... You know, obviously I'm at the center of that so, you know, you got to take what I say with a grain of salt, but... Now, the thought -- you know, some people say, "Well, the Awakening was going on... The Awakening was going on, and the surge, you know, President Bush was wrong and the surge, you know, wasn't needed." I think that's also absolutely untrue, because I think what would happen is sooner or later they would've been able to assassinate... We could've kept pressure across the whole country like we did, and sooner or later they would've just killed off the Awakening leaders.

INTERVIEWER: So the surge seems to be something that was more effective for the Awakening as it moved across the country, but not necessarily Anbar.

03201207: No, no, no, no. Well, the surge came after... Petraeus, General Petraeus (inaudible), what, December? So he actually, one of the first places he went was -- and he met with Sean MacFarland, Colonel MacFarland, and he came down to the Ready First and talked to my successor. So I'm not sure what the Marines got for forces. I know Colonel MacFarland told me he at least got the MEU, I think the (inaudible), and actually there's a book that I kind of read that, you know, read standing up at a Border's, Kill Company or something like that, or some Marine who came in, about how he won the war singlehandedly. Yeah, that thing, that's up there with North and South in my book, along with (inaudible) book of winning the war himself, who showed up in March of '07. You know, that's the kind of thing that kind of gets me is there's a lot of people that have laid claim to things that happened long before they came, and then there's people that are saying that about me, but I think, you know, all that [I built?] can be a little bit of the right time, but, you know, had we not cultivated a relationship with Sittar, it would've been another, you know, another hundred dead every year in Ramadi like had happened the past four years before that.

INTERVIEWER: So in terms of global applicability, if you don't have the right set of personalities do you think that we could still set the same type of conditions but in other environments?

03201207: Yeah, I definitely do. I think that, you know, you know... Well, I mean, part of it comes down to personality as a leader, but, I mean, but also getting people to understand that their job is not to go and kill all the enemies and hand the country over to the people and have a grateful nation thank them. It is to get in there and build the security forces in that country so they can take it themselves, right?

So we keep talking about this exit strategy which, you know, if you look where we're in, successful -- Japan, Germany, Italy -- we're still there. Korea, we're still there. Exit strategy is Vietnam and Somalia, so, you know, with Iraq, to be determined. So... But I think what you want to get is a peaceful and a prosperous nation that is somehow with the US orbit, and to get that, it is providing them democracy at some level and then providing them self-determination by developing their police force into something that kind of resembles a police force, not a (inaudible) of the regime, which most police forces, especially national police forces, are in every other country [inside of?] Western democracy.

INTERVIEWER: Instead of language training and the cultural training, do you think maybe instilling some type of training on how to create a police force might instead be more useful?

03201207: You know, and this is something that [*name removed*] -- he was trying to get this, and just could never [get in with a bite?] -- was... I am a Armored Battalion Commander. I was a business major at Nebraska. And what,

what was the expectations of me? Set up democracy -- especially (inaudible) -- set up democracy, restart the economy, and enforce rule of law. I mean, that's really what we ask the Army to do, right? OK. So take 50 Battalion Commanders, give them a piece of paper, and say, "Define those -- define those three terms," not put into action, define those three terms. You can't. You know, how does an economy work? Well, you know... You know, it's kind of like being (inaudible). You know, you tend to learn, you know, what you picked up on the street. You know, so you're right. I mean, at some level, you know, when you look at (inaudible), you know, what is the underpinnings of democracy? What are the underpinnings of economics? What are the underpinnings of rule of law? And really know that. You know, no one's ever kind of explained to them.

INTERVIEWER: But that's also the idea that this mission was a State Department mission. There's actually a book called Armed Humanitarianism that addresses this, about how these jobs that were typically Department of State and, you know, USAID, NGOs, et cetera, are now being put into the mission set of the Marines and the Army, and we're asking our Military to do jobs that, A) they're perhaps not trained to do, and B) may seem relatively impossible at times. So, if we engage in future wars where we are asking the same types of mission requirements in terms of setting up democracy, establishing the economy, building armies, et cetera, then we need to teach our military how best to do that.

03201207: I'll go with that one. I mean, there needs to be some sort of, you know, higher thought kind of things, you know, because each... You know, you can't take the economic model that works in Kansas City... I mean, (inaudible) OK. You know, was it Clinton, $100 million economic, you know, urban economic [stimulus?] that was supposed to revitalize every city in America? [Look how?] that worked out. So, you know, the economic model that works in Kansas City is not going to work in, you know, (inaudible), Kansas, so...

You know, but you're right: teaching these guys some higher level thought on this stuff I think is a good thing. I'm not sure where you put that in. You know, sadly it needs to be at the lower level, because we're actually having Captains doing it more than Colonels, you know, down at the Company Commander level. I think this, you know... And it might be a little kind of reach on this thing is, you know, everybody kind of wants to have a foreign office, like they have in Britain, but we, you know, made it a point never to be a colonial power, and so if you look it has always been a Military, you know -- someone was made the Military Governor, whether it was the Philippines or, you know, postwar Germany, and part of that is we just -- it's in our kind of DNA. We don't know it's there, that we don't want that State Department to have too much clout in that department because we're not going to be a colonial power. So I don't think most people realize why, you know, why they say no, we don't want to have that.

But the problem is the Military guys won't answer the question if nobody else will. And sometimes it's not the right answer, but at least somebody answered the question. And, you know, (inaudible) they'd say, "Hey, your response may vary a while, you know, try this, try that," and, you know, part of it comes down to, you know, you're also -- a lot of these places that are kind of second/third world, like Iraq was, was if you're going to institute democracy, you can't do

that with a bunch of state owned enterprises and cheat people of free enterprise and all that kind of stuff. I mean, (inaudible) kind of got it. I mean, they actually... You know, I mean, yeah, they're smugglers, but they're also independent businessmen. That's just a family business.

[*Segment removed for conciseness. They discuss people they know and books they have read*]

You know, if I have one criticism of Colonel MacFarland, it's he did not... He is not a self-promoting kind of guy. He's a very unassuming man, brilliant, and, you know, if he (inaudible) drum a little harder maybe I wouldn't be retired, you know what I mean? (laughter) But there's a whole lot of people that have taken credit for stuff that they just had no part in. And you know, even you read like that (inaudible) who's now (inaudible) deep thinker, and, "Oh, you know, we set it all up in '05." No, you were part of the Marines admitting that they lost on September 11th, 2006. You know what I mean? And I'm not about claiming credit for it, because what I did was no different than any one of the 3,500 members of the Marine 1st Combat Team, or the, you know, 512 members of, you know, Task Force [Concord?] did. I mean, I just did my job, I just did the job where I talked to Sittar. I mean, I give credit to every kid that's kicking in a door and everything else, but, you know, I do step up when people start taking credit for things that they, you know... I'm not looking for any credit for myself, but if somebody had no part in it I'll step up and throw the flag.

INTERVIEWER: Well sir, again, I appreciate your time. If you have additional things you'd like to talk about, you have my contact information, and if I have questions I'll reach out to you.

END OF AUDIO FILE

Interview 5: 03201209

Interview [phone interview] 03201209, May 02, 2012
Date of Deployment: 2006; Location of Deployment: Ramadi, rural
Billet: [removed]

Informed Consent protocols reviewed and agreed upon

Interviewee was [removed for protection]. There were 5 location/areas of responsibility and objectives were to:

Deal with/ train ISF

Engage the local leaders and tribal leadership. They specifically set out to find Sittar

Went to Tal Afar before Ramadi and replaced HR McMaster's brigade. McMaster showed Ready 1st how to do thing. Continuity of effort. We used that going into Ramadi:

Establish city council, a mayor, governance, and engage/work with tribal leadership

Between Tal Afar and Ramadi, Army determined Ramadi was at least 1 year behind Tal Afar (in terms of stabilization). Ramadi needed ISF built up

USMC tried to find the established sheikh for Ramadi (paramount? Premier?) but they were looking in Jordan and the Army was looking locally. The local sheikhs were low level sheikhs, third tier.

[Name removed], the intel chief was the one who found Sittar. Sittar was an intel source and Deane introduced him to other Army. [Name removed] had an interpreter, but according to interviewee- he was not very good (Dragon)

[Name removed] was interviewee's interpreter but he was not involved in the planning process at all. He did not help develop advising capability and he did not assist in setting the conditions for the Awakening. He was just an interpreter/contractor.

[Name removed] had a FAO who followed him on missions. He was Sudanese and the MEF sent down a Captain who was an Arabic linguist/ specialist. (So they had cultural advising support).

The other interpreters were 20 year old Iraqi linguists who had nothing to do with the Awakening. No help.

There was an initial plan to "find leader" in this case Sittar and to use them to retake Ramadi (these were the men who formed the plan):

Sean MacFarland

Tony Deane

Teddy Gates

Travis Patriquin

Jim Lechner

Training before deployment:

Sent to HR McMaster and saw his success and used that as model for Ramadi (didn't know how or when would "get there"= success in Ramadi)

Previous experience in Iraq

Travis Patriquin was FAO/ Linguist and trained team

Lechner was advisor to ISF and trained team

Intuition/ understanding of COIN

Army Doctrine

SOF integration into planning: interviewee tried to work with SF and integrate. There were SF, SEAL and Army at Shark Base, but not necessarily successful. SOCOM (SF) tried to take credit but Ready 1st worked with locals/ local efforts. 1/3/6 Infantry was in Hit. ?not sure if this was mis-heard. 1/6 Marines were in Ramadi. 3/6 Marines were in Ramadi before MacFarland. If interviewee is talking about SF then A) they are not infantry and B) it was 5th group. Perhaps talking about Army infantry?

Satwah became a nationalized effort and Maliki was cashing in on Sittar

Iraqis recognized what was happening in AO before Ready 1st, but that is how the brigade knew they had something, some success.

Surge: what the media calls the Surge and what the military calls the Surge are different. Technically it began:

2nd brigade 1st armored came in during the summer of 2006 and that is how there were 5 units in CENTCOM reserve.

Gotta use coalition forces and ISF to clear the area and get white space, then get in police and allow them to kill off the insurgency

Can't do that with reserves units, so the real surge helped

The surge allowed them to clear areas, build the police, then went to the sheikhs to get police recruits

Iraqsi (deserve) get a lot of the credit

SF killed AQI leadership and it was a supportive effort, but not decisive.

Integration Issues?

White SF were SEALS, not ODA @ Ramadi. Black SF and Intel also at Ramadi/ Shark Base/ODA

SEAL detachment was incredibly in-tune with integration. They subordinated themselves to the Ready 1st as long as they could do missions

Marine battalion and augments to the staff: never saw Army/Marine issue

Army Brigade w/ Marine HQ/MEF. Preferred having MEF at HQ but still had some subordinate HQ issues

Marines at HQ supported Ready 1st but also threw a lot of blocks.

Marines already had a plan and it was not the same as Ready 1st/ Army, but Marines helped them in long run

1st Battalion in Ramadi was 3/8 then 1/6 Marines. 1/6 and 3/8 had the north part of the city and armored cavalry had the southern part of the city. 1st of the 506th had the eastern portion and there were two battalions on the outskirts. They all started their efforts on the outskirts and rural areas to build IP stations.

Sittar asked for protection from Army and in exchange said he would provide men to the IP

1/6 was 1 of 3 battalions in the city proper

Outskirts into the city there were coordinated efforts

There were no police at first

Fill up police classes then the police recruits would go to Jordan for training 6 weeks later

Sittar said he'd give ready 1st 400 men to go to school, but then have them secure his house with a police station next to the house when they come back from Jordan.

Police trained while 137 Armor secured the area.

1st of 506 pushed from east to fight enemy in city so they could open a police station.

(Were the security forces militias?) The tribes wanted them but the Army said NO, they would get trained and become police or nothing.

The police would partner with the tribes but the officers were under the authority of the Chief of Police. The tribes understood the COC

Police could not go "rogue" because Army and GoI controlled all the logistics

Mis-representation about "militias", they were "pre-police" until they got trained and became legitimate police.

Sheikhs provided the men at first but then the men became police under the care of GoI

Sheikhs influenced governance

The Awakening Council:

The Provincial governor was appointed by the provincial council

The prov council wasn't necessarily legitimate according to the constitution- it was not a proper representation of the people

There was friction between two Sunni groups

The council was not legitimate. They can't elect a governor because not legit. That was the friction between Sittar and Mamoun/ Army and Marines (MEF)

The prime minister had the authority to appoint a security director and the PM nominated SIttar, but Mamoun and the provincial council did not recognize it, which caused the friction point.

Friction was legitimacy of govt and the politics behind it/ political process

Army and GoI did not want warlords

Sheikhs were pragmatic, they didn't need to be governors, they went along with the plan (for good of Anbar?)

Got Sittar, Achmed, and Mamoun to eventually work together

Had to go with results based trust, so Army trusted Mamoun and Sitttar

It is possible the Awakening could have happened sooner but not sure (in Ramadi). AQI over-reached and being sick of the AQI tactics was what pushed things over. It was fortunate that Sittar and AQI had run-ins and that AQI was taking money from Sittar. Sittar and the sheikhs did not like Americans at first, but then came to work with them and form relationships.

RS: Perfect Storm in Anbar, not good training, not language skills

Training:

There is a flaw to the COIN approach: "Square peg in a round hole"

State department wanted a Jeffersonian Democracy for Iraq, but it was not the right government for the area

Doctrinally forced into plans made by politicians. Need more training on culture

They were fortunate to have Patreaus, need intuitive leaders

Better COIN approach- revise COIN

Biggest flaw to COIN is strategic approach

Language was unsuccessful, but do need some. Huge gap.

Need training on how to use interpreters, body language

Interpreters bring personal agendas, need to be able to vet interpreters and check them for accuracy. Fortunate to have Sterling (an American linguist) but he had to be used to cross check others

Need language training for all forces, not just the enlisted

Global Applicability:

Human terrain mapping is 1st critical step to encountering and combating insurgency

Have to know families

Who is who

Leverage points

Situational understanding on human terrain

Dismounted patrols- men have to get out of vehicles

HTS-type capability:

Yes and no (usefulness of HTS as an org): as a concept 100% behind it, but the teams in theater are not effective

Train the army to do HTS capability

Have to immerse with locals for months and months, not quick studies

PhDs don't know how to do it

SF guys take the PhDs and will use them (perhaps there is a gap in how to use the teams?)

CJSOTF knows how to do COIN- use them as idea/model

Share info across branches/units

[MEF and Brigade commanders] all worked well with each other, really candid. There was no inter-service rivalry. There was normal military dynamics and it was refreshing that USMC and Army worked together as one.

RIPTOAs: they RIPed once, it was smooth. No challenges. However., RIPTOAS as a whole are a problem (continuity of relationships)

Interview 6: 03201222

Interview 03201222, 24 April 2012

[*Interviewer and Interviewee go over informed consent and acquire IC prior to interview*]

INTERVIEWER: All right. Great. Could you start by, giving me a heads-up on where you were at, and what you were doing, while in Anbar? And what time frame?

03201222: All right. I was there for OIF II. I arrived in Al Anbar at the end of January of 2004, and departed in September, 2004. I think I've mentioned in previous communications that it was not my first time in Iraq. I actually traveled to Iraq in the timeframe of 1984 to '86, when the Iran/Iraq War was going on. And then, after my OIF II tour, I returned again to Iraq in my [*removed for protection*] capacity, as a civilian contractor in support of the Marine Corps, in April and May of 2008, and again, in December of 2008.

INTERVIEWER: Were you on Al Asad Air Base?

03201222: I was at Camp Fallujah the first time, and then I was at Al Asad the second time.

INTERVIEWER: Great. So, while you were there in 2004, to what capacity were you engaged? What was your job?

03201222: I worked -- I was the [*position removed*], as part of the I MEF G3.

INTERVIEWER: Did you actually get out and work with any of the Iraqis, or was it mostly just kinetic ops?

03201222: Most of my time was, actually, spent aboard Camp Fallujah, planning. I did get out a couple of times to, more or less, observe some things that were going on. I'll give you a couple of examples. I went out to the Government Center in Ramadi on one occasion. I think it was, actually, before the First Battle of Fallujah, where 3rd Civil Affairs Group was working at interacting at the Government Center there. I attended a couple of meetings that [our] Division Commander, presided over. I forget the name of the place... There was a center that was set up where we frequently met with the Iraqis from the local area, right outside of Camp Fallujah. I can't remember what that building was called. And then there was a third occasion where I actually went into the City of Fallujah in the wake of the First Battle of

Fallujah, to observe the set up of a camp for the Iraqi forces -- the Provisional Iraqi Forces -- that were being formed, that were, kind of, part of the, sort of, cease-fire agreement, in the immediate aftermath of the First Battle of Fallujah.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any type of engagements going on with the locals? Or key-leader engagements? Let me preface this by saying that, in the MCU Press publication, number two, -- the Iraqi perspectives -- there's some discussion in there from the Sunni sheiks, that they actually approached Marines in 2003 and 2004, and gave a plan forward on how to not get involved in an insurgency, and not get involved in kinetic ops. They said "We can keep things pretty stable for you, if you work with us." Do you have any knowledge of this?

03201222: I do. I don't have firsthand knowledge, but secondhand knowledge of that. I would hear it from other Marine. Probably most prominent of those was [*name removed*], who was directly involved with some of that stuff. Also, our Chief of Staff, Colonel [*name removed*], I think had direct knowledge of some of those communications. And, based on my view, what I heard second-hand was that we probably had some big missed opportunities there.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think they were missed?

03201222: Why do I think there were missed opportunities?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Why do you think that they weren't capitalized on?

03201222: You know, I think this, kind of, goes into a broad area, but in my opinion, I just think that we were pretty culturally ignorant going in to OIF to begin with. And, although there were individuals and some key leaders who were pretty culturally savvy, that, in the main, we were pretty ignorant. We thought we knew a lot. Actually, we didn't know, and we didn't understand a lot. And we were, kind of, babes in the woods when it came to interacting and dealing with the Iraqis. I think it led to a lot of different problems, anywhere from the Iraqis just being able to take advantage of us in a lot of situation, to the fact that, you know, we probably did a lot more fighting there that resulted in a lot more conflict than, maybe, needed to take place.

INTERVIEWER: What type of cultural education did you have? Or, even, IPB, prior to going into Iraq?

03201222: Well, when you talk about me, personally, just a little bit about my background. I'm actually a [*job removed*]. I was sent to language school, and studied Arabic, from 1989 to 1990, and then I was sent out to actually live

in an Arab country for a year, which coincided with the breakout of the first Gulf War, when I was actually sent over to participate in that. So, I personally have a background in Arab and Middle East culture and language. But, short of that, what I was given -- what we were given in preparation for going over to OIF II, I think, were very limited. I think our intelligence officers did a good job with their briefings, and I think that their IPBs were not bad. But, from a planner's perspective, you know, before you can do any good planning, you have to have a really good assessment of the people, the terrain -- you know, the people, whether you classify them as the enemy or not. And, going into OIF I, which I didn't participate in, and going into OIF II, which I did participate in, we did not have a good grasp assessment of the people, the enemy, the culture. And so we were, kind of, bumping around in the dark, as I would like to say. And it really took a couple of years for us to, really, kind of, get our feet on the ground, and really figure out what was going on around us.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think -- I mean, you've already said a little bit to this, but -- if the cultural education for the General Force would have been better, do you think that there would have been significant differences in the outcome of Anbar?

03201222: Absolutely. I think it's a -- it's a very difficult thing to do. I think we have some allies that, maybe, do it a little bit better, but probably not perfectly. But there have been a lot of proposals, and I think that some of those have been enacted now. Where, you know, across the board, the Marine Corps has to make a better effort at training folks to be culturally sensitive -- to be able to operate in different cultures. And they have a base of language training, so where -- for example, if you go out on deployment with a Marine Expeditionary Unit, and you don't necessarily know where you may end up being employed, there might be a breadth of cultural knowledge and language skills to be able to support operations. I think we also have a better idea, now, of the ability to, kind of, reach back to places like CAOCL, so that, when we start having an indication that there's something brewing, that we can get those cultural advisors out there to us. I think, now -- I think we have a better grasp of doing it. But the -- it's been a long, difficult road in getting to the point where we're at right now.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of those cultural advisors -- now, back when you were there, I mean, we had FAOs, but we didn't have, like, the CULADs that we have currently. Instead, we were, you know, providing some level of language training -- whether that be good or bad -- and some level of cultural training. So, speaking just to that, do you think that the General Forces were given, you know, adequate language training, or at least training on how to use interpreters or body-language training? Anything like that, that would have helped them navigate Iraqi culture and interactions better?

03201222: They weren't given that, and it should have been -- it should have been better. And I think, you know, through some of our own cultural arrogance, we probably didn't know that we needed it -- we didn't think that we needed it. And we only learned the hard way that we did.

INTERVIEWER: Got you. What about engagement strategies? Do you know whether or not there was an actual plan in place for engagement strategies with the sheiks or key leaders, or even the locals, at that point in time?

03201222: There were. I wasn't directly involved in it, but I know that there were initiatives that were put into place by General Conway, who was the MEF Commander at the time, and General Mattis, who was very, very culturally savvy. Again, the problem sometimes in implementing those kind of initiatives is getting the folks under -- so, let's say, a subordinate commander and the subordinate staff -- to believe that those kind of things were necessary and important.

INTERVIEWER: But, isn't the culture within the Marine Corps -- if your commander believes it's important, then it is important to you -- your Marines. So, are you saying that doesn't necessarily trickle down?

03201222: I don't think it necessarily trickles down. I really do think you have to make believers of folks. And if you haven't made believers of them, they might go through the motions, but not really wholeheartedly take that idea on board.

INTERVIEWER: But in 2004, it was still a heavily kinetic fight. Do you think that may have been part of the problem? You know, why the General Forces couldn't, necessarily, embrace that believability -- or believe in, I guess, supporting the Iraqis?

03201222: I think that's part of the problem. But I think that cultural knowledge and cultural engagement is, maybe, equally as important in kinetic operations. You know, I, kind of, learned that back in my experiences in Beirut, back in the early '80s, where, to be effective, you have to understand the culture. You have to understand the mindset of the enemy. If you do, you can use it against them. You can use it to co-opt local -- you know, local people. So, yes, I agree that, because of the kinetics during the time I was there in OIF II, that it wasn't, you know, the most important thing going on. But I think, in general, that it probably should be something that's considered very important.

INTERVIEWER: If these are things -- there are lessons that we have throughout history -- whether it be, Vietnam, Korea War, Panama, just several of the other engagements the Marines have been involved with prior to Iraq -- even OIF I. If those are lessons that can be taken from small wars, and doctrine, why do you think they weren't, necessarily, employed or embraced in 2004? I mean, if it's something that, historically, we could have examples of?

03201222: I think just because it's a shortcoming in our military education. That, simply, you know, there weren't enough people who were well-rounded in small wars and counterinsurgency doctrine at the time. And, so, as a result,

you know, we just repeated the mistakes that, you know, we probably made in every generation of our Marine Corps history.

INTERVIEWER: What general strategies do you think, for engaging locals and in support of a national government -- what do you think that we would employ for future engagements? Do you think the COIN manual that currently have, and the Small Wars Manual that we currently have -- are they sufficient?

03201222: Well, I think it's a good starting point. You know, I think that it's something that we'll already -- always need to find ways to improve upon. You know, I -- (inaudible) that collection in my [*MOS removed*], while they were out on deployment last year. And it's very interesting how they approached the problem. And one of the things that the commander felt was how important it was to take every opportunity to expose the troops to the different cultures. So, when they have a liberty port call, for example, he would view that as an opportunity for his troops to get out and get to know those people, and that culture, with the idea that, sometime in the future, that might come in handy. So, you know, I think that there's new initiatives, and, maybe, new attitudes that are out there and developing right now in the Marine Corps. And I know that the MCCLL reported on that particular initiative, that will help us do these kind of things better in the future.

INTERVIEWER: So, do you think that that's important enough to actually include in a COIN Manual revision?

03201222: I do. Yes, I do. Because, again, I think it's something that is evolutionary, and will evolve -- continually evolve. And people will discover new ways that have proven to be effective. So I think we've done a couple of these little test spins that are out there. And, furthermore, I think -- you know, what you say, particularly during OIF I was that there were individual commanders and individual initiatives that really did a good job in engaging the local people in their areas of operation. One person that comes to mind is a gent by the name of [*name removed*]. He was Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*], at the time (inaudible) 1-7. And I remember hearing reports back about how successful he was, in comparison to others, in engaging and co-opting the local Iraqi... I think that he was in the area around Babylon at the time. But, overall, I think that, during OIF I, the Marines had a lot fewer instances of conflict with the Iraqis than the Army did. And it was over time, and particularly during OIF II, that we returned, and returned to a different part of Iraq -- which was western Iraq -- where we just couldn't seem to get along with the folks -- the local folks in the area that we were working at. Actually, I think our successes during OIF I caused us to be overconfident. And, we were, kind of, caught by surprise during OIF II that the local folks were hostile.

INTERVIEWER: At the time that you were there, did you or your unit directly work with any Iraqi military units?

03201222: I did not. I actually shared an office with somebody who did -- Colonel [name removed], who was in charge of the early, kind of, development of the Iraqi Security Forces. But I was not directly involved in it, so I can't speak in authority on that.

INTERVIEWER: OK. The reason I ask is, I'm trying to nail down, when was there operational planning? When did that, actually, start, between Iraqi military partners? But I don't want you to speak to something you are -- don't have firsthand knowledge of.

03201222: Well, it did start during OIF II, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the First Battle of Fallujah. Because we really had no other alternative. And a lot of that planning was being done at the Division level and lower, as the I MEF [*MOS removed*], I was not directly involved in it.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Do you have any knowledge of a meeting, or of several meetings, that occurred in Jordan, that -- both I and II MEF initiated, over time, with the Iraqi sheiks, to try and show them what Iraq could be? These are mentioned several times, in both of the MCU Press books. And I'm trying to, again, nail down the details of these meetings in Jordan. The one that's most often referenced is a particular meeting where there were some Japanese businessmen who talked to the loc-- talked with Iraqi sheiks from Iraq, and said, "Hey, this is what we could do. We could do business development with you, but you have to have stability." And it's mentioned as having occurred sometime between 2004 and 2005. Do you have any knowledge of this?

03201222: I do. I was involved in helping to establish a Marine position -- sort of a liaison position at the embassy in Amman, Jordan. And it turned out that [*name removed*] was the individual that was first placed there. I was able to that because I knew the Ambassador to Jordan, Mr. Gnehm, from previous work for the State Department. And, so, I was able to go out there, and to lobby to have that position opened. [*Name removed*] was placed in it. And, from that, I became knowledgeable of – [*name removed*], in particular, through other contacts in the Embassy, coming in contact with Jordanians and Iraqis who expressed an interest in trying to create economic, business opportunities in Al Anbar, and also, maybe, some security initiatives, to where we could, kind of, bridge the gap between the U.S. forces and the local forces -- tribal leaders, and so on. So, that began -- that was beginning as early as, let's say, February, March, of 2004.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Were those meetings, kind of -- were they ongoing, or did they just last for a short time period?

03201222: You know, I think that they were sporadic and informal at first, and then be-- they became more formalized. I know that [*name removed*] had come back -- had come from Jordan, and traveled to Camp Fallujah, and reported about some of the opportunities, and encouraged, in particular, our Chief of Staff, to come to Amman, and

make some contacts there. And, from that point, some of the initiatives -- I think they're better known now, and they've been written in some of the books. But, at the time, they were pretty secret and close-hold. And, because of that, you know, my knowledge of what began to transpire there -- that was on a classified level. It was very limited.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Most of the questions that I have, pertain to the actual Awakening. And the discussion we're having is, prior to the Awakening. But do you have any information, or ideas, or suggestions, on things that may have occurred during 2004 that would have set the stage for success later on in 2005 and '06, with the Awakening Movement?

03201222: I do. I think the fact that we -- you know, we began to initiate some informal contacts, and we also, kind of, separately, within Al Anbar, began to talk to factions and forces that we hadn't talked to before, led to later success. I think the whole initiative with General [*name removed*] and the so-called Shuwani Brigade eventually led to great success. But it was quite a novel idea in the beginning. Again, we were, kind of, grasping for ways to go forward in the aftermath of First Fallujah. You know, the problem was that that attack was initiated on very short notice, and then it was stopped right in the middle of the action. And, because we were stopped, and because that word came from the highest level of government, we were, kind of, stymied and, you know, at the point of, "All right, well where --"You know, "Where do we go now? Now do we go forward?" And this Shuwani initiative was something that came to the attention of General Conway, the MEF Commander. It's something that he had, I think, the foresight, courage, and initiative to begin to pursue, which led to some long-term successes.

INTERVIEWER: Could you explain a little bit about the Shuwani -- what did you say? The Shuwani Brigade?

03201222: The Shuwani Brigade. You'll have to follow up on this, and, kind of, check some of the information I'm going to give you. But I believe that General [*name removed*] was a former Iraqi general who had fallen out of favor, and was in exile. And, he was able to come back, and he was able to bring in his full -- some Iraqi Special Forces folks, who were very -- extremely loyal to him. There was no affiliation to the Iraqi government, or the official regime. And the idea was that they were going to build a new Iraqi Army, or security force, in Al Anbar, around him. That's, sort of, a general background. Again, it would be something to go back and try to research on your own, because my recollection of that, now -- with all the time that's passed -- isn't the best.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Well, the reason I ask is, because I've heard of the Hamza, and Fallujah Brigade, and the ING. And there's not much in the literature that talks about the Shuwani Brigade. So that's interesting. This is the first time I've heard it in these interviews.

03201222: Yeah, that -- it was a separate and parallel initiative to the Fallujah Brigade. And, you know, my recollection of the Fallujah Brigade -- again, not being directly associated with it -- was that it was a -- kind of, a perilous initiative. There is a gentleman -- I'll give you a name -- I mentioned it earlier. His name is Colonel [*name removed*]. And he's retired now. He's retired in the San Diego area. And he was directly involved with the Shuwani Brigade initiative, as well as the Fallujah Brigade. And he might be somebody that you might try to seek out, if that would be helpful to you.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Well, the idea that there were initiatives to work with, you know, these brigades. I mean, there -- they are more militia than they are official security forces.

03201222: Mm-hmm.

INTERVIEWER: It seems a little counterproductive to policy objectives. How do you -- how was there a resolution, between what our policy objectives were, in terms of linking legitimate policing or military forces to the government of Iraq, and using militias that we were supporting in order to try to bring stability?

03201222: Yeah, I think it's really hard to put it all in the context, if you hadn't been there. Because, you know, the context is, the First Battle of Fallujah, and the political decisions that were made that caused us to stop that attack after three days. And, really, what we were, kind of, left with from high-level political decisions. So, the way that I like to put it is, that we were really just, kind of, grasping at straws, trying to find anything within the limitations that have been imposed upon us by political leaders, to find something that was going to work. So that's the best way for me to frame it for you.

INTERVIEWER: Well, the First Fallujah -- it being stopped -- there's a lot of pressure that came from the government of Iraq. I've read a lot about how the media really played into that, and that Al Qaeda and the insurgency was using the media to help stop those actions. Do you -- does that sound accurate?

03201222: It does. There was -- you know, I think the strategic communications used by the bad guys was much better than ours. It was much quicker, much more dynamic and effective. But there were also -- there were also pressures that were coming as a result of, maybe, our own media. I had heard it alleged from pretty good authority that the British played a pretty big role in the stoppage of the First Battle of Fallujah. That, you know, they were outraged by the violence and cost of that battle. And had actually threatened to pull out of Iraq unless we stopped our action.

INTERVIEWER: So there was pressure coming from all sides?

03201222: There were pressures coming from our own public, and from our allies.

INTERVIEWER: Did that battle -- was it really as bad as the public -- that the media and, maybe, the impression... I mean, was it really as bad as it was made out to be?

03201222: It depends on what you mean by "bad." I mean, it was a very intense, fast-moving battle. It was brought on by more political forces. You know, I was involved, in some ways, with the planning of that. Although most of the planning was done at the Division level. But, you know, the guys at Division, beginning with General Mattis, said, "Hey, if we're going to do this, we need time to plan it, and not do it as a -- kind of, a knee-jerk response to those Americans who got hung from the bridge there in Fallujah." But, nonetheless, we were given our orders, and we executed on very short order. And to be able to do that, you have to move very quickly, and very violently. And, you know, we were very effective, even though, you know, it was costly, in terms of casualties to our own troops. And, you know, we stopped right in the middle and, you know -- from the viewpoint of military folks and tacticians and strategists -- you know, once you initiate something like that, you should never stop. You have to see it to its conclusion. You know, you've, kind of, let the genie out of the bottle, and it's very hard to put it back in.

INTERVIEWER: How much do you think that that gave the tactical advantage to the insurgency? Do you think that we were able to regain our foothold more effectively -- not more effectively, but effectively, afterwards, when Al Fajr was started?

03201222: I think it gave a huge advantage to the enemy. And another way to put it in the context is, you've got to remember that 2004 was also an election year. And you'll not that we didn't initiate the Second Battle of Fallujah until immediately after the November elections. So, it put us at a disadvantage, and it was costly, and it -- in terms of casualties and in terms of time, and achieving our objectives. It -- if we had been allowed, in my opinion, to complete our actions in the First Battle of Fallujah, it would probably have accelerated things at Al Anbar by at least a year. And, because we were put into a stalemate, and because the Fallujah Brigade initiative, in my opinion, failed, it made the Second Battle of Fallujah necessary. And the Second Battle of Fallujah had to be put off -- it was put off, I believe, because the -- it was a political year, and we had to wait until the elections were over.

INTERVIEWER: Was that for American elections?

03201222: Yes, U.S. elections.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Now, do you think that, if we had been able to plan out Fallujah I, a little bit better -- more effectively -- taking the time that was necessary, so that maybe the casualty rate would have been less. Do you think that would have had a greater impact on stability of operations? Or do you think that it was necessary that we had that level of kinetic interaction, in order to try and clear out the insurgency?

03201222: It's -- if we had had the ability to plan a little bit longer, you would have promoted stability earlier. But I'll -- you know, I'll admit that, you know, we on the military side don't always have the luxury of, you know, getting everything that we want. There are many considerations that go into a decision like that. But, you know, I'll have to say that, if there was more time to plan, they would have had less casualties on both sides, and it would have promoted stability in Al Anbar earlier.

INTERVIEWER: There are some Marines I have spoken to who, in discussions about actual COIN operations, that are under the opinion that the Marine Corps, as a whole, should quote-unquote "get back to its roots." And what they mean about that is that, the Marine Corps really should stay within the realm of the kinetic, and be good at what they're good at, which is fighting. And that either the Marine Corps segments and has sections of the Corps that does stability operations and counterinsurgency and engagements, while the other side stays kinetic. Or, just the Marine Corps, as a whole, stays kinetic -- goes in, does the heavy kinetic operations -- while other service branches do COIN. Now, I've heard a lot of debate about this, and I -- I think it's an interesting question, because my understanding of the Marine Corps is that it's broad and it's flexible, and it does a variety of things. So it -- its root is not just kinetic. But the reason that there is discussion about this is because it is often difficult for Marines to have to go into the kinetic operation, and be heavily engaged with a civilian population, and an insurgency that's fighting them within the civilian population, and then turn around and also have to try and be friends with the civilians who, legitimately, are good guys. But, also, look like the bad guys. Or, maybe bad guys who have turned, and decided to join Coalition Forces. So there is some problem with trying to resolve that, and one of the answers has been to stay kinetic, and let other service branches do the stability ops. Can you comment to that?

03201222: Yeah, I don't agree with that. I think that that's probably where our comfort zone is. That a lot of Marines that -- that's our comfort zone. But I'm not sure that our history really, you know, says that, you know, we're all about kinetics. I think if we look at the Marine Corps -- I'll give you an example, of during the 1920s and 1930s, that we were all about counterinsurgency. And we did it very well. I think the reality of the future is that the -- you know, that part of warfare is always going to be with us. There is always going to be a need for it. And I think that we have the capability of doing it very well.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So it -- along that thread, how do we prepare our Marines to get better at this, and maybe come out of their comfort zone, and prepare them to be better for the next engagement? Do we increase our cultural

training? Do we increase our language training? Do we decrease one or the other? What are some of the suggestions you would have that might help them prepare?

03201222: That's a great question. I'm not sure I'd have the whole answer, but maybe I can give some insight. First of all, I think we have to, culturally, adopt the idea and say that it's important. Sometimes, when we say, you know, we're going to add language training and do these other things, it's, kind of, like shooting at a moving target. And we've spent a lot of time and resources in the past couple of years trying to do it. And, probably, not doing it very well. But, I think that if we have good, solid doctrine, and then we begin at all levels of Marine Corps training -- whether it be at the Basic School for officers, or at the Recruit Depots for troops -- and then, carry forward at other levels, like NCO School, or Expeditionary Warfare School, Command and Staff -- that we can continue to grow in our abilities and our skills. I think -- I should say that, when I mentioned the MEU – [*removed*] -- that was out there, that had some really good and very interesting initiatives, in terms of promoting cultural awareness and cultural knowledge. The commander of that unit is now the (inaudible) General that's assigned to the Joint Staff at the Pentagon, by the name of [*name removed*]. And I think -- you know, if we can harness a couple of guys like that -- really bright and successful leaders, or anybody who has had local success within their units, to be able to grab those ideas and try to expand to see what might work across the Marine Corps -- that we may be able to do better. But those are some of my basic insights.

INTERVIEWER: OK. In terms of that level of training -- if we're not being very effective at training language, do we need to, maybe, stop the capability, or do we need to increase it, or, to what level or degree do we need to train our troops on languages?

03201222: Again, good question. The -- they need to find the right fit. You know, I -- just having been somewhat of a language student and linguist, not everybody is suited to learn a language. Maybe not everybody has to learn a language. I think everybody has to learn the -- they have to increase their cultural knowledge, but you may start by identifying some ranks, and maybe the MOSs -- Military Occupational Specialties -- that may need to require some language training. For example, I would go so far as to say, every Marine officer, when he's at Basic School, is given the opportunity to volunteer for a second language that he'll be responsible for specializing in, and given the opportunity to train in. And then, across the board, that we'd expect every one of our officers to be, at least, bilingual. And then, that's a skill that develops over the course of their career. I think, on the enlisted level, you could probably do the same thing. But I'd be a little bit worried about going so far as to say, universally, across the entire Marine Corps, for all ranks and grades, that we would want to try to impose language training. The second part of this is that, you know, considering the different languages that we've tried to learn, in some of the strategic languages that support, for example, our operations in the Middle East, such as Arabic and the languages in Afghanistan. It's very hard to find an effective language program. I'll use DLI, as an example. We've sent a lot of folks to DLI to learn languages. It depends on what department that you're sent to. There are some languages -- some language departments that are extremely effective. And there are some languages or language departments there that -- based on testing and performance of the graduates, that don't do very well. It's very interesting that the Mormons -- when they send their folks out on their missions, they have a school -- they have Brigham Young University that, I think -- I'm not sure how long the school is --

it's maybe six months. They prepare their folks before they go out on their missions. But, you know, they train in some pretty difficult and some obscure languages. And it seems like, across the board, they are very, very successful at teaching languages. And that might be something that we can learn for the Marine Corps, to find ways that effectively teach languages. Because, again, I think that we put a lot of time, money, and effort into language training, that hasn't necessarily been all that effective.

INTERVIEWER: Is it fair to say that, maybe, we need to examine if it's as necessary as we used to think? Or, there's been some suggestions from participants that, perhaps, we decrease our language training, and, instead, increase our culture training, and our training on how to use and vet interpreters. Do you have a comment to that?

03201222: I wouldn't disagree. I think, maybe, at this point in time -- maybe a little bit of a decrease across the board in language training. Or maybe if the language training that folks get are more focused towards the need -- the groups of people -- (inaudible) lessons, specialties as needed. I would agree that we should increase our cultural -- our cultural training. I would agree that it would be very helpful for us to learn how to use translators, interpreters, and, otherwise folks that, as we go into a new area -- a new country -- that have -- we haven't worked in before, to be able to bring onto our staff somebody who can advise us in how to operate successfully in a local area.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have that, a lot, in Iraq? Do you think that there was sufficient advisors or interpreters or cultural capability, in terms of augments for the Marines at the time?

03201222: Overall, I'd say no. I'd say there were some commanders that, early on, were smart enough to, kind of, reach out in the local communities where they were situated at, and to find trusted agents that they could use as, maybe, an intermediary between the community and themselves, and also get some local -- local advice. Across the board, I don't think we do it -- did it well. But I think there was individual cases (inaudible). I don't think that we've done a very good job with using and -- using interpreters, translators, and cultural advisors. But, my experience has been that there have been individual commanders who, on their own, just had the insight to reach out and to find folks, because they understood that that was important to their mission success.

INTERVIEWER: So, that sounds like a lesson that should be highlighted. Not just the fact that you had commanders that were innovative, but looking into the local community. Now, - are you familiar with the CULAD program that CAOCL has?

03201222: Yes, yes. I know that it exists. I know that advisors have been provided to some of the MEUs. I haven't had direct interaction with any of them. I think [*name removed*] in his CAOCL position maybe have introduced me to one or two of them. That's about the extent of it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, in 2004, they didn't have the CULADs. And the FAOs -- where were they located -- at Battalion and Brigade levels, or were you just up at Division? Did they have access to the FAOs?

03201222: Yeah, you're touching on a -- maybe a sensitive subject with me. I hope I don't divert too much, but I'll try to say it quickly. When we were getting ready to go over to OIF, commanders weren't smart enough to even understand or to ask for their FAO. They didn't understand that, you know, we had FAOs that were out there, and were trained. That they were available for them, and that they needed to ask for them. They were just, basically, ignorant of that fact. We, on (inaudible) getting ready to go over to OIF II, did not have a FAO on the staff. I made a recommendation that we bring aboard a FAO onto our staff that was out with another command -- 1st (inaudible) Co. And we, kind of, got, "Yeah, that sounds like a good idea. Why not?" We brought that guy out, and in the end, he became a critical asset to the MEF while we were out there during OIF II. They had a couple of FAOs at Division level, and -- alternatively -- I think General Mattis had a real appreciation for what FAOs brought to the table. But, you know, to, kind of, close this out -- I don't think that there was a method of identifying, locating, and placing FAOs in the right places in the commands. I think they were just out there, kind of, sporadically. Or you had a command who just happened to have assigned to them a FAO that was already on their staff. For example, somebody like me, when I was in my younger days -- you know, services would say -- a MEU Operations Officer, or a Battalion Operations Officer -- it would just happen that, you know, I have a FAO background, and from time to time, that would become useful as we operated in other countries. So, you know, it's sort of a sensitive point.

INTERVIEWER: Now, the future of the Corps, do you think that -- I mean, the FAO is a pretty intensive program. I mean, do you think that, with the size of the Marine Corps, that they would be able to even invest in expanding that type of capability, or maybe, instead, invest more in the CULADs, or other type of individual augments like civilian SMEs, or something like that?

03201222: I'm of the opinion that we'll probably get more bang for the buck in doing that. That we've never quite had the will to make the investment in our FAO program that we probably need to. I think it's the right thing to do, but I just don't think that the will is ever going to be there. I think that if you look at the Army, and the way that they do their FAO program -- they probably do it right. I think we're probably better off in going the direction that you suggested, with CULADs and interpreters, translators. And I think that is probably going to be more effective for us.

INTERVIEWER: OK, now you said that, "good doctrine." You had earl-- had mentioned earlier about having good doctrine. When you say "good doctrine," would you include the COIN Manual and the Small Wars Manual in that? And, if so, do you think that they're effective in their current form, or are there changes that we should make, based on your experiences in OIF? Now, I know the COIN Manual did come later, but just based on how it is now?

03201222: You know, I think that, basically, they are very good documents, but I do think that there is always room for review and improvement. But in the whole, I think that they are good. I'm not sure if that -- you know, we find in our -- other places in our doctrine, enough attention being paid to cultural aspects of war fighting. So, for example, you know, maybe you can incorporate in the Marine Corps planning process, a step that causes planners to consider the language, cultural aspects, and needs of a unit that's getting ready to -- or just be in an operation or an exercise.

INTERVIEWER: Well, do you think that our officers really even know what type of cultural assets, or cultural capabilities, are even available to them? Or even the level of cultural training that is available to them?

03201222: I would say no.

INTERVIEWER: So, maybe, part of the problem is that we haven't educated them enough on what is available, and so, therefore, it's not being used? Is that fair to say?

03201222: I think that's fair to say. I think it's probably just for a couple of reasons, and some of it is from that very same opinion that you got, saying that the Marine Corps should just stick with kinetics, and not branch out into other things. I think it's also just a result of attitudes. That you have many folks who just don't feel that it's important to begin with, so they don't pay attention to it, and don't even consider it, on occasions when they probably need to consider it -- even if it's, you know, considered but, OK, you know, it doesn't apply in this case.

INTERVIEWER: You also mentioned some leaders back in 2004, that had the foresight to use their interpreters [as advisors]-- they sounded like they were pretty innovative. Now, there's a book that came out by James Russell, talking about innovation, transformation, and war. And he's written about it in several articles. And it talks about how a lot of these commanders -- especially in 2005 and 2006, and I'm sure earlier than that -- were very innovative in their ideas. And they took the initiative to make decisions that led to the Awakening. Now, although this sounds like a great thing -- creating innovation -- it also sounds like within the Marine Corps you have the ability to be flexible enough to make these decisions, but at the same time, if you have too much innovation, how are you following, you know, the strict, you know, discipline that's within the Corps?

03201222: Yeah, I think it's a -- it's a very good point to discuss. You know, I think our war-fighting philosophy teaches that, you know, on the one hand, you try to learn your -- the doctrine. That everybody has a uniform, you know, basis of planning, operating -- common tactics, techniques, procedures. But at the same time, you know, our war-fighting philosophy states that we take that, and then we apply it to the particular situation that we find ourselves in. And every situation will be different, and I think that lends itself, then, to innovation. Whereas, you get some folks that

are just -- kind of, get tunnel vision. And they say, "This is what the book says. This is what I'm going to do, whether it applies to this situation or not." And that's where, you know, you can find yourself having some problems.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Well, finally, the main question of my project is looking at the dynamics, interactions, and actions, that were used to instigate or support the Awakening Movement, that may be globally applicable. Now again, you were early on. But I do believe that a lot of what happened in 2004 -- set the precedents for what happened later on. Can you comment to not only what you think may have happened in 2004 that could have set the stage in 2005 and '06, or do you have any thoughts on any of those things that may be globally applicable, as we move forward, potentially, into other theaters of engagement?

03201222: Well, it's, kind of, a complex question. I'll try to give you something that's meaningful. You know, the whole approach to the war in Iraq... You know, you had some factions that were very apprehensive about our commitment to going into Iraq, and what the short- and long-term implications of that would be. In my opinion, one of the best minds the Marine Corps has probably had in recent times was General Tony Zinni. And he was the Commander of Central Command. He retired before 9/11 and OIF began. But he was a voice of dissent against going into Iraq, because I think that he understood all the problems that would be inherent with that, and all the responsibilities that we would inherit by going in there. So I think he had a good vision of what we ended up encountering. Well, once we got in there, and we learned that things were not what we expected them to be, it was very -- we were very slow to assess what the real situation was, that we were confronted with. For example, when we began to experience the insurgency, it took us a long time to just interpret what was really going on. You know, was it just this criminal element? Was it just these rogue loyalists to Saddam Hussein? It took us a long time realize, no, it wasn't. It was a very well-funded, well-organized, and well-led insurgency. And once we began to understand that and adapt to it, you know, we were not going to achieve success.

INTERVIEWER: OK. In 2004, I mean, were there actions that you think set the stage for 2006's Awakening? For example, engagements with those sheiks in Jordan have already been referenced. Perhaps lessons that the commanders were learning on the ground, or anything that you observed, that you think may have led to success?

03201222: Yeah, I would say, in my opinion, I do think that the groundwork had begun in 2004 -- things that eventually led to the Awakening. I think it was added then -- there were things that occurred over time. I'm not sure than any one person or one initiative can take the credit for what occurred. I think -- so, if you look at our leadership, I think credit can be given to a succession of leaders who learned from one another -- that, in the end, paid off success. So I think it began with people in the beginning like General Conway and General Mattis, who passed the torch on to people like General Sadler and General Gaskin and General Zilmer and General Kelly and General Mills. But it took -- you know, it took four or five years of very hard work, and a lot of patience, and a lot of faith, when people had, really, given up hope, you know, that we could be successful. And a lot of that came through in relationships that were built between commanders on the ground and key, influential Iraqis in Al Anbar.

So, you know, I think if there is a real success story that's there, that resulted in the Awakening, I think, you know, really, kind of nailing down all the things that led to it -- it would be fascinating for me, and I think will be, you know, challenging and fascinating for you in your research. I'd be very wary to give the credit to any one person, one group of people, or one point in time. And I'll have to say that, much of it was a lot of try -- trial and error, or try and fail. And then, you know, based on that theory, you try something else that would eventually work. In the end, you know, I think a lot of it had to do with the Iraqis in Al Anbar themselves, just coming to the realization that, you know, there was no alternative for them, and no hope or prospect for security for themselves and for their families, and for economic prosperity, without coming to some kind of agreement and cooperation with the Marines. And once that realization took place, then real progress was made. And that couldn't take place unless those initial contacts that began in 2004 -- and began to develop most of it -- a lot of it -- secretly, over the course of a couple of years -- bore the fruit that resulted in the Awakening. And, again, you know, it happened over time. It couldn't have happened if a succession of leaders didn't carry on with the work that had been established and done by their predecessors.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that that level of collaboration was going on at the lower levels, not just with the general officers?

03201222: I do. I think that it was taking place, for example, with our civil affairs folks. The day-to-day work called for interaction with local folks. And sometimes they were used as somebody who the Iraqis could contact, and, in turn, those civil affairs folks could pass off, to the more senior leadership, contacts, suggestions, initiatives, problems, and issues. So, that's one example, on the lower level. You know, I think that you had folks like human exploitation teams -- the HET teams -- that were assigned to battalions, units, and out there -- you know, their job, in making contacts, engaging local personnel, mostly for intelligence purposes. And those contacts resulting in something that was useful to the higher level of command. With all that said, otherwise, I think, you know, your battalions, companies, and platoons are out there in contact. There were local initiatives, local contacts, that's paying dividends on a local level. But I'm not sure that they added up to anything that was useful across Al Anbar.

INTERVIEWER: Finally, do you have any final thoughts, final points, that you would like to make, that you think will be useful in terms of, potentially -- I don't want to say, creating a model, because I don't think that's possible, but specific points that can be used as we look forward to other environments, other engagements?

03201222: I just think that, as we look into this kind of issue, to turn to those folks who were most successful in terms of having success [*you need to*], interview them, study them, read about them, and use those lessons as the basis for improving our doctrine, improving the way that we educate folks, and developing policies that are going to be effective when applying it to Marines.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Well, I sincerely thank you for your time. I very much appreciate it. And if you have anything else you would like to add later, you have my contact information. And please feel free to reach out to me. And, also, you know, if I have clear -- you know, things that I need to clarify, I -- I'll be in contact.

03201222: All right. I hope that was helpful. I'm probably a better interviewer than I am an interviewee. But you certainly did a terrific job.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, thank you.

03201222: You made it real easy for me, and --

END OF AUDIO

Interview 7: 03201225

Interview 03201225, 22 March 2012
Location of Deployment: Army, Ramadi

INTERVIEWER: Okay. This is March 22nd, and I am conducting an interview with 03201225 on the Anbar Awakening. You've received the Informed Consent. Do you have any questions, concerns, anything about the Informed Consent process?

03201225: No.

(*Edited for conciseness: Interviewer goes through speech on security, redaction, rights of participant*)

INTERVIEWER: I have given you a briefing about the project already, but some of the things that I'd like to know, especially because of the different locations of where certain events occurred, the majority of events that are most documented occurred in Ramadi with Sheikh Sattar, but there's also a lot of literature that suggests that there were events that were happening out in Al-Qa'im prior, like between 2004-2005, and that there were several other militias that got stood up, and then they were stamped down or not supported by coalition. And then up in the Hit area, there's north of Hit, there was the Abu-Nimer and the Abu-Mahal that was around in the 2005 time frame. So there's a lot of literature that suggests that there were other situations that could have likely started the Awakening sooner had we a little bit of cultural knowledge and we understood what was going on. So that's some of the things that I'm trying to explore, especially about our level of cultural understanding and cultural training.

How much cultural education or training or anything did you have, or did you have any IPBs, anything like that prior to your deployment?

03201225: We had a few. I wouldn't say it was extensive. We had the basic, you know, "You're going to Iraq. Here's the do's and don'ts." The actual training itself, it was not really informative from a cultural perspective. It was kind of -- I hate to say it, but it was a canned briefing that everyone gave, and it wasn't -- you didn't have experts who gave it. It was just kind of a briefing that was passed along, given by the Army leadership to the soldiers.

It had some good information in it, but it did not -- in my opinion, it did not do the job as far as explaining real culture. It had the, you know, don't do the thumbs-up, don't show your feet, you know, the stuff that is really trivial.

INTERVIEWER: The little smart card thing?

03201225: Yeah, the smart cards. And they did pass out smart cards and little booklets of, you know, Arabic language, how to speak, but as far as doing a good job of cultural sensitivity and it really explaining it, it was not adequate.

INTERVIEWER: When were you deployed, and how many deployments did you have?

03201225: I was deployed -- the first deployment was OIF I. I was actually with 5th Corps when we moved into Iraq from Kuwait, and then I went to 1st Army Division, worked in the Green Zone in Baghdad for them right after that. That was 2003, 2004. And then I went back in 2006, came back 2007, and we were in -- I was with 1/35 Armored Battalion. We were from 2nd Brigade, 1st Armor Division, but we were assigned to 1st Brigade under Colonel MacFarland's brigade.

We were stationed at Camp Ramadi, but we were primarily responsible for Tameem, south of the river, and sort of farther out, a little bit to the west into the desert as well.

[Section removed where a map is reviewed- not pertinent]

INTERVIEWER: So did you have any type of better understanding because of your first deployment, what you were going to do going into the second, or did you get any additional training on that second deployment?

03201225: We did. I think we learned a lot after the first deployment, and we had a lot of -- a lot of the -- at least the -- I was a company commander then. A lot of the company commanders had deployed the first time, so there was a lot of institutional knowledge.

Unfortunately, a lot of it was combat and not, you know, reconciliation or, you know, stability operations, which we really -- to that point, we didn't really train a whole lot on it. It was all combat, combat, combat.

And I would say the train-up was still focused a lot on the combat aspect. You know, that was prior to counterinsurgency and all that kind of stuff.

So we had some cultural -- we did try to focus on a lot of the cultural stuff more the second time, because we realized it was important and that we would be interacting a lot more than we did the first time.

INTERVIEWER: Now, was that self-taught, or did they have JRTC or NTC at that time?

03201225: We were stationed in Germany at the time. So we had -- I think it's called "JMRC" now; it used to be called "CMTC" in Grafenwoehr in Hohenfels, and we did go down there and we did a big train-up. It was largely -- it was the first time that the training center had ever done an Iraq-type scenario, and they focused primarily on kinetic items. And it was to the point where we couldn't even roll out of the gate a mile from our little FOB in the training area where they simulated an IED or a kinetic explosion.

I think there was a couple of key leader engagements, but by that period in time, they were not developed enough, not like they are now at the training centers where it's an extremely important part. So it was mostly kinetic.

I do remember we did have a simulated platoon of Iraqi soldiers that wouldn't speak English to us, and we had to use an interpreter. So that was highly effective, because it at least got people used to going through an interpreter and working with the Iraqi forces that they hadn't done before. So that was effective.

So they did have -- I'm not saying it was all terrible. It's just because they didn't know, and we were still trying to figure it out.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like you didn't have any major IPB that they were providing to you. Did your unit kind of just do some self-education?

03201225: We did. We did. We brought in a few linguists, Arabic linguists who would try to teach some language and kind of give us their perspective, because they had had a little more training, and we did try a lot of self, just basic human interaction-type things, just to prepare people and escalation of force to, you know, how to -- proper communication techniques and all that.

So we did -- I mean, I would say that the unit did the best they could with the materials that we had, because at that time, there just wasn't -- at least in Germany, we could not access a lot of information.

We could have done a better job of going to other training centers. Like NTC, I think they did a whole lot better job. JRTC did a lot better job than they did in Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that that level of cultural knowledge either impeded or would have assisted you in what was later to come in terms of meeting the sheikhs, having the engagements, actually instigating that change of perception with the Iraqis?

03201225: I think some of it was beneficial, but there needed to be a whole lot more, just basic, and, you know, that's the one thing that I noticed about the Marines were they seemed to be a lot better culturally educated than our Army soldiers were. And I think that, in my opinion, you know, education on that is critical, regardless of the mission, and we had a lot of soldiers who just -- they didn't understand. It's not that they were hateful. They just didn't understand how to communicate, which a lot of times made things worse, because then you got two people who don't speak the same language and grade each other.

So I think that any training that we got was beneficial, but we needed a whole lot more just to have an understanding, whether it be bring in an Iraqi-American to come speak to somebody, to give us a firsthand view instead of a staff sergeant giving a class on something he's never seen before and doesn't really understand that, historical context, anything like that. As far as history goes, we received nothing on the history. And the cultural stuff was just really extremely basic.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any type of problem whenever you guys would do RIPS, or were you able to do left-seat/right-seat? Any stovepiping of information or system integration problems?

03201225: We were. Now, I can speak from the context of the RIP that I received and what I observed.

When we first got to Ramadi, we RIP'd out with -- I don't remember the name of the unit. I think it was the Michigan National Guard who had responsibility for that area we took over. Now, we did do left-seat/right-seat right. However, they had a completely different view of how to handle things. Their typical -- what they would say is that's a bad street, don't ever drive down there, or that's a bad neighborhood, we never go there.

And they primarily had static positions along Route Michigan that they manned, and so, you know, they gave us a RIP on static locations, but as far as here are the key players, here are –um… this is the type of insurgency you are looking at in this particular area of town, these are the major problems, I didn't see any of that. And I did sit in on a lot of the major key RIP pieces as well as the RIP between my counterpart. So, you know, it was kind of a RIP, but it was not very helpful.

I mean, I felt when we started that we were starting from scratch.

INTERVIEWER: How did you guys resolve that? Did you guys have any FAOs or somebody that was assisting, or did you --

03201225: We had absolutely no FAOs, which would have been absolutely so valuable to the mission. Really, you know, unless it was something that was available on Camp Ramadi, which there wasn't much, it was basically figure-it-out type of thing. Now, during the RIP, there were a few key -- I shouldn't say there was none. There were a few key people, you know, passed off and, you know -- so we did make some contacts with some people, but it was not very -- it didn't assist

a whole lot, just because the area that we wanted to settle down or we wanted to kind of calm down an insurgency, there was nothing. They just kind of avoided that area.

But as far as like somebody who would come down and give, you know, advice or assistance on how to deal with things, I didn't see it from my perspective.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Were you able to work with the Marines in terms of transferring information?

03201225: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I know that Ready First had a ton of different types of troops involved, but --

03201225: We did. We worked very closely. Names escape me. I know there was a Marine colonel who was in charge of working with the Afghan security force -- "Afghan," sorry" --

INTERVIEWER: The police?

03201225: Iraqi police and the army, and he was at a little FOB right off of Route Michigan. So we had -- I know I had contact with him. I cannot remember his name. He was an O6, and he had a very small staff. I think it was him and maybe two Marines that worked with him. So we worked with him basically because he operated within our area, and he was sort of like the training team, the MTT team, I guess you would say, for the Iraqi Army that worked in our sector.

So we worked with him, and we had a really good relationship with him. I think at least weekly, a lot of times more, he would come over, and we would discuss operations going on and how to do things better.

And then I personally -- I was assigned also as kind of -- at first, I was a company commander, and then I did a change command in country, and then I sort of became the Afghan Security Forces liaison. Anything to do with them, I was sort of the go-to guy.

So I worked with other Marines on Camp Ramadi and went to some meetings when they would have engagements with key leaders or primarily Afghan -- sorry, I keep saying "Afghan" -- Iraqi Army higher ranking officers.

At first, there wasn't -- I think it was just kind of the nature of the new guy on the block or the way things had been done before, but over time, that cooperation just grew and grew and grew. And I would say within about a month, we relied extremely heavy on each other. We worked very closely with -- honestly, we worked more closely with the Marines than we did with our Army counterparts.

I'm not saying we were kind of the stepchildren of Ready First, but we kind of were, because we were south of the river. The focus was north. We weren't actually organic to the organization. So a lot of our support would go to -- we would go to the Marines, especially the Radio Battalion. They would help us a lot with big missions that we would do. It seemed like a lot of times if there was a large mission, we always had the Marines involved in some way, shape, or fashion, particularly the Iraqi Army.

INTERVIEWER: What was your primary mission? Were you supposed to be doing these key leader engagements, or were you trying to just clear out Tameem?

03201225: The primary mission was basically to -- I shouldn't say clear -- well, it was to clear out Tameem, number one, to squash the insurgency, because as -- in the north, as Ready First was pushing south and east, we saw a lot of infiltration into Tameem, so we were kind of -- it was sort of kind of like a squeeze fashion. That was kind of the military objective, and about a little way through, I believe it was Colonel MacFarland who came up with the plan of going in and establishing the COPs, platoon COPs, and seizing key terrain, interacting with the locals, try to gain support, which I think that tactic was the turning point at least in our deployment where we started seeing change.

The key leader engagements were kind of left for higher levels with the battalion command primarily, but most of them were, honestly, with Sheikh Sattar. That was probably the main one. The lower levels were done at the company grade. I know at first -- and you're probably more interested in my second job, which I was as the Iraqi Security Force liaison. I did a lot of dialogue with the Iraqi Police primarily, because the Iraqi Army had the MTT team with it, and we had ad hoc PTT teams.

I had primarily two police stations. I had the Al-Jazeria police station, which had already had some influence in it, and then we stood up the one in Tway. It was the one we basically stood up from scratch. So there was a lot of engagement at the company. I know a lot of company commanders, they engaged with key players within their areas. So there was some engagement, and we did receive negotiation training before we went, which was helpful. So, you know, they weren't going into these things blind, but it was kind of a -- I hate to say it, but, you know, it was sort of a one-sided conversation a lot of times. We were trying to push our agenda, and we wanted them to comply versus, you know, let's find a common understanding. And I think as we went over time, that became more apparent, and that, as everything else, evolved.

INTERVIEWER: As a PiTT team leader, did you have any type of training or any idea of what to do in terms of standing up a police station?

03201225: No. Personally, I did not. My background was tanks, and that's primarily what I did.

Now, I had -- names again -- I had this first lieutenant that was a brand-new platoon leader who came in while we were there, and he and I had about -- his platoon was split up all over the area in different places, in PTT teams and doing escort missions, but I had him and about eight of his soldiers that obviously were trained, but we had no formal training on how to stand it up whatsoever. And we basically -- we went in. When we started Tway, we went in there and kind of basically set it up on the Army construct of you got your personnel. You got to have a personnel officer. You got to have your intelligence guy. We set it up like that, and it seemed to be rather effective.

The station chief, his name was Colonel [*name removed*]. I trusted him. He was former Iraqi Police prior to the war and very knowledgeable. He had run a station before. His deputies and some of the other guys, I absolutely did not trust at all, because they were more of Sattar's militia more or less his policing force. They did a lot of questionable things for Sheikh Sattar to get information out of people, and they still maintained a lot of those tactics, which was very difficult to break from some of them.

We did not receive any guidance as far from higher or any training on here's a road map of how to set this up. It was basically go over there and do the best that you can and figure it out.

INTERVIEWER: [*edited for conciseness*] Did you have any police training, or a SME acting as a police trainer that was there to assist you in training the IP?

03201225: I really think the idea of having professional law enforcement officers, civilian, come to do the training, because they're the experts. They know what works. They can teach the nuances of, you know, typical local law enforcement that the Army does -- doesn't understand.

We did have two civilians that were supposed to come and be filling that role when we were in Ramadi. I did not find them helpful whatsoever. They were teaching people -- they were teaching the place how to handcuff people, how to do stuff, basic things and, you know, that any Army person could have taught them. And what we wanted from them was the more complex things, you know how do you run the precinct effectively, how do you -- what's the best way to patrol, how do you interact with the local population, but these individuals, they weren't really providing that.

So I think if it's a professional, not just, "Hey, let's grab a policeman," let's get maybe a police trainer, civilian trainer. I think that would be extremely effective. And I think as far as the training, I think it's more -- instead of a -- like you were talking about the age, I think it's -- the key thing is respect. I think a lot of soldiers at that time did not understand how to properly respect somebody. They treated -- sadly, they treated the Iraqi people as second-class citizens, "Hey, we're here because we have to be here. We don't want to be here. Just do what we say, so we can get out of here."

So I think -- and I've noticed in situations where you did have somebody who understood that portion and did show the respect that the learning facilitation was a lot better. I also think that training individuals -- because when you look at the Army, particularly Army MP mission, you know, they don't really -- they focus on detainees and really PTT teams. To train a professional and per platoon, maybe send them to a professional civilian school on policing that the way they can understand how to stand it up would be extremely beneficial just to have a subject-matter expert to be able to step in and say, "Okay. This is what we need to train them on" because really we just kind of -- we just looked at where we saw weaknesses and tried to fill the gaps as we tried to stand it up, and it was -- some stuff was simple, and some stuff was extremely difficult.

INTERVIEWER: And did you guys reach out to anyone or were you able to do any type of online searching or gather information on how to do this policing?

03201225: You know, we should have done that. We did not. We did have access to NIPR to unclassified e-mail, which we probably could have done some searching, but that would have been probably extremely helpful.

INTERVIEWER: And do you think that either the training or -- or having learned the lesson of respect early on, any of that do you think would have made a major difference in terms of transitioning?

03201225: I think so, absolutely. Key thing is the -- is the respect. I think the respect thing that I'd notice, because I tried both tactics of going in and just barking orders. Then I went in and began calling them, if it was an Iraqi, "Colonel," or they outranked me, I called them "sir." And just the fact of giving them that respect changed in attitude completely. Because I think most people, they want to be respected. They want mutual respect and they're not going to respect you if you don't respect them, and I think that is something that has kind of been left off of cultural training. You know, the one line that I always remember is, you know, just because a culture is different doesn't mean it's wrong. It's just -- it's just different and you got to understand that. But that training early on prior to deployment, understanding of the people themselves and how they interact with foreigners that's one thing we did not get that would have been effective, you know. They look at us with skepticism. They look at us -- you have to win their trust. You're not going to walk in and be the savior of the world and they're all going to be like "Oh, anything we can do."

INTERVIEWER: With the -- did you say it was a police chief, colonel, or he was the chief, but did he hold a rank or just the chief of police?

03201225: He was the -- he was a -- Army lieutenant colonel. I believe that's -- no, he was not. He was a major. That's right. He was an Iraqi police major. And he had -- there was a few captains under him that did various different jobs. He was very knowledgeable. He was extremely helpful to us. The biggest problem that we had was the language.

We had one interpreter. And that poor guy just got worn out because, you know, basically 24-hour operations. And so, you know, it was very hard. The communication was the hardest part. He really kept that station running alive because

he kept his guys in line. The guys respected him, and he and I had a very good relationship, mutual relationship. We would sit down every day, and we would just talk about issues. We would talk about where we needed to go for the future. And we had a very good relationship, and to me, I think that -- and the lieutenant that worked with us as well, the military police lieutenant, had a great relationship with him too. And I think that is what solidified at least a partnership for us.

And like I said, it was based on respect. It was based on, you know, "We're here to help you. We're not here to tell you what to do. We want to turn this police station into something that's effective." And over time, we did a couple operations. Now, the Al-Jazeria -- when I started working at Tway, the Al-Jazeria station kind of came -- went to somebody else. And we did a -- I remember we were doing a mission in Tameem, and we used the Iraqi police to set up roadblocks and checkpoints to prevent people from coming in, and we had our -- our police forces on one side, and I could see the Al-Jazeria guys on the other side. And we had embedded -- we had our MPs with the Iraqi forces. They were kind of operating semi-independently.

And for an example, they just started firing up this house, and so all -- I'll call them "my guys" -- started moving, and I just said, "Stop." You know, "Your job is here. You can't leave this." And they understood, and they went back.

And I went over to, you know, see what was going on with the other guys and they were like, "There's some bad guys." "Where?" "They were on the roof." "So you just shot? You just shot at them? There's civilians over there. There's kids right there in front of the building." And so I think because they -- there was a different relationship at that station.

They had a small PTT team as well. But it was, more or less, they did not really do joint patrols. They did not have a -- they had a different relationship. And I think when -- when you look at cultural aspects, I think they were working on what they had been trained on, which was not very much; whereas, different aspect of being more culture [*MOS redacted*]. So like culture -- and I'm a huge believer in you've got to understand, you know, how people think in order to interact. So it was difficult, but Major [*name removed*], he was -- you know, you find that one guy who's a diamond in the rough, that you know you can trust and you know where his heart is.

INTERVIEWER: And with him, did he give you any understanding of what the police was like before and did he provide assistance with training the police?

03201225: He did. He -- he understood how to run. He didn't understand how to set up a police station. But he understood basically how to run it. Like we stood up his logistics section and his -- actually -- logistics guy stole like three, three handguns. They went to his house, and he arrested him, fired him. So, I mean, he was -- this guy, Major [*name removed*], was legit. You know, I saw him take care of a lot of corrupt guys and get them out, kick them out.

He -- I mean, he was almost -- his institutional knowledge was invaluable, because he understood how to run things. He was basically running operations as far as patrolling, and we did some joint patrolling with him and running day-to-day

checkpoints while we -- allowing us to focus on building up basically the infrastructure of the organization for him. So that was huge for us.

INTERVIEWER: And who provided the logistics support? Was it the government, or was it mostly the American and the coalition forces?

03201225: It -- it was mostly us. Now, we had been promised a lot of things from the Ramadi police chief, who Major [*name removed*] often told me was just as corrupt as anybody else. They were supposed to get uniforms. They were supposed to get weapons. They were supposed to get a lot of training, cars, vehicles that we just didn't see. So we kind of pushed that along through the U.S. to make sure that they had weapons, make sure that they got uniforms. We had trouble getting -- a lot of trouble getting body armor, a whole lot of trouble getting vehicles. I mean, they were basically driving around in unmarked pickup trucks because they had nothing else. So there was -- I would say 90 percent of it came from the U.S.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now, you mentioned that Sheikh Sattar had a lot of his guys that were involved in the police. Now, again, going back to the literature, there's discussions of him having a militia and the militia being stood up, but then there's also discussion on whether or not the militia actually was the police. At one point in time, they transitioned. So could you provide some clarification? Did he give you men to be police officers, was there any vetting process, or was this a totally separate type of thing?

03201225: All right. A little bit of all of that. Minus Colonel -- or Major [*name removed*], which I'm not sure where he came from. I don't know if he actually worked for Sheikh Sattar at one time or not. A lot of those -- the guys that came to him, I would say, were from Sattar's militia. They were some of his key enforcers. They had a Major [*name and characteristics removed*] and he was, I would say, the primary enforcer as far as extracting information from people. A very intimidating guy and a guy that I did not want to be alone with, because I did not trust him. He was one of the ones I thought if I was going to get shot, it was going to be from him.

And there was kind of a mix within a police station. We had, I'll say, Major [*name removed*] where we had vetted IPs who had been through all the training, who, you know, were properly trained. Then we had people in uniform who had not been trained, not been properly vetted from the U.S. point of view but were key to Sheikh Sattar who he wanted involved. So it was a mixture of militia and properly trained IPs all working together, and at times, there was a lot of conflict of interest that we would have to -- that was the most difficult part of standing up that IP station, because the more militia folks, they -- if they didn't get the information that they wanted at the police station using proper measures I cannot confirm that they would not take them somewhere else to extract that information.

There were times where I had to actually stop, jump in between IPs and detainees for them conducting what I would consider detainee abuse and actually pull them off and say, "You cannot do this. This is -- this is not what a police force does. You are going to lose the respect of the people," et cetera, et cetera. So we dealt with a lot of that internal struggle, and I think Major [*name removed*], he felt a lot of that struggle, too, because he was trying to legitimize a police station but yet he was still trying to maintain an equal balance between Sattar's folks.

Now, I'm not saying all of Sattar's guys were bad. He had some very good guys that were very beneficial. I think one was actually his son, I want to say, but they were very -- some of them were very good and wanted to do the right thing. You just had a couple of bad seeds.

INTERVIEWER: Now, did you -- did any of Sattar's guys go through the training later on?

03201225: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And was that the training that was established in Jordan?

03201225: Yes. Yeah, that was -- they did. That was what they were supposed to do. And I would say 90 percent of them did end up going through that training. There was a few, particularly this Major [*name removed*] guy, and a couple others that did not go through the training, and which we -- you know, we -- we kind of had a little heartburn of, because they gave him a rank and he wasn't properly trained. So we kind of had a -- when I say "we" -- me and my lieutenant, we were like, "You know, this guy shouldn't be," but it was sort of a -- more of a political thing at the time and we didn't want to, you know, I guess, jeopardize the ties with Sheikh Sattar and his influence.

But a majority of them did, and we -- we did have a really strong vetting process. Once it was stood up, we authenticated certificates. People would come with fabricated certificates. We -- you know, we had the guys there who would check them. So the vetting process was there. It was just a matter of getting some of the ones that were already established to the training.

INTERVIEWER: When you say that they were checked, who was checking them? Iraqis or Americans?

03201225: No. We had a -- we had a -- NCO who actually at one time had worked at the -- well, made the certificates or something. But they had some kind of watermark or something on the thing. So we actually had some experts who would come in, that they would have to bring their packets during the recruiting days. He would come down for us. You know, we'd put them in, in BATs and -- and, you know, do the eye scans and all that kind of stuff, and we would check all their certificates that wanted to apply for that station. So that process was very good to make sure that we have actually trained folks that came in.

So, you know, once that started happening, I think it was good, because, really, when we stepped into Tway, when I stepped into it, it was just a little tiny building, you know, maybe four rooms, in this little bitty compound. And there was just a bunch of people there.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when you -- you just said that about BATs. First, there's an article that was written, Bing West wrote it, and he said, "If -- if the Army and the Marines" -- he mostly was criticizing the Marines, "But if they had just done a census and put everybody in BATs and done all the stuff that they were supposed to do, then they easily could have separated the bad guys from the population, and they would know who the bad guys were."

03201225: Right.

INTERVIEWER: And so he's going based off of Galula -- isolate the population and then separate out the insurgents--. Well, Iraq is not really suited for the type of guerilla counterinsurgency operations Bing West is describing. But I've been very curious about the BATs, because it seems, based on the readings and folks I've talked to, that there was no real central database or repository to put information. You could take the information, but then where did it go? Could you describe the process you had for collecting information and how it was stored or shared?

03201225: What I saw was -- we did have a database, and I'm not sure where the data -- we had trouble. The biggest problem we had was syncing databases just because the pipelines for the Internet were just -- you know, they were clogged with every other system.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

03201225: So it was really difficult to do that. Now, in our area, I know the Marines in our area and our unit, we -- any chance we got, we were, you know -- we were doing BATs, BATs, BATs. Any recruiting draft, that thing was out. Anytime we had any large number of people that we could influence, they got put into the system. We actually did -- we had an operation at Al-Anbar University one time. Fortunately, it was a wash, but there was -- [laughs] -- I think 350 people we put in the system that day, if not more. So I know -- and anytime anyone was -- I mean, that thing was used constantly. The key, the problem was it was an issue with syncing and we came up with solutions where, you know, they would download it on a thumbdrive, and then it would kind of get sent out to the area, so people could upload it and put it in their systems. I think it was more of a communication problem than anything else.

INTERVIEWER: Communication between Army and Marines or communication --

03201225: No. Just communications between units because we were so spread out. So because we were so spread out, especially to the COPs, I mean, it was really difficult to get anything out to those guys, just because it was, you know, rather dangerous to do that. So I think that was -- that was the biggest problem, and we did -- we did have a fair number of hits too when we did pick up people from -- from the BATs. So, you know, it was -- it was a useful tool, and we wholeheartedly -- our unit wholeheartedly believed in the use of it, and we did it as much as we could.

INTERVIEWER: What about the -- when you went to detain people, was there -- I mean, because the judicial system in Iraq wasn't even at that time functioning. So what happened? I mean, would you pick folks up, and then would they sit somewhere, or how did you link that back to the -- the GOI?

03201225: That -- yeah. It kind of went in two -- two ways. If they were picked up by U.S. forces, they were usually brought to camp, brought back to Camp Ramadi and they were processed through each. I think each battalion had a had a unit that specifically processed detainees. And then they would be sent off to the -- I can't remember the name of it now. A big -- there was a big prison in the area that was kind of joint Iraqi but primarily run by the U.S. So they would get processed, and once your paperwork was done, then they were transferred up to this higher level prison system. But from -- I think at that time, it was primarily U.S.-run and -led.

Now, if it was IPs picked them up, it was kind of a whole different story. Depending on if it was petty crime, you know, we didn't tend to get involved too much. They would try to process the individuals up through their channels. If it was a possible insurgent, then we kind of got our hands in it and we made sure that they processed through. It eventually came back around to the Iraqis in the end, but not until it went through [inaudible].

INTERVIEWER: Did Sheikh Sattar or any of the other minor sheikhs ever get involved in that? There's descriptions where sheikhs would show up and say, "Hey, I'm vouching for this guy. He's really not bad," and because of the politics and the engagements, pass them out of the system.

03201225: Yeah. I -- I didn't see that, but I know it happens a lot. I mean, Afghanistan is the same way. But, yeah, there is somewhat if that fine political line where somebody may get picked up that has a lot of connections, and somebody will -- important like a sheikh will come and vouch for them, and, you know, it's -- I know there was cases where we said, "Look, no way. No way this guy is getting released. We know who he is. We can give you a list of what he's done." And then there were other times, I think if it wasn't, you know, as bad, we made some concessions.

INTERVIEWER: Now, do you think that any of that assisted or impeded local perceptions of the effectiveness of the police, or did they appreciate it because it was part of the tribal justice system?

03201225: You know, I think it could go both ways. At that time -- I mean, I can only speak for that time that I was there. There was still a lot of mistrust among the population and the IPs. They thought that they were just running around doing whatever they wanted to, which was kind of the case prior to that time. I think they do appreciate that, but it all depends on how they look at the individual. Like if they saw -- if they saw Sheikh Sattar as legit then I think it to be positive. If they see him as corrupt, then they're obviously going to look at him and say, "Okay. Well, now we're assisting somebody corrupt." I mean, it's -- politically, that is such a fine line. I mean, it -- it's really not black and white. There's such a gray area of, you know, what is the best thing to do.

Now, I know that we did, we -- and I say "we" -- the U.S. military. If there was somebody we knew and we had no doubt was an insurgent he didn't go back. He went into detention.

INTERVIEWER: Now, from the Iraqi perspective, one of the sheikhs, Sheikh Al-Jabour, was very publicly adamant, and he's -- he's on YouTube even saying how much Sheikh Sattar was corrupt and nothing but a criminal, he's not even a real sheikh, his brother is supposed to be the lead sheikh and the Americans were duped. And, of course, you know, a lot of this is Iraqi grandstanding, but to a large extent, it's also very accurate, because he was a minor sheikh.

03201225: Right.

INTERVIEWER: So within your area, did you experience any of that type of tribal resistance, or was everybody ok with Sheikh Sattar?

03201225: You know, from what I saw was Sheikh Sattar -- you know, regardless of his real standing, was very well respected. I mean, financially, he owned that whole area.

INTERVIEWER: He was a pretty good smuggler, too, so -- [laughs].

03201225: Yeah, yeah. And we -- from what I've heard is -- and we gave him a whole lot of contracts as well which elevated his position even higher. But from the locals we were able to interact with, it seemed to me like, you know, they saw him as legitimate. I think they all expect some form of corruption because, as you know, Middle Eastern governments are always -- our governments -- you know, all governments have corruption, but I think that they kind of looked at him as somebody who was championing their cause, at least the ones in our area that we saw and most likely because he was probably the most influential person in that Tameem area south of the river. I mean, he -- not a lot went on that he didn't know about.

INTERVIEWER: Now, again, going back to 2006 being regaled as the year of the police, it also -- you know, late 2005, early 2006, was also the year of police being targeted. Did you have any additional kinetic operations or anything that was going on because AQI was trying to thwart your operations, what you were trying to do with the police or --

03201225: We -- we did a lot of -- we reinforced a lot of the police stations. I know at Al-Jazeria, we went in and we put up T-wall, spread out the reach, kind of made stand-off distances, et cetera. So we did a lot of -- of construction work as well as we built a lot of checkpoints in the area to kind of, you know, regulate traffic and check traffic coming in. We did at Tway as well, although that -- I mean, really, this -- there's just this tiny building in the middle of this big dirt field. So, I mean, we -- we did the best that we could, and we did --

INTERVIEWER: Sorry. I'm smiling, because as you're saying this, I -- [laughs]. I know what type of building you're talking about. [Laughs.]

03201225: Yes, not real stable. And we did -- we did start focusing a lot more on -- because a lot of times, the IP did not want to go out unless we went out with them. So they started pushing a lot more for, "Okay, we'll go and do this patrol, but you need to send two Humvees with us." And, you know, we want -- we helped them out, but we were really trying to get them to start working on independent operations.

So we would do joint -- a lot of -- some joint patrolling with them. I wouldn't say a huge amount, but we -- you know, a few times a day within the local area, nothing long range, and a lot of building and defensive measures. And they -- they were targeted quite a lot. I know that I went on -- I went back on leave, and while I was gone, they hit Al-Jazeria with a VBIED and basically leveled it. Luckily, nobody was killed at all which is awesome.

And also, during that same time frame, they tried to take a VBIED into Tway but detonate it at the first sort of layer of defense and I think it killed two IPs that time. So, I mean, they -- they knew it was dangerous and, you know, hence, the big issue with body armor. They wanted body armor.

INTERVIEWER: But did that stop them from recruiting? Did you have recruitment issues, or was there still this desire to --

03201225: There was still desire to recruit. I don't think we ever had issues with recruiting. The issues we had were fake documents, people trying to become IPs. So, you know, I think -- looking back at it now, I think they started -- as time went on, they started seeing the legitimacy and maybe it was just a job or maybe it was power and influence carrying a weapon, you know whatnot. But we -- we had some really strong recruiting drives, especially in that area.

INTERVIEWER: Now, in the literature, some authors write and relive the event, and state that recruiting and the standing up of the police has been described as, singly the most important thing that occurred in Ramadi, because once the police were stood up, the population, almost overnight, changed their perception, and kinetic actions decreased. SIGACTS decreased. The people started having a little bit of normalcy, and it was this idea that Sheikh Sattar brought in all the police. You guys trained them, and then they went out amongst the population, and the population automatically started feeling secure, happy, and the life returned to normalcy in -- in Ramadi. Does that sound accurate in any way?

03201225: To me, I think it was part of it. I don't think it was the catalyst. From my personal opinion, I think getting into those neighborhoods with those COPs was what really turned the tide, and not just getting in there with the COPs, but getting there with the COPs and putting the Iraqi Army in there with the U.S. forces and getting out, because really I think the problem was -- was interaction with the local populous. They didn't know who to trust. They saw people running up and down the main roads and tanks and, you know, Humvees all the time, but really, they had very little interaction with the American people or the Iraqi Army for that matter. To me, that was kind of the catalyst.

Now, I think the -- the IPs was a huge piece of that because they did become -- we were able to do things independently of the Army, which helped, and I think that the way -- the reason that it was so -- the IPs were successful is because I think the people trusted the IPs more than they trusted the Army because normally your IPs are from the local area. They are from your neighborhood. Whereas, the Iraqi Army, they could be from Mosul, you know or a Shia area, you know.

INTERVIEWER: So you have Shia coming into Sunni areas and the AQI is trying to incite even greater sectarian violence.

03201225: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So with the COPs, did that really open things up for you and allow the people to get to know you and your men rather than seeing you as just uniforms?

03201225: Right. I think just as you said. I think they both went hand in hand, because, you know, there were areas in Tameem where the IPs wouldn't even go because they said it was so dangerous, and they wouldn't go without us. They would go with a lot of coaxing and only if we brought in, you know, heavy machine guns or whatever. So I think the fact that we were able to establish those footholds and get out in those areas and make it not completely safe but make it to an operating position where we could get folks in there and get the police working in those areas, I think together those two main factors were really what -- it was the trust of the IPs, knowing that they were from the local area. They were Sunni.

You know, they knew that they were pretty much on their side, and that security was starting to -- to move and establish locations. That -- I think that -- in my opinion, I think that's what started to make the big shift. The big shift was getting the people on our side or at least on the side of the Government of Iraq, and that is -- those two events, I think, are what really pushed it forward. I don't think any one by itself was the -- you know, the golden key. And I -- we wouldn't have -- the IPs wouldn't have been able to have as -- as much influence as they had if we had not been able to get security into some of those really bad areas.

INTERVIEWER: Now, did you just operate with the police and the Army, or did you also -- was there any interaction or operational planning with just Sattar's militia or any of his PSD?

03201225: No. We -- we would not do any operations just with his militia because we knew that, although there is a lot of support for Sheikh Sattar, they didn't necessarily trust his guys. And we felt that if we did in the operations with his militia, then we would be legitimizing what they did. And we know that they didn't do a lot of good things. I mean, they did some, but we were always suspect of a lot of their motives. So that Tway IP station was kind of the -- the conduit.

"We will work with your guys. If they go to the training, if they become IPs, and they become legitimate then we can do operations but we are not doing any operations with just your guys."

INTERVIEWER: Now, I have read in the -- did Sittar's militia [*edited for conciseness*] operate in a vigilante manner, offering to track down Al Qaeda and take care of them, or in some instances capture people and bring them back to base with an accusation of them being AQI? So, did the militia go out and specifically target al-Qaeda and do these night missions and then bring folks back to you, or were they doing this through legitimate means by providing the police with information and the police were then going out after al-Qaeda?

03201225: It was a mixture of both. We would -- they would bring people to us that they said were bad guys after they had already interrogated them, and a lot of times, we would end up letting them go, because, you know, where is your evidence? You know, you can't just bring us some random guy off the street and tell me that he kills Americans, and you have absolutely no -- nothing besides just your word and your opinion. So there was some of that going on.

I didn't -- from my perspective -- and mine is fairly small, because I was focused just on that one tiny area and the neighborhoods around it. I mean, I don't know of any large-scale operations that [his] militia did. You know, you would -- you would hear stories and rumors how they had a firefight with -- with different, you know, insurgents and stuff like that, and that they had got somebody. And, you know -- you know, you never know whether it was hearsay, whether it was legitimate.

Now, I mean, there was a few times, two or three occasions where they brought people to the IP station that they said were insurgents. So, you know, that it was kind of. It was kind of that Major [*name and characteristics removed*], he was usually the one who brought them over. Now, where they came from prior to, I don't know, but he would bring these guys over and say, "You know, these guys need to be arrested," and, you know, I severely questioned who these guys were and what involvement they had. They could have been enemies or non-supporters of the sheikh. They could have been some kind of family issue you know, because we did see a lot of that where, "Hey, this guy is an insurgent," but in real life, it's, you know, "We've been arguing over the land border between our areas." So his -- the militia was doing something. I don't -- I didn't -- wasn't privy to what they actually did or what impact they actually had.

What I was able to see was pretty much the more legitimate means of -- of how they did it knowing that there was illegitimate means and non, you know, governmental non-streamline, so --

INTERVIEWER: But, see, that's interesting, because, a lot of the description of the militia activities or even just the -- the tribal interactions -- okay, let's, for example, use Hit and the Mahal and the Nimer. The Special Forces articles, you know, the authors will describe a scenario where we know that the tribes know who is good and who is bad. The tribes will know who the bad guys are, who's participating in al-Qaeda, and who is supposed to be in area and who is not supposed to be in the area. And so we'll trust the tribes, because they're going to turn in the bad guys. So there is a leap of faith.

Now, in terms of Ready First, that's also been described in the literature as having to make that leap, leap of faith. So it's -- it's absolutely possible that some of the guys that were being turned in were being turned in for illegitimate reasons. You had to go through the steps to figure out what was going on. So, you know, but when you have to make these leaps of faith because you're trusting that the tribes are going to identify the nontribal players or -- in a lot of cases, members of their own tribes were actively participating in al-Qaeda. How did you resolve that, if at all?

03201225: Right. Some of it was blind faith. And that -- you know, that was hard for me just because, you know, you want everyone vetted. You want to make sure that they're doing the right thing. But, you know, I also understood that you had to have some of that faith or else nothing was going to change. We were going to be doing the same thing every year.

And, you know, I guess depending on the individual that you dealt with, you know, some saw the faith that you put into it and did the right thing. Some were rooted in how they were and never going to change. But I would say a majority of the folks wanted change. They wanted to see a difference. They were tired. They were not only -- they were tired of the insurgency. They were tired of us being there. They wanted, you know, to stabilize the situation. So, yeah, I think that was a huge leap of faith, you know, that the -- or the U.S. military took, because we had to take the word sometimes of people we didn't trust which is difficult, but sometimes you have to, you know, do that in order to be able to have further influence down the road and which kind of paid off.

INTERVIEWER: My primary question that's going to tie everything together. What dynamics, interactions, or actions used to instigate or support the Awakening movement do you think are globally applicable, at least from your perspective with in regards to what you were able to do in Tameem. What do you think could be applied in a variety of areas?

And I'll follow that up with -- with just asking you to kind of summarize some of the thoughts that you have, and what were the key points or key things that were done that you think helped with that Awakening or transitioning of Ramadi into a safer area?

03201225: Okay. I think the -- as we discussed before, I think the key events were establishing the COPs in those areas and getting the Iraqi Army or -- or Iraqi Security Forces into those areas and also the standing up of the police stations and the further expansion of their role in that area.

Those are the two key things.

As far as globally applicable, cultural training, language training, I think are probably the most important things that we can do.

INTERVIEWER: Is one more heavily weighted than the other, do you think?

03201225: I think cultural training is more heavily weighted, because language is often extremely complex, and it takes a lot of time. You could get -- in my opinion, you can bring in an expert for 2, 3 days, do a seminar on culture and get soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen what they need to know to be successful, how to interact, not just the do's and don't's, but here's a little bit of history, here is how they view the justice system, here is how they view society, here is how they view family, and point out the differences between how we see it in the U.S. and they see it in whatever country we're going to. And I think that's affordable. I think that's easily done, and it doesn't take a lot out of the unit itself and I think it would only help them.

Language, a lot more complex. You can teach the basics. You can hand out books, which are good and helpful, but to really, really be able to have that full interaction is you've got to have linguists who are proficient, at least at maybe a one, one-plus level who can at least talk basic things, because you will not always have an interpreter. We're always short of interpreters no matter what we're doing, and it's good to have somebody who understands the language, because interpreters, you know how it is. They don't always get it right. And if you don't understand the language, they may interpret what you're saying in a different light, which could offend somebody, which could -- you know, you never know if you don't know the language.

So those two things, I think are absolutely imperative. I think also in situations where you have larger organizations, like say a brigade or a division, that you have regional experts like Foreign Area Officers or maybe Civil Affairs Teams who have extensive training in that area who can come in and assist with particularly the higher level leaders who can maybe sit in on engagement sand negotiations, because somebody who understands the culture, when they're sitting, they can not only hear what's going on, but they can watch the body language and they can see the nuances. They can look around the room. They can pick up on a lot of indicators that somebody who is not trained in that area would never pick up on.

INTERVIEWER: Now, would you only have the FAOs at that level, or would you suggest a robust enough capability to even pull them down at the -- the lower echelons, the company level or --

03201225: I think -- I mean, I don't think the Army or -- or any of the services have the capacity as far as manpower to do that. I think in certain circumstances, depending on the area -- say you have a specific area that really needs a lot of work -- I think it would be invaluable to be able to have that flexibility to do that.

INTERVIEWER: So at what level do you think, in a perfect world -- do you think that the FAO would be most useful?

03201225: I would say probably brigade.

INTERVIEWER: Brigade level?

03201225: Just because FAOs are -- they are focused on the strategic as opposed to the operation or particularly the tactical. FAOs usually don't get into the tactical round. A lot of them have tactical backgrounds and understand it but they're used to dealing with diplomats. They're used to dealing with government officials, high-level individuals. That's just the kind of the training line.

Now, you know, some of the other programs, I don't know if you've heard of the AFPAC-Hands program. I was part of that. I don't -- I got out of it. I think it could have been a good program, but it is not resourced or run correctly. But if you could develop a cadre of individuals who were proficient in the language, not necessarily a linguist but kind of cultural experts know the language, that can be put down at the tactical level, even if you had one per battalion. Oh, that would just -- it would be huge because you -- that individual who worked on the battalion staff could go out with the company commander on an engagement could advise them on dealing with specifics, because they -- they don't have to be necessarily experts. They just have to understand it.

And I think a program like that would just be invaluable. It would just be -- I mean, it would be wonderful if we could have something like that, because to me, you know, in any -- whether it's high-intensity conflict, whether it's low-intensity conflict, or COIN operations, it's about relationships, and if you have -- I mean, we can look back at history, you know, world history. If you don't have the respect and the trust of the people that -- where you are operating in, you are never going to be successful. And I think if we could train people -- I mean, even on -- [laughs]. As -- as basic task as how to talk to somebody, you know that every soldier could go through, how to be respectful, I think that would pay us huge dividends in dealing with folks.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they'd be able to separate that out from the necessity in requirements of just being a soldier, though?

03201225: You know, that -- that's the hardest thing I think that we all -- all the services deal with, is that switch, that on and off switch going from kinetic and all of a sudden going to stability ops or peacekeeping ops. That is a -- I am really impressed at the ability of a lot of soldiers and marines who are able to do that. And it's very difficult, and that takes very strong leadership, you know, whether it's the platoon command, a platoon leader, company commander, to be able to enforce that and to be able to recognize. And that's the other thing, is we need to get leaders trained to be able to recognize those that are not -- be able to flip that switch and pull them out of situations that won't compromise.

NTC, I was an OC out there training and going to Iraq. And that was one of the things I always did, was I would always look for the soldiers who just didn't get it you know, and said we should just kill everyone, you know, and pull them aside and just -- and all it really took was pulling them aside and just saying, "Look, let's look at this in reality. Look at what your attitude is portraying." And I would say 99 percent of the time, that soldier would -- after being explained to would understand and say, "Oh, I get it." And I think a lot of times if we don't recognize -- you have to know your soldiers, your marines. If you don't recognize the ones that have that difficulty, then that switch is hard to -- to determine.

And, you know -- and I have gone through multiple scenarios in my head just trying to think of, you know -- the ideal scenario was -- would be you have your kinetic forces, and when the kinetics are done, they rip out with somebody who's focused on stability operations. Now, knowing that, that is the perfect -- in my opinion, that is the perfect scenario, because you're able to separate the two. You don't bring in old biases into the situation. You start out fresh. However, money, everything else plays into that, and it's really hard to do that. And I think as a part of training, we all at least get focused on the kinetics, because that's the easy part. And it's really hard to focus on the non-kinetic, and I think that we have learned that and understood that, but my fear is -- is that we will fall back into old patterns, and we will go back to the big fight again. And we're going to -- just like we did after Vietnam and we're going to lose all this institutional knowledge.

Now, I'm not saying COIN is the answer to every, you know, solution. But the things that we've learned about stability, about your red lines, you know, about where do we cross over from kinetic to, you know, more interaction with the population. That's my fear, is -- is where we're headed, because you see it as, you know, places like NTC, JRTC. They're starting to say, "All right. We're going to move away from COIN. We're going to get back to high-intensity conflict."

INTERVIEWER: There's a lot of discussion on whether or not COIN is even effective, if it's the future. In your opinion is the COIN manual effective now? Is it something that will be effective for the future, or are there things about it that need to be adjusted now knowing what we do?

03201225: I think the COIN manual was good at the time because it helped kind of provide a little framework, but I don't think the COIN manual is a one-size-fits-all for every, even any -- every -- a different COIN operation, I think that every situation is completely different. We cannot compare our experience in Iraq to Afghanistan.

We've tried, and we have failed miserably. So I think that it -- it served its purpose in the time, and I think it does have some good aspects in it, but, you know, anytime you put anything into doctrine, a lot of leaders look at it as gospel and which that's not what doctrine -- doctrine is the framework for you to make your decisions. But I think a lot of people look at the COIN manual and say, "Okay. Well, this is doctrine. We got to do it this way." And that can kind of constrict people's frame of thought into how it should be done, and I think that could hurt us, because really the guys on the ground, those platoon commanders, those soldiers, those marines, they understand. And they understand their area, and we have a communication problem from the lower levels, from the tactical level, all the way up to strategic of understanding the big picture and passing real information, not just what my boss wants to hear, so it makes me look successful. It's let's air our dirty laundry, what is not working.

INTERVIEWER: So how would you resolve that? Just -- because a lot of times, the ability to pass along that information is hampered by the fear of repercussion.

03201225: Right-- I mean -- [laughs] -- you can't change people. But that's what's got to change, the perception of leaders to, you know, not -- I think the mentality has got to change within the whole dynamic of the military of, you know, that we promote differences of opinions that is tolerated if you don't necessarily agree.

We all -- we're all in the military. We understand, okay, if I air my opinion and you say, "Yeah, thanks for your opinion. You're still going to do it this way," okay, I got it, not a problem. You're the boss. As long as we take that approach, it's fine, but, you know, maybe there should -- I mean, there could be more collaboration between companies, which I saw a big change when they started instituting the company ISTs. Have you heard of those?

INTERVIEWER: No.

03201225: They started doing that -- we started -- 2007, we started really pushing that at NTC. Basically, a company intel cell.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is that -- is that similar to EPIC?

03201225: Yeah, I think it is.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

03201225: And they -- the companies would share information with each other. And that, we saw just paid off huge dividends because you had somebody -- instead of calling to the battalion all the time, to the S2 who is overtasked, because he is trying to do a thousand different things you can reach out to your fellow company, you know, your buddies, and say "What's going on in your area? What -- what can we do? What's working? What's not working?" So I think if we improve communication with some type of collaboration, maybe it's just as simple as like doing a sensing session. A battalion commander or operations S3 coming down and sitting down with a company with all the soldiers and saying, "All right. What's working in your areas? What's not? What do you see?" You know, it's -- it's leadership involvement at the lowest levels, and even higher levels, you know, generals, colonels coming down and not just coming in and doing a 5-minute walkthrough of, you know -- you know how it is. We come down. We do a quick walkthrough. All right, everything looks good. They show you the best part of what's going on and then --

INTERVIEWER: Shake your hand. You did a good job.

03201225: Yeah. And that's great. And that's important, but I think if we could have a little more focus on -- we got -- we got to get the voices of these young soldiers heard because, you know, a company spends an entire year, elicit no

feedback, they RIP out. And another company comes in, and they start from scratch. And I think the RIP/TOA process, instead of it being just among leadership, it needs to be soldier to soldier. You go find a soldier that is whatever taking your job or whatever your area is, and they get together. Because I didn't see that, and I -- I just-- Amazement. It's like why. You know, the company commanders, that's great, but we don't see what's happening in the neighborhood that these platoons are in every single day.

INTERVIEWER: Did you not get the chance to read any of their ops reports or DIIRs or anything like that?

03201225: We didn't have -- when we took over, we didn't have a lot. I didn't have access to any of that stuff. And we had a lot of, at the time, computer issues and trying to get SIPR up so we could pull you know, classified information. So, now, for us, it was worth of mouth. That was it.

INTERVIEWER: [*edited for conciseness*] One aspect of this project is to fill in some of the literature gaps, which includes in my opinion, a lack of clarity on how much engagement was occurring even to the lowest ranks with locals. These engagements may have provided opportunities that could have been capitalized on. Also, that social conditions played a large role in the Awakening, that the people were sick of AQI and were losing money and business, and wanted al Qaeda gone. Can you comment?

03201225: Yes, absolutely. Hundred percent agree on that point, is the Awakening didn't happen because of any one, two, three, or four people. It happened because of those soldiers, marines, airmen, sailors that were on the ground making those day-to-day interactions, because it wasn't until the people knew that we were on their side that we were more than just, you know, the super soldier with all this equipment hanging off of us, that we were real people, just like them, that there begins that change in attitude.

They are the ones. Those thousands on the ground, they are the ones that should have the credit. They are the ones who work side by side with the Iraqi Police, with the Iraqi Army to help train them, because, you know, a lot of people say, "Well, they went to, you know their Jordan training or their Army training," but really, on-the-job training is where they really get trained because those soldiers and those police look at those -- their fellow American military members, and they kind of want to emulate them in a way. And if they're a good influence, then you have a great influence over them.

So, you know, I think you're absolutely right. A lot of times, we focus so much on the large-scale engagements, when what's really important is those small daily interactions with heads of neighborhoods, with small tribal leaders, because if you can gain the influence of those folks then that can spread where it will spread. If you engage a sheikh or a governor, you know, they'll [?] influences among the people that protect them. Politically, it sounds great, but on the ground, you know, what's perception of the people?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And at least in Iraq, you're talking about a scenario where the people are your informants for the sheikh. So I think that why it's important to tell the story of the -- just the sheer quantity of daily engagement between all the different service branches and Anbar as, influencing the Awakening. If we look at this in terms of training then maybe part of the answer is to put a heavier emphasis on early training in terms of culture engagement, understanding perspectives, how to talk to people how to respect people. So maybe the shift needs to be on the -- the soldier at basic rather than in the leaders?

03201225: Right. Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: So are there any final points or anything additional that you'd like to provide that may assist this project or that you'd like to provide?

03201225: I think that, you know, you captured it just a second ago, but when a company is able to capture their daily -- and they should be. I mean, that's the whole point of a lot of these company intel support teams or whatnot is. You know, when they go out on a patrol and they interact, they document, well, who they speak to and what they speak about, and they can be great surveyors. "What's wrong with your neighborhood?" "Oh, we have water problems." You know, simple things that we could affect immediately i.e., they go in, they find out that the well is broken. Okay. "Well, guess what? I can bring you in four pallets of water until you get it fixed." What a great, you know, investment you just made in that community. So, you know, that gathering the intel at the company level and a way to package it and pushing it on up.

Now, you know, we always run into the trouble, it's a lot of information that you're trying to truncate into actionable intelligence. So, you know, I think that we've got to be able to look at the battalion and brigade level at the opportunities and how to exploit them, to assist, instead of -- I guess what I'm kind of getting down to is the whole Army doctrine of the lower supports the higher should kind of be a flip. It should be at the battalion level, what am I doing to support a company.

And a lot of -- a lot of units have got it right, but a lot of them are just like feed me information, feed me information, feed me information. But it's capturing those small engagements on the ground and seeing what works, what doesn't work, and applying that across the board where it's applicable. I think that's extremely -- you know, I think that's the heart of it, and going back to what you said about training, you know, it's absolutely -- it is not too hard to put this training into basic -- to have -- I mean, we have yearly refreshers on equal opportunity, sexual harassment, all these other mandatory things. Why not one on just basic cultural awareness? It does not have to be country-specific -- but how to deal with people. You know, just simple everyday interaction and engagement -- or engagement, that's probably what I'm looking for, a class on engagement. That not only develops the individual personally, but it will definitely help them out in their mission when they move on.

So, yeah, I mean, key points, I think, number one, to kind of retract a little bit of what I said earlier was definitely to soldiers on the ground and the everyday interaction. The COPs being established, to allow that to happen and then the IP force that was able to sort of legitimize the ISF in the area. So I think those are the key things, you know, and I think

that we've all come very far since then, and we've learned a lot of these mistakes. I just hope that we don't lose them along the way.

And the one thing I will say that I thought was an extremely effective program was the Marine -- is it the CAT program, the female engagement -- no, the FET. The FET program, that -- those -- huge. I wish the Army had those.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I thought the Army did have something similar.

03201225: We have something similar, but it's not as well organized and trained as far as the FETs are, but the FETs that I saw and have seen operate have just been invaluable because the information that they can get is just incredible.

INTERVIEWER: In Iraq, did you guys deal with the Lionesses?

03201225: Yeah. That's what -- yeah, Lionesses.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

03201225: I found they were extremely -- especially for intelligence gathering because, you know, in compounds where you go into a compound and all the men are out working, you're not allowed in the compound. But female soldier or marine goes in there, talks to the wives, "Hey, what issues are you facing?" They just can get all kinds of good information. I mean, on cultural, social -- I mean, just simple as cultural and social issues and, you know -- I know there were cases where, you know, Iraqi females would dime-out people that they knew were insurgents that we would have never had access to.

So, yeah, extremely effective, and I think that's something that, you know, all branches should really look at continuing. I think they're vital.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful. Well, I really very much appreciate your time.

03201225: Well, thanks for coming all the way up here.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Not a problem.

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Interview 8: 03201227

Interview 03201227, 03April 2012
Date of Deployment: 2005, then 06-07; Location of Deployment: Initially Fallujah, then Ramadi
Billet: [removed] CO

INTERVIEWER: Okay. It's April 3rd, and I am interviewing 03201227. Sir, you have received the Informed Consent. Do you have any questions or concerns about it?

03201227: No.

[*Edited for conciseness: interviewer goes through maps with 03201227]*

03201227: With [*identifying information removed*] commander. I deployed with [*removed*] at the Fallujah first in '05 from March to October of 2005 and then remained with the battalion for a second deployment, and we deployed to join initially 1 MEF, which later became II MEF, and we were the single Marine battalion that was assigned to the Army brigade, which was part of II MEF. And we deployed in late August early September time frame of 2006, and we were one of the extended battalions and left in May of '07. And so our area of operations was in the city proper, and so oftentimes you'll hear Ramadi described to include the rural areas, which you were starting to describe, and Tam'eem and such. So when I talk about Ramadi, I'm talking about the urban portion, city proper, which you see depicted here by the dark piece. So everything within this was our area of operations within the city proper. We controlled the entry control points in and out of the city [*03201227 shows Interviewer locations on map of Ramadi*]. And so the governor's residence was in our AO along with the government center and the hospital and the like. So this was the greater Ramadi proper area where we were located at.

Our initial disposition of forces when we took over from 3rd battalion, 8th Marines, was -- their main battalion headquarters was at Hurricane Point, and they had several locations within that battle space, which we later expanded for both the Iraqi army and the local police that we established while we were there.

Here were the three primary lines of effort that we pursued, no surprise there. Neutralize anti-Iraqi elements; train, employ, and operate with and conduct and support CMO and IO efforts. And I have a written copy of that, you can look over later, and basically, the key element in this was making sure down to the individual Marine level that they understood exactly why we were doing what we were doing. So that was a priority to us, and so that's something you can look over [*03201227 gives Interviewer a copy of some documents*].

This was similar mission, essential tasks, which were utilized in Fallujah. So this was nothing extremely new relative to that. The day prior to us officially taking over the battle space, we sat down with the brigade commander well within what we perceived to be both the MEF's intent for why we were there and what our mission was along with the brigade's mission and intent, and we basically laid out a four-block plan that spanned the first 120 days that we were

there. So before we ever assumed the battle space, I sat down and laid out exactly where we saw our operations being focused and covered each 30-day period and basically a four-phased approach.

At that time, Colonel [*name removed*] concurred with our approach and supported us throughout, and so that kind of lays out at least our going-in position for that along with some particular coordinated instructions for our commanders. I had the benefit of, obviously, going on a pre-deployment site survey, which I had went on with my primary staff and commanders. Moreover, which was not always the traditional way, I took the same group on the advance party. So I took the company commanders, myself, and primary staff. We went on the advance party, because our intent was when we took over, not to lose momentum and move right into operations.

INTERVIEWER: That advance party, where was the training or the -- was it an exercise or --

03201227: An advance party is prior to the battalion deploying, you go in advance of that unit to your area of operations and make ready for them receive the main body, but more importantly, it allows you to be on the ground 2 weeks prior, so that you can then reassess, validate what you had seen and derived electronically.

So the whole time we were at Camp Lejeune, we were developing and tracking what was going on in developing what our concept of employment would be and where we thought we could make a difference. The mission wasn't to do the relief in place. The mission was to continue on thereafter, and so that was our intent when we went on the advance party and were able to confirm, refine what our plan was, which we presented, and then we went on to start executing that.

INTERVIEWER: I apologize. We used to refer to that as the "right-seat/left-seat" before the RIP.

03201227: That did occur, the right seat and left seat, but that right-seat/left-seat allows you to validate, confirm, reassess, refine a plan of employment, not just assume what the other guy is doing. I mean, you are gong to try and move the ball forward, pick up where they left off, and so that's how we started out there.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any communication challenges that you ran into while you were there in terms of trying to communicate with the other units that were in the area?

03201227: Not particularly, no. That wasn't a major challenge. When we first assumed a battle space -- I didn't have a picture of that. I only have the after pieces of it. We were partnered with one Iraqi Army battalion, and there was one police station on the far western edge, and they were fairly isolated and didn't venture out a whole lot much beyond the immediate vicinity of the West Ramadi police station. And the Iraqi Army battalion was on Camp Ramadi and only had a forward location still here on the western portion. You know, when we initially got there, it was probably 8 to 10 firefights a day and freedom of movement. You often hear them talk about the racetrack. I don't know if you've heard

that. This is the sauk, right across from the government center. It was very limited, and freedom of action was pretty much upper hand towards the enemy at that point.

CMO efforts were minimal, probably only around $10,000 working at the time relative to that particular line of effort, so that was kind of the lay of the land when we first got there. The governor obviously lived in our AO. We provided security and worked in coordination with his PSD, moving him to and from the government center, which we occupied and provided fixed-site security for. So as an engagement or a partner relationship, the governor obviously had access to the MEF forward level, as well the brigade commander, but I did have the benefit on a daily basis of obviously working with and talking to the governor and took full advantage of those opportunities and his situational awareness within the AO and treated him with due respect you would expect of a governor, and so that's kind of the way I engaged with and treated him and was a very beneficial relationship in that respect. And as we moved into -- are you interested in specifics of the Awakening and things of that, right?

INTERVIEWER: Yes

03201227: So one aspect of that and then I will just kind of fast-forwarded, I mean, we conducted a major battalion operation every week for 6 months straight. So there was 24 major operations over the course of 6 months. One of the first major ones within the first 30 days was to move right into the most contested area to establish -- at that time, they were calling them "combat outposts" and "COPs."

We didn't feel like that was an appropriate term, and so we settled on "security station," because part of our intent was to communicate to the population that this is a -- a "combat outpost" don't sound like things are getting back to normal to me. So it's a security station. It was seized and occupied with us along with the Iraqi Army and limited police, which we later populated with more police. But I didn't execute that operation until I had spoken with the governor about it.

I told him he needed to stay home for about the next 3 days because it would take, you know, we estimate about 72 hours. It was a pretty major, major operation going into an area that was heavily contested, and so we were coordinating pretty closely with him in that respect as well the Iraqi battalion that we were partnered with.

We also benefitted from the transition team (*MiTT*), which was partnered with that Iraqi battalion, came from our battalion, which is not typically or always the case. And in this particular situation, we had formed that transition team not knowing whether we were going to be employed, but we formed that team with about 12 individuals who had made the previous deployment. I had my battalion XO who had deployed with me. If I could spend $12 and get 300 back, that would be an investment I would make every day, and so it was a pretty solid team that we brought together months in advance. They trained together, and we were able to work out with I MEF prior to our deployment to have them reposition to actually partner with the battalion that was in our battle space.

Major [*name removed*] was the MiTT chief for the 2nd.

[*Edited for conciseness: discussion includes names, and a break in recording at the participant's request*]

So we established the first joint security station, [*location removed*]. Probably one of the more significant events which occurred soon thereafter was a meeting between myself and Governor Mamoun. About this same time, there are engagements, which are going on with Sheikh Sittar in the rural areas relative to recruiting and police, but make no mistake, there are no police in the city proper, except for the guys on the very western edge, which are not from the city. They are basically imported from the Jobs Program, police that are coming from outside the city proper in the rural areas. And that's not to take anything away from their bravery for the obvious risk associated with them assuming those responsibilities, and I applaud them for that, but it wasn't like they're spreading out into the city proper at this point, understanding the security situation as it is.

The brigade was focused on working, I would say, with Sheikh Sittar at that point. They had limited success in getting anything out of the governor, I believe. There was some frustration there, and that's fine. I understand that, but within my area of responsibility, it wasn't a frustration I could turn my back on. I mean, I had to work with those individuals that we could identify.

One of the questions you asked earlier was at what stage or time frame did engagement with locals become mission-critical. We saw that as a going-in, mission-critical requirement. You know, it wasn't like -- I wasn't an advocate of "clear, hold, and build". I think all three of those go concurrently, not sequentially. I mean, sometimes you can clear an area by the actions that you take relative to creating jobs or security without ever having to fire a shot. So they just vary in different areas. So we approached clear, hold, and build or neutralize the insurgent force. We'd choose the word "neutralize" for a reason. You don't have to kill and capture every one of them. Neutralize, train, employ the ISF. We saw pursuing all three of those with equal vigilance concurrently, just in varying degrees, and that's a small nuance point that I hope people appreciate. You can do those in varying degrees. I mean, in an area in which you don't know who the key players are, that don't mean you turn your back on it. You start trying to develop. You may start with low-hanging individuals, but you start with what you have, and it may be just discussions at that point. Obviously, one well-known key individual in our area of responsibility was the governor. So we're obviously engaging with him.

INTERVIEWER: Did you employ that also outside of Ramadi, or was it different in Fallujah in doing the concurrent clear, hold, build?

03201227: No, that was my first deployment. In Fallujah, the regimental commander was Colonel Gurganus, now General Gurganus. His Ops-O was Lieutenant Colonel Bill Mullen, who developed that, and so that was the approach even on my first deployment in '05, which was just post Al-Fajr. So we had already done one deployment utilizing this same approach, no different. So, I mean, similarly, and as I mentioned, as part of the initial entry forces in 1999 in Kosovo, it was no different. I mean, it's kind of like right out of the Small Wars manual. You spread out. You go into every village and town, and you start from the ground up. You don't sit in some big FOB.

So our first breakout of that was the initial security station at 17th Street, pretty significant event, and it was at that point that the governor came to me and said he had not taken this type of step before, but he had a list of 125

individuals. And he also identified an individual that he recommended to be the police chief. Most of these were from his tribe, which was albu-Alwan, which was in this area, but his greatest concern and the conversation we were having was that, you know, if these individuals come forth because they are from the city proper -- and that was what I was looking for was local security, people who were from the city, who knew the city streets, who knew who was supposed to be there, who was not supposed to be there. People who came from the rural area, from the Awakening, if you will, which wasn't called that at the time, God bless them, but they weren't going to go down in the city. They knew better than that. They weren't supposed to be there. It would not have been safe for them.

So his major concern was if these folks come forward, can I trust you to stand beside them and provide the necessary support, because them and along with their families were all going to be in jeopardy from the minute they're all in, because there was not going to be any half-stepping at that point within the city proper. And so I appreciated the opportunity he was providing for us. I'm not so naive as to think that he might have not also been trying to consider whether or not he needed to offset a future power struggle, that the momentum around him is being created with the rural activities and Sittar. Either way, it didn't matter to me. The fact of the matter was I was now going to be able to recruit and employ local security forces.

Now, there are inherent risks in that. How much was their involvement with the former insurgent activity? Clearly, there was a risk associated with that. So, basically, at that point, we took his list. We ran it across our databases to see if we had any of those individuals that we had significant concerns over. He assured me he had vetted the list. And so with that, probably the catalyst event in my opinion for Ramadi proper, within the city, was standing up a new police station, which was the Al Warrar police station. W-a-r-r-a-r, Al Warrar police station.

So the governor gave me a list of individuals. He gave me an individual who was capable, in his opinion, of being the chief, and he also identified a location where he thought would be useful. And so with that, we set in motion a plan to establish a police station with all the necessary force protection that you would have for a Marine unit. We also established -- at that point, we started re-task organizing our battalion and creating sort of out-of-hide, what we called, "Police Augmentation Teams." So guys who were platoon commanders or platoon sergeants or squad leaders, we were creating our own PiTTs at that point, basically, because the single PiTT that reported to the province or the one police station, you know, I wanted Marines living, eating, sleeping 24/7 in the police station, and so those individuals didn't exist. So we created them out of hide, and we established the Al-Warrar police station, and we permanently assigned individuals who didn't rotate in and out who could establish relationships. And then at that point, things started changing pretty quickly, because now you had to have the ability. I mean, they knew who were supposed to be in the city.

So now the police chief at that point, I basically sat down with him. I brought in the Iraqi battalion commander. All three of us sat down, and from there, we started planning operations together going forward. So the information and intel that the police were collecting at that point, you needed to be able to react within 15, 20 minutes, but because you had a permanent Marine presence with communications capability -- I mean, for example, if one of this policeman who are in plain clothes came back from the sauk and he could come back and say, "Hey, there's somebody here that's not supposed to be here," then they're ready to move in 20 minutes.

Well, at that point, you had the ability to communicate that to Marine units all around the area, coordinate support. We could go together. He could go independent. I mean, his greatest concern, [*was*] that we were going to shoot him. And so from that point forward, it just continued to build. But that was the catalyst event for this. Very capable. We joked. He was in the first Gulf War, as was I as a first lieutenant. And so we spent time expanding now. So now as he established this police force, which it was a constant challenge throughout the deployment to get him paid, and so we continued to work through that, but to our benefit, the governor lived in our AO. So he could exert substantial influence on the provincial police and Baghdad relative to trying to get those guys paid.

INTERVIEWER: With the standing up of the police, were you employing them at the time before sending them through training, or were they immediately put into that training program for police?

03201227: No, they were employed. Employment is training. Basic security operations, they were capable of doing. Now, concurrent with that, we would try to filter them through -- the brigade had a small course that was an interim course that we would try to filter them through. We had them on the list to go to the actual police academy.

INTERVIEWER: In Jordan?

03201227: Right. At the time in Jordan. We developed out own, you know, consolidate, organize, professionalize, you know. So we had our own police training program that was 5 days in which we used the Iraqi Army. I mean, that's a sergeant major who was the chief instructor from the Iraqi Army battalion, because we wanted to have Iraqi Army, our police, all serving alongside. Basically, I got blue shirts initially, and I put them all in blue shirts. This is later after we got more equipment for them, but initially, it was as simple as getting blue shirts for them, so that we wouldn't shoot them basically.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any type of training that you guys had and that would assist you in training police as opposed to other Iraqi Army, or were you just trying to --

03201227: Basic security ops. At this stage, it's not like there's a police on the beat, standing on the corner alone and not afraid. They were probably doing more paramilitary operations, which used basic security op techniques and tactics. So a basic entry-squad level of training for patrolling, weapons employment, and those types of things were probably more akin to the activities that we were undertaking.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of training -- and this is a slight segue, but in terms of training, especially if you're looking at global application, things that we could improve upon, if we're going to continue to have Marines train police and do -- some people refer to it as "armed humanitarianism" or "stability operations" and trying to train police forces. Is it useful to have Marines do that and include perhaps some type of police training for the Marines?

03201227: I think it's a continuum. Right now, for example, in Afghanistan, I would tell you that what you see them doing with the village stability operations is exactly what we were doing as we first started out, by and large, very similar, and I think you can take a general purpose force, for that matter, and do rudimentary security op, operations training with an initial stand-up of security force personnel. And then it's a continuum over time as you professionalize that force, and the security situation doesn't require paramilitary. You know, if it's moving towards stable, you want to see there's more like police-like activities. You are investigating crimes. So that continuum will then require more specialized training for a policeman.

INTERVIEWER: Would that, do you think, come from within the Marine Corps, or should it be looked at elsewhere like with SMEs or police trainers that would come in as augments?

03201227: I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: I think we place a large amount of training on our Marines.

03201227: It depends on what you want them to do. If you're asking an infantryman to make somebody the next CSI guy, no. That's probably not what a general purpose force is going to do, and I think we have different levels of capability that we have within our general purpose force. I just described taking your average infantry squad and employ a local security force. We also have advisor trainers, which we provide additional information and skills, which could take something to the next level potentially. I mean, we have special operations forces, which have additional skill sets. We add on law enforcement personnel who can also add subject-matter expertise to this, and so our -- as part of the four-block plan, it was basically to continue our permanent presence, basically moving from west to east across the city.

Basically, you start out with -- you know, when you have very little information on what the enemy is doing or the local population and you are trying not to disenfranchise that which you are seeking to -- that we both need, the enemy needs and we need, so we're both after the same thing. So you start out, you know -- in our mind, we didn't want to clear and disenfranchise whole portions of populations. So it was more that we would seize a piece of key terrain. We would only clear that which we needed to safely establish a permanent presence, because we didn't want to drive to work. We wanted Marines to be able to walk around with the police on foot and engage the local population, and that was the best way to gather information to further isolate the enemy from the population itself.

So we are basically -- it's almost like an island-hopping campaign. If you look across our 24 ops that we did in 6 months where we basically move from west to east, seizing key terrain, establishing a permanent presence, as that area is conducive for introducing more and more local security forces when it's highly contested, the last thing I want to do is take a fledgling police force and put them in harm's way and then break their confidence or will or spirit and overload them. We didn't ask them to do anything I wouldn't expect a Marine to do if he wasn't trained to do it. So when it was high end seizing a piece of key terrain, it was probably us and the Iraqi Army with limited number of police that the police chief thought was capable of that piece of it, which gave us a lot of great information.

I mean, literally, people would be in tears. When we would go door to door in these homes and they would see a local policeman, they immediately recognized who that guy was, and they would literally start crying. And it was like, "Okay, it's safe now." It's amazing. Perception is reality. I mean, I could put a hundred Marines on that street corner and go, "It's secure," and everybody wouldn't come out of their house. You know, in your neighborhood if there's a hundred National Guard guys on the corner, do you think it's safe? Well, no. You put one policeman out there in a blue shirt -- the security situation hadn't changed, but in their mind, it is now safe.

INTERVIEWER: Returning to normal state to some sense.

03201227: It's returning to normal. So that was the key. So our going in position -- and these are some of the lessons from Fallujah. You know, the Iraqi Army is still an army, and when you're trying to move towards stability, improving the situation, the army and paramilitary actions have to move to the periphery in order to return to normalcy. So we wanted to focus our attention on the police, more importantly local police.

As we continued to expand, we were able to increase our recruiting population from within the city proper, and so now the hundred-plus guys on the roles at Al-Warrar, well, we're going to move 25 of them over here to 17th Street. The infrastructure is better, so now you have truly police, Iraqi Army, and a Marine rifle company, all three, in the joint security station sharing in, occupying the same living, eating together, occupying the same combat operations center in terms of their radios, our radios, the army's radios all sharing information, conducting operations together.

INTERVIEWER: There was some discussion I've had previously regarding the use of speaker systems and messaging to the community, and I thought that was a pretty innovative idea. Can you talk a little bit about that, and was that something employed elsewhere as well?

03201227: No. Let me finish one thought on the police recruitment piece, and I'll talk about the “Voice of Ramadi”.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

03201227: As you talk about all the many contributing factors, because there's not just one thing, one of the contributing factors, I felt like, was the fact that Sheikh Sittar and -- and I like to use the term "elders." People with respect. Guys join the Marine Corps because there's key influencers, whether it's an uncle, it's a dad, grandfather. Some key influencer tells them that's an honorable thing to do. There was absolute complementary effect. All in the rural areas, guys are joining the police force. There's some momentum being created whereby it is now becoming an honorable thing to become a policeman. So if you're 17 years old, you want a gun, a car, and money, that was the insurgency, all right?

So now we have -- whether they're a sheikh or not is irrelevant. Is that a 2005 sheikh or is that a 1990 sheikh? Who carded that guy? He might have been the barber 4 years ago, but it is an elder. It is somebody of influence, that people

respect his opinion. So when the opinion of those individuals, which we are now uncovering more quickly who those folks are and we're engaging with them, they're communicating that it is now an honorable thing for these 17-year-old albu-Alwan folks to join the police force, and, oh, by the way, they're 17 years old, they get a weapon, they get paid, and they get a car. And Marines aren't shooting at them anymore, and they're doing something that their elders say is an honorable thing. So now you're starting to create some momentum.

And I would tell you along this particular street right here (*points to a location on the map*), many of the families lived here, and we had to basically safeguard all of those folks, because within early on of establishing this police station, there was a major attack against all these families, because they were trying to get them to fold up, because that was the most dangerous thing to the enemy. I mean, now, you know, we have local police who are routing these guys, kicking them out of their city, and so they came after them pretty hard, and so --

See, this starts out like this. If I had a build-slide I could show you how none of this existed. It was very limited footprint. This was after the fact, but we continued to build. So it was like, okay, we started out by moving the Iraqi Army off of Camp Ramadi and putting them in the battle space, and then we got them to co-locate with the Marines at our forward locations. Then we started with the first police station. Then we built to moving them into this location. Then we get them to move. Everywhere we go now, we're building joint security stations, which are co-habitated and operating together, Marine, Iraqi Army, and police, and this is a continual process over the whole time we're there. You're just kind of jumping to the end of the story here, if you will.

INTERVIEWER: All right, sorry.

03201227: No, no, no. That's fine. But I just wanted to make sure, you know, you kind of have to understand the dynamics of what's going on in and around in terms of the momentum that's being created by other like activities, whether it's in al-Qaim or in Tam'eem. This communication is starting to perpetuate itself across the area.

Now, one of the things that I made clear early on when we established this is there's only one elected government, and that's who we take instructions from. The governor was the elected official, not a sheikh, not Sheikh Sittar or anybody else that lives in here, and any instructions that come from anybody other than the chief of police, the provincial police chief, or the governor, that's not who we take orders from.

By this point, we're also engaging with Sheikh Sittar and his brother, and I met with them, although it was primarily a brigade. But at this point, we're also -- I said we have concurrent operations in terms of our civil/military operations that we're doing, because we're trying to create jobs. We're letting contracts now that didn't used to exist. Folks are starting to make some life choices. So some of the sheikhs are also contractors, Sheikh Sittar and his brother being one of them, and so being one of the contractors, I engaged with him. And [*removed*] battalion executive officer, who is Major [*name removed*] -- you may want to speak with him -- who met daily, weekly with Sheikh Sittar and his brother. They talked primarily about contracts, and we limited that conversation to things they might be able to affect in here. We were also working contracts from other key contractor sheikh folks from in here.

I primarily partnered with the legitimate government aspect a little bit, to be honest with you, to maintain some separation, because I also had -- I want to reassure the governor that, you know, I was working with him. Now, he recognized that I'm also working with everybody else, but I sort of leaned in that direction, if you will, and so that's kind of our civil affairs team, and the XO was meeting on a routine basis. Major rubble contract right in front of the government center went to Sheikh Sittar and his brother, removing all of this. So now we're coordinating police, security, jobs. We're hauling off all the blown-up vehicles that were in here. That don't look like the place getting any safer to me. So those are small things. We're obviously repairing the bridge. We're standing up the bank. So we are getting after concurrently, neutralize the enemy, stand up and employ the Iraqi Security Forces, undertake civil/military operations, which instill confidence in the local population in their government, not in us. I didn't really care about what they thought about us. I wanted them to see that as being a result of the governor. There was no mayor. There was no local municipal type of anything at that point, and eventually, you kind of move from a picture of that to the tune of $10 million is working here. It was 10,000 to 10 million by the time we were leaving.

One of the issues that we ran into was, if perception is reality, how do we communicate to the population the things that are taking place across this city with their local police, with the activities that bring back basic civil function? A guy still wants to raise his family. He wants a job. He needs electricity. He needs water, you know.

Some of those things are starting to happen now where we've established security, and I need to be able to communicate that, because remember, you know, mission essential task 1 was "neutralize the enemy," and you can neutralize enemy forces potentially by communicating to the local population, "Hey, you know what, if you want to get some of the great things that are going on, on this side of town, how about play a role in identifying the bad guy? And then good things can happen your way."

Within [*unit removed*], we had what we called a "non-kinetic effects working group," and the battalion XO headed that up. So the operations officer, the intel officer, they obviously knew all the high-value targets and the kinetic actions and the cordon and searches that were planned with the police. They were aware of all those things, but the non-kinetic effects with the civil affairs that were ongoing, so that those were complementary, you know, you didn't want to necessarily disenfranchise the elements of a population that you were just trying to open a school in, for example. It would be detrimental.

We had some issues with probably, I want to say over 60 percent -- it could have been 70 percent of all indirect fire that the brigade received was going right on top of this 17th Street security station the minute we put it in there, because they wanted us out of there. They didn't want us walking around on foot, and we're having a challenging time locating, because they were shoot-n-scoot in here, and I'm like, okay, let's start from scratch. How can we -- instead of the normal ways, how might we be able to at least move the enemy into a position more to our advantage? And as we were having that discussion, we started looking at information operations might be a way to do that. Then we started looking at, okay, well, how do they receive information, you know, pamphlets, this, that. Like at all the entry control points, just like we utilized in Fallujah, we had something as simple as mark whiteboards. So as soon as something happened, we could write in Arabic what happened in town, so everybody -- 5,000 people come in. They can see our version of what just happened, and you can communicate it that way.

Well, we realized that, you know what, we're being required right now by the brigade to report on what's being said over the mosque loud speakers every day, positive or negative. It looks like the population receives their information that way, and so quite frankly, we decided at that point that we were going to establish our own loud speaker broadcast. I was able to utilize some of our funds and sent one of our locals to Baghdad to purchase basic mosque loud speakers.

Our intent for those -- and they didn't start out all over. They started in one location. We felt that it was important. We called it "The Voice of Ramadi." The format was basically we started each one of the broadcasts out, and this was all developed. My interpreter was just a phenomenal guy, [*name removed*]. He acted -- he was pretty much a full-on staff member, special staff officer as far as I'm concerned. I mean, he was a hired contractor, but he had full access to everything that I did. He had the trust of the governor and everybody else. He spoke with the right dialect, and so I had him even before this in the evenings monitoring all of the local -- all the TV stations telling me what's going on around me kind of thing.

He played a key role along with our non-kinetic effects working group, our civil affairs folks, our PSYOPs folks, and basically developing a format, which started out with the local -- with the Iraqi national anthem. That preceded every broadcast. We were capitalizing on a previous effort we had, which we went out and purchased Iraqi flags and lined the streets and the bridge here with Iraqi flags, and, of course, we placed them on all of our police stations. We communicated nothing in U.S. Every brief, you know, it was all about the Iraqi forces there. So we wanted to capitalize on that, not that we thought we were going to build a sense of nationalism overnight. So you started out with the national anthem. We followed that up with local sports and news. We would pull excerpts off of BBC and things that were of interest to the local population, and we'd basically communicate those. And we did so probably for about 2 weeks.

It was not a PSYOP operation. It was strictly just information, and then we started noticing people would come out. They became sort of sensitized to, hey, they hear the Iraqi national anthem. They come outside. Now they're listening, and they're getting the news. It was at that point then that we started folding into that our own local information, which allowed us to then communicate what the local police was doing and all the great things they're doing. We were able to communicate schools that were open and where the crossing points were, what some of the rules were that were going on.

Then we started to expand that, and we expanded that to every one of these locations. I would bring the governor, and he would sit down and was kind of like the President's weekly address. We would sit down, and he would write a script. I would give him a Diet Coke, and we would record him. And if he'd mess up, we'd start over again. So then we would fold those in every now and then when he thought appropriate. The police chief, we knew it was effective when we started seeing these recordings being copied in Syria. They were showing up over there. People were recording them, because he was quite the fire and brimstone guy when he got on the hook.

It also gave us the immediate ability whenever something kinetic would happen, for example -- maybe the enemy would shoot a mortar round, injure civilians. Well, up to that point, they would be the first one out with the word on the street that U.S. forces had once again injured a local civilian. Well, see, we could beat them to the punch now. We could go right on there. We had set recordings, and you could get on The Voice and immediately tell them. We had safety

messages. Guys would get on there. The local police at each one of these locations, if a firefight broke out, would get on there and say, "Hey, you need to get your kids. You need to get inside. The bad guys are at it again, and your local police are moving now to get the bad guys."

So now we were the first. We had the first story. We had the first version of it. We could come back after that and tell them that, once again, so-and-so was injured, but your police have now taken them to a local hospital, and they're receiving necessary treatment. Thank you for your continued reporting. Now, that might have been a little PSYOPs, because at some point, we might not have had a lot of reporting. But I'll tell you what, we had three targets that we're after. One was the police. The police started feeling pretty proud about what they were doing, and they were like, "Well, this is the way we always did it." So now they are feeling pretty proud about what they're doing. The local population is now better informed, you know? I'm not saying that was the only version. I'm sure the bad guys at one point tried to put loud speakers on a car and drive around, which we targeted, you know, because they were trying to -- action, reaction, counter-action to that. And the third audience there was the enemy, in fact. So when they are now starting to hear that the local population is reporting on them, it is causing them a lot of concern.

Now there are people moving around in civilian clothes who are policemen, who are telling on them. The local population is now telling on them. Pretty soon, it's getting pretty challenging for them to conduct operations in the area. So that was probably one of the most effective tools that we came up with. The brigade adopted it and started trying to use similar forms of this. As well, I think, the MEF, across the MEF, some folks started taking a look at it. We continued to refine those broadcasts to include a prayer at the appropriate time. Obviously, we didn't want to complete with the Call to Prayer. There's certain prayers that's used in the evening versus morning, and of course, we made sure that we included those.

Now, make no mistake, our initial broadcast, although it came from a police station, we never did any from some PSYOP vehicle. That's ridiculous. It had to be credible. It had to come from there, where the people knew it was from them. The initial ones, my interpreter, who sounded like a local, but pretty soon, then they started being able to do their own with us recording them.

INTERVIEWER: So it sounds like [*he*] was pretty important

03201227: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: So getting back to maybe a key lesson out of this, the Marines have the CULAD program, and they are really putting some weight behind trying to utilize CULADs as least in Afghanistan.

03201227: What's that?

INTERVIEWER: The Cultural Advisors. They're indigenous to the area but naturalized US citizens.

03201227: He was absolutely a cultural advisor to us, myself and him.

INTERVIEWER: So to me, it sounds like this is a boon towards continuing something like the cultural advisor program instead of -- I mean, like a lot of talk has been about FAOs. Well, the FAOs tend to be at higher levels in embassies and not necessarily as available (*to brigades and battalions*), because there's so much that gets invested into creating a FAO that it may not necessarily be possible in terms of resourcing. But the CULAD position might be a good way to continue assisting in that regard.

03201227: Right. You know, as we continued to sort of expand our permanent presence, you know, which is you can't drive to work across the area, we continued to develop Augmentation Teams out of hide. Within each one of these police stations, the names that we adopted for each one of these security stations were from the local area, so people recognized, "Oh, that's a police station. You're building a police station. This will be a police station in our area." So that was kind of part of it as we moved across. We basically developed police precincts. Again, these are all things where I am working with that police chief. I can draw lines on a map, but I never made a decision that I wasn't sitting down with him, and he's like, "No, no, no. That's not -- that's wrong. It needs to go here because of this and this." Very well, great. Put the line there. That's kind of what this is a product of in working in consonance with those guys.

The next step in terms of information operations, we also created videos. We had our own police video that we developed. I found I had to -- each one of these police stations, we felt it was more productive to have about 100 policemen. That was within their capability. Instead of having some big police station with 600 in it and then only 100 can come to work any one day, I mean, that was kind of beyond the command-and-control and leadership capacity at this point, and we learned some of those lessons from Fallujah.

So it was more effective at this stage to have a smaller police force, because the sort of substation commander was not going to be a guy capable of managing a large population. So now we would have a security force meeting every other week or every month at my headquarters, and we would all come in. We'd talk about operations and things like that. We did a video of the police and what they were doing and all the good things they do to music, so it's kind of playing in the background as we're just meeting and greeting before things. These guys were just enamored with that. So we brought in folks from the MEF and actually created our own production. I have a copy of it. I can show it to you if you want to see it. We made thousands of copies of it. The bad guy was distributing in the sauk his own version of DVDs and CDs, so then we started handing them out -- well, not us, the police. So once again, they were very proud of that.

We did similar things with the CMO ops. We made a transition to now try to establish our own local district council, which is kind of the next step in our CMO IO line of effort, and so at this point, because we knew who some of the local players were and we could talk to the governor about who the right folks were, literally we were Google searching what would be the right makeup of this body, because there was no PRT or anybody else like that. What is a municipality? So we kind of came up with there's a teacher. There's a professional. There's a female. It was not sheikhs. That was not the focus that this is a council of sheikhs. It was more along a more traditional governance line, not that there wasn't a sheikh who wore both hats in that respect potentially.

So our first meeting -- and this is one of the initial district council meetings here. When we first brought the group together, we had a CMO video, where we basically had before and after pictures of some of the, I'd say, low-hanging fruit things. We cleaned up a park. We fixed a school. We hauled off junk vehicles. These were things that were obvious to us that were probably useful for protection. Junk vehicles are an IED threat, and they also look like things aren't getting better. So we had these before and after videos, and I can show the -- you can have a copy of it, probably. We developed a meeting agenda. We knew who the initial sort of district council appointed guy was going to be. We sat down with him and developed the agenda. We put it in Arabic for the meeting, prepared him to lead the meeting, not us lead it, and I have the whole agenda for the first meeting, I believe. But the emphasis was, "Okay, look. Here's the stuff that with the police and the Army, we came up with, and I -- over to you. What would you like to do next? Here is your council. You guys decide, and if collectively, you decide that's what you want to do, we'll see if we can help you do it and where we do it. You have a voice in this thing. And, oh, by the way, at some point, we're probably going to have an elected council. Initially, you have been appointed and selected, if you will, but this is the thing that's going to move along."

So now in essence, you have company commanders, which they're not at Hurricane Point. Everybody was pushed out of Hurricane Point, and they're in the operating area. Your average company commander, he's probably got three police chiefs that work directly with him. He is now developing his own little area, district council rep. So now he's having his own meetings with the police chiefs, the Iraq Army company commander, and his own local municipal type of guy talking about what they want in their area. And they're bringing that to the district meeting that we're having. That's how that sort of evolves.

Then we had a whole variety of how to get people back to work. We're not just running around kicking in doors. When we're doing engagement patrols with the local police, we had purchased sugar, wheat, flour, oil, blankets, and of course, that's all the police. So if we're going into an area that we're interested in, you know, just showing up with something, you know, I mean, there's got to be goodness. You only get so much tolerance out of any human being, and so at some point, they're like, "Okay. When is my life going to get better?" So I feel like when you move into an area, seize key terrain, there's shooting and some people who get killed when that happens. You're restricting traffic and creating gated communities. You're inconveniencing their way of life as they have known it up to this point. In less than 2 weeks, you better show them something getting better at the most fundamental level. That was our approach.

So, immediately, we would be trying to push out food stuffs, create freedom of movement for the local population, make sure they can get to the hospital, start identifying what their immediate needs are, jobs programs. All those things are where I go back and say you pursue all three of those lines of efforts, but you do so concurrently, not in a lock-step march piece. It's just in varying degrees. You've obviously not going to build a school in a place that the bad guys are dropping mortar rounds, but that don't mean I'm engaging with the local guy, saying, "Hey, here's what we're working on. Here's a police chief. Look over there."

INTERVIEWER: Did you put out a message for all of your Marines that at every level, even your corporals, your lance corporals, that when you're engaging, you're talking with the locals that even those levels of engagement had importance in value?

03201227: Yeah, absolutely. In addition to the whole training workup, when you look over the traditional order in commander's intent and then you start breaking it down into how do you make each lance corporal, PFC -- it's got to be down the end of it -- actually understand why you are doing what you're doing, how does that contribute to improving -- you know, we're here to support and assist the Iraqi government. That was our going-in position, not kill and capture the enemy. We are trying to improve the security and stability, okay? You got to explain that. You got to talk in layman's terms so everybody understands why we're doing that. I described the enemy. The enemy comes in many different forms. The enemy could be they don't have water, they don't have a job. Well, that's the enemy to improving security and stability. So that's an ongoing drum beat theme. It's not just 29 Palms. That's a constant, okay, we're now establishing a road guard position, so everybody can cross and get to school, and this was why that's important.

INTERVIEWER: In order to be effective even at the rank of corporal, the strategic corporal, if you will, should we focus more on teaching them more language --

03201227: No.

INTERVIEWER: -- teaching them more about culture, or teaching them more about working with interpreters? How would you balance that out if you're [*one of the enlisted and on the streets interacting with locals*]?

03201227: One of the questions that you had and I had written, one of the after-action comments we brought back was that, absolutely, you need your basic rudimentary survival language skills. Part of it is to be able to be polite and respectful. We all appreciate that, as simple as saying "thank you," "shukran" or whatever, very rudimentary. And, of course, some of their job tasks require them to be able to say "stop" and things like that. But beyond that, I would recommend focusing attention on communication over language skills, particularly for leaders. Whether you're a battalion commander or a company commander, the interaction and communication skills of trying to achieve consensus, identify concerns, I mean, all those are absolutely essential. There were hours spent and constant discussions with all of the folks I'm describing here, not by just me but everybody, platoon commanders, company commanders, squad leaders with interpreters, all across the battle space. This isn't just one individual who all of a sudden was the burning bush of this. This was across the board, but you got to understand why you're having the conversation.

Something as simple as in the early intent, if we're here to support and assist and you're not going to be saying no unless there's a real good reason for it with your Iraqi Security Force counterpart because of the negative implications, something as simple as I armed Marines with, you know, learn how to say "I understand." When somebody asks you for something that you can't guarantee or provide, we're never going to say we're going to do something that we don't deliver on, because you only get to do that once, and then you're a liar and there's no trust. And without trust, nothing is going to move forward.

There's a great track record already of people doing a lot of talk and actually providing nothing. So when we say something, it's got to happen across the board. If you're a [*removed*] Marine and you say something is going to happen, then it's got to happen every time. When you can't guarantee that, then you simply say. "I understand. I acknowledge." You are acknowledging their concern, you know, "I need this. I want this." "I understand." That is a way to at least say you are listening. You might not be able to agree to it, and I think most human beings can respect that, but you may need to take that concern to somebody who has the authority or the resources to address it more appropriately, and so you tell them that. It's nothing different than you would expect or want. And I never approached any of these folks that I dealt with and thing very high, no different than I would you in terms of just kind of mutual respect, in terms of we're all trying to make this situation better. I know we have a number of competing priorities relative to this.

Something as simple as between the police chief and the Iraq Army guy and me, we sat down early on in the very beginning and talked. I said, "Look, make no mistake, the enemy is not going to like this. They are going to try and separate us, so just expect it. Also expect that my Marines are young, just like yours. They're going to make a mistake. Something is going to happen. It's just a matter of time. It may be one of your policemen who shakes down one of his guys coming back off of leave. It may be one of your soldiers who rough-handles one of his policemen and detains him or be one of my Marines who does that. I'm just asking when that happens, we put everybody in a neutral corner, make sure our subordinate commanders know not to do anything, and us three will come right back where we're at. We'll sit down as the adults, and we'll work out a solution for it. Can we all agree to that?" "Yes, [*03201227*], we can agree to it." Okay.

INTERVIEWER: And I think that that is a lesson that should be highlighted, and the reason that I bring this up is because even back in 2008, after this has all occurred, up in Ninewa, those folks would say to me, "You're with the Marines. The Marines are straight shooters. We can trust them."

03201227: Right.

INTERVIEWER: So what had happened at Anbar had spread north, so that what had occurred had gone through the word-of-mouth networks, and it was believed that if you were a Marine, if you say that you're going to do something, it's going to happen. So I think that that's a great boon to what the Marines had done in Anbar.

03201227: Well, we were the benefactors of that. We just didn't want to break that trust, because that goes back to the individual actions that Marines and commanders had been taking across Anbar Province for years prior to us coming to Ramadi, whether it was in al-Qaim or Fallujah. I mean, you know, the type of leader engagement trying to provide for civil function, trying to work through, you know, the local security force, whatever it be, which was heavily focused on the Army initially, you know, we didn't just start that in '06 and '07.

It would not have been credible for me to say, "Yes, Governor, you can trust me," if the last 3 years the Marines had not represented that to him. He had worked with plenty of Marines prior to that. He had seen plenty of Marines and working across Anbar Province. I mean, the whole II MEF and 1 MEF campaign plan was predicated on that same Small Wars manual doctrine that I was taught as a second lieutenant. I mean, this was nothing really new or earth-shattering.

INTERVIEWER: No. But then going out with the companies, I'd be running around with a few guys, and I would sit off and speak to them about why -- you know, drinking chai is not about drinking a whole bunch of tea. There's more to it. And why it's important, how it nests within the overall strategic plan. So even at the lowest levels, you have to understand what it is that you're doing.

03201227: Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, I would just add, not to sound cold, but you're absolutely right. And some people don't understand that, and that is we didn't take one -- I mean, here is a final… (*03201227 sorts through some articles he provided to the Interviewer*)… We didn't undertake any civil-military ops that didn't provide us a tactical advantage. That was a driving factor, and, I mean -- and sometimes you can see those efforts disconnected from the overall focus. If we're trying to provide security working from west to east, those activities have to nest with a larger plan within this area of operations. So if a civil affairs guy comes up and says, "Hey, we want to rebuild the school here," great. Tell me what tactical advantage that gives me. How many key leaders live in that area? What is that going to give me? What is that going to provide that allows me to better neutralize the enemy? And if it was nothing, then I'm like nothing against those kids that need to go to school, but the amount of resources and people I have, it's not going to be applied there. It's going to go over here.

Sometimes people think that's a little cold, but that's just business. As you look, this is at the end of it, all of the various projects, but whether it's rebuilding a bridge or schools or clinics or any number of these things, I mean, they were taking it at various stages, synchronized with where we were, what we were communicating, and how that was going to better enable us to neutralize the enemy. This was just a snapshot brief that I would probably provide weekly. So on any given -- this was on any given week when you look at your kinetic and your non-kinetic activities, this was just in one week's time.

So you look across the battle space, by this time, we're obviously -- you know, we're all over. We're specifically doing these things. We're communicating these things, but make no mistake, at the same time, you have units that are patrolling, disrupting, interdicting, you know, still controlling areas with entry control points into gated areas where vehicles aren't allowed but foot traffic is, and they're having to go through now established police checkpoints throughout this area.

INTERVIEWER: Now, just having looked at what was done inside the city proper as you're describing it, it seems very much nested within doctrine but different than what has occurred elsewhere. So knowing that, are there additional lessons or things that you would say can be applied universally elsewhere or just pieces, parts-- I know each environment is different-- but does the answer truly lie within the Small Wars manual and within the Counterinsurgency manual, and that's really the base foundation that we need, or are there more types of training that you would recommend that would have made things easier, better, or should be improved upon that we can help Marines with as we move into other environments? Especially if we are looking at, say, Yemen or Jordan or the Horn of Africa, especially the Horn of Africa where you have an entirely different cultural system that is unlike what we've seen before. Is there anything else that you think that we could assist Marines in training?

03201227: Cultural understanding and communication skills are -- I don't see how you can develop a concept of employment of military forces in isolation of those two things. I mean, it's going to -- I mean, it's part of the terrain. I think what we have is a great foundation. The things we've discussed relative to Ramadi are -- you know, they're examples, tools in the kit bag. I would no sooner apply these, rote, without, you know, starting from scratch, A to Z, and assessing the ground, the people, you know. Do you want me to make it better? What do you want us to accomplish? And then looking across everything you know and every experience you got, every technique, tactic, or procedure, but I would not suggest that anybody take a cookie-cutter approach to any of this.

If there's some universal lesson, I mean, a couple of things from me -- well, I don't even know if it's universal. No security like local security, but I wouldn't take that. I mean, that was effective here. I hear that there's some effectiveness relative to that in the village stability ops in Afghanistan with the ANP, but I have to verify and validate that. If you sent me to another country, I wouldn't go, "Okay, we're going to stand up a local police force, because, by gosh, that's the answer." It may not be, you know? Maybe that won't work in that society. That whole system is built on people, and what motivates and drives those folks, that's what you're going to try and get at. Does power and money play a role? Power, money, religion, security, basic human needs, all those factors are going to be relative and relevant in any society, but I got to understand them.

INTERVIEWER: Again, maybe the answer is no model, but then would alternatively a better solution be perhaps putting the onus on the trainers at pre-deployment, so that we're helping Marines understand the actual environment they're going into? So doing a better job at pre-deployment workups, would that be more of a -- I guess adding more cultural tools to the tool kit?

03201227: Aren't we already saying that? Aren't we already saying there is a level of cultural understanding that a general needs or a commander needs, decision-makers, as well as a level of cultural understanding down to the lowest rank? I think some guy named Clausewitz said, you know, "Understand the nature of the war you're about to enter," right? I think that rings true today when you talk about cultural understanding. The three pre-deployment -- it's not unit training management, but, you know, shoot, move, and communicate was pretty fundamental. Hit what you shoot at. Be able to conduct a patrol from A to Z, but communicate for me, which I talk to Marines about, was not just in the electrons and the radios communicate, but understand the nature of the war we're about to enter. So, I mean, that was pretty fundamental, because I had to get that down to the lance corporal level. I mean, I had to have a lance corporal understand the reason you are providing security right now for this well is because that is going to enable us to neutralize the insurgent. I had to explain that. He got that, you know, "Oh, okay. I get it." All right, fine.

Now, maybe I communicated that a little different to the company commander or a battalion commander with all the rest of the connecting pieces to that, but when you drive through this neighborhood, I want everybody to wave. We're using wave tactics. I want you to smile. "Sir, why are we going to do that? We're tough guys." Because I want to know who don't wave back, and then we're going to mark that on our map, and that's going to tell me something about this area I didn't know before. "Oh, we're getting over." Yes. And that resonated with him. He's like, "Okay, so I'm not weak. I'm not a wimp. No. I'm collecting information." That's right, and that's going to help us better understand this neighborhood.

Maybe they're upset because the unit before us drove around like assholes. You know what I mean? If you drive that way in my neighborhood, I'm not going to be happy with you, either. They might not be insurgents at all. Maybe their power ain't been on for 3 weeks, you know? Don't make that assumption, but there's something wrong, you know?

INTERVIEWER: And it sounds like the way you communicated that, not just to your Marines but in the way you were looking at the problem was-- although many people say it's bad to put an American lens on it-- but in this case, seeing things from an American perspective-- how you think a normal community would look like-- worked, because it seemed to be a good and effective means to establishing that understanding with your Marines.

03201227: I think I developed that lens, not in isolation, though. I'm describing, you know, several deployments that involved similar situations where I'm interacting and learning, you know, Haiti, Kosovo, Liberia. I had the benefit or un-benefit of Albania with engaging a number of populations, and each one of them had their own nuance and understanding and what was important to them.

So in the first deployment in Fallujah, hey, I wasn't, you know, a cultural guru by no stretch. I mean, I assumed everybody wanted to be treated with basic dignity and respect and that you need to be an honest person and accountable and those types of things. I think that's a pretty good going imposition, but the things I'm communicating now, I learned from the people I sat down and talked with. I came to the conclusion that that guy just wants to raise his family like me. I didn't draw that conclusion in the United States. I drew that after sitting down talking with a number of people and recognizing that either they're lying or they're telling the truth. I'll judge that based on their behavior, not on what they're saying. If I give them a life choice that affords them the opportunity to modify their behavior, then that will tell me something about them. So that kind of grew over time.

INTERVIEWER: But the experience of leadership too. At any point in time, did you or any of your Marines receive body language training? Not just how to use your interpreters, but how to understand the body language, so that you can kind of get a feel on whether or not your interpreter is interpreting well or if the reaction of the person that you're talking to --

03201227: Right, right. No, we received no training like that. I mean, I was the benefactor of a -- you know, as an infantry officer, when I was a major, I was assigned to be the commanding officer of a recruiting station, and I think you may find some interesting parallels in some of the folks who did that, because, you know, you're sending them to professional sales schools, and it's needs-based selling, never learn anything when I was talking, you listen a little bit more, you pay attention to all the things you're talking about. You know, for an infantry guy who's basically trying to increase market share, you know, over three States, you know, where do you apply resources?

This was marketing. When you talk about information operations, it was marketing. I looked at it purely through a marketing lens, and my experiences in doing that were useful. When you're talking to a young man or woman about enlisting in the United States Marine Corps, there are key influencers that have a huge impact on that decision. Mom, dad, aunt, uncle, I don't know who, but you better find them, and so I had done that for 3 years. So I appreciated the impact that key influencers, elders, as I talked about, and the role that they could play in some of this. So very useful

when you talk about communications, training, and experiences serve me in good stead. I probably didn't learn all the lessons I should have relative to that, but they were extremely important.

INTERVIEWER: My final question -- I know it's not on this list, but throughout some of the interviews, there's been discussions on "the Marines should get back to doing what they're really good at, which is kinetic ops, and they should perhaps either branch off and have a section of the Marines that just does the humanitarian state building, nation building, or they should instead back out and let other service branches or perhaps even USAID or DOS get" --

03201227: Who said that? They? They said that? Whoever said that, I completely disagree with them. We're not -- Yeah, yeah, yeah. Get back to what we used to do, we never left, you know. I don't know what history book they were looking at. You know, the key capability -- and I'm not a bumper sticker here trying to sell you anything, but just look across our history and tell me where we haven't been doing this. So, I mean, this is -- you know, what makes a Marine, a general purpose force successful is transition. That is the key, whether you're an individual Marine and use the old three-block war construct that we started back in the crew-like days with -- are you familiar with that? Familiar with three-block war construct or heard of that?

INTERVIEWER: I've heard of it, and I've read a little bit about it.

03201227: Yeah, yeah. It's not to be interpreted spatially, but just conceptually, you know, you're talking about you want an individual Marine or a unit with the full-on capability to go from, you know, handing out, you know, diapers, the full-on, you know, high-end, kinetic operations, and then quickly transition backwards and forth, you know, with equal vigilance and capability, and so whether you're an individual Marine or a unit, that's what you come out of your pre-deployment training plan or your mission-essential task. You know, that's the key. So our mission-essential task to conduct offensive operations, conduct stability operations, you know, all of those things are capabilities that you should be able to transition. Some units, some individuals do it better than others, but that's fundamentally, you know, our bread and butter. That's what we do.

INTERVIEWER: And I think that's why it struck a cord with me and -- I look at the MEUs, and I think that is to me what the MEUs do. You might be on your way to one mission, but in the middle, on your way, you're switching and maybe having to do three or four other things. The flexibility of the Marine Corps, I think, is unique, and so I'm interested in why there would be that belief.

03201227: Well, I got a little riled up when you said that, because I take exception to it. And 99 and the 26 MEU, and I was the BLT operations officer, you know, we went ashore in Albania, built refugee camps for all the Kosovar refugees who were pouring across into Albania. Got back on the ship, went to Thessaloniki, Greece, moved in former Republic of Yugoslavia, got our stuff together, mechanized, motorized, movement to contact on the hills of the Serbs leaving Kosovo, went into the city of Nehalani, city of 120,000 people, immediately spread out not in one FOB but in six, no different than you saw here, in each one of the villages where, you know, a lieutenant is repatriating ducks and chickens with the local population, learning who the individual is. So at the same time he's doing that, there is a firefight in Zegra, and on the border with Serbia, we are running Cobras, making sure we're not going into a mechanized ambush. So

that's three-block war. You're executing all those missions at the same time in varying degrees. We're just not a one-trick pony.

INTERVIEWER: So the idea of stability ops, or armed humanitarianism--

03201227: Security force assistance, armed humanitarianism, whatever you're calling it, there's going to be a requirement for security. There's requirement for making things better, and we have to train and be prepared to do all those. The fact that some people may be a little frustrated with some of their conventional-esque skill sets, okay, maybe they can't make an A-plus on that right now, but maybe they can make a B, and they can also make a B at stability ops. So now you've got the flexibility. I mean, I'm a taxpayer too. So I expect somebody to be able to span the range of what we expect the Marine Corps to historically have done and continue to be able to do. So I think we're able to meet those kinetic, conventional operations requirements, but I think we've got 10 years of maybe, I hope, getting a little bit smarter at being able to extend into some of these operations with a better understanding going forward.

I was trying to see. I think I was looking at your dynamics, interactions, and actions used to instigate, support the Awakening. What are the dynamics? Better understand what's in it for me. Ever heard that before? WIFM, you've heard that before? WIFM, what's in it for me? And me, me personally -- maybe it's the person I'm engaging with, you know. So what's in it for him?

Not to assume that everybody is ill intent or not looking out for the greater good, but you better have an appreciation for when you're doing engagement with folks that there may be some fundamental human needs that are not selfless, and you better have an appreciation for that. There were quite a few dynamics in the Awakening, whether it was in the city proper, whether it was the elected government, or it was Sittar.

I had one of my police chiefs at one of my security meetings show up, and he had a piece of paper. And it was from Sittar, and he slides it over in front of me and he shows it to me. So I have [*name removed*] read it, and basically, Sittar was saying, "Hey, I want you to open a police station over here," X, Y, and Z. And just as politely as I could, you know, I said, "Hey, you know, as we've always talked, we respect our elders, and certainly, I respect Sheikh Sittar and the great role he's playing for all of us in the leadership, but also there is only one elected government, all right? And he ain't it." And I took that piece of paper, and I ripped it up, and then they all like cheered, because they were scared to death, because they couldn't -- they needed that kind of top cover right then, and I'm like, "And I will go talk to him about this. You go back and do exactly what the provincial police chief, and I'll direct. That's your job. That's part of being a professional organization," as we're trying to professionalize them with this point kind of thing. So everybody has got their own agenda. I mean, that's no big surprise.

INTERVIEWER: I've read and heard that Sheikh Sittar often requested that Governor Mamoun be replaced or removed, and there is a lot of interplay and dynamics to that --

03201227: Sure. He carried much more sway in the rural areas. That type of letter issued in a rural area would have been adhered to immediately, because all those people in the rest of Ramadi were pretty much working through and beholding, I would say, to him, but not in the city proper.

And they're trying to find through communication skills -- they're trying to find that mutually beneficial place between what their agenda is and what yours is and trying to find that mutual benefit place, if you will. So that was one of the key to the interaction piece, and it has to be face to face. So I guess if you're looking for sort of things that are globally applicable, most of these are kind of human nature like that I came out as being sort of truce, you know, okay, what's in it for him, you know. That's the dynamics that you better understand, and you'll understand them better, and it will evolve. And you have to continually reassess that because it will change over time, probably.

In terms of interactions, mine is it has to be face to face. I mean, you can't get there without being kneecap-to-kneecap people, consistently. You're not going to gain any trust. You're not going to be able to find what that mutually beneficial place is without that, and in terms of actions that are globally applicable, you got to be consistent. I mean, I commented on that earlier. You got to keep your word.

You know, if there was anything that I tried to make absolutely hold true, because that's what I would want -- I mean, the first time you'd tell me something and you don't do it, and I'm just not going to trust you again. And I made the assumption that they've heard it over and over and over again. You know, talk is cheap. Do something, you know?

You have to put something tangible. I figure I had 2 weeks. Every time I move someplace, you know, and I seize the piece of key terrain and upset the apple cart of whatever they had going on before we got there, you know, I had 2 weeks, you know. So you got to bring back some action-oriented stuff, something tangible, and it may not be what they want, but it has to be something, and you've got to be good to your word. So those are three things that I don't think are Ramadi-specific.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any other points that you'd like to comment on or any final things you'd like to add?

03201227: No. I think that's it.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful. I very much appreciate it, and I know that this has probably been, to a large extent, very redundant. You've mentioned several other interviews. I am going to continue and try and chip away at accessing that material.

End of recording

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Interview 9: 04201233

Interview 04201233, 13 April 2012
Date of Deployment: 2005; Location of Deployment: Al Qaim
Billet: CO
Note: The interviewee was given informed consent and then launched into discussion before the recorder was set up.

04201233: [*The tribes out west*] were fed up, and they had a choice between two foreigners, either al-Qaeda in Iraq, who they picked initially, or either the Americans. And then when they saw the Americans were actually siding with and living with the Iraqi soldiers, they picked our side. Albu Mahal. Sheikh Kurdi was the first, him and Mayor Farhan.

If you -- when you talk to the Albu Risha tribe, Sheikh Sabah's brother, Sheikh Achmed, he'll say, "Hey, Albu Mahals were the first." They called it the "Little Awakening," because it was isolated, and they took that and expanded it in Ramadi the next year. And the guys who really facilitated that were Bill Jurney, who commanded 1/6 in Ramadi and then McFarland who was the brigade commander, Army brigade commander.

But what was rewarding for me when I went back in the spring of '10 with [*a researcher- name removed*] -- that's who went. Me and [*him*] went. We spent 5, 6 weeks in Iraq traveling the country, interviewing Iraqis. We did all the interviews back here that winter and early spring for the American side, and then we went to Iraq and spent about 5 or 6 weeks interviewing Iraqis. But what was rewarding for me personally was the Albu Risha tribe was giving the Albu Mahals the credit for starting it.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

04201233: Yeah. Now, the problem is, is they're trying to do the same damn thing in Afghanistan, but it's different. And I could talk to you for hours. I got almost 2 years in Afghanistan. The Pashtun are never going to pick our side. Why? Because they're never going to pick a foreigner against another Pashtun, and all Taliban are Pashtun. Not all Pashtuns are Taliban, but all Taliban are Pashtun.

And the only way that we'll ever get Pashtuns, which is a Pashtun insurgency in Afghanistan, to pick the side of their government, meaning their army, is to have a Pashtun-based army in the south, and we get the hell out of their way, different than happened in Iraq.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely.

04201233: And half our leaders don't understand that. They want to cookie-cut COIN.

INTERVIEWER: And that's why I'm fearful when I started reading about models. The Ramadi model is actually documented as "The Ramadi Model," and it states that it can be applied elsewhere. And I think that leads our Marines --

04201233: Could. Maybe not. According on if it fits.

INTERVIEWER: But if it's something that people think should be included in the COIN model as something that is cookie cutter or doctrinally sound, then I think that it could lead our Marines into a path that they shouldn't go down. They should, in my opinion, look at each scenario differently and take what they know and what they've educated on.

04201233: Yeah. You got to read that whole bookshelf over there, right?

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that in terms of cultural training or anything that we're providing to officers below your rank or even the enlisted is something that's going to be able to get them to that stage, or do you think that it's the years of experience?

04201233: Yeah. The cultural training is this. Say that I am a battalion commander and I'm on air alert because -- this is 5, 6 years from now, right? So now we're back to air alert. Do you know what that is, where you're on ready -- it's a ready battalion that's ready to go anywhere in the world, right? And I get the mission that I'm going to the southern islands of Indonesia. I'm telling you, as a battalion commander, from the time when I left to when I get there, I would have read everything I could on the people of Indonesia, in that part of Indonesia, not about the enemy, not about tactics. What we do is start breaking out tactics books and shit like that. What you need to be studying is people.

And I would learn just enough of the language to show that I care, right? Because I'm not going to learn Indonesian or what the hell they speak. I don't even know, right? Hell, when I went to Afghanistan the first time in '04, I couldn't even spell "Afghanistan," and that's the problem. So we need to build a culture within our officer corps that we know the most important thing that we do before we go into combat is understand the people that we're going in to either try to help or try to kill. We need to know both, the culture of those people. How do you do that? We need a repository of -- if I'm on a MEU float, I'm BLT out on a ship in the Pacific somewhere, and something blows up in Mindanao, southern Philippines.

I would be able to immediately (*snaps fingers*) with electrons have everything I can have on the people of that area and environment and beginning to disseminate them up to my officers and my staff NCOs and NCOs and begin to read and understand who we're fixing to go fight or help.

INTERVIEWER: Do the MEUs currently get that or anything similar?

04201233: Shit, no. We ain't got nothing like that, that I know of, but it's a way of thinking that the most important -- with the time I have, most important thing I'm going to do is understand where I'm going and who the people are going to be there, and we don't really do that.

I would argue that after my tour in Afghanistan and then a year later, I did that before I went back into Iraq, and I had some people to help me. I had a RAO that fell into my lap, a regional --

INTERVIEWER: The regional…

04201233: [*name removed*], have you heard his name?

INTERVIEWER: I haven't, but I've heard of the RAOs, the FAOs, and now the Corps has the CULAD program.

04201233: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Have you heard of that?

04201233: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get one in Afghanistan?

04201233: No. Well, I mean, I was in Afghanistan in '04 at the time of command. I came back as a colonel. But in Iraq, I started figuring out who the tribes were out there and then how I was going to leverage that. You know, some of it fell into my lap, kind of figured it out as we went, but in '05, nobody was thinking that way, right? We were there to kill "ragheads," you know. You had senior officers saying that kind of stuff, right, which is totally against what we're -- you know, as we've evolved all these years.

And people ask me all the time, "How did you know what to do?" Well, hell, reading that bookshelf over there, that's how. We have to study our profession, and this is nothing new. Fighting amongst the people, countering an insurgency, fighting an asymmetric irregular enemy is nothing new under the sun. There's 5,000 years of history that prove that, and we make it like this, this new type of warfare. It's not. Human nature hadn't changed since Adam and Eve.

INTERVIEWER: Did you think anything about trying to understand the tribes was new, or that also kind of fits within the readings that you have?

04201233: Absolutely, but, you know, you can look at General Zinni when he was a brigadier general when he was in Somalia talking about the tribes of Somali in '93, '94, understanding how the tribes worked, how the clans worked. We just don't have enough people that we're doing that at all, including me. I was there for the march up. I'm telling you, I was XO of a battalion. Our last position after we went up toward Baghdad and went back down was Al Kut. I had no idea that I was in a Sunni area. I don't even know if I knew the difference between Sunni and Shia in '03. I was ignorant.

So was our President and everybody that was supporting him -- right? Because they thought the fight, they was listening to Chalabi or whatever his name was that was back -- who am I talking about? The Iraqi that we were listening to, that Wolfowitz and all them dudes were listening to.

INTERVIEWER: Chalabi

04201233: He was telling him the fight was between the Arabs and the Kurds, right? That's what we thought the fight was going to be between, because that's what Saddam, you know, with Arabs and Kurds, right, which is a racist fight, right? They're racist against each other, the Arabs against the Kurds. Where the real fight was, we found out, was a prejudice fight between the Sunnis and Shias because they're both Arabs. They hate each other because of religion, which is prejudice vice a racism.

There is a racism between the Arabs and the Kurds, but Kurds are Sunni and so are half -- you know, a good portion of the Arabs are Sunnis. They're same religion. They still don't like each other, because they're a different race. We didn't understand any of that stuff, because we didn't study the culture of the people and understand what we were getting into.

So when I was in Al Kut, I mean, I wasn't -- I should have been understanding what a Shia was different than a Sunni and why they acted the way they did and why they dressed the way they did, but we wasn't doing any of that. And we made so many mistakes because of that. It's the lack of understanding the people you're trying to help and kill. You need to know both, and we don't do a very good job of that.

So there's where we ought to be focused to educate our officers, to understand that nuance right there, and who knows where we're going to be? I could be going into Argentina 5 years from now. So I don't know shit about Argentina, right? But I'd figure it out if I knew I was going down there now.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. Do you think that having anything like the individual augments that the Marine Corps tends to pick up, like a CULAD or the FAO -- well, the FAO is more than an augment. He gets 3 or 4 years of training, but --

04201233: Does it help? Absolutely. I mean, it helped me. I'm telling you, one of the significant pieces that made [*unit removed*] successful in Al Qaim -- and I'll give you a bunch of writings on this before you leave -- was a guy named [*name removed*] who was a RAO, and he was a Middle East RAO. And he had studied the tribes in Al Qaim out there, because that's where he was, and he was the one that laid out, "Hey, there's these five tribes. Here's the strong tribe. Here's the tribe that Saddam always gave all the money to in order to control the other ones, because he didn't want to mess with that part of Iraq back then." He laid all that out for me, and then we made some decisions off that, that ended up being very successful. And I got -- and I'll let you read about that rather than spend time.

INTERVIEWER: Is he in the States now?

04201233: He's a reservist, and he works for the State Department. He should be on the GAL, I would think. If not, there's people -- but he's written a number of things in the Gazette over the last 5, 6 years on this. He's got an article in the Gazette about tribes and how to understand them.

INTERVIEWER: What about language training? You said just enough to get you by or to be polite or let them know you care.

04201233: Yeah. Here's where I got strong opinions about language training. I've been in the Marine Corps 24 years. I've got nine deployments. My first one was in Panama during Just Cause when we took down Noriega, Spanish. A year later, I was a lieutenant in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Arabic. A year later, I was on a ship. I trained with the Spanish, the Italians, the Israelis, the Greeks, the Portuguese, the French, all those languages, right?

Went off to B-BILLET School, back within a month of [*becoming*] a company commander, I'm in Liberia, you know, broken English, pigeon English. During while we were there, the Embassy blew up, in the Central African Republic -- and I took a rifle platoon in there to secure it. What do they speak there? French. Got back from there. It was the air alert company, went down to Cuba, was guarding prisoners down there, right? Back to Spanish. You know, go off the school, back, as XO, march up, Arabic. A year later, I'm a battalion commander. I'm in eastern Afghanistan, you know, Pashtun and Urdu out there, right?

A year later, I'm back in western Iraq, Arabic. A year later, 2 years later, I'm back in Afghanistan, but I'm traveling in the northern part, Dari. How in the hell am I going to learn all those languages? Hell, I don't even speak English very well. I'm not.

What you do do, though, is you learn a little bit of the language to show people that you care about their culture. That's what it shows, and you have to understand how to use an interpreter. Even if you're, you know, a 505 -- what the numbers are -- can you really converse in people's dialect in different parts of the countries? Because you learned the pure type of language, and then you go into eastern Afghanistan. So if you learn the pure Pashtun, but you go into certain parts of eastern Afghanistan, I mean, you can't -- it's a whole different dialect. But it's still Pashtun, right?

INTERVIEWER: -- the same thing with Iraq.

04201233: Same thing here. You go up to Maine or New York compared to South Georgia, and it's a hugely different -- I can barely understand some of my cousins when I go home, right? So I just don't believe that we should put a whole lot of damn money into language training for the average Marine.

INTERVIEWER: Would it be better then, to teach them how to utilize an interpreter --

04201233: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: -- or maybe body language training?

04201233: Well, this is what you do. So some -- what you do is we should have a -- the D-LAB for every Marine that goes through boot camp, right? And then it's in their record book, and you have a group of Marines, whatever it is, 10, 15 percent, that have a propensity to learn a language.

I would fail the shit out of that test, right, because I don't even speak English well, much less another language, but there's Marines who -- they have a knack and a propensity to learn, and there's the guys that -- so when I'm going to -- I know I'm going to the Horn of Africa, right, or Sudan, whatever. So I would look in the record books of my 900 Marines, and I would take those 45 or 50 that have a high score, and I would send them to language training.

How do you use those guys? You still need interpreters, because of what I just said. What a guy who understands the language can do for you as a commander down at the platoon, company, and battalion level is he can listen to the interpreter to make sure that he's saying what you want him to say and he's telling you what that guy is really saying, because interpreters won't do that…. But if you had somebody there that understood what the interpreter was saying and understood what you were saying and kind of understood what the Iraqi or Afghan or whoever is saying, then he's kind of your ombudsman. He makes sure that interpreter is saying what you want him to say and telling you what the guy said. That's how I would use those Marines.

I wouldn't use them as interpreters because they'll never -- the nuances of a language, to have a real discussion, especially when you're in negotiations, right -- we need to teach them negotiations, because that's really what young officers and NCOs do out there with the locals.

And in order to do real negotiation, you really have to understand and be fluent in the language, right? And that's hard to do in enough numbers to be effective, but there's ways around it, and I just think I gave you a way to do that. So

there's where we should focus. We're all over the place, you know, and we send -- we send, you know, half the battalion to language training, you know, and they can -- and then they really don't learn the language, because we don't immerse on there. It's just really -- there's only a few people who really have a knack to learn language.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any assets or things back at CONUS that could have helped or in your opinion changed how things happened in Iraq, anything that could have helped units?

04201233: We're also looking at this whole problem, talking about Iraq mostly right now, through a lens of looking back, because when we were doing the march-up in 2004 and even into 2005, we weren't thinking about culture stuff. We were there to kick their ass, right? We were totally mis-illusioned about what we could accomplish, and through some hard lessons, a lot of dead Marines and soldiers, we evolved.

So now we can look at this, what's the next problem? Is it going to be the same? Do we just try to put the lens of Afghanistan on it? We've got to watch that, but in any place we go -- I go back to when I started. First thing I would do not, now that I've had those hard lessons -- I've put Marines in body bags because of mistakes I've made -- first thing I would do is I'd study the people that I was going into. There's never any hurt with that, and I would study the language. And I would try to do what I just talked about, find a few Marines that would be my helper with an interpreter to really learn the language, and the rest of us would learn just enough to show that we care, which is part of the culture, understanding their culture.

INTERVIEWER: So in terms of global applicability, using the resources that we have for education, obviously books and articles that has been written, and then these lessons that you've provided and advice on cultural training and language, is there anything else that you would think might help prepare Marines who are on the MEUs who have those missions that change direction halfway on their way to the next location? So their mission focus might change temporarily for a few weeks. So how is it that we might be able to better assist, aid transition or prepare those Marines?

04201233: There needs to be a library, electronic library that they have access to, every possible contingency that we can think of. A good example is MEU's out, you know -- the disaster in Japan, right? So who would have thought they were going to go up into Japan, help with a nuclear spill or something? And then the same MEUs, the one who goes up into northern Pakistan when the floods happened. So they need to be able to have a (*snaps fingers*) -- when I'm sailing, hey, I know I'm going into northern Pakistan. I know that those are this type of people, right? They're not Punjins; they're Pashtuns. And they speak this language. And get everybody you can on every area that they would be going into. You got to build that library before you go. You got to think through your possible contingencies, most likely to least likely.

You know, you'd have the tactical language skill disk, like we had for Dari and Pashtun. You'd have those for every particular area. So if I'm a WestPak guy, you're talking about, you know, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, and all the different dialects and languages in all those different places -- Korea. You know, just look at the map and start picking them out.

Really what you need for the average Marine are those tactical language skill disks. All those are pretty cheap to make. That's what CAOCL ought to be working on, building these libraries and repositories for all the contingencies we can think of.

And the MEUs, perfect example, because they're going to sail through 15 different areas and different languages and cultures during their 6-, 7-month deployments. Even the MED. I mean, when you go into the MED -- I just named them off -- you're going to seven or eight different countries. Each one speaks a different language. Each one has a different culture, not vastly different in Europe, but they're different cultures.

INTERVIEWER: So getting back to Al Qaim, when you went in, the thought was that it was a kinetic fight, but at what point did you start thinking that we have to engage with the locals and find out who the sheikhs are. I mean really start --

04201233: From the first day.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you guys had a plan?

04201233: Oh, absolutely. I had a plan to take that city, build those 14 battle positions, and take that place over, and then bring in the Iraqis. Yeah, absolutely. We went over there in our PDSS, and the battalion we replaced wasn't doing anything. And we had planned to do that. Everybody thought we were crazy, everybody, including the colonel and the general, who I love to death the colonel. I'm great friends with him. He's basically -- I know him from a long time. He basically says, "Have at it, Big Boy. See what you can do."

We went in. We TOA'd on September 10th, we attacked September 11th, the next day, and went out and took two intersections. And everybody said we were going to be shot at and blown up, and they did. They shot at us. They tried to blow us up. There's nothing in Iraq that could whip a Rifle Platoon Marine force, nothing. There's nothing in Afghanistan that can whip a Rifle Platoon Marine force. So we just didn't have the right people to take the chances.

INTERVIEWER: The unit you replaced, was that Army or Marine?

04201233: Marine. He had less people than me. All right. I don't want to talk bad about another unit, but the idea to take an area and stay in an area just was not there, because they did some full-size, battalion-size attacks, 4, 5, 6 days long and then came back to the big bases. The difference was when we took an area, we took a bulldozer and pushed up a berm, and we lived there and never left. And we lived in the dirt. We ate MREs until we started eating off the local economy, right, which is also part of doing COIN correctly. We just didn't have the culture for it. We didn't think that way as an organization, but we've got plenty of history of doing it.

I mean, that's what Chesty Puller and Eddie Craig and all those guys did in the small wars down in Central and South America, down in Haiti. Hell, you look at General Barrow, that picture on the right up there. When he was a first and second lieutenant in China, 1944 and '45, he lived with the Chinese rebels who were fighting the Japanese, wore Chinese uniforms. He was doing advising as far back as that and living and working with indigenous forces. We got a long history of this. Our CAP program and our advisor program in Vietnam is very successful. Hell, all of our heroes were. When I was a lieutenant, the three regimental commanders of 2nd Division, 2nd Marines was Ripley, won the Navy Cross as an advisor in Vietnam. 6 Marines was Larry Livingston, won the Navy Cross as an advisor in Vietnam. 8th Marines was E-Tool Smith, won the Navy Cross as an advisor in Vietnam. We have a history of this. This is nothing new.

INTERVIEWER: So why were saying that there wasn't the right people.

04201233: Because after Vietnam, we said we'll never do that kind of fighting again. We focused on Soviet Union, and Desert Storm just about ruined us. We thought that's the way we were going to fight wars, push button, you know, hit them hard, get out, and we were naive. And it bit us in the ass for about 2 or 3 years until we started figuring it out in '5, '6.

INTERVIEWER: So is that why Al Qaim wasn't able to make that final push to actually instigate the Awakening and have it spread?

04201233: Maybe. I don't know. It takes the right command.

INTERVIEWER: There's some of the literature -- and to be honest, this is kind of how I got interested in this project in the first place. I was just reading about Anbar after having been there. What I found is that there's little understanding of how many engagements were taking place [*by Marines and other units*]. Now, when it comes to the Marines, I know they dismount, and they get out, and they talk to locals. So why that isn't reflected well in the literature, I found it to be very interesting. Problematic, disappointing, but interesting. And I was hoping that I'd be able to actually explain the sheer number of engagements that our Marines actually do with locals.

04201233: And patrolling. I mean, the amount of patrols that the average Marine battalion was going in Iraq compared to an Army battalion was off the chart. We stayed amongst the people, especially from the winter of '06 on, when we started evolving and understanding things.

I mean, if you go back and read General Mattis' talking points and his orders and stuff, when he went in, in '04, he had planned on doing this, and then the whole Fallujah, First Fallujah, Second Fallujah, it all got away from him, and it was a very violent place. And it had to stay kinetic for a while. He understood it from the get-go. All this stuff we're talking about, he wasn't there long enough in '04 to implement it all. And then the wrong commanders got in charge. It takes a guy like Mattis that really understands warfare.

I'm telling you, General Allen is that guy. If we got a chance in hell of being successful in Afghanistan, we got the right man in charge, not just because he's a Marine. He understands this whole thing I talked about, the Pashtuns and how they're not going to pick a foreigner's side. He understands all that. He understands only the Afghan Army can win this thing.

The number-one thing a government does for its people is provide security, not central services, not schools, clinics, none of that shit. It's safety through their army, and until the average Pashtun looks out their mud hut and sees their army kicking the Taliban's ass, they ain't going to pick it. But when they do finally see that and they pick their army's side, they have just picked their government's side, and that's what we're trying to get them to do, to pick their government's side. Karsai right now, that's all we want them to do, so we can get the hell out of there. The only way for that to happen is them to pick their army side, not the police force. The police will come, especially in that part of the world. It's the army.

INTERVIEWER: So army, then police?

04201233: Right. The legitimate control of the violence will be controlled by the army first.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. In Iraq, they often stated that the turning point was because it was the year of the police in 2006. I'd actually like to caveat, that I don't think it was as much the year of the police as it was the year of the local.

04201233: Yeah. That's the tribal militias is all it was.

INTERVIEWER: Because the army was comprised of Sunni and Shia and some Kurd, but mostly the Sunni and Shia. So can you comment on that in terms of Al Qaim? Did you work more with the Army?

04201233: Army. I had whole brigade. I had 1-1. 1st fire brigade, 1st brigade, 1st division. Then evolve that into 3/7, but General Casey allowed me to build a Sunni-based 3/7 brigade. It's still out there. It's called 28/7 now, as they redid the numbering. General Casey understood. That's another thing that pisses me off. General Casey don't get any of the credit for the Awakening. Let me tell you something. The Awakening was well, well on the way when General Petraeus showed up in February of '07, well on the way. It had been on the way for a year and a half, and General Casey understood that. And he gets zero credit for that, and General Petraeus should be the one who says that, and he hadn't.

INTERVIEWER: From what I understand, he actually came in and saw what was going on in Ramadi --

04201233: He did.

INTERVIEWER: -- and the outlying areas and said, "Hey, this is great."

04201233: Which is Bill Jurney's battalion, was main one, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines.

INTERVIEWER: I think what happened, though, is that Petraeus went in (*to Ramadi and Fallujah*) before the Surge (*after he went to Anbar and met Sheikh Sittar*). There's also in the literature a lot of discussion about how the Surge is what created the Awakening and saved the day, but the Surge is linked to the Sons of Iraq. And the Sons of Iraq spread out from Baghdad on. It wasn't a western Anbar initiative, and I think that what -- personally speaking, I think that what's set the stage for the Surge and for the Son of Iraq to have any kind of foothold is what happened out in Anbar.

04201233: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: So maybe in that regard, General Petraeus deserves that credit…

04201233: He does deserve it. I'm not saying he don't deserve any credit.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely agree, and I understand that's not what you…

04201233: I'm just saying that General Casey gets no credit. He gets bad things said about him, right, that he was all screwed up and Petraeus is the one that came in and saved the day. And it's not the case. General Petraeus did great things. That ain't what I said. I just am pissed that Casey gets none of the credit for the Awakening or anything that happened good in Iraq, and that's just not the case.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that there's so much emphasis put on folks getting credit, and the reason I ask this question is because from the Army side, the literature I've read, they list very specific people who did very specific things. For example, the hero of Ramadi is Captain Travis Patriquin according to the Army authors. But the Marines, they talk about <u>our</u> Marines, and I think that's a very distinct, very unique thing.

04201233: That's why I'm dancing around the unit I replaced. He had different circumstances and stuff. I'm not going to say anything bad about that unit I replaced. They had -- you know, he was missing one of his companies for 4 of the 7 months he was there. He had different circumstances. Also, different commanders didn't have the same emphasis. I don't know. So each unit, and that's another thing, each unit comes, in the Marine Corps, comes in and builds on what the guy before him did, and it happened all the way through. And it really accelerated through '06 and '07.

INTERVIEWER: So a lot of right-seat/left-seat and continuing the pattern instead of [*edited for conciseness*] starting from scratch. So it seems like what you're saying is the overlap is one of the things that helped make it successful. During the RIPs were you able to talk and formulate a plan?

04201233: Yeah. And even before. The way that we trained, everybody goes through the same venue, which was our [*inaudible: sounds like capstone*] involved in the Mojave Viper. Every Marine infantry battalion is trained and organized exactly the same, which is not even close in the Army. You have the light infantry, the armor, or the mechanized infantry. Each one has their own culture. In the Marine Corps, all battalions are the same. We're all organized and trained the same, which helps with that. You know, and then at the general officer level, the generals that started coming in, you know, you start bringing in the guys who understood counterinsurgency, and the next one come in, it would just build on that.

And you look back in '07 when General Allen was there as the deputy, he was a one-star. He was doing amazing things with the tribes and accelerating that. That's why he accelerated to three stars very quickly, now is trying to do that in Afghanistan as a four-star.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it's perhaps the culture of the Marine Corps that prevents certain individuals getting as much credit as they should?

04201233: Not as they should, but that's just the way we are. You know, I've gotten more attention on this than I probably deserve. I've done a number of these interviews, right? I was in the right place at the right time, had studied the problem, counterinsurgency, and implemented. That was just right place at the right time. Circumstances. Got the right guy with [*name removed*], had the right commander with Colonel [*name removed*] that allowed me to do what I thought needed to be done. You know, the whole living amongst the people, nobody was doing that. Nobody was living was in the dirt. This whole FOBs and COP things was not -- we were in big bases, and we were commuting to work. Even though General Mattis the year before understood these, he just never got a chance, never got the traction in order to do it.

And the focus was completely on Fallujah during -- all through '04 and early '05. There was no focus at all out west, and even Ramadi was just “hold Ramadi while we take care of Fallujah”, because it had to be that way because of number of forces we had. [*Removed for identification*]-- and it ignited in Al Qaim, and General Casey recognized it, and then some of the generals that came in after him with General Neller and -- ah, retired three-star now. He was a two-star at the time. Neller was his deputy. His name escapes me.

INTERVIEWER: Zilmer.

04201233: Zilmer. Yeah, Zilmer and Neller came over together, and they really picked up on what was happening in Al Qaim and accelerated that throughout the other parts of the Al Anbar.

And FOBs and COPs start popping up all over the place. Bill Jurney, you'll read about, if you read any of those books that I gave you [*he never provided books to the researcher, but did provide some articles*], and I'll give you some write-up, writings. He was doing that, and he built 10 positions in downtown Ramadi, just peppered and surrounded, swarm tactics.

INTERVIEWER: Were those COPs or police stations?

04201233: Well, he built both, because he was in a city, right?

INTERVIEWER: For out in Al Qaim, was it more of just a COP or did you actually get to establish police stations or outposts?

04201233: We started building -- we recruited 550 policemen in our last couple months there, and then [*unit name removed*] came in and replaced us with [*name removed*], picked up on that and accelerated it big time. So we established with the Army first and then went for police. And the police -- when the fight is that kinetic at the time, police had to be trained as paramilitary. They can't be "serve and protect," because they get their ass kicked. That's what happens in Afghanistan. Police get killed 3 to 1 over the solider, because we tried to turn them into street cops. We should turn them into -- we should develop a paramilitary force, and then over time, they evolved into… Boy, many people, especially our NATO partners, they get really nervous talking that way, right, because they believe they'll abuse the people, take over. That's some chances you got to take, because they can't survive. They have to be able to fight and kill the bad guy.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any experience with those PiTT trainers that are doing the police training?

04201233: Oh, yeah, a bunch.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they received the adequate training to do their jobs?

04201233: No. They were trying -- whole time I was in Afghanistan, particularly Afghanistan, they were trying to make city cops, trying to teach them law and stuff. What they need to be is paramilitary.

INTERVIEWER: But in Iraq, weren't they more paramilitary? Because, I mean, what you were doing, but also I heard very similar in Ramadi.

04201233: Yeah. And that's because they were really run by the Albu Risha tribe. Each situation is different, but when your cops are getting killed 3 to 1, who wants to be a cop? So what the cops are doing in Afghanistan in particular is they're really corrupt to stay alive. They play both sides. They have to. Hell, I'd do the same thing if I were them. The border police are even worse. What we should have made the border police is frontier guardsmen, because it's cool to be a frontier guardsman, be a warrior, use their culture to our advantage. We did the exact opposite. We tried to turn them into customs and border agents.

INTERVIEWER: In Iraq or both?

04201233: No, in Afghanistan in particular. And they've become corrupt, inept. They're horrible.

INTERVIEWER: I haven't heard very many positive things about the border guards in Iraq until '08, '09, when they became more Yezidi and that's when things seemed to calm down. And I don't know if that's a cultural shift or because they --

04201233: Well, I mean, it's kind of like being a frontier guardsman. The eastern part of Afghanistan, the eastern, southern part, that's just essential that they be. That's what the Pakistanis did on the western side. Their frontier guardsmen are a bunch of, you know, mountain warrior, and it's cool to be a mountain warrior in their culture. We did the exact opposite with the Afghans on the other side, because we don't understand their culture, and we didn't use their culture to our advantage.

INTERVIEWER: In Al Qaim, were there Special Forces there, 5th group, at the time you were there, or was that after?

04201233: I had a Special Force -- I had an ODA team with my battalion, and then I had the tier I, yes. I didn't have the tier I. They were with me. But, yes, we had a very good relationship with Special Forces, and I learned -- we learned that the year before in the eastern mountains of Afghanistan where we -- I put platoons with Special Forces in the eastern Afghanistan in '04. I mean, stuff like we were told, "Hey, you see those guys down there in that fenced-in area, they're off limits. You can't go down there." Very first day, I went in, knocked on the door, went in, sat down, put a dip of snuff in, said, "Who's in charge here? I'm ready to help you. You're the main effort." I gave them a ground QR. I gave them a tank platoon and a heavy gun platoons. Within 2, 3 weeks, they were coming to my meetings, calling me "boss," and helping us with our stuff. It's all about relationships and understanding. Especially the top tier guys.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I ask is there's a few articles I've read, one in particular, that takes 100 percent of the credit for 2005 Al Qaim working with Albu Mahal and Albu Nimr.

04201233: With the Desert Protectors, you're talking about. That name ring a bell?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. They describe the militia, and they talk about the Desert Protectors and how the Marines didn't necessarily support the Desert Protectors and --

04201233: That's wrong. That's not true.

INTERVIEWER: That's one of the articles that had me start thinking about this idea of credit, So I was very interested in why that perception would be there.

04201233: We didn't run the Desert Protectors. They did. But we absolutely supported them. And then they ended up being the Scout Sniper Platoon, for a better word, in the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 1-1. We integrated them into the Army -- or they did.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What about -- is it the ING, Iraqi National Guard? Did you have any experience with them?

04201233: They were all destroyed the year before in '04 during the whole Fallujah time. They all -- out in Al Qaim, they came in after Fallujah, chopped all their heads off and destroyed that whole organization. One of the places that al-Qaeda landed after Fallujah was Al Qaim. Part of them went into Ramadi, and part came out to Al Qaim. The reason that the top tier guys were out there was because they thought Zarqawi was headquartered out of there.

INTERVIEWER: So how did al-Qaeda react then to the tribes? Were they still trying to use those suppression tactics and the beheadings and killings?

04201233: Absolutely, especially against the Albu Mahals, which was the largest tribe. The Sumalis (*Sumaida'ai or perhaps Sudani, or Shammari? It is unclear which tribe he is discussing because there is no Sumali tribe in Iraq or Anbar*) kind of pick the side of al-Qaeda, and that's why it took a while to bring them into the fold. But the other tribes with Albu Mahal leading the ones who rose up, and they rose up before we got there. They was fighting in May. I got it in all these write-ups that [*name removed*] did. They was fighting in May. They fought a huge fight again in June and July -- or July and August.

When we first got there, it was like, hey, red on red-- that was red on red going on out there. It was like -- right off the bat, I'm like we need to figure out why. Why the hell we got Iraqis fighting each other up there? And it was the Albu

Mahals fighting al-Qaeda, and then when we went in, when we attacked in September and then again in October and again in November, and we took over the whole place, they picked our side. They decided that we were a better option than al-Qaeda. That has never happened in Afghanistan, and it's not going to happen in Afghanistan, because they're a different culture, because they're not going to pick a side against a Pashtun. And nobody has understood that over the years in Afghanistan. It's that simple.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that -- what's the divide? Why don't the generals who are leading it understand that? I'm certain they have their advisors.

04201233: General Allen does.

INTERVIEWER: How is he trying to --

04201233: Well, he's trying to build up. He's trying to get them to pick their army's side, which means they just pick their government's side. And the way you do that, you got to get out of the way, and you do it through advisors. You provide them the fire support, MedEvac systems, and things that they need to be an army, and you get out of their way. And that's against our culture, because we want to do it, because they ain't doing it right, so we'll just do it, and it's never going to work in Afghanistan.

INTERVIEWER: Is that because we keep on thinking that it's not good enough? I've heard the phrase "Iraqi good enough," and then there's, well, all right, we'll do Iraqi good enough, and that was antithetical to Marine Corps culture. So if it's the same thing in Afghanistan where you're trying to get them to be like Marines, of course, there's going to be a problem. Do you think that maybe that's --

04201233: I think we do it probably better than anybody. The difference is Helmand is not going to be Al Anbar.

INTERVIEWER: But I think a lot of people are hoping to push it that way.

04201233: Kandahar --is not going to be Al Anbar. It's not as important. Kandahar is so much more important. If you study Afghan history, Kandahar is the capital of Afghanistan, not Kabul. Always has been, always will be. It's the spiritual capital of Afghanistan, Kandahar is. It has been for thousands of years. It's the Pashtun homeland, and the Pashtuns have always controlled Afghanistan. Kabul was not.

INTERVIEWER: [*edited for conciseness*] In Anbar, social conditions and the level of state development may have contributed to the Awakening. Is there a comparison in Afghanistan?

04201233: Here's the big difference. Iraq was a country. It was a society. Hell, they invented math, right? They got the cradle of the universe there, where the two rivers came together, which was the Garden of Eden maybe, right? I mean, they are a very rich, deep society and culture, thousands of years. They've been a state. They had an army. They had a police force. They had medical supplies. They had schools. Afghanistan has never had any of that. There's a totally different problem set.

INTERVIEWER: And not even remotely similar in terms of tribal structure or --

04201233: Right. We took the most independent peoples, and we made one of the strictest central government constitutions. It's the exact opposite of their nature. So if you read the constitution for Afghanistan that we approved and let them do in the Bonn Agreement in '04 -- I mean in '02 -- it's ridiculous. We took the most decentralized people and put them in the most centralized government in the world, one of the most centralized governments, besides communism or something, right? It's the exact opposite of what we should do.

What we probably should have done is made them a confederacy, you know, something like loose cantons of Switzerland. I know they're not going to be Switzerland, but how the tribes, the seven tribes, the cantons run Switzerland, something like the confederacy was in the south, where there is no weak central government and strong states, or province type thing. We did the exact opposite, and that --

INTERVIEWER: That's because we're trying to link it to some form of --

04201233: Yeah, western society.

INTERVIEWER: Putting in a democracy, a central government.

04201233: Police force, rule of law. Rather than -- if you study the Afghan culture, particularly the Pashtuns, they have a society, unlike Iraqis, where the sheikh makes a lot of the decisions, and all the men do what the sheikh says, right, because hierarchy. They have a group of elders that make decisions. They're called "jurgas," right? And a jurga is nothing more than a group of old men that are essentially elected or appointed by the people. What does that sound like? It sounds like Congress, right? Sounds like a Republic where the people decide who the representatives are, and then they follow the rules that these group of men decide on. That's what we do. That's called our State congresses and U.S. Congress. That's how we run our government. They just do it at a very small tribal level, but nobody puts it in those type of terms. It's that simple.

INTERVIEWER: I think it's because Afghanistan might seem still so completely foreign to us, that it's hard to put it into those terms.

04201233: And each one of those tribes makes decisions a different way. For instance, you're coming to visit me, so I'm required to feed you, but I don't have any goats. So tonight I slip over, and I steal two goats from my neighbor and I get caught. They bring me before a jurga, find me guilty. It might be as simple as, hey, you pay him back three goats over the next 2 months, or it could be you've done this a lot, so we're going to burn your house down and oust you out of the tribe, or it may be that you're required to give him one of your daughters, your 9-year-old daughter, or it might even be a son in eastern Afghanistan for his pleasures. We have a hard time, but that -- these are -- you know, if you get caught having sex out of wedlock, the jurga might decide that we dig two holes, we stick you in it. We fill them up above your elbows, and then we all come out and stone you to death. But the people of the tribe accept that adjudication. How do we come to grips with that, right? We need to stay the hell out of it, but we're not.

INTERVIEWER: I agree with you. Now, back to Al Qaim, the last question that I wanted to really touch upon, is the operational planning. When you had the tribes that you were working with, Albu Mahal being the strongest tribe, but then also the military counterparts that were there, did you at any point in time start to include the tribal element or the sheikhs into your operational planning? Were they ever invited in and you sit down and talk?

04201233: Oh, hell, yeah. I met with them every week. I mean, I'll tell a story. [*name removed*] is the one who helped me with this. He told me there's five tribes in the Al Qaim region. He talked to me about Albu Mahal historically has been the strongest, that Saddam made them the strongest, so they controlled all the smuggling. You know, the good honest smugglers is what they were, and they were the richest. He says but in order to be successful here, we got to treat them all the same, or you'll never get peace amongst them. So this was different than anybody else had ever treated them.

So the first meeting we went to, they called it a meeting after we had – Steel Curtain -- and only three of the five tribes showed up. [*He*] leaned over and said, "Sir, my advice is for you to get up and leave." So I says, "Hey" -- I turned to Mayor [*name removed*] who was in charge of doing this, who was appointed by the Albu Mahal tribe, and says, "Hey, when you get all five tribes, call me." I picked my shit up, and I left.

About a week later, I got a call. It was Mayor [*name removed*], "Yeah, I got them all." I went to the meeting, sat down. There was four of the five. The Sumannis (*Sumaida'ai or perhaps Sudani, or Shammari? It is unclear which tribe he is discussing because there is no Sumani tribe in Iraq or Anbar- Shumani Brigade is mentioned in literature, but it was not a tribal name. Perhaps the interviewee is referencing the Salmoni tribe, which was in the general geographic area*) still wasn't there, because they were afraid to come, because they were the ones who supported al-Qaeda. I picked my shit up. I said, "When you get the Sumannis (*see above note*) call me.

A week later, I go, all five of them, and then we started dealing with all five tribes. And I essentially put a company with each -- in each one of the tribal areas, and it's amazing how the company commander became the advocate for that tribe and started trying to get the civil affairs money that we had and different things. And that's what you want. And

then I tried to be the overall ombudsman for the whole thing, but I -- and to tell you the truth, I was the most partial to Sheikh Kurdi. He was the strongest of all of them. I thought he was the most honorable. He didn't run away when Sheikh Sabah, the real sheikh of the Albu Mahals, went to Jordan. He stayed. He was the one who was fighting.

INTERVIEWER: Did Sheikh Sabah ever try and come back?

04201233: No. He's rich and living a good life, but I'm telling you, you could not get Sheikh Kurdi -- I got videos, interviews with him. You could not get Sheikh Kurdi to say a bad thing about Sabah. No. Even though that son of a bitch ran off and the Kurdi is the one who stayed during the hard times.

INTERVIEWER: Well, there's a lot of folks say that that's because the next in line would tell the premier sheikh or paramount sheikh to run, because al-Qaeda was threatening them. And then you hear from others that, no, they ran, they took off, and they didn't support it. You know, I'm sure there's politics.

04201233: Oh yeah. Yeah. In my culture, though, he was the warrior. He stayed, right? So, therefore, I liked him.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And I'm not really clear if it's the Iraqis who are providing the details on whether or not somebody ran because they were told to or left because they were fleeing or what have you, because that's not really the focus of this [*project*]. But it's interesting how much hell came down on those [*sheikhs*] that did stay, and yet they still continue to fight and stand up for it. In terms of the Iraqi Army, in order to get them up to the point where you needed them to [*perform*], how much were they involved in operational --

04201233: Big time. I had Colonel [*name removed*] was their brigade commander who -- I mean, he was huge. Within a meeting or two, I pulled my chair back behind him. I wouldn't sit at the table. The guy sitting at the end of the table, the lead guy, was Colonel [*name removed*], commander if 1st Brigade, 1st Division. And then when he left and we brought in -- we built 3/7, he was Albu Mahal. The brigade commander was Albu Mahal, so was two of the three battalion commanders.

I got his -- an interview of him too. He's got the 7th Division. He's the 7th Division commander right now. [*Name removed*], Colonel [*name removed*], now General [*name removed*]. His brother was the police chief, the first police chief, because Albu Mahal was the strongest, and they were ready to fight. They gave the most men.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have any concerns about the fight that Albu Mahal was so greatly involved, or was it just natural because it was their area?

04201233: They had the most people, but what we tried to do is not oppress the other ones and give them -- especially when it came to essential services and building schools. In fact, we made that really equal. And I'd have to fight with Kurdi about that some, because he's like, "I'm giving all the men. Why are you giving money to the other one?" Because I got the money, I do what the hell I want with it, you know? You got to show that you're strong with them too. Then he'd respect that and feed you baby sheep, which is meaning they like you, especially -- when I would go eat with him, which is very often, he would always feed me.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

04201233: He would pick the meat and put it on my plate, right? That means that --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I'm familiar with that. Did that change, this relationship of including [*the Albu Mahal in operational planning*]? It was right out the get-go. Did that change over time or just stay that way?

04201233: Uh-uh.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know if [*the new Brigade*] picked that [*process*] up after you left?

04201233: Yeah, absolutely. The guy that replaced me, 1/7, was [*name removed*]. He got it. He understood the whole COIN piece. He got it. It's a great battalion commander, getting ready to retire this summer.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Well, I certainly would appreciate the additional information, and I greatly appreciate your time.

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Interview 10: 04201235

Interview 04201235, 17 April 2012

INTERVIEWER: OK. Now your name was referred to me by some other participants because this project is based on a snowball sample. So it's word of mouth networking. So I don't really -- I'm not exactly familiar with where you were at or what you were doing while you were in Anbar or what years you served. Could you provide that information?

04201235: I served 2006. January to December of 2006.

INTERVIEWER: OK. And where were you located?

04201235: I was in Fallujah for the first three months and then Ramadi for the last nine.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

04201235: With 7th Iraqi Division headquarters.

INTERVIEWER: Were you a MiTT or a PiTT?

04201235: MiTT. I was team chief. Senior adviser for the 7th Iraqi Division.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you receive any type of training prior to going out there on what your duties were going to be?

04201235: Yeah. About three weeks plus with the 1st MEF Marine Expeditionary Force.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did any of that information also provide like cultural opinion?

04201235: Yeah there's a heavy emphasis on culture. You know there was a heavy emphasis on culture and language considerations because the Muslim culture is so different from our own.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that any of that information really changed interactions in Iraq or assisted you in completing your mission? Or was it tangential?

04201235: It was critical to understand the context for communication and understanding some of the cultural differences. But in terms of actual application what turned out to be more the case was if you -- when you first go in as an adviser for units and people that have had a number of advisers -- in my case it's a new division. And I was the second one, not the first one. But even they were also adapted to our culture. So based on their work ethics they were very able to adapt to you know let's get past the tea and social, let's get the work done, and you get out of my office as fast as you can you know. So they adapted to us too. So which is not something you hear discussed. I mean you have to learn as you go. So you know you can go with some folks and it was not all about you know all the lead-in posturing typical expectations of a you know Western versus Muslim culture. It was more along the lines of I've dealt with you know military folks before from United States and here's how you like to kind of do things and here's how I'd like to do things. Get some -- get them done and get you out of here. And I'd rather you know spend my time you know with somebody else who does the same thing if you will. You see what I'm saying?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

04201235: So they adapted to us. Which is not something you get in the classes per se.

INTERVIEWER: So that falls more into the realm of understanding military culture. Did you have any preparation that helped you understand what Iraqi military culture was like?

04201235: No. No. There was -- that was not a significant component of the predeployment training. And that would have been helpful because you know at that point we were just beginning to understand. So it would be interesting to see you know where we were in 2008, 2009, 2010 in terms of preparing people to interact with a specific segment of the Muslim culture or any other culture as you move forward and do these things in terms of operational culture.

INTERVIEWER: Well I mean I've spoken with both MiTTs and PiTTs and it seems like the Marine Corps does a better job of trying to prepare the MiTTs necessarily than the police training forces.

04201235: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I find it interesting because 2006 was related as the year of the police. And within the literature there seems to be a lot of discussion over whether or not the police are more effective than the army. Whether or not the Iraqi army had some trouble with the population because it was segmented by sectarianism. And yet I'm not really finding throughout these interviews that that -- that the sectarian issue was necessarily that much of a problem. Did you experience any issues with having your Iraqi army unit not be locals?

04201235: Yeah they weren't initially trusted. It's some felt where some elements of 7th Iraqi Division. You had significant parts of a battalion. And it's most of the leadership was Sunni. Overwhelmingly the jundi were Shia. So that caused problems in terms of execution and training and those kinds of things. I mean there were some very good soldiers who were Shia and professional. And then there were soldiers who were not very professional and Shia. And they could cause problems interacting with the local Sunnis of Al Anbar. But luckily most of the leadership in the 7th Iraqi Division then in the brigades, and even down at the battalions, by and large were Sunni. So they did that to -- you know that was the face of the command of the unit in where most of the local tribal chieftains were their you know designated you know staff officers if you will. Interfaced with Sunni officers. So that made the resolution of conflicts easier. I think it would have been more difficult if it had been Shia with Sunni tribesman because Al Anbar is predominantly Sunni.

So a lot of the problems. The things that we had to work around as an example out towards Al Qaim is because of its proximity to the Syrian border it's a huge smuggling route. Which it's the nature of the economy and the culture. The problem is you know Al Qaeda and other extremist organizations could exploit it to traffic in things that could hurt you know our efforts. Whether it was Iraqi army, Iraqi police or coalition forces. So we had to work with the local tribal chiefs to say you know we understand that you're going to -- there's going to be a black market here and smuggling of all kinds. We just would like you to not do this kind of smuggling. And so you know you had to work with them so that the -- you know there was some level of understanding and control of the bad things but not interference with their livelihoods. So if you had a Shia sitting down to do that it would have been difficult. But with a Sunni officer and a Sunni tribal chieftain or sheikh, whatever was applicable, they would relate better. If it was Shia there was mutual mistrust unless there was experience over time. Now during my first half year there the assistant division commander was a Shia. And he did extremely well. He fought against the Americans and was wounded and etc. and was a hero amongst the division staff as a Shia. And most of the division staff was Sunni but they trusted him. In fact he was executed in July by Shia extremists in Baghdad. He went home to see his family and he was executed because he was working so well with the Iraqi army and working with the coalition. So you see examples of that. One end to the other.

INTERVIEWER: So it sounds like you're -- I mean you had mentioned Al Qaim. It sounds like you had a lot of interaction with the sheikhs that were out there. Is that true?

04201235: Yes. We did all the time. And with the Awakening movement in and around Ramadi.

General [*name removed*] who was the division commander for most of the period that I was there was from Al Qaim and had status as a tribal leader but not a sheikh. And he established a very strong working relationship with the original leader of the Awakening movement in Ramadi. In fact we gave him weapons and vehicles and all kinds of things.

INTERVIEWER: Was the -- when you gave them weapons and vehicles, etc. was that under the auspice of them being police and going through training or was it part of the militia establishment?

04201235: Militia. It was an armed militia.

That had committed you know all under you know under the -- with the approval of MNF-West and all the way to Baghdad. I mean it was not -- it was approved and very transparent to coalition forces but it was done to arm their militias because they had effective battalions, they just needed the right weapons and mobility to help us fight the fight. And that's exactly what they did.

Because we were having trouble with recruiting at that point in the 1st Brigade located near Ramadi because of the conditions that you know we were able to provide with the very immature Iraqi army logistics infrastructure and buildings, etc.

INTERVIEWER: So how were you -- with the Iraqi army did you have just one station? Or at that time were you still able to provide COPs and kind of push out into the -- were you inside the city or outside in the more rural areas?

04201235: The division headquarters or the brigade itself?

INTERVIEWER: Where you were, your -- I

04201235: We were at Camp Blue Diamond which is in the northern part of the city on the eastern side of the river. And then 1st Brigade was on primarily the western side of the river. And 1st Brigade of 1st Division was on the eastern side of the river.

And then 2nd Brigade of the 7th Iraqi Division was in Haditha with combat outposts in and around that area. And then the 3rd Brigade of the Iraqi division was out in Al Qaim. And each of those brigades had you know a dozen to two dozen combat outposts that they would work and man in conjunction with Army or Marine units.

The 1st Brigade was aligned with Army. For most of my time with the 1st Ready Brigade. And then the 2nd Brigade in Haditha and the 3rd Brigade in Al Qaim was aligned with Marine units. Rotating battalions that went in. You know every seven months a new battalion would be in there and they would work with them in most cases to jointly work an area.

INTERVIEWER: When working with those sheikhs did you already have -- was there already a plan in place for those engagements? The literature actually paints this picture of certain people doing certain things and rock stars if you will going out there and having this lightbulb moment where they were engaging with the populace and the sheikhs. And the Marines dismount and they often engage with the public. So I'm trying to navigate what the actual ground truth would be versus what I see in the literature and --

04201235: Yeah I think the literature overly simplifies it in terms of you know a key person is the one that moved the ball you know down the field and scored. When it was -- it's usually much more complex than that. That was a person who you know was there when something fundamental changed. And certainly they contributed to it. But you know the whole Awakening movement which saw success in 2007 began in 2006. You know and the efforts of a number of people before that in 2005. So you know the Awakening began in '05 in terms of people relationships and building forces. Became a reality in 2006 and then it achieved its initial objectives in 2007. So there are a number of people who talked to you know sheikhs in terms of coalition forces or you know adviser corps guys that had influence I think. The literature takes too simple an approach in giving you know certain people all kinds of credit when in fact it wasn't just that one person, it was a number of people, and it was they're the ones that got it across the finish line if you will.

Are you recording this or are we just talking?

INTERVIEWER: Oh yes, I've been recording. In the inf --

04201235: OK.

INTERVIEWER: -- want me to redact that?

04201235: No, it's all -- I was going to give you an example but I'd rather not say it on the tape.

INTERVIEWER: OK. If you'd like I could pause it.

04201235: You can pause it.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Let me do that. All right.

[*Section removed at request of interviewee*]

INTERVIEWER: Did you have anyone within you know your toolkit I guess? An interpreter or cultural adviser? Somebody who was helping -- helped you navigate that?

04201235: Yeah. We had a team of advisers. And I had 12 adviser -- 12 translators. Excuse me. But not advisers, no. You have linguists and they have different skills and maturity. And then you have to find the ones that are most suitable for the level of discussion. So when I was talking to the division commander, and as long as we had good open communications, which was probably you know 60%, 70% of the time, we -- he and I were able to communicate even controversial things. And we could tell when the translator was getting in the way of the conversation. When he was picking and choosing. Because he and I were trying to communicate and could over time. Now when we weren't getting along as well, then that was much more difficult because then you know I'm not communicating everything and nor is he and then the translator is kind of caught in between. And it makes it more problematic. Which happens in those situations. They want things and need things. We don't understand why. We don't give into that. And they have issues.

INTERVIEWER: Well, do you think that instead we should be boosting language capability--

04201235: Well, you can't. You -- unless you're fluent in standard Arabic and in the dialects, you could not have done what you need to do. You would invest so much time in the language and how much of the languages would you get right?

You know I mean we need to have folks who understand culture and one of the ways to do that to a certain degree is through language, absolutely. So we need folks who can do that, who can be you know that handful of folks on any given you know staff when required would deploy with that staff to help them. But you know to what level do you have to develop that capacity across the Marine Corps is a whole other question. You know how much training time are you going to give up to do that. And I think the Marine Corps has got it right now in terms of understanding operational culture writ large. Then understanding regions and states and subentities. And then figuring out how to apply that understanding of operational culture. Because it's more of an approach to the problem by you know having an expert in one region or state. You know we need -- because the Marine Corps is never going to be confined to one continent or one geographic region. Because of the you know expeditionary crisis response approach of the Marine Corps we're going to be tasked to go wherever the crisis is.

So we can't afford to have you know everybody get standard Arabic. Which we did for a while. You know a lot of education there but you know so now we're shifting to Pacific so is it going to be Chinese, is it going to be Indian, or is it going to be both, and then Malaysian and then Indonesian and other languages or countries with you know their specific languages? That's what is going to be required next. So you know we need to build up a capacity for that. But it's not every Marine. Not even some Marines. But a very small group who can deploy with a Marine air-ground task force. So they go beyond just culture. They actually understand the character and the nature of things because they have the language training and they've done tours there. And that's far beyond you know the current you know -- I'm drawing a blank. The foreign area officer, RAO, FAO things.

INTERVIEWER: The FAOs, yeah.

04201235: You know that goes well beyond that. Because that tends to be more kind of State Department diplomatic than operational.

INTERVIEWER: Now are you talking more about having that type of -- are you -- first off are you familiar with the cultural adviser program? The capacity --

04201235: Yes. A little bit, yes. I mean I've been away from it since 2007. 2007 to today I've been doing Marine Corps vision strategy work and then I've been in the last two and a half years doing Marine cyber operations.

Which is a whole other language that --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah the CULADs right now that we use are Afghan nationals and they're American citizens now but we refer to them as heritage CULADs.

But you know there's a discussion whether or not you would actually grow that [*capability*] within the Marine Corps or continue with somebody who is a regional expert because they've lived there.

04201235: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So what are you suggesting? Are you suggesting a Marine who would be somebody like a FAO?

But operational. And you know -- and again very selective and small. You know and you need enough to be -- to know the differences and have the expertise. Whether you know it's a handful of folks and it's -- for different countries. In key critical countries or hot spots we anticipate. You know so we know Chinese is going to be an issue. We know Indian is going to be an issue. If you're shifting to the Pacific and you're looking at the next 100 years and deployments of Marines to hot spots, that seems to be a likely investment.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that if you had had that back in Anbar, do you think that would have made any significant difference?

04201235: I think it would have made a significant difference if at the division level we had a cultural expert who spoke the language or had multiple tours there. Either the current version you just described or a Marine trained who had you know multiple tours in the area, in the region. And he understood things at a very different level. He could have helped us probably been more operationally effective, yes. Now you can't have that at every platoon and company. Maybe not every battalion. I mean you're just going to -- there's only so many Marines and so much training time. And you're not going to get all the languages and the cultures right. Because by definition a crisis is going to develop wherever. But there are some known languages that are going to be more in demand than others. As an example if you looked at Africa, there are so many languages with so many dialects, it's probably not worth the investment. I mean if you're going to have a crisis there you're going to have to go with what you got.

But the -- because of the various languages and variations of those languages you know it would be far too great an investment. But if you're looking at -- if your focus is the European theater -- I mean the Pacific theater, and that's where we're going to start deploying more Marines to Darwin and beefing up present you know MARFORPAC and III MEF forces and these kinds of things, then it would make sense that you speak -- you have some Marines with the ability to understand the language and the culture at a much higher level than the guys who actually have to do the operations.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of what you were able to accomplish back in Anbar, did you have any body language training or how to use an interpreter training? Something that was going to be useful in terms of interacting with that foreign military?

04201235: Oh yes we had that from the I MEF predeployment training and we -- and they had a lot of both -- they had the classroom instruction and they had hands on training, and then they brought in folks who had been -- who had deployed to your area, region you know the previous six months or nine months earlier. And then you have a turnover period when you get there to work with the folks who had been on the deck if you will in my case the previous year. And then they could talk you through the different personalities and the tactics and techniques that they used. And then you could take your training and experience to date. And then you could adapt it to specific applications.

INTERVIEWER: Using that knowledge when you did the engagements that were out in the communities with key leaders or just the Iraqi population did you notice or I guess I should qualify the statement. In any of the engagements do you think that they were right out the gate helpful and useful towards mission development? Or do you think that there were some engagements early on that may have actually impeded progress?

04201235: You know I don't know. Because it's one of those things that I mean to answer that question I'd have to go back now and talk to now Lieutenant General [*name removed*] and ask him you know about different incidences over the year and find out you know where things went well and where things broke down and why they broke down.

So again that goes back to you know what's your feedback mechanism, what's your assessment tool to know how effective you're being, while you're in theater, while you're actually doing things. That's very difficult because especially if it's you're conducting common operations like 7th Iraqi Division was and the MiTTs were to assess you know what is working and what's not in terms of the relationship. You can tell some things but you can't tell everything.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I ask that type of question is because it's come up a few times in my readings and interviews, about the need to find the right sheikh or the right guy or the right person to instigate the Awakening. And whether or not that was an actual plan. And if so how do you navigate through the fact that there were sheikhs that were there prior to Saddam kind of monkeying with the tribal system?

There were new sheikhs that were created by Saddam. There were new sheikhs that were created by us. You know how do you get Marines to a point where they can navigate through all these key leaders?

04201235: Well because you do a cultural preparation of the battle space. You know you can take a look at you know -- if you haven't talked to him, one of the probably the more successful regimental commanders who did that tribal IPB information -- intelligence preparation of the battle space was [*name removed*]. So the entire year before his regiment deployed the regimental staff working with the battalions focused on understanding the tribal laydown within the Al Anbar and more the part of Al Anbar and specifically the tribal leadership associated with that laydown. So they knew who all the -- they knew the tribes. They knew the key leadership. And then they worked that and mapped that so their intel session and their commanders were very much aware of who was responsible for what and then you know it was a constant process of making sure they were up to speed and updated because people change, personalities change, agendas change.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Actually that was my next question was how much IPB did you receive. And it sounds like quite a bit.

04201235: Well, we didn't receive much at all. Because it was very immature. We provided more turnover with the guys who followed us in December of 2006 than we received. Because 7th Iraqi Division was new and their placement in Al Anbar was just beginning when we got there. Whereas you know a year later it's much more mature and we could give them a much better turnover in terms of tribes and leadership and who were the power brokers and those kinds of things. And then you at some point you get down to relationships. What kind of relationships people can build with other people. And that's where you get into you know being successful. Because you can do all the homework you want, you get all the training you want, but unless you can relate to someone and they trust you and vice versa, then it's all for naught. Because you can do all the training in the world but you know unless you know how to get from A to B with somebody who trusts you then it becomes problematic.

INTERVIEWER: Now were you with the RIPTOA? Were you able to provide that right seat, left seat and were actually introducing the new unit to these people --

04201235: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And we went through and then if you're professional about it you try to say hey here's where I think we did well, here's where I think we didn't do as well, you know, here's what I might try to do different, you know, here's how you could you know move the ball forward in one area or another that we had failed or didn't seem to be working as well in. You know and then you -- then the new team meets the remain behind Iraqi forces in this case and then they you know adapt and change hopefully and make things better.

INTERVIEWER: Great. In terms of operational planning was your Iraqi army division at the stage where you were able to do cooperative planning with them at the time that you took over?

04201235: Yes. No. We did operational integration because the 7th Iraqi Division all three brigades were at different levels when we began in terms of operational capacity. You know they're all kind of squad, platoon, some company. In January of 2006. By the time we left in December of 2006, the 1st and 2nd Brigades were doing battalion level operations and some brigade level operations. In fact the 1st Brigade already owned battle space in that it didn't have US Army partnered with it, it just had advisers. It was doing its own combat operations unassisted primarily except for fire support from the United States Army or the coalition. And this to the 2nd Brigade was also doing brigade level but still needed significant assistance because of the nature of the threat in Haditha. Because it was much more of a problematic area. And then 3rd Brigade in Al Qaim was not up to brigade level yet because it was the newest of the brigades kind of still doing company level. But it could take on company level space. So then you can push the Marines to other areas that required assistance. So as the Iraqi forces you know became more combat-capable and could take on a battle space at whatever level, platoon, company, battalion, brigade, then that freed American or coalition forces to operate someplace else.

INTERVIEWER: Now what about the tribal elements, the militias? Did you do any type of operational planning with them or did you just stay with --

04201235: No. No we didn't but the Iraqis did. So the -- so when sheikh -- the original sheikh in the Awakening movement, it starts with an R, I'm drawing a blank right now.

INTERVIEWER: Are you talking about Sheikh Albu Risha?

04201235: Yeah Albu Risha. When Albu Risha, he basically was the commander if you will of the -- of like about three battalions in the Ramadi area. And when he coordinated operations he coordinated it directly with General [*name removed*]. And there were a couple incidences in the early fall of 2006 where there were attacks by Al Qaeda or extremist elements in and around Ramadi. The Tam'eem district was one that was pretty -- the yellow -- red apartments. There was a couple different areas where they were -- we historically had a lot of enemy activity of one flavor or another. And Albu Risha would -- and [he] would coordinate. They would you know I'm -- something's going on and I'm having problems with an Iraqi army or Iraqi police unit here or there who's having some trouble. Then they would come. They'd be like they'd call in the cavalry. It was an absolute -- in tactical terms and in terms of what we would see as you know a rapid reaction force QRF if you will. It was not pretty but it was effective. I mean they would get the job done. They would come and they would assist the police unit or Iraqi army unit and they would get rid of bad guys. It didn't look pretty but it worked. And so there was coordination between the 7th Iraqi Division and the Awakening movement in the fall of 2006. You could see it, you could hear it. And they knew what they needed. But again that was -- that would be something that we were aware of weapons transfers. We saw. We counted it. We you know -- we did all that. But I'm sure there's other things that went on we never saw. Because you can't watch them 24/7.

You know so you know they're doing other things. And coordinating operations that the coalition may not see because you can't cover everything.

INTERVIEWER: Did you happen to know of any other of those types of coordinated efforts going on in Al Qaim or Haditha or Hit with the other tribal elements?

04201235: Between the Iraqi forces present and the local forces?

INTERVIEWER: Yes

04201235: I tell you I can give you examples but they would be classified but I could tell you that I'm absolutely sure it was going on at some level continuously.

INTERVIEWER: OK. I certainly don't want to get into anything that's classified.

The reason I ask that is again going back to the literature with the Albu Mahal and the Albu Nimr there's some articles that are out there especially written by Special Forces that say that their -- and even in Al Qaim the Awakenings could have happened or did happen a lot sooner but because of a lack of coordinated effort or coalition support they failed. Now what I'm starting to hear is that that's not necessarily the case. That they were a little -- you know it might be that they failed and Albu Risha was able to pick it up because of the centrality or the location. You know he's in Ramadi with a lot of assets right there.

04201235: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: As where in Al Qaim that's right on the Syrian border. And so it's not like they're going to have this concerted wildfire spread of momentum. So I'm trying to pick apart how much did we actually coordinate with these tribal elements or with only with Iraqi army or what was going on. And maybe perhaps put some clarity into whether or not we actually did or did not support potential Awakening movements. I don't know if you can comment on that on the unclassified side.

04201235: I think there were attempts at the Awakening that began in the summer of 2006 without a doubt in different areas. And it's just like any momentum. It builds over time. So to say it failed would be inaccurate. It might have not been as successful at a tactical level as it could have been, proved to be later. But those were things that built on the momentum that became much more consistent and persistent in the spring, summer of 2007, see what I'm saying?

I mean there were operations that were ongoing that had limited success and then as it got into late fall they became even more successful. And then by the spring of 2007, summer of 2007 it was very apparent what was going on. But things like that occurred at different levels all the time.

INTERVIEWER: But it's not necessarily --

04201235: I got to get going here pretty soon. I can talk to you again but I'm already late at something else that I need to do.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Then let me just ask one final question. What dynamics, interactions and actions used to instigate or support the Awakening movement do you feel are globally applicable across areas where insurgencies may exist.

04201235: Oh OK. I think the -- that aspect of the Awakening that's applicable to insurgencies or efforts along those lines is finding out what the benefits rewards system is of the nonthreatening forces are and figure out a way to reward them and institutionalize them in a way that's good in the long term. So you can't -- if you have something that as in the case of Al Anbar would set up an autonomous region, which is what some of the Sunnis wanted, would be counterposed -- would not be consistent with what the federal system in Baghdad wanted, then you'd be reinforcing a local success but it wouldn't have enduring sustainability. So you have to find out what parts of what people are asking for fits into the bigger you know either state or regional perspective and then going from there. So there's that -- there's an aspect of what we figured out with the Awakening and those who were responsible for it on the Iraqi side. Figured out what the reward requirement was, what their goals were. Figured out a way to leverage that in a way that was successful to them but also to the greater coalition efforts if that makes sense.

INTERVIEWER: It does. It does. Well, sir, I don't want to take up any more of your time. But I certainly appreciate your speaking with me.

04201235: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: If you have any other thoughts by all means please contact me.

04201235: Right.

END OF AUDIO

Interview 11: 04201236

Interview 04201236, 18 April 2012
Date of Deployment: 05-06; Location of Deployment: Al Asad (with bases and Ops throughout Anbar); Billet: [removed] ANGLICO

[*Edited for conciseness: Interviewer goes through informed consent process*]

INTERVIEWER: Can you explain a little bit about where you were and what you were doing while you were deployed in Iraq?

04201236: Okay. I was there from February to September 2005 and in February to September of 2006. I was the [*removed for security*] ANGLICO. The headquarters was based out of Al-Asad, but we had teams spread out all over Iraq, first deployment down as far as FOB Kalsu, all the way up to Ubadi and across up there, that direction. We had teams out in Fallujah. We had teams in Ramadi. We had teams in Habbaniyah, and my role as a [*removed*] there would be to travel with the CO to the different locations. Some of our guys embedded with MiTT teams that dealt directly with the Iraqi Security Forces. Others were embedded with Army units who were somehow tangled into with the Iraqi forces, so my experience over there was more or less traveling around to see my teams. We did get in a few engagements over there, myself and the command element, but as the most part, my unit was dispersed all over Al-Anbar Province, and so I got a little bit of a perspective from visiting all the different areas. That's the extent of my --

INTERVIEWER: Now, you were actually recommended to me. So I had another participant say that I really needed to speak with you, and I think that's because you have such a variety of perspectives of the area.

04201236: Right. And I know how that participant was and is.

INTERVIEWER: That is the one thing I have found with working with Marines. There's been a few interviews I've gone to where they knew I was coming before I did, I guess.

04201236: Well, he actually had some of my Marines attached to one of the teams he had down there. So some -- and we operated somewhat in the same area with some of our teams. So, like I said, I would go down and visit my guys, talk to them, see what was affecting their operations and their engagements out there, how they were effective and so forth, but I guess as a baseline, ANGLICO, they're Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, and what they do is they provide fire support. They go out in small teams, and they're attached to Army units and other Marine units, and they provide expertise in air, naval, gunfire, and artillery support. So that's what they do. So, like I said, I have people all over. We had between 20 and 30 teams, four-man teams, pretty much spread all throughout Iraq the time I was there, both times.

INTERVIEWER: So your experience -- I've talked with a lot of military who have worked in Ramadi, some who worked in Fallujah, both Army and Marine who were from Al Qaim. I had a couple people I've spoken with who have talked about Habbaniyah, and they had a little bit of experience in Haditha, but other than that, not too much in that area. So it's really great to be able to have a variety of perspectives from the whole AO.

04201236: We had teams in Habbaniyah. We had teams in Haditha. We had teams in Ramadi. We had teams in Al Qaim. So we were fairly spread out. We basically -- the first iteration, we had what were called our brigade platoons we had down in FOB Kalsu, and we had a platoon in Fallujah or parts of a platoon in Fallujah operating out of Fallujah, and then parts of our team was in Ramadi. And then we would pull teams and place them elsewhere around as we needed them.

INTERVIEWER: The rest of those teams, were they fully embedded with other Marine Corps units, or were – [*you embedded with Army too?]*

04201236: We were embedded with both Army units and Marine units, and some of our guys were actually embedded with the MiTT teams that were assigned to a particular Iraqi unit.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any type of communication issues when you were trying to collaboration with partner coalition?

04201236: No. Most of that was done like our guys would be assigned to a MiTT team. So the MiTT team was doing more of that collaboration, not necessarily us. We were just completing the missions that were involved there. But I know that -- I know that the more familiar we became with our Iraqi counterparts and the people we're going to be out there working with, the better the operation seemed to go. That whole becoming friends with them, so to speak, and gaining that respect really helped us out.

INTERVIEWER: Now, in terms of working with the Iraqis, were they there before your unit started working with them? Do they have any former experience with the Marines or the MiTTs?

04201236: In 2006, yes. In 2005, from what I can recall, no, not really. It was more we were beginning to make those relationships and form those relationships.

INTERVIEWER: Were they Sunni and Shia or mostly Shia?

04201236: Mostly Sunni from what I recall, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. The reason I ask is because a lot of the PiTTs that I've talked to have talked about being a police trainer, and that the idea was to make the police force a local force. [*In the literature*] 2006 was [*referred to as*] the "Year of the Police". What I'm starting to find is it's not necessarily the year of the police but more the year of the local, and that the lesson was working and having locals in the area, so that they're recognized.

04201236: I agree wholeheartedly with that, and I noticed that. I think in a sense the reason that the local was the key there was because people were just tired of the intimidation. There was no security, and they trusted, you know, tribal warfare and everything else that goes on. First of all, they got a feeling of ownership in their own security, and their own people were providing that security. So the fact that they were so tired of the intimidation by the insurgents -- like we were in one Op, and it was -- the insurgency had such a strong hold out there. You could see as we were there for a week or so that the Iraqi people just started coming towards us. They were gravitating towards us. They wanted security, and they were tired of the intimidation piece. And just that factor coupled with getting locals involved in their own security, I think really helped.

INTERVIEWER: Now, when they started approaching you as Marines, did your Marines know how to react to that or respond? Did they automatically engage with those locals?

04201236: I think in 2006, yes. Not so much 2005. That was our first deployment as a unit in 2005, and everyone was very apprehensive. I think after going back a second time, we were more culturally aware. We received more intensive cultural training.

INTERVIEWER: But in 2005 not so much?

04201236: Not as much.

INTERVIEWER: How much IPB did you get?

04201236: Not much, to be honest with you.

INTERVIEWER: No? So you guys just maybe went out more [*culturally unaware*] in 2005 than in 2006?

04201236: Very much so.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any kind of language training, anything that assisted you?

04201236: We didn't start language training as much. See, I left ANGLICO and went to MARSOC. We got a lot of language and cultural training in MARSOC. When I first got there (*ANGLICO*), because I got assigned to ANGLICO about a month prior to deployment, and the language training program, it was minimal at best, to be honest with you, and we realized that we needed that. And between deployments, we worked on it. Was it a formalized language program? No, it wasn't, but there was a need for small unit leaders on the ground to at least be able to converse and at least make their presence known. But our guys weren't necessarily the ones that were out there doing the key leader engagement piece and so forth. We didn't do that, the MiTT teams that we belonged to. They were doing it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, key leader isn't necessarily "the key", and that, I found just from my own personal experience. The locals themselves, especially in a tribal network, are going to go back and tell their sheikhs whether or not they think you can be trusted and then still work up the chain. So being dismounted is an advantage.

04201236: Well, very true, very true, and that was one of the things. Like our guys that were in Habbaniyah, they were embedded with a MiTT team, and they were -- this was 2006, and they were actively engaged with the Iraqis on a daily basis. They lived with them. They walked with them. They talked with them. They patrolled with them. Matter of fact, one of my friends got killed out there, and it was sort of -- it was weird how that happened, but that's no big deal. But it could have been a lot worse if the friendships and they hadn't developed a relationship with the Iraqis that they were walking with and sleeping with every day. So you're absolutely right. You know, the lance corporal walking down the sidewalk on a patrol that runs into a village elder or just a young kid means a lot. It has strategic implications.

INTERVIEWER: [*Edited for clarity*] The Marine Corps calls it the "Strategic Corporal"

04201236: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But the reason I ask about engagements even at the lowest rank is because in the literature, some authors have described scenarios where a few people did some really significant things. And they paint this picture that engagements were not common practice.

04201236: We do. I wouldn't say that they were not a common practice. It was only a few. You know, your formal sit-downs, those were few and far between from my unit, from my level, but on patrol going through villages, we talked to them every day. We tried to communicate with them [*Iraqis*]. I will say that there is a serious lapse in language training, extremely critical lapse in language training in any unit in the Marine Corps. There may be a few people who could speak the language. We've gotten a lot better with cultural training, a lot better. When we first started, it wasn't very good, but we've gotten a lot better. But language, most of the Marines that I had were picking stuff up on the street and dealing with the Iraqis that they were living with, and they were learning it from them. As far as formalized training before we went, it was nonexistent.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any type of body language training or how to work with interpreters, anything like that?

04201236: The 'terp piece, we did. Working with 'terps and using them to our advantage, we did learn a lot of that, not really -- it was just lessons learned, you know -- from the previous unit that had gone and so forth, but we really at that point -- I don't know where it's gone since then, because I left there, I went to MARSOC where we got all of this training. So MARSOC was completely different than my time at ANGLICO.

INTERVIEWER: With the Iraqi [*interpreters*], were there any that stuck out as a little bit better? I mean, there are some descriptions of certain interpreters that wound up actually being utilized more as a cultural advisor, because they were able to work very well with the Marines.

04201236: We had -- we had a couple that were attached to RCT-2 up in -- I cannot -- God, I wish I can remember their names now, because they were RCT-2 'terps, but sometimes they would go out with us, because we would support RCT-2. And they did do that. And we would talk to them in the compound there at Camp Ripper about how do we deal with it and how do we interact with the Iraqi people. Okay, we're going to this village. What's significant about this village? What's going to make this village different than this village, this tribal area different than this tribal area, the Sunni from the Shia? What do we need to do as Americans, so we don't create a more chaotic environment than there needs to be, you know?

INTERVIEWER: [*Edited for clarity*] Did you think to talk to them because you had training, or had read about doing that in the Small Wars manual?

04201236: I thought about that, because I had a lot of years of experience in the Marine Corps prior to that. The young guys don't think about that. They didn't until they were forced to. You know, they get into an engagement. They go into a town, and something happens, and then the next thing you know, they realize that they could have benefitted from some talk prior to. But I would say that the more you got familiar with your 'terps and understood how well and how quickly they could help you out and how integral they really were to your success -- and that comes from the top down. Our boss, our bosses really pushed it. They did. My CO really talked to the team leaders that were out there, and he pushed using the Iraqis that were -- he was good with that. He really was. He stressed that this was their fight, not ours. We were an arm in the war trying to do what we had to do, but we're trying to bring peace and stability to the Iraqi people and so forth. So they will be more apt to help out and more apt to want to be a part of this if we make it their fight, and I think that was key for us, because a lot of our -- because the way ANGLICO was set up, the team leaders were all lieutenants and captains. They weren't senior at all. They had 4, 5 years of experience in the Marine Corps, and they hadn't really gotten on-the-ground, any formal cultural training. So that came from the top down with us.

And I know the RCT commanders that we supported and BCT for the Army guys that we supported, it seems to me the Army was more in tune to the cultural piece than the Marine Corps was. In my impression, when we would go down to

Ramadi and deal with the guys down at Ramadi or we would go up to Al Qaim and deal with the Marines, it seemed to me they were more embedded with their -- with the Iraqi counterparts down in Ramadi area.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that is? Why do you think the Marines weren't asked about it -- or "invested," I guess, maybe is a better word?

04201236: I think in 2005, we were -- I think the focus was different. I think the focus in 2005 for us was -- I know to me it was a lot more kinetic at that point, and that's what we were focused on. Instead of trying to get away from the kinetic piece and went into hearts and minds and so forth, I think in 2006, it changed, but I think in 2005, we were just trying to feel our way through it and also take the fight to the bad guy.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that that's because of what had happened in 2004 in Fallujah, Al Fajr, or was it just -- in 2005, there's a lot within the literature that talks about, Al Qaim or Hit or Haditha, these little mini "Awakenings." But sometimes it's expressed as Coalition Forces didn't have the ability to see [*what was going on*], because they didn't have cultural training, that they didn't have the ability to see what was happening and therefore didn't pick up on the momentum. So there's almost like this feel that the Awakening could have happened sooner if we had capitalized on it.

04201236: You know, I tend to agree. Like I just stated, in 2005, we were not focused on that at all. We were not -- we didn't use the momentum that should have been there or the -- or the force multiplier of the Iraqi people in their own conflict. We didn't do that. It was so much more kinetic. I almost felt safe going back in 2006.

INTERVIEWER: Really?

04201236: Yes. Where in 2005, I was always on edge, because I knew that pretty much everywhere we went, we were going to get hit -- or could be hit, could be involved in something. And 2006, we didn't see nearly as much as we saw in 2005.

INTERVIEWER: That's a pretty significant change.

04201236: It was. It really was, and I don't know what the ANGLICO units that went back in 2007 and 2008 saw, but I know my two experiences over there, it was a night-and-day difference between the two.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think happened in that time frame for the shift? When you went back in 2006, was that already after there had been engagements with Albu Risha and the other tribes or --

04201236: I believe so. I went back, like I said, February 2006, and I just know that when we got there, the security on the ground just seemed so much better, you know. I had a sense that the Iraqi people were in control of their own destiny at that point; whereas, in 2005, I didn't feel that. I think the security forces, the police forces were much better engaged in 2006. They were much better organized to fight their fight; whereas, in 2005, I still believe we were doing the bulk of everything. Whereas, in 2006, we were partnered a lot more, and the Iraqis -- Like when I go down visit my guys in Fallujah or visit my guys in Habbaniyah and the Iraqis were right there with them doing the bulk of what they needed to be doing, and we were there advising, partnering, and so forth; in the gunfights with them but not taking a preponderance of a gunfight, but less of it.

INTERVIEWER: Were they including the Iraqis at that point in time in operational planning?

04201236: Just at the higher level, definitely. Not so much -- not from what I saw at the company level or below, no.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of your travels around the AO, did you have any experience with the tribal militias or the unofficial security forces?

04201236: I did not, no.

INTERVIEWER: There's sometimes a lot of disparity over whether or not we call them militias, whether or not they were militias or pre-police or pre-Iraqi Army. How do Marines try to resolve when you have the opportunity to use the locals to stabilize an area even if it is a militia, but it may not necessarily nest within our overall policy objectives? And if you don't want to answer it, you don't have to, but --

04201236: I would -- suffice it to say that we do what needs to be done to get the job done. Okay. That's pretty much -- I know what most Marines are going to do, and I know what my guys did and how they dealt with people and how to get things accomplished. You're right. It may not nest very well with what our overall -- what we're supposed to do, but in certain situations, it's probably going to be used.

INTERVIEWER: But that level of flexibility also has a lot of success, it seems.

04201236: It does.

INTERVIEWER: Especially when dealing with small wars or counterinsurgencies.

04201236: Yes. And I think you have to trust in your people to let them do that, and I think Marines do it well.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there were any engagements that you experienced that you think may have not necessarily been helpful but may have actually clouded the situation and made things more difficult for Marines?

04201236: I think when we had -- it wasn't us, but we had two different battalions RIP up in the Hit area. I think the mind-set of the two different battalion commanders and how they were dealing with the locals, I think that prevented some progress up in that area for a while. I think -- I think at the lower level with the younger Marines, you know, when you talk COIN and when you talk winning the hearts and minds of people, that's a hard point to get across and especially when they're worried about their own survival. And trust comes into play a lot there, and from the top down, there's really got to be a strong -- they've got to buy into COIN, or your young Marines aren't going to do it. And I felt that there was a completely different mind-set between those two and that city and that down or that village, whatever Hit was, and I just -- I think I saw -- I saw a strong -- because we would travel through Hit all the time, and I saw a shift in the way the people looked at you, once a new unit took over, because they came in a little bit heavy-handed, in my opinion, not crimes or anything of that nature, but they weren't as -- they weren't as -- I don't know -- open to the Iraqi people.

INTERVIEWER: So if that's -- I mean, if they came in heavy-handed, though, the Iraqi people who -- you know, their culture relies heavily on engagements and building friendships and relationships. So the idea, first off, RIPs were something that was a little hard for the people to grasp themselves, because they built up the relationship with you, and then now you're going home. So you have to almost start over --

04201236: You do.

INTERVIEWER: -- unless there is that right-seat/left-seat where you're able to introduce, you know, say this guy is trusted by me, and make him a partner in the engagement process.

04201236: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Did you guys do that with those RIPs?

04201236: We did. We did. But every RIP and every engagement is personality-dependent. I mean, take you and I together. We hit it off great. And you may think, hey, this guy is trusted, trustworthy. We can work together to come to a common solution. Yet I bring the guy in who is going to replace me, and he may talk about it, but is he really going to do it, or is he a trustworthy individual? And those are the stumbling blocks, because it takes -- you know, you can do a RIP. You can do a 2-week RIP. You can do however long you're going to RIP with a unit, and you can have constant

engagements, but you can tell if someone is genuine. And so all of those, you know -- if -- I mean, that's why I'm a little bit -- you know, the Marine Corps does things for reasons, and we do 7 months in and so forth. And we're not there for long periods of time. There's reasons for all of that.

But a continued presence is going to help win these things out, and you have to have -- like I said, leaders have to buy into the mentality of what we're over there to do. If they don't, then you're always going to have a conflict every time you RIP. And there's always going to be a month-long period where these relationships are being rebuilt and so forth, where there is potential for bad things to happen, with the tide to turn, so to say. And I saw some of that when RIPs were going on, because they were going on, because they were sporadic throughout the different AOs we were going in. Some RIPs were very successful, and it was driven from the top-down. Some RIPs weren't as good, because if I developed a relationship with a certain AO for 7 months and I was comfortable, my Marines were comfortable in dealing with local villagers or whatever the case may be and there was a trust built up there, then all of a sudden, another lance corporal comes in there, and he scared off his own -- he's scared to walk outside the wire, because he's heard every horror story in the world and doesn't know how he's going to have to perform. Well, that's an impediment to progress right there. So it's going to take him a month or two to develop and change.

But yet to answer your original question, going back to could we have capitalized on this momentum earlier if we would have had training, yes. Yes, we really could have, because as soon as all the mullahs and the sheikhs and all the others really decided that they had had enough. They had had enough of instability. They have had enough of insecurity. They have had enough of intimidation. I mean, they really decided that, you know, we're done with this, let's move forward, and then they accepted us as a more stable force, you know. But I just -- I think if we were -- personally, we could have been more effective if we would have learned more.

INTERVIEWER: In looking back and then thinking about lessons learned, how we can capitalize on these lessons for future theaters of engagement, how do you get to that point where you're teaching these young Marines how important it is? I mean, you're not going to get it just by reading the book.

04201236: No.

INTERVIEWER: So without the experience, how do you get them to not only think about the kinetic fight but also buy-in themselves personally into the idea that they have to try and see these people as friends or maybe like family members?

04201236: Well, I mean, you can do it with an informal training program as part of your PTP, your build-up and so forth, a lot of scenario and role playing. You can incorporate scenario and role playing into professional military education. There's whole different -- a whole different agenda or different areas where you can concentrate that, but for that unit going into that specific AO, you really need to focus that during their work-up to go and make that a big part of it, besides all the shooting packages and everything else that you go through. You really need to make that a part of it and not just a check in the block, okay, we got our cultural training.

If you know 6 months out you're going to this country, this place, and the language is this, well, take the time to do at least basic-level language emergent training or whatever you can do for the bulk of your unit, you know, cultural training, cultural awareness. It's key. That was part of our screening from RSOC was when we were screening these guys and we were doing a lot of cultural training, we were putting them in scenarios saying, "Boom! React," and then we were judging them on how they reacted to the scenario and what their mentality was like and how mature they were. Well, you can't do that as a disqualifier for the regular Marine Corps, but you can do it to familiarize someone with it.

I mean, if our fight is going to be COIN from now on in most of the areas and when we're looking at the areas that we're going to be fighting in the next 100 years, you need to formalize this type of training into the PTP, more so than what we already do.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that we have a good balance of language and culture, or do we need to focus more on language or more on culture?

04201236: I think we need to go more with culture side. Language is enough. If you could teach very basic conversational language, just enough to communicate to show, I think it works hand in hand. I think if you show the local populous that you are willing to try, I think that wins a lot, and here you're not -- okay, we all know the things you got to tell them, to stop, get down, and all those other things, but not that kind of conversation. But where you can approach someone on a patrol going through a city or a town and you can just ask them how their day is or just build up some type of rapport, you know, that pays dividends.

I've done about four trips down to Colombia to work with the Colombian military and help build their NCO corps, and I know just enough Spanish to get myself in trouble, but it showed them that I was willing to try. And I tell you what, I built some really good relationships down there. Now, Colombia is different than Iraq and Afghanistan and so forth, but, I mean, I think that's key. But the cultural piece, making people aware -- look at all the things that Marines are doing and soldiers are doing over there now that are bringing bad press to the military, to the United States. If they had more cultural training, maybe some of that stuff wouldn't be occurring. Of course, a lot of that is basic leadership, but I think -- I think the balance should shift more towards the cultural aspect of it with --

INTERVIEWER: If we were able to [*provide*] more cultural training, to what level of fidelity do you think would be necessary to be effective? Because when you're taking into account the variety of types of things that the Marine Corps does, like the MEUs, for example, what would you suggest is the right balance? Do we need more regional training? Would you need to drill down into the real specifics, or would you maybe need more information on the types of military structure that was there before [*a regime collapse*] or the political structure? What do you think is necessary?

04201236: I think a basic wave-top, a regional level, information would really help, not a book that, "Hey, go read this while you're" -- but actual -- and not a PowerPoint presentation, but, I mean, the closer to hands-on training you can get is what you need. I don't know if drilling down into the very specifics is necessary, but I think you need to create a cultural awareness better than what we do now.

Now, since I left ANGLICO in 2007, I went to MARSOC, and then I've been up here for a while now. So I don't know what's really going on out there in the fleet since I left. So I don't know what improvements have been made, but I know my two tours in Iraq with that unit, we didn't have much -- our cultural awareness was a book, Cultural Issues Going On In Iraq, or whatever the book was entitled, and it was a waste of time, because nobody read it.

INTERVIEWER: And that little green pamphlet, did you guys have that? (*Smart Cards*)

04201236: Yep. And unless we sat down with all the Marines in the room and said, "Read this," it wasn't read. I think I still have mine somewhere. But I just think there needs to be -- I think regional area, wave top-type cultural awareness would help out.

INTERVIEWER: What about having more, like the Iraqi interpreters, having more of those advisors to be available [*like a CULAD*]? Do you think that that would be more value-added, or do you think having another person around that, obviously factors into the logistics -- do you think that would be problematic?

04201236: I don't think that's something that couldn't be overcome. I think that would be very beneficial. I think someone who -- you know, I mean, we've served in different wars throughout history with advisors on both sides, and unless he's a bad guy, he's a good guy, the way I look at it. He can't help but help us, or she can't help but help us out, because they know the culture. And I think that's very good. And it helped me just talking to the guy. Sitting and having a cigar, talking to the interpreters when we were inside the wire, I learned a lot, and I think that was very valuable. It definitely helped me if I had to talk to someone on a patrol or whatever the case may be.

INTERVIEWER: Now, I have had some Marines, and forgive me if this winds up being a little bit of a trigger question, they have suggested that -- and this is the quote: “We, the Marine Corps, needs to get back to the way we are meant to be, the way we originally were”, suggesting the Corps is kinetic, and then to “have a separate part of the Marine Corps that's humanitarian guys, the builders, the PRT folks, the ones who would go in and do the COIN.” What are your Thoughts on that?

04201236: I disagree with that, and the reason I disagree with it is, for one, we're too small, and two, we're -- the fight we're going to fight requires these skill sets, requires cultural awareness, requires language skills, requires the ability to communicate with people, because you can't kill your way to victory. You can't do it. We saw that in Vietnam. We killed many more than they killed, but we saw what happened there. Any fights we've been in, especially in these types of fights we're in and with a COIN fight, you don't win the fight. The United States Marine Corps is not going to win a fight in Iraq or Afghanistan or anywhere by themselves, okay?

So Marine Corps doesn't have 50,000 people that we can make here specifically for humanitarian assistance and civil affairs and that piece. We can't do that. We're not big enough. Marines need to possess those skill sets. So whoever said that, yeah, it's nice to think that a "Hey Marines, let's just go break things". You know, that's what Marines think that they should all do. Everything needs to be kinetic. We need to have those skill sets, but that's not the war we're fighting these days.

INTERVIEWER: But don't you also need to be able to -- if you can't separate or segregate the Marine Corps into those types performance units, then you need to be able to have that resolution between being able to be a really effective kinetic operator and then within a matter of moments also be able to engage people that looked very similar to the folks that we're just fighting.

04201236: I think the three- and four-block war theories, I think those are accurate, and those are the fights we're going to fight, in littorals and everywhere else we go to in the future. And Marines just need to train to that ability or at least have a basic understanding. I think the reason Marines say that, those comments that were said to you, is because Marines don't want to get out of their comfort zone, and their comfort zone is operational combat, the mission of the Marine Corps rifle squad, locate, close, charge the enemy, by fire maneuver, kill the enemies, by fire and close combat. That's what they do. That's what they want to do. They're comfortable with it. They're not comfortable with fighting on one block, the next block doing security operations, next block doing humanitarian operations. They're not comfortable with that, and that's a mind-set that you have to train your Marines too. They have to understand that that is the fight that we fight.

INTERVIEWER: Were you seeing that a lot between 2005 and 2006, the three-block war?

04201236: I saw it more. I saw it more. I saw -- I wasn't there in 2003. I wasn't there in 2004 at all, but --

INTERVIEWER: But between 2005 and 2006?

04201236: Yes. I was actually -- in 2003 and '4, I was the First Sergeant out in Reno, and we sent one of our reserve -- we sent our reserve unit over to Iraq. And it was a reserve force reconnaissance unit, and it was all kinetic. That's what they did. And when they came back, I talked to the Sergeant Major. I talked to the First Sergeant, and they were like -- that's what they did. They didn't focus on anything else. There was a bit of a shift to that more. I mean, there were more people willing to accept us in 2006 than there were in 2005, and like I said, I believe it was tied to the fact that they were tired of the insecurity and instability, and they were tired of the intimidation of the insurgency. And I think their leaders got fed up, and that was the Awakening. Did we facilitate it by using them? Sure, we did, but we wouldn't -- I don't believe we would have been able to do it without them wanting to do it.

INTERVIEWER: Getting back to the three-block war, there's some that say you do "clear, hold, build", consecutively. [*Edited for conciseness*] 1/6 Marines report having done them continuously. So you're doing a "three-block war", where

at the same time that you're doing kinetic operations over here, you're also employing humanitarian assistance and trying to build projects just a few blocks away. Do you think there is usefulness in both strategies, whether it be consecutively, or do you think that it's more effective to try and do something all at once, if possible?

04201236: I think the situation is going to dictate. I think you have to have the abilities to do them consecutively, because some environments are going to create that. You may be in a gunfight on one block, and the next block, you had kids out there or whatever the case may be. So I think you have t make that mind-set part of your training. You have to train the officers to instill that into your younger Marines, and you have to train it. We try -- in my present unit, we try to inculcate the young people into that mind-set, "This is what you're going to see." And the boss talks about it. I talk about it, and I think it's key, because you have -- I mean, if all you're doing is one way, we're going to have problems. We're going to have cases where people shouldn't get hurt and they get hurt. It's because that would be the mind-set. You know, we have to break that mind-set.

INTERVIEWER: When you were traveling around the AO, were all Marine units employing, the inkblot method, or creating the COPs and then spreading them out into the city? Building one COP in one location, then piggy-backing and building another one to spread out? [*Edited for conciseness*]

04201236: That happened a lot in 2006. A lot.

INTERVIEWER: Everywhere or just in Ramadi?

04201236: No. Most of the places where I saw -- because we would go to Rawah, up in that area. We'd spread out, Ramadi and Habbaniyah. We did. We were working that way out of Fallujah. I think pretty much everywhere. Not in 2005 so much. 2005, there was a whole lot of operating out of the FOBs, main FOBs. I think 2006, we really -- we really started spreading out amongst the people and gaining their trust. The problem with that, though, is once you pull back, you lose that trust, because you're out there. You think, okay, we got this guy who is going to fight alongside of us, and all of a sudden, he's gone. Well, they lied to us. They told us they were going to be here with us and for us, and now they're gone. So that can be problematic too.

INTERVIEWER: In 2005 specifically, did you have any interactions with other coalition partners, such as Special Forces or the SEAL teams that were out there or -- the reserve units, and there was National Guard and some CAV units and an armor division. I'm trying to think of all the people that were out there in 2005 and 2006, but mainly 2005. Did you have any of those interactions?

04201236: We reacted -- my units were with me, and we worked with the SEALs. We worked with some other people in support, and we did work. We had -- we had a team that was a National Guard unit that was put out there in the middle of nowhere, but we did work with the SEALs and some other people.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that the relationship was mutually supportive, or could it have been better?

04201236: I think the uniqueness of what we did provided them with an asset, so it fit in. I think instead of their guys having to worry about air support and other things of that nature, our guys proved their medal and were able to fit in with them.

I think with the conventional forces, there's no doubt about it. Our guys were value-added. With the Special Forces kind of guys and the SOCOM guys, they're a little bit -- their skill sets are a little better for the most part, and a lot of them were doing the same thing our guys could do, but with our guys embedding in with them, it freed their guys to do other things.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I ask is because in the literature, there's one article in particular that was written by a SF guy who said that the Marines didn't really support them very much, and they actually may have hampered their ability to do certain things. Also, they didn't support the tribal effort. Now, this was in late 2005.

But then I spoke with Marines who said, "No, that wasn't the case. That's kind of disappointing." And I know that there's power grabbing sometimes, especially in hindsight as we write history, but I'd like to be able to drill down to actually what those relationships were like. If there were people stepping on each other's toes, fine, so be it. We'll use it as a lesson on partnering and collaboration with other coalition partners, but if it was an issue of stovepiping information (*and not supporting operations*), that is a challenge to overcome.

04201236: Right. I think I've got a little bit of a unique perspective going from ANGLICO to MARSOC, and while in ANGLICO, my guys were working with the SEALs and so forth. And then me dealing with a lot of the different -- and just my experience with the different elements of SOCOM, there's a whole lot of sibling rivalry in there. There's a whole lot of it, and I don't think we trained as -- we didn't train with them prior to going over there. So there was initial, "Hey, what are you guys going to bring to the fight? You're just going to get in our way." And we actually had to prove that we were good at what we did, because the way ANGLICO was set up, I mean, it was always to work with our allies. Typically, we worked with the Brits (*British*). We worked with the Germans. We worked with the French. We worked with the Poles (*Polish*). Well, 2005 and 2006, we weren't really doing that. We were working with the Army, and we worked with typically a second ANGLICO. We worked with the 18th Airborne Corps and units from that corps, and we worked with Marine units, which was not doctrinal at all. But we were operating in Anbar, and they needed help. So we would support them. So we really weren't working doctrinally, but then when we got attached -- not attached to but worked with, the SEALs and so forth down around Fallujah and different areas -- there was a little bit of sibling rivalry, and I think if we had of worked with them, it would have paid off.

INTERVIEWER: You mean prior to?

04201236: Prior to deployment. And I don't know if that's ever going to happen, because they have those skill sets.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it's, more or less, because of military culture that these things kind of pop out when people write, or did you actually experience stovepiping of information? If you have one unit that's maybe not working so closely with another unit that's of a different service branch and information is not necessarily being shared, especially regarding operations that are occurring in the area, then it's easy to say, "Yeah, they didn't support us."

04201236: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But if you're not really talking to them or if maybe something as simple as your information systems are not compatible, then how can you possibly know?

04201236: Right. I think the issue -- we worked well. ANGLICO worked well with the units that we supported. I really didn't have that much information. We worked hand in hand in planning and so forth. At higher levels, I couldn't really tell you. ANGLICO is a unique unit, and what it did, I mean, they like to call themselves "semi-special." We're not -- the Marine Corps always had Force Reconnaissance who was the Marine Corps's elite branch, and then when they opened up SOCOM and MARSOC came in and took all of Force Recon and everything else, now Force Recon is back to a little bit of extent. ANGLICO was like treated as a step down from that but more elite than the regular Marine Corps, because what they did. So there's a little bit of uniqueness in that unit and a little bit of cowboy mentality, but they're a very professional organization but a little bit of cowboy mentality. So they can fit in with the SOCOM guys. So there really wasn't that big of an issue there.

INTERVIEWER: Then I can write this up as an author’s opinion, but not necessarily a lesson?

04201236: I would agree with that wholeheartedly. I don't think anyone was hiding anything, anyone was keeping anything so they could get the glory. I mean, my boss and I would travel. We'd go down there. We'd visit the SEALs. We'd go to their headquarters. We talked to those guys, said, "Hi, we're working with you." The guys up at Al Asad, up at Camp Ripper, we're working with those guy supervisor there, and there were no issues.

INTERVIEWER: Were the tribes ever asking you guys to come and support them and help, and if so, were you able to respond?

04201236: From my perspective, no. At the MiTT level and so forth where I had teams that were attached, yeah, they were. Maybe not specifically my guys, but they were talking, they were dealing with the MITTs, and they got the support that they needed and help they needed. That happened, like I said, 2006. That became more the occurrence than in 2005.

INTERVIEWER: So in 2005, it really just wasn't going on that much?

04201236: Not from my perspective, no.

INTERVIEWER: Was it because -- at least in 2006, that was when the Awakening really started picking up steam, and in September is when they officially announced it. But in 2006, do you think that they were engaging the MiTTs because it was more an Iraqi tribe going to an Iraqi counterpart like the IA?

04201236: I think so. I think so. I think they finally -- they had an Iraqi face to the fight, and I think that's what really worked out.

INTERVIEWER: Did you guys have any experience with the Iraqi police, trying to set up the Iraqi police, or was that mostly all PiTTs?

04201236: That was all PiTTs. That wasn't us.

INTERVIEWER: [*Edited for clarity & conciseness*] What dynamics, actions, and/or interactions do you think supported or instigated events in Anbar, the Awakening, that could be globally applicable in other COIN fights or environments?

04201236: I think the earlier we can engage with the local populous, whether that's through training their military or through training or just communications with the people, that's huge, and in order to do that, you've got to -- prior to deploying your Marines, you've got to give them the operational and cultural training that they need to be standing on their own two feet out there. From my experience, we didn't get that, with the exception of a pamphlet that said, "Read this." I don't know if that's happening now, if it's gotten better since I left. I believe it has. I've been told it has.

INTERVIEWER: I'm also hearing about a computer program, Combat Hunter. Now, prior to this project, I've had a little bit of experience with it, but I've heard that that's been implemented and a lot of people have said that it's good --

04201236: Well, then that's good that that's being used.

But that to me is the biggest piece that I learned. I mean, it's a COIN fight, and I said it once before. You can't kill your way to victory. We can't kill everybody, and if we do, who is left to stabilize and run their country? So the quicker we

can engage the local population and get them on our side, the better, and that young lance corporal walking down the street on a patrol is going to be able to influence more than people think. So we got it on him or her with the ability to engage the local population and build rapport and get a trust there.

INTERVIEWER: To what level and degree? The Lance Corporal will get some training, but they have to go through a lot of training on weapons, training on systems, whatever training they have for the MOS. How much training are we really going to put on the shoulders of an 18-20 year-old to make them effective in a COIN fight? Do we need to focus more on culture and drilling down to that level of fidelity with the lance corporal?

04201236: I think you do. I think that -- I mean, 63 percent of the Marine Corps is Lance Corporal and below, and those are the people that are out there walking those last 200 meters into a village with very little or limited supervision above them. I think they can make or break you. Their actions on the ground can be -- as you know, strategic implications can be huge. So I think it's value-added to give them more training. I mean, what's the harm in it?

INTERVIEWER: Some would say it's the time investment, but I've also heard that the onus is supposed to be on the leaders to train his troops. If a leader thinks something is important, then they will take the initial steps to make sure that the training is there for their enlisted.

04201236: Well, that's true with their competing interest there, you know. There are very much competing interests. That's why I'm saying a formalized process to at least get them some regional cultural awareness is key in my book, because they're the ones that are out there doing everything. I mean, I can go out there, and I can chase Marines around, and I can motivate them, and I can do everything I've got to do as a Sergeant Major, but they're the ones that are walking through that market and talking to that guy behind the fruit stand and gaining that trust and confidence, and if he's afraid to do it or if he's so rigid and can't be approachable because he's never been trained and not aware of it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, also, if they have that mentality, that the Marine Corps should be mostly kinetic....

04201236: Right.

INTERVIEWER: …and perhaps they need to try and understand that the Marine Corps is much more than that.

04201236: I think if the training -- or not the training, but the awareness that we give most of these MiTT teams could somehow be pushed out to the Marine Corps, I think that's valuable. I think just that level of awareness that they get prior to going over there is -- would be good.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they received a decent amount of training or a proper amount of training in 2005 and 2006 to provide what they needed to be effective?

04201236: I think they were -- they were learning on the fly. I really think they do. I think all those lessons that we learned from this can actually be -- I follow all the stuff in the Marine Corps center for lessons learned and all that. I read it all the time, but I think if -- I mean, if we're not going to use the information that we've gathered in the last 10 years, why do we even get it in the first place? And there's so much information out there that we've learned about cultural awareness and language skills that it's kept up here, but the guys going all the work and making the biggest impression over there aren't getting any of it or aren't getting as much potentially they could use.

INTERVIEWER: So it sounds like what you're saying is that the enlisted need more focus. If we are trying to meet the objectives of the "Strategic Corporal", then you have to make him the strategic corporal.

04201236: 04201236: I think so. Yes. It's easy to pay lip service to it, and it's easy to say, "Okay. The captains now understand cultural awareness for Region "Umptefratz"," but if he doesn't think that's important, he's more worried about kinetic operations, he's not going to make sure that that private or that PFC 6 months out of boot camp understands the implications of his actions over there.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that age might be a factor? I mean, the maturity of our enlisted who are Corporals (*Privates, PFCs, Corporals, Lance Corporals, etc.),* they are going to be pretty young. Do you think that it's because we have this maybe ill-faceted idea that they're just too young to grasp it?

04201236: I think that there are so many competing interests that we think it's a waste of time, but I think we're wrong there. I think we need to equip our guys for the fight that we're fighting, and part of the fight we're fighting is the cultural piece. I'm a big fan of pushing that down as far as you possibly can.

INTERVIEWER: Excellent. I really appreciate you coming and talking to me, because your perspective has been, I think, not necessarily radically different, but I think from your perspective and the work that you did, I think it's really helpful. So I very much appreciate that. If there's anything else you'd like to add, contact me.

04201236: Well, no, not really. I mean, if I think of something, I'll call you. But from my perspective, if this is the fight we're going to fight for the near future, which it seems to be, because I don't see a bunch of people coming up, lining up in a line and coming, charging at us, we have to equip our Marines. If we equip them with the skill sets to fight a kinetic fight, we have to equip them with the skill sets to fight a non-kinetic fight.

INTERVIEWER: If they have these skill sets -- And, we're talking the “ifs, haves, and what ifs”, but if they had had these skill sets, do you think that your enlisted guys would have been able to recognize that there were some tribal elements that were trying to reach out to the Marines?

04201236: Possibly.

INTERVIEWER: And the reason I ask is because, you know, having walked the streets myself and talking with those fruit stand vendors and everything else and just the little subtle intricacies of what I was seeing were letting me know where certain people and certain elements were that weren't supposed to be in that community and gave me a real feel for what was going on.

Now, I have lots of cultural training, but I would take that back and talk to the Marines I was [*embedded*] with and say, "Okay, this is what I'm hearing, and this is what I'm seeing." And the response would be, "Well, how did you get that? You just went and bought and apple. How did you…" -- but it's because of that level of educational training that I have.

04201236: Right. And we've all heard it, knowledge is power, and we just need to empower our Marines. You know, as far -- now, obviously, with the contributing factors there, you know, or conflicting, what takes priority and what takes precedence, you know, we have to figure that piece out, because there's a mind-set that says Marine Corps needs to get back to its roots and this is what we're going to do. I understand getting back to our roots. We need to do that, but in the Banana Wars, we were -- and all the small wars we ever fought, we were dealing with the local population. And that's part of what we do, and the Marine just needs to understand that, but I just think as leaders, we need to equip our Marines the best way we possibly can.

INTERVIEWER: If you were to say that there was a percentage of time that should go into one versus the other, kinetic versus cultural…

04201236: I think we do all the other type of training year-round. I think as we get closer to deployment, that -- I mean, even if you only up it 10 more percent or 15 percent, that that's not going to take away from the stuff that you've already been proficient at, because you've been doing it year-round, because you're required to do that stuff year-round.

INTERVIEWER: So do your cultural training as a ramp-up rather than a year-round thing?

04201236: Mm-hmm. While it's fresh in their minds.

INTERVIEWER: So, types of training, you have already said no PowerPoints, hands-on stuff, more integration into something like Mojave Viper. Army has JRTC, NTC. There's a few others that they do also. Is the best type of training integration training or maybe actually working on these computer programs like Combat Hunter?

04201236: I think both of them work, but I think you can push that stuff down to the regiment and battalion level. I mean, put it into their unit training programs. Make it mandatory that, you know, we have our ITS standards and our T&R manual says infantry unit has to be capable of doing this, this, this, this. Well, guess what, now Marine units going overseas have to be capable of doing this. Show a knowledge and understanding of cultural awareness and how to interact with the local population. Okay. Well, how do you demonstrate that? When role players and you develop exercise to do that. I am thinking out of the box here, but I think that's key. I think that type of stuff. I mean, sure, you're going to have to sit in a classroom and talk about it. We're going to have to get some person with a 50-pound brain -- no offense.

INTERVIEWER: [Laughs.] That's okay.

04201236: I'm sure yours is bigger than that. But sure, we're going to have to get lectures. I mean, I'm going back to school for my MBA right now. I get lectured, and I can't stand it, but I have to do it. People learn different ways, so that's part of it. And -- but if you can focus more on hands-on, that's what the young guy learns. But by the same token, this is the Nintendo generation, and they are very good at games and stuff like that. And they like that, and that makes it more exciting. I've got a 20-year-old son and a 16-year-old son, and I know what they play every day. But you can incorporate the Combat Hunter-type games into the lower levels.

Now, a lot of the Marine Corps is going to say, "No, that will never happen. It can't happen. It takes up too much time. Logistically, it's impossible." Well, everything is logistically impossible until you take a hard look at it, and then you can figure out ways to make it work.

INTERVIEWER: Well, if you have something that is a video game package, that is something that you can have Marines take home that’s not that much of a time investment, and if it's fun --

04201236: We've got MarineNet courses. We've got MCI courses that you could really -- that are going online right now that could potentially develop cultural awareness, regional awareness, our regional awareness for whatever the case may be. Instead of Rosetta Stone language courses, you could have MCI courses, where you have to show some type of proficiency with language or something of that nature that could be implemented. There are many ways that you can implement this that can create a culture in the Marine Corps. Now, do you work on Arabic now or whatever other language from this region in the world? You don't know. But, I mean, those are just different ideas to incorporate it into a culture of the Marine Corps.

INTERVIEWER: What about using -- Are you familiar with the FAOs?

04201236: Yes

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any experience with them?

04201236: I was on embassy duty in Poland, but I did spend 3 months in Peru a long time ago, and I dealt with the FAOs and RAOs.

INTERVIEWER: Are you familiar with the CULAD program?

04201236: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. [*Edited for clarity*] Should the Marine Corps boost the CULAD program or something similar?

04201236: I don't know how much that program is going to get down to the lowest guy, the boots on the ground. I don't know where -- I mean, it couldn't hurt, but I don't know what's the quickest avenue to get the young Marines culturally aware. And that's the question I don't have an answer to. I mean, I'm looking at things, like I said, MarineNet courses, MCI-type courses, and I know there are different MCIs covering different areas of the world and this and that, but develop a program where down to the regimental and battalion level, it's part of their unit training, you know. Like I said, I'm just throwing ideas and don't know what's going to stick on the wall.

INTERVIEWER: I look back at Anbar and see, we have this event that was documented, and maybe it's not so unique and not so new. It just happened to work right for the time at the time it was needed, but it's something that historically is going to go down as a very unique scenario. And in the Marine Corps, it's considered quite a success in Anbar. I think that the reason that it's so unique is because, in some parts of the AOs, like within the city of Ramadi, what 1/6 did was very much right out of doctrine. And it worked perfectly. But then outside of Ramadi in the tribal-rural areas, the Army had to have a little bit more flexibility, a little more creativity, and that's fine as long as the commanders from the top are understanding and giving the green light to go ahead and let those leaps of faith occur.

04201236: Yes, right.

INTERVIEWER: But, if we had the cultural training and maybe we did have “Strategic Corporals” on the ground at the time who were aware of the cultural nuances, is it likely that these things could have happened sooner through engagements that were already occurring? Possibly.

04201236: Yes

INTERVIEWER: One of my questions is about social conditions. Anbar had a different level of state development, which is why Anbar can't be applied to, say, Afghanistan where state development is not the same. But there were also [*deteriorated*] social conditions, the economy was completely screwed up, al-Qaeda was doing some pretty harsh things and being way too heavy-handed, pushing the population away from them, making some serious mistakes.

04201236: Yes

INTERVIEWER: [*Edited for conciseness*] Do you think that any of the things that you know from doctrine, if they had been applied differently would have made any difference? (*Like Gallula, or Kilcullen*, *Small Wars Manual*)

04201236: I don't think so. Not really.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, because you have this fluid environment with these fluid cultures, fluid people, and they easily switch sides. They switched allegiances based on what the necessity was for them to survive.

04201236: Right. Yeah. That's -- that to me was -- you're exactly right. Their allegiance changed like I change my underwear every day, you know what I mean? Not to be funny or flippant or anything, but, I mean, what suited them best at the time is the side that they were on until they got tired of all the atrocities and they got tired of the lack of security. I tend to agree with you.

INTERVIEWER: But when you had these tribal elements or Iraqis, they did switch. How do you -- again, getting back to that "Strategic Corporal", if one day he sees somebody that is wearing a particular outfit or knows they're from a particular tribe and then a week later, they're part of the Iraqi Army that he's supposed to help train, how does a Marine that age, even with your commander saying "do this" -- how do they get to that point where they're really going to establish trust? Is it something that we can even try and address in training, or is that just something where the leaders are going to have to continue to drive home that message?

04201236: That's -- just bring them -- give them some training on the awareness of what happens, and when they see it, maybe they'll realize it's happening, if that makes any sense.

INTERVIEWER: Or how do identify it.

04201236: Right, right.

INTERVIEWER: You could use lessons like Anbar and see this is what happens and this is how we responded or how we could respond or should have responded.

04201236: Right. I mean, that's -- that's probably the extent of what you could do there, but --

INTERVIEWER: I do know that that's been described in the literature as a huge challenge, especially when you are trying to build up trust. How do you get somebody who's young, without the years of experience as a leader, to try and understand --

04201236: Well, in Afghanistan right now with all the Afghan forces have turned their weapons on military, there's a whole lot of distrust there. How do you fix that? How do you fix trust when you got a soldier doing what he's accused of doing? I mean, that set us back 10 years, and urinating on corpses and everything else, I mean, that -- how do you build that trust back up? What do you do? You have to have those guys -- the individual guy on the ground has got to win that trust for us, and he's not going to be able to unless he's gets some sort of training or cultural awareness.

I've been to probably 29 different countries or so in my 29 years in the Marine Corps, and each one is different. And each -- it's about people. It's about interpersonal skills and communication skills, and a lot of that, I gained over the years. And unfortunately, I was given time to gain that experience before I went into certain places, where some people today, they come out of boot camp, they come out of SOI, and they're in a fight 3 months later. So they don't have that experience, that life experience. So you have to be able to at least make them aware, and I think we're failing as a Marine Corps if we don't focus on cultural awareness.

INTERVIEWER: Well, with you having been to so many different countries in your career, one a year, how are you (personally) going to address the language training then?

04201236: Well, a lot of mine was just stopping in here for a TA&E trip for a week or 2 weeks or something like that. Some countries, I needed it; some, I didn't. It was depending on what I was trying to do. But they weren't al conflicts. So we're talking conflicts here. Conflicts are much different. If I'm just going down to do a TA&E trip, I'm going to be gone for a month, yes, it's nice to understand a little bit of the language and so forth. That's one piece, but I still needed to know the cultural piece, because you don't want to go there. We're “Ambassadors in Blue” wherever we go, and you don't want to do anything that's going to hurt us in the future, because a place where we're friends today, we might not be friends 10 years from now. So you have to -- I think it's a mind-set. It's a cultural mind-set that people get away from. People don't understand the importance of it.

You know, the "ugly American," I can go in here and be in Colombia right now. You know, let's play the ugly American and just ruin, ruin any relationship-building that we've done over the past 100 years because we're the ugly American, or you get a guy who is a tourist that goes overseas and does something stupid, and now he's set back foreign policy and diplomacy for years. Cultural awareness is something that's key.

The last trips I went to, I had to go through SCETC for classes and stuff like that to make sure I was at least aware of what was going on down in that area, so -- I think one area that we do fail in, in the Marine Corps -- we try, but we don't try well enough, because the people who really need the training aren't the sergeant majors, aren't the colonels. Yes, we need the basic, because we're going to be doing a lot of the key leader engagement at the top, but it's the guy on the ground. It's the young lance corporal, young PFC out there on a patrol who is going to talk to that fruit vendor, or he's going to -- he needs to get more, and I don't think we do it well enough. We check the blocks quite a bit. We check the blocks. We need to follow through on that and make sure it's happening.

INTERVIEWER: But also put it into such a way that they care.

04201236: Right.

[*Edited for conciseness & relevance: Interviewer talks about the power of women in other cultures and relating them to our mothers or grandmothers*]

INTERVIEWER: Well, I really sincerely thank you.

04201236: No problem.

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Interview 12: 04201238

Interview 04201238, 30 April, 2012
Date of Deployment: 2006-2007; Location of Deployment: Fallujah to Camp Corregidor
Billet: Battalion CO [removed]

INTERVIEWER: It is April 30th and I'm interviewing 04201238. Sir, have you read the informed consent form?

04201238: Yes I have.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Do you agree to it?

04201238: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Could you start off by letting me know where you were or what you were doing? And then that way we can set the precedents for moving forward.

04201238: Yeah. From June of 2006 to February of 2007 I was the battalion commander for [*removed for identifying features*]. I had the area, or battalion had the area, between an area called Habsa, which is just a little bit west of the west TCP of Fallujah, all the way over to the Julayba Peninsula, which right up to Camp Corregidor. So we had -- off and on we had the Julayba Peninsula. It would transition back and forth. Between me and whatever Army battalion was there. And then north to the river and south down to Lake Habbaniyah around TQ. Taqaddum.

INTERVIEWER: Did you spend most of your time at Camp Corregidor?

04201238: No. We were at Habbaniyah. I had -- I was actually as battalion [*removed*], my battalion was responsible to run Camp Habbaniyah. But I didn't have any Marines there. I had Marines -- we were one of the first battalions to push Marines out and patrol bases.

INTERVIEWER: OK. All right. And you were -- before I started the recorder -- about to start telling me about some journals that you have here and --

04201238: Yeah. So I kept notes. I haven't really codified these at all. But just different meetings I had. Like one on the 30th of October I had with Sheikh Abbas and what he called the tribal council. Five sheikhs plus Sheikh Khamis Abdal Karim, who was sheikh of the Albu Fahd tribe. It was the first time I met him. He was living in Jordan at the time. He came back to meet me because he liked what we were doing.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So and it started -- let's see. The notes are October 2006.

04201238: Yeah. This is 30 October of 2006. But we -- I mean we were engaging. I went out every day as battalion [*removed*] and we were heavily engaging people the whole time that we were there.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So did you have a plan in action before you went over to Anbar? Did you have an idea of what it was that you were going to do when you got there?

04201238: No. I knew that we were going to relieve [*removed*] Marines, which was good, because I had just been the executive officer of that battalion from June of 2004 to August of 2005. I was the XO of that battalion during the second battle of Fallujah. I was the XO. That's where I was wounded. So the staff was the staff that I trained as the XO. So it was great. So it was just like doing a relief in place with your own unit. So it was really good. And I had worked for Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*], who was the battalion commander. I was his XO for three months. And we were friends. And so our turnover began the moment that we were named as replacements. So I think we had a good eight months of chatting back and forth on SIPR about what's going on. At the time they -- when we first found out, they were living at Camp Fallujah and had the area down around Ferris Town and the western slice around Fallujah all the way around the southern half of the city down towards -- is the Shia town down there. They went down to that village. So that's what I thought we were going to have. We were going to do a relief in place with them for that area. When I went over to do the predeployment site survey it coincided with [*name removed*] going out to Habbaniyah to do a predeployment site survey with an Army National Guard unit, 1st of the 110th.

INTERVIEWER: Is that the PA? The Pennsylvania one? (*Actually the PA NG unit was the 2-28th. Have to see which unit the 1-110th was*)

04201238: Yeah. They were from all over the place. Horrible. They were terrible. My God. They were an armored unit. So they drove tanks everywhere.

INTERVIEWER: So absolutely no dismount there, if they're driving tanks.

04201238: Yeah. I don't know what they -- I mean again I was only a couple days with them. But they were ridiculous. I just would never behave like that. So we did the predeployment site survey with them. And at that predeployment site survey we decided that this was not how a Marine unit was going to operate in this area. And so what [*name removed*] did was he set up -- started to set up the area based on some things we agreed on while we were there. So that when I did a relief in place with him we could immediately push off into a battalion offensive which we did. It was called Operation Rubicon. So we completed the relief in place with [*unit removed*] in the end of July of 2006. And by the 10th or so of August we pushed in Operation Rubicon.

INTERVIEWER: When you said that the National Guard, that they -- I mean so the way they behaved. Were they just not interacting with the locals? Or were they actually being disruptive?

04201238: No. They were very messed up. And they were living in tanks. They had tanks outposted on the road. They had -- the enemy had a sniper school operating in the area because they would stick their heads up out of the tanks and they would shoot at them. So they had closed the road.

They drove all over the road. So their tanks had thrown dirt all over the road, which made it a lot easier for the enemy to bury IEDs in the dirt. They had put barbed wire right along the breakdown lane on both sides of the road. So it restricted their maneuver and it gave the enemy more maneuver. It was just, I mean there were bushes and trees growing up next to the road that just were -- I mean we had to clean all that stuff up. They just were not -- I don't know. Again that was just a snapshot. They may have been doing other things. Because they did -- they were primarily focused on the city of Khalidiya. And they did get that city in the hands of Iraqi -- the 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Brigade during that time. So I'm certain that was their main effort. That was very close to Camp Habbaniyah. But they were all living on Camp Habbaniyah. The whole battalion. By the time I got there [*unit removed*] had pushed some of their

battalion out but they had only had a month to kind of shape the area. So they did a great job I thought of shaping it for us. And then we pushed right into Operation Rubicon and --

INTERVIEWER: There's very little information in the literature about what the Pennsylvania National Guard or even the other National Guard units were doing. I have reached out to a couple of them just to try and get their version on record. But my understanding just from the one National Guardsman that I have spoken with briefly is that they didn't have any cultural training at all. So they were completely unprepared for the type of environment they were going into.

04201238: They know how to read. People make excuses. I just -- it drives me crazy. Nobody told us exactly what to do, therefore we behaved horribly. It's not -- it's unbelievable. That's why they have a commander. This commander of this unit was a Marine. He got out of the Marine Corps and went into the National Guard.

So I was trying to find the date (*looking through his journals*). We already started taking casualties even during the RIP. OK, can find it later, but so that unit was gone and [*unit removed*] was in that area. So they did I thought a remarkable job of getting set up. Mostly engaging, finding out who the key civil leaders were in that area. Which were in hiding because Al Qaeda was -- I think my view, again the view that I have is generally the view that I think the Iraqis have, because I spent a lot of time talking to them. Actually not talking, listening to what they had to say to me. I spoke very little to them.

Is they killed Sheikh Nassir January of 2006. They cut his head off right in the street right in East Husaybah, right in the middle of the area that I had. And the people really liked Sheikh Nassir a lot. And lots and lots and lots of people told me this. So when they -- when Al Qaeda killed him the people kind of -- I think they started to say whoa, what the---. The other thing that Sheik Khamis told me was that the Al Qaeda men were trying to marry into their tribes, which put them off. So those two things I think set the stage for our engagement with them.

Now we could have done it wrong and kept them against us. But I think we did it right, the way we treated them, with dignity. I mean I have all this -- I produced cards. We had you know for -- we prepared ourselves very well for this fight. The battalion did. Not the -- a lot of the training that the Marine Corps did. But the training we did at the battalion level with our personal conduct I thought prepared us very well for the fight that we got into in our area, which was heavily reliant on restraint and treating people with dignity and respect.

And we made -- I adopted for the battalion -- I adopted a thing called virtue ethics. And worked on this with my chaplain, a guy named [*name removed*]. He was chaplain of the year he graduated, my chaplain, for the Navy. He was phenomenal. Great man. We read a whole pile of books and we found one book. I said we got to find one book that we can use. And we found this book called *Morals under the Gun* written by a guy named James Toner, who was an instructor at the Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, Alabama. And that book, in there was a piece about virtue ethics. And so we adopted that. We made a card with the battalion's logo in the center. And it was our moral compass. And we used prudence, courage, temperance and justice. Four virtues that are in the Constitution. And so we tied the oath of office of the Marines to these four virtues and their behavior on the battlefield. Just kind of set the stage of culture about just being a good person.

INTERVIEWER: Now did that go out to the Marines? Or did you also provide that to the Iraqis so they --

04201238: No. It was just us. No, the Iraqis, I'm not sure if they would have -- they might have. I don't know. They understood it because they saw us behaving that way. And they understood that. So my thought was if we behave in a certain way. Because we didn't have any interpreters. I think we had -- I believe 16 interpreters for the whole battalion. The entire battalion, 976 Marines, minus a few Marines from H&S Company I had to keep on Camp Habbaniyah to run it. Everybody was on the battlefield 24 hours a day. We were living in patrol bases. We rented the houses from the people, which was a huge pain in the ass to get that money. Everything that we wanted to do was just so hard.

INTERVIEWER: Because you were trying to get money from the Marines or just from --

04201238: From -- no from MNF-I, MNC-I, whoever -- all the money was so centrally controlled that you just couldn't get access to it. They talk about CERP. And we had CERP you know in 2004 that we could use. But you couldn't even get your hands on that stuff. You had to go through the layers of bureaucracy. It took too long. So by the time you got the money it was you know you had to explain 50 times why you didn't have the money to them. You know it was just -- it made you look ridiculous.

So we focused on other stuff. It was just -- it just would eat up a lot of time. Eventually we got the money and we rented the houses from them. We actually went up and we -- and I -- and we identified the houses ahead of time. When we went into an area, we pushed in. There were plenty of areas in our area that were unoccupied by US forces. So the enemy was allowed to roam around and do whatever they wanted to. So they -- it was this Route Nova that ran. It was a raised road that ran along the river. It was a dike against flooding. The battalion commander for the 1st of the 110th called it the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

OK. And I said well, that's ridiculous. How can you have that? And it was self-imposed Ho Chi Minh Trail because again he had barbed wire along the side of the road. They couldn't even get up -- you know he couldn't even get up in that area. So later when we got in there we tore up all the wire, bulldozed all the bushes growing alongside the road, burned all the reeds. I mean I've got story after story I could tell you all day about just how painful it was to get all that stuff done. Shaped the battlefield so that it worked for us. And then the enemy was at a disadvantage. And then it was hard for them to put IEDs on the road. So --

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like you were -- even though there was a unit before--that you were almost going in from scratch against Al Qaeda.

04201238: Well, because you know because they weren't there that long. Like if [*unit removed*] would have been there longer, they would have done the same thing. They would have done the same thing we did. I know they would have. So it wasn't that you know it was -- we -- there was a lot of experience in that battalion and there was a lot of experience in the battalion I had of this works, it doesn't work. So the Marines even had a sense, the NCOs had a sense for what works and what doesn't work.

Now [*unit removed*] wasn't a big engagement battalion. [*unit removed*] was. We were doing engagements in 2004 prior to going to the city. And Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*] was the battalion commander. And he had us on a classic counterinsurgency path as well. Going out and talking to people and building relationships. And Fallujah would have a city council meeting quote, unquote that I would go to. Some sheikhs were there. So when I went back a year later, a lot of the same people were still there. So they were bad guys then, and now suddenly they're in the police. And you know why are you chief of police? Because you were an insurgent a year ago and XO of an Iraqi National Guard

battalion. So why are you -- so it was useful for that. And then it was useful on the other side is the same sheikhs were there.

INTERVIEWER: When you say engagement do you also mean just being able to speak with the public? Or was it mostly key leader or local leader?

04201238: Well, we didn't have key leader. None of that stuff -- that --Yeah, that stuff came up later (*meaning the term Key Leader, KLE. It appears that he was having KLEs however, because there were engagements with local leaders and imams*). But it was people that we thought would be influential. Prior to going, 2004, prior to going into the city, I set up an engagement with the imam of a mosque just straight north of Fallujah. Sits up in the open. And I said hey, this is -- we're sitting, getting ready to go on the attack. I said we're going to the city. There's going to be a lot of dead bodies in there. We got to bury them. And they're Muslims. So can you help us with that? Sure. So when we started killing people in the city we went and got him. And he got a flatbed truck and a bucket loader and took these people and started burying them. That stopped us from doing that. We buried 200 bodies. Because they (*he implies CF*) wanted to exploit them. But there was nothing to exploit. But that sort of thing, people -- you know that's a part of their culture. You got to bury them before.

INTERVIEWER: And if you try and send a message or exploit the scenario, then that's just going to make them angrier.

04201238: Well, whether they're angry or not is not that important. But it was the right thing to do. And so we made the effort to try to do the right thing. And eventually were stopped. And so then the bodies just lay in the street for six weeks. Dogs ate them and it was gross.

But so that's -- you know that's a wedge where cultural understanding is useful. Because try -- you try to do that, and people see you, and they'll help you. They will help you. So we applied that same -- I -- as a battalion commander I applied that same methodology later with [*unit removed*] to do the right thing. That's what you have to do. This is a counterinsurgency that we're fighting so the best way I thought to win a counterinsurgency was to start one of your own. Not to fight the one that's going on. And so what we sought out to do was to build alliances with people, wherever they were, and then build a bigger tribe than the tribe that was against us. Ours was the strongest tribe. Bing West stole that from me in an interview over there.

You know our battalion was very well armed. And we demonstrated a lot of restraint on the battlefield. And the people saw that and you can -- there's -- google my name. There's interviews that -- or there's stories that journalists wrote that were with us that wrote about the restraint of the Marines you know that they demonstrated restraint in firefights because they couldn't see the enemy, they didn't return fire, didn't put people at risk, you know. The people saw all that. And that I think was an underlying piece of this Awakening. So that -- all that -- we did that from July, August, September. We did Operation Rubicon. We pushed into this area. It was called East Husaybah. But -- and Zuwaybit by the Iraqis. So it's on the -- over towards the -- if you have a map, I can show you on the map.

INTERVIEWER: The map I have is of Ramadi. So it's not -- it doesn't go out to the --

04201238: Go out, East Ramadi. The key part about the area that we had. It was where the people were fighting in Ramadi. This is where they lived. And so they would fight in the city and they would come back and hang out there. And because there was no military -- US military in that area, they were hard to find.

[*Edited: Interviewer pulls out a map of Ramadi, but it is not large enough to show the areas described. 04201238 shows the interviewer areas hand-drawn off the sides of the map*]

04201238: [*(removed) Marines in Ramadi*] might have come in the fall I think. -- the Ready First didn't start the Awakening in any way, shape or form. I mean I'm sure he played a part in it. But the Awakening was started by the Iraqi people. And there was a group called the Thawar Al Anbar that was the key part of the Awakening. I --

INTERVIEWER: Thawar Al Anbar

04201238: Yes. Anbar Revolutionary Fighters I think is what it means. So 14 of those guys that were my Concerned Local Citizens council. I have their names somewhere. There were 14 of them. So we would meet you know once a week sort of.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So they were local council. So when you first got out there you started the clearing, shaped the battlefield. There were some kinetic operations that occurred. But you were also talking with people at the same time?

04201238: Well, we had -- it wasn't like we're going to do a kinetic phase and then we're going to -- it was if the enemy -- if we get the enemy in a place and time of our choosing then we'll pummel. If we didn't then we would ignore them. It was kind of like that. We're not going to -- I'm not going to get into a firefight with the enemy at an ambush site that they've chosen that's all to their advantage that they're going to escape from, just not doing it. So they would shoot at us. I would ignore them. I would do what I'm doing. And if they -- they're not going to come attack us, then they're irrelevant.

Where the -- you know I tried to get the Marines to understand. To try to think about what is the enemy trying to get you to do and then don't do that. And don't do something else that they want you to do when you're not doing that either. So do what you set out there to do. Show courage in the face of danger and be brave and protect the Iraqi people. That's why we're here. So in the meantime the enemy will have to come fight you at some point. Because they're not going to get any successes against you. And they're going to become irrelevant.

So what happened eventually was that they had to come fight us. So they sent the Yemeni sniper in to try to kill me. And they did a bunch of things that just worked to their disadvantage because the people would tell us what's going on.

INTERVIEWER: So was there any active IO campaign that you were employing?

04201238: No, I would say it was more of a strategic communication plan. That we were going after the attitudes, perceptions and ideas of the Iraqi people. They you know -- my first week there the kids would run away from us. Now even when we were fighting in Fallujah the kids never ran away from us. So they were terrified of US forces for whatever reason. I don't know why. So that to me was troubling. And so we had to get through that. And so it was you know talk to everybody. Find out who's who. OK, get this guy, get that. And [*name removed*] had turned over some people that he'd met that he thought would be useful contacts. And most of them turned out. Some of them didn't. So we sort through them and we got a group of contacts of people that we could talk to and we could build relationships with. It wasn't based on trust. It was just based on you know transactional relationships.

So the Thawar Al Anbar was a group formed of Iraqis that they formed on their own. They told me about. And so there were 14 people that I had met that just happened to be part of that group. I don't know if they formed it then with me and expanded it or if it was expanded, then came in, I haven't really figured that out. I didn't really care.

Those were people that I already knew. There was no government. There was no -- I mean I was the mayor of the whole area of 30,000 Iraqis. So one of the first things we did at a meeting was I asked them what were their expectations. Like what is a normal day in Iraq. Because I've never seen one. I've been here the whole time in the middle of combat. So I made them explain to me what they thought was -- it was informative for me to listen to what they thought was a normal day. So how do we get back to that as a group of people working towards a common goal, how do we get back to that? And so what are the things that were necessary to accomplish to get back to that normal day? So the violence had to go away. That was the common consensus. So how do you get rid of the violence?

Well, there were things I could do to get rid of the violence that were you know I could -- and we were. We already had demonstrated restraint. So the Marines had already physically demonstrated a willingness to lower the level of violence. Because that was a stated purpose of us in that and I told the Marines we were going to do that. And they did. They were very -- they did -- they exercised restraint.

And the other thing was the IEDs. You know getting rid of the IEDs. And so we kind of came up with an agreement that if they could somehow help us find the IEDs that we would dig them up and we would bring them back to Camp Habbaniyah and blow them up. So there was less violence in their neighborhood. So whenever we would find them, they saw us. Dig them up. Disarm them. Dig them up. Bring them back. Blow them up at Camp Habbaniyah. The ones that went off of all those -- I mean we couldn't do anything about that. So but whenever one went off we went around and explained to everybody in the whole area that heard it what just happened. And said to the adults that could have been your kid standing next to that. You know these kids come up and talk to us all the time. You know if you find someone that's putting these in the road or you know where they're hiding them, tell us.

We'll take care of it. And so we started getting information about where they were hiding the IEDs. And so we did. With the Iraqi battalion. We had great relationship with the Iraqi battalion commanders by the way. I mean that to me was a key. It was one of our -- I can get you the -- I have actually -- we have three pillars for our battalion's success. And I have a -- it's a you know prepare for the next battlefield. And it was three pillars. Putting Iraqi capability on it was our first pillar. So everything we did we did with Iraqis.

INTERVIEWER: Was this an existing unit that was already there? Or were they given to you or --

04201238: This was the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Division. And they were good. I built solid relationships with the 3rd Battalion and the 1st Battalion commander. The 2nd Battalion was not in my area at first. So two of the battalions of the 3rd Brigade I had very good relationships. Colonel [*name removed*] was the battalion commander for 1st Battalion. And I had provided. We had provided the MiTT team from our battalion for that. I'd give up 54 Marines from my battalion to support the MiTTs. So I gave up my operations officer. Gave our best people. My best company commander. A guy named [*name removed*]. I gave my operations officer, [*name removed*], to run the MiTT. We gave them squad leaders, platoon sergeants. Gave them people that we really couldn't afford to lose. But we made up for it. And then 1st Battalion -- or 3rd Battalion was Colonel [*name removed*].

Colonel [*name removed*] spoke English. He was a -- he taught at their military school in Baghdad. He was a colonel in the old Iraqi Army and so was [*name removed*]. So the first MiTT over there was an Army reservist teacher. We got him fired and [*name removed*] came in behind him, Major [*name removed*]. So he ran that MiTT. And I think he's just coming out with a book on that whole area. MiTTs were key obviously, I thought. And then I spent personally a lot of time sitting down and talking with both of those battalion commanders one on one, in their office. We planned together. So we did for the -- going back to my point of the IEDs, we called them Operation River Sweep. And I would give -- he would give me -- 3rd Battalion would give me Iraqi soldiers and I would give him Marines and we would sweep both sides of the river at the same time. We could go all the way up into Albu Bali area. And we just gradually got rid of all the caches of IEDs or IED material. And then we stopped all the black market gas sales. which got rid of the money, the funding. So if you came into our AO from the moment you drove into it there was no black market gas till you drove out the other side. If you were selling black market gas I would stop. I would stop a car. And I would take the gas and I would dump it in the tank of the car and I would tell them to go away, it's not allowed. And so eventually they just stopped selling it. Because they would lose the gas.

INTERVIEWER: With the MiTTs did you also have any of your units that were teaching the police? Any of the PiTT teams?

04201238: Yeah. Yeah I gave up one of my CAT sections. Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*] was the PiTT leader I guess, the Marine there. He's a friend of mine, [*information removed*]. So I actually was instrumental in getting him over to that PTT. And then I gave him vehicles and CAT section from my battalion to drive him around, protect him. We got rid of the police chief and put Abbas, Sheikh Abbas, in charge of the -- made him the chief of police.

INTERVIEWER: OK. With the PiTTs did they -- did the Marines ever have any training on what to do with the police? Or would you say that you were instead training more general security forces? Which would be more in line with the type of training they received?

04201238: There were police officers there also. Actually two. There were at least two Boston cops that were there. I'm from New England. So, there were police officers there.

That's right. And I -- you know we would have a meeting every week. It got to this. Once the Awakening -- and well, we didn't call it the Awakening at the time. But once the uprising, Thawar Al Anbar, got going, that's what became the Awakening. We had a weekly meeting. So we got the 14. I made them pick a mayor. And they -- and it was two rules. And the first one was I'm not going to be the mayor anymore. And the second one was it can't be one of you 14. You got to pick, you got to agree on someone outside of the group. And so they picked General [*name removed*] cousin.

INTERVIEWER: Is this -- was he from the Albu Fahd?

04201238: Well, I think they all were part of the Albu Fahd. The Albu Fahd was the big tribe of all of them I think, my understanding.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, there's a lot that I've been reading about. There was several members actually of the families that Al Qaeda assassinated rather violently.

04201238: Right. So these are the -- we had the meeting on the 30th. This was the second meeting. So this was just two weeks later we met with all these sheikhs. So I had better time to write it. So Albu Mar'i, this was Albu Khalifa, Albu Khalifa, Albu Mar'i.

INTERVIEWER: Those the tribes?

04201238: [*name removed*]. Yeah, so they're all subtribes. Albu Fahd. This was [*name removed*]. He wasn't the sheikh. He was the representative for Khamis. [*name removed*] we made the chief of police. So we had one, two, three, four, five, six sheikhs at -- and [*name removed*] was a sheikh in Abu Falis. He lived in a place which is on the west side of Camp Habbaniyah. This road.

They do move based on who their daughters and sisters marry. And so I kept track of that. I mean we had in my office a diagram on the wall and every day my intel officer, me, and my head team leader, my XO, and my OpsO who was a pilot. I had a pilot and made one of my FACs my OpsO because I gave up my OpsO for a MTT. Would sit in there. We would fill in the links to see who. And then we would draw the tribal boundaries on the map so we understood where the -- and I found out. I would fill in the blanks by talking to the women and they --

INTERVIEWER: And they spoke with you freely?

04201238: Yeah. Yeah, as long as there was an Iraqi man around. But they would say whatever they wanted. They weren't like you know checking their words or anything. But it was outside. It was a male. An Iraqi male. This was later. This was probably November, December timeframe. So it took four, five months to get to that point.

INTERVIEWER: On a side note, did you have an understanding and know that that -- you know what the protocols were and everything?

04201238: I made sure we followed them.

INTERVIEWER: OK. For this tribal -- for that type of information when you did your RIPs with the next incoming unit of Marines -- I'm assuming they were Marines but --

04201238: Yeah it was [*unit removed*].

INTERVIEWER: During your RIPs did you provide that information back? Or was there any sharing of that type of information with any other units that were in your AO or even outside your AO? Just to let them know what was going on.

04201238: No, nobody was really that interested. There was very little coordination between. The coordination between [*unit removed*] Infantry and me was just what Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*] and I did together. There was nothing between the regiment and the Ready First. It was -- not that I could see anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Because I am finding [in the literature] mention of communication challenges, either stovepiping of information or lack of coordination for whatever reason. Whether it be your different mission sets in the fight, too busy, whatever the situation may be. But also sometimes the network itself can be a challenge. If the Army is using one network and the Marines are using a different network then you can't even --

04201238: Well, they had different radios than we had. Like I had to give them one of my radios and they had to give me one of theirs so we could talk to each other. But it was fine. We met once a week. I met with Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*]. I would drive down to Ramadi and go into Camp Corregidor. And I would meet with him and I would tell him what we were doing and I would -- the [*unit removed*] was there before him. And they were -- they had been extended twice. They were completely just hunkered down. So they weren't foot-patrolling. They were just completely behind bunkers. They would drive up and down the road. And that's it. So we were foot-patrolling. And I went down. This guy [*name removed*], a general -- he had -- was a common name. OK, you got to get out on foot patrol. No, we're not. So we would literally drive down. I took a reporter with me one day and we got mortared all the way down into Camp Corregidor and then all the way back we got mortared. And then mortar rounds stopped at my boundary and we just kept driving.

INTERVIEWER: Well, there's a lesson learned.

04201238: Right. Get everybody together and tell them that if you shoot rockets at me you're going to pay for it. And so whether that's heavy-handed or not I don't care. But that's what I told them. That I have more than enough combat power at my disposal to deal with you people, so don't bother. And they stopped shooting. We took down all the force pro at Camp Habbaniyah. All the sandbags. We cleaned up the roads. I mean it was -- you could -- there was no danger. We had no rockets. Zero. We had I think two during our first two weeks. I met with everybody. And I said here's the deal. You know it's -- you can go one way or the other. But stop firing rockets at Camp Habbaniyah. They stopped.

INTERVIEWER: Did the kids eventually come back out and start talking to you guys?

04201238: Yeah. Yeah they used to ride. There's pictures of me. This one kid would climb up on my shoulders and I'd walk down the road with him on my shoulders. And we'd give them candy. I told -- you know I told the Marines that if you want to give the kids candy you got to go to their parents and you got to ask their parents if you can give them candy. Give the candy to their parents. And then -- because everybody'd be like -- people would throw candy from vehicles and I was afraid the kids would get run over or get hurt fighting for the candy. So that actually worked I think to our advantage. And I said you know just think about if that's your kid. Would you want some stranger giving your kid candy. I mean it's just a basic -- you don't need cultural training for that. So but they would carry candy in their drop pouch.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah I used to carry about 20 or 30 pens with me.

04201238: Yeah. Pens they want. Soccer -- we must have given out 10,000 soccer balls. We could never give out enough of them.

INTERVIEWER: With the mention of one of your comments earlier about you know if the insurgents were harassing you then you'd respond but otherwise you ignored them. [*Edited for clarity*] Did you employ the idea of a "three block war" in your AO, and if so was it consecutively or on-going all at once?

04201238: Well, here's how we would do it. And the three-block war is a good metaphor because you know you're fighting, you're building, you're you know turning over. And you could be -- it's not a three-block. You could be doing it all on the same block. So the three-block war metaphor breaks down if you're not in a mobile -- like we were in a

completely static situation. We were there for six months, seven months, same place. So my view was if 976 Marines, we had a section of Paladins on our camps. We had artillery. General support for the AO. But the AO was my AO that we -- so it was two sections of artillery. We integrated. The changes we made was we took those artillery pieces and we took the fire direction center. We integrated the fire direction center into our COC. So it was Marine-Army integrated. We had fire -- we got -- we could do counter-battery fire to a POO within a minute. Get artillery rounds downrange. So the integration piece, the -- you could be literally handing out you know blankets or something and get shot at while you're doing that. So it's not really a three-block war. But the metaphor worked I think because it helped people to put it into a framework.

So you want to take I think the -- if you want your Marines to understand what you're talking about you have to have a vision. Your vision has to be broad-based and it has to talk about where you want to go. So you can use that three-block war metaphor to explain the situation that you're going to be in. So that's maneuver warfare. It's centralized vision, decentralized execution. So on any given day I had no idea how many patrols we had going out or where they were. I couldn't tell you. I rarely used the radio. When I got on the radio it was to talk to the regimental commander. I mean I very rarely said anything on the radio to anybody. Because I would go talk face to face with people. I would give them orders face to face and we would talk about what's going on.

The patrol bases, there were two squads, platoon minus, platoon reinforced, in a patrol base. The way that we pick those is before we -- and there were substantial areas of our AO that was unoccupied. I mean there were no patrols going in there. It was just kind of wide open. So we did Operation Rubicon. We did Operation Mars' Lance. And then we did two River Sweeps. So we did four what I would consider battalion. You know more than half a battalion involved. For the whole time we were there. Other than that it was day-to-day patrolling from patrol bases for that. So we'd go -- the way that we got the battalion off of Camp Habbaniyah and out into the AO was we did Operation Rubicon. We had a Roman theme using the movie Gladiator. We had the virtues. Strength and honor. We'd salute each other all the time. Strength and honor was our -- were the two words that we used. Which the Iraqis found amusing. That we would all salute each other all the time. Nonfiring hand, strength and honor. And we would take Google Earth. That was the most accurate map we could get was Google Earth. We'd take that and we would find -- my guidance to the company commander was find the best house, best building that was not the sheikh's, that was close to a mosque, had to be close to a mosque, that had power and water. Because we had to monitor. I wanted to know how many hours a day they had electricity. And if the water was working. There was a water treatment plant that we were providing security for. So we would move into an area. They would find this house, go into it. They would bring the people out. I would talk to them. We're going to move you out of here. We need to use your house to provide security for this area. We're going to pay you rent. Where can we move you to? Cousin, whatever, they always had someplace they could go to. Grab your stuff, put it in the truck, take the truck to wherever, drop them off. Then that became our patrol base for that one. That was one patrol. So we had I think 18 of these total by the time we were done. So the battalion was now spread out over a wide area. And then we built forts for lack of a better word along ASR Mobile. So we had one, two, three, four, we had four of those little HESCO forts on Mobile. And then the rest were patrol bases all. And so everybody lived in -- the Marines lived in these patrol bases.

INTERVIEWER: So in the community.

04201238: Yes. And that's where they stayed. So that way they had an AO. So when I would come in -- and I patrolled every single day twice a day, day and night. I would go grab a squad leader or lieutenant or whoever and we'd

go to the map and we'd talk on the map about what's going on. And we talked about patrolling in a counterinsurgency environment and what we were trying to do. And so we had a bunch of things we were trying to do. Census. Who's married to who, who owns what vehicles, who lives here, who doesn't, who's visiting. Because the key for me in a counterinsurgency is to understand you know one of these things looks like the other but you know kind of the little simple thing you know. Who doesn't belong in this area. The people that don't belong are the enemy, OK, and the people that belong. So the only way you get to know who doesn't belong is to know who lives there for real and who their cousins are and who's who and then how all the tribes are related. And we actually adjusted boundaries so that a unit would have the whole tribe, not half. And I adjusted my boundary with Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*] to keep a whole tribe in my AO. Now the regiment never approved it. The MEF never approved it. But that whole tribe was not cut in half anymore.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's very important.

04201238: Yeah it was. It was huge. Because we're sitting on a road. You know and on the other side of that road was you know another 50 or 60 people for this one sheikh and you wanted them all to be under me at the time. So that was kind of our approach I guess was -- I don't think that was -- I mean it was heavy-handed if you're talking about kinetic ops but those are heavy-handed anyway but our approach was not to be -- our measures of effectiveness were -- we had four of them. And I think I got this from Kilcullen or some article I read. Was we're most effective when people are joining us. So they're defecting from the enemy to us. So it was defect, surrender, capture, kill. Least effective when we're killing people. And so defect, surrender, capture, kill.

So MOE4 (*Measure of Effectiveness*) least effective was killing. So if you're killing the enemy -- because you can't kill them all, and the more you try to kill the enemy, the more other people you kill that may or may not be your enemy. It's just -- so we didn't kill any civilians the whole time we were there. We didn't kill one single civilian. Zero.

Special Forces came in and killed civilians. What else? Engineers killed a civilian. People that didn't belong to our unit doing things in our area killed civilians. We were attacked twice by the US Army, three times by the Iraqi Army. And the enemy killed a lot of civilians. When they were trying to kill me they had put a bounty on my head. They drove a suicide vehicle into my vehicle, killed my driver in the middle of a market and killed a whole bunch of people, three or four kids and six or eight adults. Middle of a town called Modiq, which was about halfway in the middle of our AO.

INTERVIEWER: Did the people themselves respond to that? I mean did you actually have more people that came over to your side after that? Or were they just at that point so desensitized?

04201238: No they were already -- no, no, no. They're -- no you're not desensitized. I don't think you get desensitized to that sort of stuff. No, they were already supporting us. Yeah one of the guys that was killed was a shop owner that was part of this Thawar Al Anbar. No, they were already on our side. This was November. Day after Thanksgiving. November 26th. Again the Awakening was already under way. When Khamis came I think that was -- he was a real sheikh. You could tell. He was -- a lot of the sheikhs left and they were living in Jordan. So that they left the country because they were not safe. And they were living in Jordan. So Khamis was living in Jordan. He came back and he was a real -- I mean you could tell he was -- and he I think -- he came back there to live for good.

I had him and I had General [*name removed*]. And in those books there's an interview they do with [*name removed*]. And he talks about me in that interview. General [*name removed*] does. General [*name removed*] saved my life two,

three different times easily just by telling me stuff. So it's [*name removed*]. There's two [*name removed*]. The one that I'm talking about is [*name removed*]. And he's interviewed in the -- I think volume two of that Anbar thing. And he talks about -- they spell my name wrong in it. But he talks about me in that interview and our relationship, which was good. He surrendered. We -- when we kicked off Rubicon he surrendered to my company commander and so he could come talk to me. He knew me from before. He was an Iraqi National Guard battalion commander. And what's the chief of police's name? Think of it. Anyway his -- the guy that was the chief of police at Camp Habbaniyah was his XO. So he met with me.

Then he wanted to meet with Colonel [*name removed*]. I think I set up that. I can't remember. I think I set up that meeting also -- think -- but mostly he dealt with me. He was my guy. So you know you have your local expert. He was mine. So I would meet with him as much as I could. We -- one of the -- where the company were -- Kilo Company's patrol base was set up, their company CP was two of his houses that we rented from him. And then he was in the other one. So we more or less protected him. And then Khamis was the other, was the sheikh.

INTERVIEWER: Was it difficult at first or problematic trying to trust the Iraqis when they would switch sides, from insurgent to supporter?

04201238: How do you know? I mean there's no -- I mean we captured -- so there's MOEs right there. So defect, capture, actually surrender. Defect, surrender, capture, kill. So here's -- this was our -- we were at TQ leaving. This is when I talked to the battalion. These were my notes when I talked to -- I had a whole battalion. And I talked about successful -- identify, eliminate Al Qaeda cells without killing any local nationals. Earn respect and trust of the local nationals. Turn over 60% of our initial AO to the Iraqi Army. Which we did. We were one of the -- we were the first battalion in that area to turn over battle space to the government of Iraq. So the whole -- our whole eastern sector from Sanadaban all the way over to the Habsa area we turned over to the Iraqis. Moving. And then we kept turning over pieces, Khalidiya. And we were working on turning over the area around Modiq when we left. So there was only a small piece. And then as we turned over that piece we were to get closer to Ramadi. So just get more battle space on the other side.

INTERVIEWER: You had mentioned a police chief who had been an insurgent before and the confusion of …

04201238: [*name removed*]was his name. He was. He was an insurgent. I knew he was.

INTERVIEWER: So it takes a leap of faith to trust a person who was an insurgent but who then switches to supporting the legitimate government, and CF?

04201238: He wasn't. He was still an insurgent. I went over to his office and told him that if I found out he was working with the enemy I would come over there and kill him. I knew who he was. He knew who -- I was the last person on earth he expected to walk into that office that day. And when I found out who he was. I knew who he was from when I was XO of 3-5.

INTERVIEWER: OK, so that wasn't a scenario where it was a legitimate turnover.

04201238: No we got rid of him and we replaced him with Sheikh [*name removed*]. But what I told Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*] was don't fire [*name removed*] and don't fire [*name removed*] because if you fire him then he --

so they made him like a training officer. And so they could keep an eye on him. He was a scumbag. But we replaced him with Sheikh [*name removed*]. Sheikh [*name removed*] was a good man.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of the three-block war did you have any of the PRT teams coming in? Or civil affairs trying to build?

04201238: My civil affairs officer was [*name removed*]. He was shot in the face with me. He went out. We -- civil affairs was our -- I told the Marines what we were doing was armed civil affairs. So every day that we went out my civil affairs officer went with me. Until he was shot. He was shot in October. I want to say like the -- promoted him to major on the 1st of October. He was shot like two weeks later. I mean there's a newspaper. There was a reporter with us that day. And there's an article that he wrote about him being shot. And the restraint that the Marines used in that engagement. There was a sniper that was -- that's the Yemeni sniper that was working against us. So this was October and they were already trying to kill me. We looked a lot alike. [*name removed*] I had known. I played rugby with [*name removed*] also. So I knew [*name removed*]. So I pulled him into our team. But we had him and we had a captain and a couple of enlisted guys. That was the extent of our civil affairs that was not a tremendous what I would consider civil affairs effort. But we tried to do -- we tried to get -- my view on the whole thing was that no matter how badly the Iraqis did it, us doing it for them was not a recipe for success. So we tried to get the Iraqis to do their own repair work and their own fixing of things. And so we shepherded that whether it was at gunpoint to fix you know pipes that were broken or whatever.

Tracking down these DGs for agriculture. And where's the food, and I spent a lot of time doing that. So we would meet with these people and say look, these people are entitled to food, where is it. You know where's the truck with the -- because they would just give them you know a bag of flour or cans of food. So we tracked that down and we'd get it for them. We would work on fixing electrical system as much as we could. But the distribution system was jacked up. So until somebody fixed that it wasn't going to get any better. Schools. We got schools repaired. Any damage that was done by explosions, even if it was an IED, we would fix it. And so -- but we wouldn't give them money. We would get them to fix it. We'd buy -- you know here, buy the supplies. We'd go fix it before we would pay them.

So the things actually got fixed. We'd get them to open their stores. So we got the store. This was all part of the what's a normal day in Iraq you know. Getting the stores open. How about painting, how about sweeping the streets, how about cleaning up the garbage, how about we put a soccer field over here, how about -- those are the small things that we did was my view of the civil affairs effort. To get things kind of back to normal for the Iraqis.

So he got shot. He got medevaced out in October. And then I was on my own for -- I had a couple of guys. But they were afraid to go outside the wire. So I put them to work for the Iraqis on Camp Habbaniyah. But we continued. I mean I continued to make the civil affairs piece the main effort for the battalion the whole time that we were there. Which I think is -- was important because we weren't out there you know who are the bad guys. Go find them. Why isn't that pump working, oh, there's a bunch of bombs in there, oh, no kidding, all right. I mean you wouldn't find -- they're not going to tell you that. You have to go look inside the pump.

Why aren't you -- why aren't these crops having water, no, the pump is not working. OK, what's wrong with the pump. Oh, the electrical wire is broken. So my jump command post was a bunch of H&S Company guys. There was no infantry guys in it at all. So I had electricians. I had Motor-T guys. I had a bunch of guys. So they all knew how to fix stuff, drive tractors, all that kind of stuff. So the Marines would get involved with fixing things too out there. Which was good. The

Iraqis would see that and it would kind of get them to -- so that was our -- I guess our civil affairs effort. Then we had blankets and all kinds of stuff piled up in warehouses on Camp Habbaniyah that we just gave away.

I found a guy, Red Crescent guy. Gave him a whole bunch of that. And then we just gave out whatever we had to people. We got a dental chair for a dentist. That was a major thing. It was an unbelievable amount of work but we got it. We got it delivered to him. And it was part of what General [*name removed*] says about us, me always doing everything. Like I never told him I was going to do something if I couldn't do it. So every single thing that I agreed that the battalion was going to do, we always did it. We got the road open. I told him we would open the road. We got the road. The -- they call it the Fallujah-Ramadi road. But ASR Michigan.

We opened it. It was black. It was closed when we got there. And it was green when we left. So the backbone of all this was the corporals and the sergeants I think. The squad leaders were the ones that made all this happen. The patrols, just the routine of patrolling. The day-to-day grind of just going out there on patrol. We patrolled 24 hours a day seven days a week. You know we patrolled at night. We patrolled you know all the time. And not doing stupid things. They were very mature. They knew what they were doing. They were very focused on their mission. They put together pieces. They did patrol reports and my -- the platoon commander I had for my jump command post was my assistant intel officer. And he whenever we went into a patrol base would get -- download the patrol reports onto a thumb drive, he'd bring them back to headquarters, and we would read them.

We would put together our intel. We never really got a lot of intel from the top down. Most of the intelligence that we used was stuff that we generated ourselves. The few times that we got intel that was useful was on suicide vehicles. They would give us a window of three to five days and there would always be an -- a suicide vehicle that would attack us in that window.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that you were getting a lot of support from higher (*MEF, Baghdad*)?

04201238: There's not much they can do to support you. I mean they would -- you know the force wasn't -- at a higher level wasn't organized for counterinsurgency. They were organized to you know capture signals intel. And they didn't use that. You know they'd pass stuff word of mouth. They'd meet and talk to each other in a car. You know they would -- I mean they weren't making a lot of cell phone calls. At least not in our AO. So I don't think the -- they were trying to do tricks and goofy stuff. And I was like yeah. That might work once. But you know we want something that's enduring. You know HUMINT was the key. And getting that human intelligence was the key. Getting people to put their lives at risk to sit down and talk to you. I mean General [*name removed*], he was putting himself at risk by you know -- [*name removed*]. All these sheikhs meeting me. All these Thawar Al Anbar guys. And all these people that would even talk to me were making themselves a target of Al Qaeda.

INTERVIEWER: There's a book that James Russell wrote called Innovation, Transformation, and War. It's transformation. At any rate he says the Marines did this really innovative thing. The innovation came from the bottom up and then eventually the top down. So they were going both ways. But it was the bottom-up approach that was so innovative, and that you guys were kind of out there doing your own thing. That headquarters wasn't able to support that much because they were doing planning and operations that were maybe not necessarily suited to the environment. And so what it did was it forced the brigades and battalions to really do their own thing and have individual plans for each AO.

04201238: Well, you had -- I mean each AO was different. You couldn't -- I mean I felt very well supported by -- Colonel [*name removed*] was my boss. I mean if we needed something I could go to him. I could say sir, here's what we want to do. Here's why we want to do it. I mean every time we did a battalion Op, the first one we briefed to was the MEF. After that he briefed them to MEF for me. But I mean the MEF was informed. General Zilmer would come visit. He would talk to me one on one in my office. I mean there was good communication. To say that there was not good communication is not true. We communicated. Everybody knew. I knew what [*name removed*] was doing. I knew what [*name removed*] was doing. I talked to him on SIPR. I never saw him. The Army unit task force on the other side of the river, I used to get temporary battle space from that guy every time we'd patrol on the river. So we absolutely -- the key to doing as well as we did was the fact that we did communicate. Now we didn't communicate specifically here's what I'm -- it didn't matter what I was doing. It only mattered that we were all trying to do the same thing, which was get the Iraqi people in charge of it. Of that country.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So you didn't have any problems with communication with the Army units, except for the radio issue.

04201238: But no. I would drive down there and I mean I met with [*name removed*] once a week. And I would go there or he would come here. I had [*name removed*] who was the artillery battalion commander in Ramadi. I had two of his artillery pieces at Camp Habbaniyah. He would come down all the time you know once every two weeks or so to see his guys. And I would see him then. And we would talk about fire support.

And you know and there were things that I wasn't willing to do in my AO. I didn't want to do this -- these harassing interdiction fires that they were doing. Where they were like stop that. I'm like no. You know if you blow up these coconut -- or these date palms you know it takes 15 years to grow another one. These are how these people make a living. The 1st of the 110th had stopped the Iraqis from climbing the trees to take care of these date palms so they get full bud. You know I looked it up on the Internet. How do you -- you know what -- how do you take care of these trees. So we told them go ahead and climb the trees. I don't care. Just don't climb the tree with an AK-47 on your back or somebody's going to shoot you. It's just you know.

You know if -- you can go to the mosque at night. There was a curfew. I'm like you know why is there a curfew. I mean what's the point. People have to go. They have to go to the -- they have to go pray at night. So I'm like go to the mosque. Just don't carry a shovel with you to the mosque. I mean why would you take a shovel with you to the mosque. You know because you're going to dig by the side of the road. You know don't choose the middle of the night to repair your water line by the side of the road.

If you're going to do that, come over to the patrol base. Ask for someone to come out there with you. And I mean it's -- that's the communication piece that we had to get in place. The greatest obstacle to that piece was the lack of interpreters we had. And the unwillingness or the inability of the Marine Corps to train people how to speak the language. The book that we used to train was the Small Wars Manual. That's what we used. The counterinsurgency manual is a bunch of crap. The Small Wars Manual is what we used. The Small Wars Manual is what got the Awakening under way. That's the mindset that the Marines had going into the Awakening. And on the very front of that book the -- you know one of the rules of counterinsurgency is the officer should speak the native language. This is based on our experience in Haiti, Nicaragua and all the banana wars that we had in the 1920s. And we ignored it.

INTERVIEWER: Would you then say that our ultimate support should go towards continuing language training or you know upping the amount of language training? Or should there be a balance between language and culture training? Or perhaps even more culture training but then increase of interpreters or how to use interpreters or FAOs or CULADs or something like that? What would you say is the balance for training?

04201238: Well, I think that you know with this in hindsight that officers should speak a foreign language so that we should -- it doesn't have to be Arabic. It can be French or -- if you can speak a foreign language you can learn another one. That's my view. So if you started this at the Basic School, French, Spanish would be two useful ones. Now I've spent more time in South America than in Iraq. So and then you have another language to fall back on.

The one thing that I've seen of other nations in the world is most people from other nations can speak at least two languages, their own and English. So yeah I think that there should be some sort of way that officers would be expected to maintain some proficiency in a language. Whether you recruit people that way or whatever. But -- and then it doesn't have to be incentivized with money. It can be an expectation just like right now qualifying with a rifle or taking a physical fitness test. Don't get paid extra money for passing a physical fitness test. You PT every day. So why don't you spend an hour a day learning or maintaining a language that you're taught? That's my view. I've had that view for a long time. So --

The culture piece was -- is -- it's hard to -- the -- it's a nuance with culture. So you don't -- if you're not a good person you're not going to -- it doesn't matter how much culture training you get. You're still going to be an asshole. And people aren't going to work with you. So if you treat people with dignity and respect they'll teach you their culture. I learned culture of the Iraqis by listening to them. And it's my experience on recruiting duty, paid the greatest dividends for me. And you know I've said this several times.

But it's no small coincidence that [*4 names removed*], I mean we're all recruiting station commanders from 1989 -- from 1998 to about 2003. And tough time in recruiting duty. And we put all that professional selling skills that we learned on recruiting duty to use. It's a needs-based sales technique. It forces you. It's great leadership training. It forces you to listen to what people say to you and then find out what are they really talking about. That's how I met with Thawar Al Anbar. I used that stuff. What do you -- what's the need behind the need? So you want peace. Great. Who doesn't? You know world peace. I mean they give out a prize for that every year. So what do you really want? You know -- you -- what is it -- what are those needs? And get those needs lined up. And said you know we had a bunch of needs. Here are the things. And I said fine. These few things I'm fully capable of doing. What are you guys going to do? Because I'm not doing all of this. So who's going to do the rest of this stuff? And you know they agreed to do some of them. I said OK, then these ones right here, we'll keep them on the list. We'll set them aside. We'll worry about them later.

INTERVIEWER: You spoke about the recruiting duty. I've heard that from a few others- that if there was one thing they could change about the officer corps it's to make that mandatory. To have that recruiting duty.

04201238: It's great. I mean there's not enough billets to make it mandatory. But it's -- it was really hard when we -- I mean those of us that were battalion commanders were -- just happened to be on recruiting duty together when the nation was struggling and it was really hard. So it was harder than combat. I mean really it was. And so we had a common bond from that time. Even though we were in different parts of the country. We'd see each other. And we were friends. And we'd known each other. The Marine Corps is small. And we'd known each other since we were lieutenants.

But I think the recruiting background helped our engagement with the Iraqi people. And so if I was going to teach anything, I would -- and we did it in [*unit removed*]. We gathered up the Marines that had been on recruiting duty, the enlisted Marines, to teach PSS to the young Marines that had never been out there. As a form of engagement. Because it's nonthreatening. You're not you know who's your brother. I mean you don't ask people 20 question at once. You put together a combat patrol that has just a couple of objectives. You go out and you just talk to people. And they just tell you one or two things. And you just -- OK. You know it's a conversation you're having with them. It's not a probe you know 20 questions. People fail, it's not about culture, it's about really just how you approach dealing with people. If people feel like you're just quizzing them, that's just a transaction relationship. They're going to either answer your questions or not. And if they think you're trying to find out something they're going to try to tell you something that you might want to hear. I mean it's just-- you know so it was -- that's more important than the culture, is understanding that human dynamic.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any type of body language training or how to use interpreters so that you would have the ability to understand some of those nuances?

04201238: No. But you -- you know 45-year-old battalion commander. I mean I've been around. So I mean you by that point in life. Some of that might be useful for the younger guys. You know. And no, my terps were great. My interpreter was a mailman from Florida. His parents were Egyptian. He spoke Arabic with an Egyptian accent, which the Iraqis got a kick out of that. But --

INTERVIEWER: It's very formal. Very formal in comparison.

04201238: Right. Yeah. Yeah. So but he would speak with the same tone and the same mannerisms that I was using. Because I told him to. If I'm mad I want you to let them know I'm mad. If I'm not you know. So he was very good. My interpreter and I had worked very well together. And the same in Fallujah when I was there before. I had a Peshmerga guy from northern Iraq, Kurd, and he was good also.

INTERVIEWER: Now did those -- especially the Kurd, but the Egyptian as well. Were they able to help you navigate the culture? So instead of being just an interpreter, more as a cultural adviser? Or did they just pretty much fulfill the role of just interpreter?

04201238: No. Because they weren't Iraqi. Well he could. He could explain what things meant in context of the language. But no, you're -- you needed to have an Iraqi to do that. That's why I had General [*name removed*].

INTERVIEWER: OK. So you used General [*name removed*] as your POC?

04201238: Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Would it have been useful, do you think, if the Marine Corps had provided you with a cultural adviser? Or was it really just not at that time necessary?

04201238: You know you've got to get a local. You have to get a local. You have to. I don't put a lot of weight behind this anthropology people they have out there. And you know there's probably something to it. But you could get a local. It's got to be someone that -- you know that -- I mean it's hard to find. But General [*name removed*] did that for me. I would ask him what is this, what does this mean. Who's this person, how are they related. You're not going to

get a person that's going to be able to tell you that. You need someone who lives in that area that can tell you that's not going to lie to you. I just got lucky to get him. Then [*name removed*] was the other one. His brother actually ran the tribe while he was gone. And [*name removed*] also had the other half of it.

INTERVIEWER: Did you -- have you had experience with any cultural assets in theater like FAOs, RAOs, the HTS teams?

04201238: Oh, I'm familiar with -- I was at manpower. I was the head of ground power officer assignment. So I'm familiar with all the programs. I don't know. I don't know. I've never worked with them. So I don't -- I'm not saying they're bad. I'm just --I think that I got the same thing from General [*name removed*]. And that may have just been luck.

He was like "Hey! I like what you're doing, you know, I want to come talk to you, what do you want. Well, you're different. Your guys are different than the units that were here before. Why are you different?" That's what he asked me. Why are you different? And I said what do you mean why are we different. Goes well, you know, your approach is different. You're not yelling at people. You're not shooting. You're not -- like we're not here to kill you. We're here to kill Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is our enemy. Not the Iraqi people. So we're here to kill Al Qaeda. So tell us where Al Qaeda is and we'll be friends. And we just developed a relationship with each other where I would meet with him or he would ask me to come meet with him. He's the only person I would go to a preordained meeting with. All these other guys, they would -- I'd be out there. And I'd be like OK go get [*name removed*], go get this guy, go get that. Send kids after them. And then bring them all in. Because they would -- somebody would find out about it and there'd be someone there trying to get the word.

INTERVIEWER: The nifty cell phone network. You immediately start seeing people call.

04201238: Yeah the cell phones didn't work in our area. The cell phone tower was in Khalidiya. Actually it was behind -- it was on Camp Habbaniyah. And it was not working. And we -- you know one of the civil affairs efforts was to try to get that working.

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't have that problem very much.

04201238: No. No. If they had a cell phone they were taking a picture. So we quickly confiscated tons of cell phones and then you didn't see them anymore. Because they were taking pictures of our convoys. And you could see the pictures right on the phone.

INTERVIEWER: We've spoken a lot about the engagements. It sounds like you came right out the gate and started talking to people. So that's good. Did you find that any of those engagements early on caused problems later? Or were they all do you think pretty much progressive in nature and helping towards your mission objectives?

04201238: Well, you had to be careful. I had a sense for this. Again just again reading the Small Wars Manual and I read you know I mean God knows how many -- I write them down in here. So all the books.

INTERVIEWER: Oh. So you have a nice reading list.

04201238: You know the books I read. You know In the Belly of the Green Bird. About the insurgents. (*He motions to his personal journals*) You can read through them. These are my day-to-day notes. I can explain to you what they

mean. But it's proof. I mean the Ready First has nothing to do with this. This is Sheikh [*name removed*]. He's the sheikh of the Albu Fahd. Five hundred thousand people in his tribe. Met with me on October 30th.

INTERVIEWER: And this is happening before MacFarland?

04201238: Yes. This is before anybody. In fact when I said hey, *Khamis*, why don't you guys meet with him, you know and tried -- I tried to set up a meeting with him and General [*name removed*] in Al Mansour District of Baghdad and for some reason they couldn't work it out. But these were already -- it was already under way is what I'm saying. That's the Awakening right there. That was it. That hey, coming back and saying join the police, join the army. His whole tribe. The 1st Division's numbers tripled in that time period.

INTERVIEWER: Of Albu Fahd, right?

04201238: Yes. They were from that tribe. The police. The way we were training the police was they were afraid to leave their -- I'm like why won't you join the police. Police make more money. You want to be a -- we want police officers. We don't want soldiers here. You know we don't want soldiers in your neighborhood. We want -- this is how we do it in America. The police are from their own same community. I mean everywhere it's that way. Why wouldn't we do it that way here? You get -- hire him, then we'll go, if they join the police we're going to send them away. If you send them away they're not going to join. They're not going to leave their families. They can't afford to move.

So we said fine. We will -- we'll recruit 100 police officers. Fifty will go to Jordan where they were being trained. And the other 50 will protect the family of the 50 -- the families of the 50 that are gone. When those 50 come back we'll send the other 50. Now there's more than 50 but that's just a -- and so I think it was 100. I think we got them 100 that time. And general [*name removed*] helped us get more because we immediately -- we -- when we started doing that, that's just something we worked out. Us, [*name removed*] and the PTT, and the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Division battalion commanders. What I told them was listen. Here's what's going to work. You train the police. The -- you have -- the Iraqi Army had credibility with the people. They did. The police did not.

Police in that country under Saddam were corrupt. They were traffic -- direct traffic. They were spying on people. So you train them. You train us for the credibility of the Iraqi Army to these police officers. And then you get to leave. You -- the army should be defending the borders of the country. So it was me and those two battalion commanders. [*name removed*]. I'm like listen, I can't do this. If the US people are the only ones training them then it's not going to work. You understand that. So they -- OK we'll train them.

INTERVIEWER: So you had Iraqi Army guys that were going in and helping to train the police force.

04201238: Yes. So they would go on patrol with the Iraqi soldiers. Yes absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Eventually did the Iraqi Army pull out so that it was just the straight local police force?

04201238: Yes. Khalidiya was turned over to the police. It was blue. When we left it was blue. It was run by the police.

INTERVIEWER: So within a seven-month timeframe you were able to get police in there.

04201238: Yes. We recruited locally. And that's how we did it. Again we had to come -- but you got to solve -- you got to focus on solving the problem. You can't just say well you know. No. Why won't you join? General [*name removed*], why won't these people join the police? They're afraid for their families. Of course they are. Why wouldn't they be? They're going to be targeted.

INTERVIEWER: 2006 was the "year of the police". What I'm finding is it's not so much the year of the police but the year of the local. I think that's a bigger message. Because you can have police but if you're going to move you know this tribal guy over here and you put him in this area then -- and they don't know him, then --

04201238: It was the year of the police though. But not everybody made it the -- like we made it like whatever they were saying I took on board as a battalion commander to make that our mission. The year of the police. Let's make it police. OK, what do you need? PTT, police training team. What do you need? What resources do you need from me to help you do your job? You're -- I'm supporting you. 3rd Brigade, I'm supporting -- I'm in support of you. We're putting Iraqi capability. That's one of our pillars. You know when the ten-second gunfight was the other one. And then what's good for the legion is good for Rome was like the -- no, what's -- defend the nation or something. It was something about the United States that was the third pillar. I can give you the -- I can get those things to you too.

But our three pillars. So put Iraqi capability on it was -- it's the Iraqi units get the credit. It doesn't matter. I mean we do something with you. It's going to -- you know do it small. And then big. These are written in the front you know the Twenty-eight Articles from Kilcullen are in the front. You know and I -- every day I did this. I went through these every day. I read them all the time. And this is how I'd direct my day was these are good. These are like Jomini's principles. These are principles of counterinsurgency that are very very relevant.

INTERVIEWER: But you said that the COIN manual at least in its current form is not a good document?

04201238: No, it is. It's just a regurgitation of what we did in Iraq I think.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that if you could make revisions on it today that you would? Or does it stand?

04201238: I don't think it would apply so -- it may not apply somewhere else. That's my point is that you know David Galula writes a pretty good book on counterinsurgency also that I read. This makes sense. How do you take what Galula is writing and apply it to the current situation? That's the hard part. It's -- I mean you have all these different counterinsurgencies throughout history. I mean --

INTERVIEWER: Bing West [*wrote an article*] referencing 1-6. But he says if the Marines had just cordoned off the city and done a census and done the BATs and done the fingerprinting and really figured out who was who, then you would have known immediately who the bad guys were. And it would have been over. Well, how do you really --

04201238: Bing West comes in. He came in my area and wrote stuff that wasn't even true about me in the stupid book. So that's not how it works.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. But he references Galula but Galula was able to really actually isolate his community. That's not going to work in Ramadi. I mean you can do the walled city and you can do the gated communities but --

04201238: But there are things that Galula writes about that make sense.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely.

04201238: Way you treat people. If you would have done that -- if you would have done the same thing we did in Malaysia to the Iraqis they would have absolutely rebelled. They would have been -- it would have been exactly what Saddam was doing to them.

INTERVIEWER: [*Edited for clarity*] Colonel, now General MacFarland wrote an article called Anbar the Tipping Point, in which he describes "the Ramadi Model" and uses it as a lesson for success. But it reads as if it is a generalizable model, which may be problematic. Can you use a "model" to apply COIN to other environments? Can what was done in Ramadi be used globally?

04201238: How is it the Ramadi model though? I don't understand. I --

INTERVIEWER: He looks at very specific things that they did. But when he says the Ramadi model, the impression that you get from the article is that it is very specific to the entire AO. But it's not. It was rural. And it was working with Sheikh Sattar and it's not what 1-6 did inside the city.

04201238: No. And it's not what we were doing right next door and his model falls on its face because one of his battalion commanders, [*name removed*], wasn't doing it either. And so he did what we were doing. He used our approach for his area, the foot patrol, and the get out and talk to people, the armed civil affairs, the -- I mean push into an area and I mean we took the Julayba Peninsula from him. And by -- this was in December. We had gotten our TTPs down to so well that we knew where all the IEDs were ahead of time. Sent Lima Company in at 2:00 in the morning into patrol bases that we selected ahead of time. Key throughout the area. Sun comes up in the morning. You got an entire reinforced company in an area full of bad guys. Because we're trying to seal off Zuwaybit and we were going to clean up the Albu Bali area. They couldn't do anything. We went out and dug up all the IEDs and blew them up. Because they were all unarmed. The wires were there, nothing hooked to them. You know everything was -- we knew where they all were. And you know we killed four or five people you know that were trying to run away. But for the most part the enemy was trapped in that area and couldn't get away. And they couldn't come out and blow us up because we weren't moving. We were there. We were already in their AO.

INTERVIEWER: And these, did they become permanent? You --

04201238: Well, I kept it for as long as I could, but it was not -- it was temporary. It was part of the Ready First area. I mean it wasn't part of 5th Marines. So we got it temporarily because we were getting attacked from that. We were getting rockets shot at us from that side. And all of our sources were saying it's not us, it's Zuwaybit area. So we need to go clean it up. And [*name removed*] didn't have the resources to do it because he was focused towards the city. Because he -- I mean this was a ruralish area. So it was Sheikh -- well, Sattar was I think up in -- maybe in -- on the other side of the river I think.

He was with [*name removed*]. And then we had -- Yeah so he was west and north of me. But the sheikhs that were in that area were not good people. Were part of that council though. I knew who they were. So I just -- when we got that peninsula I just went and made -- visited them. I said hey look. You got two choices. You can work with us or you're not going to be around much longer. So --

INTERVIEWER: And then they start working with you at that point?

04201238: This was December of '06. So they knew that -- yeah I think they did. I mean they went you know. It was a power struggle among them to see who was going to be in charge of things. So I'm sure one of them killed Sattar.

INTERVIEWER: Did you see a lot of red-on-red activity? And if so did you understand what was going on, that there was tribal conflict that was occurring also?

04201238: No, I think the tribes turned against Al Qaeda and killed those guys. And they did. They -- those guys were floating down the river. That was in the fall of '06.

INTERVIEWER: The reason I ask is that's come up a few times where you know you can see in your SIGACTS there's red-on-red going on. And whether or not there is early understanding to interpret what that meant, that the tribes were actually standing up against Al Qaeda --

04201238: Right. It wasn't -- it was the Iraqi people against foreigners is what I would call it. They called them foreigners or takfiri. You know zealots.

INTERVIEWER: But you also have to understand that to an Iraqi you know if you're in this little AO in this area, especially your tribal area, that they would actually call a foreigner anybody who was outside that tribal area. So there were levels of foreignness. There were those from outside the country, others who are from outside your area of influence, your tribal area, and those from outside your city.

04201238: But they would distinguish.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know if they all used them -- used takfiri as the word.

04201238: Well, those were the -- like the religious kind of extreme religious. Those were -- they were usually -- sometimes they were Iraqis actually.

INTERVIEWER: For the discussion on Sheikh Sattar you've mentioned you know Ready First came after working with Sheikh Sattar. What understanding was there about him? Did you have any interaction with Sheikh Sattar at all?

04201238: No. No. I saw him once. I dealt just with [*name removed*]. Because they were all in Ramadi. I had no reason to go to any of those meetings. And I knew they were meeting with people just -- and then there were -- some of the battalions were forming up these Concerned Local Citizens groups. Basically militias. I didn't allow our Concerned Local Citizens to be armed. They couldn't be armed. So what we did was we gave every Iraqi a weapon. So if you had a house and we knew you lived in that house, we gave you an AK-47 and like 50 rounds of ammo I think. According to Iraqi law they could have that.

The [*unit removed*] didn't do it, had gone around and taken the firing pins out of the weapons. So they would bring me a weapon. Let's go to your house. I'd go to their house. I would give them an AK that worked with 50 rounds. And I would say this is just for your protection inside your house. So that doesn't mean you can shoot Marines if we come to your house. You have to let us in. But if someone tries to rob you or someone from Al Qaeda comes here, shoot them.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So you actually returned back to the tenets of Iraqi law.

04201238: Yes. Yeah. Everything that was -- that they were entitled to by Iraqi law I allowed them to have. So we gave them weapons. We gave them back weapons. Here you go. This is a weapon. Give me your broken one. And we'd take the broken one and we gave them a weapon. So they had AKs. And these were AKs that we captured, so we didn't buy them. And so as the people became more armed there was less -- I mean it's math there. They weren't against us. Those people weren't against us. Because we were actually helping them. So I wasn't worried about them shooting us. We never had incidents where someone we gave a weapon to shot us. Or we tracked them down. And they lived in that house, that was their house.

INTERVIEWER: Was MEF on board with you guys making those --

04201238: No we just did it on our own. I never asked anybody. Just did it. I gave -- actually I gave them that and I gave them a card that we have -- as a battalion have an embosser. Embossing thing that has the battalion logo on it. So I made a card with the battalion logo. It was a piece of paper. And it was a flap. So the embossed part, you could feel it, you couldn't laminate that. And then the other part was laminated. Had the battalion logo. And on the inside of it it had the weapon serial number of that weapon. And it said this weapon was given to whatever his name was. We put his name in there. By me. My name was on there. And here's the serial number. I gave it to them.

INTERVIEWER: That way if anyone challenged them…

04201238: I said if anybody tries to take your weapon you show them this card. And so it happened all the time. Marines were coming in. Whatever, looking for someone. They'd knock on the door. You know we didn't blow the doors off. They'd let us in. Weapon. Here's your card. OK. The Thawar Al Anbar also had these cards that they carried with them so they could identify themselves to Marines. And if they had some information they wanted to pass to us they would put it in the glove box of their vehicle. Because we would do snap vehicle checkpoints all the time. We didn't have any permanent checkpoints on the road. So we would catch them in there or they would -- the Marines looking through the car, they'd take something. Then it's -- it was very transparent that people were passing us information. So that worked pretty good too.

INTERVIEWER: So do you agree with this idea of innovation- working from the bottom up instead of top-down? Or is this just something that the Marines do? That [the command element] allows for flexibility of the battalion and brigade commanders to make these decisions based on their understanding of the AO?

04201238: Yeah that's how we operate. Yeah. So the regimental commanders and the battalion commanders. I mean I think our culture, the Marine Corps's culture, is innovative. I mean we have a long history of innovation. I mean our MAGTF is an innovative structure. It's task-organized. The commander reorganizes and rebuilds it based on the mission. As our mission evolves in our AO, I mean we're the main effort for 5th Marines for all the way through Thanksgiving into December. As we got into December I told now General [*name removed*], but Colonel [*name removed*], hey look, you -- I mean we don't need to be the main effort anymore. You can take these -- we had a company of tanks, a company of recon assigned to our battalion for Rubicon and for the other -- I mean we had a reconnaissance company out there with us for three or four months. I mean it was you know over almost 2,000 people in the task force.

I mean we were the main effort for the regiment for a good part of the time. So there's no reason why we shouldn't have turned up good results. I mean we had -- we were well resourced. As we accomplished the tasks that we gave ourselves to do, because it would be very hard for a higher headquarters to task you to accomplish something in your AO because it's just so nuanced. So -- it's so specific to your area. There's a time lead on it. It's human interaction that you can't force. You can't make it happen faster than it's going to happen anyway. All you can do is really facilitate the development down a course that you want it to. It's more influence in that sense. So it's more of a strategic communication than it is IO. So people talk about IO. I viewed IO as something that we did to the enemy. So I never lied to people I wanted to help me. So I always told them the truth. And the enemy you deceive. You trick. That's more of information operations.

INTERVIEWER: So the same as the PSYOP aspect?

04201238: PSYOP too, right. Or MISO I guess is what they call it now but right. So we engaged in that based on what we were allowed to. A lot of this stuff is controlled by law. For strategic communication, that's just talking to people. That's just here's a message. Got a loudspeaker on my vehicle. I'd tell the terp to say whatever. You know something. I'd have some things written out for him to say to people. Some people could hear you, some people couldn't. You know we handed out leaflets all the time. Information. You know we tried to get -- I wanted to get a newspaper going up there. I thought that would have been tremendous. Would be to get just a -- you know a small newspaper printed in that area run by the Iraqis. Put whatever you want in there. I don't care.

INTERVIEWER: Did that ever come to fruition?

04201238: No. And then I wanted to get a radio station, which was something that 3-5 did in Ad Diwaniyah. They got on TV actually and they fielded questions from Iraqis. Which I thought would have been good. I would have been willing to do that. Go to TV. You know because they all had satellite dishes, so they had television. They would show me stuff they were watching on TV all the time when I was out walking around.

INTERVIEWER: 1-6 actually tried. They put radio -- or loudspeakers on buildings. The same type that were on the mosques. And they had certain messages and a radio show Voice of Ramadi they put together. Was that similar?

04201238: AM radio, right?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know.

04201238: Yeah, see, the -- they listen -- the Iraqis listen to FM radio. So right. There was the AM radio station. But --

INTERVIEWER: Actually I don't know if it was AM or FM. They just talked about the Voice of Ramadi. It was local. Inside the city. And they had the governor would come on and the mayor would come on and the police chiefs and --

04201238: Yeah that's what you should do. Yeah because I tried to do that in Habbaniyah but we just couldn't. It was just -- no, we had to have AM radio. I mean this was early on. So they might have gotten an FM radio. And based on what we were asking for. I don't know. But I thought that something like that in Khalidiya would have been useful. And I would have been willing to sit there and answer their questions. Because I used to get questions all the time walking around.

INTERVIEWER: OK. You've brought up several things. In terms of the innovation question, [*Edited for clarity*] it seems that the Marines allow innovation and make their LOOs broad purposefully to allow officers at the brigade and battalion level to interpret and execute as needed for the environment.

04201238: We have four LOOs. Security, governance, communication and economic development was our fourth one. Those were our four LOOs. But those are ones that we develop at the battalion level. I don't know what the higher ones were.

INTERVIEWER: But they're all -- everything that you did at the battalion was nested within the overall objectives that go up to brigade and then the regimental and then higher headquarters, division level. Right? The MEF.

04201238: I didn't really -- like they -- I never felt like they were like things to accomplish. And the -- like hey we want you to -- we just -- like Operation Rubicon was what we decided we wanted to do. And then we convinced the higher headquarters to let us do it. Because -- that was fine. Yeah that was good. Because the other solution would have been for them to come down and tell you to go do X. And then that might -- you know your understanding of your AO is naturally going to be much more defined than the higher headquarters' is. So theirs is going to be general. So I think what -- my sense of what they tried to do -- I just thought staff was too big. There was just too much headquarters over there. Was they tried to take what was coming up and kind of make it work, provide resources to -- you know they're getting some success here. So let's give them some more to get more success. And if you weren't getting success then you kind of got ignored I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any contact or any experience with any of the units that were operating out in Al Qaim or Hit?

04201238: No. I talked to [*name removed*] when he came back from Iraq. And he told us about what he was doing up there which would have informed a lot of what we were doing based on that. We're friends so --

INTERVIEWER: Because there was a lot of discussion in the literature about how Al Qaim actually may have been the initiation point of --

04201238: Yeah I think with Colonel [*name removed*] up there. I believe that. They came down the river. I believe that fully. It started up there in Al Qaim with what he was doing. What Colonel [*name removed*] was doing up there with Marines out of patrol bases. And engaging the local leaders. And the stuff that works. Stuff that we were doing in OIF 2 actually before we fought in Fallujah. He just took it up a notch. And so we expected -- I did -- expected that Awakening. It wasn't Awakening. But that kind of turning against Al Qaeda. To come down the river. It was facilitated in my AO by them killing Sheikh Nassir. You know that and them trying to marry into the tribes. Those two things turned the sheikhs off, turned the people off to Al Qaeda. They became very brutal and kind of overly violent, thuggish kind of people. So it did come down the river. Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Is it reasonable to assume that these sheikhs were also talking with each other?

04201238: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So you know someone from Albu Fahd talking with Albu Mahal or Nimr or --

04201238: Yeah. I believe they were in Jordan, yes. And East Husaybah was in my area. West Husaybah is in Al Qaim. And so Sheikh [*name removed*] lived in East Husaybah. So the sheikh that [*name removed*] dealt with up there was his cousin.

INTERVIEWER: So they were communicating.

04201238: So yeah it was -- it's all tied together. And again what I had -- I think what I had for the battalion was kind of a heads up that this is coming. So get ready for it.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So you at least had some information. But that's based on your network of communications with the other Marines, you're a small --

04201238: Right. With talking to Colonel [*name removed*] and you know what he -- I just had a sense that be -- we need to be ready for this when it comes down in our area. And oh yeah we can do a lot to facilitate it if we get ourselves set up properly. If we get the battlefield properly shaped to support us in a proactive way, not reactive way. I think a lot of the actions that people took were reactive. Counter-sniper, counter-IED, counter-this, counter-that. When in fact if you're reacting to the enemy you're losing. When the enemy is reacting to you you're winning. So how you -- the main thing that I told the battalion to do is get the initiative back. You have to get the initiative. Whatever we do, we have to regain the initiative. And then we have to keep the initiative. So once we got the initiative back then it was a matter of -- then it became really hard because now you're in pursuit. Now you have to aggressively go after the enemy. You can't -- you know you can't sit on your heels and say OK they're reacting to us, now what. No, now you got to go after them. So we went after them hard. We found the leaders. We blew up their houses. We destroyed their property. I mean that's how you get rid of them is this guy is working for Al Qaeda, he's going to die, we're going to blow up his house, we're going to bulldoze it down, we're going to -- this is going to be wiped out. And --

INTERVIEWER: So gone completely.

04201238: Right. And you go tell everybody this is an Al Qaeda guy. There was a -- can't remember his name now. There was a couple of brothers that were Al Qaeda that we -- the guy -- you know one just finally -- he just left. But we blew up their houses. Destroyed their property.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any other units that were operating in the area that maybe made progress a little more difficult? Or maybe helped contribute to progress? I.e., any of the SOF units, special -- or SEALs? Just the Army. Any other service branch that was there. Or were you doing coordinated efforts with them?

04201238: Initially no. They -- SEALs, a guy named [*name removed*] was in charge of the SEALs at Shark Base at the time. I think he's a Navy captain now. Good guy. But they came into my area without me knowing about it looking for some people. And my Marines grabbed them, cornered them, and asked them what they were doing. And they were trying to capture somebody that we had already sent up to Camp Cropper. Based on that interaction, I got ahold of the SEAL commander who was living on Camp Habbaniyah. He was one of my tenants at the camp. To find out what's going on. So he explained to me what was going on. And so that initiated a VTC with [*name removed*]. And then they do -- they did a weekly VTC that we became a part of. So based on an initial kind of lack of coordination and communication we developed a process that was very good I thought, that we'd work together.

So I would feed him. I would give a lot of information that I thought was useful but not for me. So I would forward that over to him. Same thing with [*name removed*]. I'd find out information about stuff going on in his AO that was just information. It wasn't intel, it was just hey this is -- I thought -- would think if that -- if I was in charge of that area I might want to know this. So I would forward that over to him. So this culminated in this Yemeni sniper that they sent in to kill me who actually shot my civil affairs officer in the face and killed Lance Corporal [*name removed*] and Lance Corporal [*name removed*]. And they killed that sniper, SEALs did. Based on information that we -- they used me as a decoy to come in and they flew in and killed the guy. I had the bullet from one of the Marines that was shot and they tested the bullet against the weapon that they captured, it was the same guy. So we knew we got him.

So yes that is an example of us working together. There were -- you know there was the unit that came out of Balad. SF unit, ranger unit, something, that came in through the Albu Bali area. Ended up killing a kid with a mortar round. It was an accident. But they didn't go pay *saleesha* so we had to go do that. So there's examples of where it didn't work out so good either. I thought it always worked better for us if we coordinated with the unit ahead of time.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any communication challenges? I've heard that there were some issues with at least the ODA that were operating in Anbar because they -- it was an MNF effort and so they didn't quite know who was in charge, what the chain of command was supposed to be, who was running what show. And so there were some challenges in that regard. Did you experience that?

04201238: Yeah they were not -- they were hard to work with. When I was there. Now when I was there in 2004 --

INTERVIEWER: The ODA or just the coordinated effort of trying to get the communications?

04201238: It was just -- it was not well coordinated. I didn't think. I didn't have any problems with it during my second tour. But I never really felt like it was a well -- there were things that would go on you'd find out about after the fact. They could have just -- we could have been a part of it. When I was there for OIF 2, we had an ODA unit at Camp Baharia and so we coordinated directly with them. That was a good relationship. We -- they -- I mean they ate in our chow hall. And we worked directly with them. I think they were [*unit removed*] or something like that. But that was a good relationship with them. So it's not all bad. I think again it's personal relationships. Establishing those personal relationships. And then sharing information and then sometimes the shared information becomes intel for somebody else. Because they process it and it makes sense. And sometimes it's just oh that's good SA type stuff to know. So sharing that type of -- and we shared -- I mean I shared weekly with Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*] information. I brought my stuff down. What we were doing, what operation we had, where my patrol bases were. He knew all that stuff. I gave it to him directly and I knew where his were.

INTERVIEWER: There's an article called Better Lucky than Good by Brent Lindeman. It's a Naval War College master's thesis that came out. And the student is Special Forces. And what he writes in there is not very friendly towards the Marine Corps. That he cites a lack of communication, lack of coordinated effort in regard to the Albu Mahal and Albu Nimr and that because of this lack of coordination while they were trying to stand up an Awakening up there and trying to do missions with the Albu Mahal and the Albu Nimr that the Marines were stepping on it and --

04201238: Right, because it's not their battle space. The battle space belonged to the Marine battalion commander.

INTERVIEWER: So if there's a lack of coordination --

04201238: Why not coordinate with the -- I mean -- You own the AO. Why are Special Forces units coming into battle space that you're assigned? I mean on the ground it said [*units removed*]. That's the breakdown.

INTERVIEWER: If the heart of the matter really is that it's a lack of understanding over chain of command or who owns battle space or communication challenges or personal issues between people or what have you, that sounds more logical than the Marines trying to be counterproductive towards...

04201238: Right. They're not. They're trying to do -- they probably had no idea what the Special Forces units were doing. And why would a unit be operating in another commander's battle space? This happened all the time with logistics units. Just whooshing our AO because you know once we got Michigan open everybody wanted to use it. No coordination at all. They would stop to fix a flat tire, they would search houses of people that were friendly to us that would be mad at me the next morning when they'd see me out. I'm like what are you talking. Why did your Marines? I'd -- I don't know what you're talking about.

Doesn't sound like anything that we would do. So I would go to the company commander. Hey, what the heck is going on? I don't know. Oh, they took their weapon, they took this. So I'd do the forensics, call the XO, what units went through our AO last night. We'd track it down to some logistics unit or engineer unit or whatever that stopped to fix a flat.

Took the guy's weapons. Searching the house. He showed him the card. Everything we had in place. And they still took it. So I'm like go get the weapon. Bring it back up there. Give it back to him. And tell him sorry. Or don't tell him sorry but tell him it was -- wasn't us. It was some other Marines. But that's the type of thing that higher headquarters should deconflict. And they weren't.

INTERVIEWER: But that's how you can see that a lot of the credit taking or the finger pointing or the blame that you see in the literature…this explains how that can come about. But the general public who read these [*articles*] about the Anbar Awakening isn't going to understand those little nuances.

04201238: No, but unity of command is a principle of war. Why would you -- that is probably the biggest criticism I would have of the war is that the principle of unity of command was routinely violated at the small tactical unit level. The battalion level. That other units would be sent to operate in and around or through your battle space that you knew nothing about. And you would find out about it either by accident because of them shooting at you or you know a variety of ways. You know I had a patrol fired at at night by a convoy because they saw people moving. It was in my area. My AO. They're -- you know they were on a patrol in their own company. The company commander was with the patrol. They had to dive into a drainage ditch to avoid getting killed.

INTERVIEWER: Is that -- the one incident that you mentioned where you said that -- how it was the Army had fired on Marines?

04201238: Right. I think it was an Iraqi National Guard or Iraqi Army convoy with a US Army escort. And you know like I mean -- and then all the criticism comes down to me because I didn't report the patrol. I'm like well to who. It's my area. Report to.

INTERVIEWER: So I can understand those challenges.

04201238: Yeah so there -- I mean there was a lot of that kind of stuff that would go on and the -- I'm sure the SF guys are doing great work. I mean I would never you know say they're not. They're trying to do what they think they need to do based on their mission. The coordination piece though I think could have been done a lot better. And it would have been a better -- because when we coordinated with the SEALs at Shark Base, we always got better results than we would have got by ourselves. Every time. Every single time was always 1,000% better than we could have -- because ours would have been very deliberate plodding you know.

INTERVIEWER: I'm not trying to criticize. I'm trying to get at why these things have popped up so much in the literature and to hopefully clarify some of it [*in my report*]. Because it does seem at least to me a civilian, that if you have a coordinated effort that just makes sense that things would work out better.

04201238: It wasn't coordinated. I mean I don't know about the situation. But if he wasn't coordinating with [*name removed*], who's a great guy, I mean there's no reason he wouldn't have welcomed them there. Then it's up to those units coming into that area to coordinate with you or whoever sent them there or --

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that maybe some of the bureaucracy of trying to get through who owns the AO, which part of the battle space -- let me clarify. I've had one discussion with an ODA who said they were trying to go up the chain. They were trying to do an operation. And they wanted coordination. But then they'd have to call (*CJSOTF and*) then over to MNF-North. And they would say no, you have to talk to West (*meaning MNF-W*). They would call West and they'd say no you got to talk to North. And then you got to go up here to --

04201238: Should be headquarters.

INTERVIEWER: -- CJSOTF and then CJSOTF would say no go to North. And so it was this problem of getting through whoever provides permission and support. And he said he would have loved to have been able to go right down the road and talk to the Marines and say this is what I need.

04201238: That's what they should have done.

INTERVIEWER: But at the same time you have to get the support from your command. But then they were getting the runaround. And so there was a general discussion about how these problems, getting permissions, would have been one of the greater challenges. And it was something that he thought was relatively unique to OIF. That he didn't experience it in other --

04201238: Well, we had an ODA sniper team attached to us in [*unit removed*] in Fallujah. They were attached. They were great.

INTERVIEWER: So no issues on that front?

04201238: They -- I mean they were superb. But they worked for us. They took taskings from us. So for those teams why weren't they just assigned to [*unit removed*]? There's -- it wasn't a colonel leading it. So it couldn't have been a seniority thing. It was probably majors, captains.

INTERVIEWER: He also mentioned that their structure, their command structure, is different.

04201238: It is.

INTERVIEWER: In that a Major, who would be a team leader to the ODA is the equivalent of the type of training and level of authority a Colonel would be for the Army. And yet that's not really ever communicated very well. And so there's an idea of "you're just a Major". But he's not. He's a Major Special Forces team leader. And once you get up (into the ranks of) Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel you're now talking about a command staffer and someone you wouldn't necessarily see on the field.

04201238: No, he's a commander. I would -- I mean if they were working in my area I would treat them like a company commander. I mean he would be a commander. And he would have the same authority. But he doesn't have special court-martial authority. He doesn't have the same authority that a Battalion Commander has. There's no way. Or a Colonel. There's no way.

INTERVIEWER: No. He's a team leader for an ODA.

04201238: Yeah he's a Special Forces team leader. Very capable. Very powerful unit that you would treat him like a -- I would treat him like a commander. He would be a commander. The same way I treated the engineers that were attached to me or the -- I had the AAV platoon. Or the tank company. Or the reconnaissance company. They got a whole company of recon.

INTERVIEWER: So going back to the personal relationships. Your understanding of it and treatment may not necessarily be the exact same as the way other --

04201238: But that's what it's about (*meaning personal relationships*). And I mean the one guy that says this the best is General Mattis. I mean he absolutely understands it. And he drilled that into our heads when he was our division commander. And this is about personal relationships and making things work out. You have to solve the problem. It's not who shot John. I mean and again whenever -- and maybe it was just because it was the SEALs and the -- you know the Navy-Marine Corps relationship might have made it a little easier but [*name removed*] and I were the same rank. And his SEAL guys were team leaders the same way that these ODA guys are team leaders. And we -- they had -- they operated on the river. They lived on my camp. And there were no problems. I mean because we talked and coordinated the problems were minor. They were solvable problems.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it can be chalked up to something as simple as service branch competition?

04201238: I don't know. I mean it could be. And you know the -- but then they should have given them their own separate battle space then. That's how you -- I mean that's how you solve. It's the -- that's how you solve that. You make it a geometry problem. I mean the great thing about the battle space is you can separate people by time and space. And that avoids problems. So you can -- this is your AO. And there's a whole bunch of rules that govern fires between boundaries and coordination between boundaries that are already set in place. You don't have to make a whole new list, whole new set of rules. So then if they're not going to work for that commander then that area they're working in should have temporarily for the time that they're there or permanently if they're going to be there for the whole time been a separate area. I mean we solved that problem. Me and [*name removed*]. Me and [*name removed*].

By temporarily getting each other's battle space. If I'm going to do something along the border between my area and those other units' area, then I'm going to get a couple of kilometers of space or maybe a kilometer of space into their area. As mine temporarily so that the enemy can't use that border against me.

That's just common sense. And we routinely did that between us or even with the help of higher headquarters if we needed to. Because we did. We dropped bombs and killed people in each other's territory when those operations were going on. Because that's why we were doing them. We knew the enemy was there and we were going after the enemy and we expected -- we had fire support and airplanes and everything overhead to use. And we expected them to use the river. Get in the other area. And we didn't -- wouldn't allow it. Once they figured out it wasn't going to work anymore they stopped doing it.

INTERVIEWER: When you did these operations and included the Iraqi Army in this, did you sit down with the Colonels and actually include them in the planning process or --

04201238: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: -- was it – OK?

04201238: Absolutely. And we met several times a week. I'd go over and have lunch in their place with them. We'd have lunch. We'd talk about what they were doing, what we're doing. So they knew fully what we're doing along. Because we had boundaries. I met with them. Treated them exactly the same way I treated Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*], American Army commander. Iraqi battalion commander got the same level of trust and respect from me that they got. And that helped build the relationship between us that was really powerful.

INTERVIEWER: Was it the same with the police? Did you include them or were they not --

04201238: Yeah they were reluctant to patrol. Because they were legitimately not confident in their capabilities, and how the people were going to respond. We got them there though. We gave them Humvees. We painted the Humvees for them. The police Humvees. And they put police Humvees in our convoys at first. And the Iraqis did the same thing in theirs. And then eventually it was just the police. So we had to get there.

But yeah we sat down. Again we held the weekly meeting eventually with 3rd Brigade of the 1st Division. With people from there. All three battalion commanders from the 3rd Brigade. That was the AO that they were operating in. Me, police team leader. The MTTs. So the majors that were in charge of the training teams for the Iraqi battalions of 3rd Brigade were there. [*name removed*] was there. [*name removed*], the PTT leader, was there. He ran the meeting. And I think that was -- the SEAL guys were there. So they had a rep.

So everybody who worked with them. Eventually we got this meeting in place to where everybody who worked together, the senior people were there at this meeting. And we had an agenda led by the police. That's how we got Khalidiya turned over to the police. Was we put them in charge. First it was [*name removed*]. And then [*name removed*] ran the meeting. And so you kind of modeled it for them. Got it working. Turned it over to them. And by the time we left, [*unit removed*], the Iraqis were leading that meeting. And we were kind of back benchers.

INTERVIEWER: OK. And you had said that you didn't work with any of the militias at the time.

04201238: We didn't have any. I wouldn't allow it. I absolutely forbid militias. Because militias are something that you have to deal with later. And I was not -- I was absolutely unwilling to create a short term solution that was going to be a long term problem later on. There's no place in the Iraqi law for militia. There's not. That -- nobody could show it to me. And so I said no. You're not going to. And they wanted that. Khamis wanted his own security. No. I refused. It made our engagement longer. But I said no. We're not going to do that. The mayor wanted his own security. No. You have police officers that can escort you around. I don't have a problem with that.

So there's a picture of me and him talking to the Iraqi people with me standing next to the mayor. And two police officers standing next to him. Providing him with security. He's in a suit. In Modiq. So it worked. But again if -- I believe if we would have caved into that, I think there would have been things happening that we didn't -- I told them. I'm like listen we're all against Al Qaeda. But we're not going to be murdering people in the streets. OK, that's not going to happen. So we're not going to tolerate that. We're not. Americans are not going to tolerate that. And neither should you. And so it just set a different tone as to how that area developed. And I believe it helped us turn it over to the police quicker.

INTERVIEWER: In some of the articles that have been written by the Ready First that talked about the Albu Rishas, who said "we'll provide security in this area, we'll get it calmed down if you trust us and work with us and basically allow a militia", who eventually became police, but in the interim they were militia. And then as soon as Ready First said yeah OK let's do this --

04201238: I was against that.

INTERVIEWER: That there were Albu RIsha that wound up showing up at the gates, with Al Qaeda guys in their trunks. You know that they had gone and they got the bad guys, and eradicated them pretty quickly.

04201238: Yeah how do you prove it?

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't buy into that at all?

04201238: No. I refused to do it. It was -- and they did it. And I told -- I had this discussion. I said no. I'm not going to do that. I refuse. Well, we're going to -- this -- just because that may solve the problem, it's not what I believe is the right way to do it. So we -- no. We gave people weapons for their houses. They were entitled to that by Iraqi law. But they weren't allowed to go out on the street and shoot people. Wasn't going to turn this into Dodge City or the Wild West. I mean that's kind of what happened in this country out west is they had militias and they didn't always go -- those things don't always go the way you think they should. And once they get under way they're very hard to control. Very hard to disarm those people. What we did was we said no. We used it as a hard line to get them to join the police. Join the police and then you can be armed. Join the army and then you can be armed in the street. But if you're not in the police or the army you're not going to walk around this area that belongs to us, [*removed*] Battalion [*removed*] Marines and 3rd Brigade of the 1st Iraqi Division, with a weapon in your hand, or you'll be killed immediately.

INTERVIEWER: How do you think that played out in terms of Ramadi? I mean did you have experience watching what was going on up there?

04201238: Yeah. It was -- when we pulled out of the Julayba Peninsula Chuck came up in there and did just that. He set up a Concerned Local Citizens group up in that area. It worked out OK. But he made it work. I don't know how he dealt with it. It's still something you got to deal with later. Whereas we just said police. Join the police. Join the army. The army got big. Like they had a brigade up in Ramadi that was recruited around the Habbaniyah area. So the 2nd Brigade was in Ramadi I think of the 1st Division. And they had 7th Division up there too I believe. Was the Iraqi units.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sorry. When you said [*name removed*] was he Army or --

04201238: [*name removed*]. Yeah. [*unit removed*]. But yeah it worked out fine for them. I mean he -- but he -- I know he personally made it work. And then I left in first week of February. So they were still working on it. I think [*name removed*] was one of the battalions that got extended for the surge. Surge gets a lot. The surge I think -- I don't know. I'm still undecided about what the surge might have accomplished. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Well, the Surge came after the Awakening had already started. After things had really turned around in Anbar. So I think the Surge -- personally in my opinion -- may have been effective in terms of spreading that momentum into Baghdad and beyond.

04201238: Yeah I think so. Right. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: But to my understanding the Marines didn't really get that much benefit from the surge.

04201238: I think it was -- couple of battalions. They were extended for a few months. I mean they thought about extending us. But we had already sent two companies home by the time they were doing that. I think that ours would have been a good battalion to extend because we were in the middle. Like we were the -- we had the whole middle area. Between Ramadi and Fallujah. It was kind of an urban rural kind of thing. There were nice houses there. A lot of wealthy Sunnis lived there.

INTERVIEWER: General Petraeus when he came in, I think he was visiting 1-6. He visited Ready First. Did he come down and see you guys?

04201238: No I was gone. General Odierno got there in December. Immediate change at the high level. You could sense it already. I mean right away. We got our rent money. We got all that stuff in December.

INTERVIEWER: When Odierno came in?

04201238: Yeah. Yeah. He was an immediate impact for sure in approach. In methodology. In mindset. And of course General Petraeus. I mean everybody read about what he did in Tal Afar. So I mean a lot of what we -- a lot of what I did was what I read about him doing in Tal Afar with the division that he was commander of. It was very engagement-oriented. Very --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Wasn't -- H. R. McMaster was up there in Tal Afar also.

04201238: Yeah I think McMaster was his -- maybe his OpsO or something. I don't know. Or I know Petraeus was the division commander up there. You know it was Kurds. I mean it was different. You know it's more -- It's different. It's different but you could take -- and what I looked at in the -- I guess the value of studied history through a whole

career is that you look at those commanders who were successful and not look at their model but their -- what were they thinking, like what were they trying to make happen, and how did their approach differ from someone else. You know like why didn't -- why did we have to go fight in Fallujah, because look what he did up in Tal Afar. He didn't crush that city. Same kind of idea. Now it was different. I mean we had a lot of foreign fighters in Fallujah. So --

INTERVIEWER: Well the whole thing from Fallujah. Now that was more of a top-down approach instead of the bottom-up approach, right? But do you think that things switched to more flexibility in allowing the brigades and battalions to do what they needed to do after Fallujah?

04201238: No, building up to Fallujah was -- there was a lot of bottom. We were doing classic counterinsurgency patrols. I mean the whole city was cordoned off and it was MEF battle space. So you couldn't shoot into the city without coordinating. But the whole area, we -- I mean I was [*unit removed*]. We had the whole area around the city, that was our AO.

INTERVIEWER: So were you employing the same type of tactics?

04201238: Yeah. Same stuff. Just get out. Talk to people. Engage people. Water projects. The Al Anbar Technical College. We were rebuilding that. All the contacts, the sheikh, the mosque, the Fallujah City Council meetings. Once a week they were meeting up in Sadiqiya. All the people that we knew from that were people that I went to when we were fighting in the city and dead bodies, where do we take the civilians, we took them up to the Al Anbar Technical College, why did we get in there, because we -- $500,000 contract to rebuild the thing, and we knew all the people, we knew the director of it, we knew all those people. Said hey these people need someplace to go. We evacuated you know 700 people out of the city. Just our battalion. Took them all up there and dropped them off. And we brought food up there. And we -- they were good. They were OK. If we didn't have that relationship what the heck would we have done with those people? Let them loose in the desert? I mean they would have died.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that -- and we talked about this a little bit at the very beginning of this interview-- but missed opportunities… Do you think that there were missed opportunities that we could have capitalized on that might have created these Awakening movements sooner?

04201238: No. There was -- there were a lot of foreign fighters, foreigners, in -- that were involved with the Fallujah piece. You didn't see so much of that in -- we killed those people by 2006, we had --

INTERVIEWER: So that was a big change between the two?

04201238: Yeah you didn't see it as -- when a foreigner came in like the Yemeni that we killed, that was rare. Al Qaeda guys were usually foreigners but there were several Iraqis that were considered Al Qaeda that we ended up killing as well.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that Al Qaeda switched the tactic from using real foreigners into recruiting locals and that that's where they were getting their main power base?

04201238: It seemed like it. I can't really prove it. Just a sense that I had that the message we had that we're not -- we're here to fight Al Qaeda, not Iraqis, resonated with a lot of people. So they would point out people as Al Qaeda even if they were Iraqis.

INTERVIEWER: Well, a lot of that might be either criminal activity or local personal vendettas.

04201238: A lot of it was. And we didn't get involved in that. And local criminal activity. People smuggling cigarettes. I didn't care about that.

INTERVIEWER: Did your guys have an understanding of what those types of networks were like beforehand?

04201238: We knew who they were.

INTERVIEWER: That the smuggling was there prior to us ever going in.

04201238: It's all part of their -- that's just their deal. The people that lived in our area were truck drivers. And so one area we made a lot of success on was getting the gas stations open and providing them with gas. I had four or five Marines wounded guarding gas stations. It was huge. It was a huge part of -- you know we shut down black market gas. And then we tracked the deliveries of gasoline into these gas stations. So when those trucks showed up I had a squad of Marines guarding the gas station. Standing there. And making sure that the price -- we had all the prices. What the -- what they were allowed to charge. It's all fixed by the central government. And we made sure that the price they paid for gas was what was allowed for that week. And we had three. I think three gas stations in our area. And there were a bunch of thugs hanging around there at first. And after a while they were -- they just disappeared.

INTERVIEWER: Earlier on you had mentioned that what was going on in Ramadi—that Sheikh Sattar maybe was not as influential as we seemed to think he was.

04201238: Well, I think he was. I mean he had -- people knew. He was like a political figure I think. Seemed like it.

INTERVIEWER: His family actually has a long history in Iraq. He's referenced (*in the literature*) as like the Lawrence of Arabia of Anbar. That his -- one of his grandfathers or something like that battled the Brits in '32. And so there's a tribal nuance. A history that was there. And I think that may have helped.

04201238: Everybody knew him. So he was known. So I think his -- I just don't know why he was doing it. I never really understood why he did it. Like I knew why Khamis was doing it. He wanted his people, his tribe, I believe that he wanted his tribe to be safe. I didn't know Sattar. I didn't know him. I just knew that everybody knew him.

INTERVIEWER: The Albu Rishas had taken a pretty big hit from Al Qaeda. They annihilated half his family. So do you have any thoughts on why he became the face of the more politicized Awakening?

04201238: Because we made him that. I think we did. Put him -- I think we put him at risk for that. For -- whereas I told Khamis just keep a low profile. I mean they'll kill you. They'll -- we saw what they did to Nassir. I mean they would have done that with anybody they could get their hands on.

INTERVIEWER: And Albu Risha paid the price. But at the same time I think, at least based on my readings, that he knew [*he'd be a target*]. And there's interviews with him on YouTube that we've listened to and he's very adamant that he knows exactly what's at stake.

04201238: Right yeah, I think they all knew. They're very -- they knew. That's how they -- I think probably the same circumstances they lived under under Saddam. Seems like it. That there was a sort of unwritten agreement. Anbar people and the --

INTERVIEWER: Prior to going into Iraq, when you were doing your predeployment training, did you get any additional cultural training or an effective IPB before going in?

04201238: What did we do? We went -- we had Mojave Viper.

INTERVIEWER: You did have Mojave Viper at that time?

04201238: Yeah. We went. It was early. It was early one. It was good. It was a kinetic focus I think. Which is what -- you know we needed to do that. That's a core competency of Marines. So you got to go out there and you got to train Marines to do combined arms. So you know whether that's Mojave Viper or combined arms exercise, whether we do it or not is irrelevant. You need to know how. And so that piece I believe needs to stay. So I wanted it as part of the battalion. Because you have lieutenants, sergeants, everybody going through that if you don't do it, if you don't teach them how to do fire support coordination, they're never going to learn it, because then they're going to be majors and staff sergeants, and they're going to be clueless. So that was half of it. And then the other half was this sort of COINish piece. And they were building that village out there.

INTERVIEWER: The Conex Buildings?

04201238: But we had a better -- when -- in [*unit removed*] we went through Stu Segall Studios down in San Diego.

INTERVIEWER: Segall Studios?

04201238: Stu Segall. He's a great guy. And he's a movie producer. And we went down to that studio before we went to Iraq. And we trained.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that?

04201238: In San Diego.

INTERVIEWER: You're the first one that's told me about this place.

04201238: Oh my God, it was unbelievable. It's the best training I've had in my entire career. They tried to replicate that out at Twentynine Palms. And they just couldn't. He's a movie producer. You know he had special effects. He had RPG rounds on wires coming at us and IEDs in the street.

INTERVIEWER: Was this like a private contract the Marine Corps had?

04201238: Yeah he was friends with somebody. We met him. Me and the battalion commander. And set it up. I guess he had done something with Colonel [*name removed*] was at SOTG out there. And he did it for a MEU. So we paid him I think $80,000, and it was worth it. It saved so many lives in that city. I couldn't -- unbelievable. But it was -- he called it hyper realistic training. And it was on a studio. Movie studio. He hired Iraqis. This was -- I mean this was -- or

this was in the summer. This was July of 2004. So it was before any of that stuff was being done. Hired Iraqi-speaking Americans. One of them was a one-legged woman. He put a fake leg on her and blew an IED. Blew her leg off with movie special effects. Blood. It was unbelievable. It was so unbelievable. And we had Marines that had been in the march up that just completely went into vapor lock. It was so realistic. It was -- everything was filmed. So the debriefs were not who shot John but let's watch this film. See what you did there. See what you did there. See what you did.

INTERVIEWER: Are those things still available now? Do Marines use those or --

04201238: Well, they tried to do it at Twentynine Palms. They tried to take that. Because it was -- it got to be very expensive.

INTERVIEWER: The debrief videos, do they use them?

04201238: My God, they were -- yeah I hope they do. That was unbelievable. But I mean you -- I'll give you Stu's number. You can call him. It was -- that is the best training, 27 years I've been a Marine. I mean I was enlisted for five years, I'm a scout sniper instructor, I've been through a lot of really good training. And it was unbelievable. It preserved lives. It taught innovation. It taught adaptation. It taught you know here's -- if you -- the thing is it was not a scenario-driven, it was an event-driven scenario that we had. So if you went down a street and you were engaging the Iraqis and you were using your terp, and you were doing the right things, you found out about the IED. Or you found out about the guy with the RPG around the corner. And then you could put together your response to that. At the time. Your response could be wrong. And you could get into a mess. But if your response was right -- so you were sort of rewarded with not having IEDs go off or not having RPGs fired at you by doing the right thing. It was really -- it was brilliant. Colonel [*name removed*], guy that's -- he's -- Brilliant tactical guy. I mean --

INTERVIEWER: In my interviews I am often told about video training called Combat Hunter. It's video-based training. I've been told Combat Hunter is pretty good. From the young enlisted- the video game generation- I am told the training is great, but from older officers they prefer to get their hands dirty and have realistic interactive training. They said that interactive training is by far the best because it really makes you think about the innovation piece, think about the problem. Something like Combat Hunter might be really useful, but it's (*training*) more about being there and getting involved.

04201238: You could use -- you can do both. What it does is it gives you this intuitive-based decision making process. So you know for me -- and I saw lots of firefights in Fallujah. I was the commander of two separate task forces for the battalion. And the first time a Marine was shot was the first time I saw someone shot for real in front of me. But I had the experience of Stu Segall Studio to fall back on the intuitive piece. And so I wasn't aah, it was OK I've seen this before. That's what that type of training allows you. The hyper realistic training. It allows your brain to say oh OK, this is what we're -- this is my training. Because there's no time to really put a lot of thought into it. You're in the middle of the firefight. So that sort of hyper realistic training allows you to fall back on your training and the responses that -- or things that you learned in that training scenario give you a reinforcement to go forward. So --

INTERVIEWER: That's incredible. I'm fascinated by this thing that the movie producer put together…

04201238: Yeah, he has movie sets, I mean -- Stu, he'll be at my change of command for TBS. He's a great guy but –

Well, I think they took a lot of what we were -- he was involved to some degree with the training venue that they developed at Twentynine Palms. And he's just -- he's got a brilliant mind for this. He thinks of things because of -- he -- because he's an artist, because he thinks of things that I wouldn't have. Wouldn't have thought. He -- I mean he put an IED in the road and put cork, pieces of cork, around it. So that you're actually hit by something. It's not going to hurt you. But you're hit by a piece of shrapnel. Now you're wounded. It's not like hey you're wounded. No, you actually feel that thing hit you. And then so there's a controller standing there saying OK you got hit, you got wounded in the face, you got wounded in the arm.

INTERVIEWER: No wonder it costs so much but that's amazing.

04201238: It was -- he had an RPG that came down this wire. I mean comes right at ya. And the special effects, the Americans that speak Arabic so you have the contact with people that aren't going to speak (*inaudible*). And you had to use your terp. I mean there's all kinds of different little pieces but we put the entire battalion through it one company at a time. Because we rotated them down there. Everybody (i*naudible*).

INTERVIEWER: -- by far the most incredible training I've heard referenced.

04201238: Yeah it was great. And that battalion, performance of that battalion. And it was kind of the brainchild of Colonel [*name removed*] and what he did.

INTERVIEWER: My final question, sir, and I am grateful that you've given me this much time, is my baseline question. What dynamics, interactions and actions used to support the Awakening Movement do you think may have global applicability? Not necessarily a model but what things do you think we might have taken from these experiences in Anbar and that we could use in other areas? If say you had a MEU that was going somewhere or even if we do fight in -- maybe we go into Africa as the next engagement. But how do you think we could use these things and make them globally applicable? And if the answer is none, then that too is important.

04201238: Well, you can -- I mean if you're talking about Phase 0 engagement activities.

INTERVIEWER: No, I'm talking about any engagements. Where insurgencies exist. So if we're looking at counterinsurgency operations, but it doesn't necessarily have to be inclusively COIN. So what lessons from Anbar do you think are globally applicable?

04201238: Well, what I would take away from my own experience is that the reactive counterinsurgency mindset is one we should abandon. And the best way to beat an insurgency is to go in and kind of start your own, which was the philosophy that I think we used in the Habbaniyah area which was don't worry about the enemy. The enemy wants you to react to them. They want you to you know shoot in all directions when an IED goes off, they want you to kill civilians, they want you to make people feel afraid of you. And so the ability to understand the situation through the people's eyes is the skill that we need to -- and then how do you then shape the environment to your advantage, thoughtful process, that doesn't involve throwing money at people and doing all sorts of things that I guess don't really build respectful relationship.

So I would fall back on you know like I said the professional selling skills that I took from recruiting duty and just leadership. I don't know that you could go into the middle of an insurgency as -- I mean as a peacekeeping force? That

what you're talking about? And try to solve it. I mean I don't believe that's something that this country should pursue. I think that the Marine Corps could be a very good force using our experience from Iraq and even Afghanistan in -- regionally. Having regional expertise at Phase 0 and going in there and building relationships with different nations. Military-to-military training. And then learning those languages and learning that culture and understanding that culture. And then using that interaction as a way to fortify alliances. That I think is something we can take our experience from Iraq and kind of bring forward the necessity of language. Different language other than English. The ability to make the problems of those people your central effort. Not to kind of make them solutions to your problem. My sense in 2004 was that the people were in a state of denial that the insurgency was even happening.

INTERVIEWER: When you say the people, the Iraqi people or the Marines?

04201238: No, the leaders. I mean not the Marines. I think that we had a pretty good idea that this thing was going on. That there was something happening in that country that was an insurgency type thing. But they're not -- I mean they're -- I don't know that any of them are exactly the same. And you don't really win them either. You just kind of stop fighting. I mean what's the definition of victory from Iraq? I mean I never really saw one.

INTERVIEWER: A lot of the literature actually suggests that Anbar, the Anbar Awakening, is the pinnacle of victory in Iraq.

04201238: But what did we gain? I mean we --

INTERVIEWER: Temporary stability.

04201238: But they could have -- we could have done that at the beginning. We could have said your police force is going to stay in place, your army is going to stay in place, and I mean we remove civil and military order from the country and then the whole place goes into chaos.

INTERVIEWER: A lot of political leaders I think at the time didn't necessarily understand the culture or what -- I don't think that they necessarily understood COA development. And they didn't look at the second and third order effects of their decisions prior to making them. And whether or not the CPA had an understanding of what they were about to do I'm not necessarily sure. But you're right. Setting those conditions by disbanding the military was...

04201238: But I don't believe you win a counterinsurgency. You just don't lose. And there's a difference there. And again people want to try to apply a victory stamp. But there's no victory.

INTERVIEWER: The idea of winning a counterinsurgency though, isn't that to get the population to buy into the GOI in this particular case? And to actually start supporting their own government as opposed to the objectives of the insurgency?

04201238: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Now whether or not we have Iraqis who actually have done that I would argue. I'm not exactly sure that the effectiveness that we achieved, the strategies, the goals, the wins, success that we achieved in 2006 and 2007 really stabilized Iraq so that they were successful in 2008, 2009… 2012. I mean we're seeing a lot of instability, but at least the

police force is still in place. The Iraqi Army is still in place. They're still an effective force. So maybe the win here is that we trained an effective police and military.

04201238: Right. That's really what we focused on, to get the balance of security forces up to a certain percentage and then the violence magically stops.

INTERVIEWER: So maybe that's the measure of effectiveness. Maybe that's the win that is being referenced as opposed to creating a stable democracy.

04201238: Yeah I don't -- I mean I don't -- the Iraqi people will decide what sort of government and what sort of life they want to live. I never really felt like we were a part of that. I think I always said it's up to them to decide on their own what sort of life they want for their kids and their grandchildren just like our founding fathers decided that for us. We have a Constitution and our way of -- that Constitution I wouldn't recommend the Iraqis adopting it. I'm not sure that it would work for them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any final thoughts or any final things that you'd like to say about your experience in Anbar? At least as it would pertain to this project even if it's suggestions on where I should go with this information. Is there additional avenues that I should look at?

04201238: Well, I think the main thing I would say about the so-called Awakening was that -- to point out that it was a team effort that was over several years of just people working pieces you know, thin -- it's like putting a roast beef on one of those slicers. You know you're just slicing off a little piece every time. And it was an effort. We did detailed reliefs in place. I mean we talked to each other as we came back. I mean as battalion commanders rotated back from Iraq you would meet with the guys that were going over there. And you would say here's what's going on. Here's what we did. Here's what worked. Here's what didn't work. And that -- to me that's a huge collective effort you know from the battalion to the regiment to the division, the MEF, I mean that -- in Anbar I mean that was a huge piece. And to somehow claim that one person came in and just suddenly made the -- convinced the Iraqi -- because the Awakening was really about the Iraqi people stepping up to the plate, you know, joining the police and joining the army and provide security. And that was a three-, four-year effort of just hey, just do this. We'll take -- you know we'll -- we're going to take care of this problem. Take care of that problem. But you guys got to work these other problems yourselves. And I think that you know any counterinsurgency is a squad leader's fight. And I guess the unsung heroes of -- if I would credit anybody with creating the Awakening that's an American it would be those sergeant, those corporals, those -- I had a lot of lance corporal squad leaders you know, 18-, 19-year-old young men, doing amazing work up there that they just they're not equipped for. They're --- They don't have the life experience. They don't have the years of experience of being in the Marine Corps. They -- some of them, two, three years in the Marine Corps, that's it. Now they're out there in a patrol base you know dealing with a population that doesn't speak Arabic, no interpreter, that to me is a true -- is unbelievable that we succeeded.

INTERVIEWER: But if our focus now is the "Strategic Corporal" or the "Ambassador Private". -- And we're saying that it's a primary focus and we're going to train these corps, how do we do that? I mean you have 18- and 19-year-old men who are going out, and they're the ones that the Iraqis interact with and they're the ones that are the face of the Marine Corps…

04201238: We need to treat the squad leader position like the professional experienced infantryman's position that it is. And you need to train them to be squad leaders.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think our training currently is effective enough for that?

04201238: I didn't have sergeant squad leaders. I mean the -- most of my squad leaders were corporals and lance corporals. So I think we have a good program to teach Marines how to be squad leaders. And a lot of that is on-the-job experience which is value -- I was an infantry squad leader as a corporal. And that's how you learn it. It just takes a lot of time. I think that General Dunford in particular is looking at -- I think the Marine Corps is looking at a better way to do it. And it involves kind of keeping those Marines -- educating and training those Marines better to lead them up to get in that position and really holding that squad leader position up as the key billet. Which it is. And it's not the strategic corporal or strategic sergeant. It's the -- it's that last line of defense for the honor of the nation. I mean right there that squad leader can stop all the bullshit. All the jackassery can stop right there. That man, that woman, has the power to do that. Just tell them. Knock it off. They stop. They respect you. They trust you. And I think you need to have a mature individual who's selected to be in that position. Or you get what you get. And then you have to make up for it through your officers and through your staff NCOs and reinforcing the young lance corporal, who in my mind did a phenomenal job in our area at the time that we were there. They were you know heroes. I mean I worship the ground they walk on because they had an impossible task every day and they went out and just tried to do it every day.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that if we boosted -- you mentioned language training. But if we boosted language training or boosted cultural training that we could --

04201238: Just educate enlisted Marines better. I mean we do a great job of educating our officers. You know let's educate these enlisted men. Let's provide them with an avenue to get you know a bachelor's degree. Let's provide them with an avenue to be -- to have an opportunity to get better education. And they do. They get GI Bill.

I mean I'm not criticizing the system. I think the system is good. I mean I went through it. I went to college as a sergeant. I mean -- But I'm an officer, I'm not a squad leader now. And the -- when I was a squad leader I mean I didn't know what I didn't know. And it seemed like I would have been a good squad leader when I was a lieutenant graduated from the Basic School. I would have been a great squad leader. That's a -- you know so there are people in an infantry unit that know how to be squad leaders very well. But it isn't always the squad leader. So the problem to solve, which is a hard problem, is how do we do that better. It's never going to be perfect. But can we do a better job, you know.

Most of what I had working for me on recruiting duty were sergeants. And a lot of those sergeants were infantry sergeants. And they're not in the infantry because they're on recruiting duty. So there are other places where we need these people. But I think you know -- and then when you get back to the fleet, now you're a staff sergeant. So maybe the billet needs to be a staff sergeant's billet. You know maybe you need to -- in order to meet all the requirements of the Marine Corps you know maybe the rank requirements for the billets needs to be increased so that you have a more mature, better educated young man or woman in the position, that maybe they're better prepared for it. And you know they don't make that many mistakes now. I mean out of all the opportunities they have to really do horrible things, they 99.9% of the time choose to do the right thing. I think that speaks highly of our society. The way we prepare people to -- And then in the Marine Corps our selection of bringing people into the Marine Corps. We pick a small percentage and we screen them out for all kinds of stuff that would make them you know not suitable for the job.

But I think I still believe -- I've always believed the backbone of the Marine Corps is the NCO, the noncommissioned officer, corporal and sergeant. Because they are the last -- I mean they make everything work. They figure it out. They take the hard problems and put them in. Behind the Awakening is that squad leader. Figuring it out every day. Just grinding it out. And all the stuff that we put in place, all the things that the officers put in place in that battalion, those squad leaders have to make sure that every member of their squad understood all of it before they stepped out on patrol. And that's a hard job. And I just -- I'm not sure that -- you know if I was going to write an article about the Awakening it would be about those squad leaders.

INTERVIEWER: They don't get nearly as much press I guess.

04201238: Because that's who the Iraqi people fell in love with were those young Marines. You know they saw me. They saw you know Colonel MacFarland. They saw us occasionally. But the people in general saw those young Marines every single day. And looked at them and judged them every single day. And said yeah we want those guys.

INTERVIEWER: And they left an indelible impression. When I was there in 2008 and 2009 going up north into AO Tripoli. I mean the people that were up there were like we know these Marines. We've heard about you. And the overall overwhelming message was that they were straight dealers. And they were trustworthy. So the -- what happened from Anbar, that resonated up into Ninawa. And I think that that was very powerful. So you're right. And I appreciate that message. If there's anything else that you'd like to add to contribute to the project, you have my contact information.

04201238: Yeah. I wrote a paper when I was at Harvard. And I wrote a paper about what we did as part of a larger paper I wrote with [*name removed*] and an Air Force Special Forces colonel named [*name removed*]. I can get that to you. It's pretty long. But a lot of what I'm talking about about our methodology for the battalion, the things I pushed down to these squad leaders to do, the things that we came up with as a team in [*unit removed*] to implement ahead of time, is in that paper. I talk about some of the shortfalls. The terps and how we overcame that by getting Iraqis to come patrol with us and -- Iraqi soldiers. You know hey, you're not terps, but these guys speak Arabic. So we won't know what they're saying. But at least they can speak Arabic. So it was a fallback. And in that is the virtue ethics card. And I talk about how we implemented that. And then our -- I called it vision for success. But the vision. I believe maneuver warfare is centralized vision, decentralized planning and execution. And so a lot of people think it's centralized planning, decentralized execution. But it's really the vision that needs to be centralized. Like here's the vision. So I try to simplify the vision into this pillar thing where we had the overarching pillar and then three pillars underneath it. They're subordinate. So that the Marines could look at that. And I could talk to them about that instead of lecturing them.

INTERVIEWER: And you said you based that on a Roman model. So it was the idea of using history.

04201238: Yeah, well at the time the movie Gladiator was popular. So the -- one of the first talks I gave the battalion, I said you know you can look at our mission in the same way that the gladiator Maximus, he's in the -- you know he's in the coliseum. And he says I don't know what's going to come out of that door. But whatever does, we'll fare a lot better if we all stick together, fight together. So that's why -- I used that theme like this is -- you know we don't know what we're going to see really. We just think we do. But we might get it wrong. If we get it wrong then we got to stick together. Even if we get it right we got to stick together. We got to fight together. So everybody has to be doing the same thing. Everybody has to be saying the same message. So one tribe, one voice, same message. If you don't agree with the message, you got to tell me why. You got to give me an opportunity to explain to you why we're

doing this. And I don't care what your rank is. You're private or major, whatever. You know you can raise your hand and call bullshit on me any time you want. And make me explain to you so that you understand it what we're trying to do. I got a lot of resistance to the virtue ethics piece. And they didn't understand it. And they're young and I got that. So I expected to have to work through that. And then we had the -- so strength and honor is what we did. So our motto was strength and honor. So we you know did that. And so that was kind of a good theme. All of our operations were Roman. So we had Operation Rubicon. We had Operation Mars' Lance, which was hastae Martis, it was a festival that the Romans did in March to cleanse the spears in the river.

INTERVIEWER: So you really tapped into that idea for your warrior ethos and --

04201238: Right. So yeah so I tried to build this -- you know it was we're the Roman legion. That's where we are. Like it or not. We're over here fighting insurgency against our country. And somehow connected that to that. So here's what we're doing. So this is the -- kind of the central theme was that. And then we tied the virtue ethics piece into it. And I tied it to the Constitution and their oath of office. So everything was -- I tried to bring everything to the -- I mean I swore to uphold and defend the Constitution. Here's how you're doing it. Here's how your -- don't -- I don't care what people are saying, pundits in the press, whatever. Here's how we're going to uphold our end of the bargain. And you have to do this. And it's about being a representative of these four virtues.

INTERVIEWER: Well, sir, I thank you very much.

END OF AUDIO

Interview 13: 04201239

Interview 04201239, 04 June 2012

INTERVIEWER: It's June 4th, and I am speaking with 04201239. Sir, you've received the informed consent form and you've responded to it. Do you have any questions or concerns at this time?

04201239: I do not.

INTERVIEWER: OK. If we get into anything that's classified we have to stop and initiate security protocols. With us, it's going to be the TECOM security protocols, but I don't think anything we're going to discuss will be classified today. If, at any point, you wish to contact me and have portions of this interview redacted, let me know. You're in complete control of the information you provide. OK?

04201239: OK.

INTERVIEWER: If you could start with where you were in Anbar, and during what time period of your deployment you were there, or multiple deployments, for that matter.

04201239: OK. I went back to Iraq after OIF1; I was part of I MEF in OIF1. I went back to Iraq with first Marine division at Camp Blue Diamond in Ramadi in February of 2004, when we, with the main body, first element of the main body that rolled back in to takeover from the 82nd Airborne in Al Anbar. And then I stayed with the division until June of 2004, at which point I was pulled up to the MEF to be the acting G-2, because the MEF G-2 got med-evac'd out of the country. And then I stayed at the MEF until November of 2004, at which point I redeployed just prior to the second battle of Fallujah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you go back for another deployment, or was –

04201239: Not to Iraq. That was my final one to Iraq.

INTERVIEWER: OK. There were some things that you wanted to start off with initially with this discussion, so I'm going to let you launch into that.

04201239: All right. (Pause.) When we first got back into Iraq, to take over from the 82nd Airborne, we were going in with a lot of preconceived notions that we had received from the 82nd Airborne and their intelligence section, what the conditions were going to be like when we got to Al Anbar. And we knew from the press reports, the open source reports, that Al Anbar was the most violent place in Iraq at the time, which was why they decided to send us back there, because initially, when they told us -- we redeployed in 2003, thought we were done with the war, and we were going to get back to being a regular Marine Corps going on WESTPAK and doing UDPs to Okinawa, and we hadn't been back more than two months, we're told, "Nope, you're going back to Iraq instead. IMEF is going back, and this time it'll be for a year." Course, most of us had already been gone for almost a year already, with the previous 2002 deployment that we'd sat in Kuwait, but so now we're going back for another year in Iraq, and we understood Southern Iraq very well.

You know, we'd occupied it for many months after the initial march up to Baghdad, and so a lot of that fueled our expectations of what we were going to get into in Al Anbar. 'cause we just didn't know the Sunnis and the differences between Sunnis and Shias. We knew what you could read; you know, we knew the origins of the split in religions; we understood the issues with Imam Ali and Imam Hussein, and the plane to Karbala and all the things that had happened there. But we really didn't understand the dynamics of the cultural differences between Sunni Iraqi Arabs and Shia Iraqi Arabs, as opposed to Sunni Kuwaiti Saudi Arabs. For example, I've spent plenty of time working with Kuwaitis and Saudis and other Arabs of -- Sunni Arabs are the desert Arabs -- didn't realize that Iraqi Shias were going to be so different than the Sunni -- than the Arabs I dealt with. I mean just a completely different society and culture, and now we're going into the Sunni part of Iraq, so at least this time we realized, we knew we didn't know it. Whereas we didn't go in with a lot of expectations, like we did first when we went into OIF1. So now we knew we didn't understand this environment. We knew that some of the things we had learned in the South were going to be applicable, but we didn't know which ones of those things.

So we took a lot of what the 82nd Airborne was telling us about the conditions there, and you know, layered them on top of what we understood about Shia Iraq, and thought we had set a pretty good foundation on which to plan when we, for operations when we went back to Iraq and Al Anbar this time. One of the things that I wanted to bring out was how fortunate we were that General Gray, back when he was a Commandant, changed the entire paradigm of the way the Marine Corps operates. We switched from what had become a very Cold War, army-like formation of two battalions up, and one back, everything was pretty much a frontal assault. We paid lip-service to the idea of envelopments; everything ended up being straight up to the objective, "hit the enemy right on his frontage and crush him."

And General Gray came in with his maneuver warfare philosophy and he turned everything on its head. And, for me, I was a Lieutenant then, it was a complete, it was my own awakening of how different warfare could be, because I just hadn't even thought of anything like this, because I wasn't educated at it. What that inspired in us, as junior officers, was this sense of independence -- the requirement that we would understand our higher headquarters, understand what the units on our flanks were doing, so that when we went into the fight, knowing full well that whatever we planned was not going to work, because no plan ever survives the first round -- knowing that it wasn't going to work, be ready to change immediately as soon as you found out something wasn't happening that needed to happen. And so as a result, when we went into Al Anbar, I think from the top to the bottom, we all knew that the plan really wasn't going to work. The plan was the plan, and you have to plan-- so you've got something to go on, but everybody expected that we were going to change and change a lot from day one, and so when we got there and things started morphing in completely different ways than we expected, it wasn't that big a deal. We just adjusted to it and everybody continued to march, and General Mattis gave new orders and just, well, moved with it.

A lot of what happened in 2004, of course, was set up by what we did in 2003, and one point that is completely missed in most of the history accounts, in fact, almost all of them -- I don't know that I've ever read anything about this in any publications; it gets back to how Marines ought to write and we don't -- but in 2003 in June in MEF I, we had planned to hold elections in, I think it was Najaf, I'm not sure which city, but it was one of the southern cities, I think it was Najaf, and we were going to hold local elections because we needed to get the water running, we needed to get the electricity, we needed to get the telephone system working.

You know, I'd been out and I'd talked to the guy who runs the telephone system in Hillah, and he got his local service working, but he couldn't get the long-distance working. There's no government to make this stuff happen, and so the big focus of MEF I is to get the local governments up and running, so we'd get the police force rehired and get all these things happening that needed to function for the citizens, so that they got the services they needed. Because we as Marines, we knew we couldn't be everywhere and do everything, there weren't enough of us. It had to be local government doing it. The only way you can get local government to do it is by having someone in charge who can then hire people to actually go out and turn the water on, turn the sewage on. That meant we needed to have elections very rapidly, because we didn't know who to appoint. You know, we couldn't tell the difference between a good guy and a bad guy -- everybody who was anybody was a Ba'athist, so they all looked bad to us. And we knew that wasn't right, some of them were actually pretty good people, but we figured the locals could figure it out in an election.

So in 2003, in June, we'd planned to have elections, and to the point where the candidates had already run, posters were all over town, local ballots had been printed, polling stations were designated. Everything was set to have this election and then, somehow -- although we had sent up all of our operational plans into Baghdad, to what then was the CJSOTF -- although they had seen it all, it hadn't ever floated up to the leadership, and ten days before the election, the leadership in Baghdad decided that they were going to cancel it. And Ambassador Bremer said, "No one is going to have elections in this country until I hold a presidential election," and we were just stunned. And this followed, first a CPA order one of demobilizing the military, disestablishing the military. CPA order number two, which was the DeBa'athification Policy. And now he cancelled the local elections, which the people in all of southern Iraq were looking at as proof that the Americans were not here to take over, that they weren't going to put us in charge, and he cancelled them.

And because of that, the ill will that that engendered among the Shia, we never got it back -- it really, that was quite a bit of the impetus behind Muqtada al-Sadr and why he was able to gain traction, because it proved everything that he was saying.

That happened in June of 2003, so now as you fast forward into 2004. We landed in Al Anbar and it turns out it's nothing like we expected. The reason that the violence has gone down in a lot of places was because the 82nd Airborne didn't go there anymore, and they had colored a lot of the roads as non-trafficable, and no one was allowed to drive through them. And so, consequently, if you don't drive through a bad neighborhood, you don't get shot at! Course, that means the insurgents are in charge, and they're running entire cities like Fallujah, because the 82nd didn't go to Fallujah, they just drove around it. They didn't drive through Ramadi, they didn't patrol in Ramadi, they'd drive through, windows rolled up, as fast as they could from point to point, from base to base, but they didn't actually patrol. They never got off on the side streets, they absolutely never got out of their vehicles. And so, as a result, as soon as we took over, and we started dismounting, we started driving down the side streets, and we started trying to make contact with the locals, then we immediately just -- it was a kick in the hornet's nest, you know? We turned over a rock.

INTERVIEWER: Did the 82nd have the same number of forces as the Marines going in?

04201239: They -- not for the whole province, they did not, and the Third Armory Cavalry Regiment was out in the desert which was -- they had their Bradley fighting vehicles, and things that a CAV Regiment has, but they didn't have a whole lot of troops. And so out in the, out in the desert there were [*unit removed*] Marines that had taken over when

we stepped in. They were really, really thin, thinly manned. In the city of Ramadi, they had, I'm not sure how many forces they actually had in the city of Ramadi, but they -- we came in with something of a plus-up, because we had, I'm trying to think, do we had-- we had two Marine regiments and an army brigade. The army brigade was in Ramadi, they were our element in Ramadi, and then the two Marine regiments were our other Marine forces, one out in the desert and one in, operating out of Camp Fallujah with his headquarters and then battalions in places like Camp Ubu Ku'ram (*unsure of spelling*). So I can't blame the 82nd, I'm not saying they were doing everything wrong, I mean, they were there, they were doing what they were supposed to do -- just as a side note, to skip forward six months.

When I briefed General Abizade and I got done with my NCO (*unclear audio*) brief as the G-2, and he looked at me and he said, "You just don't get it." Then he looked at General Conway, he said, "You're a holding action. This is an economy of force operation out here. We don't expect you to win Al Anbar." And that, you could have heard a pin drop in the room because the idea that Marines were going in as a holding action had just never, ever occurred to us, because we were there to win the counterinsurgency. In fact, I was looking at my watch and saying, "I got about four months left; this thing needs to be over." You know, even though we all said, "Yeah, we know it's going to last us -- the average insurgency lasts eight years," and all that. We didn't really believe it; we thought we were going to be able to nip this thing in the bud when we rolled in there, just like we had in the South. We were going to nip this thing in the bud and it was going to get fixed pretty rapidly. Although if I, if you listen to what I said, I always said, "Oh yes, insurgencies last for years."

I didn't really, in my heart, internalize it until that moment, and I realized we're just not going to be allowed to do the things we need to do. Because they're seeing us as a holding action. So that kind of characterizes what ended up happening when we got there. The, our plan for Fallujah was a whole lot of civil military operations, and this is, I think this is pretty well-documented. At one point, General Mattis actually said, "I want to, I want to be able to look in f-- stand at the end of Fallujah, I want to be able to look in front of me and see all the -- " I can't remember how he said, " -- the nastiness that Fallujah is, with potholes and broken windows and unpainted buildings, and then I want to be able to see the garbage on the streets -- " 'cause there's garbage all over Fallujah, " -- and then I want to be able to turn around and see where the Marines have been. And I want to see painted buildings and freshly-paved streets, and flower pots lining the road. Now are there any questions about my intent." (Laughs.) "OK, we got it, General." And, you know, so, "we can make this happen."

And so that was how we went in there with this expectation that we were going to go in -- we had hotly debated how we were going to fight the insurgency. You know, were we going to try and seal off the borders and then work our way in to deal with the internal insurgents? Were we going to go to the outer reaches of the desert and work with the distant tribes, and in places like Al Qaim and Rutbah and things like that, and get those pacified and then worry about Ramadi and Fallujah? Or maybe we should go straight into Ramadi or Fallujah or both of them, those being the important pieces of Al Anbar. Ramadi being the center of gravity, the governance capital. Maybe we need to start there, and really pacify Ramadi and then worry about Fallujah.

And the decision was, and it was General Mattis's decision, I assume you talked to General Conway on it, but I wasn't at the MEF at the time -- General Mattis's decision, "We going to go into Fallujah. And we were going to go in there, instead of fighting, we're going to go in there with civil military operations to show them, 'You have no better friend and no worse enemy than U.S. Marines, and if you're going to be our friend, you're going to get power, water, sewage,

education for your kids, medical care, your streets are going to get fixed, somebody's going to pick up your garbage every week,'" you know, "'you're going to start living a real life, and start moving ahead economically, moving ahead with your family. If you're not going to be our friend, then you're not going to get any of our benefits, and we're going to go, you know, clear Fallujah, one neighborhood at a time.'" And we're just going to work through, neighborhood by neighborhood, and all the neighborhoods that are going to work with us are going to get all the benefits of having Marines providing for their security and then they can take care of their economic advancement. All the neighborhoods that wouldn't play ball with us would get nothing. And it would pretty soon be obvious who, who, where people who wanted to live. That was our plan.

INTERVIEWER: Did he intentionally choose Fallujah as the biggest, the biggest bite he could take, I guess?

04201239: Fallujah being the biggest problem. Fallujah, I one time described it to him as: Fallujah was the Mos Eisley spaceport for Iraq (*reference to Star Wars*). It was where, for thousands of years, all of the smugglers and criminals and drug dealers and all would flow into Iraq across the desert and they'd stop in Fallujah. Their goods would get bought and sold, they'd get repackaged, they'd get turned into legitimate goods, then they'd get shipped into Baghdad and other cities for resale, as if they were legitimate trading goods. Cigarette smugglers, everybody, everything comes into -- used to come in to Fallujah, and that was where it got legitimized, and the money got laundered, and everything else, then the smugglers would leave, and the actual businessmen would take it from there. That was the big handoff place, was Fallujah, and they've been doing it in Fallujah for thousands of years.

Didn't used to be at Ramadi; Ramadi was an invented city by one of the Iraq regimes who needed a capital in Al Anbar, but Fallujah was the biggest city. You can't have Fallujah as a capital! I mean Fallujah is the smuggler's haven, so they need some place that they could have a capital in Al Anbar that was actually a decent city, so they chose this little nothing of a town, Ramadi, and turned it into the capital city. So that's why you kind of have these two competing power brokers in Al Anbar, with the economic power broker of the city of Fallujah, and then the governance coming out of the city of Ramadi.

And yes, all that stuff was known to us before we went over, because we dug into this because we knew we needed to understand the dynamics there. How well-understood amongst the division, I don't know. One of the things we did that was just absolutely critical to that first division deployment to Al Anbar was -- General Mattis pulled us out of our jobs and sat us down in the auditorium, and we went through, was it?, Four days worth of classes on Arabs, Iraq, Sunni-- the Sunni religion, all these different layers of things, how things got to their point Iraq that it was with what happened before Saddam, what happened during Saddam, what's happened since then with the 82nd Airborne. And we brought in a whole bunch of different guest speakers who spoke to us about a number of different things, including a Dr. Salmoni, I think he was one of the anthropologists at CAOCL, and so all these folks came in, Bing West came in and talked about combined action platoons in Vietnam and how they partnered with the local Vietnamese to drive out the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese rebels, or North Vietnamese army. All those things.

And so we went into Iraq with our heads full of what had worked in the past, with the intent that we wanted to make those kinds of things happen again. And what was, and just as a side note, one of the things we did not do, was for the second round of folks that came out, they never got that kind of a baseline education. And we really tripped up there for a while. At six-month-out, we rotated quite a few people from our headquarters' elements. Headquarters are

supposed to stay for a year, but internally, we swap people in and out, and so we got a bunch of MEF 3 folks in, some folks from Camp Lejeune who took over for folks in MEF I, for example, and by that time, I was up at the MEF I as the acting G-2, and the new officers I got in were just completely ignorant of Iraq, Arabs, the difference between a Sunni and a Shia. And they literally couldn't find Ramadi on a map. Some of them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know why they didn't get that training?

04201239: There was -- training did not exist. The only reason we got it was because General Mattis and General Conway decided we needed it. And most of us had been at deployment, and probably 90-some% of us had been in OIF I, and so we were actually coming back for our second round. And so our understanding of Iraqi culture, even though it was based on Shias, was still light-years ahead of where it had been the previous year before we deployed. And so now we get the new crop of guys coming in to, to rotate out, and we suffered a huge slump. And I don't know how much training the infantry battalions got at that time. You know, quite a bit of our training was -- at that time, it was thought that you would deploy over and you would stop in Kuwait, and you would spend a week in Kuwait driving around and practicing immediate action drills for near ambush and far ambush and IED and, you know -- I did it, too, before I went up to Ramadi, before I drove up there. So you know, I knew what they were going through, and it has absolutely nothing to do with dealing with the culture or anything like that. It was everything to do with basic Marine infantry skills. So we had, we suffered a real slump with that second round of folks who came in, second round in our understanding of what was going on. And that certainly contributed to some of the things that we did not do as well as we should have in the second battle of Fallujah and stuff like that during that time period. But I probably ought to get back to the first appointment.

So we get back in and now we're going to take over from the 82nd Airborne. One of the things that we'd been talking about a lot, and I don't know where I picked it up, whether I got it from General Mattis or I, somebody put the idea in my head -- we talked about driving a wedge, we wanted to drive a wedge between, and we'd say, "Drive a wedge between the populace and the insurgency," we want to separate those two, so that the good people are on one side, allied with us, and the bad people, who want to fight us, are on the other side. And this is probably the biggest counterinsurgency lesson that I learned when I was over there, and it came as a very hard pill for me to swallow because I had been preaching this "drive the wedge" for so long. The wedge does not get driven between the populace and the insurgents; you can't, they are one and the same. The same guy is a good guy today is a bad guy tonight is a good guy again tomorrow. The same guy that will help you one day will shoot you the next day -- or maybe just help his friend who's shooting you. And so you can't drive a wedge between the populace and the insurgency.

The wedge gets driven between elements of the insurgency. Every insurgency that I've ever studied is a coalition of people who are fighting against something. The only thing that holds them together is that they are fighting against something. Once that something is gone, they turn on each other and start fighting themselves, unless it's an exceptionally powerful leader in charge of that insurgency, which is very rarely the case. And in Iraq that was certainly not the case, and we knew it going in there. There were so many different elements of the insurgency -- even the Ba'athists themselves couldn't get along; each one of them was trying to out-compete the other one at the same time he was trying to, they were trying to enable each other, they were also competing against each other. And then you had other elements of Sunni radicals and foreign elements and the Zarqawi. And before he stood up, the -- and Al-Qaeda and Iraq, and all those different elements, they're all fighting against each other as much as they're fighting against us.

INTERVIEWER: Did you still have that heavy criminal element that was in there as well?

04201239: Huge criminal element, yeah. I remember sitting in Kuwait and getting the report that Saddam had opened up all the jails, and we thought, "Wow, what a counterproductive thing for him to do!" (Laughs.) Not at all understanding his intent behind that thing. I remember the report that we got that Saddam had, before we attacked in -- must have been about January -- he had opened all the passport offices and handed out the passports. We though, "Well, that's a weird thing to do. Why would people want passports?" What I know now is, it was a translation problem: he didn't hand out passports, he handed out those pink ID cards, the Iraqi ID cards. He had opened up ID offices, not passport offices, and he had passed out the ID cards to his Saddam Fedayeen in stacks of thousands, so that they could then create identities for their people, and when the foreign fighters started flying in, we started finding all these blank pink ID cards. That's what got handed out, not passports, but at the time, of course, it made no sense. Why would you hand out passports?

You know, another important piece is, the whole insurgency got planned well before we ever attacked, and we just didn't understand what we were reading in our intelligence reports. We just didn't get it; didn't put two and two together. And even if we had, I don't know that we would have necessarily applied the proper weight to it. And we had all the reports of what all the Fedayeen, and what the Fedayeen were doing, and how they were preparing to fight in the rear areas and stuff when came in. We knew this was going to happen. We didn't understand what form it was going to take, and to a large extent, we did exactly what we should when we rolled in in OIF I, because the Saddam Fedayeen attacks in the rear area never materialized! We prevented them from doing it. Because of our operations, they were unable to do all the things that they were supposedly trying to do before we attacked. What we didn't understand was that, a year, year and a half, two years later was when they actually planned to run this ins-- when the insurgency was going to take hold.

It was that first year when we had that -- we had that first year that we could've stamped it out if we'd have done a number of different things, and we, the U.S. policy, the way we did the post-fight ensured that we would have the insurgency. Because even the people that didn't want to be insurgents turned into insurgents in a lot of cases because of the things that happened. But we had that year there where we could have stamped it out, because the planned insurgency that Saddam wanted to do just didn't take hold, and -- but that's another topic.

So to get back to where we are at Al Anbar: "driving the wedge." The wedge ge-- you have to focus on operations that will drive the wedge between elements of the insurgency. And that was what was ultimately successful, and we recognized that finally, towards the end of 2004, is that we were driving the wedge in the wrong place. Had a conversation with Colonel [*name removed*], who was a former 11th Marines Commander for a time, with MEF G3, and things like that. And he and I talked about how this fits exactly into Clausewitz. Clausewitz says, "I love to fight a coalition, because all I have to do is divide the coalition and I win. Because if they could defeat me individually, they would, but they have to band together to defeat me. So if I can divide them, I will win." And you know, once this epiphany happened, then a bunch of us started trying to shift the operations and preach the new dogma of "Quit trying to drive the wedge between the populace; all you're doing is making people upset. Drive that wedge between the different elements of the insurgency. Figure out which element of the insurgency is operating there, and which is operating next to it, and find ways to make them hate each other more." And that, I think that's really what the Al Anbar Awakening showed.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. With the coalition, were they effective, do you think, in ways of breaking apart aspects of the insurgent coalition?

04201239: There were pieces of it that were working very well. We weren't able to get a log to traction, and again, I'm going to point a finger at Baghdad and the headquarters in Baghdad, Ambassador Bremer, General Casey's headquarters up there, General Sanchez initially -- because what ended up happening was, we started on this new track, and people started getting the idea of finding the elements, the different pieces of the insurgency, driving them apart, driving those wedges between them. And one of the things we did that had not received much press, was...the civil affairs group put together a -- I don't know what you call it, an economic summit? -- they took a bunch of Iraqi businessmen from Al Anbar, we loaded them up on C130s and we flew them down to, I think it was Bahrain.

INTERVIEWER: OK. I've heard of a -- there was a meeting in Bahrain, and then later on in Amman. There was actually several that were in Amman, Jordan.

04201239: Yeah, yeah. The first one was in Bahrain, so went down to Bahrain and it was, like it was intended to be, it was this huge awakening for the Iraqi businessmen of, the rest of the Arab world has run away with civilization without you. Under Saddam, you got left behind. And so for a lot of these guys who'd never left Iraq, they just couldn't believe that another Arab country could be so advanced. And we heard that repeatedly from a number of these Iraqi leaders, you know, lamenting that Baghdad used to be the center of civilization of the world. And it certainly was the center of civilization of the Arab society, and obviously Turkey. But for many, many years, even in modern times -- and then, the last, the previous decades, the previous century, Baghdad had really fallen off to just being a backwater, and Saddam had completely ruined the country. And so there's a huge amount of anger coming out of Bahrain against Saddam, against the Ba'athists, against everything bad that had happened in Iraq. And they had gone down there and they had met all these Egyptian, and Jordanian, and Saudi businessmen who wanted to invest in Iraq, because they saw a huge opportunity to make a lot of money for their companies, if they could just quit -- get Iraqis to quit shooting.

And so I came out of there with high hopes, but the big significant thing that happened down there was, the civil affairs group Commander was approached by a man who slipped him a note and said, "Meet me tonight in my hotel room; we have things we need to discuss." Kind of thing -- kind of this enticing little note, and of course everybody was a little bit worried, was this a setup? But you know, it's in a legitimate hotel and, yeah, nobody's just going to shoot somebody in a hotel. That'd be kind of counterproductive. So he went there with a number of other people, and it turned out he sat down with a particular element of the insurgency that I won't name right now, because I'm not sure if that piece would still be classified, and I'd hate for some Iraqis to get in trouble for this.

But he sat down with these, a number of Iraqi men, and they said, "We represent this particular element of the insurgency," they had a name, they said, "We have 12 demands that we want to issue you, and in return for these demands, we will have a cease fire." And we were like, "Wow, this is, OK, show us your demands." And the demands were things like, and I wrote a few of them down here so I could remember them. The demands were -- almost every one of them exactly what we wanted them to do. It was things like, "Quit calling us terrorists; let us run our own cities, we don't want you governing our cities; let us run our own economy; let us run our own legal system; let us provide for our own security -- " and, you know, there were 12 things like that. And we were like, "Wow, this is exactly what we're telling you we want you to do!" You know. "We want you to run your own economy. We don't know anything about

running economies; we're Marines!" You know? "We're not making any money out of this; we want to turn it over to you!"

INTERVIEWER: So thought that you were straight-out occupiers, and they wanted the same things you did

04201239: Exactly. For the previous year, it had been two ships passing in the night, with the U.S. saying "We want this," and the Iraqis saying, "We want the same thing." And now we finally, finally came together with these guys, and so everybody came out of there very excited that, "hey, here's the way forward. Here's how to stop the insurgency in its tracks. We get these guys on board, and they will be able to control their own people." Because everybody in Anbar belongs to a tribe and a clan and all the rest of that, and these are the men at the top of that. Unfortunately, there were two reasons why it didn't work: one is, this organization was not exclusively in charge of Al Anbar. It was one element of the insurgency in Al Anbar, but it also extended all the way up into areas north of Baghdad, and so they -- and it was led by one of the Ba'athist, former Ba'athist regime guys. And so they weren't able to provide us a cease fire in Al Anbar; all they could do was control their own people, they couldn't control all the rest of the folks that were doing bad things. So that was one reason it failed.

But the most important reason it failed was, we got our legs completely chopped out from under us by the guys in Baghdad. Ambassador Bremer, General Casey sent us down an order, sent out the order, "No one will negotiate a cease fire with the insurgents except the headquarters in Baghdad." We were not allowed to negotiate with the insurgents. And so when our chief-of-staff [name removed] flew to Amman Jordan, he was met in the airport by the State Department, turned around, stuck back on an airplane, and sent to the United States. "You are not allowed to get out of the airport. You are not allowed to meet with anybody." So then, the phone calls ensue: "Where were you, we were expecting you here?" "I'm sorry; my government won't let me talk to you anymore."

Well no wonder they're shooting at us! No wonder they think we're here to occupy their country! When we do stuff like that. And no matter how hard I tried to work through G-2 channels, and how hard -- I'm trying to think who was the 3 by then, I think [*name removed*] had been the 3 and he got replaced by [*name removed*] -- no matter how hard we tried through the 2 and 3 channels, we could not get that turned around. They would not let us speak with any element of the insurgency whatsoever to try to come to an agreement, so the whole idea of trying to drive a wedge between elements of the insurgency got stalled just a couple months after it even began, because we were not allowed to do it by our own command in Baghdad.

INTERVIEWER: Why were the policy objectives so different than what you were seeing, what you thought needed to happen to make this insurgency go away? Why was Baghdad so resistant?

04201239: It gets back to the idea that Ambassador Bremer had that only he could hold elections. He had to have the national election before anybody else could hold local elections, even though we all know that politics is local. All politics is local, right? And it is, and especially in a place like Iraq. I mean, in 2003, I spent a lot of time driving in two Humvees, because you could do it back then, with open doors, no armor or anything like that. I did have a 762 mounted on one of them, but that was it, and we drove everywhere like that. And we drive into these towns and we get surrounded literally by hundreds of people. In one case, out in Al Amarah, they started cheering "George Bush! George Bush!" It was just...bizarre.

It was like, truly, the liberation of France as we drove through these towns that no Americans had been in, and the people would just come out, and everybody would want to touch us and scream and cheer, and I kept hearing over and over again that they wanted an American in charge of Iraq. "Only Amerikii, no Arabi" would be what they tried to -- and over and over again, I heard it a dozen times from people in these towns, and I would try to explain to them, "No, we're going to put an Iraqi in charge of Iraq," and they would just get livid, they would just get panicked, "No! You cannot trust anybody here! Everybody -- " in other words, everybody here is beholden to some clan, tribe, family, religion, whatever. That if Iraq was, they honestly believed, truly the Shias believed that if you put a Shia in charge, it was going to be a -- the Shia was going to do bad things to other Shia as well as the Sunnis. And so you just could not do that. At that time, Trill Abi was the leading contender and we'd go around and people would yell, "No, no Trill Abi!" as we'd drive by, as if I could do something about this, but...and we saw it painted all over the place, "No Trill Abi!" You know, they did not want one of their own and they especially did not want a Sunni in charge. The wanted only an American in charge.

INTERVIEWER: And yet, that is counterproductive to Iraqi culture in and of itself.

04201239: You would have thought. As you peel this onion away, and you start figuring out what the Iraqis were asking for, what they wanted was local control. They wanted their local mayor, they wanted their local province leaders, and they wanted to be able to choose them, because they wanted them to be reflective of their religious and cultural and ethnic and tribal makeup. You know, that's -- the government should look like the tribes in an area. But beyond that, they didn't think that they would be able to -- Iraq, because of the nature of the country, being so divisive between the three major areas, they didn't think they would ever be able to come to a consensus on the leader who could be magnanimous.

And if you look back in history, King Faisal, that the British brought in, was about the only one who did it right, and he did it because he wasn't Iraqi. They brought him in from Saudi Arabia. But he understood enough about tribes and how to play them off that he could keep the peace in Iraq pretty effectively. And Saddam was just a miserable failure, he kept having to kill tens of thousands of people to try to keep them under the lid, and so by having an American up there, they felt like, "We have an American at the top; we have Iraqis running everything else; that'll ensure that it isn't -- " because they hate corruption, too. As soon as they get their hands in the till, they do it themselves, but they all hate corruption theoretically, right? And if, when you're not the guy who's getting anything, you hate the corruption, but when you're the guy getting everything, you're OK with it.

And so that's why they wanted a -- there was a number of times where they were told -- I was actually asked, "When do we become a state?" And they thought they were going to be the 51st state. This was a huge misunderstanding, you know, expectations and failed expectations is what leads to things like insurgencies. I don't know if it would be a majority in the south, but a huge number of people, maybe a majority, in the southern Iraq thought they were going to be the 51st state of the United States. And when we started saying, "No, we're going to put an Iraqi in charge, that was not what they wanted to hear." They, as you broke it down, you know, they're terrified of everything that capitalism means, because you know, you have to perform to survive. You can starve to death in capitalism; you can't starve to death in a place like Iraq, really, because the government -- there are so many failsafe programs, you're going to be given food vouchers and you're going to have stuff to eat. But you can starve to death in capitalism and that scares them. Because they're not competitive, and they knew they weren't competitive.

On the other hand, they see everything that America has, and they want cars and microwaves. They don't want rock-and-roll, but they do want cars and microwaves. They don't want bikinis. So they want this piece of the American Dream, but not that piece of the American Dream. And so, for them, the way to get it was to become a state of the United States, and when they found out they weren't going to be, it was a major, major blow to expectations for a lot of them. And then they found out they weren't even going to have an American for consul. If a guy like MacArthur were to come in, with sunglasses and corn cob pipe, the guy that beat their army -- that's what they wanted. They wanted the guy that beat them to now take charge and issue orders. That fits with that whole Iraqi mentality. The guy with sunglasses and a corn cob pipe.

So we failed their expectations. From the Shia side, it was big disappointment; from the Sunni side, it was an opportunity: "The Americans aren't taking charge. The Americans are not going to govern the country. This is our chance to grab it back." And so that gave them the green light to do whatever they had to do, because we weren't going to be there long enough. And we kept telling them over and over again, "We're leaving, we're leaving, we're leaving, we're leaving." And as long as we kept telling them we were leaving, they were going to keep fighting harder and harder and harder and harder to grab their slice of the pie.

New topic. A lot of people kept asking, "Why are they fighting?" We don't understand why the insurgents are fighting. It became very simple pretty soon after we got there, and I included, in all the briefings we did for the VIPs when I got up to the MEF. The reason the insurgents are fighting at the top-level: for those people who are the leaders of Al Anbar, the reason they are fighting is because there is not a single ministerial position held by a Sunni in all the government in Baghdad. They went from holding all the positions to holding none of the positions. They want a piece of the action; they want to have some control over their destiny. They are completely victimized by the Shias. That's why they're fighting! Give them a couple positions, and they will quit fighting. At the high level. See the leaders will quit fighting because now, hey, they're in, they've got a position, there's nothing to fight about. You give them something like that, then that will trickle down to the rest of them. You don't give them that, they will continue to fight.

INTERVIEWER: So was this plan to incorporate the tribes, start working with tribal leaders, and get them into the governance -- that was a plan early on?

04201239: Very early.

INTERVIEWER: Was there an idea of trying to, once you realized there was an insurgency, to try and find some Lawrence of Arabia type character? Like what Sittar later became? Were you trying to find somebody after you realized there was an insurgency, to take the lead and take the charge on switching allegiances?

04201239: That's abs-- and that brings, that's a great topic to dive into there. First example of that was the Fallujah brigade. You know, shortly after we took over -- what was it? -- less than two weeks, we hadn't even been in charge of Al Anbar for two weeks and the knuckleheads drove through the middle of Fallujah, the Black Water guys, and they wanted to take a shortcut, and they'd done it a dozen times, and gotten away with it, and this time they just didn't. And they drove through Fallujah and the vehicles got ambushed, and the guys got killed and their bodies mutilated. And you know, it was all over the news. And we had, at this point, our plan had been to fight Fallujah with civil military operations; we're not going to shoot anybody; we're going to go in their and repaint the city, we're going to pave the streets -- and then this happened, and it -- so we really resisted. I was at division at this time, and General Mattis just

burning up the phone lines, driving over to Fallujah, talking to everybody he could, really resisted the urge that was coming out of the Bush administration to go in and seek revenge on the Fallujahns for this.

Because it was going to completely throw us off our whole game plan, because our game plan was to show the Iraqis that we weren't the 82nd Airborne. The 82nd Airborne had fired into crowds of unarmed people; they'd killed folks; they didn't pay the restitution payments for the people that were killed, because at that time, for a lot of Americans, there was a real misunderstanding of what a *saleesha* payment was, and a lot of Americans felt like that was admitting guilt. And we had come to the realization at First MARDIV before we even went back in 2004, that the *saleesha* payments are not an admission of guilt, what they are is a re-leveling of the playing field. Because when you kill a young man from another tribe -- if you're a tribe and you kill a young man from another tribe, you've taken part of that tribe's combat power. And now they are more vulnerably than they were the day before, so now they feel like, "Now we have to make the other tribe even with us, otherwise they're going to come and hurt us." And so, in order to level that playing field, the tribe that killed the other young man, even if it was a justified killing, will make a payment to that other tribe so that now we're level again. Now the power is even, and these guys don't feel like they're vulnerable and we don't feel like we're overly powerful because we smoothed things out. And so when the 82nd fired into the crowd and killed the innocent people, they needed to immediately make *saleesha* payments to the families and, more importantly, the tribe from who -- those people came from, that cultural place those people came from, so that it would level the playing field again in the eyes of the Fallujahns.

They refused to do so, which made the Fallujahns feel very vulnerable and it also -- it also has all kinds of other dynamics, you know, insulting and all the rest of the stuff that they wouldn't do this, and so then that caused Fallujah to be even a worse place than it always was. And Fallujah was always bad; it was not going to be good; it's never going to be good, but that made it a whole lot worse. And so when we rolled back in there, our intent was to make sure that we very much separated ourselves, not to demonize the 82nd at all, it was just to make sure the people understood, "OK, new sheriff in town; the slate is clean," and we tried to make the *saleesha* payments to the people who'd been killed in Fallujah for the, since the 82nd hadn't, we tried to do that. Unfortunately, when you're eight months after the fact, you can't figure out who to make payments to -- people are coming out of the woodwork. I don't even know if we got any good credit for trying. But you know, the whole thing failed at that point. It wouldn't have worked.

So anyway, so we're trying to clean the slate and now they tell us, "No, you got to go back in, you got to get revenge for these Black Water contractors that were killed in this vehicle movement that they got ambushed in. And we didn't want to do it, because that was going to make us look a lot like what the 82nd Airborne had done. We're rolling into Fallujah with our guns blazing, and we're killing a lot of people. We knew a lot of innocents would be killed; you can't go into a city like that without killing a lot of innocent people, so we really, really did not want to shoot anybody at all in Fallujah. Unfortunately, we weren't given that option; we were ordered to go in, and so all those flower pots that we were buying to line the streets...didn't get used. All the paint that was being set aside...never got used. You know, the whole thing went off the table and instead we rolled into Fallujah -- in days, we had taken the entire city.

Speaking of which. And in days, we had taken the entire city, except the little corner up in the Jolan district. And we had killed thousands of Iraqis, and at that point, we'd lost less than a dozen Marines, I think, KIA. And it really showed you how efficient Marines can be when they decide to turn on the juice. I mean, they turned on the juice; they were just amazing. At that point they told us we had to cease offensive operations, so we stopped on the edge of the Jolan

district and bottled-- everybody bottled up there, and the rest of the city was completely empty. Everybody who was anybody left town when that happened; they saw what was coming. And so we really didn't kill any if -- very few civilians, because there was no civilians in the town, so all those reports that were coming out that we were killing the civilians were complete fiction. The town was empty, except for bad guys that wanted to get killed -- that's why they were there

INTERVIEWER: But they were very, very good at the IO Campaign.

04201239: They were great at the IO Campaign, and so these young guys were sitting in Jolan, speed-balling, doing heroine and amphetamine, combining the two, because it was scary and boring and it -- and you'd shoot up the heroine, and then you'd take the amphetamines and they'd go out of their mind and grab an RPG, "I can't stand it anymore, Akhmed!" And they'd grab the RPG and come tearing down the streets at the Marine positions with RPGs. So of course the Marine'd shoot him. And another guy would run out and try to grab the RPG, and they'd shoot him. And then after a couple days, the bodies'd still be laying out there, because everybody that came out would get shot, and there'd be four, five bodies laying in the street. That was the stuff that people were getting on the news, "And the bodies are piling up in the streets!" It's like, these bunch of drug users. Anyway, so, as a result, they told us we had to stop fighting, cease offensive operations. So we kind of fudged a little bit, and we'd push out a patrol at night, and think "why don't we just go ahead and move the company up to where the patrol stopped because it's obviously unoccupied. We're not doing offensive operations, we're just kind of eating it, block by block. And so we just kept gradually moving forward, and finally General Abizade came out and -- to school us up on things --

-- that's another fun story of, again with General Mattis, we got ambushed on our way to the meeting with General Abizade. And General Mattis comes walking in with blood on his trousers; we'd just fought our way through this major ambush to get to this meeting, and General Abizade says, "You have to pull out of Fallujah; here's a red circle. This red circle -- I want all the troops outside of this red circle, and you're not allowed to even shoot inside the circle unless you're shot at."

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

04201239: Yeah, that was bad. Because at that point, then, all the reports started coming in, like, "The Marines are soft-cake, and they were beaten by the insurgents in Fallujah." Because everybody thought they had beaten the Marines. Even Saddam had never quelled Fallujah; that's why he put the Iranian dissidents, the MEK (?) Camp was Camp Fallujah, that's why he put them there, was to threaten the city of Fallujah. Saddam had never been able to quell Fallujah, and now the Americans hadn't -- the fighting Arab spirit of Fallujah won the day again. The Americans might have won against the Iraqi army, but they can't beat Fallujah. Even the Marines can't beat it, and so that was -- the loss of that IO Campaign was, you just can't put a high enough value on that for the insurgency. It enabled the insurgents like nothing else that had happened at that point. And then they wouldn't let us back in.

INTERVIEWER: So what happened then with Fallujah II?

04201239: So what we started doing then was we, since we couldn't stand Fallujah, we had to figure out some sort of emergency action plan, because if we pulled out of Fallujah, we knew every bad guy from Iraq was going to come in to Fallujah. And now we were being told we wouldn't even be able to patrol inside Fallujah. Not only did we have to pull out, but we couldn't even drive through Fallujah to patrol it, which was going to turn it into a sanctuary. Which was what we pointed out before we pulled out. It came up right there in the General Abizade meeting. This is going to be a

sanctuary for all the bad guys. Generally, when you're fighting an insurgency, you want to eliminate the sanctuaries. Most of the time sanctuaries, like in Vietnam or another country like Cambodia or Laos, you can't control. Here, we gave them one, we actually gave them a sanctuary so they could build the insurgency to fight against us. It was, from our perspective at MEF I, it was just bizarre. How could this possibly be a good idea?

But we do what we're told to do, and so we pulled back to the red line, and so we said, "We got to leave some sort of force in here. If you won't let Americans in here -- " And so without asking permission, we just announced, we're standing up the Fallujah brigade, and it's going to be Iraqis, and Iraqis are going to patrol this themselves. To put this in context, we had been prohibited by Baghdad, from standing up any military force in Al Anbar. We were going to stand up the Iraqi army in other places. This persisted all the way through 2004. They would not allow us to even open up a recruiting station for the Iraqi army in Al Anbar. So we would take guys from Al Anbar, and we would hire the bus and drive them down to someplace in the south like Najaf or Karbala so they could sign up to be part of the Iraqi army. Because we were not allowed to have a recruiting station in Al Anbar.

INTERVIEWER: Is it just the fear of Baghdad, a Sunni element trying to rise up and then providing them a force?

04201239: Yeah. Exactly. The Shias were so paranoid about it, and I don't know what Ambassador Bremer or General Casey's perspective on this was, but they were letting, trying to let President Maliki run the country at that time -- so they're trying to let him run the country, and so, by running the country, that meant excluding all Sunnis from the army. Course, the problem is, most of the army officers were Sunni, and so if you want an army that's actually going to function -- you know, they wondered why their army kept turning and running, it's because all of the leadership of the army was from Al Anbar. And if you don't bring them back in the army, then you've got nobody to run your army. And that's where they were, and people kept saying, "How is it the Iraqis fought the Iranians, but yet they can't even march themselves out of boot camp?" And the reason was is because they weren't hiring anybody that had previously been part of the leadership of the army. In fact, they were actively trying to discourage them from joining, which gets back to, now, the other piece of --

We already talked about why the leadership was fighting. Leadership was fighting because no ministerial positions. The mid-level section of the insurgency was fighting because they weren't allowed to rejoin the army. It's what they did. Even when the Ottomans were in charge of the Arab world, a massive chunk of their officer corps was Al Anbar Sunnis. And they would ship them all over the world to monitor everybody from the Egyptians to you name it, because you could trust the Iraqi Sunnis. They were good officers. And now we're telling them, "You can't join the army." But there's nothing else to do in Al Anbar. Even the cement factory isn't working. The glass factory isn't working, nothing's working out here! There's nothing for these guys to do! It just defies belief that we wouldn't find something for these guys to do, in my perspective. Just, every day out there, I was shaking my head -- the next crazy thing, policy that prevented us from stopping the insurgency. And you just -- I kept thinking, I must be oversimplifying it, if we just gave these jobs in the army, wouldn't that be pretty much -- everybody'd be shipped out, there'd be nobody left here to fight, because they'd all be someplace else, right? And that's what had seemed like a good plan to me. Hire all these guys into the army and then ship them down to Basra or up to, you know, Kirkuk. Then there'd be nobody left here to fight.

INTERVIEWER: Well what about the police? Were they letting you stand up police at that time?

04201239: Well, yeah, we were trying to stand up police, and one of the problems with police was perceptions of what police did. There was another huge epiphany we had right in 2003, when we came in to Iraq and we took over the Shia south, and everybody had gone home. The policeman all left, the sewage managers, the electrical men, everybody was gone, and we couldn't figure this out. At least the policemen ought to be here, because in America, if nothing else, our policemen would have stayed there to keep the murderers and the kidnappers -- the policemen would have continued to do their job. But not in Iraq; they all went home and they refused to come to work, and we were just horrified, we were like, "How can these guys just turn their back on their people? You know, Saddam let all the criminals out, and they won't even defend their people from the criminals."

It finally hit, and I was out in Al Amarah and it must have been at the end of May. I was talking to the police chief out there. It finally hit me when he was talking to me about his problems and why he was having trouble with the British and things like that. The police worked for the Chief of Police in Baghdad. They did not work for the local mayor. In America, our police force is hired by the city government and works for the City Council, as represented by the City Mayor. And the Police Chief can be fired by the City Council, not by Washington, D.C. In Iraq, the police were hired by Baghdad; they worked for Baghdad, not for the local City Council, not for the local people. Their job was to enforce the laws of Baghdad, not to protect and serve the people. You would never see "To protect and serve" on an Iraqi police car. It wasn't their job; their job was to make sure that people didn't violate Baghdad's laws. And so murder was just as bad as badmouthing Saddam Hussein. It was all -- it was like the Ten Commandments; they aren't prioritized, you know, they're just all there. And that's the way a lot of these Baghdad laws were, they were just all there. You're not allowed to kidnap your neighbors' kids; just as bad as badmouthing Saddam Hussein. And so that's what the policemen did. And so when Baghdad went away, the policemen had no laws to enforce. He didn't see his job as keeping kids from getting hurt by kidnappers, and so that's one of the things that was going on, kidnapping kids for ransom, and the family would pay to get the kids back, and it was a pretty lucrative occupation that folks were doing.

So we start hiring the police out in Al Anbar. They were all really confused about this whole thing, because they were coming in thinking that they were going to get a job that was going to enforce the government's laws, and the people, in order to get away with breaking the government's laws, would grease their palms a little bit, so they would overlook the violations of the laws from Baghdad. They did not see themselves coming in as protectors of the populace to serve the people. And to try to change that mindset that is so deeply ingrained in the culture, to where I can't even come up with a good analogy in American society...I don't know if we'll ever really get there. It'll be generational change to get policemen to understand that "We expect you to -- "and plus! Here I am, listen to me, a very American statement there, huh? We need to get Iraqi policemen to understand what their job is. No, Baghdad needs to get the Iraqi policemen to understand what their job is. But even the people in Baghdad see the policemen as being there to enforce their laws. And so, as we tried to hire these policemen, and then we wanted them to do something against terrorists, well that was just never going to happen. You didn't join the police force to get, to be out there running and gunning. You joined the police force because it was a good, comfortable living. And so that's why our police force just kept failing.

Plus it didn't help that situations like in Haditha, where we stood up a small police force -- I think it was six guys -- and then Fallujah happens, and so we pulled the battalion out of Haditha and moved it down to Fallujah, and we came back to Haditha, and all the policemen had been executed. So we went out and we hired six new guys, retrained them, now these guys are the policemen, the Marines are working with them, they go out and they do their rounds with the Marines and stuff like that. And then something else happened, and the battalion had to pull out of Haditha again -- they killed all six of them. So we went back there...you would have thought, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me

twice, shame on me," right? No. Six more guys -- hundred people want to be policemen again. So they hire six more guys, and those guys get executed. They went through three or four different rounds of police, and all of them got killed. And people just kept stepping up and wanting to be policemen. We kept saying, "At some point, they're not going to want to do this anymore." Because we've obviously proven that we are not here to help them. Every time we pull out, they get killed.

And so, those are the kinds of, again, yet another one of the many mistakes that we were making, that we knew we were making that mistake, and we couldn't prevent it. We were doing everything we could to try to work with Baghdad to say, "We can't pull the battalion out of these areas. You can't -- because every time we pull them out and put combat power someplace else to handle something, it leaves a vacuum where we were, and they're not ready to stand on their own two feet." And Iraqi policemen are never going to be able to stand on their own two feet against terrorists; it's not in their culture.

INTERVIEWER: Is this -- and maybe I'm very naïve on this, but -- is this disjoint between the policy level, the politicians that were in Baghdad, and the military fighting force, is this unique with Iraq? Is this unique or is this something that's more typical, where you have this un-coordinated, at least in my opinion, seemed like an un-coordinated effort between the political objectives and what the military needs to do in order to match these political objectives.

04201239: You're -- it is absolutely typical of fighting a counterinsurgency. The things that keep the popular -- for example, they talk about how Vietnam was lost in America; not in Vietnam. And to keep the popular will to support an insurgency, the things that you need to do to accommodate that are at odds with the message you need to communicate in the theater of operations. The best speech George Bush ever gave while I was in Iraq was his "Bring it on" speech. "You going to start something here? Bring it on. You want to have an insurgency, I say bring it on," you know? That was the best speech he ever got. Afterwards, Iraqis were coming up, when I go out in town, Iraqis were coming up to me saying they loved that speech. And America's really committed -- "you're going to be here now, aren't you?" you know, because they really read into it a lot of things that were not intended. They read into it that American is now committed to Iraq and so it was one of those things, "well, do I help build up their expectations? Or do I pour cold water on it so they're not so disappointed six months from now, when you start hearing the president say, 'We're pulling out of Iraq in a year'?" Because I knew that was still coming. Because what the Iraqis wanted to hear was, even in the Sunni areas, the Iraqis wanted to hear that "the Americans are here, and we're committed, and we're going to get your economy back on its feet before we pull out. We're going to get rid of these people that are blowing up your kids, and doing all these bad things before we pull out." That's what, even the Sunnis wanted to hear that, because the vast majority of people in Al Anbar really wanted peace and stability and economic success, and they knew we could bring that. If we could just get past all the rest of these problems.

But anyway, so, it's endemic in insurgencies. We saw it in Lebanon and Beirut, what the national government was -- what Ronald Reagan's government needed us to do was different from what needed to happen on the ground to try to provide peace. And then the French and the Italians, of course, were even in a worse spot than the American Marines were. We saw it in Somalia with the idea that, you know, the Clinton administration decided, "We're going to go take out Muammar Hadid." Well, no, he's the one guy who's keeping the lid on the pressure cooker here. Yeah, he's a bad guy today, but he doesn't have to be a bad guy unless we choose to see him as a bad guy, right? You know, this -- his son, as you know, was a Marine.

Anyway, so you know, a lot of these are choices that are made in the distant capital because they don't understand the granularity of the details on the ground. And in Vietnam, what was happening at ICOR when the Marines were able to defeat the Vietcong in ICOR with the combined action platoons, and you know, if you took back every little village back from the Vietcong, so that the Vietcong no longer had freedom of operation, and when they tried to move through an area, all the local villagers knew it, and now, it was the local villagers going out and stopping them from doing a particular thing -- it drove all the VC up into the hills. And before the MBA got involved it the war -- it drove all the VC up into the hills, and the body count in ICOR dropped to almost nothing. And the perception down in Saigon was that the Marines were losing, because they weren't killing anybody. Actually, the Marines were trying to say, "No, actually, we've already won. That's why there's nobody dying up here anymore, is because people are getting on with their lives, and nobody wants to tolerate any nonsense about a revolution anymore."

And so, a lot of the times, what happens in the national capital is very different than what happens in the provinces surrounding it, and that's what we ran into in Al Anbar. The things they needed, in order to keep the coalition together for a government in Baghdad, because they were having a really, really hard time of it -- to keep that coalition together for the government in Baghdad were exactly at odds with what we needed to do in Al Anbar to defeat the insurgency. So why -- I've been pointing a lot of fingers at General Casey and Ambassador Bremer on the decisions they made that prevented us from talking with the insurgency to try to develop cease fires and start working one piece of the insurgency against another, like happened under General Petraeus -- it, they kept us from doing that in 2004.

The reason they did that was because of the political conditions that were happening in Baghdad, and they had placed the importance of -- they believed that the center of gravity for Iraq was Baghdad, that they had to keep Baghdad together. And that was one of those, you know, you talk about things that we used to beat at MEF I, messages we wanted to tell from MEF I, one of them was that, if you're going to defeat the insurgency, the center of gravity for the insurgency is Al Anbar. And you've got to defeat the insurgency in Al Anbar, and all the rest of the country will fall into place. But if you don't defeat it in Al Anbar, it will continue to cause problems in Baghdad because we could very clearly see the flow of fighters, ammunitions, and everything else, into Al Anbar -- in Al Anbar, they would get repackaged up, turned into whatever they needed to do, then they would transfer those VBIEDs and IEDs and everything else would go into Baghdad and then blow up. Nobody was building the VBIED in Baghdad; they were building them in Al Anbar. So in order to stop the insurgency, you had to defeat the insurgency in Al Anbar. And that was when I finished off that brief to General Abizade one day when he was out visiting, when General Conway was still the CG, we finished off this brief to General Abizade and he looked at me and he said -- did we record that part already?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think so.

04201239: Did we? Yeah. And he said, "You know, this is an economy of force," and it was just a different perception. He believed that the center of gravity was in Baghdad. We at MEF I believed that the center of gravity was in Al Anbar.

INTERVIEWER: So getting back to the Fallujah brigade -- you had tried to pacify Fallujah by standing up the Iraqi, so what happened with the Fallujah brigade?

04201239: So since they weren't going to let us in there, we figured we better do something. So we decided, let's stand up a friendly Iraqi force that can go in there. But we needed guys that were already trained. And we knew they existed out in the hinterlands, because everybody we were fighting is former Republican Guard and stuff like that. And

we knew this very well from the people we'd captured, and HUMINT reports and stuff like that. So let's see if we can turn these guys and bring them in, hire them, make them part of the Fallujah brigade, and now they can run Fallujah for us. And so we brought in a number of different Iraqi generals, former Republican Guard, former army guys, and unfortunately, they all continued to fail us.

The first guy we brought in, who was just a really nice old guy, but he was way too old to try to be a general, and almost died of a heart attack on his second week of the job. So OK, we need a new general whose health is good enough that he can be the general of the Fallujah brigade. Brought in another guy, and I'll tell you, the guy was just...he just...he wasn't capable of doing the job. He'd been an Iraqi general, but he really had no skill at pulling this whole thing together. So we went through this whole series of generals of the Fallujah brigade and subordinate leaders, and it was just a constant turnover. Once we got the thing stood up, then we were having trouble with brigade. We'd find a really good brigade commander, and they're like, in one case, brigade commander, his nephew or his -- I think it was his nephew, who was one of his battalion commanders, got kidnapped, and so the brigade commander went on a vendetta to go get this guy back and took half his men with him to go do this operation to rescue -- and it turned out a disaster, and the guy ended up quitting, and his nephew got killed, and all this bad stuff. And so every time we start making any progress with this, the insurgents were always able to out-brutalize us, and they would just brutally come in and kill people's families and stuff like that, kidnap their loved ones, and then the brigade commander would quit. And we'd be back to shopping around, trying to find a new one.

And the guys who wanted the job were not the guys you wanted for the job. They wanted the job because they were either, number one, bad guys, or number two, corrupt, or both. They were just looking to get the kick backs. And so the Fallujah brigade ended up failing, but despite that failure, it was because of the Fallujah brigade, that when we went to Bahrain with all the sheikhs and all the leaders of Al Anbar, that we were approached by this element of the insurgency that said, "We can tell you Marines are doing things different. You've tried to stand up this Fallujah brigade; you've tried to do these different things; they haven't worked. We understand that. But we know you're trying, and we want to work with you, because we think we can work with you. If we can make a deal with you, then we'll try to make a deal with everyone else, all the other units in Iraq. But first we want to work with you, because we know that you're different because of what you're doing."

And we took that as a positive thing, not a negative thing. You know, some people might say, "Well, you shouldn't be -- if the insurgents like you, you must be doing something wrong," but actually that was exactly the route we wanted to go. Their twelve planks, you know, "we want to run our own economy, we want to run our own government," -- yes, that is exactly what we want! We want to bring back the leaders who were doing it before, put them in charge. But the de-Ba'athification policy just was undercutting us at every turn. I mean, you know, "if you want the trains to run on time, you're going to have to hire the Nazis" was one of our sayings. When we did the OPT, before we ever even did OIF 1. That was one of the sayings in the OPT; a lesson learned from World War II: when you take over a country, you can't -- you have to hold your nose and hire back the guys you didn't like. And so, going into Iraq, OIF 1, one of the things we kept saying over and over, and joking about, was "if you want the trains to run on time, we're going to have to hire the Nazis." In this case we're going to have to hire the Ba'athists. And we were prepared to do it.

Unfortunately, Ambassador Bremer didn't read that part of our plan, and I don't know why he didn't read the plan, but the plan, the whole time, was to keep the army intact and to put them in charge. And to get out as fast as we could. But

we figured "as fast as we could" was going to be a couple years, and we were all going in with the expectation that we were going to be there that long. I told my wife -- she said -- first six months went by, we're still sitting in Kuwait, she says, "You must be about ready to redeploy!" I said, "No, honey, this is not a WESTPAK." (Laughs.) "You're not getting it! We're not coming back until at least a year after we entered Iraq. And it isn't a year from when I left; it's a year after we get into Iraq, maybe longer. Because when we go into Iraq, we're going to be occupying the country until we can turn it over to Iraqis. It's going to take us at least a year, maybe two, so I'm not going to be home until probably about 2005." She did not want to hear that. That was not -- but that's what a lot of us were expecting, and I felt like that was a realistic expectation. There were plenty of people that thought we'd be back in a year. But I did not. I thought it'd be even longer than a year. I thought I was trying to be a realist, but obviously our government had different plans.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that, and this is completely subjective, but do you think that maybe there was a lack of understanding, at least at the political level, about what the Ba'athists really were or what they really meant? I mean, I would assume that they would have advisors on their staff that was helping them understand what Saddam's regime was like. And that Ba'athism was just -- in order to have any kind of government job or any type of civil affair, I mean, any type of major job --

04201239: Even to be a schoolteacher, you had to be a Ba'athist!

INTERVIEWER: Yeah! In order to go to college. Many people said that in order to go to college you had to be a Ba'athist. So did they -- do you think -- had any understanding of how deep Ba'athism went and what it really meant, not that it was, that they were bad...?

04201239: I know that it was late dawning on some people in Baghdad -- there's a great documentary, Lost Year in Iraq, and it goes into exactly that. And it talks to General Garner and what was going on with he and General Sanchez when Ambassador Bremer showed up, and General Garner first saw the De-Ba'athification order. You know, Ambassador Bremer had been there less than 24 hours and he said, "I'm putting this message out." General Garner and General Sanchez read it and went, "Oh no! This is not going to work," you know, because in their mind, yeah, we wanted to keep out that top-tier level of Ba'athists. And everybody, we don't want the -- the red-headed general and stuff like that, we don't want them coming back in. And so there needs to be a level of Ba'athists that we're not going to allow back in to the government, but we can take that on a case-by-case basis. And so that was General Garner's perception; he talks about it in the documentary, he reads this De-Ba'athification policy, he says, "This is not going to work; this is going to eliminate anybody that's ever been in the Ba'ath Party. That's like most of the country! You can't do this!" (Laughs.) And so he went in to Ambassador Bremer and, who knows what the conversations sound like, and General Garner -- but here I'm just speculating on General Garner, but anyway, he explained that to Ambassador Bremer, and Ambassador Bremer told him, "I'm not asking for your opinion; I'm telling you I'm issuing this."

And so it's my perception, and it certainly was at the time, that they in Baghdad just weren't getting it. They didn't understand that there's a difference between a tier 1 Ba'athist and a tier 5 Ba'athist. And absolutely, that is what was fueling this whole insurgency.

INTERVIEWER: With engagements going into Anbar -- did you get the chance to actually go out and meet all of these sheikhs and talk with them and sit down and find out what their plans were, what they would like to see for Anbar? In the MCU books, there's a few interviews on the Iraqi perspectives, that edition, that says, from these sheikhs, they did speak with Marines and they told them that they wanted peace, and if you armed them then, or if you talked to them,

or had worked with them, that they would completely, in 24 hours, have Anbar pacified. But we weren't able to work with them in that regard.

04201239: That is absolutely true, yes. And all the Iraqi leaders that I talked to, from the governor to the deputy governor, who ended up getting his head chopped off and duct-taped to his body and tossed out on the police-lot, but that was a whole separate story -- a lot of them are dead now, but all the sheikhs were promising, "Yes, we can fix this. Just give us what need to fix this." There was a lot of skepticism on our part as to whether this was legitimate, were they just trying to arm themselves so they can overcome the tribe next door and take that thing that they've wanted for 200 years and now "we're finally going to own the water well that we always wanted!" kind of thing. Or was it fairly legitimate. And so we were trying to get that happening, and it got to the point where General Mattis used to publish his daily intentions message, and that went pretty widely out to a big audience, and not too long after the debacle with the Chief of Staff getting PNG'd from Jordan, one of General Mattis's intention messages included a note from a battalion that reported the good news that it had identified the leader of one of the insurgent elements, and they were now working with him to come into the fold and be part of the local government and to -- I think they even, they were negotiating a cease fire.

Well, that was the magic phrase, and somehow this intentions message made it up to Baghdad MNFI because General Metz was the MNCI at this time -- Casey was MNFI, General Casey, his staff, called down just furious. "How many times have we told you Marines you are not allowed to negotiate a cease fire?" So it trickles down the division -- now General Mattis is furious, and he's coming back up to General Conway, "Hey your staff has got to quit passing this stuff up to Baghdad; nobody's negotiating a cease fire. What he's doing is trying to bring insurgent elements into the fold so they'll quit fighting. There's a subtle nuance of the vocabulary there that they're just not getting in Baghdad." And what seemed to us to be the most obvious tactic; these people are fighting for control. Well, good, come on in and you can have some control. You can be part of this. That's what democracies are all about right? You don't have to fight if you can vote. And it just seemed so obvious to us, and they wouldn't let us do it.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any of the engagements that you felt were counterproductive, that maybe were misleading, and so that maybe caused some problems later on?

04201239: That was really common. Sometimes you look back on them and you don't know if it's a translation error sometimes, maybe just didn’t get translated right to them or us. Sometimes it's deliberate deception on one party's part. And there were certainly, like I just mentioned, there were certainly tribes out there, elements of the government, that were just -- they weren't bad guys, and they wanted us to arm them, not so much that they could fight the insurgents, but so they could just fight with their neighbor. And they would claim their neighbor was a bad guy, and they were doing that all the time. Because emotions never get more powerful than they do within a family, and family fighting on family, even if it's two extended families, can get extremely bitter, and that's what they've got going on over there. And there's a lot of it. And -- because there's a lot at stake for them, because everything, your economic success is all built around where you fit in to the family dynamics.

If you're born at a certain level, you may become a medical doctor and highly respected and move to a place like America and live in a mansion. But in Iraq, it doesn't change -- your degree does not change where you fit in to the family. You still fit at your level. You're not going to suddenly leap up and be the clan shake. You're where you're born, and nothing can fix that, which is part of the cultural dynamic that fuels the insurgencies. It actually fuels the larger global jihad. Because in the global jihad, a lot of the young men who are so scared of how the world is changing,

because they see it on TV, they watch it on Al Arabia TV, they see what is happening and they realize that where you fit in to your family is no longer going to be your ticket to success. It's how well you perform, and you got to get an education, and you got to get a job, and you got to do these things and that is really, really unsettling to a generation that was born into thinking that their life was set, they don't have to worry about it.

All societies go through this. The European societies went through it, you know, 1,000 years ago, but unfortunately, the Middle Eastern societies are just now entering that phase, and it's going to be very unsettling for them.

INTERVIEWER: With that level of engagement, do you feel that the Marines who were dismounting, and talking with the locals, and getting down and just really engaging with the public -- do you think that information was getting back to the sheikhs? That they were hearing from their people, "Hey the Marines are actually talking to us!" and that they may have -- helped them instill some of that trust, may have come to you because their people were talking to them, or did that not fit with their hierarchical order?

04201239: I would say that absolutely was part of why we had such a different experience in Al Anbar with the Iraqis than some of the other units in other places. It's why we had such a different experience in the south, than the units that came in to replace us did. Even -- contrary to a lot of the popular wisdom of how the British did their counterinsurgency, and they did some of their classic counterinsurgency, the "softly, softly" approach, and you know, taking off their helmets and wearing their soft covers and stuff like that down in the Basra area, but in other places, they just weren't doing it in 2003. Like in Al Ammarah, they weren't patrolling, they weren't out on foot, and we saw that with the, with a lot of the army units, like with the 82nd Airborne, they just didn't engage with the locals. They drove through town with the windows rolled up, got to where they were going, and never stopped in between.

And you know, I assume one of the very first HUMINT reports we got was a report that "All the Marines… " the Iraqis believe that all the Marines have AIDS. And that's why we had been sent to Al Anbar. The President sent us there because we all had AIDS and we were going to die anyway, and he told us to get out of our vehicles and walk along the streets and engage with the locals, but we were so much more vulnerable, we were all going to get blown up, and that's why they sent us there. That was the only way they could rationalize this thing out of, "Why would these guys get out of these armored vehicles? Well, they've all got AIDS; they're going to die anyway."

INTERVIEWER: Wow, that's amazing. I've never heard that before!

04201239: I saved a copy of that one for years; I've lost it since then, but that was just a classic.

INTERVIEWER: So you, you've talked a little bit about the cultural training & understanding, you've talked about the Fallujah brigade, which answers some of my questions about operational planning. At the beginning of our interview, you said that there were some points that you had in terms of my major overall question, which is the dynamics, actions, interactions, anything that might be globally applicable. What lessons can we take from Anbar, and what was learned from Anbar in '04, and how might we be able to apply -- if at all -- because, maybe part of the answer is "we can't," that maybe there is no model or cookie-cutter solution. But instead, maybe pointers that we can take and use in other insurgencies.

04201239: There certainly are some lessons that we can take away from this. Like you pointed out, no two insurgencies are at all alike, and that's been one of the more difficult things to get some of our leadership to understand

how different it's been in Afghanistan from Iraq. And why a surge in Afghanistan wasn't going to have the effect that it did in Iraq. The surge in Iraq was the moment when the Iraqis finally accepted what we had been telling them in the Marine sector, that "We're going to be here; we're not going to leave you," even though our actions had done just the opposite over and over again. You know, we kept saying, "We're going to be here for the long haul; we're here for you; we're going to help you set up your government," but our leadership kept saying, "We're leaving, we're leaving, we're leaving."

And then with the surge, when President Bush decided to do the surge, it told the Iraqis, "Oh, actually, the Americans are committed to us." And so that was one of those major shifts that allowed people to feel like they could trust the Americans long enough to get a -- to turn against some of the local guys who were doing bad things, and side with the local guys who were siding with Americans. Because you can't really get the populace to side with foreigners, but if you can get some of their leadership to side with us, then they can side with the leadership that's siding with us. And that piece they'll do, because they're looking at it and they're saying, "I know both of these guys; this guy's leader of the insurgency, and this guy's the leader of the American allies. Who am I more scared of?" MEF 1 under [*name removed*] wrote that assessment in 2006 with "Iraqis are more af-- ", actually, [*name removed*] actually authored it. "Iraqis are actually more afraid of Al Qaeda in Iraq than they are of anything else." What they said was "Al Qaeda in Iraq is a greater force amongst Iraqis than the coalition." What they meant was people were terrified of Al Qaeda in Iraq -- they did horrible, scary things, like Mexican drug cartel scary things in Iraq against these people, so of course the people were absolutely terrified of them. They weren't scared of us; we weren't going out and doing these atrocities to people. And so they knew that they could just kind of pay us lip service, and we'd go on by, but they better actually perform for the insurgents or they're going to get a grenade through the window in the middle of the night, kind of thing.

And so of course they were siding -- their support went to the insurgents, even though they hated them, they could still love us. But they hated the insurgents, but they were more terrified of the insurgents. The surge changed that dynamic; the surge allowed them to believe again, like they had several times before, it allowed them to believe that we were going to be there and that we were going to help fix their society out there. And they could turn their back on their insurgents, and they wouldn't be victimized by it. But, more importantly, was Ambassador Bremer leaving the scene and changing that dynamic, switching over the leadership in Baghdad that would allow the subordinate commanders to actually work with the locals. And that was what made all the difference because it allowed us finally, like water flowing down hill, you end up siding with an element of the insurgency, because they're willing to come in from the cold, which drives a wedge between them and the other insurgents. It's the most natural thing of human nature, and if you just release the constrictions from your higher headquarters, you can very rapidly solve a lot of the problems by doing that.

And so that same kind of dynamic is what holds true across insurgencies; driving that wedge between the two piece of the insurgency, no matter what insurgency it is, is the solution to the counterinsurgency. You got to bring some of them in from the cold, you got to bring them into the government and give them power against those elements that are still fighting. And then as -- it will siphon off the support for the rest of the insurgents and bring it into the piece of the government, a piece that's more acceptable to the populace, because the populace is fighting because they're made about something obviously. In Iraq they were mad about the -- the Sunnis were mad. In Afghanistan, there's 1,000 different reasons for being mad, you can't just say it's because the Sunnis have been excluded; it's like every single little town has its own reason for being mad. And those kind of pieces -- but the same philosophy works, you bring in the element that you can live with, and you let them exclude the rest of them, and let them identify the rest of them.

INTERVIEWER: Well, were there any additional points that you'd like to add to the project?

04201239: One thing I didn't talk about was what we were doing with the tribes out in the desert during 2004, and this is the thing, I think, that ended up getting you sent in my direction, because [*name removed*] the Special Forces Commander out there, ODA 540 -- when we got to Iraq, I went with General Mattis, but General Mattis pretty rapidly needed to bring the special forces, and the special operations force, because we had a SEAL DET (detachment), and of course we had two ForceRecon. We had to bring them into the regular operations. So I ended up detaching from the division headquarters and moving in with the Green Berets and working with the SEALs and doing the Special Forces effort we had, and so one of the pieces of it that General Mattis had us doing was going out into the desert.

The Albu Nimr tribe was the first tribe we linked up with, and working with them to try to build what we initially called the Iraqi Highway Patrol. So we couldn't call them the army because Baghdad wouldn't let us call them anything that looked like the army. We couldn't call them the police, because if they became the police, then they would fall under this whole separate hierarchy of Baghdad, and Baghdad was trying to control the hiring process of that.

So we had to find a way to do this so that Baghdad wouldn't stick their long fingers into it and tell us to stop, because every time we tried to do something, they're telling us to stop. And [*name removed*] had already experienced this in his previous deployment to Al Anbar; this was his second time in there. So he already had some inroads with the Albu Nimr tribe when we very first got there. The Albu Nimr tribe wandered the desert; they weren't necessarily Iraqi or Jordanian or Syrian. They ignored all national borders; they went wherever they wanted; you know, they were the typical nomadic sheep herders. And they would trade cigarettes or whatever else they could under the table on the black market to earn some extra money.

And we were fine with that, as long as it wasn't guns going to the insurgency. And so talking with the Albu Nimr chief, we worked out a deal to where we'd bring in his young men; we would train them up in, as part of the police academy, but they wouldn't be real policemen, but then they would help us with the smuggling of the foreign fighters and money and things like that in and out from Syria and Jordan. Because, our thoughts were that, these guys know the desert; these guys know the paths that the smugglers take -- the same paths that were being used in the Oil for Food program, to get around that, were the same paths that they'd been using for 1,000 years to smuggle things in to Baghdad, and it all ends up in Fallujah. So if we can use the Albu Nimr tribe to interdict this, because, what the tribe does to make is, they stop all these caravans that are coming through -- some truckload worth of illegal cigarettes is coming through. They'll stop the cigarettes and tax them, make them give them a couple hundred dollars to let them pass through. And so we wanted them to do that with the foreign fighters and everything else, and then clue us in on what was going on. Just give us the information; we don't actually expect them to stop the trafficking. We just wanted the intel from them.

And, as it turned out, there was some success -- it wasn't, there's no silver bullet on any of this stuff, but it was one of those pieces where, you know, you start talking about the Anbar Awakening, and it was one of things of sowing the seeds out amongst the tribes, to say, you know, "we all can work together on this." And we found those nomadic tribes to be actually very, very open to that kind of thing. They were very used to allying with whoever walks through the front door.

INTERVIEWER: Now, in there, there's an article that discusses a lot of this. It's called, "*Better Lucky Than Good: An Alignment of Incentives*," is, I think, the second part of the article. And it was written by Brent Linneman, who I know has worked with [*two names removed*] had brought him up. At any rate, in the article he brings up the Albu Nimr and the Albu Mahal, but he also talks about how they did try to stand up an Awakening movement, and that the Special

Forces were working with them, but they didn't gain any traction, because the Marines were impeding a lot of the traction for them, or MEF was having some issues, or that maybe there were some political issues that were causing them from being able to find any success. But he argues that, had there been support, that it would have created the [wide-spread] Awakening in '05.

04201239: Yeah. I'm firmly convinced that, if we could have done the things that we were allowed to do after the surge, that we could have created that whole thing in 2004, 2005. Because the seeds were getting laid in 2004 -- it's just a complete travesty that it took so long for people to understand basic counterinsurgency. Just read any of the basic counterinsurgent philosophies, and you can see the path out. And it's hard to say, you know, which piece of it actually would have gained traction, because the important thing with a counterinsurgency is to try a lot of stuff, to try the paving the streets of Fallujah and the flowerpots, to try working with the Albu Nimrs and the Albu Mahal tribes, to stand up the local police force in a place like Haditha, and to stick with them long enough to get them going -- to do all those different things, you have to make everything happen because it's a synergistic effect that happens. Because now you're in -- but without some control going to the leaders of the insurgency in Baghdad, there's still going to be a huge amount of money flowing in.

One of the truisms that you can cast a big wide brush across all insurgencies is money. You got to have money to run an insurgency. This was something that I used to get in arguments about a lot of times, because there were a lot of, even Marines didn't understand how much money it took to run this insurgency. Because even just to plant an IED, there's a lot of money to get that one artillery shell out there under the road. It isn't -- very few people, except for the very last guy, maybe, at the end who's actually planting this thing, actually have any kind of a higher-level moral belief that they're doing something for the good of their country. They're doing it for the money. The people that go out and take the ammo from the abandoned ammo dump, regular civilians in most cases, load up a bunch of artillery shells and bring them in, not because they want to support the insurgency, but because they're going to sell them. And they sell them to a guy who's going to -- one of the -- and serve it to facilitators.

Well that guy's got to have money coming in from somewhere. He's not -- these people, they aren't the rich people that're doing this. He's being paid by somebody to buy these artillery rounds, and then he takes those artillery rounds, along with the detonators, and all the rest of that stuff, and he gives it to a guy who can actually manufacture it and turn it into a bomb. Well this guy's not doing it for free; he wants money to build this IED, that's how he makes his money. And then somebody's going to go out and plant it. It's not the guy who builds the IED, he's not going to plant this thing. It's some young 18 year old's going to come in and do that. Well somebody has to go find this guy, and usually that's your imam or your local leader who's recruiting young men in and sending them over to the IED facilitator, who then links them up with the IED to go plant this thing. Well the recruiter wants money too! Every guy that comes in, he's expecting a little bit of cash because he's recruited all these guys. And it's finally that last 18 year old who may or may not even get paid -- the guy who's really taking all the risk, and he may be doing it for free just because he's fired up, because he was mad because the Americans did something to his family. Or he may get a little bit of money, but there's a lot of money that goes in to actually planting a single IED.

And without taking out the top of the insurgency, without cutting out the leadership, giving them a piece of the pie in Baghdad, you can't really squash the insurgency. You've got to give them some control. But then, all the rest of those layers down there, all the way down to, at the very bottom is the Albu Nimr, the nomads that are wandering the desert kind of thing -- they've got to have a reason for being part of the program, too. And that was where -- an Awakening can

start from the bottom up, but we still needed a piece from the top down that was going to fix that. Otherwise, we'd just be, we were salmon swimming upstream.

INTERVIEWER: So that's still the very powerful, top-tier sheiks. But on the, there's some videos on youtube where some of these powerful sheiks say, "You know, you could have done this," or, "we were pulling the strings behind the Awakening sheiks," so even though Sittar wound up with a lot of the front-forward facing publicity that a lot of these other sheiks talk about having pulled the strings and facilitated this Awakening prior.

04201239: I am not surprised. I think to think anything else is probably being naïve about a place like Iraq -- everybody in Iraq is getting their strings pulled by somebody else, and the only guy that really wasn't, you could say was Saddam, but even in Saddam's case, to maintain the leadership of a country like that, you have to appease so many people. You have to give them a piece of your control. So even a guy like Saddam, he was getting his strings pulled. It's just that there wasn't one guy in top -- he was managing the people who were pulling his strings. So for a country that operates like Iraq, everybody's strings are getting pulled by everybody else.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. Well, is there anything else you'd like to add?

04201239: I think that's pretty much it.

END OF AUDIO FILE

Interview 14: 04201240

Interview 04201240, 06 April 2012

INTERVIEWER: All right. I have with me -- let's see. It's April 6th. And I have with me 04201240-PF. You have received the informed consent form. Correct?

04201240: That is correct. I've read it.

INTERVIEWER: OK. And you agree with everything that's in it?

04201240: Yes. I agree and I'd sign it. I agree with everything.

INTERVIEWER: OK. For the record could you give me a little bit of a background on what you were doing in theater at the time, what your role was, what unit you were with, etc.?

04201240: Sure. I -- for the period that you're interested in I was in Al Anbar from late May 2006 to late October 2006. I was the civil military -- or civil affairs officer. Either S5 or S9. Depending on who you're talking to. For [*unit removed*] Armor Regiment. Which was part of 1st Brigade 1st Armored Division in Ramadi during that timeframe. I was also in Iraq in '03, '04. But I was in Baghdad and North Babil Province then. So I don't think you'll be interested in that portion of it.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So you were with MacFarland's Ready First Brigade?

04201240: Correct.

INTERVIEWER: OK. When you got down into Ramadi as opposed to Tal Afar did you have a plan in process for how you were going to engage the population?

04201240: Well, let me back up. The battalion I was in actually came up from Kuwait. So we fell in on a battalion from the -- well, it was actually from the New Jersey National Guard as part of [*unit removed*] Infantry Division. So I

didn't come down from Tal Afar. And so I had no prior coordination with Ready First Brigade until we got there in theater and at Camp Ramadi in late May of '06.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So when you first got there and you knew what your job was going to be, did you establish a plan? Or did you have an idea of what you were going to be faced with once you got into Ramadi?

04201240: We have a little bit of intelligence on Ramadi and we'd certainly been following it in terms of reporting and that kind of thing. In terms of an overall plan we didn't know what the overall plan was because as I said we were falling in with Ready First and Ready First had a larger plan and then our battalion kind of worked up a plan on what we would like to do but that was modified by you know Colonel MacFarland's guidance. In terms of my side of the house, civil affairs, my -- our main effort was identifying local leaders in the sector, both in Tam'eem 5 Kilo and then also in Zangora that we could engage with and also continue relationships that our prior battalions had already installed. And then also in terms of local leader engagement that overlaps into Iraqi police recruiting, you know developing local governance, security, that kind of thing. But I don't have a mission statement to read to you or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: No, that's fine. In terms of working with that previous unit did you get a pretty decent right seat, left seat with your RIP/TOA?

04201240: I did. I replaced a Major [*name removed*] from the New Jersey National Guard who had been my predecessor and he did a good job of handing off you know basically his assessment of who the local leaders were, what the tribal structure was in and around our sector, the economics, local governance and lack thereof, and that kind of thing. And he also -- the previous battalion, [*unit removed*] Armor I believe was their unit designation, they took us out and helped, allowed us to meet the local leaders that they knew as well. So I think you know there was a good right seat, left seat ride and they handed off everything they had. That said, I mean Ramadi was not in the best shape at the time. And most of the local leaders that we were looking for out in sector weren't looking for us and were underground or had fled.

INTERVIEWER: OK. What type of training or IPB had you received?

04201240: In terms of IPB we had been tracking Ramadi when we were down in Kuwait for at least a month or two. I had actually been in a different battalion almost up until we deployed. So I don't know the full answer to that because I had been in an infantry battalion before that that was actually on the other side of the river when we got to Ramadi. In terms of training for the civil affairs side of the house I hadn't received really any formal training whatsoever other than you know when we'd gone to Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels I was an armor slash infantry company team XO and we did local leader engagement at the combat training center. But my previous experience during my first Iraq rotation in Baghdad where I'd been a civil affairs officer and worked with the neighborhood councils and the local district councils, which

were the first democratically elected organizations in Iraq post war, so in 2003 and 2004 I had done both economic development and local leader development engagements and local governance work. So I guess that was my training or experience. It basically all OJT.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So it sounds like you had a pretty good foundation going in. Was there anything additionally that you think you should have had that would have assisted or maybe changed outcomes had you been given different training or additional training?

04201240: Sure. I mean in a perfect world of you know unlimited resources language training would have been tremendous. Instead of doing language training in between the two rotations we spent most of our time in the motor pool both when I was a scout platoon leader and when I was also a tank company XO fixing broken vehicles and equipment. So there was you know no formal language training or cultural training or anything like that. It was all basically fixing equipment and then working on trigger puller type things. When we did deploy to Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and get those kind of rotations we would get more of the local leader engagement counterinsurgency type training. And that was good. I mean I think it was probably more focused on the people who had never been to Iraq before. But that was good. I mean in a perfect world yeah civil affairs officers would have gotten the kind of training that you know Travis Patriquin got in a previous life when he was doing Special Forces stuff where he went to Jordan for six months and learned the language and learned the culture and lived amongst the people and that kind of thing. But that certainly wasn't going to happen at the op tempo that we were operating at in the big Army back in the mid 2000s.

INTERVIEWER: Was that part of Travis's FAO experience or was it his SF experience though with the six-month training?

04201240: I believe that was part of the Special Forces training back before he became -- before he went to the officer side of the house. So that would have been I think in the late '90s that he did that.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of language you mentioned that before. Would it have been better do you think to have had more language and language fluency or just more cultural training and better interpreters or more interpreters?

04201240: All of the above. I mean I think language training would have been the number one priority because you know the cultural training can follow quickly thereafter when you're speaking the language. And cultural -- I mean more cultural training would have been great. I can't say more on that just because I felt like my first Iraq rotation was basically ten months of cultural training. You know meeting with the people every single day and then I was a scout platoon leader so I spent a lot of time in Iraqis' homes and saw how they lived and you know talked to them and did tactical questioning and that kind of thing. So I felt like I had a pretty good understanding culturally. What was the -- there was a third part to that question I believe.

INTERVIEWER: There's a lot of discussion over more language training, less language training, more culture training or less culture training. What's the fine balance of what we have to provide to our soldiers on top of all the additional tactical and kinetic training that they receive. The types of training that would be most effective to the operators who are actually on the ground.

04201240: Right. Yeah I mean I can't really speak for platoon leaders and squads and that kind of thing during our deployment. I mean I would go out with them once in a while. But I didn't really have a good -- you know I just wasn't exposed to your average you know team leader, SAW gunner out in the infantry platoons to really know how sensitive they were to the cultural aspect of it. I would certainly think more would be better. Specifically because there are -- you know there are issues when you're in a kinetic AO like that where you know guys were seeing their buddies get you know seriously injured or killed that people you know maybe want to take that out on the populace. And that I believe is counterproductive. And I think people realize that over time but maybe not you know in the initial shock of you know having your platoon leader or your platoon sergeant killed or something like that within the first couple weeks of being there. Maybe more cultural training could have helped that but I'm not sure.

INTERVIEWER: Based on your experience there do you think that had you or anyone else you observed had more culture or language training it would have affected any type of the outcomes in terms of how people perceived you, how the sheikhs perceived you, whether or not it could have affected the Awakening, anything in that regard?

04201240: I can't give a concrete answer. You know more is always better. And certainly you know if there was a lot more people out there speaking Arabic I think we probably -- in the battalion we probably could have catalyzed the formation of the Awakening or facilitated it better and helped to bring together you know all these various disparate parts around the AO. But I don't know if -- you know I don't know if we could have made it any better because it worked out pretty well. And I mean I said this to a couple of the authors that have written other books about the Awakening. I mean 85% of the credit on the Awakening belongs to the Iraqis in my opinion because they're the ones who you know took the big chances and put their family and lives on the line to band together to you know -- to make this tremendous shift in terms of their allegiances and their level of action out there in Al Anbar going from you know basically either siding with the insurgency or sitting on the sidelines and playing both sides to actually you know saying hey we're putting our foot on the ground and it stops here and it stops now and you know we're going to come after you. You know they're the ones who made that decision. They're the ones who risked their lives and their families' lives and their whole way of life and everything else like that.

INTERVIEWER: In some of the interviews that the Iraqi sheikhs have provided, whether they be on YouTube, in literature, to other researchers, they've actually suggested that they came to US forces, to coalition forces a whole lot sooner. Some referenced as early as 2004. Actually some referenced early as 2003. Do you think -- and they say that

the Awakening could have happened sooner or there could have been no kinetic involvement at all had we just understood what we were looking at, understood the culture, listened to them, etc. Do you think that's true --

04201240: Right.

INTERVIEWER: -- or do you think that might -- you know might have just been your standard posturing I guess? Maybe that's a harsh term but hindsight is always --

04201240: Right. Well, I think I mean when I say the Iraqis deserve 85% of the credit I mean it certainly helped that Colonel MacFarland as brigade commander was willing to take a chance on this. Because you know as you mentioned the tribes that we dealt with and other local leaders in Ramadi had banded together before and said hey we're going to fight back against Al Qaeda and other foreign influences. You know and we're going to take them on and we're going to drive them out of Ramadi. And they lost. I mean they got slaughtered basically. And from what I understand they had come to America before and America had been kind of wishy-washy about it and you know I'll say from my experience Colonel MacFarland took a pretty massive chance both with -- I mean with the brigade and also with his career on doing what he did because my understanding was his guidance from higher was not to empower these local sheikhs because they weren't supporting Governor Mamoun and they also weren't supporting the elder tribal forces who had been in exile in Jordan for what, at that point three years and claimed to be still calling the shots in Al Anbar, yet they weren't you know any way putting their life on the line or showing their face in and around Ramadi. And Colonel MacFarland said hey you know keep talking to these sheikhs, let's see where this goes, let's support them, if they're willing to put their sons into the Iraqi police let's recruit them and co-opt them over to our side. And you know if he hadn't been willing to do that who knows if this would have gotten off the ground or not or if it would have just fizzled or if the sheikhs would have just thrown their hands up for the last time and said hey we're not playing ball with the Americans anymore, this is it, we're done.

INTERVIEWER: So MEF did not receive or did not provide him with any type of guidance in terms of engaging these local sheikhs or they weren't supportive of it or was it just that they had a different LOO that maybe didn't mesh with the flexibility that Colonel MacFarland needed?

04201240: Right, well, the engagement that was going on at the MEF level involved the sheikhs outside of Al Anbar, meaning the sheikhs that were in Jordan and Amman, and all the engagements that were going on over there. They did not involve empowering the local you know what were considered the junior sheikhs in and around Ramadi. So in terms of putting them -- putting their sons and daughters into the Iraqi police and then also -- sorry, not daughters, just sons -- also opening up the Iraqi police stations, the satellite stations. Now I'm not -- that may have been an Iraqi police issue from Baghdad in terms of being authorized to open those or not. But Colonel MacFarland, he authorized them, said hey let's keep going with this and we'll see where it goes. Now there was later on in the August, September timeframe a --

there was meetings conducted with both Governor Mamoun and Sheikh Sittar where they reconciled their differences and the MEF came on board with supporting Sheikh Sittar at that point at the MEF level versus at the battalion and brigade level.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that maybe that was just a lack of understanding of the tribal hierarchy and what exactly was going on with the reasons that the sheikhs had moved to Jordan and weren't in Iraq? Or do you think that it's just the hierarchy of our engagement strategies that had --

04201240: Well, I think -- I mean I think a lot of it is just in large part a function of the hierarchy of our military where you know everybody has their level of engagement. And just as we break things down into company, battalion, brigade, division level you know there was a construct that I understand was held at the division level about what the tribal hierarchy was. And you know that briefs well on a PowerPoint slide but when you're out there talking to people on the ground and you're meeting the people and you're finding out you know who are the actual local leaders, who actually has the skin in the game and is calling the shots, you find out that it's different. And you know things don't move quickly in military bureaucracy. So it takes a while to send that information up and for people to you know observe, orient, decide and act that hey you know we've been wasting our time for two years talking to these sheikhs in Jordan that claim to be in charge and you know know what's going on and they say they're going to come back and it turns out they're not going to come back. And they don't have any control of their people. And their people don't respect them because they left the country.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that with these engagement strategies and working with the sheikhs, that there were any communication challenges between either MEF or the battalions or brigade or even down to the company so that they weren't exactly sure about who was engaging whom and how they kind of nested? I mean or was this information in terms of how the tribes were working on the ground getting back up to the generals who were at division?

04201240: I can only answer a small part of that question because I don't -- I just didn't have the situational awareness at the MEF level. So I was at battalion level and Travis Patriquin was my brigade level reporting contact and also became a really good friend and you know we spent a lot of time talking and planning on what we were doing and who we were engaging and what tribes. You know trying to build just a picture of what the tribal footprint was in and around Ramadi. We got a pretty good handle both from the previous units and also from the interpreters that you know had been there. And they were -- you know they were tremendous value added because they had seen all these units come through and they knew the local populace. So Travis and I would talk a lot and you know take brainstorm and come up with ideas and talk about hey we can do this, we can do that. And so when I was talking to him I didn't ever really feel like I was getting much information pushed down from MEF in terms of what was going on across Al Anbar and what you know MEF's initiatives were for you know larger division level engagements of you know the tribal alliances and everything else. You know like the Dulaimi tribal alliance and stuff like that that I knew existed from my first rotation in Iraq. So our picture was really limited to you know Ramadi AO. I can't remember what our call sign of

the actual unit -- or the AO was on the graphics. But so I had a good idea of what was going on in and around Ramadi and in and around the other battalions. And then we had our weekly civil affairs meetings where the other battalion civil affairs officers would come in to include from the Marine battalion, if possible from 1st of the 506th over on the east side of Ramadi if the guy could make it over in a Bradley or something. And then also from our Marine civil affairs team who had had overlap with a previous unit as well before they turned over. And you know they were a great resource too. And so we'd come together and talk about everything that was going on. And in those sessions that's where we would also talk about hey this tribe is saying this, this tribe is saying this, I've got this tribal leader from your AO in my AO now talking to me through Sheikh Sittar. We would share information. But I never felt like I was getting much of a push down from MEF. All I really was doing was reporting up to them and then filling out this atmospheric slide that I felt was worthless. But I know that in the military -- and I had to do similar slides my first rotation -- it's all about whether things are green, yellow and red on the PowerPoint slide.

INTERVIEWER: The infamous dashboard.

04201240: Right. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So it sounds like in these meetings though that you would talk with all of your counterparts that were within Ramadi. So whether that be the Marines or the Army it sounded like there was discussion that was going on.

04201240: Yes absolutely. And I mean these discussions were from minor detail down -- I mean having to do with UN food supply deliveries to the food supply warehouse that was in my AO and then you know somebody over in 1/6 Infantry would say hey my people aren't able to get their food supply, can you figure out what's happening, and my civil affairs team would go out and talk to people like that, to you know more esoteric ideas of hey this tribe looks like it's you know coming in from out of the cold and they're talking to us a little more and you know that's the kind of thing where Travis would you know report that to brigade and maybe they'd throw some more resources into engaging with that tribe. And you know that kind of heated up towards the end of the rotation as Sheikh Sittar and the other tribes around really the northern crescent of Ramadi in both Zangora and Jazeera were starting to meet together on their own and tell us that they were meeting together and they would come. You know we'd go out and talk to Sittar at his house and all of a sudden there'd be two or three sheikhs there that we didn't know as [*unit removed*] Armor but were from 1/6's AO or 1st of the 506th's AO. And you know I'd immediately after such a meeting call over to their civil affairs officer or their XO and S3 and say hey you know we got this guy in our sector if you want to come either meet with him at Sheikh Sittar's house or you want to meet with him there. Because it wasn't -- these other battalions were trying to meet with these guys but they weren't necessarily talking to them at the time. It's just a matter of them warming up you know throughout that summer and a lot of that I think had to do with the engagements the Iraqis were having with each other behind the scenes that we didn't know about.

INTERVIEWER: I mean the one thing I've noticed through these interviews is that it sounds like the Iraqis were engaging the Army side and the Marine Corps pretty equally. It also seems like there was a lot of coordination. But in the

literature that's not necessarily the case. And so what we see in the writings and the literature, things that are presented in the public eye, is a very different story than what I have found when I actually start talking with the Army and Marines that were there on the ground. Is that a fair assessment?

04201240: The only thing I'm not sure about is -- in that assessment is whether you're saying it was Army and Marines engaging with the Iraqis equally at the same time or on -- you know in their respective AOs. Because you know when we'd go out and meet with Sheikh Sittar it was generally an all Army meeting with Sheikh Sittar unless you know our Marine civil affairs officer came along, which he did a couple times. But not usually because that was a battalion level engagement. And he was more on the tactical side of going out and doing lower level engagements and also you know reconstruction projects and that kind of thing. So I thought -- I mean I had no problem whatsoever I feel like engaging across you know uniform colors between Army and Marines when I was there in Ramadi at the battalion you know and brigade lower level. All the dogs and cats in and around Ramadi, whether they were Marines, whether they were OGA -- well, OGAs of a certain flavor, and you know Navy Seabees or whatever, they all worked great together I thought. I thought it was pretty clear, easy flow of information. Same thing with the Marines at Hurricane Point. I would deal with their civil affairs officer sometimes. Met sometimes. Never any issues there cross-coordinating with them.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any stovepiping of information simply because of the types of networks that you were on?

04201240: That's -- I think that there was a pretty good sharing of information across Ramadi. Now there was some stovepiping from the OGAs where they wouldn't -- it was basically a one-way street. They expected us to tell them everything they were doing but if we ever tried to get any cross-coordination they -- no information would come back out of them. So that was frustrating because you know we knew that they were engaging with a lot of the same people we were. But we weren't able to you know have any kind of fidelity on what was going on in those engagements. Which leads to unfortunately you know some engagement fratricide where you know the left hand and the right hand aren't talking but the Iraqis think that the left hand and right hand are talking. And so they look at us kind of strange sometimes. I don't have any specific memory of that. I just know I had that experience with one particular OGA that was there in Ramadi. In terms of stovepiping of info, in terms of not getting any information passed down to us, I would say yes. But otherwise not that I know of. And again because I was a battalion level I really -- I wouldn't know what was being stovepiped and what wasn't. I just didn't have situational awareness of what else was going on.

INTERVIEWER: No, that's fine. I'm asking you to speak specifically about your own experience. In terms of -- you've mentioned OGA but what about the -- does that include the Special Forces, the ODA, that were in the area? Or did you not have experience with them?

04201240: No. Well, I mean the Shark Base uniformed folks, the SEALs were great. I worked with their engagement officer quite a bit. And we did some projects together. And we would share information. They were great to work with. The black side of the house of the OGAs, I really had very little to do with them. And they -- you know the direct action folks, they weren't interested really in the local leader engagement and tribal engagement and that kind of thing. I think their fight was kinetically focused generally.

INTERVIEWER: Now you mentioned having multiple conversations with Captain Patriquin. Some articles I've read state he was there for a relatively limited period of time. Was he really able to accomplish a significant amount of activity in six weeks that he was there prior to his untimely death?

04201240: No, he was there a lot longer than six weeks. He was there for -- he was there from late May of 2006 to -- he was killed December 6th of 2006.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

04201240: So that puts him there for six months. A little over six months, right?

INTERVIEWER: That's good. OK. Because there's a couple other people that I've spoken with who said he was there for a considerably shorter period, and it's in some of the literature as I mentioned. So I was a little confused about that. Thank you.

04201240: Right. No I mean he was there. I got there I want to say on or about May 23rd and I remember vividly going up to the Ready First headquarters for about four or five days straight saying hey where is Captain Patriquin. Because I'd never met him. I didn't know anything about him at all. Only thing I knew was he was the brigade S9 so I knew he was my, you know, direct reporting counterpart you know within the staff section. And so you know I wanted to find out what was Ready First's plan for the civil affairs side of the house. And so he got there in late May and then I know and I remember getting the report from another -- from my replacement that he had been killed because I had been e-mailing him back and forth in November, December. He'd e-mailed me I think last on December 4th, 2006. And I e-mailed him back and never heard back from him because he was killed with Major McClung and Vincent Pomante on December 6th.

INTERVIEWER: So I mean did you ever see his mustache PowerPoint slides?

04201240: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Could you provide a little bit more context to them and why they were so instrumental in trying to explain these engagement strategies?

04201240: Yeah and I may not have the full story on this right because he did that PowerPoint slide toward the end of my time in Ramadi. And I don't think he ever showed it to me. But I mean it was basically embodiment of the kind of stuff we would talk about in our meetings. And I think more than anything I mean that's an expression of Travis's sense of humor. He's kind of a no-nonsense guy, doesn't use a lot of you know big buzzwords or anything like that. It was basically his way of telling higher and other people, anybody who would listen, hey this is actually really simple. And I'm going to make it so simple that you can't deny that this is the way to do this. So I mean Travis is a little rough around the edges and I think that was -- and he does not like PowerPoint, he does not like -- he did not like long briefings, he did not enjoy that kind of thing. And so I mean I would say that was you know likely the genesis of that PowerPoint presentation. I don't know if that answers your question or not.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah it does. You know he's credited with quite a bit and I'm not trying to diminish that in any way. But what I would like to get at is how many other people were engaging and were talking with the sheikhs and building upon this engagement and networking over time. So what I am seeing throughout my readings, the research, interviews, etc. is that there were continuous engagements that were going on. At least I've tracked from 2004 on. And they escalated to a point and that's when Ready First came in. So had any of the sheikhs, had anyone that you engaged with told you about other meetings or engagements they had had or networks or friendships they had built with coalition? And if so do you think that that contributed to the success that you guys had out there?

04201240: Oh absolutely. I mean this is certainly not something that just all of a sudden happens in a vacuum. For instance I mean Sheikh Sittar and Sheikh Ahmed were both you know our primary engagement. And the battalion that preceded us, 1st Battalion of the 172nd Armor out of the, I believe Vermont National Guard, they were engaging with Sheikh Sittar and Sheikh Ahmed on almost a daily basis throughout their yearlong rotation. And you know the people -- the unit that had preceded them, which I believe was 1/9 Infantry out of Korea 2nd Infantry Division US Army, they had also been engaging with them on a daily basis. Or you know every couple days. But at least every week. And when you go into Sheikh Sittar's house he had a display of all of the paraphernalia and basically going away gifts that he had received from previous Army units that had had our sector. And so every unit would give him a gift. I can't remember. Maybe he got a belt buckle from 1/172. We had -- we gave him a Stetson from our unit. So I mean there was certainly overlap. Our Marine civil affairs officer Major [*name removed*] had been in Ramadi in 2004 and as a civil affairs officer. I think he was a captain at the time. And he had met Sheikh Sittar and we brought him out for the engagement because -- I can't remember. We were working on some specific issue with Sheikh Sittar and it was an issue that was really in Major [*name removed*] lane. Something that he had been working on with his Marine civil affairs team. And Sheikh Sittar remembered Major [*name removed*] from 2004. He looked him up and down and said I remember you, you were

at my house you know two years ago. And Major [*name removed*] confirmed yeah he had been at his house and had engaged with Sittar. So that was a long-running ongoing engagement. And that was the primary engagement in West Ramadi. And it wasn't for lack of trying. I mean the unit that had preceded us had gone out and tried to meet other sheikhs and tried to meet other local leaders but because of the Al Qaeda murder and intimidation campaign they hadn't been successful. Things started to change when we were there. And I think it was you know both additional forces, change in tactics, the building of COPs in various sectors that kind of brought about that change as well as the Iraqis. You know just there being a systemic shift in their perspective on the American occupation. Because that's basically what it was to them. And what they saw as the future of Iraq.

INTERVIEWER: So in terms of these COPs with your civil affairs you know work did you have any part in building these COPs or was that part of a different part of the battalion or the brigade at the brigade level?

04201240: No. I mean civil affairs planning was built into every operation we did in [*unit removed*]. And I'm pretty sure it was in the other battalions as well because you know Travis would give us updates on the planning and you know if we had a civil affairs meeting that week before a COP was about to go in you know the primary focus of the talk would be the civil affairs aspect of the building of the COP. So you know the initial establishment of the COP both being led with a civil affairs effort because when the COP would go in you're basically kicking somebody out of their house. Usually multiple families out of their house. And so we would try to do that in the least disruptive way possible and also in a way that would not endanger the families that we were displacing. We would also pay those families. We'd also find someplace for them to stay immediately. So you would lead with civil affairs. And then you know obviously the engineers and the trigger pullers would take over immediately in terms of establishing immediate security so that the COP wouldn't be you know overrun or destroyed by a VBIED or whatever else. And then immediately thereafter you know civil affairs was kind of the focus because civil affairs wasn't just you know our civil affairs team and our civil affairs officer going out. It was really the squads and platoons going out and meeting with the locals in the houses nearby. You know doing census operations in and around there. Distributing food, water, generators, all that kind of thing. And that was kind of our way of getting into these people's houses and talking to them and finding out what's going on and finding out -- you know gathering intelligence basically. So it was all integrated and you can't really say that civil affairs was the lead effort versus you know kinetics versus you know force security or whatever else.

INTERVIEWER: With the COP so as I understand it you're saying that the COPs would displace people's homes. So they weren't -- you weren't building a station. Or not a station but a COP. You were actually utilizing infrastructure that was already there and then just taking it over as a security point?

04201240: Well, yes but I mean you were taking over some piece of real estate that generally had you know natural defensive and observation advantages. But as soon as you took it over it stopped looking like somebody's house or a school or whatever it had been. It immediately was surrounded by massive you know T-wall barriers and everything else

like that. So it was -- I mean it's a building process. But you're starting with something. You're not just starting with a plot of empty desert.

INTERVIEWER: OK. In terms of 1/6 they've mentioned several times the idea of the three-block war and how that was utilized inside the walls of Ramadi. Was that something similar in the rural areas or the outskirts of Ramadi like in Tam'eem or -- trying to remember my directions. More eastern Ramadi or --

04201240: I can't speak for eastern Ramadi. I was in western Ramadi and we had the full gamut of geography or terrain. I mean we had Zangora which was large open areas, farms, very tribal, rural. 5 Kilo and Tam'eem, however, were you know very urban built up neighborhoods. 5 Kilo was much nicer, more wealthy people. And Tam'eem was more -- what's the right word to say -- working class I guess would be a way to put it. And I mean in Tam'eem -- I'm not the best person to talk to. I would go out on census operations at night. But once we put in our COP, that was about a week before I left. But as soon as we put in our COP I mean people came in immediately that day and were livid about us shutting down a road. But once we started talking to them you know two or three days later after talking to them and they realized that hey we're here, we're going to provide security, they said to us you know where have you been, why, we've been waiting for you guys to come do this here in the middle of Tam'eem, we need your help. Once they realized that we were there to stay and we would have overwatch over them. But they wouldn't -- you know they weren't willing to say that before when we would just visit at night where we -- you know we weren't commuting to sector because it was literally half a kilometer into the sector and there was always somebody out there on patrol in the sector. But you know it's one thing to see a patrol walk by two or three times a day. It's another thing to look over and you can see this you know massive compound and the Americans are coming in and out of it all day every day.

INTERVIEWER: Inside Ramadi the three-block war is referencing being able to -- in one small area you might have kinetic activity in one block, reconstruction going on in another block, engagement activities. Not just your ink spot but your security building activities. All of it happening all at once rather than --

04201240: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: -- the idea of clear, hold, build happening one after the other consecutively. Instead it's referenced at least inside Ramadi as having happened at the same time. Now I only have information that suggests that that occurred inside Ramadi near the government center and the COPs that were there. But would you say it's also what happened outside the city center? Or did you have to do clear, hold, build in a process?

04201240: I mean I don't have a good answer because as I think about what we did in Zangora and what we did in Tam'eem and also what we did in 5 Kilo it wasn't -- I mean it wasn't a clear sequential process with dividing lines

between clearing, holding and building. I mean it was the full gamut somewhat simultaneously. But I mean I really don't have a better answer on that. I know in Zangora I mean we built the IP station which was kind of our -- you know our COP out there. And I mean the first thing you have to do when you build any of these is you have to clear that immediate area and then you fan out from there. And so then you're holding and then after that you know the building begins. So it is a one two three but it happens in such a short amount of time and with so much overlap you can't draw a line on the calendar where you said all right we transition from the clear phase to the hold phase to the build phase. Because the second you're building the COP and clearing the surrounding area you know the units that are out there clearing are also establishing relationships with the people, collecting you know census information on the people, figuring out you know what are our opportunities here to reach out to the people, you know to engage them, to build a neighborhood council. I mean that was on the day we put in a COP in Tam'eem we had a crowd building that were upset about us shutting down a road that we needed to secure to get to the COP. And you know because we didn't want an IED being put on that road. And so we identified four or five people in the crowd that were perhaps the most agitated but they were the most vocal. And so I went up and I pulled them out of the crowd and I invited them in and we sat them down in the house and we just started talking to them. Because if they were out there speaking for the crowd they're some kind of leaders, and that was an opportunity to -- you know to identify local leaders in Tam'eem that we'd been looking for for four or five months. And we brought them in, we talked to them for an hour. You know we explained what was going in. We explained that we're not going anywhere. We're staying here. You know we're going to help build Tam'eem for you and your families. But you know I said it toward the end of that meeting. I said you know you are clearly some kind of local leader and we would like to continue to speak with you. Would you be willing to represent you know your neighbors. And as soon as that came up they shut down immediately because they saw themselves. They realized that they had kind of stuck their neck out a little bit. And they were nervous. And unfortunately we left a week later. But from my follow-on unit I found out that you know hey we kept engaging with these people and talking to them. I'm not sure if those specific individuals turned out to become you know neighborhood council members or anything like that. But those are the kind of opportunities that building the COP provided. And along those same lines an anecdote I heard from Travis back when [*unit removed*] did their initial COP on the south side of Ramadi. He was talking about one of the platoon leaders from [*unit removed*] infantry company that was with them. How they were building the COP, they were in a firefight, and the platoon leader was trying to rewire a generator out in the neighborhood so that the Iraqis would have electricity that night. I don't remember that platoon leader's name. Unfortunately a lot of the history for this has become a lot more difficult since Travis got killed.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have language yourself? I mean were you able to speak Arabic? Or were you using an interpreter when you were having these engagements?

04201240: I had had an interpreter. I mean I spoke 30 to 40 basic Arabic words that I picked up you know when I was a scout platoon leader that I needed for tactical reasons. But I did not speak the language. My assistant [*name removed*] did speak the language and so he would go. Towards the end of our rotation he was spending probably more time at Sheikh Sittar's house than I was. And then I was more involved with just the battalionwide focus on civil affairs. And so he would go along with Colonel [*name removed*] to those engagements. But Colonel [*name removed*] also had an interpreter. But [*name removed*] was kind of an extra set of eyes and ears since he did speak the language and he had had Arabic training from the Army in a previous life when he was an intel enlisted guy.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any training on how to use interpreters or how to understand or interpret body language so that you would know whether or not your interpreters were good?

04201240: I didn't have any formal training but I had used interpreters my first rotation you know over all levels of quality and so I felt like I had a pretty good idea in terms of you know how complicated a statement could you make, how to break up what you're saying, how to read. You know obviously because you can't understand what the person you're speaking to is saying body language becomes that much more important. And so you know I didn't have any formal training on reading body language but I felt like I picked up quite a bit from my first rotation. And then you said -- you asked about the quality of our interpreters?

The primary interpreter that I interacted with was Colonel [*name removed*] interpreter [*name removed*] who had a lot of knowledge from the area and had a very strong relationship with Sheikh Sittar and some of the other sheikhs. And so he also had some strong opinions about things and so in addition to being an interpreter he was an adviser of sorts. And you know that was value added at times. Other times it was a little bit frustrating. But you know that kind of comes with the territory. And different interpreters have a different view of their role you know as interpreters. And you would -- you know I would -- when I was working directly with him I would give him feedback about what was good and what was bad and then Colonel [*name removed*] of course I assume had the same relationship with him and that kind of thing. But that was Colonel [*name removed*] interpreter. So you'd have to ask Colonel [*name removed*] more about that.

INTERVIEWER: I had actually -- I had heard that either this guy [*name removed*] had provided a plan or that he had had a plan about trying to find -- trying to remember exactly how it was stated. Trying to find quote, unquote "that guy". Meaning the particular type of sheikh with the particular type of personality traits that would be needed, the lineage, and the respect of the community that would be needed to try and make a turnaround, i.e., the Anbar Awakening. And that he had presented this type of plan to military commanding officers even prior to Colonel [*name removed*] but had also provided it to Colonel [*name removed*] because it had gone nowhere. And Colonel [*name removed*] sent it up to Colonel [*name removed*]. Do you know anything at all about this? Or did this interpreter tell you that he had been trying to advise Army about the type of person they needed to find?

04201240: I never got anything like that from [*name removed*]. [*name removed*] is a pretty smart guy though. And I mean I would not be surprised to hear that. But I never got that from [*name removed*]. Now [*name removed*] would explain. I mean he definitely had opinions about who was -- you know who was in charge within tribal structure and you know what he thought was going well and what he didn't think was going well. But I never got any kind of formal presentation or any even you know informal presentation about hey we need to identify one specific type of sheikh or this sheikh could be you know quote, unquote guy to unite the tribes around Ramadi or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of using interpreters, did you use them more as interpreters or like this guy [*name removed*] did they become more cultural advisers?

04201240: I don't know beyond really [*name removed*] They would -- when you had a translator or interpreter, whichever, however you want to define them, that lived with you and worked with you on a daily basis, that person naturally became more than just you know a pass-through for the language. That person would become an adviser you know on the culture, on people, things that they picked up, etc. because you know every person I ran across worth their salt in the military wants to hear other people's recommendations and thoughts on things. Ultimately whoever's in charge is going to make the decision but they're going to you know pull from as many smart people as they've got around them to get ideas and figure out what's going on to get the best picture possible before they make a decision. Now when we would go pick up a translator or interpreter just for a specific mission who was pulled out of the general translator or interpreter pool that belonged to the battalion or brigade would send somebody down to us, that person generally would be less value added in that respect. Because you'd work with them you know for one particular mission. And you know they would tell you when they'd be picking up on things out in sector. And I always told them you know hey if you've got any thoughts on anything just tell me offline. Don't tell me in front of the person we're talking to.

So but that relationship wouldn't grow as much unless you had a repeat customer type relationship, as I remember having with a couple particular translators when I would do certain things. You know when I was out for instance talking to the guy who ran the oil transfer point for all of Al Anbar. Because I sent up a report from going out there and trying to engage with this guy and talk to him about oil distribution in Al Anbar and after I sent that report up I got multiple taskers down from the MEF. Hey we need to find out more about this guy. And I kept going out and talking to him. And I would take the same translator. We finally ended up just bringing him back to the base to Camp Ramadi so that we could talk to him in more detail. I mean that kind of thing.

INTERVIEWER: With these interpreters what I'm getting at is whether or not it would be useful -- again moving forward as we look at other environments, other engagements, other theaters we may go into -- is it worthwhile to recommend that we instead provide our soldiers with more language training, more cultural training, maybe more use of cultural advisers or augments for example. The Marine Corps has something that's referred to as the cultural adviser program, the CULAD program. I know the Army has the human terrain system. There's also CENTCOM has something similar where there are cultural advisers. Is that a direction that you feel personally should be explored? Or do you think we should instead focus more on providing language training or more focus and emphasis on culture training for our troops?

04201240: I mean I'd like to have both which is of course not the answer you want because with all the scarcity -- I thought the -- I mean -- and I'm also reaching back into my first rotation here as well. When we did my first rotation we were engaging with the DACs and the NACs, the district councils and the neighborhood councils. We had both interpreters, translators provided by the Army that were you know US citizens of some flavor of Middle Eastern background. They were great cultural advisers. We also had a cultural adviser that was a native of Baghdad. He was a

really smart guy. Had a PhD. And I mean their value added was through the roof. So I think you have to have both. I mean you got to have somebody embedded down at the battalion, brigade level you know and the human terrain team doesn't really do any good for the guys actually making the decision on the ground if it's you know stuck up at brigade or division or corps level in my opinion of course. But I think the language training is key too. So that you know there's always going to be a finite supply of translators and interpreters. There's no two -- there's no way around it. And unfortunately the person who ends up losing out when there's a shortage of translators and interpreters in my experience are the units that are actually going out on patrol. Because the colonel is always going to have his translator and nobody's going to be allowed to touch him. The brigade commander is always going to have his or her translator and nobody's going to be allowed to touch him. The S2 shop at the brigade level is probably going to have their own interpreter and nobody else is going to be allowed to touch him. So I think down at the platoon level and the company -- you know the company level where the rubber actually meets the road and the most engagement actually goes on, that's where I think you could make your most money having translators who are also you know culturally adept and understand the culture you know. Hopefully have some kind of native ties to the area to help you out. Because that's where you know they would be additional value added above just the language skills is when they're able to tell you hey this is what I think is really going on in this neighborhood, this is the person I think is actually in charge, or this is -- these people are saying this but they're really more concerned about this. And they're not going to tell you that for X, Y and Z reasons.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the troops that were on the ground -- your enlisted guys, do you think they had enough cultural savvy to recognize what was going on in their community? Or do you think that is something that has changed over time with cultural training?

04201240: Well, I mean I think the military has had a pretty huge transition that occurred around that time of that rotation of a focus from you know search and destroy, we're going to search the houses at night, find the bad guys, and then put them in jail, and then there will be no more insurgent activity, to you know more counterinsurgency-related living amongst the populace, getting to know the populace, working with them to rid the area of the insurgency. I think I mean based on my experience and talking to squad leaders, you know Joes down in the line squad, the guys that are doing the heavy lifting you know on a daily basis, I think they probably came to the same understanding as the rotation went along that we're not going to be able to shoot our way out of Ramadi. I mean it just can't be done. Previous units had found themselves in the same situation where it's kinetic, kinetic, kinetic and all you really end up with is a lot of you know dead guys on the other side, a fair amount of casualties on our side, and really no progress being made. So I think people at the company level understood that. But it was a difficult lesson to learn because you know guys are losing their buddies out on these missions to IEDs and you know gunfire and everything else like that.

INTERVIEWER: When you were working with these sheikhs, and if you didn't experience this then you don't need to go into detail. But I mean was there any alignment or operational planning with Sheikh Sittar and his brother or their tribal elements that you were aware of? I mean were they actually incorporated into the operational planning process? Or was it only after they started submitting people to the police force and they became legitimate police?

04201240: Right. We didn't use them as -- we meaning [*unit removed*] Armor did not use them operationally until they became part of the Iraqi police.

So once they had taken -- once they became you know part of the Zangora IP station and then other parts of their family you know went to downtown Ramadi to fill out that IP station as well. Then we used them on missions. They weren't being used as part of you know actual like trigger pullers or anything like that until they transitioned into the Iraqi police.

INTERVIEWER: So this idea of militias that were not legitimate police forces. Doesn't sound like that necessarily existed. Or do you think that there were actual militias that were operating there as well?

04201240: Yeah I mean I think that yeah just the -- I can't remember what they called them in 2005. I have no -- I mean I don't know. But I think that the tribes were probably operating independently of us. Both before the Awakening and then you know as the Awakening took place. But that was not you know -- they weren't giving us briefings about what they were doing. And nor were we giving them instructions about what to do. At least not on the civil affairs side of the house. I didn't witness anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: OK. But the idea at least from your perspective, the idea that we were supporting militias doesn't seem to hold much weight.

04201240: No. I mean I think what are some people's militia are other people's Iraqi police. I mean I think some people probably see putting an entire tribe into an Iraqi police station in their area you know and with them receiving training but it being limited training, I think some people refer to that as militia. I don't. I mean they were Iraqi police and they had to swear allegiance you know to the country of Iraq and fall you know underneath the control of the interior ministry and the Iraqi police. That was a big stumbling block for us as we negotiated with you know Sheikh Ahmed, Sheikh Sittar and the other sheikhs. Because the interior ministry is dominated by the Shia and the Iraqi police nationally are dominated by the Shia. And obviously the people of Al Anbar are not you know huge fans of the Shia takeover of Iraq. So that was a huge stumbling block. But they elected to join the Iraqi police instead of joining the Iraqi army because they wanted their sons to stay right there in Ramadi and provide security for them. And that was kind of the genesis of the Awakening, the military aspect of the Al Anbar Awakening.

INTERVIEWER: So the idea of them going into the Iraqi army, did that -- I mean were they as successful in terms of that recruiting? Because the Iraqi army, they were going everywhere.

04201240: No. Right. I mean that's what they -- Sheikh Sittar I remember vividly saying to me -- Colonel [*name removed*] and myself in June you know we want to put some men into the Iraqi army and have an Iraqi army unit of you know people from Ramadi and people from the tribe. And we had to explain to them that if they go into the Iraqi army they belong to you know the big Iraqi army meaning they could be deployed anywhere. And you know we have -- you would have no control over that whatsoever. But if you put them into the Iraqi police they could stay here and serve Ramadi. And you know there was some pushback for a little while on joining the Iraqi police because of affiliation with you know the Shia domination and the interior ministry and everything else. But they eventually elected to go the Iraqi police route after we talked about you know hey if you put your guys into the Iraqi police, we get enough, you'll get a tribal -- you'll get an Iraqi police substation that is in your tribal area, filled with guys from your tribe, as long as you give up a certain percentage of them to go down to downtown Ramadi and work with the Iraqi police down there.

INTERVIEWER: You know what I'm finding is that you know 2006 was actually called often the year of the police. What I'm actually starting to find is that it's not necessarily so much the year of the police as it was the year of the local. And that the key seems to be that it was local forces staying in their local areas. Do you think that's a fair assessment?

04201240: I think so. I mean I think the year of the police, the reason that has come about, is I think that was the -- God, I can't remember what they called it. What was the four-star command in Iraq? I don't sit around thinking about this war anymore. I've moved on. Whatever the four-star level, General Casey in command, said this is going to be the year of the Iraqi police. That was the national effort. What we saw in Ramadi was absolutely was absolutely the year of the local. I mean it was the people there in their local area wanting to basically step up and say enough is enough, you know let's get back to somewhat normal living. And the way to do that was the Iraqi police and you know arming the tribes within the auspices of the Iraqi police.

INTERVIEWER: Did your unit have any understanding of what police forces were like before, under Saddam?

04201240: Oh, before the war itself?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah under Saddam's you know rule the police weren't necessarily trusted agents. So --

04201240: Oh no, no. Yeah I don't really have any vivid memories of them talking about prewar living. But I do -- you know I do remember Sheikh Ahmed, Sheikh Sittar saying many times that if you just give us weapons we'll be able to -- you know we'll clean out Ramadi in two weeks. And of course we couldn't just hand them weapons and we would explain that to them. And that was part of the negotiation. One thing Sheikh Sittar said is he said I want desert

protectors, because he was familiar with the program that the SEALs had run with the Mahal tribe out in western Al Anbar I think in '05. And you know I immediately went back and made an inquiry about -- you know found out what desert protectors were and how we could get them and found out very quickly that that was not an option for us. And that's why we went back to him with Iraqi army or Iraqi police. He initially wanted Iraqi army because Iraqi army has traditionally been dominated by the Sunnis and it still had quite a bit of Sunni influence in the Iraqi army even post Saddam. But the nonnegotiable was we're not going to put our guys in the Iraqi army to have them sent somewhere else, you know sent to Baghdad or sent up to Mosul or wherever else.

INTERVIEWER: Why was the desert protector program, why was that not something that you guys were willing to invest in? Was it because it was a militia?

04201240: I don't know why the reason was that we were told we weren't allowed to do desert protectors. I just know that higher meaning brigade said desert protectors are not an option, that that is a -- that's not something we can do.

And I know that you know Travis and Colonel [*name removed*] and Colonel [*name removed*], I'm sure they had conversations with higher about that but I wasn't privy to that stuff.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Yeah there's -- you know there's quite a bit in the literature that talks about that.

04201240: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of the Anbar Awakening. There's an article called *Better Lucky than Good* and it's written by an ODA, former ODA, who -- talks about the Albu Mahal and the Albu Nimr and the efforts that they had 2005. And his perspective is that the Awakening could have happened in 2005 had there been support, or more support, from coalition forces towards the Nimr and Mahal. Do you have any opinion based on what you saw in 2006 about whether or not the community was ready for this type of Awakening movement any sooner than what happened in your timeframe?

04201240: I don't know. And you know this gets into the difficulty of historical hypotheticals. I just don't know if the critical mass of support from the tribes would have been there in terms of had they become fed up enough -- I mean for lack of a better term -- with just the way things were. You know were they -- in 2005 were they sufficiently upset with Al Qaeda coming in and stealing their revenue sources through smuggling and the -- controlling the highways and

everything else like that that they were willing to you know side with the Americans and you know take up weapons against their -- you know against fellow Iraqis and the foreign influence that had come in. I just don't know. I know that you know it happened in 2006. There was a confluence of events that led to you know not just Sheikh Sittar and Sheikh Ahmed but you know all the other tribes there on the northern and western crescent of Ramadi saying you know enough is enough. After they killed the -- I think it was the Albu Ali Jassim sheikh on August 22nd where they all just you know put their foot on the ground and said you know we're not doing this anymore and we're going to take a huge chance and we're going to come together and we're going to drive these people out of our neighborhood. I don't know if that could have happened in 2005 or not. I know that -- I can't remember his name but the guy who tried to do it in 2005 in Ramadi. I think they had limited success for a couple weeks and then all of a sudden him and the other sheikhs that were involved in it turned up dead. And so I don't -- you know had there been more coalition support for that, I don't know if you would have been able to stop the murder and intimidation campaign from Al Qaeda because you know you can put a Bradley on every street corner but the people who are from there and know everybody, they can walk around and pretty much do whatever they want behind closed doors. It's really difficult until you have enough buy-in in the populace. Because they're the people that know what's going on.

INTERVIEWER: And is that part of the problem that we have though? That the -- you know a lot of earlier units weren't necessarily as dismounted as you know Ready First and the Marines were back in 2006?

04201240: Is what? I'm sorry.

INTERVIEWER: Dismounted. That I mean it seems to be one of the major changes that occurred in Ramadi is that people were getting out of their vehicles and actually doing foot patrols on a more regular basis.

04201240: Right. Yeah. I would assume that that something to do with it. I just didn't know and I don't know enough about how the previous units were operating. I'll tell you I mean I went in and sat in on the right seat, left seat ride with the infantry company in Tam'eem and the unit that preceded us in Tam'eem, they were as dismounted as you can get. I mean they were Vermont National Guard mountain infantry, light infantry company. And those guys were out in sector every single day dismounted. They were out in sector every single night dismounted. They were doing almost everything dismounted throughout that sector.

INTERVIEWER: And that was a National Guard unit?

04201240: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. All right.

04201240: Yeah I mean that's the kind of thing that I think people have preconceptions about what the National Guard did in Ramadi. But I mean when we got there and did the left seat, right seat ride I was pretty impressed actually with the National Guard unit that we took over from. They were very involved and I thought doing the right thing. But you know unfortunately Ramadi was a shithole for lack of a better term and it's pretty strong form input but I mean it didn't have enough soldiers to secure the whole area.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think the reason that there's preconceived notions is because at least in the public record what's available for people who try and do this type of research, the National Guard has taken a pretty hard hit. I mean the matter of public opinion is based on you know historical memory, what authors are willing to present. And if you're not able to talk with the National Guard then you know it's a little bit of a one-sided argument. So if you have information that can help me understand their role, their actions, their involvement, I would love to hear it. Because I would like to include their perspective or at least any information about their types of tactics in this type of research.

04201240: Yeah I mean I know Colonel [*name removed*] might have the contact information for our predecessors and I'm sure you could get it pretty easily just by reaching out to Vermont National Guard. Now at brigade level I don't have really the level of fidelity on what [unit removed] was doing writ large. But in terms of down on the ground in western Ramadi I mean first -- that [unit removed] Armor out of Vermont, they were engaging local leaders. They were out in sector. I mean they were boots on the ground trying to do the best they could with the resources they had. I mean they had a great intel section as well. So I was pretty impressed when we took over from them. And I mean I'd been in Iraq before so it wasn't my first right seat, left seat ride. I'd been both in Baghdad and the Triangle of Death area on my first rotation.

INTERVIEWER: Did they ever talk to you about any training or any type of -- I mean did they receive any type of cultural training or IPB? Did they have a situational awareness?

04201240: I don't know.

I just -- I don't know about their predeployment training and you know I got a pretty limited snapshot of their deployment. You know just as much as I needed and I could get in that you know one-week timeframe. But I will -- I mean they were ready to get on the plane because it had been a pretty rough rotation for them. I can't remember how many guys they lost in the battalion but I know it was in double digits.

INTERVIEWER: Finally the base question for this research project is what dynamics, interactions and actions that were used to instigate or support the Awakening movement do you feel based on your experience in 2006 are globally applicable. And I bring this up because again looking back at the literature there's a lot of discussion about models and whether or not there are specific models that can be utilized across board in terms of any counterinsurgency environment. So if you --

04201240: Oh yeah I've thought about that a little bit. And thought about it a lot more when I first got out of the Army. I haven't really thought about it in the last couple years because I'm not in the Army. Not what I do anymore. But I mean I thought the big takeaways for me. There's certainly no checklist -- I know the military loves checklists -- that I could say on you know why we were successful. Or what I would recommend for any kind of engagement or larger level planning for civil affairs. But what I saw just at you know my level in talking to everything from your average Iraqi in his house up to you know mukhtars in neighborhoods and you know lower level tribal leaders and tribal sheikhs and civil servants and that kind of thing is you've got to engage everyone in your sector to include people. You know seek out people that you don't think are necessarily going to be local leaders. People you think actually really don't like you. Because the more you engage people, the more you're going to learn about them. And you know if you're not talking to somebody nothing good is probably going to happen. One thing I found in engagements. You know a lot of these things.

We as Americans want to talk because as military people we're -- you know we're can do get done people and we want to take charge of the situation and drive the conversation to an endpoint you know which is our preconceived idea of what we're going to get out of this person. A lot -- you're a lot better off in my experience to let the person on the other side talk, let them vent, let them tell you everything that you've done that's wrong, how you're ruining their neighborhood and everything else and just get that out of them. It's cathartic for them and it allows you to learn more about the other person. Don't promise anything you can't provide. Don't get into the business of making promises unless you absolutely need to and you're at a sufficient point in a relationship that a promise is warranted. Find what you can agree on with the person you're talking to. You know you're -- not everybody you talk to is going to decide to come on board with America for the big win. Find something, you know some common ground, something you can agree on, something that you can follow up with the person about later. And make your mistakes, whether they're mistakes, you know historical mistakes or a mistake you made you know a week ago. I know with unit changeover a lot of times people would badmouth the unit before them and say oh well you know that unit messed this up and we're going to change that. They just see one uniform. And I mean whether it's Marines or Army or just Army Army, Marines Army, you're all on the same team. So admit any mistakes that were made you know and own them as your own, move forward.

I mean the big thing with the Awakening was just an alignment of incentives. You know find out what is driving that local leader. You know what is their -- or whoever you're talking to. What is their power base, what makes them tick, what is important to them, and what are the stress points for them in their life whether it's you know family issues, security, economics. And then figure out how you can align your interests with their interests. And so you have some mutual incentive that you can use to work together on something and just build the relationship. Because you never know where that's going to go. And that's kind of what happened with Sheikh Sittar and those units that had been there

before us had built a great relationship with Sheikh Ahmed, Sheikh Sittar and the whole Albu Risha family. And that carried over and you know finally our incentives were truly aligned in the summer of 2006 where they decided that enough was enough and you know we were looking for anybody to work with basically in sector to provide security. Because Ramadi was generally just a lost cause.

You know as famously published by that Marine colonel's intel assessment that came out that summer. Cultural sensitivity is huge. You know it would have been great if there had been more training I think for the trigger puller level. You know squads and platoons going into an area about how much you can set yourself back just by roughing up you know some old man when you go into his house. You know 19-year-old soldier not realizing. You know he's angry about something that happened and not realizing that by roughing up this old guy who's being intransigent he's basically turning you know a whole neighborhood against them. And then one big thing that I think we finally came to grips with in 2006 and was not a focus I think from 2003 until that time. And I think it's one of these things that kind of just percolated up from the bottom, from the ranks, where people were like hey this is my second Iraq rotation. Or as Travis said in his PowerPoint slide if we'd realized this three years ago maybe I'd have gotten to spend more time at home with my wife. Because you've got to recognize and work within the local traditional power structures. You know that culture has been there for thousands of years and it's going to be there for thousands of years after we leave. And unless we work within their culture, their local power structures, the way their families are arranged and interrelated to all the other. You know even though these are separate tribes they're all interrelated and intermarried. And if you're not willing to work within that you can get nowhere. I mean you can't overlay a Western construct on top of a completely different culture. So that's a couple bullet points for me. Certainly not a checklist. I don't know how helpful that is.

INTERVIEWER: No, it's very helpful. Because I mean any of this information that goes back is going to help us as we move forward shaping our training. You know also there's the COIN manual doctrine that we can look at. And do you think that -- I mean the COIN manual was written after Ramadi. But do you think that there was you know Army doctrine or any of the material that the Army provided to you that you know is a standard staple of how COIN operations should continue? Or do you think there needs to be revision in terms of doctrine? Especially after the lessons that were learned from Ramadi in the Anbar Awakening.

04201240: I don't know because I was not provided any materials from the Army. Other than I guess we got some lessons learned manuals in between the two Iraq rotations. Excuse me. But I mean when I -- I got out of the Army after my second Iraq rotation. So the COIN manual. I know it's out there. I haven't read it. I'm sure it's got really good stuff in it because you know a lot of people with a lot of experience in Iraq wrote it and I know General Petraeus and I think maybe it was General Mattis worked together on that. But I wasn't provided anything from the Army to prepare me for any of this. I mean I had the benefit of going to a college that you know had a very strong international perspective on things and I had a roommate who was fluent in Arabic and had grown up in Saudi Arabia. So I understood a little bit about Arabic -- you know Arab culture. That kind of thing. But I can't really offer any revisions to Army doctrine because there wasn't really any Army doctrine that I got as a lieutenant and a captain.

INTERVIEWER: That's fair. That's fair. Well, I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to talk with me. Especially over a weekend. If there's any additional information you'd like to add please contact me. Also if you think there's other people that I really really need to speak with you know send them my information. But if there's any additional information that you have please contact me and provide it. But again I appreciate your participation so much. Thank you.

04201240: OK, yeah, thanks. Yeah good luck with everything. And I'll let you know if I have any other additional information. I mean I'm kind of just going off memory with this stuff. Because I don't really think about it anymore. I'm not -- I left the Army in '07 and I'm completely a civilian now. So this is all just a memory for me. But hopefully you can turn it into something good for both the soldiers and Marines going forward.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. No, that's great. Thank you so much. You have a great day.

04201240: All right. Thanks.

INTERVIEWER: Bye-bye.

04201240: Yeah. Bye.

END OF AUDIO

Interview 15: 04201241

Interview 04201241 Part I, 09 May 2012

INTERVIEWER: OK. May the 9th. I'm talking with 04201241. Sir, you have received the informed consent, correct?

04201241: That's correct.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any questions or concerns about the informed consent process?

04201241: No, I do not.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful. For the record, could you provide some background into what you were doing and where you were located in Anbar during the time of your deployment?

04201241: Yes. I was in -- I was a team leader with [*unit removed*] CAG, and I was in direct support of [*unit removed*] Marines, and we were located at Hurricane Point in Ramadi, Iraq, from 2000 -- from August -- or September 2006 until April 2007. So we were -- our battalion, [*unit removed*] Marines, was a battalion under the Ready First.

INTERVIEWER: OK, wonderful. In regards to your job with Civil Affairs, I'm assuming, although I probably shouldn't, that you were outside talking with locals and engaging on a pretty regular basis.

04201241: Yeah, that's right. We were -- so my kind of job with the battalion was direct local engagement with the population and to understand -- try to keep a pulse on the city, understand what some of the Iraqi military requirements were, and then really to conduct military operations for the battalion.

INTERVIEWER: OK. In terms of those engagements, were you just engaging the local leaders, or were you also having regular conversations with locals who were out in the city?

04201241: We did both. So we engaged -- we engaged leaders at all kind of levels in our battalion to include tribal leaders, city leaders, which at the beginning were literally none. There was no -- there were no mayors, there were no local civilian governmental police for the city. Even for the province, all we had was the governor, and that was pretty much it. But at the same time, we're also engaging the local populace in general, and just really trying to develop our situational awareness on what their views and opinions were of how the city was functioning, and trying to interdict sometimes without them even knowing, problems that they see. Just try to create jobs, if we could, in certain neighborhoods, that would get people back to working again.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Were you collaborating with any of the Army units that were also in Ramadi?

04201241: We were. We would -- so the way we were set up, we had the civil affairs team in each of the Army battalions. And so if there were -- if there was a project maybe that would kind of border on which part of the city, we would work with those civil affairs teams and those battalions to figure out which battalion or which project would be best served by each other's battalions. So if there were a project taking place on the border of -- between [*our unit*] and civil affairs members from the other battalions, we'd work with them to say, OK, maybe you all should do this project. So we'd work it out at once. But we'd also exchange information on who we're talking to, and maybe even contractors that we -- if we didn't have a contractor that could do a certain thing, maybe one of the other battalions knew a contractor in their area that we could use for a project. And vice versa. And then at the same time, we'd have Colonel [*name removed*], who is the DET commander for the Ready First. We'd have weekly civil affair team leader meetings,

where we could exchange ideas, kind of brief each other on what we had been doing, and kind of exchange best practices, if you will, for that time.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any communication challenges or any problems, say, with the networking that was going on between the computer systems? Anything that would, in your opinion, impede some of the progress that could have been made?

04201241: You know, I don't remember -- I don't remember any real major com issues. We -- this was -- this was '06, so three years into war. By that time, pretty much the networks had been established, and I don't remember any major communications issue between -- with us, internal to Ramadi, from (inaudible) back to my DET commander or the brigade or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: OK. From the civil affairs perspective, did you feel that you understood and received guidance from MEF that came down to the battalion, and vice versa? Was there information flow that was going up and down the chain?

04201241: Yeah, there's definitely information flow. There was definitely information flow. I do think, at times, there was disconnect between the brigade and the MEF. And especially initially, where I felt like we were getting pushback for some of our tribal engagement efforts from the MEF. I'm saying the MEF in loose terms. I'm not sure who. Was it something outside or the civil affairs side or where. I just felt there was a disconnect between what we were trying to accomplish in Ramadi and what they were doing. There may have even have been a disconnect between the TAG leadership and us down in Ramadi.

INTERVIEWER: In what ways?

04201241: I think -- this is my opinion. I'm not exactly sure. I wasn't privy to any communication between the brigade and MEF or whatever. A lot of the tribal engagement entities -- my opinion is that the TAG leadership at the highest level was kind of against it. They were trying to push, hey this is -- we're here to support the elected governments. Got these tribal elements. Some of them had an opinion of some of the tribal leaders we were engaging were -- could be corrupt or had blood on their hands or were smugglers or whatever it may have been. So there was that angst, I felt, from, I'll say, once again, MEF. I don't want to say it was -- not command or anything, but I felt some pushback initially from that. But I think as time went on, into January, February, into March, I think people started coming onboard. I think I saw that change, but initially I felt there was a disconnect from what we were trying to do at the brigade battalion level and what MEF wanted us to do.

INTERVIEWER: Part of that may have been just because overall policy goals are to support the governance of Iraq, and that would include your provincial government, your -- the governor that was there, Governor Mamoun. So it would -- you have a mission that would be nested inside of those overall policy objectives. So I can see how there would be some disconnect when you start to engage tribes. Does that sound correct?

04201241: Yeah. Yeah, and that's completely understood. I mean, there was -- the military in general was there to support the elected government leaders. And that's where that -- that's where that conflict happened. But at the same time, I don't think MEF had a good understanding of exactly what we had in Ramadi, which was a provincial governor and that was it. No mayor. No water workers. No sewage workers. Nothing. So as we were trying to stand up and say, "Hey, we need a mayor, we need to start doing things," we were met with some initial pushback. I'll leave it at that.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you engage often with Governor Mamoun?

04201241: No, not at our level. So at the battalion level, we did not. I think -- our battalion commander did, but kind of the governor was more of a brigade-slash-MEF kind of level asset to engage. To engage with. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: All right. With the tribal leaders, did you have a sense that there was also a hierarchy of tribal elders that you were and were not allowed to engage? Or did you just engage with whomever was in your area of operations?

04201241: Yeah, I didn't feel like -- we definitely dealt with kind of the people in our area, like our little battalion area. And sometimes -- I mean, frequently, the battalion XO, Major [*name removed*], and myself would go to Sheikh Sittar's house, and meet with Sittar and Ahmed, his brother. Coming at least on a weekly basis, but it was more -- and when we would do that, I would say nine times out of ten, we'd also have our local tribal folks in those meetings with us. So it was almost just like a networking type of engagement. So we would do both. We'd meet with Sittar and Ahmed, but also our local tribal leaders. And sometimes some of the things we wanted to do -- we needed to talk to Sittar and those guys with our local tribal leaders so we were all on the same page.

INTERVIEWER: What was your impression of Sheikh Sittar and his brother in terms of the tribal relationships with these other tribes?

04201241: I thought there was definitely a dynamic in that whole -- in the tribal movement in terms of kind of who sat at the top and kind of down the chain of command and their whole chain of command. But we only had positive engagement with those guys. I think, looking at Sittar, I mean, he was definitely a dynamic individual. He was kind of the front man out there. I think his brother was a little bit more the brains behind the operation. You could have kind of good, lengthy discussions with his brother. If you really needed something, make something work, it was usually talking to Sheikh Ahmed. Then we had another individual we talked a lot with, [*name removed to protect individual*]. I forget [his] last name. We worked with [*name removed to protect individual*] and Ahmed, and then -- to get things done in our battalion area when needed to include -- we had an individual named Sheikh [*name removed to protect individual*] in our area that we dealt with frequently for tribal things we needed to get done in the battalion area.

INTERVIEWER: Did your battalion interact any at all with the battalions that were working in Tam'eem?

04201241: Not directly. Like, on the civil affairs side, we did. But it was never -- it was never -- it was just exchanging ideas and seeing which projects, things along those lines. No. Obviously, that battalion would do operations -- kind of like all battalions would. If a battalion in Tam'eem was doing a major operation, we would try to do things in support of their battalion, and vice versa. So we were doing an operation in our area, and we were the brigade's focus of effort. That Army battalion at Tam'eem would do things like close off certain streets or monitor certain avenues and that they're safe for us, to help our battalion out.

INTERVIEWER: OK. With the civil affairs side, were you working directly with the Iraqi counterparts in terms of planning the types of projects you were going to do in support of development?

04201241: We did. Eventually -- at first it was strictly, let's start getting projects started in the city, just because we didn't really have any when we got there. So one of our first projects was more of an IO type of project, was let's just get all the burned-out, bombed-out vehicles off the streets of Ramadi. And so that was kind of the first one. Then we started getting more projects done, things like cleaning up parks and just trying to kind of beautify the city, if you will, a little bit. And once a mayor came onboard and some of the city workers started coming back, what we would usually do is sit down with the mayor and some of the city leaders, like the power guy or the water guy or whatever, and go through kind of a list of projects and kind of get their input, and then have them also prioritize certain things. And then we could go ahead and execute those civil military operations.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find any conflict or roadblocks towards trying to find the appropriate contractors, the Iraqi contractors, to help you with these projects?

04201241: Yeah. I mean, no major roadblocks. But at the same time, you always want to -- you wanted to make sure you had the right contractor for the right job. I think sometimes you understood you may not always have that. I felt, at the same time, once -- at first it was hard. You really didn't know what kind of contract you were working with, other than when you went to inspect the work that was being done. But once we get kind of that -- I'm not going to call it a city council, but once we got that core group of people, like the mayor and the other folks, onboard, and we could meet with them weekly, I felt like at that point we really were hitting the nail in the head with having the right contractors do the right jobs. And I didn't feel like there was any favoritism showing between this contractor or that contractor. I just think that if we were to work on a sewage issue or whatever, we were getting someone that the water department people knew it was a solid contractor to do a sewage job or water job. But up until that point, your contractors were just kind of word of mouth, who you were getting. But I would say, for the most part, for the type of project we were doing, all the contractors met our expectations.

INTERVIEWER: Were they assigned or brought to you by these tribal elements, by the tribal leaders? Or through the government?

04201241: They were, for the most part -- yeah, for the most part, they were brought to us by -- through the tribal engagement. And not just tribal engagement, but also city engagement.

INTERVIEWER: The idea behind the way the Three Block War in terms of what was going on in Ramadi was that operations were going on all at once, and rather than clear-hold-build being a consecutive thing, it was something that was done at the same time, and that that was a very unique way of approaching operations in Ramadi. Do you have any opinions or comments to that?

04201241: I do -- I remember that well, and I remember (inaudible). We're not clear -- we're not doing any clear, then hold, then build. We're doing clear and hold and build. It's totally -- I think that's exactly what we were doing, whereas -- as the company moved in to set up a security station, that oftentimes was very kinetic, that first few days when we'd set up that security station. So while we were doing kind of civil affairs operations then, i.e. moving people out of their homes and making sure people were safe and making sure civilians weren't getting in the kinetic area, a block away we were cleaning up a park, or we were building a soccer field, or we were preparing the school or something along those lines. So we were definitely doing civil affairs in support of all those three phases. During kinetics, during hold, and also building things. So I definitely -- we saw that -- that happened in Ramadi during that timeframe.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the Iraqi people were seeing it and responding to you guys? Did you get a sense of a feeling that the people were onboard with you?

04201241: Yeah, I think probably around November and December, I started really getting that feeling. When we set up -- we set up a security station on -- we called it the (unclear audio-Phillip Heath?) Street Security Station.

Kind of our first major flurry into an area called Katana, this little district inside Ramadi. But once we start setting up that, and we could do little patrols out from there, I definitely got a feel that the population saw us as an enabler to security and not a detriment to security. And we had more people approaching us. At least this is my feeling. I felt like we had people approaching us and understanding we were trying to clean things up. That was the first time I really felt that.

And then in December, we set up -- we were trying to set up the Katana security station, and eventually had to move fall back in this one house for a few days, and the family -- we offered them the opportunity -- I said, "Hey, we can move your family out without anyone seeing it, or you can stay here," and the family wanted to stay there. So again, holed up with this family about four or five days, talking to them. I had a good sense that they understood what was going on and

understood that we were there trying to improve their security situation, which would also eventually improve their economic situation and get things back to normal. So I definitely, like November, December timeframe, definitely felt that. Then that just carried on through January and February. Things were a lot easier.

But I think the one operation in December was a great example of that Three Block War and how sometimes your kinetic operations could have an adverse impact on your civil affairs type stuff. Which it happens. You're not going to change that. It's always going to happen. But we had to blow up a building, and literally when we did that, we blew a whole water -- main water line in the city there, and things just started flooding. But by that time, luckily, through the tribal engagement, through developing a city council-like entity and working with local city employees, and through improving the security station, the security situation up to that point, we were kind of -- I say rapidly. (inaudible) not fast, but within days, get city water workers in there to start fixing those water lines again and fix that problem. The whole Three Block War, we were definitely doing it. I think when we started doing that, like I said, in November, it was a very methodical way we had to do it. But once we started doing that, you could see the population kind of start changing and things start improving at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Were you actually stationed out at the 17th Street Station, or did you maneuver back and forth to Hurricane Point?

04201241: Yeah, we maneuvered back and forth. My civil affairs team was only seven people, and so by having to mind the station at these company locations all the time, we would sit back at battalion headquarters and then, if there was an operation going on, we would just move down with that company and stay with that company for a day or two, or maybe just for a night, to do patrols or whatever it may be, and then come back to battalion headquarters.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you have any type of training for the civil affairs work? Or even just how to interact with the Iraqi culture prior to going out there?

04201241: Just during work-ups. I felt like [*unit removed*] CAG -- I joined [*unit removed*] CAG in November of 2005, and I felt like some of the weekend trainings we did helped, and then once we got activated and got into our training plan, I think they did a good job setting up roleplaying. Some of the situations, they put us out in the field to learn how to engage Iraqis and civilian populations. So I think they did a good job on that. I think some of the counterinsurgency classes we had were great. We had to go through a COIN academy in Taji prior to when we first got into Iraq. So I think that week in Taji at the COIN academy really helped out, truly understand it, getting a better grasp on counterinsurgency, on making the population center of gravity. I felt like we were pretty well-trained for a bunch of reservists coming in to do that type of job.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any training on how to deal with interpreters?

04201241: We did. We had a few classes on using interpreters. Even during the roleplaying, they would have someone act as interpreter for us. I think that worked out pretty well also.

INTERVIEWER: OK. What about body language training, anything like that that would help you understand whether or not an interpreter was saying what you needed them to say?

04201241: Yeah, you know, nothing like that really, to be honest. And that would have been useful. We -- the only kind of body language was the cultural stuff, like don't show the heels of your feet, don't do this, don't do that. But in terms of using the interpreter, that would have been helpful.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have interpreter challenges at all while you were there?

04201241: I had some internal. Some caused by just some personalities on my team. But at the end of the day, I think -- I had two translators. The first one had been there for a couple of years. We had a pretty bad -- we were setting up the Katana security station and the building blew up on us. And after that, my kind of translator checked out, and I think he was done. We were pretty close to the blast, so -- then when he left, we had another -- a very young Iraqi translator that took some time to get used to. He was very, very young, so some of the meetings we were having with Sittar and Ahmed and all that, he felt a little bit out of place, I think. But it still worked out well, I think.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Do you feel that there was training you should have had that you think may have made a difference in your mission's success?

04201241: Yeah, I think -- I think there's one. In terms of civil affairs, I think there's something to be said for having that capability, the majority of that capability, with reservists, because they do bring a civilian aspect to that job, which I think is important. But even with that being said, I would have loved, during training, to have a little bit better governance classes just in terms of, "Hey, this is how a city council is made up. This is the job a mayor does. This is the job that certain workers for a city or a local community are responsible for. This is how it operates." So I really would have liked a little bit more of that side of training. Maybe include going out and talking to a mayor, or talking to a city council member, or talking to the local electrical person or sewage person or whoever. I would have loved to have that type of training.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Would you -- you said talking to a governor or a mayor or something similar, but did you have any information that showed you or helped you understand what it was like in Iraq prior to the US going in? So what their city governance actually looked like with -- or under Saddam's administration?

04201241: You know what, I personally did not, to be honest with you. Looking back now, that would have been excellent information to have had. Maybe -- to be honest with you, maybe it was out there and I just didn't get to it or was lazy about getting that type of information, but that would have been great to have in that training also. Or have that type of information presented in a training session.

Because that really would have helped us. Like I said, this is no knock on anyone. This is just the way combat happens. Ramadi was a decimated city because of all the kinetic operations that took place prior to us getting there, and even while we were there. It would have been really nice to have a better understanding of how the city was functioning before all this happened.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. I'm sure that the people probably would have appreciated having their city returned to its former state.

04201241: Yeah. Sometimes you would say -- and we didn't know. Sometimes someone would show up, say, "Hey, I'm the water guy for the city." He seemed like he was, because he knew everyone, and all the workers that were still kind of working knew each other, so you felt like, OK, this is the legitimate guy. But at the end of the day, to be honest with you, there was no way for us to really know and to check. So that information would have definitely been handy.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it impeded your ability to perform the mission in any way, or do you think that it just would have aided it?

04201241: I think it was just a natural progression. Even if we had that information when we first got there, like I said, it was so kinetic that no one was showing up for work, and rightfully so, because there were firefights and IEDs taking place all over the place, and just the population in general did not feel secure whatsoever.

But at the -- oh, I'm sorry, real quick. But at the same time, like I said, Hurricane Point sat on the tip of Ramadi there at this tiny little place. We had a -- I'll call it a locks, if you will. Little barriers that would raise and lower the water -- slow down the river. They're not [based on whatever?]. So those water workers would show up religiously once a month to adjust those kind of locks. So there was some things taking place, but just not at the significant level like we would have liked to have had.

INTERVIEWER: Those guys that were showing up, who was paying them?

04201241: Yeah, they were getting paid. They would have to go to Fallujah or Baghdad to get their pay, but they were getting paid, so they still showed up for work, which was good. It just wasn't on a large-scale level, like the whole water department showing up, or the whole education department showing up, or the whole sewage department showing up. So it was very ad hoc, if you will. But once, I said, as security got better, then more and more people started showing back up. One of -- I think one of the most significant operations we did, probably, was injecting money into the bank. Ramadi was a big retirement community. A lot of workers were not getting paid. I think it had been like two or three months before the bank was really functioning the way a bank should do. People weren't getting their pensions they were paying through the bank of Ramadi.

INTERVIEWER: Were you using CERP funds or do you think that the government of Iraq was actually supporting any of those projects or even the bank for that reason?

04201241: In terms of the bank, to be honest with you, I don't remember -- I never remember hearing about a shipment of money from the Iraqi government to the bank. Initially while we were there. Later on it started happening, but we would have to -- I can't remember the frequency, but I know initially it was all -- I'm not going to say -- it wasn't CERP funds. It was whatever money that we had given the Iraqis to do whatever. Because we had to go down to the bank, and there was about $2.4 million in U.S. cash that we had to -- we went down there one night, took all that money out, took it back to Camp Ramadi, got on a helicopter, flew it back, exchange it for Iraqi dinar and brought it back, to put back into the bank. So I'm not sure, to be honest with you, whose money that was, how it got there initially or anything like that. But once -- like I said, all going back to security situation -- once that improved and we could make that shipment of money from Iraqi government into the bank, when it really started working, then things were executed pretty well in terms of the Iraqi government providing the money to the bank.

INTERVIEWER: OK. The reason I even asked that type of question is because there's -- in the literature, at least, there's some information that suggests that the GOI was not necessarily supporting the Sunni area, just because it's a Sunni/Shia divide. And that has been referenced as being an impediment. That the GOI actually was the impediment towards some of the reconstruction success that was going on in Ramadi, Fallujah, and other areas of Anbar.

04201241: Once again, that can very well have been the case, to be honest with you, but going back to your last question also, all the projects that we saw, that we were doing or whatever, were CERP projects.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you have any collaboration with the Iraqi army? Any work that you did with them?

04201241: A little bit. Not a whole lot. Probably the folks from [our unit?] you talked to probably have a better [cog?] on this. I know whenever I went out on a patrol, or whenever we did a company-size, battalion-size operation, we always had the Iraqi police and Iraqi army with us. Really -- and this is my own opinion on -- and I don't want to speak for [*name removed to protect individual*] or for [*name removed to protect individual*] or any other [*unit removed*] Marines, but the feeling I got, and I agreed with it, was really the most important thing for us to have are the Iraqi police with us. Because eventually that's who's going to be running the security in the city. And they were local, so they could go with -- they knew good guys and bad guys. They knew the terrain better than anyone. Because at that point, the Iraqi army that were there were still -- the majority of them were Shias not from that area. So having the local police

were, in my opinion, critical to really gain good understanding of the city and understanding who to talk to and who to reach out to and what kind of projects. We worked with those guys. If we were to do a project or a food delivery or whatever it may be, we always put their face -- we put their face on those projects, not U.S. military faces on those projects.

INTERVIEWER: The Iraqi police?

04201241: Yeah. If we were going to do a food delivery to a mosque or whatever, like if we shut down the city for -- sometimes we had to shut down the checkpoints coming into the city for a couple of days. And so when we'd do that, we'd always make sure we, prior to that operation, had start [locking on?] rice and oil and sugar and all these things that would come into the city that we would interrupt. We would have the police drop that stuff off at a mosque or whatever, a good distribution point, for the locals to come get those type of sustenance type stuff, to get them through a week or whatever it may be. So we tried to put as much as we can in an Iraqi station. Not just Iraqi police, but whatever it was, we would always try to put an Iraqi face on it, not a U.S. military face on it.

INTERVIEWER: OK. When you first came in to Ramadi, did you do a RIPTOA with another unit, and if so, what was your right seat, left seat like?

04201241: We did. We did one -- ours was [*unit removed*]. It was not the same as you'd find in an infantry battalion, but for me, the civil affairs team that we were replacing, they would take us down to government center, introduce us to whomever they had been working with before, and what are their projects they had done before, and then that was our kind of left seat, right seat type thing. Then just general situation, like, "Hey, watch out for this area" or "Our experience was we tried to do this and it didn't work very well." It was that type of information exchange.

INTERVIEWER: Did they talk to you about the amount of engagements that they had participated in or had had? Any continuity in terms of engagements with the local population or with the civil leaders or with the sheikhs?

04201241: Yeah, I got into that, and once again, I know that the environment changes so often and frequently for our turnover. The team -- they had been working with one contractor named [*name removed*]. I think his name was [*name removed*] or something like that. [*name removed*] was a critical player for us. I was glad they turned that guy over. People had been working with him for probably a year or two before that. That was really the only contractor-slash-local engagement that they had turned over to us, with the exception of there was one other guy, and he was from north of Ramadi, who was a sheikh of some sort. I would go down to -- with Alpha Company, went down with their company commander, and we went out to this guy's house once or twice. It became pretty apparent after the second visit, this guy is not a player. He may hold this title of sheikh at some level, but he just was not going to do anything for us. That was really the only trouble we had. And once again, not knocking the guys we relieved. There just was nothing there, really, at that point in time, I don't think.

INTERVIEWER: OK. That's fair. I've covered engagements. I've covered the operations collaboration you may have had, and I've covered quite a bit of the cultural training. Do you have any information, comments, or things that you would like to say about what types of training should we have moving forward, whether it be for general purpose Marines or for the reverse units, but what type of training should we have moving forward if we are looking at other COIN environments that --

04201241: I think obviously the basic skills, the basic infantry skills, are always critical, and that's always a must. I think we kind of hit on the whole -- especially (inaudible) side or just COIN in general. Understanding centers of gravity, i.e. the population first, and then understanding how certain villages or cities, how those function. I think you brought up an excellent point that I totally agree with. Understanding wherever you're going in to help, that city or village or country, how that government works. Because I think the whole thing of changing the way a government at the national

level or at the provincial level, at the city level -- I personally don't think that can be changed. We've got to work within that construct of how it functioned before. I think that's critical knowledge to have. Like I said, maybe it is a fault of mine that I just never really got into that or got that level of training that I would like to have had. And I think the point on some of the more -- understanding things like body language I think also would have been very, very helpful in terms of using translators, or even when you're talking to an individual from a different nationality. That would have been helpful also.

There's one other one. We got a little taste of it, but understanding before -- or when you're going into a COIN environment or whatever it may be, understanding all the types of funding that's out there, that's accessible to you. Not just CERP, but some of the other types of funding out there. And even having points of contact or offices that you can reach back to to do those type of things, I think would be very critical to have in a counterinsurgency environment.

INTERVIEWER: Now, with the training, did you -- as a reserve unit, did your unit receive any heavy language training?

04201241: No. No, not at all. It was such a -- it's such a short work-up and deployment that we probably just -- if you didn't know Arabic, you weren't going to learn it in two months or whatever it may have been, prior to going over there. So we didn't really have any heavy language training or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: What do the Marine reserve units do that's different from active duty? Is their training as intensive as your active duty Marines, in terms of the culture training and the language training and everything else that they have to go through?

04201241: I don't want to speak for all reserve units. I would say ours was not, just because -- it was intense. Once we got called up -- we were activated on 15 June and we deployed 31 August. Once we got activated, it was pretty intense training because you're trying to cram everything into those two and a half months. From rifle ranges to just combat things to civil affairs classes to learning the Marine Corps planning process. It was just a lot. We didn't get -- I think for the active duty guys, it's more of a consistent type of training, that they can focus maybe on language or some of these other things that a reserve unit -- it's just hard to do in a reserve unit.

INTERVIEWER: OK. With the reserve units, do you -- throughout the course of a year, do you receive any additional online augmented training that you have to do?

04201241: Not that I recall, to be honest with you.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

04201241: And that may have all changed, because it's been so long since I have done some like that. But back then, I don't recall any of that.

INTERVIEWER: OK. When -- getting back to your engagement, when you would go to Sheikh Sittar's house and have those engagements with him, what types of things, if any, were coming to light that led you to believe that there was something bigger going on here? At what point did the your unit know that this guy was going to be pretty instrumental in later activities, if at all? Because --

04201241: I think -- I'm trying to remember. I remember the first time -- I know the first time that [*name removed*] and I showed up, we were a little taken aback by, like, wow, this is -- just from the sheer physical presence when we showed up there, we thought this was something different than what we thought we were going to see. We showed up and literally walk in this room, and there are probably 10 other different tribal leaders there from different parts of Ramadi. At that point, we kind of thought, this may have some legs to it. So we were cautiously optimistic that we

could help each other out. But I think really trying to trace back to probably -- I think maybe in October. We start seeing things like -- I would get a contract in a bad part of town, and they were able to get the job done quickly.

OK, maybe this thing has a real good potential. They were living up to work -- things they were going to tell us they were going to do, they did, and vice versa. We were always trying to make sure -- not press them, but if we asked them to do something, and it could be simple as, "Meet us over here on this day and this time," and they would be there. So it was little things where, for me, I'm like, OK, I'm kind of giving them their reliability test, and they're meeting these types of tests. So then I can tell you where I definitely knew things were going to change rapidly was we set up a local police station in our battalion area, literally overnight, and we'd been talking to them previous. I think, for me, this was one of the most important things that I saw, because we would go to them and say, "OK, do you have any young men that want to sign up to be a local police officer?" And overnight, we built a police station. We had I don't know how many police officers there, that weren't formally trained as police officers, but we gave them blue uniforms and said, "OK, you're now a police officer. You're going on patrol with us." Once I started seeing their young men from their tribes show up, I knew that this was a game changer.

INTERVIEWER: So you had them out on patrol with you without training, or before they went to the academy?

04201241: Yeah, they didn't go to the academy. The plan was -- say we got 50 guys in for a police station. The plan -- and I'm trying to remember the exact number. We just didn't have time for them to go through the Phoenix Academy, but the plan was to phase -- the plan was to get them all through the Phoenix Academy at some point in time. Say you had 50. Maybe 10 of those young men would go to the academy and the other 40 would kind of do on-the-job training. When those 10 came back, maybe another 10 went through. That was our plan. Now, how that ended up being executed -- I'm not exactly sure of the numbers, but that was kind of the plan we had. There just were no police officers we had inside the city when we first got to the -- I shouldn't say no. There was an extremely limited number of police officers we had.

INTERVIEWER: So without them being trained, and yet with uniforms, I think there's a lot of discourse about militias in Ramadi, what constituted a militia, whether or not the United States was actually employing militias and supporting tribally-led militias. How do you feel about that? Do you think that that matches what you guys were doing, or were they police?

04201241: That was always a concern -- a concern of our-- we knew that was a concern of the MEF and of commanders in Baghdad, even. We heard over and over again -- and that was something they'd say. "We don't want you to create traveling militias." We understood that completely. I will say that we viewed them and that they were doing their job as a police officer. Now, not like a police officer we'd have in the United States. These guys were capable of carrying a rifle and pointing out good guys and bad guys, gathering intelligence on their own, that type of stuff. Could they do a crime scene or any of that? No. Not then, but to be honest with you, that was the last thing we were thinking about during that timeframe. But we viewed them as definitely police officers. They had their own chain of command. They had their own case chiefs. I don't even know if the police chiefs had gone through the academies or not, to be honest with you, but they answered to these guys. You could see the command -- respect that these young Iraqi police officers had for their police chiefs. And so we felt very confident that these guys were capable of going out on patrol with us and helping us out.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So it didn't feel like a militia as much as it did a general purpose element?

04201241: Right, right.

INTERVIEWER: I don't want to say paramilitary, but at the same time, it wasn't police, yet -- actually, in some -- there's been some references to them being more paramilitary. But that's -- again, if that's all you needed...

04201241: That's a good -- that's a good -- I think that's a good term. I'd almost equate them -- I don't want to equate them to this, but almost like a national guard where they were kind of paramilitary-ish, that they could do security-type operations.

I think that's one of the important things of why we got them uniforms, is to make them feel part of a unit. Like I said, you could definitely see a chain of command when you went to these police stations.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you have any civilian augments that came in to help you train any of these police?

04201241: We did not. At the time -- maybe later on they did, but at the time that was kind of conducted at Blue Diamond. We just weren't real privy to what was going on there. I didn't see any while I was there, in terms of the battalion, our police officers and our battalion.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Finally, there's the overall baseline question for this research project, is what actions, interactions, or dynamics do you feel may have instigated or supported the awakening movement that can be globally applied in other COIN environments?

04201241: I think -- I think the first one is understanding what their real needs are, and understanding that sometimes their needs or requirements aren't going to match what you're wanting to do or your needs. You've got to find that healthy balance of -- sometimes it's putting what they want to do first. I don't mean things that would put anyone in danger or whatever it might be, but building that trust and confidence in each other I think is critical. But at the same time, you always have to maintain a healthy, skeptical eye on that relationship. I think that's the first one, is developing that trust and confidence, where you're both feeling like you're on the same team. I know that's kind of wishy-washy.

There's nothing quantifiable you can do, or metric you can establish, to say, "OK, we have done X, Y, and Z." I think it's just one of those things that, as a Marine or a soldier, you use your judgment on that type of stuff. And the other one is, at some point -- sometimes you have to be kind of brutally honest with each other, perceptually. But other times, they would say, "Anybody want to do this?". In the end, I would have to kind of walk them back without telling them why they couldn't do that, because we knew we had an operation getting ready to take place or something going on. If you develop that respectful relationship to begin with, they will understand certain -- sometimes when those pop up and you say, "No, I'm sorry, but we just cannot do that" or "We can't do that right now." I think that aspect is very important in terms of tribal engagement globally. It will change from culture to culture and country to country.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

04201241: The other one -- the other thing is you have to -- you really have to watch CERP funding and make sure you're not wasting taxpayers' money. But also you have to understand that maybe to do this one project that you know you need to do, that will have a great impact, you may have to do a couple other little projects to help to get to that point. And so that's another thing I would say you kind of have to apply no matter where you are.

INTERVIEWER: What level of follow-through do you think we need to have for these types of projects?

04201241: I took -- the projects that we did, we would always follow up to make sure they were done. I always made sure that we went back and did a final assessment on was the project complete. And there were many times where we -- the guy would say, "I'm done," and we're like, "OK, well" -- to be honest with you, I would just lie and say, "I don't have the funding yet. It's still coming." And that would buy me a week or so, and eventually I could work with the company and say, "Hey, can you get me off of this site, or can you -- when you're on a patrol near this area, can you pop

in and see if this work has been completed?" type of thing. You definitely need to have that follow-through to make sure you're not just throwing good money after bad, or bad money after good, to make sure these projects are getting done. One thing – you have to have a mindset of no matter what these projects are, they're not going to be done to the level -- a U.S. standard that we achieve in the U.S. or some great, civilized country. As long as it's to what the level of Iraqis -- what they do and how they do it, but the project is complete and it's functioning.

INTERVIEWER: OK. The reason I would even go into that level of depth is because, when I was there in 2008, we were hearing significant complaints from the locals about projects that weren't being completed, and I was told, at least from the State Department -- not Civil Affairs, but at least from the State Department, with the PRTs that there were monetary breakdowns to follow-ups. So if you had a project, say, that was under $5,000, or even under $15,000, they didn't go check.

04201241: Oh, really?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know if that was necessarily a PRT operating procedure, but the people themselves, the Iraqis, they didn't distinguish between whether or not it was a Civil Affairs unit that was doing something versus a State Department-led project. Did you experience -- actually, did you even have PRTs that were out there at the time?

04201241: That's something to bring up here, because we did -- we did and didn't. The poor PRT guys were at Blue Diamond, and they just could not get out really to go do projects. Because there was a four vehicle requirement, and this and that, and they were just having -- we had very little interaction while we were there. When we were leaving, I think [*name removed*], who was the DET commander that relieved our DET had a -- the PRT grew and it became like an EPRT. It was much more robust than we were there. But I know while we were there, even if the PRT had a project, it was just hard for the guys to get out anywhere.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So it doesn't sound like the same type of environment. With the projects that you were engaging in, how much local involvement did you have? How many -- did the people come out and talk to you guys and see you? What was that like?

04201241: Yeah, I think -- our projects were -- we weren't building any type of power plants or anything like that. It was a lot easier for our projects. It was maybe repairing a school that had been damaged, or it was cleaning a field behind a mosque, or -- I'm trying to remember a lot of the projects we had. It was basically cleaning up and repairing and that type of stuff. So it was kind of easy to get out there. You could see firsthand -- you'd clear off -- this one park down -- that's our mission in Ramadi. It became a trash dump. That's what it became. But before, it was a very nice park. We just kind of restored it to being a very nice park. At least you could see there -- we'd go by and make sure there were things being done, all the work was done. You could see kids playing and you could start talking to some of the local dads and stuff like that. You could see some of that. But once again, those projects were nothing intense. I think the biggest project we had going on was a rubble removal project across from the government center in Ramadi. That took months and months just because it was a very kinetic environment, and you can only get so much work done at a time without -- before the contractors start getting shot at. They kind of did have that engagement. OK, we're going to go out and see if this thing -- this project is complete. And just as a program manager, or project manager, there, I kind of saw myself as also -- I wanted to have that finality to that project. I hated to have -- I hated to have contracts that were still left open. So I liked that -- we liked to see that things were done and complete. But once again, we were talking not anything complex type projects, and they were easy to follow up on because we could go out and patrol there. We had access – [our unit] was phenomenal. If I needed to go do something, [*name removed*] and the company commands made sure that we got out there and were able to do those type of inspections.

INTERVIEWER: Great. Do you have any other points or feedback, or anything that you'd like to add for this project that you think is useful?

04201241: No, no. I think we covered all the critical things. For me, I try to make things -- my brain is not very big, so I try to keep things pretty simple. For me, it was core principles. Population was our -- was my center of gravity. I was a civil affairs guy. I felt it was my job to have a pulse of the city, the populace, if you will, in our little battalion area. So as we were planning operations, it was my job, or I felt that it was my job, to let the battalions know and the commanders know kind of, these are the things that could help this operation, or these are the things post kinetic operation that we probably should rapidly do. Like you said, show the population, hey, we're serious about this. We're here to try to do something better. And that was critical. And at the same time, to me, it was all about (inaudible). I don't mean a person, but putting a local face on a project, or making it as local as possible, and transitioning over whatever I could to whomever I could that was local.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Did you -- as a reserve unit, did you have the doctrine available to you that you were reading up on so you were familiar with the planning process? And the Small Wars Manual, did you use that at all before you were going over --

04201241: Yeah. Used that just like for P and E for myself, to be honest with you. I remember reading some of that. I just remember I studied Vietnam a little -- a lot -- in college and the post, just reading articles and understanding that counterinsurgency or kind of like a company (inaudible) type war, (inaudible) war, where it's about engaging the populace, your local populace. Those are just kind of the themes kind of that I felt like our battalion had a good grasp of going in to do the operation. But yeah, we had access to all these documents. I think in terms of counterinsurgency, I felt very well-trained on the principle of counterinsurgency. I really think that that helped me, at least personally, a tremendous amount during my time there.

INTERVIEWER: Are you familiar with the COIN manual as it is now?

04201241: I am, I am. We did a scrub. When we came back from Ramadi, we had (inaudible) documents, and part of that was looking also at the counterinsurgency manual and seeing how civil affairs lined up with that. So yeah. In terms of doctrine and planning process and everything else, I felt like we were pretty well-trained and had access to those documents, if and when needed. In fact, I think I even had hard -- I brought these books with me just in case.

INTERVIEWER: OK. For the COIN manual, and its state after you scrubbed it, do you think that there's any revisions that you would recommend?

04201241: I think the last time I looked at it was maybe like two years ago. I personally thought -- I'm sure things have changed. I'm sure Afghanistan maybe had some impact on that, but I still -- everything that was in there, for me and what we did in Iraq, was plenty suitable.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Well, I appreciate that. I really appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today. If there is any additional information, you do have my contact information, and I would appreciate you reaching out to me again.

04201241: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Again, if there's anything that you need me to remove, just let me know. otherwise, again, thank you so much, and hope you have a really lovely day.

04201241: You too. Thanks. I really –

END OF AUDIO FILE PT 1

BEGINNING OF AUDIO FILE PT 2

04201241: Ya know, we were a standard infantry battalion at center 3 [unsure of transcription] so we had a good relationship with our SF partners, which I think was real critical because we'd go out and a lot of times I'd call up the Navy SEAL team and they had a reservist also who was a SEAL, but like their civil affairs guy. So him and I worked hand and glove a lot of times. He'd go out on patrol and a lot of times I'd go, well I don't know if I can do that with the CERP funds and maybe he'd go and do the project. So, we had a great relationship with the SF guys in helping each other out.

INTERVIEWER: In the literature there appears to be gaps in the knowledge about the level of engagements, especially on the Marine Corps side, there is a lot of credit taking and finger pointing, and in these interviews I am hearing that there was a lot more collaboration that what is being revealed to the public. Did you have any challenges at all or was it a good collaborative relationship between the Army, Marines, SF, at least to your recollection?

04201241: Ya know, I swear to God, for me it was, for a seven month deployment it was all the right people were in the right place at the right time. And you are right, I have seen so many people take credit, point fingers and stuff like that, and it isn't right, and I want to make sure that comes across is there were… I think the environment in and of itself, and I think there were smart people in place that were able to capture that environment and make good things [happen], and that's not to knock anyone who came before us because I don't think they had that opportunity. Ya know, the thing is, they built the foundation for what people did while we were there. And, even the people that came after us, I mean, they took what little amount we did and made it even better. So I think it was a holistic team effort and I never had any issues with any of my Army counterparts, none of my SF counterparts, I… I got some pushback from MEF on certain things, but I think that is to be expected no matter where you are in a warzone. One thing is, I do think there were about 500 too many lawyers running around the battlefield. I understand why they're there but at the same time it makes the job way harder. I think the collaboration was great, I don't think anyone could have done what they did without having each other, ya know what I mean? I don't think what Brigade did have been done without MEFs work, and vice versa. So, I think everyone worked well together. I know there were little… I mean, there were issues that at the time felt like big issues but at the end of the day everyone was on the same page. I think when General Allen came on board and, not knocking the generals beforehand, but I think once he came on board, we really kinda engaged at the General level with Sheikh Sittar and some of those guys, also with the government guys, and tying all of that together at the MEF level I think was phenomenal.

INTERVIEWER: There's a recent book that came out by James Russel called Innovation, Transformation, and War and he uses Ramadi as an example and he says the success that occurred in Anbar and in the Anbar Awakening specifically in Ramadi was because of a ground up approach, so a bottom to top instead of a top to bottom approach. He says that this is innovative, but the Marine Corps allows flexibility in their commanding officers to engage and assess the environment, so I'm not sure that I personally would call it innovation rather than embracing the true spirit of their training.

04201241: I totally agree

INTERVIEWER: I think the good news story here is that from what I'm hearing in these interviews is the good collaboration within and across the service branches and though that makes for a successful story [about Anbar], it is not necessarily the story that is portrayed in the literature currently.

04201241: yeah I think you're right on. Now, I haven't heard of that book or read it yet, but as you explain that to me it's like, well, working at the ground-root level in a counterinsurgency is not innovative. I mean, was text book Small Wars manual and probably the whole [mitigation? Audio unclear] type thing the Marine Corps tried to do in Viet Nam. I mean that's what I understood about counterinsurgency and when in Ramadi , like I said, you just had that opportunity that presented itself and you had the people who could see it and ran with it. And, you're right, it was at the ground level but I think in a counterinsurgency it's what you need.

INTERVIEWER: But I also don't think that at the ground level, at the brigades and battalions, if they did not have the green light from MEF that, I'm not necessarily sure they would have had that flexibility. So I am not discounting MEF's involvement either.

04201241: Yeah, 'cause MEF could have easily put the kybosh on it. I mean, I think that…and money flows from there so you had to have acceptance from MEF and an understanding from MEF to do things like that and you have to understand that MEF was there to engage at the government level. I'm not making a swipe at MEF, it's not MEF's job to come down at the battalion level and start dealing with tribal leaders. I think that everyone pretty much played their role the way it should be played.

INTERVIEWER: You said that when General Allen came on it seemed like it was much more inviting in terms of their acceptance and willingness to engage with the upper level tribal sheikhs?

04201241: I don't know if it's that or if it was tying it all together, if that makes sense? It was General Allen, well, I'm not saying just General Allen, it was the MEF and it could have been anyone. It could have been General Reist, or any one of those guys. It was finally at that stage I think, maybe a little of both- being at that stage and that MEF understood when to get involved. That you had that tie between now a formally established Awakening, the governor, and the provincial government tied all together that was critical at the MEF level. Because at the battalion level we're doing our little thing- whatever it may be and if you didn't have the MEF there tying it [all the LOOs] at the operational and at the strategic level- I say strategic level because the impact this thing had, not just at the provincial level but I think in the country – that MEF really gave it teeth and made things a lot better.

INTERVIEWER: This was before Petraeus came on board with the Surge?

04201241: Right, right. General Petraeus came over to Ramadi, oh, I can't remember the date, but it was when [two names removed] and I think Colonel [name removed], had driven him out and around Ramadi to one of our security stations and we had bought some loud mosque speakers and we were running- I won't call it IO [information operations- he is referring to "The Voice of Ramadi"]- well, maybe white IO, but we were broadcasting- we used it for emergency broadcasting in case something had happened like an explosion or something we'd need to tell people to stay in their homes, whatever it may be, but we were also doing it on a daily basis. We'd put public announcements out from the governor, and we'd go over to Mamoun's house and we'd tape record him, whatever he'd want to say that day or that week. We'd tape record Sheikh Achmed [I think he means Ahmed, Sittar's brother], Sittar, Latif, whatever. We'd blast that out all over the PA system and General Petraeus came down and saw some of this stuff and, once again, I don't know people's impression of Petraeus but I walked away with the impression that Hey, this guy understood what worked and what wasn't working and I think embraced things that were working and carried it forward, and then he fixed the things that weren't working. It's such a good feeling seeing MEF get involved in the right time in the right way and doing what they needed to do at the Iraq ISFO, but the strategic level doing the same also.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any final points that you have?

04201241: No

[they discuss the final products- end tape]

Interview 16: 04201242

Interview 04201242, 10 May 2012
Date of Deployment: 2005-2006; Location of Deployment: Ramadi to Habbaniyah
Billet: [unit removed] CO

INTERVIEWER: OK. For the record, can you let me know what your rank was at the time and what your, your billet was, what you were doing in Anbar?

04201242: Yeah, I was a Colonel, and I was the Commander of the [*unit removed*] Infantry Division.

INTERVIEWER: OK, and this is for National Guard?

04201242: It was a National Guard brigade, yes.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Where were you located?

04201242: In Ramadi. Well, actually my area of operations extended from Ramadi to Habbaniyah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. In Ramadi, was that the southern portion, or did you have the entire city and outlying areas as your AO?

04201242: The entire city and outlying areas.

INTERVIEWER: OK, wonderful. For the units that were in your command, was there a lot of training or IPB that you received prior to being deployed?

04201242: Well, my brigade was mobilized in January, and we went through post-mobilization training until May 2005, and then went over to Ramadi in June. So yeah, we received training prior to going over there, certainly.

INTERVIEWER: Did the training include any depth cultural training or language training to prepare you for the environment?

04201242: There was no language training, and some cultural training.

INTERVIEWER: OK. With the cultural training, did you receive or your unit, receive any training on how to use interpreters or anything that might assist you in understanding the environment when you got there and how to use those interpreters?

04201242: The interpreter training wasn't extensive, by any means. You know, we... Doing our training at Camp Shelby, it was, you know, FOB based, and, you know, they had villages and rural players there and that type of thing. So in that regard... But it was more training in how to deal with tribal leaders and sheiks and that kind of thing rather than how to use interpreters.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Do you think that training was helpful in terms of, of when you got onsite in Ramadi? Do you think that that training helped to prepare your troops for what they were encountering in the local bases?

04201242: Well yeah, any training is going to be a help, but at that point in time, you know, 2005, early 2005, it was

still a developing situation with what was occurring over in Iraq and, you know, the United States at that time did not have any revised COIN doctrine. So once we got on the ground there we had to, oh, use our own best judgment in conducting the COIN fight I guess is the best way to put it. There wasn't any doctrine to fall back on, or we weren't necessarily, quote, "trained on" US COIN doctrine, because it simply didn't exist at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that didn't come around until 2006.

04201242: At least, at least not as we know it today.

INTERVIEWER: Was there other doctrine that was available as opposed to COIN doctrine, such as the Small Wars manual, anything like that?

04201242: Oh certainly, yeah. I mean, there had been some writings out there, that it was really left up to our own self-development and professional development to read those type of writings that were available at the time, but it wasn't part of our official training.

INTERVIEWER: OK. So I know that the fight was pretty kinetic in 2005. Is that what you were experiencing in Ramadi, or were there pockets of stability intermingled with the kinetic fight?

04201242: Oh, it was a very kinetic fight, but yes, there were pockets of stability operations intertwined with it, for sure. I mean, non-lethal targeting and non-lethal operations were also a big part of what we did, but it was certainly lethal, as well.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel that it was possible to engage the locals at that time, or did the environment and the social conditions just not allow it because of the kinetics?

04201242: No, it was absolutely possible to engage the locals, but there were some constraints. For example, if you were out on a dismounted patrol, you couldn't simply stop along the side of the street and a marketplace and talk to one of the businesspeople there, one of the market place owners there. You had to actually go inside of their kiosk or go inside of their building to talk to them because of the sniper threat. And you know, you had to be conscious not to remain in any one location too long due to the insurgency threat there. So when you were out on a dismounted patrol there were constraints like that that didn't make it really that easy or that conducive to interact with the people on the street, although we still did, but again, with those constraints, as I mentioned.

As far as the interaction with the government leaders and the tribal leaders and the sheiks, what seemed to be established by the brigade that was there prior to me and during the relief in place, I was brought up to speed on it, was once a week at the government center -- if I'm not mistaken I think it was Sundays; I can't remember the exact day, but once a week at the government center all of the sheiks who were still in Ramadi would come to the government center and have a large meeting with my predecessor, who was the [*unit removed*] Brigade Commander from the [*unit removed*] Infantry Division, [*name removed*], and then I continued that type of engagement after he left, where once a week I would go to government center and meet with Governor Mamoun who was a Governor of Al Anbar Province, as well as... Yeah, there generally were about 20 sheiks and tribal leaders there initially. You know, for months I met with that many. So yes, engagement with the people, engagement with the leadership was possible with certain caveats and constraints.

INTERVIEWER: With the sheiks that were there, do you feel that there was any headway made with them in terms of establishing trust with coalition forces, or were they still pretty skittish at that time?

04201242: Absolutely. We made great headway in establishing trust. And by the way -- you know, this may have come out in your research already, you may know this, but -- when the conventional operations began in Iraq, most of the powerful sheiks, if not all of the powerful sheiks, from Al Anbar Province left Iraq, and many of them went to Jordan and other surrounding countries, and the sheiks that were left in Ramadi -- at least I can speak for the area I was in -- the sheiks that were left in Ramadi were the less powerful sheiks, but the only sheiks left standing. Others had fled. So we were really dealing with the B team or the C team, if you will, because the A team fled the country. So with that said, you know, those 20 or so sheiks that would come to the government center one day a week, and I would meet -- and when I first began meeting with them there was absolutely skittishness, absolutely a lack of trust and that sort of thing, but we did certain things and followed through on certain actions which I believe created a sense of trust between the [*unit removed*] Brigade, the [*unit removed*] I commanded, and the sheiks.

I'll give you a couple of examples. One was the elections that occurred in December of 2005. You might be aware that when the elections occurred in January of 2005, I think the percentage, turnaround of the percentage of people from Ramadi who came out to vote in January 2005 was around 3%, 4%, 5%, something at that very small level, and then when we conducted the elections in December 2005, about 11 months later, we had about an 80% -- 80% of the population of Ramadi came out and voted. So to me, that was an indicator that trust was being established.

Another indicator that trust was being established was when we first got there we knew it was important to recruit police into their police department, which was essentially nonexistent when we arrived there in June and July of 2005. So every month, you know, beginning in August we would have these recruiting events at various facilities in Ramadi, and, you know, August, September, October, November, December, when we would have these recruiting events we would have maybe three people show up, four people show up, maybe five people show up to join the police, and the theme and the message I began to get out to these sheiks in Ramadi was, "The sooner you, you sheiks encourage the sons of Ramadi to join the police and to join the Iraqi military, and the sooner you're able to secure your own city due to the sons of Ramadi joining the police and other security forces, the sooner the American military will leave your city." That was the message.

And that coupled with -- then I get into detail about some of the things the sheiks asked for and some of the things I followed through with built some trust, which led to that large turnout at the election in December, as I mentioned, and also the great success we had with the police recruiting in early January 2006, when we had literally over 1,000 sons of Ramadi come to join the police. And that was at the glass factory recruiting event, which, again, I'll give a little bit more detail later, but that's the same recruiting event where on the fort a suicide bomber attacked and blew himself up. You may be aware of that. But the indicators that trust was being built was the success of the election December 2005 and the success of the police recruiting event in January 2006 when we literally had over 1,000 people show up to join the police.

INTERVIEWER: So at these recruiting drives, it sounds like what happened during your deployment was what was repeated later on, but according to the literature the glass factory had significant impact on the willingness of the sons of Iraq, that the young men to participate in 2006 until they had reestablished trust. Is that...?

04201242: I don't agree with that. I think the... There was an issue, a couple of issues that developed. I believe insurgents saw that we were having success forming a bond with the sheiks and the tribal leaders, as evidenced by the election in December and the police recruiting drive in January. Now, in January, if memory serves me correct, we conducted that police recruiting event at the glass factory on December 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th, and in hindsight, as I reviewed what went wrong, you know, what -- in regard to that suicide bomber attack happening -- the biggest mistake I made is that I had organized the recruiting drive for four days in a row, and I should've known better. When you're fighting a COIN fight, one thing you don't want to do is establish a pattern or do the same thing four days in a row, and it was on the fourth day at 11:00 in the morning that that suicide bomber attacked. That gave the insurgents three days to

take a look at the event, evaluate the type of security that we had set up, and then execute their plan with that suicide bomber. So that was... I personally feel I made a mistake there by allowing that recruiting event to go on for four days.

Now, when that suicide bomber attacked on the 5th, we knew that within two weeks we had to have 200 of those sons of Ramadi who joined the police, who came to that police recruiting drive and got registered to go to the police academy -- we knew that they were going to, we were going to have 200 of them show up in exactly two weeks at the glass factory to ship to the police academy's school, north in Baghdad. So, you know, I got together with my subordinate battalion commanders and others who were involved with organizing the event and providing security for it, and we did an after action review determining, OK, what do we need to do differently with our security? Although our security plan was sound, we knew we had to do something to mitigate the same thing happening, which caused about 100 Iraqi citizens to get killed. And so we came up with a little bit different of a security plan which was going to be able to mitigate that.

But two weeks later, 200 of those Iraqis who were scheduled to go to the police academy showed up at that very same glass factory and shipped to the academy. So that told me that the, that the average Iraqi wasn't afraid to come back to the very site of that suicide bombing and enter the glass factory and go to the police academy. But what happened within about two or three weeks after the suicide bombing, which I don't know if it's been widely reported or widely known -- and it should be -- is that insurgents began to wage an intimidation and murder campaign against the sheiks, and there were several sheiks that were executed, beginning around the third week in January and continuing into the late winter and early spring. And it was the murder and intimidation campaign against the sheiks that really put a wedge between what I was trying to do as a [*unit removed*] Commander and what my brigade was trying to do, and our communication that we had with the sheiks. Because once the murder and intimidation campaign started, we -- none of the sheiks, none of the sheiks continued to come to the, to the government center to meet with me. It was like a ghost town there.

So I think the average citizen of Ramadi showed some courage, but due to the murder and intimidation campaign against the sheiks, even more so than the suicide bombing, put that wedge between myself and the tribal leaders. And I think that was a turning point in favor of the insurgency at that particular point in time, and we had to work very hard to make headway from that. Did that make sense to you? Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

INTERVIEWER: It does, and to give you a little bit of background, I have, prior to doing the interviews with this project, I've read about 100, 120 articles. I still have a stack of books yet to read.

04201242: Yeah. Yeah, the thing you've got to be careful there of is very few of those articles about the contemporary operations in Ramadi, 2005 and later, were written by people who spent a sustained amount of time there, so... And that includes everybody. I mean, even Bing West didn't spend all that much time there. He spent most of his time with the Marines, and there's others who wrote articles. So, you know, some of those things that have been written I don't think are written with a great deal of understanding of the entire situation. But at any rate, I understand what you're saying. You did -- you've done a lot of reading, and that's a good thing.

INTERVIEWER: And sir, that's actually why I'm incredibly grateful for you agreeing to speak with me. I think that there is... There's huge gaps in the literature that's available to the public… [*edited for conciseness*] and I don't think that the literature is necessarily fair or complete in regards to what was going on with the National Guard units or with the 82nd. And that may be just because there's a lack of people writing about it, but I would hope that with this project, having spoken with a wide variety of people throughout the service branches that my intent is to be able to show more, or at least provide more clarity on what happened, so that we can then take lessons from that and potentially use it as we continue to train our troops.

04201242: Yeah, you know, the 82nd I believe was there in Al Anbar early on. Now, when I got to Iraq I ripped with the [*unit removed*]. They were the brigade that actually was sent to Iraq from Korea, and they had a very tough fight on their hands. As a matter of fact, one of their battalions had to be sent to Fallujah. They lost around 90 soldiers and Marines in that time. They spent their -- my [*unit removed*] lost 82 soldiers and Marines and Corpsmen. I believe [*unit removed*] had ripped after me, had about the same amount of killed in action, around 85-90, and I think...

You know, the way I look at it, the administration saw Al Anbar as an economy of force operation, and if you figure, you know, the Army Brigade Combat Teams were losing about 85-90 a year, you know, I imagine the Marine Regimental Combat Teams, you know, the RCT in Fallujah, the RCT out west in Syria, they were probably losing about, you know, 85, 90 a year, so you're looking at around 300 killed in action a year, and something tells me that the administration felt comfortable with losing that many a year in an economy of force operation, rather than putting the number of troops that were required in Al Anbar to get the job done properly.

I mean, every brigade that worked there in Ramadi -- at least [*unit removed*] Infantry Division and my Brigade -- worked with not anywhere near the troops required, especially with the current COIN doctrine that's been written. I mean, you know, that Ramadi to Habbaniyah area, that was certainly enough for the Division to cover it, rather than the Brigade -- and I'm talking not only because of the square mileage but because of the population that was there. And when [*unit removed*] came in and ripped with us -- I don't know how many people know this, but their area of operation was significantly reduced, and they came in with significantly more combat power than what we had there.

And then they seemed to, at least in some of the writing, seemed to like to take the credit for the Sunni Awakening, but really I believe the Sunni Awakening started with [*name removed*] and presumably continued with us, and [*unit removed*] had a part in that. You know, [*unit removed*] Division had a part in that, and then the brigade that came in after them... I really don't see it as the overnight success that happened in Al Anbar, like some people want to portray it. It took a lot of time and it took a lot of blood and it took a lot of lives for that success to eventually happen, and when it's portrayed that it happened overnight or it happened due to one unit's actions, that's completely false.

INTERVIEWER: And to be honest, sir, that's what I'm finding with the interviews that I'm conducting, and again, I hope that that's what I can report on. I do believe that it, personally believe that it wasn't just the actions of a few, it was combined actions over time coupled with the social conditions.

04201242: Yeah, and I'll tell you another thing that a lot of people don't like to talk about but it's an important part of war, I found, over there is luck and chance really play into things quite a bit. And that's not to take anything away from, you know, what our soldiers and Marines did over there, but that does factor into the equation, as well, and I'll give you an example. So when I was over there, the MNCI, I guess the MNCI thought process and the Marine Division thought process was do not give the sheiks heavy weapons, any heavy machine guns or that type of thing. We'd give them some AKs, and we could give them some smaller weapons, but don't give them any type of heavy barreled machine guns for their own security. Instead, encourage the sheiks to get their people from the tribe to join the police to secure Ramadi that way, and that's what we tried to do.

One of the things that I think happened by chance with the [*Ready First*] -- I even hesitate to say this because I don't like to comment on times when I wasn't there, but it's my perception that just by luck and by chance the sheiks were given -- and I don't think it was a deliberate action or plan or anything, but I think by chance the sheiks were given some heavy weapons and they were able to defend themselves, and they were able to turn these weapons against the Al-Qaida and Iraq element that was there, and that's what really, I think, turned the tide and helped facilitate the Sunni Awakening. It was really a change in course that had, that occurred by happenstance rather than by deliberate plan. By putting these heavy arms in the hands of these sheiks, I really think that helped turn the tide.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm. The literature also paints a very strong picture of the importance of engagements, especially with 1-1 and then 1-6. Marines were in the Ramadi center, city center.

04201242: Mm-hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But unfortunately, when I talk about gaps, it also, the literature, shows a picture of engagements occurring in 2006 but perhaps not as much before, and there's a lot of discussion about the level of dismounted patrols having a serious impact. Can you comment on the amount...? I mean, you've already touched upon the amount of dismounted patrols, but what was your engagement strategy like? What were the troops told about engagement strategies and the level of importance they might play into the counterinsurgency fight that you had before you?

04201242: Yep. Engagement strategy was a key part of our strategy for conducting operations in Ramadi when we first arrived there in July. Actually we took transfer the 30th of July in 2006. And one of the unsung heroes who died on January 5th was Lieutenant Colonel [*name removed*]. He was my -- he was a Fire Support Officer, and I placed him in the position as my Leader Engagement Officer. And he played a key role in the sheik engagements that occurred at the government center.

In addition to that, every Battalion Commander knew exactly that it was one of their primary responsibilities to engage the sheiks and the other key leaders within the battalion areas of operation, because what I did with my brigade is I subdivided my brigade AO into battalion areas of operation, and every leader, every battalion level leader knew what their responsibilities were in terms of engaging with the sheiks and other leaders in their battalion AOs.

As far as dismounted patrolling, most of our patrols were dismounted. As far as combat outposts outside of the FOBs, there were many areas that [*unit removed*] did not get to, and I think one of the main reasons [*unit removed*] didn't get to some of these areas is because they were consumed with sending one of their battalions to Fallujah, and then they just didn't have the troops to task to do what we did. But there was an area called the Kudar's Mosque area, north of the Euphrates, just north of Ramadi proper, that we fought into and established a combat outpost right near the Kudar's Mosque, which was a heavily infested area with insurgents.

There was another area down south of Ramadi with the railroad bridge going across the canal that we fought into -- and when I say we fought into, I mean we, we fought through subsurface roadside bombs and IEDs that had been placed there for I don't know how long. And of course, subsurface IEDs are the worst type of IED that you can encounter because there's no, no protection against them. And we established a combat outpost down at the bridge going over the canal there, and we established another combat outpost on the western side of Tam'eem, which was a southern region of Ramadi, where we would do surges of trucks and other large vehicles coming into the city. Established an outpost down near the Malaab, which was the soccer stadium in East Ramadi. So there were many outposts that we established, many dismounted patrols that our Marines and soldiers conducted. And I'll tell you the truth: I personally went on many dismounted patrols with the guys, so I know they happened. And I told you the way we would have to engage folks when, you know, Iraqi citizens when we were conducting dismounted patrols: just simply put a teller for them out on the street. There you would have to post some security and talk to these guys.

So in terms of combat outposts to get closer to the populace, in terms of dismounted patrols to engage the Iraqi citizens and the town, we did a lot of that. Now, there were -- again, the insurgency was, was very robust at that time. You know, we would have citizens tell us, "Hey, if you come by and talk to us, within a matter of 30 minutes, 60 minutes after you guys leave we have insurgents here slapping us around, asking, asking, you know, what we talked to you guys about." We didn't have the troops to task to have constant patrolling 24 hours a day, so when a patrol wasn't out, that's when insurgents would come in and try to intimidate these people we talked to and find out what we were talking to them about. You know, so you've got that dynamic to work with.

As far as engaging in the sheiks, I mentioned to you, you know, that we were able to establish trust with them, and I told you about some of the indicators, but just some of the specifics on how we established trust: there was a point in time where the sheiks said to me, they said, you know, "Your dismounted patrols are going into homes and you're randomly searching homes," and it was true. You know, we'd have a dismounted patrol out and you would just randomly pick a home to go into and search the home, and the, and the sheiks said, "You know, this doesn't make any sense to us. All you're doing is aggravating and frustrating the people. You know, some of these people have," well, not some of them, but they would say, "These people have nothing to do with the insurgency, and here you are going into their home and searching." And you know, I thought about that, and I thought, you know, that does make sense. You know, the chances of finding any kind of weapons or contraband or anything like that just due to a random home search is very, very slim.

So I listened to the sheiks, and I put, put out the orders to the [*unit removed*] Commanders, "Your patrols will no longer just arbitrarily go into somebody's home and, and begin searching it." Now, we would still conduct searches of homes if there was some type of intelligence that we received through the various means that we had that indicated there might be bomb-making material or an insurgent or something else inside of a home. Certainly we'd do, we would do that, but we stopped the random searches of the homes, and the sheiks noticed this, and they appreciated it.

Another thing they asked was that we stop random searches of vehicles coming through the PCPs, especially on the western side of Ramadi, coming over the bridge over the Euphrates River and coming over the, the bridge that was over the canal. And we stopped doing that, as well. We would search cars based on intelligence of certain "Be on the lookout for" type vehicles, and certainly we would search those cars, but we would -- we, we slowed down quite a bit just randomly searching vehicles, because a couple of things. First of all, very frustrating to somebody if they have nothing to do with the insurgency and you're searching their car. And the other thing is it slows down the traffic coming into the city considerably, and it impacts their work schedules and, and, and those type of things. So listened to the sheiks in a couple of those areas, and went back to the sheiks and let them know what we were doing, and I think that helped form a bond of trust with those sheiks that resulted in some of the things I already talked about.

Now, there was another case thing I did based on talking to Iraqis, and I believe it was January or so, January or February of 2006, but I was talking to some Iraqis, and -- actually, I was talking to one of the police chiefs, who lived up by a region called C Lake, which was northwest of the city of Ramadi, and that was an area that we would generally get indirect fire out to our, our FOBs from. And I said to this Iraqi, I said, "You move up here by C Lake." I said, "We're getting indirect fire from that area." I said, "You and your people who live up in this area have to go out and talk to these insurgents and get them to stop firing this indirect fire at us, and therefore we will stop firing counter-fire into your neighborhoods." And, you know, this, this Iraqi said to me, he said, "How can you expect us to go up to these insurgents and tell them to stop firing that indirect fire at your FOBs?" He said, "They'll, they'll beat us, they'll, they'll kill us, whatever." He said, "But," he goes, "your, your counter-fire," he goes, "you have to understand what the effects of your counter-fire is." He said, "Very seldom do you kill any insurgents," which was true, "and what you do is you kill cattle, you break windows, potentially you could kill some innocent civilians who might be out there in that area."

And he said, you know, you know, "The counter-fire you'd doing is doing absolutely no good." And I thought about this, and I knew our counter-fire was ineffective from the perspective of actually killing bad guys, because even when we got our counter-fire times down to under 60 seconds but then it takes them that long to displace once they fired a mortar or two at us, and I figured really the best way to eliminate counter-fire was the boots on the ground, or some type of observation in the air. And, and I reflected on what this guy said about the effects of our artillery firing at these positions where the insurgents had been a couple minutes previous to that, and how it would adversely impact the lives of the Iraqis who lived in that area, which certainly wasn't doing our cause any good.

And so I put a ban on all counter-fire, which I'll tell you the [*unit removed*] Commanders did not like at all. And then

after the course of a couple of months I kind of lifted that to a degree where there were some areas where it was obvious it was very rural and there were no homes in the area that we would allow counter-fire to go into, but there were some areas where we would absolutely not allow counter-fire to go into. And I'm not talking just about the CDE, but just, just because of the impact we thought it would have on the local Iraqis up in that area -- and I, and I think that helped our cause, as well, by just being smart about eliminating something that really made soldiers feel good to fire the counter-fire, because it felt like we were doing something, but it was really not having any positive effect on what we were trying to achieve, and that, and that was throwing the insurgents who were firing indirect fire into our FOBs. And I believe the Iraqis appreciated that, as well.

INTERVIEWER: Were the insurgents able to use your counter-firing as an anti-coalition IO campaign? I mean, were they really effective?

04201242: Absolutely. Absolutely, because their message was, "Hey, we're not the ones who broke your window. We're not the ones who killed your cow. We're not the ones who killed your child with this counter-fire. Americans did it." And as far as the Iraqis were concerned, they could care less if we were doing counter-fire because an insurgent just fired a mortar round at us. All they knew is that we're the guys who fired back and had destroyed their life in some way. So certainly it, it fed right into the insurgent IO campaign. And, and I'm a big believer that in a COIN fight, counter-fire is not the way to counter those type of things, or to mitigate the idea that insurgents would fire at us. You absolutely need the boots on the ground.

The only quandary here is when you're already very much under strength in terms of the numbers in the population and the physical area have to cover, because the administration won't give you more troops, or won't put more troops over there in Iraq, you've got some tough decisions you've got to make. And so you have to come up with creative, imaginative ways to get boots on the ground or eyes in the air at certain times that are going to be to your benefit, and obviously that's done based on pattern analysis of what times of day do insurgents fire the counter-fire, from what positions do they fire the counter-fire, and then you do your best to get the boots on the ground at those times in order to, in order to disrupt it.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, why do you think that, at the strategic level it was determined that Amber would be an economy of force fight? Why did the surge come later instead of sooner?

04201242: Well, the surge, in my estimation, the surge had nothing to do with Al Anbar province. The surge, as far as I could tell, focused on Baghdad and the areas around Baghdad. I don't believe there were any forces surged into Al Anbar that I know of. Now, there were some things done in Al Anbar that created better conditions, especially for the [*unit removed*] as they ripped with us, and I know, you know, General Casey and, and General Chiarellii came to see me in May of 2006, and they came right to my office in Ramadi, along with General Zilmer, who was the 1 MEF Commander at the time. And General Casey asked me, "What do you need to control Ramadi?" And I went to the map and I showed him Ramadi cent-, Ramadi proper, and I said, "I really think you need a brigade combat team in Ramadi proper itself."

And I showed him the area (inaudible) and then around Hurricane Point, the Blue Diamond, up into the area north of Euphrates, which was called Jazeera. I said, "You need another brigade combat team here or else you're going to be giving the insurgents a safe haven right outside of the city." And then I pointed to Habbaniyah. That was from the 5-5 Easting, which was just east of combat outpost in Corregidor in East Ramadi, 5-5 Easting all the way out to Habbaniyah, which was probably about 25 kilometers, as I recall.

And I said, you know, "You need another brigade combat team up in Habbaniyah, and then in the Jazeera area, north of the Euphrates, north of, of Habbaniyah." I said, "You need three brigade combat teams here if you want to control Ramadi, because you can't just put a brigade combat team right in the middle of the city. You've got to also control

those outlying areas or else you're going to be giving those insurgents clear safe haven very close, in very close proximity." And there was no pushback at all from General Casey or General Chiarelli, although there was frustration, because I remember General Chiarelli saying to General Casey, "Sir, I don't know where we're going to get a division from. That's impossible." But nobody disagreed.

So I mean, to, clearly to control that situation more force was needed there, so what General Casey did do when one team (inaudible) us, he took Habbaniyah away from that brigade's area of operation, and that was of significant help to Ready First by eliminating Habbaniyah from their AO, because that extended my AO by another 45 kilometers, and that was another violent and chaotic and populated area. So by taking Habbaniyah away was, I think, extremely beneficial to them and then they came in with two additional battalion headquarters and four additional companies. So they were able to focus more clearly and precisely on Ramadi, with additional force, which I believe helped, you know, helped, helped them do what they had to do.

And I remember putting a ConOp together, and asking General [*name removed*], who was the Commander of, of the [*unit removed*] MARDIV, because we worked for [*unit removed*] MARDIV the first six months we were there, then the MEF the second six months we were there, because the Marine Division headquarters ripped out in the middle of our deployment there. So I worked first for General [*name removed*] and then for General [*name removed*]. I remember putting a ConOp together and showing General [*name removed*] how we could exploit success, the success that we were having at that time by putting an additional battalion in Jazeera, which was more (inaudible) of Ramadi right across the Euphrates River, and he said, you know, "This looks like a good plan, but I'm not going to ask for another battalion, because that would be like pissing up a rope." Those were his exact words. So what that told me is there was probably somebody up the food chain somewhere that didn't want operational commanders asking for more troops.

INTERVIEWER: So that sounds more political at that point.

04201242: Oh yeah, certainly. I mean, you know, look what happened to General Shinseki when he said we needed 350,000 soldiers to go into Iraq. I mean, yeah, it was absolutely political. That's what I mean. I think the administration was OK with losing approximately 300 soldiers and Marines per year, and having the Al Anbar area, you know, teeter back and forth on the state of chaos. And their main focus, I believe, was on Baghdad, because I imagine they saw Baghdad as the strategic center of gravity for the country.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Did you at any point get any support, even if it was partial BCTs, to surround Ramadi?

04201242: No.

INTERVIEWER: OK. The surge did come in 2007, so that was even at the end of Ready First's tenure.

04201242: Right. But see, the point I made with 1-1 is their area of operation was reduced, and they came in with more force. So, I mean, even though that wasn't part of the surge, but I think it was due... I would think it was due to the conversation I had with General Casey and General Chiarelli, you know, when they were asking, "What do you need to control Ramadi," and obviously they couldn't come up with a division, but it seems to me that they did take some action to reduce the AO and bring some troops in there when 1-1 came in. And again, I have no idea if that was their thought process. All I know is what I told them and all I know is what happened afterward.

INTERVIEWER: And that's fine for the purposes of this study. You've actually provided way more information than I had and, on what occurred in that, in that time period. With the collaboration that you had with other units, whether they be Marine Corps, other Army, Special Forces, et cetera, were there any communication challenges that you were aware of that even the other units were having that may have caused some disconnect in what was going on in the area?

Because I, I do know that that was, to a small extent, happening later on, and that might just be chalked up to things like CIDNE versus MarineLink, different types of radios, just...

04201242: No, not so much. No. As far as the technical communications issues, no, we were able to communicate with the Marines well. They were able to communicate with us well. I did not see that as a challenge. Now, there were some challenges -- you know, we had some special operators operating there in Ramadi who we had a liaison relationship with. You know, they had some organizations there that, you know, I would go over and talk to, to the guys and tell them what we were seeing, and they would tell us, to an extent, what they were seeing. But I do remember one time -- and I can't remember exactly what period this was and what year we were there -- but there was some type of task force sent in, and I think it was more of a conventional task force. Something tells me it might've been the 82nd or someone. And they conducted some operations north in Ramadi, up in the Jazeera area. It was almost like a scorched earth type of thing they did. They just went in and just, with very lethal means, destroyed areas up there in my AO just north of Ramadi, which we ended up having to clean up the issues they made in engagements with some of the people up there who weren't all that happy. I don't know if you heard anything about that.

INTERVIEWER: I have. I've actually heard several examples throughout a course of a few years in Anbar where that occurred. Do you think that that's just because of -- and, and forgive me, I've, I've actually had this described as a lack of understanding over who was within the chain of command and who was running things, because it was a collaborative effort between Army, Marines, National Guard, and Special Forces. Does that sound reasonable?

04201242: Yeah, I mean, if they were going to do something like that, the better course of action would've been to take a battalion like I was asking for and task organize it to my brigade and allow me to employ it, rather than coming in without any coordination at all and just chew an area up. I'm not sure who was behind that. I don't know if that was at the MNCI or the MCFI level, but it was really a big mistake, and it caused more problems, more harm than good, for sure.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get a heads up about the operation before it happened, or just after the damage was done?

04201242: Pretty much while it was, while the damage was occurring, and after the damage was done.

INTERVIEWER: OK. With the Special Forces that were there, did they mention to you at any time of, of tribes kind of doing red on red action, and basically mini-awakenings that were occurring?

04201242: Oh yeah, there was evidence of red on red. And see, this is the chaos of Ramadi. I mean, you had several different insurgent troops there. You had the local insurgents, and the local insurgents, their primary goal -- and the local insurgents were primarily led by those sub-sheiks that were left behind -- their primary goal was to get the Americans out of the city of Ramadi, period. Then you had some nationalists, and these were the former Saddam type guys, perhaps former military leaders who had positions of prominence in the military. I call them the nationalists. And their goal was to discredit the Shiite government in Baghdad and they wanted to see the government turn to a more Sunni led government, more of a Baathist type of government, like they had under the Saddam regime. Then the third insurgent group you had there was the Al-Qaeda in Iraq element. And obviously we know what Al-Qaeda and Iraq's goals were: their goal was to create a radical Islamic Caliphate spreading from that region, and, again, they would use whatever means they would have to. So all three of these insurgent groups in Ramadi -- the local insurgents, the nationalists, and Al-Qaeda in Iraq -- would sometimes band together when their goals were similar, and at other times they would be odd, at odds with one another when their goals were within, were with conflict with one another.

Now, in addition to these three types of insurgent groups there, you had a fourth element who were the common criminals. They were the gun traffickers and that sort of element who were simply making money off of the chaos that

was occurring there. You know, they were probably going out to some of these large weapons caches that Saddam had that we never fully guarded, you know, when we started conventional Ops there, and they were probably bringing arms and weapons and explosives and then selling it to some of these insurgent groups who maybe didn't have the logistical or transportation assets to go miles away and bring it back into the city.

So you had these three insurgent groups with different goals, but sometimes they would band together and sometimes be at odds with one another. Then you had the criminal element, so that all led to some of the red on red that we saw. It wasn't necessarily the case that anybody was supporting the American cause there, but they were all supporting their own causes, and that's where you had the red on red.

Even the Sunni Awakening -- I don't believe the Sunni Awakening where what it really was, I believe, the local insurgents who were led by these sub-sheiks, taking up arms against the nationalists, and especially the Al-Qaeda and Iraq element is who they took up the arms against, they didn't do it because they wanted to help the Americans; they did it because they got fed up with Al-Qaeda in Iraq killing their cousins and killing their brothers, and they finally wanted to put a stop to it. And they saw that the only way they could do that was to take, finally take matters into their own hands, and they were given the opportunity with some of these heavier weapons systems to be able to do that effectively. So as far as the red on red, you know, we saw red on red right from the beginning when we got there, but it had nothing to do with supporting the American cause. It had to do with supporting their own cause.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there would've been any cultural knowledge, understanding, cultural assets like advisors, anything that could've helped you more clearly see what was happening with those red on red activities? Or do you think that it was just too chaotic to really distinguish what those SIGACTs really meant?

04201242: Well, I know the Marine Division had a cultural advisor at the Division, because I met a couple of those folks. It would've been nice to have a cultural advisor at the Brigade Combat Team level, for sure. That would've been a help. So yeah, and I mean, the simple answer to your question is yes, I certainly believe that would've helped, but that resource was not available at the brigade level.

And even at that point in time -- you know, it's a little bit easier now in hindsight six, seven years later to make some sense out of what was a very chaotic situation. That point in time, even with some of the cultural advisors who maybe were available to come over there and support the Brigade, who knows if they would've seen it clearly enough for us to take the appropriate steps. And the other thing is even if there were some solutions that could've been formed, in a COIN environment one of the biggest elements of combat power is really that soldier on the ground. I mean, when you're fighting a conventional war, a lot of fighting a conventional war has to do with putting the element of combat power at the decisive point, which doesn't necessarily mean boots on the ground, but in a counterinsurgency your best weapon, I think, is a soldier out there talking to a person, talking to an indigenous citizen. And when you're very under-strength, due to the amount of population that you have there in the geographic area, you might be able to understand what some of the solutions are, but you just don't have the resources to execute those solutions. So, you know, there's that issue, too.

INTERVIEWER: This is a little bit tangential, -- but do you think that there is a, I don't want to say a magic number but a per capita ratio that would make things work so, you know, number of soldiers per size of population?

04201242: Yeah, what I've seen in the current COIN doctrine is 20 counterinsurgents -- I'm sorry, one counterinsurgent for every 20 people in the populace. So it's kind of like a 1:20 ratio. And I have no idea where they came up with that number. I don't even know if that makes sense or not, but some expert... (laughter) I know our current COIN FM, that ratio appears there, and I don't know how valid it is. But using that ratio with the 5,000 troops we had in Ramadi and the 400,000 population, we were under-strength by about 3-5,000 soldiers and Marines.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Getting back to the interpreters and cultural advisors -- did you have any interpreters that wound up becoming more than just an interpreter, that were offering cultural advice? Or did you just have an interpreter pool that just did linguistic translation and that was all?

04201242: Yeah, most of our interpreters were from Iraq or some were brought in from other Arab countries outside of Iraq, and actually we had a -- that was one of the -- I'm glad you brought that up -- that was probably one of the biggest operational constraints we had is having enough good interpreters. Many of the interpreters that were brought in from other regions of the world, they spoke a different dialect. I had Iraqis many times confide to me through my interpreter, who was actually a pretty good interpreter, that many of these other interpreters were very, very poor. Sometimes we couldn't understand them when they spoke English to us, and Iraqis couldn't understand them when they spoke Arabic to them. That's how poor they were.

My interpreter... I went through a few different interpreters. The interpreter that I finally ended up staying with for about the last six months of my tour there was an individual who came over from Baghdad to the United States about 25 years ago, was an American citizens, owned several businesses in Detroit, and then the war broke out. After the war broke out he decided to volunteer to become an interpreter. He told me he was a Christian -- I don't know if he was a Christian or a Muslim -- and he spoke perfect English. And the Iraqis seemed to be able to understand him very well, and the Iraqis seemed to like him very well. So I, you know, I was lucky with my interpreter, but many of the other interpreters were subpar, and I think that really put -- I think that's something that hasn't been written about enough is the operational disadvantage our country was put at by not having enough good interpreters out there with their soldiers as they were patrolling.

So to answer your question, no. Most of them didn't provide much cultural... You know, anecdotally, you know, sometimes they would, don't get me wrong. You know, a lot of times they would kind of give us some cultural hints and tips and that kind of thing, but nothing very, very significant that would turn the tide.

Now, another thing I thought about that I never executed -- it was primarily because of, I guess, my risk aversion to the security, and maybe if I would go back over there to a situation like that again I would even think differently about it, but we thought it might've been a good idea to have brought an Iraqi soldier into our operation center and actually had them working there, but again, you just don't know who to trust, and I didn't want to take that chance. But I thought that would, that would be a good thing to have in terms of cultural sensitivity and such. Now, we did, we did begin to have some Iraqi forces, you know, Army forces training with us, and we trained them up and got them into our AO, and a lot of times I would talk to their Brigade Commanders and other leaders and try to pick their brain about cultural items, but again, that was more anecdotal than anything else.

[*Edited for conciseness: discussion irrelevant to research*]

INTERVIEWER: At the RCTs you had some serious challenges with the amount and availability of interpreters. And then once you get down to the brigades it was even worse, and then companies you just forget even asking for an interpreter. So I know that that's a huge challenge, but it also begs the question of how much language training should we provide to our soldiers, and whether or not that's something we should explore in order to counteract the deficiency of good interpreters. However, conversely, you're now talking about adding an additional burden to get fluency within your soldiers. How do you feel about the amount of language training we should provide to our soldiers?

04201242: I mean, I think we need to take a look at areas of the world that are of strategic importance to our country, such as Iran, the Middle East, China, Korea, and work now to get a good cadre of soldiers well versed in a myriad of languages. And I mean, when you get right down to it, I mean, how many are we really talking about? I think once the war starts in one of these regions it's already too late, because it does take quite a long time to gain

proficiency. But I think our country should be working on that right now.

Don't get -- I know, I mean, I understand there's language schools, and I know we have some of our military intelligence folks going to language schools and that sort of thing, but (inaudible) costs money, and that's a big issue right now. But to be able to take your average infantryman or field artillery soldier or armor soldier or striker soldier and, you know, get them immersed in a language I think would be a very good idea.

But I think once a conflict starts in any one of these regions, you know, you could try to include that type of language training into the pre-deployment training that a soldier would be going through, but he's going to -- I think the level of proficiency would be conversational, conversational minus at best. I think it's something we really need to be working on now, and I think it's extremely important. I mean, it is as important as being proficient with a weapon, and I think we need to focus on it now for some of these strategic regions, and the languages that go with those regions. That's my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: For the National Guard, would you say that that would be the same? Do you think the National Guard is going to get called up for more and more engagements now that they've proven themselves in Iraq?

04201242: Well, I think so. First of all, you know, when you look back on the fact that this was the first sustained war we fought with an all volunteer force, you know, if the Guard wasn't used in the last ten years we would've had to have gone through the draft. I mean, that's what happened in Vietnam. President Johnson made a strategic decision not to use the National Guard, and obviously, you know, the draft was in full swing. So yeah, I think based on the performance of the National Guard -- and it's not too farfetched to think, you know, in the dangerous world that we live in we'll see similar type of conflicts, and a lot of them are going to be protracted like this. I think the Guard is going to be used again, unfortunately, 'cause nobody wants to see war for anybody, but I think it's reality. And I think the Guardsmen should be sent to these language opportunities, too. You know, there's enough Guardsmen out there who, with the support of their employers, could take the time off to go to a six month language school. I mean, we're sending them there now. We're sending some of our Military Intelligence people to these language schools, so... Yeah, I think it's possible, and it should be -- the Guard should be included in these opportunities.

INTERVIEWER: Does it become more of a challenge to add these types of training requirements to the Guardsmen because of the nature of the National Guard? So not just language training, but also the type of cultural training you would need for effective COIN operations?

04201242: I think with the, you know, with the language training -- I mean, you know that the National Guard gets funded and paid for a soldier to go to training with his unit one weekend out of the month and two weeks during the course of the year. However, many Guardsmen train much more than that when the funding is available. You know, with the various schools that a Guardsman has to go to, just like an Active Component soldier has to go to, you can't possibly go to those additional schools only one month out, only weekend out of a month and two weeks out of a year. There's -- most of our Guardsmen for years now have been going through additional training on top of that. That one weekend a month and two weeks during a year, that's only training with their unit.

You know, for any other specialty training, to be a master gunner on a tank or a Bradley fighting vehicle, or to be proficient in a language, that's all training that has to be done in addition to that. And many of our Guardsmen aren't willing to sacrifice the time away from their job and the time away from their family to do that additional training. I mean, that's why they joined: they want to be proficient in what they do. And it, you know, it is a sacrifice to be away, because a lot of the Guardsmen who spend this additional time going away for this training, you know, don't have the same promotional opportunities in their civilian jobs, like civilians who aren't in the National Guard have, because their peers at their civilian job aren't leaving as much, so they certainly do sacrifice in terms of civilian job opportunities by

going through this additional military training.

It's like, you know, whatever department you work for or company you work for, if it's a private company, you know, if you had to go away for six months for language training, then you had to go away for an additional two weeks to get master gunner qualified, then you had to go away for an additional three weeks for some other type of training, you know, they're probably not going to fire you but you're probably not going to have the same promotion opportunities as one of your peers who doesn't go away that often, works for the same company as... You know, so these National Guard soldiers certainly do make that sacrifice, and they, and they may, they make that sacrifice just because of, you know, the love of their country, and they want to be proficient in what they do. It's certainly not for the money.

INTERVIEWER: So to an extent, do you think that the types of training the National Guardsmen should receive would be similar to the types of training that the Army and the Marine Corps would receive in regards to this culture and language?

04201242: Yeah, I mean, as far as the language training, I think that's training that the Guardsmen would have to go away to receive. As far as the cultural training, the cultural training could be integrated into some of the weekend drills and some of the annual training, you know, two week annual training requirements. I think that could be integrated in there. I think there could also be a sense of self-study that would have to occur, you know, where these Guardsmen would do self-study in terms of cultural awareness training on their off time, you know, when they're not at their civilian jobs or when they're not at National Guard training, you know, time in the evening, time on a, on an off weekend, whatever, to do some self-study, like much of the reading I've done regarding COIN has been done on my own time, and I think most Guardsmen would be willing to do that, as well.

INTERVIEWER: OK, great. And going back to the Iraqi Army piece, you said that there was a level of trust. Did you actually have any of the Iraqi Army or the Iraqi Policemen inside the TOC participating in operational planning, or were they --

04201242: No.

INTERVIEWER: OK. It was just not a sustainable security situation at that time?

04201242: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think that would be the best way to put it. I hate to say there was a lack of trust for them on our part, but it just didn't seem as though the reward was going to be worth the risk. We have certain... And that's the thing with Iraqi Army: when we first got there to Ramadi there was zero Iraqi Army in my area of operation, and (inaudible) in one year that we were there, by the time I left there we had three brigades of Iraqi Army Forces there. I had two brigades in Ramadi. I had one brigade in West Ramadi, one brigade out East Ramadi, and one brigade out in Habbaniyah. Now, the way the Iraqi Army functioned at that time is, you know, you've got a brigade, and the brigade has three battalions, and then each battalion has three companies. When you're talking about an Iraqi brigade, you're really talking about a third of what we would consider a brigade, because there was always at any one time two-thirds of those Iraqi soldiers off duty taking... They didn't have an electronic pay system, so they would manually be paid. They would all be from different parts of the country. And I'm serious about this -- you're going to think it's a joke, but we, at any one time we would always have two thirds of an Iraqi Army gone somewhere else, not doing their military job. They would be taking the money back home to their village and coming back, and there'd only be about a third of them on station to do their job at any one time. It was very frustrating.

So with the relatively limited amount of soldiers we had from the Iraqi Army available for us to utilize at any one time, we would use them for basic things, you know, like patrolling with us, and that's one of the things we tried to do was put more and more of the Iraqi Army face on the military operations we would do. So they'd be, you know, patrolling with

us and that type of thing, but as far as getting them involved in planning for an operation, no, we really didn't use them for that.

Why didn't we use them for it? Again, I think it was just because we thought there was too big of a security risk to take in relation to the reward we might get, we might get out of it, although the one brigade that we did have out in Habbaniyah seemed to be our most confident brigade, although they still had the issue with at any one time having two thirds of their brigade (inaudible) that. But they had the most proficient commander. They seemed to have good leadership. And we actually gave that Iraqi brigade -- that was the only brigade that we actually gave their own area of operation to. So I actually cut a small area of operation for this Iraqi brigade out of my Brigade AO, and that AO consisted of the area north of Habbaniyah, north of the Euphrates River, that part of Jazeera. I gave that land to that Iraqi brigade commander, and as far as I was concerned he owned that land. He could plan his own operations there. He could do his own engagement there. He would do his own patrolling there. However, I did have fire supporters and controllers that call in close air support from the Air Force with his guys when they would go out, because they didn't have the capability to call for fire following close air support. So they were augmented with some of my soldiers. However, they owned that piece of terrain. And that didn't come right from the get go. That came after they proved themselves and they seemed to be worthy of taking on that responsibility.

INTERVIEWER: Gotcha. Did you have any -- I don't know if the Guardsmen, if you guys have MiTT?

04201242: Oh yeah, MiTT teams. Sure, we have MiTT teams for all of the Iraqi brigades, and many cases we plussed up the MiTT team. The MiTT team, again, they'd send these MiTT teams over and they just don't have enough troops on them, so now I've got to take my own soldiers out of hide, plus up these MiTT teams. So, I mean, just the... Just the unfortunate lack of sending enough troops to get the job done at that point in time was very frustrating. You know, I'd get these MiTT teams in, they wouldn't have enough solders on the MiTT team to do what they're, to perform their mission. I would have to plus them up with people out of my battalions, and obviously that took away from the troop's task.

That's very, very -- that was a very, very frustrating thing when you -- you know, you wanted to do more, you just didn't have the troops to do it with, and they wouldn't give you anymore troops. And then furthermore -- (laughter) this is another thing -- in January, when II MARDIV West and 1 MEF Forward came in, II MARDIV had their, had their division headquarters at Blue Diamond in Ramadi. Then that division left in January, and 1 MEF Forward came in. One MEF Forward did not come into Blue Diamond; they went into Fallujah. So now I have this FOB at Blue Diamond, and guess who had to secure that FOB? Me.

INTERVIEWER: So you had an even bigger AO to cover.

04201242: Well, yeah, I mean, I had an additional FOB now, because when II MARDIV was there, they had their Marines who were assigned to the 2nd Marine Division Headquarters doing the, you know, up in the towers, around the FOB, doing the security, doing the patrolling around the FOB, and then all of a sudden they, that Division rips out into other, to 1 MEF Forward, you know, which was essentially the Marine Division Headquarters that came in, and decides they're going to go to Fallujah instead of Ramadi, so now I have this FOB that I need to secure. So I had to put forces up there at that FOB, and then I had to come up with about 100 soldiers to do 24/7 security on that FOB. So that's 100 soldiers I had to take from patrolling to put on FOB security. I mean, it's frustrating. When you don't have enough soldiers to do the patrolling you want to do anyway, and then all the sudden you get another task like that.

INTERVIEWER: And it explains, certainly, why there would be the perception that there was not much that could be accomplished during certain periods throughout 2004, 2005, and 2006.

04201242: Yeah. And then it's also -- I mean, if you're an Iraqi civilian and you see a patrol come around once every two days or once every three days for a couple hours, right, how much are you going to tell that patrol? Because you know when they leave this Iraqi insurgent is going to be in your face an hour after they leave. So, you know, it's very hard to get information from these people when they know you're not going to be around to protect them an hour after you leave, and they may not see you for another two or three days. So without -- like a counterinsurgency fight it all comes down to boots on the ground and that sense of providing security and protection of the populace. And while I'm on that, I will mention that that's another interesting notion here is when we first got to Ramadi, the mission we were given essentially was to defeat the insurgency, which meant to kill or detain insurgents. When -- I kind of evolved over the year I was there, continuing to read, you know, these COIN articles and just gaining situational awareness about what was actually going on on the ground and such, that I evolved to the point where I realized the mission should not have been defeat the insurgents, the mission should have been protect the populace, because there's a difference there between the two. If your troops are focused on going out and killing and detaining insurgents versus protecting the populace, there's a different mindset, you know what I mean?

Because -- and I had an Iraqi tell me this. He said when an American soldier killed an insurgent, no matter how despicable that insurgent might have been, no matter how many Iraqi civilians that insurgent might've killed, when an American soldier kills that insurgent, that American soldier just created a martyr. Now, when an Iraqi kills that same insurgent, they just killed a bad guy. And that's an interesting cultural distinction, don't you think? It's almost a no-win situation! (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and it's not a distinction that I think we understood until much later.

04201242: Right. Right. You know, we thought, OK, we're going to go out and kill these insurgents who not only are killing Americans but they're also killing Iraqis, and they're intimidating Iraqis and cutting heads off of people, but the way they saw it, we just created a martyr because it was an American who killed them.

INTERVIEWER: When the MEF came in, did you feel that after they got settled in Fallujah that they were more supportive of you guys, or was it still -- did you still remain with the same troops, still have to cover down on Blue Diamond?

04201242: Oh yeah, I mean, again, General [*name removed*] -- and by the way, General [*name removed*] was a gem of a Commander to work for, just a really good man... But no, I mean, no more resources became available when MEF Forward came in, and I imagine -- because their hands were tied, too. So no, the relationship with MEF Forward was good, but we didn't get any more support.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Were there Special Forces that were operating in the area?

04201242: Oh, absolutely. They were right there, essentially right adjacent to our FOB at Ramadi, which is kind of a separate, walled off portion. And yeah, like I said, I would go over and see them and convey to them what we were seeing, and they would convey to me what they were seeing, and occasionally we would do joint operations together where we might provide an outer cordon while they would go in and, you know, detain a bad guy or that, or that type of thing. So yeah, we worked together. But they would only tell us as much as they wanted us to know.

INTERVIEWER: Well, that's understandable. There is -- there's a few articles, actually, but one in particular that references the ODA 5th group that was up in Al-Qaim. Now, I know that was not necessarily in your AO, but they mention in 2005 having started a mini-awakening with the Albu Mahal and the Albu Nimer. What they started was a militia. I mean, they supported and armed a militia, and I know that there's a lot of taboo feeling about militias themselves, but in your AO did you know of any of the tribes that were trying to create an awakening and were

specifically asking for you to support and supply a militia?

04201242: Absolutely. Absolutely, and like I said, the thinking of MNCI and the Marine Division at the time was do not give these -- do not arm the sheik militias. That's the (inaudible) order. Do not arm the sheik militias. You tell them they've got to send their tribes people to join the Iraqi Police, and then we'll send them off to the police academy and they can come back to Ramadi and secure their town that way, but do not, do not arm the sheik militias.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Do you know if there was the school, the police school in Jordan, if that had been formed at the time?

04201242: Yes. Yeah, we sent them to both places. There was a school north of Baghdad and there was a school in Jordan. We would send them to either place, but depending on what seats were available.

Now, this is another thing we did is whenever the Iraq -- most of our guys did go to the school north of Baghdad, by the way, but whenever we would have our police from Ramadi graduate from the police academy, we would send a security element, my MPs or another mounted force, out to Baghdad and escort them back to Ramadi, because you may know that there were many instances where these police, in coming back to their cities on buses, insurgents would stop those buses and shoot 40 of them in the back of the head. So, you know, we were very conscious of ensuring we got our guys back safely without being executed.

INTERVIEWER: Well, my final question, sir -- and I've taken up a terrible amount of your time, so I can't thank you enough -- but my final question is the baseline for this research project, which is: based on your experience in Anbar, what actions, interactions, or dynamics do you felt, feel helped support or instigate the Awakening that could be globally applied?

04201242: Yeah, I really think there's something to be said for these sheik militias. It does take a certain amount of trust, and I think they need to be controlled or held accountable in some way, but... And this kind of thing we've got to be careful about. We can't... We can't apply the lessons we learned in Iraq to every future type of insurgency we encounter, so we've just, we've just got to caveat that and be careful of that, do you know what I mean?

But in hindsight, it seems to me that arming the sheik militias really helped facilitate and encourage the Sunni Awakening. The other thing is -- and I think this is probably more of a global statement that could be applied more broadly -- is the focus, I believe, needs to be on protecting the populace rather than defeating or destroying the insurgents. And this isn't anything new, really, but I think it's something I learned over there in Iraq, and I think many more learned in Iraq, is if you protect the populace, and they feel secure, it's going to be more prone for them to turn the bad guys in than if your focus is on killing the bad guys and the populace doesn't feel very secure at all. But that gives the insurgents a scene whereby they could institute a murder and intimidation campaign. So I think globally learning is really focused, needs to be on securing the populace.

I think the more cultural awareness our soldiers have, the better. I think leader involvement at every level to ensure our soldiers are doing the right thing in accordance with our values is extremely important. You know, we have so many soldiers from -- and when I say soldier I mean soldier/Marine, of course -- but there are so many soldiers from so many different backgrounds that they need good leaders to be out there ensuring that they understand the purpose of what they're doing, they understand the importance of treating the indigenous people with dignity and respect. They need to understand that if they even accidentally kill a civilian it's probably going to create ten more insurgents. And leaders need to be out there on the ground to ensure that those type of ideas are being reinforced continually. It's not enough to stand up in front of your troops when you are ready to leave your [MOG?] station and go over to whatever country and make this big speech about treating the people with dignity and respect. That's something that has to be reinforced

continually, and it has to be reinforced with leaders being right there on the ground to do that. So those are the things that really come to mind, I guess.

INTERVIEWER: Great. Well, again, I very much appreciate your time.

INTERVIEWER: The phone conversation has ended. However, after I paused the recording the respondent gave me additional information. He said he wanted me to make sure that we highlight the fact that the National Guard provided civilians skills that they were able to bring to the table in Ramadi, particularly in regards to rebuilding the city, providing electricity, fixing the water. Some of the National Guardsmen had been or were police officers, so they were able to bring their training to the table when they were training the Iraqi Police, as well as in bringing to the table training for the Iraqi Army. The respondent will be sending me some information in the mail. That information will be included in the notes for this project, and will be typed up and added to the transcripts at a later date.

END OF AUDIO

Interview 17: 04201243

Interview 04201243, 06 June 2012

INTERVIEWER: Yes. OK, I'm speaking with 04201243 and it's the 6th of June. Sir, I'm about to read you the informed consent. I gave you a little bit of a background on the project. This interview is going to be audiotaped unless you ask me not to. If we get into anything that's going to be of a classified nature we have to stop and I have to initiate TECOM or now it's EDCOM's security protocols because it will be considered a spillage. This is all unclassified. Your participation is voluntary. If you refuse to participate or you wish that any portion of this project be redacted just let me know. It is confidential to the extent that's permitted by law. So no reference to you is going to be made in oral and/or written reports that will link you to the project unless you explicitly authorize me to do so. Also any contextual information about who you are is going to be limited to the extent that I can protect you. So you can also refuse any questions or stop this interview at any time. You can request information that you've already provided throughout the entire interview be removed from the study at any point. Also although we do expect that your participation is going to pose extremely minimal risk to you, you won't be receiving any compensation for the project. It's just you know the benefits are going to be accrued towards the knowledge that you provide. And all of this information is going to be provided to CAOCL and it will be distributed throughout the Marine Corps. One other note is that I will be contacting participants towards the reporting phase, just to vet the information against what you've already provided, so that I make sure that I get things correct. And whatever it is that CAOCL will allow me to release I'll offer it to the participants so that they have access to published material. All the information, just so you know, is locked up and secured at all times. So no one has access to it except for me and the primary researcher who is Dr. Kerry Fosher. She's the director here at CAOCL. And I can send you all of that information in an e-mail so that you can access it at your convenience. OK?

04201243: OK, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Yeah. So if you could give me a little bit of background about what you were doing while in Iraq that would be great.

04201243: OK. You want to know my background information or just Iraq?

INTERVIEWER: You can provide both. If you want to give me context as to what your background is. But then also how it relates to Iraq.

04201243: OK. I'm a retired -- name is [*name removed*]. And I'm retired Special Forces E8 (*MSG*). I spent 16 straight years on A-teams in 5th Group. I never left here once I was assigned. I started off with Desert Shield, Desert Storm. And I lived with Arab tribesmen who formed the 2nd Battalion of the Shadit Brigade for the push back into Kuwait. Then I spent the rest of my career working in the Middle East and East Africa. I have six combat tours in four separate conflicts. Desert Storm, Somalia, August of '93 to January '94. And then I fought in Afghanistan, and then three tours in Iraq, to include the initial dates.

INTERVIEWER: And where were you located in Iraq during which timeframe?

04201243: In the time period I think you're interested -- and you can correct me if I'm wrong -- is the Al Anbar piece. I did two tours in Al Anbar. First significant operation occurred 18 February 2004. I was in from '04 till -- February '04 till July of '04 for the first tour. I came back a year and a half later. I went in in August of -- into Al Anbar in August of '05 and left February or end of January '06.

INTERVIEWER: OK. And where were you located?

04201243: Al Asad on the first trip and Camp Hit the second trip. I was an operation detachment operation sergeant for ODA [*unit removed*] on those two trips.

INTERVIEWER: OK. I have several different types of questions that I could ask you. But it seems like you have a particular way that you would like to approach discussing the Anbar Awakening. So would you prefer just to launch into it?

04201243: I'll launch into it and you direct me where you need me to go. OK. The -- I was working for Alpha Company [*unit removed*] Company asset in OIF 2. I worked for a major named [*name removed*]. Anyway I had assigned a mission to my detachment to find Sunni Arabs who would kill AQ for us. That was the goal. This predates any Iraqi government or anything like that. So the tribal piece that we were working on predates any of that. And the whole idea was the commander in chief's intent was to kill AQ where we could find them. And we could find them out west with the right guys. All right. So with that in mind we launched into Iraq on my second trip. One of the first things we did significant to us is I had -- we had the force operations going, which is all, you know, mini spy network, whatever you want to call them. Anyways I told my guys to take a good hard look at each guy, interview them, and I wanted them to find me a guy that I could meet and recruit to be a soldier force. And that event -- that went on from 20 to 25 February. Did the force assessment. And the guy with codename Nubs now he's still alive and Nubs was nominated as our guy. He had a history of fighting Saddam in the 1995 rebellion that the western Sunnis and the Albu Nimr tribe had against Saddam out in Ramadi.

INTERVIEWER: OK. You said Nubs as in N-U-B-S?

04201243: Yeah, Nubs, [*identifying information removed*]. He's a rough guy. Now this whole tour was the first round of what we considered a ten-round fight. We're hooking and jabbing and trying to figure things out. When we went to the second tour, we had a plan. We knew what we had to do. You'll see this is going to take a while. Anyhow, we got Nubs on board on 24 February and he had six other guys that he trusted that he was going to send them into an action cell. Scouts. What this really did for us was he agreed to form this action cell and provide the team with a

plausible force on which to build a PSYOP team based on the possibility of a pro new Iraqi government vigilante group. And we also used them as a security force for our operation. So that was how it started. That -- and that is far as I know the first tribesmen recruited to do anything except tell on other guys.

INTERVIEWER: Was Nubs Albu Nimr or –

04201243: He's Nimr. The Shalal clan Albu Nimr tribe. I'll call him Nimrawi from now on. That's how they say it. That was one of the problems we had with the culture thing. The Marines were bad about, and I'm sure the Army was too. They were looking for Albu Mahal people and Mahalawi like they were separate tribes, but it's just the possessive form of the tribe. Nimrawi. By the way I speak very good Arabic but I don't read it or write it.

OK. That was the first significant event you'd be interested in.

A couple other events occurred. These were direct action missions. We shot someone in Abu Hayat on a raid. And they died. And we started receiving -- we started -- the HET team started getting information about a special Iraqi unit doing that kind of stuff. But we were fully in uniform with our military stuff. Then on -- that occurred 16 March. At 9 April just before 9 April, I want to say about the 7th of April, the -- an imam had come in and had everybody all fired up along the Euphrates River to go out and kill Americans on Highway 12. Some British guys got killed and the unit told me to go find this guy and basically either arrest or kill him. Preferably not kill him. But anyhow so on 9 April I went down into Baghdadi right outside of Al Asad and found this guy and he decided he'd put up a fight so we killed him. We had the B-team in support, the ODA did the work fully in uniform. But once again the word on the street was the special Iraq unit. The only reason we think they did that, they thought that, was because we all spoke Arabic on the objective. It's just it was just a habit we'd gotten into.

[Approximately 5 minutes of the transcript has been redacted at the request of the interviewee]

We used indigenous guns, indigenous explosives, etc. We were not successful in the kill capture. But his dad turned him in to the Marines at Al Asad and the second- and third-order effects on our enemy was unbelievable. Everyone was scared of the new Iraqi unit which later on we could track ourselves for some period of time, so that now this -- the whole purpose of that op was A) to get the guy, B) to kind of shock the enemy's early warning systems. Kind of like bear hunting. You know what a bear looks like, but if a sheep walks up, turns into a bear and eats you alive, that changes how you're thinking.

All right so that was that one. All right. Let me see. On 30 May we met with a Sheikh [*name removed*]. Called me up. And he was [*position removed*]. And we had a meeting. He came up and met with us. He declared himself pro coalition. We knew it was the largest tribe in Dulaimi confederation. He'd gone on record as pro new government. And that's

fairly significant. And I'll get into how we developed these relationships. But anyway I even made a note here. The [*name removed*] meeting is the beginning of the end of the co-option of the tribes. We did another PSYOPs raid against [*name removed*] and outstandingly successful. It killed one ACF -- anti (inaudible 15:24) -- is what we called them back then. Moved back into the desert and the population of Muhammadi locked itself down and actually ended up killing some AQ guys who were coming in to pay off these guys. Put in IEDs, etc. So that was extremely successful. I could tell you that TTP, but I don't even want to go into that. That's pretty brutal.

Anyway I'm selling this all to the Marines. And I'm telling them I won't lie (inaudible 16:00) tell them it'll be transparent to them who does it. And I'm pretty sure that they thought that the Nimr were doing the work.

So what happens after that -- see this gets funny. And it worked out perfect. On 6 -- on -- we did -- it was around 11 to 14 May we did the [*name removed*] raid and we dropped the leaflets again. I had an American citizen who'd been an Iraqi most of his life write these. So the syntax was correct and the dialect was correct. So we threw those out. Anyway Sheikh [*name removed*] on or about 16 May. His -- somebody tried to blow him up out. We think that was in retaliation for the [*name removed*] raid. Now that is significant because now it appears as though AQ or insurgents are attacking a tribe that had been known to support their operations. Which is exactly what we wanted. We -- that was the effect we wanted to have. So I made a note here. That was enemy miscalculation. The PSYOP piece now is going to become reality. And (inaudible 17:30) two thirds (inaudible 17:32) Nimr and some of west Juliet, which is our area. And they go on offense, etc. Another key event that occurred which I heard from the Marines, it wasn't -- I wasn't there. But Abd [*name removed*] entered the -- on 17 May [*name removed*] entered the Hit city council meeting unannounced, declares if any Nimr floats he will level the city. The officers who attended that city council meeting told me some of them started crying. Which told us he was the right guy and that threat was credible. And he was delivering a message to someone through that city council because we had suspected the city council was bad. Was you know not -- what turned out later on that all of our assumptions ended up being true as far as the enemy piece.

INTERVIEWER: Was this city council -- was Governor Mamoun in it at all?

04201243: No this was the Hit city council.

INTERVIEWER: The Hit city council. All right. Very good.

04201243: Yeah this has nothing to do with Ramadi. Understand what we were looking at is trying to get the largest tribe in the Dulaimi confederation on our side. And we thought the others would follow. We knew they were tied into the Mahal tribe. I was just learning how to play this game. You know what I'm saying?

You try stuff. You -- what we expected from these less than -- well let's just call them unconventional raids we were doing. We expected to shock the enemy's systems to the point where they would have to put more guys on defense

and less offense. So what we were seeing was the Nimr were getting blamed for it. Which was good. We wanted them to get blamed and we wanted -- and even -- and one of our measures of effectiveness was they -- if the tribe got attacked by other Arabs then we thought that would swing them our way. Boom. And that -- and we achieved our goal by 17 May.

And then later on General Mattis -- or about -- actually before that. General Mattis. I had a -- mostly Shalal clan guys that we were forming into a little militia to keep that town safe down there. Little place called Tal Aswat Nawaya which is where (inaudible 20:27) and he had -- when they were making their big move for the first Fallujah in April and he (General Mattis) asked [*name removed*] to ask me if those guys could reconnoiter the route for him. So we sent these guys out and reconnoitered the route. And the Marines never got hit going to or from Fallujah. And after that General Mattis funded a 100-man militia. And that was through his CERP funds.

Anyway we stood it up. And it all worked good till 28 June. Once the RIPTOA occurred, the ING picked up the full-time security operations and they were using the Nimr. Bottom line is the Nimr didn't like working for those people. And we also got another portion of a tribe. Began to engage them and to have a small militia formed in Al Amira, which is just northwest on the east side of the Euphrates River. Anyway by my notes we had roughly -- we had 70 guys in that unit. Ten of them were not in uniform and that was just to find stuff out for us. Anyway that's basically a real short synopsis of the first tour.

But the thought processes that started with that you know were just get a bunch of guys to go kill bad guys, that sounded pretty good. The thing was we had to start modeling out our enemy a bit on account of you know the insurgency does everything that the big military does. You know. You know what the battlefield operating systems are? Command, control, mobility, countermobility, survivability, air defense, all that.

Well, we realized somewhere in that first tour that we were actually targeting our enemy's combat service support. And if we could take that from them they would either have to attack us, US forces, in which they would lose, or they would have to try to use coercion, intimidation and every other nasty thing they could do to get the tribes, the smuggling tribes, which is primarily what these people do for a living, they'd have to get them on board. Back on the AQ side. We knew we could split AQ from the Sunni insurgents too. There's no tribal society that ever survived Islamic fascist takeover. And we have models for that.

I mean if you look at Lebanon in '75, about '75, they had that civil war. Well that's when Hezbollah gets into southern Lebanon and (inaudible 23:36) control the schools, the hospitals, etc. And if you -- and the best model really is Afghanistan. What happened in Afghanistan with the Soviet invasion -- and this is just the model we were using -- there's only three things that the AQ has to have to win. The first is they have to have -- they have -- basically they have to have a civil war. They have to have social -- they have to have economic failure, social chaos, and 50-plus percent Muslim population.

We weren't doing anything about them wiping out everybody else. For some reason we just -- we don't see that as one of their three-step methods. Once they get it to a majority Muslims, they run everybody off. And they'll do it violently or nonviolently. You look in Europe, there are whole enclaves now. Maybe like you open up a store. Bunch of Muslims move in, don't go to your store. They pick on your kids at school. Well next thing you do is you sell the store and move. And a Muslim takes over. That's how they do it. Or you know in a more violent society they just form a militia and start killing people till they run them off. Once the -- the social chaos piece is the interesting piece because we helped them do that out west. What happened with that was what they did in Afghanistan which is my best model is all those kids that went to Pakistan, you know they exfiled Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion. Well then who raised them? AQ. The madrases. Now you give those guys a ten-year -- 10-to-15- or 20-year timeline. Now the five-year-old who has no knowledge of anything other than war and being a refugee, now he's 20. You hand him an AK and say go fight for the (inaudible 25:41) and he's indoctrinated completely and that's how they do it. They destroy the social structure which in Afghanistan and in the Middle East is tribal. Those social structures predate Islam.

OK. So once we -- once you -- once they can just replace the social structure then it's inevitable. As long as there's near economic failure, economic failure, in a 16-to-20-year timeline, they're in. They did it in Lebanon. They did it in Afghanistan. And they did it, and they're doing it in Somalia. And the key piece for AQ and bin Laden and them was he formed that unit and when the Taliban ran into forces they couldn't defeat then he sent his foreign fighters in there. His foreign brigade in there. Into that fight. And that's when he went from you know in this case bin Laden and AQ went from being the supporting unit to the Taliban's army to the supported unit supported by Mullah Omar and the Taliban. So with that model in mind we were seeing that occur in Al Anbar. And we helped create that problem because Paul Bremer was bumping his gums about the tribes are an anachronism. Typically in my experience humans fall back on their baseline society when they're under stress. And we were saying that we weren't going to support them doing. Is that clear?

So that's the modeling that I'm talking about. We had to have -- we were playing off of something. And every time -- by mid tour of the first tour, we pretty much weren't going to do any more standard raids. Because what'd it do? Well, it actually helped AQ. Every time you blow up a door in a tribal society and arrest a guy or kill him the sheikh has to pay for that. The tribe has to pay for that. Now they have widows and they have orphans you know that they got to raise. So we were actually helping AQ create the conditions required to win. I'm in a pretty big building here. I bet we could stack all the paperwork for all the raids done in Al Anbar Province and fill this thing up. Every year it got worse. We just didn't analyze. More raid. More raid. Get to work. Get to work. And we were wrong. But there are people who need killed, and there's a way to do it so that doesn't blow back on you number one. Number two, it isolates and reinforces. It isolates societies, reinforces the social structure, which is counterproductive to AQ or Hezbollah, take note. Now that's the thought process that came out of OIF 2. Because between OIF 2 and 3 we actually came up with a (inaudible 29:23). Any questions?

INTERVIEWER: No. Not so far.

04201243: OK. Is it making sense at all?

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely.

04201243: OK. Well, the -- during the year and a half that we did not realize -- or I didn't realize -- the SF had been jerked out of Al Anbar. We -- actually I thought after OIF 2 that we could -- the A-teams could go in there, get on this horse and ride it. And we would have had the Awakening done (inaudible 29:59), but instead they pulled SF out of there. It was all Marine Corps after that.

Anyways so during that time period I moved to another team so I'd get more team time. Anyhow the -- what we did was we came up with an operational scheme to basically get the tribes to fight AQ and ultimately defeat AQ. All right. First we took the model. That AQ model I just gave. That I just talked about. Those three things. And we started doing it in OIF 2. In OIF 3 we weren't going to do anything that caused economic hardship to the tribe, that created social chaos that would undermine these tribal sheikhs and mukhtars. And we're -- you know the Muslim thing, it's already 100% Muslim. So we can't do anything about that anyhow. All right. Things we weren't going to do, which may be more key, is you know the idea that we'll protect the population. And that will make the AQ, the insurgents, less of a problem, that is crazy. For example go to Baghdad, protect the Christians. What effect does that have (inaudible 31:45) none. Over time they're going to win that fight. We're not going to stay there forever. Am I making sense?

All right. So what we did was we said OK that's how we're going to operate. That gives us our basic dos and don'ts. We took the battlefield operating systems. And we used a check if it was targetable. A minus if it wasn't. And a check minus if it was targetable but very difficult to do. Here's what we came up with. The mobility countermobility survivability, they're invisible to us. They have a religion that requires them at some point in their life to go to Saudi Arabia. They move around all the time, they have good (inaudible 32:36) we weren't going to do anything about. There's not enough of them. We looked at their C2, their command and control. It was being done out in the mosque. Well, problem with that is took an act of Congress to get a raid on a mosque. Their maneuver is simply positioning people who are almost invisible to us in the right place at the right time to execute the things they needed done. So that was not targetable. These are all minuses. Can't be done. Their intel -- five bucks, I mean, they'll count Humvees. I mean 70% unemployment. People will do about anything for money. They'll collect intel. Not targetable. Their fires. Everybody forgets their fires also include PSYOPs. They were killing us on. Killing us on. Our last three, we were sending -- they were sending Iraqi army units who are almost 100% Shia into Al Anbar Province. Guess what AQ's IO message was? That the Shia are going to take over and they're going to use their army and they're going to whip your ass and make you be like them and destroy you. And we were reinforcing it. Our government was helping the Iraq -- you know the Iraqi (inaudible 34:03) their air defense.

INTERVIEWER: Was AQI also using the idea of the Iranian takeover?

04201243: That's exactly what I'm talking about. They don't look at it as Iranian taking. They look at it Shia taking. Because -- so that's how they were doing. But the bottom line on this. We would literally reinforce that IO thinking. By

'05 they're winning the fires game big time on. All right. Their air defense is not targetable. Because once again they don't have a gun on them, we're not going to drop a bomb. And that's kind of our own rules killing us. Their fires were targetable. But it was a check minus on account of we could counteract their PSYOPs. With our legitimate US military PSYOPs. Now one of the problems you have is -- and I'll get into how Arabs think. There is actually a model out there from the quote State Department. And we'll get into that later. Anyway their fires were counterable. The problem is it's still counter. We needed to take the initiative and have our own PSYOPs campaign. Which we had done before and will do again. The air defense. But check this out. Combat service support. Oh-five that insurgency were using smuggling tribes and they had been smugglers since before Islam. So there's nothing new under the sun. And guess who those tribes are. Mahalawi. Nimrawi. Al-Ubaidi. That became targetable. If we could take that from the insurgency or from the AQ side of the insurgency.

Understand these are all -- these organizations were very Mafia, very Mafia-like. If you've ever dealt with unions in states like where I'm from. They're very comparable. Anyway we knew we could target that. So that got a check. And that's what we did. That was the plan. Now on the Arab modeling. I got this about 1995, '96. Lady came from the State Department. They had a big symposium here. Long story short. She told us this is how Arabs identify themselves. We are Western. What do you do for a living, ma'am? I am a contractor is what you told me.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

04201243: OK. That is a state of being. I am. Correct?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

04201243: Am I -- OK. I am a former soldier. I am a janitor, I am a shooting instructor. That's a state of being. That's Western. You ever talk to an Arab and ask him what they do?

They say *ishegli*, my work is. They have one name. Then they have their father's name. Then they have their grandfather's name. Then they have -- throw a few more in there. But the next important piece of information is their clan. The next one after that, number five, is their tribe. That's important to know. So an Arab. When he does anything the first thing he's got to do is he has got to -- he's got -- it's his -- this is his identification. And we all have them. You know levels of identification. His first one, himself, his single name, and his immediate family.

Anything you can do for an Arab that makes them feel good about themselves and look good to their immediate family they'll get on board with. All right. The next level is extended family and clan. The next level of influence is tribe. Guess what the next one is. Muslims like me. And I found this to be true throughout the region. So it's not -- you know the lady that explained it to us. And then we applied it and it worked. Then it's Muslims not like me. Then it's country of

origin. Which is something we haven't thought about. What do the Persians and the Egyptians who are the primary Hezbollah and AQ guys, what do they have in common? They have major empires that predate Islam.

OK. So country of origin is why the Palestinian thing never goes away. Because that's more important to them than their nationality, which comes in about number seven. The reason I'm telling you this is because to motivate anyone you want to get as high up on that chain of self-identification as you can. But the line is drawn at tribe for someone like me, non-Muslim, to input. To apply influence. Because I'm not a Muslim. I can't do Muslims like me, Muslims not like me. They have to do that. That's how we came up with we're going to target the entire tribe, all clans available, and that's the largest number of people we could take from the enemy's combat service support. So that was part of the plan. All right. So we've identified (inaudible 39:56) going to take from the enemy. How the target thinks. And what the enemy requires. What conditions the enemy requires to be successful. After that I mean this gets easy. All right. Am I making any sense at all?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Now I mean this was your plan. And you came up with this prior to going in?

04201243: Prior to going into OIF 3. And then we went and executed. And a lot of intel (inaudible 40:32) bottom line is we had to go back in and make and reestablish contact with the tribe. We did that through some trickery and some other things. Anyway so we worked through that. Now that really began on or right around in August and early September.

INTERVIEWER: Of 2005?

04201243: Yeah. And what -- the situation we walked into was the Lima template, the unit that had gotten just -- you know lost a whole platoon. Was at Camp Hit. They were at Camp Hit. The Navy Seabees were building the Iraqi army camp. On part of Camp Hit. They were getting bombed every day. Morale was not real high. Let's go with that. Anyways so all that was occurring. And well then we came back in. And they went out. The Marines were going to arrest the Burgess. Bunch of the Burgess clan of -- the Burgess al-Gaoud Albu Nimr. And I sent a couple guys with them. And anyway I cut a deal with Sheikh [*name removed*] who was the brother of [*name removed*]. [*name removed*] is dead by this point. He was killed by the Marines while being abducted by AQ. They ran a checkpoint. Everybody got smoked. So his son [*name removed*] I want to say was about 28 then is now the king of the tribe. He's in over his head. But [two *names removed*] brother, was helping him along. And he had a whole little entourage of guys we'd met before. And that we knew. So we could deal with. The problem was I wasn't sure we weren't going to get killed if we rolled down in there. Anyway so they arrest the Burgess clan. And [*name removed*] immediately calls me. I was friends with these guys. I've met these guys' wives. I've got in fairly deep with them in OIF 2. So they called me. When they heard I was back they called me up and said hey can you get our guys out of jail. So me and a Colonel [*name removed*] put on a big show. Colonel [*name removed*] wants to keep them. They didn't have evidence to keep them. They only arrested them because they had a nice place. The only reason they had a nice place is because they're Albu Nimr. And anybody

messed with them would be killed. So they didn't go over there and mess up, because the mosque -- fact we used to call Sheikh [*name removed*] the don, he's like Don Corleone. We had nicknames for all these guys.

So the don calls up. And he wants his guys out of jail. I rehearse the big act we're going to put on in front of him. He ends up signing a contract that says we'll be safe. And shows me on the map all the points we'll be safe under his and the tribe's purview and that we can fall back to his compound which is fairly well guarded, has walls and everything, if we're ever under attack and need to fall back in there. So we just got his signature on that. And all the players are (inaudible 44:10) OK. So we're making headway, right?

All right. Anyway the (inaudible 44:22) we're starting thinking about expanding to other tribes. The Mahal in particular. The -- and we would work on that, work on that, work on that. And in truth OIF 3 set up for OIF 4, which is when the Awakening really occurred. So without the first two tours the Awakening wouldn't have occurred. It couldn't have.

We wouldn't have done -- we would not have done the work required to make it occur. The Albu Risha and all those guys were never going to sign up and get on board with it until the Nimr did. The Nimr and the Mahal. There's no way. It's the largest two tribes in the confederation. If they don't swing that way those other guys, they're done. They won't (inaudible 45:17) anyway I've got some notes here you may be interested in. I'll kind of read them off. This is a tribal engagement information paper that I wrote at the time that I was in country. And I basically was having to justify why we were doing what we were doing (inaudible 45:41) we engaged the tribe in order to assess possibility of co-opting upper level leadership and because human terrain denial initiative is being conducted with civil affairs as the ODA main effort. The team absent monetary support from OGA.

OK. Has little to offer the well-off sheikhs. To withhold (inaudible 46:05) moneys would be counterproductive to developing economic and physical security. This would make local populations more vulnerable to what at the time was AIF, we knew it was AQ. And their IO. This information paper previously recorded information. Includes previously reported information concerning the Nimr. And it's been in SITREPs. Anyways I had basically having to justify why I had to put this together. The -- because we were currently in contact with the Nimr. Co-opting the tribe. Three things are currently acting as a drag on the operations. One was -- and this was interesting. On 4 September '05 there was a partial destruction of the Hit city bridge. And we start having to go to Ramadi and live out in the desert. We lived out in the desert 90 days in the six-month tour out there. So it was pretty dangerous. Anyway we had no ability to control any tribal leadership through withholding payment or sending contracts (inaudible 47:18) have that influence. Anyway that's the kind of stuff we were dealing with. Not that important.

INTERVIEWER: Well, when you briefed this who were you briefing it to?

04201243: I had to send it up to a 3rd Battalion even though I was a [*unit removed*] unit. I was working for 3rd Battalion. [*name removed*].

INTERVIEWER: OK. Were the Marines aware of what was happening? Were they getting briefed on this also?

04201243: No. Pretty much not. They did not care.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Why do you think that is? Was it because of the higher –

04201243: Well, I'll give -- they were only sending battalions in there for like 90 days at a time. At by OIF 3. In fact the unit that had the Lima Company that lost that platoon. They were shell-shocked. I mean it's (inaudible 48:30) and then Colonel [*name removed*] old unit rolled in. [*Unit removed*] I believe is who they were. They were there for about 30 or 40 days, 30 days. Then working for the Marine Corps was a Mississippi National Guard artillery unit slash provisional infantry. Took over Camp Hit. It was just a constant influx of new guys. And then they had a beach landing force or something showed up. And they were going to do a big sweep of the river valley. Which we talked them out of. What occurred -- what -- the operation that occurred, the enemy operation that occurred in September actually started in August. The -- we handed out cell phones. We had cell phone contacts with the Nimrawi on the other side of the river. Somebody went up and blew up the cell phone towers. And then someone blew up the landline that went to Hit from that side of the river. And then within a few weeks they blew the bridge. There were -- also on that same day there were two suicide car bomb attacks. Killed several Marines. It was pretty bloody. But we looked at it. It was an isolation operation. It was a battlefield shaping operation by AQ. And it was to intimidate the tribe and isolate them from US military contact and they were very successful in that. In fact by October there was one voter in Hit. Remember they had the October election. There was one voter in Hit. I think he lasted a week before somebody smoked him. By December guess how many voters they are from that area.

INTERVIEWER: How many?

04201243: Over 3,000. You know why? Because we went up. The Marines came up. Did a good job. They took back that -- the far side of the bridge that had a big hole in it. It was a place called Hay al-Bakr. Once they did that there was no resistance. We used the Desert Protectors that we'd gotten, formed up, which was -- it was the same guys that we had in OIF 2 but now they were going to be Desert Protectors. And the Mahal were playing up in Al Qaim. And we took those 30 Desert Protectors. We did rear guard for the Marines. We guided them through the desert so they didn't come up that big raised road right along the river where they would just get IEDd to hell. Dropped them in. We made sure they didn't hit Zawaya or any of the Nimr areas. So they you know didn't get their doors blown off and their lives all screwed up. And they went up and cleared that. And then anyway that -- the Marines did a good job on that piece. Any more questions?

INTERVIEWER: Could you go into the Desert Protectors a little bit more? Did you guys form the Desert Protectors?

04201243: No. The 5th Group formed them. And the Iraqis were on board with it. Well (inaudible 51:47) there's a whole lot of history that leads up to what really happened in Al Anbar. If you go back to -- fold these pages back. Hate to do this, have to refer back to stuff. It's been a long time, you know. I'll give you an example. And these are the questions that I was asked by Marine MCIA when I came over to DC a few years ago, hold on one second.

All right. The -- we left in July of '04. And I thought for sure we were going to seize the initiative. I -- my team and I weren't allowed to tell anybody about what we did. It's the greatest secret ever kept (inaudible 53:03) anyway the -- so one of the biggest problems we had out west was the Mahal, they were nationalist insurgents, as were the Nimr, all the Dulaimi confederation were nationalist insurgents. But AQ had come in with money and they did it with a traveling imam system. They'd have two or three guys and an imam. He shows up at church, tells everybody, get them all fired up, run out, kill Americans, right? Well, the Karibila tribe up in Al Qaim had gone fully on AQ. They were taking AQ money and they were eating it you know hook, line and sinker. The Mahal started resenting that because criminal organizations can't have too much religion, you know what I'm saying? Kind of like the Mafia. Church on Sunday. Gambling on Monday. Right?

Kind of thing. Well, they were -- the split was occurring. Well the – (Marines) they did Operation Matador in November of '04. Well, the way that occurred was (inaudible 54:08) Albu Nimr who was basically the XO for the Nimr tribe went to Sadoun Dulaimi (*Premier Sheikh of Dulaim Confederation and Minister of Defense*) and said hey man the Mahal need help up here, AQ is kicking our ass. Well, Sadoun Dulaimi turns. Minister of defense at the time. He turns to the US military and says hey we need help. Well they sent the Marines. Well the Marines (inaudible 54:31) linked up with the Mahal who were actually fighting. Had turned and started fighting AQ at the time. And the Marines went in there and shot anybody with a gun. They called it red-on-red anyway.

Not realizing what they were seeing. Well the problem with that was AQ just got out of the way. Those are the Mahal houses that we dropped bombs and artillery shells on. That's -- they'd had -- they'd been moved out of the village so to speak and were trying to retake their homes. We destroyed it. And we killed a bunch of them. Well, that combined with the Haditha 14. Haditha was (inaudible 55:10) if you look at all the (inaudible 55:13) networks out there.

It's a decision point for your enemy. He's going to decide to head to Ubaidi or he's going to head toward Ramadi or head to the lake and go across the pond to Lake Tharthar into Samarra and that area. Well, control of that or having influence on that was critical to AQ. And to the insurgents. Well, remember I was talking about the Iraqi freedom group?

In OIF 2 they had about six guys showed up from Haditha wanted to join the Iraqi freedom group. Which didn't exist. Just smoke and mirrors. So we told them to form their own chapter. Well turned out they were all cops. So they were up there busting AQ. Well guess what happens in late fall early winter. They end up being 14 total guys. They were beheaded in Haditha and it was the same timeframe the major Fallujah, the big Fallujah fight was going on. The Marines did not roll their QRF to help them. Now the shock effect on these tribes down that river is unbelievable at this point.

They think now. I mean it's got Matador. You've got that that has occurred. They're thinking hey. The Marines and the US military doesn't give a damn what happens to us. So they hunker down and just lay low. They have no other survival capability.

That's what happens. I mean you know the questions I was asked for underperformance of tribal efforts to fight AQ. Well, we were asking tribes who were nationalist insurgents to fight AQ which they needed to be politically vented off which we hadn't done yet. But we also marginalized their social structure. Well you can't do that. When you start doing that you're in for a fight. We did it with the American Indians and look how long that fight took.

All right. We didn't pay the security forces. We had guys running around being policemen never got paid. And then you know when we finally got the -- we had 300 recruits for the Desert Protectors. They were all Sunni. The Nimr tribesmen. It was aircraft maintenance day the day they got recruited. They had to spend one more day. And that night they got hit with mortars. Now all 30 of them went home. The only police force that existed -- you know as a cohesive unit in Al Anbar in '05 was in Zawaya, the Al Furat township. They never got legally paid. They'd never been paid legally. Well the money is going somewhere. The Marines are paying people to pay cops. The cops in Hit, which didn't exist, they had a payroll. They had a general going down there picking up payroll. Didn't have one cop. That's the kind of stuff we were looking at. We're like OK this -- we got some problems too. Anyway that's what happened.

INTERVIEWER: Well, does it seem like -- I mean did the Marines not just -- did they just not understand what they were seeing? Or were they fully aware exactly of what was happening with these tribes and they were just given orders not to intervene?

04201243: Well you know I can tell you this. General Mattis when -- when he was there he understood the value of that militia we formed because his Marines didn't get hit. Now beyond that I don't know what he understood or didn't understand. But I can tell you this. Every time the Marines started losing -- and they knew hey man we're losing ground here. They would turn to me and the team. Go hey can you help us out? They didn't care what the answer was then. But at other times they fought us tooth and nail in OIF 3. They really did not want us getting that tribe gunned up and doing all these things. It was just you know and we -- you couldn't have flung a dead cat without hitting a Marine in the mouth down there in Hit. And then the tribe was isolated. They just-- they kept referring to the city council. The OIF 2 and 3.

They referred to the police and city council as a legitimate government. I asked them. I said well who elected those guys and who made them the legitimate government? Not one of them on that city council was from any of the tribes from the area. The policemen weren't from the town. They had been turned out. They were emplaced by AQ. The guy who ran the water plant was an AQ affiliate. Now I found those later. We assumed it. But I found out later after the Awakening when my friend told me who did what and how, why. So they're working with the bad guys. The Marines were working with the bad guys. And then we told them they were bad guys. (*They said*) Hey look man. There's no way.

I'll give an example. Example story. If an IED went off and killed somebody on the road, within 30 minutes almost every time the police chief would call up and say he knows who did it. Now you know I've watched enough CSI: Miami there. That don't happen. Not every time. So OK so what was the function of the police? In our model the police and the city council in Hit and then in other towns? They were all intel counterintel. Basically they kept -- they were the -- they were wearing uniforms and had reasons to meet with Marine Corps officers and keep a handle on what was going on and keep the information flowing to the head. And we told them that. We told the Marines that. They were like well we don't care, they're the city council. We've been told to work with them. There was no election that occurred. Where'd they come from?

INTERVIEWER: But it also seems like some of the problems the Marines were having is that I found through this project is that yes they were saying that they had to work with legitimate you know what they felt had to be the legitimate source, *i.e.*, the city council or the police, but they were getting those orders from policy makers. So from Baghdad. And although they wanted to do other things they were being told no and to stand down. So –

04201243: Well then that's fine. But look, listen, I'm not indicting the Marine Corps or anybody. My point is this. If you -- it's almost like you need a history class taught somewhere. That's what I tell everybody. I said look we are not going to change you know 2,000 years of social structure. We're not going to do it without violence. I'm telling you you can't do it. There's no way. We were in a bridge too far.

We took out a dictatorship and said you're going to eventually have an election. We took a communist -- I mean so now you know they had an underground economy, pure gas (inaudible 63:12) now add in that third one. We're going to destroy your social structure. Man, you're asking for a fight. There's no way they're going to do that. I mean, who would? I mean if I got -- if I watched our president talk and I needed an interpreter, well, you'd have a fight on your hand here in America. But that's what would happen. Paul Bremer (inaudible 63:40) he's got a terp. You know that's probably what he's saying. That we're wrong. We viewed it like this. The best we could hope for was to have an 1840s to 1850s American style politics in the tribal areas. They were going to vote how the tribes said to vote anyhow. That make sense?

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely.

04201243: Right. They're always going to do that because they have a social structure that they revere. They -- it's a big deal to be *shabir*, old, they respect that. And to be the head of a family. They -- everything's done by *majlis*, you know, the council. There's reasons for that. Because 1,000 years ago which fork in the road to take to the next well with your sheep meant life or death. For the whole crew. So anyhow that's what we're looking at. That's my basic -- I want to answer any questions you got. But that's how we did it. That's how we got pulled off. I'll tell you there's lots more dirty tricks here than I will allude to over the phone. We tricked them into it.

INTERVIEWER: You've actually answered the majority of my questions. Except that the baseline question for this project is what dynamics, actions or interactions were used to support the Awakening that are globally applicable. And at the very beginning of this interview I alluded to that. Not necessarily models. But things that can be used. That we would use for counterinsurgency ops, training, anything like that. You've given me a lot of information that I can use to pull that together. But what do you -- you know in a nutshell what do you think that we should be trying to train these -- you know our Marines or even the Army so that they're better prepared when we go into other theaters of engagement?

04201243: Well, almost -- well, first thing was we have to define to a degree what are we fighting here. OK? I'll give you an example. You know we did a drone strike the other night going to kill -- supposedly the Navy killed some bad guy. All right? Let's start off with this. First thing is what is the US military business model. All right? I'm going to tell you what it is. I'm just an American citizen like you are now paying taxes, etc. First thing is the last time we fought anybody over stuff, actual resources, that's World War II. Started over natural resources. After that every fight we've been in has been about politics. Stop the communists, etc. Right? AQ will attack and kill us anywhere they can. They aren't likely to conclude an existential war (inaudible 67:14) those terms. However, it is a global insurgency. Now this is just my view on it. If we look at it as a global insurgency we will fight it different.

How many bad guys have we killed? We got Saddam. They get better, worse. Worse. We got Zarqawi. Better, worse. Worse. We got bin Laden. Weren't three days later talking Haqqani network. We're not going to run out of these guys. We are not going to run out of bad guys to kill short of using nuclear weapons we cannot kill enough of them to have an influence we think we can have. That's cost us a fortune.

So let's go with the global insurgency. Now if I take it and look at it as a global insurgency. Now trust me. I'm an old SF guy, man. I was all about kicking in the doors, shooting the bad guy. I mean well you know that's cool stuff. I was a young man. But when I started losing, because I cannot stand losing nothing. I am a (inaudible 68:29) and we were losing our ass out there. We're running around breaking this door and that, killing this guy, killing that guy. And it had no effect. I can't stand that. So when we started looking at it as a global insurgency OK, how (inaudible 68:44) and we'd kind of model it out and we came up with that AQ model. Which I already had in my head (inaudible 68:52) a lot of this (inaudible 68:55) OK, well, that model gave me what not to do. Don't dress up in black Velcro and go shoot guys. And leave the tribes dangling. Because that actually reinforces the IO theme from my enemy. And it creates the social chaos. Because here's how they do it. And I had a guy told me. We the military had gone up and raided this house. Killed a guy (inaudible 69:23) killed a guy (inaudible 69:25) three wives and 14 kids. That tribe now has to cover down on that.

OK. The AQ guys are going down with a whisper campaign going up to the 15-year-old kid and going we'd never let that happen, your sheikh let that happen. They're undermining social structure. See what I'm saying?

Which is all conditioned based on the model we had that are required for AQ to take over. That tells us what not to do. Also tells us that we can do stuff. How we do it is more important than the effect it has on that (inaudible 70:08) on a targeted person as an individual. How you do it is way more important. It's way better to have a bunch of tribesmen go

up and beat a guy to death than it is for you to shoot him. It reinforces the social status, the social structure. You know it makes them look like they're doing the right things for the right reasons. It may be brutal. May be beyond our -- the pale for us to be able to watch it. But it's better than us shooting. Because it doesn't reinforce my enemy's IO theme. And it doesn't create the conditions required for him to be successful.

Until we get to that point, till we can think like that, we're in trouble. The other thing we have to do trainingwise is hey we have a (inaudible 71:03) structure between -- I call it the see it to do it time. Our see it to do it time is terrible. Terrible. You know a guy could tell -- you could be in country X fighting this fight right now. And somebody can walk up to you and go right now there's AQ guy in that mosque, go get him, you can't do it. Because our sensors can see what needs done, but we've delinked it from our capability of striking to the point with the decision matrix in there that I don't know where that came from. And we can't get it done in any timely fashion. Our see it to do it time is terrible (inaudible 71:54) at some point you got to trust the guy to go out and do the right thing.

INTERVIEWER: Now I've heard that before from another ODA and he complained that there were often times that it was unclear who the reporting requirement was supposed to go to. And that whenever they wanted to do or needed to do a mission they had to send it up to JSOTF, JSOTF would call over to North, North would call to West, and West you know is Marine Corps and they're just like well why isn't JSOTF taking it. So by that time the mission is now invalid.

04201243: Exactly. That's what I'm saying. It'd be -- it's like I call it blindfolded boxing. Stick me in the ring, put a blindfold on me, and the cornerman is yelling throw a left, throw a left, throw a right, duck, here's how this works out, I never hit a damn thing and I get my head knocked off because they're delinking things. You almost have to -- you know almost inverse of the way the military (inaudible 72:58) unit in an area, say these are the conditions I want when you leave here on X date. Go make it happen. Here's the assets you have to do it with. And quit worrying about the little things. Because you can bet they don't.

INTERVIEWER: So is there a way to circumvent that? I mean do -- you know maybe –

04201243: Yeah we did it all the time but then you end up like me. If you're going to tell this story, right, they'll come arrest me more likely. Yeah we ran our own PSYOPs. I ran the blackest op you ever heard of. None of it was authorized. I never asked for authorization. Already knew what the answer would be. I'm -- you know what Sun Tzu say? I've read Sun Tzu six times. Sun Tzu says know yourself, know your enemy and never in a thousand battles will you be in peril. Hell, I knew who we were (inaudible 73:58) was easy. Ask for permission for that, they're going to say no. So just don't (inaudible 74:06) just go do what you got to do.

INTERVIEWER: Well, if you had any need for coordinated efforts with you know other Army or Marine Corps units that were in the area, say company or battalion –

04201243: Yeah we did it. We tricked it (inaudible 74:20) I would put in these real vanilla CONOPS. You know we're going out on patrol. That kind of thing (inaudible 74:30) the people to do. They were looking for us. Then (inaudible 74:34) with the Marines in OIF 2 I basically told them we were going to have some of our friends do the work. And they knew we were out there you know linked up with these tribes. And they'd say -- I'd say hey it's going to be ugly. Just don't worry about it. Then they'd clear out the area and let the guys go (inaudible 74:54) now reality, sometimes it was our tribesmen, sometimes it was us. Didn't matter to me as long as we weren't getting shot by them.

INTERVIEWER: Did -- do you think that any of the uncoordinated efforts that were going on affect each other? Like if the Marines were engaging any of the tribes, did that affect your engagements or vice versa?

04201243: Yeah it did. But it's OK. I mean you know they were in constant contact with [*name removed*] remember they're toeing the party line. At the time it was the tribes are an anachronism. We're not going to deal with the tribes, etc., etc. Well we realized the folly in that right off the bat. That was dumb. We're not going to do dumb. It's like this. You know it's like we were told one time we were gunning up a militia. Think it was OIF 2, might have been OIF 3. I said yes we are. We handed out guns all the time. To citizens. We gave these little card. I got an example card right here. It says call Wayne LaPierre. It has our phone number to our team (inaudible 76:22) you know who Wayne LaPierre is? He's NRA's chief executive officer. We were handing out guns left and right. Because I can't ask anybody. It's an economy of force mission in all of Al Anbar. There's less than 3,000 fighting men on the ground any given day. Right? And I'm going to tell somebody to call up if they see any bad guys. And when I get time I'll get to it. You know you -- they can't survive like that. So I handed out guns. Told them hey you see him, shoot him. Don't get caught shooting up Marines or soldiers because they will kill you (inaudible 77:14) yeah I'm all about self-defense. I'll tell you what. You come and tell me you killed him, I'll come out and look at him (inaudible 77:26) like a meteor.

INTERVIEWER: So with the removal of the ODA during that time period in -- you know after your third or fourth -- was it the third deployment?

04201243: Between OIF 2 and 3, a year and a half of no ODA. We lost a lot of contact. And it was a struggle. OIF 3 was a repeat of OIF 2. With the exception that AQ had really gotten hold down in there.

INTERVIEWER: OK, why do you think that ODA was moved out?

04201243: You have to ask General [*name removed*]. I have no idea why. I could tell you this though. It was extremely violent, right up to the Awakening, it got worse and worse and worse. You kind of expect it. That was bad.

INTERVIEWER: OK. All right. Well, I mean we've -- like I said we've gone through all the questions that I have. There's probably going to wind up being more. Is it OK if I contact you again?

04201243: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: OK. Especially since I have a couple last interviews and I'm sure that they're going to raise a few questions.

04201243: All right. On the training side the -- we had an advantage. We're 5th Group. I've never in my military career really done anything except work with Muslims and Arabs. You know we -- just knowing the right questions to ask. Like (inaudible 79:12) name, just ask his name, his dad's name, his grandpa's name and his clan and his tribe, forget all the other names, doesn't matter. Those pieces of info you can find him. So the gunning up militias and all that. Hey, what would you do if your neighborhood was having car bombs in it? You're going to get your gun and you're going to go out and do neighborhood watch, right? You can't count on the police to be there when you need them. Hell. In the situation we were in out there, they were the bad guys. Just the way it is. And then we need to set -- it's almost like we stopped being Americans as soon as we put on a uniform and leave the country. Am I making sense on that?

INTERVIEWER: Well, no, describe it a little bit. Like how do you feel that you stop being Americans once you go over there? Once you put on the uniform.

04201243: Well for example like the guns. You know they would raid a house. Maybe one of the bad -- you know we did all kind of things wrong. For example we started a false economy where it paid to rat on somebody you didn't like. So you get three of your buddies to go in and talk to these guys, act like you don't know each other, and say bad Bob lives here and this is what he does -- he did. Now really you just had a dispute with bad Bob. He's no more of an insurgent than you are. But that's how you get him offed. And we paid for the information. In an employment environment of 70% unemployment military age males, you can see how this can work out, right?

You're never going to run out of info. We in fact chased guys around. I will never forget the SEALs would ask us for help. We were chasing a guy. What was his name? Keyser Soze. It's the same year that movie The Usual Suspects came out with Keyser Soze. They actually -- I've got it right here. They've got Keyser Soze on this little Al Qaim area. This (inaudible 81:28) we're after Keyser Soze.

They were paying for information on Keyser Soze. And I kept telling them hey man that's a fake name. It's fake. They had another one. Ahmed Muddffker. Yeah. Now we're talking about a big poster board with Ahmed al M-U-D-D-F-F-K-E-R. OK. So we created this economy. Right? We don't know what -- when we ask for their name we get 72 different names and we write down the first two. Well, you can't find anybody in the Middle East without five pieces of information. We didn't even know what questions to ask. All right? So if you're looking for bad guys, you gotta have the right names.

The other thing is make friends everywhere you go. Gun them up. And make a mental note of where they live. Because later on if they start acting up they're the easy ones to find and kill. This is easy. You know in 1930s (inaudible 82:45) intel system. Then I'll get off the phone with you. And this is part of the thinking process that got us to do the things we did. 1930s we're doing Lend-Lease. You know World War II is coming. All right. Get down to the shipyards. And they're having problems with strikes. This is during Lend-Lease also. Then they have a guy named Charles Luciano tells this Navy guy. This is our only intel service at the time. Says hey look, I can make sure there's no strike. I can make sure there's no sabotage. And they told him to blow off. Next thing you know there's two ships on fire. And a strike. They came back to him. He got it all fixed. He's a bad guy. Correct? But he's our bad guy. And that's my point. Get somebody in charge that you can hold accountable. Because you can always do them later if they don't do what you want. You have absolutely no influence over people you don't know. Does that make any sense at all?

Anyway like I say I'll let you go on that. You ever have any questions, give me a call.

END OF AUDIO FILE

Interview 18: 04201248

Interview 04201248, June 13, 2012
Dates of Deployment: Feb 2004-Oct 04, then July 05- 2006; Location of Deployment: al Qaim
Billet: [Billet removed] ODA

- First ODAs deployed with specific, synchronized plan to conduct tribal engagement at the operational level- February 2004.
- Plan initiated with the MARDIV and MEF (despite skepticism at MEF but interest at MARDIV due to commitment for Marine battle space control and commitment for transparency and full coordination/synchronization) Oct 03.
- ODAs deployed to al Qaim (2 ODAs), al Assad/Haditha, ar Rutbah, Ramadi and Fallujah with company headquarters as an operational element to al Asad. This required buy in as previous headquarters was a SOCCE and in al Qaim.
- First week of May 04, moved it to Ramadi with Division Main at Blue Diamond.
- ODAs removed sometime in August-October 04 due to mission focus change (under COL [*name removed*]). This was a huge mistake as was the purpose change to training/advising Scout platoons/commando platoons.
- For reference, ODAs should train, assist and advise BNs or larger of indigenous forces. This led to the raiding mentality and focus on 30 guys/pipe hitters. It also pushed a change to more unilateral operations. This also was a huge mistake and focused on decentralized, uncoordinated efforts/operations with minimal value.
- ODAs returned after JUL 05 along with briefing on Manifest Destiny provided to COL [*name removed*] (5th SFG and CJSOTF-AP commander).
- Lack of understanding and sophistication resulted in the trivial Desert Protectors.
- I was strongly against using the Mahal. They were absolutely criminals and were high on my target list. It was short sighted and misdirected. [*name removed*] was directly tied to the cross border smuggling for the insurgency, extremist organizations and simply used the opportunity to secure the border "commerce" from his competition.
- Because the process and culture was not understood and American commanders expected to replicate US military organizations, they assumed a one size fits all approach.
- About Nimr: ALL tribes have criminal and insurgent ties in the al Anbar. Even the Nimr had sub elements. The vast majority of Nimr were tied to smuggling and were the most susceptible to our exploitation...and using their own internal mechanisms to enforce compliance with the program. American commanders did not get this or the fact that to target properly, effectively and credibly, you needed that component (some inflitration and association with hostile elements). If we listened to that tact, we would never have flipped the Issa in Fallujah...82d greatest threat/enemy and then the providers of 80% of actionable intel and targets for the first battle of Fallujah. Really naive, short-sighted and rigid mindset.
- Lack of leadership, childish adherence to a misguided understanding of "its all about the ODA," bowing to irrelevant metrics from conventional headquarters led to the trivialization of SF in Iraq. That isn't our core mission and should not have been our core focus (creation of scout and strike platoons along with focus on caches, raids/operations, kias. Etc). Read any theory on counter insurgency...never use special operations solely as raiding. And allow the boys to be unaccountable, un focused and un synchronized...and what do you get? Raids. The lack of vision and leadership is really quite pathetic.
- Mattis provided them with training and made sure to train USMC. Cannot discount the effect of one person. He understood what was going on and what needed to happen before he went to Iraq, created a plan prior to deployment
- Once in theater, Mattis at MEF cut his assets down and once that happened, the units got on board with plan and “got in line.” This was referenced later by another interviewee as “when Mattis fired half his staff and disrupted the Council of Colonels, who created a buffer between what the generals wanted and needed done and what actually got done on the battlefield

- MEF was very conventional, rigid, and uniform (prior to Mattis? Did this ever change?)
- Army in Ramadi was uniform and conventional
- MiTTs wanted to create Ranger-like IA
- SF created paramilitary units and ICDC:
    - Not an Army battalion- more a hybrid Army/Militia
    - They weren't police, they were militias/ armed factions in blue uniform shirts, modeled off of USA Revolutionary War (militias)
    - Community protection/ Neighborhood watches with weapons
    - Protected community from AQI
    - Helped SF weed out AQI bad guys from population
- Certain people at certain times working with other certain people created operational success
- Everything that occurred between units/commands was relationship/personality based
- There was an incredible amount of institutional resistance to what the SF were trying to do in Anbar
- Policy objectives incredibly hard to understand and there was considerable pushback from Baghdad on SF operations
    - Sunni afraid of retribution from Shia (sectarianism)
    - Shia did not want to arm Sunni
    - Shia thought there would be a fight later, after USA left
    - Shia did not want Sunni to create separate provincial state in Anbar (sep from Baghdad)
- In 2003 04201248's ODA was the only SF unit to be sent back to Anbar but CJSOTF did not want them there. They were given 1 company and 7 ODA teams to run/ manage all of Iraq
- No one could manage Anbar/ Iraq at the time with only 7 teams, so 04201248 linked up with the Marines, which wasn't operationally effective (COC issues)
- They were restrained by resources
- The "Desert Protectors" were not called the DP at the time, they were called something different (See 04201243 AM notes- the original tribally led militia is referenced in here)
- All the planning for operations in 2004 was done in 2003. They had a plan before going into Iraq
- Institutions with cultures that are different need to build a common operational language. Can't have an integrated unit w/o a common language and understanding operations
- In order to be effective, in a joint environment, need to have joint understanding with:
    - Joint operational goals
    - Common language
    - Common operational picture
    - Common way to share information
    - Similar LOOs
    - Have ability to communicate
    - Have common and known COC
    - Have common and known reporting structure
- Command and control was a nightmare, no unity of command. Have to develo0p the command and control structure
    - Understand who is working in AO
    - Single coherent plan for operations in AO/Iraq
    - There was no coordinated, synchronized strategy for or in Iraq
    - Every unit/service branch was doing their own thing
    - Need to stop reinventing with each RIPTOA and deployment- no continuity of effort
- USMC is a hierarchical structure, which is good and bad (limiting)
- Joint structure between CJSOTF and USMC needed to be effective but wasn't

- ODA brought language skills and a redundant language and intel capability. They were effective as long as they had Mattis working with them. When he RIP'd, relationship fell apart
- Lindemann article "Better Lucky then Good" is typical of SF community and is overly critical of other services (the USMC as "lowly worm")
- The officers who were successful with integration were [*two names removed*] and they understood how things should work at the operational level
- USMC are traditionally terrain holders and are a structured organization
- SF can operate independently but USMC owns the battlespace and resources. Each service needs to help one another
- USMC needed to know what ODA brought to the fight, units spoke with each other and came to an agreement on operations (Mattis referenced as influential)
- Egos and personalities were sometimes problems
- Forces structure needs to be in agreement
- Currently no way for service branches to coordinate/ have effective joint structure
- SF can achieve critical mass but that does not mean or equate to # of bodies, measures of effectiveness does not equate to # KIA
- Conway was an effective leader, he understood what needed to happen but his staff did not. Since the key structures of support were at the division level, Conway was unable to influence assistance to SF, especially since operational environment at time was kinetic
- SOCOM/CJSOTF:
    - Lack of leadership and accountability
    - Bush wanted more SF, need more people:
        - Recruit from all branches/public
        - Younger, inexperienced recruits
        - Lack of institutional knowledge, ego, raid mentality
    - Tactical use of SF harms COIN Ops (#1 thing you don't do in a counterinsurgency is use special forces for raids, however, SF is designed for doing raids)
    - Culture of SF changing (Negative effect)
        - SOCOM now creating units and battalions
        - Institutional (Army) problem:
            - SF environment has become very conventional
            - SF is supposed to operate unconventionally
        - SF should be doing much more with their soldiers
        - Should train 1500 or more new SF
        - A young SF team is not youthful, it is a new team, inexperienced, w/o supervisions and/or anyone to answer to
        - Some of the young teams and even CJSOTF did not want to engage with or work with the tribes- just wanted HVI KIA
        - Young teams and CJSOTF wanted to do raids ("get some pussy")- wanted to kill- caused many problems with tribes and other units
        - Traditional scope of SF:
            - know & study culture
            - work w/ & train indigenous culture
            - integrate w/ indigenous culture
            - precision/ surgical kill & extraction
- Models:
    - Difference in being descriptive vs. prescriptive
    - Can't cookiecutter COIN

- Need to understand human currency:
    - Effect of operations= KIA (what are 2nd and 3rd order effects?)
    - Numbers killed may incl. civilians (what are 2nd and 3rd order effects?)
- MEF was least receptive to SF engaging with tribes. Wanted to:
    - Control ground/own battlespace
    - Engage with politicians/ at political level