

ing the wall around the target house, the team approached the entrance and took cover behind a wall partially masking the doorway. Kingdon crept around the corner and squared up to the door. He quickly and quietly placed his charge on the lock side of the big, heavy wooden door, then withdrew behind the wall to protect himself from the blast. While doing so, he thought he heard part of the charge come off the door, so he went back to check it, and seeing the charge still in place, drew back again. He announced over his radio, “breaching, breaching, breaching” and detonated the charge.

The subsequent blast knocked Kingdon off his feet, shattered his weapons and gear, and momentarily stunned the Marines right behind him. Something had gone wrong with the breach, and although he did not know what it was, he definitely knew he was injured. While he was down on the ground, stunned and wounded, Hospital Corpsman First Class Robert T. Bryan began to work on him, and the rest of the assault force initiated the backup breaching procedures. Master Sergeant Wyrick looked at the door and the charge and thought at first that it had only partially detonated, or “low-ordered.” He called for the secondary breach, which used sledgehammers and a wrecking tool appropriately called a “hooligan.” When that approach failed, Wyrick called for a third method, another explosive charge, which got the door open. The alternate breaching took only a few extra seconds, but now the all-important elements of shock and surprise were gone.<sup>8</sup>

Leaping over the prostrate Staff Sergeant Kingdon or dashing around him, the assaulters burst into the house and began to flood the interior. Just inside the entry was a room with an open doorway. Master Sergeant Wyrick moved down the hallway, past the doorway, and button-hooked back to clear the inside of the room, flashing the bright white light attached to his M4 as he passed to assess the situation. He saw nothing, but concealed in the shadows of the room was the target himself, awake, alert, and armed. Shots rang out from inside the room, and one of the assaulters shouted, “He’s shooting through the door!” Wyrick threw in a flash-bang and entered. Right behind him was Staff Sergeant Glen S. Cederholm, who saw the armed Iraqi in the corner positioned to shoot Wyrick and killed him with precise fire from his M4 carbine.<sup>9</sup>

Outside the house, casualty evacuation procedures were in motion. Further examination revealed what had happened to Staff Sergeant Kingdon. The explosive leads with the blasting caps and booster charge had come loose from the main charge and were

coiled up under his M4 carbine, which hung down on the right side of his chest. When he initiated the detonation, the blasting caps and booster charge exploded and also set off a sympathetic detonation of a flash-bang. The main charges still attached to the door were unprimed and therefore untouched, leading Wyrick to think that they only partially functioned. Kingdon’s body armor shielded most of his torso, but his unprotected right arm took the full blast.

Lying there while the assault progressed, he heard Wyrick call for the alternate breach, then saw the assault teams flood past him into the house. “Doc” Bryan placed a tourniquet on his arm and that, according to Kingdon, hurt worse than the blast itself. He heard the gunshots from the house, then heard Master Sergeant Keith E. Oakes call for a body bag. Not knowing that the body bag was for the now-dead target of the raid, he wondered who it was for.<sup>10</sup> There was also another Marine casualty. Hospital Corpsman First Class Michael D. Tyrell was hit in the leg with one round from the burst fired by the target of the raid. Despite the wound, Tyrell continued with the mission of clearing the house and even went outside to assist in treating and evacuating Kingdon. When he went back into the house to help with the search, Major Kozeniesky ordered him to stop and be treated.<sup>11</sup>

While the house was being searched, three or four Marines took Kingdon to the designated casualty evacuation vehicle to get him to the helicopter. Master Sergeant Hays B. Harrington, the radio reconnaissance leader, jumped into the driver’s seat and sped off to the primary landing zone. He found it unusable, fouled by wires, and headed for the secondary zone. The helicopter pilots, seeing another patch of clear ground that looked better than the secondary zone, vectored Harrington there instead. The helicopter flew Kingdon to the Army’s 31st Corps Support Hospital in Baghdad, where he was immediately taken into surgery.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kingdon was sent from Baghdad to Landstuhl, Germany, from there to Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, and eventually back to Camp Pendleton. On 24 March 2005 he recounted the details of the incident to the author. When the blast happened he thought he had blown his arm off. Two things immediately worried him. Displaying admirable cool headedness and a keen sense of priorities, he assessed his own condition: “I had Doc Bryan check to see that my nuts were okay”—they were—“and then I took my own pulse just to make sure that I had one.” The wry humor belied what were very serious, life-threatening injuries: “a nearly severed arm, a broken artery, a four inch chest compromise, and burns to the chest and groin area.” HM1 Bryan would receive an award for his speed and skill in treating him. At the time of his interview, Kingdon had been promoted to gunnery sergeant, was back on full duty with Det One, and his arm was working at “98 percent.”



Photo courtesy of Det One  
*GySgt James A. Crawford of Det One's radio reconnaissance section puts his .45-caliber pistol through its paces at Range 130 during Weapons and Tactics Package I. The skills that Crawford and others learned there— marksmanship, mindset, and gun-handling—came into play later in Iraq.*

Despite the problems during the breach and the injuries to two men, the raid achieved its objective. The target was killed and several items were taken during sensitive site exploitation. The intensive training that the detachment had gone through for a year paid off. "Prosecution of the target continued fluidly and simultaneously while the casualty was treated and evacuated," wrote Major Kozeniesky. Objective Ricochet was the only direct action operation in which a Det One Marine was wounded, and moreover, the only raid in which any shots were fired during the actual assault. Shortly after Ricochet, the entire task group received an order that stopped all direct action raids.

### *Supporting Task Unit North*

While Task Unit Raider operated in Baghdad, the Det One Marines with the outlying task units were busy as well.

Gunnery Sergeant James A. Crawford, one of the

two radio reconnaissance team leaders in the Det One intelligence element, arrived in Baghdad on the first planeload. The quiet Georgian and former infantryman spent his first week sorting out the situation on the ground, then was instructed to take his team and one counterintelligence Marine to support Task Unit North. Switching out one member of his team for another—he had two Arabic linguists and needed to leave one at Camp Myler—they departed on 15 April 2004.

Crawford's team consisted of Sergeant William S. Benedict, Sergeant Daryl J. Anderson, and Staff Sergeant William B. Parker. Parker had joined the Marine Corps later in life than most of his colleagues; when the detachment deployed to Iraq, he was in his late thirties but was still a relatively junior Marine. A man of many talents, he had formal instruction in Arabic and would use that skill to good effect.\* Also part of the team was a bespectacled former mortarman from the counterintelligence section, Staff Sergeant Daniel L. Williams. Although Williams looked like a misplaced computer programmer, he was in fact a shrewd and experienced HUMINT operative who had honed his skills in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Just prior to deployment, Williams went to a six-week Arabic immersion course and came away with some basic skills, although nothing like he would need to operate without a translator. Despite being the sole Marine HUMINT collector in the city where they deployed, his work would have an immediate impact on the insurgent cells there.

The SEALs made the Marines feel welcome. "They treated us like we were somebody," said Crawford, having half-expected the opposite.<sup>12</sup> They allotted the Marines good living and working spaces and more importantly, allowed them the operational freedom to use both their technical skills and their gunfighting abilities. Williams was stunned at the reception: "We landed on the airstrip, and they [the SEALs] had two trucks full of guys who unloaded all of our gear for us, stacked it up, had coffee and snacks waiting, then drove us over to our trailers. They gave us everything we could have asked for or wanted."<sup>13</sup> The next day, Crawford and Williams gave a short capabilities brief, the gist of which was: "we're here to build targets for you to hit, and this is how we're going to do it." One SEAL expressed reservations that they could deliver. Crawford and Williams made it a point to make sure that they over-delivered.

Within a week after arrival, Task Unit North exe-

\* He had been, among other things, a garbage man. He took that job in order to satisfy his own curiosity; it would not be incorrect to say that the same impulse led him to the Marine Corps.

cuted its first hit. Staff Sergeant Williams worked closely with the other intelligence cells in the city and with the task group in Baghdad, and based on information derived from them, he produced actionable intelligence on a target. When the task unit drove out of the gate on the first mission, the Marines were fully integrated into the raid force. Staff Sergeant Parker, with his language skills, did most of the radio reconnaissance work; Gunnery Sergeant Crawford and Sergeants Anderson and Benedict were “average Joes,” but Benedict manned a machine gun as well as an electronic jammer. The radio reconnaissance Marines also handled the items taken in sensitive site exploitation, especially phones and other electronics. Williams filled his role as the one-man HUMINT element, waiting to do tactical interrogations of detainees. The SEALs brought 14 detainees off the first target, and Williams interrogated them all, assisted by a Navy (and former Marine) linguist and Staff Sergeant Parker. The subsequent intelligence enabled them to roll up most of the local terrorist network, methodically, mission by mission, over the next several weeks. One of the first 14 detainees was the leader of a cell tied to Ansar al-Sunna, an al-Qaida affiliate.<sup>14</sup>

The work that Williams did so well had its downside. His operational cycle was “two days on and four hours off,” a good indication of his dedication to duty but a reminder of why counterintelligence Marines are usually employed in pairs. Working with other agencies, running sources, going on missions, interrogating detainees, and reporting up the chain-of-command was a tall order for one man, even for a short duration.

Williams’s most important duty was interrogations. Staff Sergeant Parker helped him, using his Arabic skills at times more to keep an eye on the translator than to translate.\* The linguist had to say exactly what the interrogator said, mimicking his tone and emphasis. If the translator faltered, Parker knew enough Arabic to say, “You’re not translating that right. I know what he [Williams] said, and I know what you said.” He then would point out the discrepancies.<sup>15</sup>

Staff Sergeant Williams had his own detention facility to house detainees from Task Unit North’s raids, and guards to run it. His operations coincided with the revelations of the Abu Ghraib scandal, and its effects were quickly felt. But the task unit had good procedures that both protected them and looked after

their detainees. Each was medically checked when he came in and when he went out, both by the SEALs and by third parties. Some of the Iraqis who were guests of the task unit howled at the treatment in an effort to make trouble for the Americans. Williams weathered more than one investigation, but nobody could fault his procedures or adherence to the rules. The Abu Ghraib incident produced substantial changes in interrogations and detainee handling, not so much in the methods used—although some methods were curtailed—but after Abu Ghraib, interrogators had more people looking over their shoulders, which acted as a psychological constraint on them. Not being wedded to questionable methods, Williams and the other Det One interrogators relied on classic techniques to get the information they needed, and invariably they succeeded.<sup>16</sup>

Even though they were sometimes stymied by the language barrier, Gunnery Sergeant Crawford’s radio reconnaissance Marines did a variety of collections, even in their off hours. On a few occasions, they could hear people talking about them as they drove out on missions. Setting aside the somewhat off-putting nature of this discovery, they saw an opportunity in it. One night they went out for the sole purpose of intercepting the traffic that seemed to give away their movements. Staff Sergeant Parker and his fellow Marines triangulated it and identified the source location. Fortunately, it turned out that the transmitters were not enemy forces, but local levies just practicing bad communications security. They were unwittingly tipping off anyone who was listening to the operations of the task unit. Crawford passed the word up his chain of command, and through delicate liaison with higher headquarters, those responsible were persuaded to cease and desist.\*

In the month and a half on station, the Marines with Task Unit North went out on approximately 18 raids. Through their efforts, the task unit was able to identify, target, and disrupt the local insurgent structure and completely eliminate three of its cells. What stopped Task Unit North from getting the rest was not enemy action, but an abrupt change in the task group’s mission.

### *Supporting Task Unit West*

Det One supported Task Unit West in al-Anbar Province as well as in northern Iraq. Major Carter se-

\* The interpreters, or “terps,” that Williams and Parker were concerned with were not SEALs, but contractors, native speakers whose loyalties were sometimes in doubt. Parker referred to dealing with the interpreters as “terp wrangling.”

\* MSgt Harrington and his Marines made a similar discovery in Baghdad. Some American personnel at Baghdad International Airport were heard freely discussing Task Unit Raider’s movements over unsecured nets when the raid force exited the base. The practice was immediately and firmly corrected.

lected Master Sergeant Bret A. Hayes, his intelligence chief, to go out to al-Anbar Province with Gunnery Sergeant Matthew A. Ulmer, the counterintelligence chief. Because the task unit's base was not far from the base of the 1st Marine Division's Regimental Combat Team Seven, the reasoning behind sending only two Marines (albeit very senior ones) was that they could leverage the capabilities in the intelligence sections of the Marine units. Hayes knew the 7th Marines intelligence officer and intelligence chief very well; Ulmer likewise knew the counterintelligence Marines.

The two Marines received a less enthusiastic welcome than their northern counterparts but were quickly rolled into Task Unit West operations. Master Sergeant Hayes noted that the SEALs, in his experience, tended to treat support personnel as outsiders, but they accepted the Marines as "operators." In one instance, Hayes asked the task unit commander for permission to detail a Navy intelligence specialist to fly in a helicopter to take photographs of a site of interest near Haditha Dam. The answer he got was that the sailor was not a SEAL and therefore was unsuitable for the task. Hayes went to 7th Marines' intelligence section and borrowed a lance corporal, who went up and got the images that Hayes needed.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to tight urban areas like Baghdad, Task Unit West had a huge operating area, all of western Anbar province, where population centers were separated by vast amounts of nothing. The differences in distances were evident as Task Unit West executed its first mission the night after the Marines arrived, an operation near Haditha Dam on the Euphrates River. To illustrate the distances involved, Task Unit Raider's first operation involved an approach lasting no more than a few minutes; the convoy for Task Unit West's first mission took an hour and 40 minutes to arrive on target. The mission was a success, and the SEALs brought the man they were seeking back to their compound. The post-operation actions were similar to those in Baghdad, except out west, they lacked certain facilities. Gunnery Sergeant Ulmer interrogated the detainees at his small detention facility, but he had to hand them off to the 7th Marines after about 24 hours. As with Task Unit Raider and Task Unit North, there were Army Special Forces teams in this area. Both teams excelled at HUMINT and cooperated closely with the SEAL task unit.

After the first few weeks on station, Task Unit West leadership traveled to Ramadi to confer with the 1st Marine Division on operations in and around Fallujah. The division was planning a major sweep around the city. The task unit leadership made contact with the Marines' tactical fusion center (which had ab-

sorbed much of I Marine Expeditionary Force's intelligence section on top of its own assets) and with the local special forces team. The members of the task unit then moved down to Camp Fallujah, where they conferred further with the commanders of 1st Marines and 7th Marines and formed a plan. Task Unit West would provide sniper support but would also maintain an on-call direct action capability to seize high-value targets of opportunity. (Staff liaison with 1st Marines was helped by the fact that the regimental executive officer had once been Master Sergeant Hayes's company commander. Hayes and Ulmer were also glad to be able to spend some time at Camp Fallujah with Colonel Robert J. Coates.) When offensive operations in Fallujah ceased indefinitely, Task Unit West was turned to running counter-mortar and counter-rocket patrols in an area near the Marine base. Following that task, the task unit was released from duty in and around Camp Fallujah.<sup>18</sup>

After Fallujah, Task Unit West returned to its home compound, where it resumed operations. Some were directed at insurgents, targeting a three-pronged intersection south of Haditha where roadside bombs were all too common. Members of the unit also started planning a major operation in conjunction with the 7th Marines in which the SEALs of Task Unit West would assault a site to seize two high-value targets while the Marines would roll in with vehicles to cordon off the area. The task group in Baghdad supported the planning by filling Master Sergeant Hayes's extensive "laundry list" of intelligence requirements. Task Unit West continued to run operations throughout its very large area of operations, including more joint operations with the special forces. One mission rolled up a suspect who led them to actionable intelligence on bomb makers in Husaybah and al-Qaim, important towns and constant trouble spots right on the Syrian border.<sup>19</sup>

On 18 May, Master Sergeant Hayes went home to the United States, where his wife was giving birth. During the brief time he was gone, the nature of task group's deployment changed, and when he returned to Iraq, Task Unit West was in Baghdad. He and Gunnery Sergeant Ulmer were rolled back into general duties supporting the task group and Task Unit Raider. Almost two months into the deployment, Hayes was finally doing his job as Det One intelligence chief, and Ulmer was serving once again as counterintelligence chief.

### *Colonel Coates in Fallujah*

On 23 April 2004, Colonel Coates departed Baghdad for Camp Fallujah. Due to the provisions of the memorandum of agreement between the Marine

Corps and Naval Special Warfare, he stepped aside but retained his command of the detachment. Rather than have him return to Camp Pendleton, the commanding general of Marine Forces Central Command sent him to I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) as his liaison officer, where his experience in unconventional warfare could be best employed.

When Colonel Coates arrived at Camp Fallujah, the situation was in a tense stalemate. Marine units occupied a quarter of Fallujah but were held in their positions by orders from commands higher than I MEF. An agreement had been reached with the elders in the city—those who could be found and persuaded to negotiate—to turn in all heavy weapons and munitions, but no true cease-fire existed. Fire fights were common; one Marine company commander joked that the insurgents apparently interpreted the agreement to hand over their weapons and munitions as “giving them to us one round at a time.”<sup>20</sup>

Lieutenant General James T. Conway, the I MEF commander, needed to solve the problem. The most effective course of action, a rapid and violent thrust to seize the rest of the city, was no longer available to him. At this point, on or about 21 April, a former Iraqi general appeared on the scene with an interesting plan. He said that in a matter of days, he could form and field an indigenous force to address the security of Fallujah. He would take orders from General Conway, and the Marines would pay and support the force. Taken on face value, this plan held great promise: an Iraqi solution to an Iraqi problem. Moreover, it was a Sunni-based solution and was supported by the emerging interim government. Once the plan was implemented, Marines could be withdrawn from the city and redeployed to the areas from which they had come, and they could begin to redevelop the operational themes of security, stability and reconstruction.

For better or for worse, the Fallujah Brigade, as it quickly began to be called, became the best choice on a very short list of options. It offered a solution to the prevailing operational dilemma, the imperative to keep the pressure on the insurgent groups in Fallujah while not engaging in direct offensive action. It promised a way to engage and shape the city and force the Iraqis to deal with their own problems. A success would be significant and would portend good things for other trouble spots in Iraq. The risk was that the whole scheme would fail.

Lieutenant General Conway selected Colonel Coates to be the point man with the Fallujah Brigade. He would deliver Conway’s intentions and instructions and would pay the Iraqis as agreed. He would

also seek to keep them focused on the task at hand, hold them to their agreements, and report back to the commanding general on their performance. Coates needed every scrap of his experience in unconventional operations to keep the organization in line and working toward the right goals, harkening back to his time as an advisor in El Salvador. Accompanied by an Arabic-speaking Marine officer, Captain Rodrick H. McHaty, and a small detail of Marines, he went to meet with his new charges on 30 April. The next day, Coates confirmed that the first battalion of the brigade, numbering approximately 300 men, had reported for duty, with several hundred more expected in a few days’ time.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout the late spring and summer of 2004, Colonel Coates and his team were in and out of the Fallujah Brigade’s lines on a regular basis. Much of his work was simple communication, telling the Iraqis what they needed to do, reminding them what they said they were going to do, ensuring that supplies were being distributed, and then either delivering or withholding payments as the occasion warranted. This was certainly a laborious process. The enemy’s agile information machine had spun the Americans’ withdrawal from the city as a defeat. One story attributed it in part to divine intervention in the form of a horde of “heavenly camel spiders” descending upon the invaders and forcing them out. The Fallujah Brigade soldiers or *jundi* gleefully accepted this peculiar assessment as an article of faith, even though they were ostensibly on the coalition’s side. Coates’s tasks included trying to disabuse them of strange notions and to get them operating on concrete lines. As he told the credulous *jundi*, “There are no spider bites,” and he rolled up his sleeves to prove it to them.

Once the odd new unit was in place and assigned its own sector, a curious thing happened: the fighting stopped. There was much debate within the Marine headquarters over whether this development was a product of the Fallujah Brigade asserting itself over the insurgents or allying itself with them. It was an open secret that many of today’s *jundi* were probably yesterday’s (and possibly tomorrow’s) insurgents, but given the uncertain nature of unconventional warfare, to say nothing of the importance of the mission, the Marine leadership was willing to give the initiative an opportunity to stand or fall on its own merits.

<sup>20</sup> The MEF G-3, Col Larry K. Brown, remarked somewhat harshly, but not without justification, in an interview with the author that when the first contingent of the Fallujah Brigade fell into formation as promised, it was the first time he had seen an Iraqi “do anything he’d promised, on time.”

More importantly, perhaps, than simply ending the fighting was the intelligence the Marines gained from the Fallujah Brigade on the situation inside the city. Colonel John C. Coleman, the MEF chief of staff, noted that “we gained a window into the insurgency that we would otherwise have spent months wrestling to understand.”<sup>22</sup> It turned out that the insurgency inside the city was no monolith; it had fault lines and fractures. At the same time that the Marines were working hard to direct the Fallujah Brigade, they were also profiting from a new vantage point, gathering intelligence and honing tactics, techniques, and procedures.

Colonel Coates took a long-term view of the Fallujah Brigade and was under no illusions about instant operational miracles. Counterinsurgency operations are measured in years, not weeks or months. If the venture succeeded, then so much the better in his opinion, but he knew from his daily contact that it was a shaky proposition. He wanted to make sure that the Marines extracted the most value they could out of the Iraqi unit, so that if the time came again when coalition forces had to mount a final operation to take the city, there would be no question that the command had fought smart as well as hard, and had exhausted all means to crack this very hard nut.<sup>23</sup>

Some of the attractive aspects to the brigade were also its weak points, namely that it was full of locals who identified with the old Iraqi military. After its ini-

tial successes, the Fallujah Brigade’s inherent contradictions began to tell, and its effectiveness declined as the summer of 2004 progressed. Contact between insurgents, Fallujah Brigade units, and American forces increased, and indirect fire on Marine bases once again became a daily event. The hearts and minds of the brigade’s leadership were in the right place, but they could not address the hard-core elements and fully assert themselves over the city. As the Iraq unit became less of an asset and more of a liability, Colonel Coates lent his expertise to unpublicized operations aimed at exploiting divisions in the insurgency and then assisted another Iraqi unit that could and did fight.

By the end of May 2004, Detachment One and its elements were deeply involved in a wide range of operations. The main body, Task Unit Raider, had found its operational niche and was operating in an increasingly efficient battle rhythm. A handful of Marines in the two outlying task units were providing critical intelligence support to their SEAL brethren. Colonel Coates was engaged in a momentous effort to direct an indigenous force to deal with the biggest problem in Iraq.

On 28 May, Commander Wilson received word that his mission was changing. He was ordered to shift focus from offensive operations to a defensive operation, protecting the four principal figures of the interim Iraqi government.

## Chapter 6

# Direct Action

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### *Protecting the Iraqi Leaders*

After he received the order on 28 May 2004 to cease direct action operations, Commander William W. Wilson pulled in all his forces, including Task Unit Raider, and reorganized them for the new protective mission, the personal security detail. Wilson's two priority information requirements shifted to a single overriding question: who was trying to kill the interim Iraqi government leaders? Every action that any member of the task group took from that point on was dedicated to keeping the Iraqi president, prime minister, and two vice presidents alive. The personal security detail became, in the words of Wilson and many others, "the most important mission in Iraq."<sup>1</sup>

Task Unit Raider's Marines were assigned to cover one of the two vice presidents, Rowsch Shaways, a Kurd. Captain Eric N. Thompson was assigned as the "agent in charge" of the detail, and as such, he was offered an interesting view of Kurdish politics as well as a look at the workings of the interim Iraqi government and the Coalition Provisional Authority. Thompson handled Shaways's schedule and itinerary and spent as much time in Irbil, Kurdistan, as he did in Baghdad. Det One Marines on Shaways's detail in Baghdad performed, in Thompson's words, "some very hairy missions."<sup>2</sup>

The Marines had not trained, as a unit, to do personal security work. Captain Thompson threw himself into educating and organizing his platoon, drawing from the SEALs' extensive knowledge and from the U.S. Department of State representatives who came out to assist them. A few of the Marines, including Gunnery Sergeant John A. Dailey, had some previous experience with personal security details. Dailey took it upon himself to read as much as he could on the tasks involved (because he thought it was something that Marines should know how to do), and he contacted one of his old platoon commanders, who had become a U.S. Secret Service agent, for advice. Dailey became the advance man for Vice President Shaways's detail, arriving first at all venues to check the physical security.<sup>3</sup> It was Dailey and the others from Task Unit Raider who did the "hairy missions," escorting Shaways in and out of Baghdad at a time when every terrorist and insurgent in the country wanted to kill him.

Just as quickly as the close protective mission came, it ended for Task Unit Raider. Within a week, Commander Wilson assessed the situation and decided he could cover his details and still reconstitute an offensive capability.\* The resumption of the offensive supported the larger effort by giving Wilson the ability to hit first instead of simply standing by and waiting for an attack, trying to dodge it or worse yet, hoping just to withstand it. The SEAL task units stayed on the personal security detail, but the Marines were drawn out of it, and Task Unit Raider was again organized for direct action and other offensive missions. The Marines' role in the most important mission in Iraq would be to strike at the car-bomb makers and facilitators, since it was clear to Wilson that the vehicle-borne suicide bomb was the most dangerous weapon the insurgents possessed.<sup>4</sup>

Commander Wilson also had another force he could draw on: the Polish GROM was formed as a separate task unit, named Task Unit Thunder, and joined the Marines for direct action.<sup>5</sup> The GROM figured prominently in the Det One story, for in their members, the Marines saw kindred souls: big, aggressive, smart gunfighters, utterly reliable, and completely dedicated to the task at hand. To a man, the Marines were effusive in their praise of the Polish operators. Commander Wilson called them "the finest non-U.S. special operations force" of his experience. If the GROM had any limitation, it was only in certain command and control capabilities, specifically in fires, intelligence fusion, and liaison with conventional units. Wilson decided that he was going to set them up to succeed in independent operations, and in mid-June, he detailed Det One's Captain Stephen V. Fiscus and a small liaison cell of Marines and SEALs to embed with them.<sup>5</sup> In exchange for a handful of personnel, Wilson gained a completely new task unit, and the Raider/Thunder alliance proved to be a potent combination over subsequent weeks. Commander Wilson had girded his force for action.

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\* The terms of the 20 February 2003 memorandum of agreement with SOCom probably also played a significant part. The detachment was deployed to perform four missions, none of which was a personal security detail.

<sup>5</sup> *Grupa Reagowania Operacyjno Manewrowego*, which translates to Operational Mobile Reaction Group. The acronym GROM is the Polish word for thunder.

The SEAL task units formed the task group's shield around the Iraqi leaders, while Task Units Raider and Thunder formed the sword.

With the SEAL task units consolidating in Baghdad, individual personnel were also shifted. The intelligence Marines with what had been Task Unit West were brought back into the fold, while those with the former Task Unit North remained with the SEALs and moved into roles more directly related to protecting the Iraqi government officials. Most of the intelligence element remained in general support to the task group. Major Craig S. Kozeniesky shifted his duties to one job—command of Task Unit Raider.

One very important material result of the mission shift was that Task Unit Raider received several new, purpose-built M113 armored humvees from the SEALs. This represented a substantial boost in their tactical capabilities, gave the Marines a deeper field of mobility assets, and covered the shortcomings of the assault vehicles they had built for themselves. That shift in assets caused some grumbling from the SEALs, but it made sense. If the Marines were to go out beyond the wire and hit targets, they needed the means to do so effectively.

#### *After The Protective Detail*

Task Unit Raider came off the brief period of protective duty by launching Objective Razor, the third in a series of raids targeting a notorious insurgent facilitator. Five days later, the Marines hit their next target, the leader of a large and active cell. Objective Radiate began a period of sustained direct action operations against cell leaders, bomb makers, and other major malefactors, leading up to the planned 30 June transfer of sovereignty to the new Iraqi government. The significance of these operations was clear: any threat to the emerging government needed to be dealt with quickly and decisively, not only to protect the principals, but to enforce their authority.

At 0230 on 13 June, the raid on Objective Radiate began. The operation netted several detainees, and while the Marine counterintelligence team sifted through them on site, one of them admitted he was the target; the others were released while he was taken back to task group headquarters. Several items were also taken that strongly suggested anti-Coalition activities, including "coffins draped with U.S. flags, Ansar Al Sunna videos, and a family photo with Saddam." The other curious aspect of the operation was substantial Iraqi police activity in the immediate vicinity. The Marines were wary of the police but did not interfere.<sup>6</sup>

On 18 June, the task unit executed a raid on Objective Raven. The target was a man suspected of

being a car bomb maker. The information came once again from the always active source operations of 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group. The target site was a farm not far outside Baghdad. The original plan for the mission was for Task Unit Raider, Task Unit Thunder, 1st Squadron, 5th U.S. Cavalry, and an Iraqi unit to strike several targets in sequence. Several individuals were targeted; Task Unit Raider's own target was a man who was suspected of regularly importing cars, which were then turned into suicide bombs at his farm and passed to cells around Baghdad. The intelligence on the targets came from a source who planned to attend a gathering of all the important figures targeted in the mission and provide the trigger for execution.<sup>7</sup> The detailed planning for Raven was upset when the source reported that the location for the meeting had been secured by a Coalition conventional unit conducting its own operations. The decision was made to execute the raid on the farm as planned, as the source expected that the targets would rendezvous there instead.

The Marines later reported that the approach to the target site was "uneventful." This was something of a misstatement, as a few things happened to enliven the proceedings. The convoy was navigating by global positioning system, but the source stated several times that the Marines had missed key turns. The convoy continued on its course, as the Marines had justifiable confidence in their equipment and their planning, and they assessed that "the source was obviously confused about exactly where he was." His confusion continued as, right after the convoy made its final turn into the target's street, he "belatedly indicated" that they had driven past the house. Having no more confidence in the man's sense of direction, the assault force headed for the target as they had planned.<sup>8</sup>

Moments before the assault began, a car left the target site and drove toward the convoy. When the car failed to obey warnings to stop, it was engaged first with a Marine's M4 and then with a .50-caliber machine gun, both bursts being directed across the front of the car rather than into it, in case it was rigged as a bomb. The driver of the car got out and "crawled down the street" until he was stopped by Marines as the assault was in progress.

From that moment, the raid proceeded without incident. Curiously, the door to the house was found open, so the assault force literally walked in instead of blowing the door in or breaking it down. While the house was being secured and searched, the assault teams moved a short way down the road to assault other buildings. The AC-130 and HH-60s



reported several “squirters” escaping the house, who were promptly pursued and apprehended. Seventeen males were detained, so many that Major Kozeniesky decided that they would have to be airlifted out rather than taken back in the convoy. One of them was identified as the target of the raid. The operation yielded light weapons but no car bombs or bomb-making materials.<sup>7</sup> The raid force returned to Camp Myler without incident.<sup>9</sup>

Major Kozeniesky lauded the performance of the Marines on this operation, noting that the combination of a large target area, multiple structures, and vehicle threats prompted all hands to perform beyond even the normal high expectations. He logged the operation as another blow struck at the bomb makers and insurgent leaders threatening the Iraqi government. While accepting the reality of “less-than-perfect intelligence” on some of the targets, he noted: “The nature of the threat and the strategic significance of the turnover [transfer of sovereignty] dictate that we err on the side of action.”<sup>10</sup>

Task Unit Raider continued to opt for action throughout June. At 0300 on 22 June, it executed its tenth direct-action raid, Objective Recoil. Second Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, provided the high-quality intelligence sources that were becoming a regular feature of many of the task group’s operations. What made Recoil exceptional was the timeline from notification to execution. Major Kozeniesky wrote that, while engaged in planning for Objective Relinquish, they were notified of the need to hit Recoil that night. “We began Recoil planning from a completely cold start around 2300, were on the objective a little over four hours later (0315), and were back inside friendly lines roughly a half hour after the first breach (0348).” This level of execution illustrated the high level of readiness maintained by the Marines and their ability to drop whatever they were doing and concentrate exclusively and effectively on a priority operation. The assault force hit the target’s residence and place of business in rapid succession, detaining him and taking away items after a search of both places. In addition to praising the intelligence work by the special forces, Kozeniesky also singled out the naval pilots and crews of Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 4 (HCS-4), noting that they responded with admirable speed and efficiency to the short-notice call to arms.<sup>11</sup>

Less than 24 hours after Recoil, the Marines executed a combined raid with the GROM on Objective

Relinquish. This operation marked the first use of a source run completely by Det One counterintelligence Marines. The source was passed to them by other government agencies in Baghdad, where he had produced intelligence for task group targets in the past. Staff Sergeant Scott J. Beretz worked the source for two weeks to develop the intelligence on the target, which consisted of an individual or individuals strongly suspected to be producing car bombs for use against the Iraqi government. Descriptions and names were not known, but the source was reliable, and Major Kozeniesky’s policy was to act on good intelligence rather than wait for perfect intelligence. The source indicated that the latest two vehicles, a van and a sport utility vehicle, had already been prepared as bombs and were almost ready for use. The two vehicles were at separate locations a few hundred meters apart. Task Unit Raider took one location, and the Task Unit Thunder, augmented for this mission by more counterintelligence and fires Marines, took the other.

The raid began with Task Unit Raider making a soft approach and a stealthy entrance to the target location. Inside the wall of the property, the Marines found three vehicles, one of them the van. The explosive ordnance disposal technicians swept the vehicles to make sure they were not loaded with explosives, and when they gave the signal that the vehicles were clear, the assault teams breached and entered the house. A short distance down the street, Task Unit Thunder did the same. Inside, the Marines found several people, including two military-age males who were detained. The Marines towed away the van and disabled the other two cars. After it was clear that the van was not a functional bomb at the moment, the only drama of the night occurred when Major Thomas P. Dolan, serving as forward air controller, saw a vehicle on a side street flash its lights three times. He asked the helicopters overhead to check it out. The pilots saw the car’s lights flash three times again but reported no other visible activity. Dolan and the pilots thought that it could have been a prearranged signal by anti-Coalition forces, but it could just as well have been a remote entry device being used for its intended purpose. They took no further action.\*

Based on the intelligence gathered from the site and from the two detainees, the raid on Objective Re-

<sup>7</sup> The intelligence debrief on the mission did note an unlikely combination of materials found on scene: “a picture of [Muqtada al] Sadr and *Maxim* magazines.”

\* In one of the bizarre side stories that always seemed to accompany these raids, the intelligence debrief noted that two men were seen outside a nearby building. “When the assaulters approached them the individuals asked in English, ‘we go inside now?’ The assaulter told them to go inside and they went.”

## Det One Sniper Rifles



.408-caliber Chey-Tac



.50-caliber M82 Barrett



7.62mm M40A3



7.62mm SR-25

Photos Courtesy of Det One

linquish was judged a success. The two men confessed to anti-Coalition involvement and provided actionable intelligence on local insurgent activities, which was quickly passed up the chain-of-command for other units to execute. Tests done by explosive experts on the van indicated traces of ammonium nitrate, a fertilizer compound used in improvised explosives, and it too was passed to higher headquarters for further exploitation.<sup>12</sup>

On 23 June, after resting and recovering from Relinquish, the Marines took a day off at the pool on the special forces' compound to mark the one-year anniversary of the unit's activation. As Major Kozeniesky wrote: "We have come a long way in a relatively short period of time—from moving into our new compound and putting names with new faces a year ago, to conducting direct action raids in Baghdad alongside Polish SOF, using Special Forces sources, with Navy and Air Force special operations aircraft in support."<sup>13</sup>

The birthday celebration called for a pause but not a vacation, and the task unit returned, refreshed, to Camp Myler, to address the business at hand. In the last few days before the transfer of sovereignty, Major Kozeniesky intended to keep the insurgent cells off balance by striking as many targets as he could since

the general expectation in the task group was that the new government would take a somewhat less aggressive stance. They began to prepare for the next operation, Objective Recruit. The intelligence for Recruit was derived from the exploitation of detainees from Objective Radiate, executed on 13 June. The targets were individuals in the same cell who had eluded capture on that previous raid. Two in particular were targeted for capture or killing; the Marines took one, and the Poles of Task Unit Thunder took the other.

At 0208 on 29 June, Task Unit Raider's assault teams went over the wall of their assigned target house. During the approach, the AC-130 had reported figures fleeing from the roof of the house to an adjacent structure, so the assault force made ready to breach and enter that building too. At the first house, they attempted an explosive breach, which malfunctioned. Before the secondary breach could even be attempted, someone opened the front door from the inside. The assault teams entered and secured the residence, rounding up the occupants, including two males. The Marines also secured several items of interest, including a car, anti-Coalition propaganda, a washing-machine timer, and a remote-control car, the latter two both standard homemade

bomb components. (There was also a page from a book showing the locations of U.S. military bases overseas.) The Marines also found, but did not touch, bloody bed linens, which the intelligence debrief later noted “would support some reporting on wounded foreign fighters” in transit through the area.<sup>14</sup>

Based on the in-stride surveillance of the target area by the AC-130, the Marines mounted a rapid assault on the adjacent building, where they detained six more males and more electronic components. On-site interrogations by Staff Sergeant Beretz turned into he-said/she-said finger pointing. One young man said that this was the target’s house and that he was the target’s nephew, but that he had not seen his uncle in a long time. One woman pointed to a man taken from the second house and said that he was the target. He, of course, remained silent. A third person said that the target lived across the street. Major Kozeniesky decided to take all the detainees back to task group headquarters and sort them out there, suspecting that they already had the man they wanted, and even if they did not, the others would be full of interesting information.<sup>15</sup>

Following the execution of Recruit, Gunnery Sergeant Joseph L. Morrison of Team 2 was injured in a training session. The injury was not life-threatening, but it aggravated a career’s worth of hard use on his body, such that he needed to go home for surgery and recovery. The assistant team leader, Staff Sergeant Kevin J. Harris, took his place. The accident came during practice in hand-to-hand combat. Det One trained hard even while it was working hard.<sup>16</sup>

On 2 July, Task Unit Raider executed a raid on Objective Republican, the largest operation to date. The target of the raid was another car-bomb maker. Another target was assigned to Task Unit Thunder. The intelligence was supplied by 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, which also coordinated the participation of the 36th Battalion, Iraqi National Guard, a high-quality unit that the battalion trained and advised. The task group needed the Iraqis because the intelligence indicated that a mosque was being used for the construction and staging of car bombs.<sup>17</sup>

Task Units Raider and Thunder left Camp Myler and linked up with the Army and Iraqi units in the Green Zone, where they conducted rehearsals and final coordination. The individual units left in turn; Raider arrived at the set point just after 0200 and began a dismounted approach to the target house. While the Marines were scaling the wall, a male exited the front door and was immediately detained. The assault teams entered and cleared the structure,

declaring it secure after five minutes. Outside, gunshots were heard down the block, but no one could pinpoint their origin, and no further action was taken.<sup>18</sup>

Three males, including the primary target himself, were detained and dropped off at the Green Zone, along with multiple bomb-making components, a computer, and several hundred blank Iraqi passports. The operation continued to strengthen the ties with the Polish unit and the special forces and gave the Marines an opportunity to work with Iraqi units. Major Kozeniesky concluded that Task Unit Raider had “dealt the cell a serious blow” that would “limit its ability to construct and employ car bombs for the foreseeable future. Mission was a success.”<sup>19</sup>

### *Local Counter-Rocket Operations*

Following the transfer of sovereignty from the Coalition Provisional Authority to the Iraqi interim government, Task Unit Raider stepped back from the spate of direct action missions against bomb makers that characterized much of the month of June and began a series of operations geared more toward protecting its own base. All Coalition bases were the targets of insurgent rocket and mortar attacks, but Camp Myler and Baghdad International Airport had recently received several attacks. The worst was a direct hit on the task group operations center that seriously wounded a SEAL and destroyed some equipment.\* Major Kozeniesky turned the operational capabilities of his task unit to striking at these local threats.

On several days during the month of June, Marines had been compelled to man their assigned positions for base defense after incidents of small arms and indirect fire. On 30 June, the Marines established a sniper and observation position at Camp Myler, dedicated specifically to the base defense plan, to be occupied continuously until further notice. Even with only a pair of Marines on duty at any given time, this move represented a regular manpower drain. Once again, Colonel Coates’s every-Marine-a-rifleman philosophy paid dividends, as support section and headquarters Marines ably addressed this requirement as well as serving on other missions, decreasing the burdens on the reconnaissance element.<sup>20</sup>

The intelligence element also turned its attention to the local threat. Master Sergeant Hays B. Harrington’s signals intelligence section produced informa-

\* HM1 Matthew S. Pranka treated the casualty, helped save his life, and was decorated. The citation read, in part: “Pranka leapt into action from his quarters several hundred meters away. Rather than seeking cover during the rocket barrage, he sprinted across open terrain to come to the aid of the wounded sailor.”

tion that pointed to a certain residence in the vicinity. The high-tech SIGINT revelation was supported by an old but effective technique called crater analysis, in which a Marine measures and orients a shell crater to get a back azimuth to its point of origin and a rough indication of the size and type of round. Gunnery Sergeant Matthew A. Ulmer and Staff Sergeant Beretz began cultivating sources in the local area in order to root out information on the attackers.<sup>21</sup> While the intelligence was being gathered and analyzed, Major Kozeniesky and the staff coordinated with the Army unit that owned the local battlespace, 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery. The soldiers had an immediate interest in the success of any raids directed at indirect fire threats and agreed to provide the quick reaction force. On this raid, the task unit would also employ a new technique, an eight-man "squirter control team" to deal with people fleeing the target house. This immediate reaction force, aloft in one of the HH-60s that always supported them, was provided by Task Unit Thunder.<sup>22</sup>

The series of raids aimed at the local indirect fire problem began with Objective Roundup. The attack launched at 0300 on 6 July. After a short approach to the target, which was less than five kilometers from Camp Myler, the assault force reached the set point and split up to assault the two target buildings simultaneously. It hit each building hard, then executed a rapid follow-on assault on another building, based on the questioning of the residents of the first two houses. The Marines detained three men, all of whom provided information on rocket attacks that led to subsequent operations.<sup>23</sup>

The detainee interrogations were fed back into the targeting cycle, along with more information from 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, and 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group. Also thrown into the intelligence mix was a very useful item that was recovered by 1st Reconnaissance Battalion during a raid in al-Anbar Province: a global positioning system receiver. It contained hundreds of stored waypoints, many of which corresponded to locations associated with the Camp Myler rocket attacks, indicating possible points of origin or cache sites. Meanwhile, 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces, was devising a plan, called Operation Serpent Strike, to bait the local insurgents into firing at the base by setting up a stage and leaking information that a large event was going to occur. They coordinated with an artillery unit to site a counterbattery radar set to track the incoming rounds, while aircraft circled overhead for surveillance. As part of the plan, Task Unit Raider was to stage its convoy and prepare to act on any rocket

launch. If no rocket attacks occurred during Operation Serpent Strike, the plan called for Raider and Thunder to launch later on Objective Reform.<sup>24</sup>

The insurgents did not take the bait, so the two task units executed raids as planned. Task Unit Raider took one target set, Thunder the other. The Marine convoy left after nightfall on 9 June and arrived at the set point right after 2200. At the first of the three target sites, the Marines took no detainees and found no evidence of insurgent activity, so they proceeded directly to the next site. The watchful AC-130 passed information on activity there, and the Marines conducted a hard hit. They found scorch marks on the ground at this location that were indicative of possible rocket launches. The task unit mounted up and proceeded to the third objective, which also yielded nothing.<sup>25</sup> Major Kozeniesky, in his comments on the operation, admitted that they had "little to show" for the three hits of the night but pointed out that since every one of the individuals the Marines interrogated on site knew of rocket and mortar activity in the vicinity, it tended to validate the general intelligence picture and in no way deterred them from pursuing these targets.<sup>26</sup>

Following the local operations, Task Raider turned its attention again to high-value targets, striking at a former official in the Ba'athist regime chemical program, now dubbed Objective Reflector. This man was suspected of supplying explosives and chemicals to insurgent networks, and signals intelligence indicated that he was going to escape the country. Right before 0330 on 11 July, the assault force breached the man's house and entered it, finding it empty but very recently occupied. Experts from other government agencies brought along for the site exploitation found one ton of chemicals and chemical lab equipment, and they took several samples. "Technically and tactically, this was a superbly executed operation," wrote Major Kozeniesky. The disappointment at missing the target was balanced by a good haul of intelligence materials.<sup>27</sup>

Two days later, the task unit executed a raid on Objective Run Down, a leader of both insurgent and criminal activity. Second Battalion, 5th Special Forces, provided the intelligence and again organized the participation of the 36th Battalion, Iraqi National Guard. The raid proceeded on schedule and without incident. The force took the primary target as well as two other males.

By the third week of July, Task Unit Raider had conducted a total of 17 direct action raids. Most were successes, some were "dry holes." Some had been undertaken on short notice, while others were long

planned. The Marines had hit former regime officials and common criminals, insurgents and bomb makers. Det One Marines were operating not only at Camp Myler but in the Green Zone and in Fallujah and served in key positions in the task group staff.\* While the bulk of the task group was dedicated to the protective details, Task Units Raider and Thunder remained the forces of choice for direct action.<sup>28</sup>

### *Colonel Coates and the Fallujah Brigade*

Colonel Robert J. Coates, who had the most accurate view of the Fallujah Brigade's operations and therefore no reason to have inflated expectations, also took a long view of the venture. Marines could crush the city in a matter of days—they nearly did in April, and would finally do so in November 2004—but he wanted to know if there was a better way to fight the battle. Iraqis needed to be pushed forward to solve Iraqi problems, and although their solutions might not be perfect by American standards, they would be Iraqi solutions.\*\* But if the Iraqis could not come to a solution and the Marines needed to apply more forceful means, then every effort needed to be expended to use the Iraqi unit to shape the battlespace and contribute to victory.<sup>29</sup>

The one task the Fallujah Brigade needed to be able to do that it could not or would not do was take on the hard-core elements like the foreign fighters who made the insurgency immeasurably worse. The I Marine Expeditionary Force ceased support for its operations, namely in the form of payments delivered by Colonel Coates, and the Fallujah Brigade fell apart on 12 September. However, even as its parts melted away, then joined or rejoined the insurgency, Lieutenant General James T. Conway's staff was exploiting the discord it gradually had sown. And Colonel Coates was working with another Iraqi unit that had been formed, one that would prove to be a significantly more effective fighting force.

This second organization, which became known as the Shahwani Special Forces, grew out of the same general initiative that produced the Fallujah Brigade. It differed in that it was smaller and was made up of a much higher quality of Iraqi soldier than the *jundi* of the Fallujah Brigade. It took its name from its leader, Major General Mohammed Abdullah Mohammed al-

Shahwani,\* a figure with a long association with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who had become head of Iraq's National Intelligence Service. He offered to form another unit of soldiers that were loyal to him and would do that which the Fallujah Brigade could or would not do.<sup>31</sup>

Colonel Coates was tasked with setting the Shahwani up in a compound inside Camp Fallujah, supplying them with arms and equipment, and communicating Lieutenant General Conway's orders and guidance. He found General Shahwani and his men a refreshing change from the Fallujah Brigade and recognized that they would be able to accomplish a wide variety of tasks in shaping the Fallujah battlespace.

The Shahwani operational units formed under Colonel Khalis Ali Hussein, another professional and exceptionally capable officer.\*\* Training progressed quickly, and the units began to operate first with the Marines, and then independently of them in many cases. They took over many duties from the Marines that they could do better, such as manning vehicle checkpoints and screening civilians. As the time drew near when it was clear that a more "kinetic" solution would be needed in Fallujah, the soldiers in the Shahwani Special Forces undertook several operations inside the city doing what Colonel Coates offhandedly described as "different things," meaning that they were involved in some very sensitive, high-risk shaping operations that contributed significantly to the success of the operation in November 2004.

The initiative that produced both the Fallujah Brigade and the Shahwani Special Forces was, in Colonel Coates's words, "an opportunity for those in there to choose what side they wanted to be on." The latter certainly chose more wisely than the former. Colonel Coates

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\* Shahwani, a Sunni, competed internationally as a decathlete in his youth and was sent for U.S. Army Ranger training in the late 1960s. He later headed the Iraqi Special Forces School and was a brigadier general in command of a Republican Guard unit during the first half of the Iran-Iraq War. His military success led Saddam Hussein to perceive him as a threat, and by 1990, Shahwani had fled to London. Shahwani was based in Jordan during the Gulf War, collecting intelligence from his abundant sources, and with CIA support, he tried to organize a military coup against Saddam in 1996. The plot failed, and while Shahwani escaped, 85 of the conspirators were executed, including his three sons. Shahwani continued to work with the CIA on various plots to turn the Iraq military against Hussein. After the invasion in 2003, he became director of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service.

\*\* For their professionalism and steadfastness, the Shahwani officers suffered immensely. Col Khalis's family in Baghdad was kidnapped, but he remained loyal to the cause and stayed at his post, and Khalis and his protective detail were killed in early 2005 by terrorists in Baghdad. Col Coates called it "a statement to the effectiveness of his leadership and his Iraqi special forces." Many other Shahwani officers were also killed by the insurgents. Col Coates email to author, 7 August 2006.

\* During the week of 10 July, Maj Wade Priddy assumed the job of task group operations officer after the SEAL officer in the post rotated home.

\*\* Col Coates pointed out to the author that El Salvador's civil war brought to a close in much the same way as described.

## Det One Weapons



5.56mm M4 SOPMOD Rifle



7.62mm M14 Rifle



5.56mm M249 Light Machine Gun



.45-caliber M1911 Pistol and Stryder Knife

Photos Courtesy of Det One

was involved with both units every day until he departed Iraq in October, was materially responsible for most of their successes, and consequently for much of the success in the decisive action of that part of the campaign.\*

### *Intel Marines after the Protective Detail*

With the onset of the protective detail mission, Det One's far-flung intelligence element became somewhat less far-flung as the task group contracted and consolidated. Master Sergeant Bret A. Hayes and Gunnery Sergeant Matthew Ulmer came back to Camp Myler, where they operated in general support of the task group and were able to work more directly with Task Unit Raider. Most of the radio reconnaissance section was sent to Baghdad for direct support of the SEALs. They occupied one floor of a hotel, and from that perch, they were able to provide timely and critical signals intelligence, employing new equipment and developing different techniques, tactics, and procedures. For example, Gunnery Sergeant James A. Crawford put together a significant target package based on his own collection that was passed up for execution by upper-tier units.<sup>31</sup>

The intelligence element performed other tasks in and around Baghdad as well, sometimes in support

of conventional units. Gunnery Sergeant Crawford and Staff Sergeant William B. Parker were involved in a fierce day-long firefight on 12 August while attached to 1st Battalion, 9th U.S. Cavalry, seeking out insurgents responsible for indirect fire attacks on the Green Zone. They, along with two SEALs and a squad of cavalymen, were posted on top of a building on Haifa Street. Throughout that day, they provided intelligence to the commander of the Army unit on the targets he was seeking. Later in the day, their mission was to scan the area for an insurgent mortar team, locate them, and take them out. The rest of the company had departed, and the small combined team was in a covert position. The mortarmen came, fired, and left, close to them but unfortunately out of sight, so they reported what they heard and remained in place. They saw a roadside bomb emplaced and subsequently detonated against an Army vehicle, but they did not engage those who planted it because they did not want to compromise their location.<sup>32</sup>

Their position was soon compromised for them, however, when the street filled with masked gunmen, massing for action and firing weapons in the air. They observed a dozen men get out of two vehicles at the base of their building and start to unload rocket propelled grenades and small arms. The SEALs, soldiers,

\* Col Coates received the Bronze Star for his actions.

and Marines reasoned that this situation called for action, and they moved back to the roof, where they dropped grenades on the gunmen and engaged them with small-arms fire. They also called to alert the cavalry battalion's quick reaction force. The Haifa Street fight was on.<sup>33</sup>

Although his team had just engaged the gunmen below, Gunnery Sergeant Crawford was not sure that the enemy could pinpoint them, and so while he observed an enemy rocket team across the street, he did not shoot but instead alerted the rest of the team to its presence. Crawford quickly found out that the enemy did know his position, as they started to receive heavy small arms fire. The team returned it in kind. "Rounds were snapping over our heads at a very rapid rate, and they practically had us pinned," he later wrote. When the gunmen paused to reload, the Americans used the brief window of opportunity to descend to a more defensible part of the building.<sup>34</sup>

A young boy, perhaps 10 years old, appeared on the roof of the building next to them and threw a grenade. Shouts of "grenade!" went up, and most of the men were able to get out of the way, but one soldier was caught in the open and sustained severe injuries—one foot was severed and his legs had other wounds. "The rate of fire we were receiving was enormous," Crawford noting, adding that he later counted eight rocket-propelled grenade hits on just one side of the building. Parker counted 14 hits in all. Crawford called for an immediate extract.<sup>35</sup>

While the team treated its casualties and fortified its position, "all hell broke loose" on the street below. Smoke billowed up from the cars they had destroyed, and automatic weapons fire continued to sweep the position. The Marines, SEALs, and soldiers bounded down to an apartment below the roof under mutual covering fire and continued the fight. The incoming fire continued, as heavy as before. It shattered a window and sprayed Parker with glass. The Americans maintained a steady and accurate volume of fire going out. Crawford later wrote that they had 30 confirmed kills during the fight.<sup>36</sup>

The quick reaction force took an hour to arrive, but when it did, it was in force, with "Bradleys pouring out 25mm high explosive everywhere," as Crawford recalled. The Marines, SEALs, and soldiers took their wounded down to street level and loaded them into the vehicles, which drove straight to the 31st Corps Support Hospital. There they dropped off the wounded and then prepared to return and reengage the insurgents. Within an hour, Crawford and Parker found themselves back on Haifa Street, while 1st Bat-

talion, 9th Cavalry, systematically retook the area and searched the buildings. The entire episode ran 20 hours. "By this time," Crawford wrote, "we were all smoked, no food, no rest, and hot as can be."<sup>37</sup>

The Haifa Street fight began with a radio reconnaissance mission and ended in a close-quarters fight, where gunfighting skills and sheer physical endurance won the day. The Det One Marines had again proved up to the task.

Staff Sergeant Daniel L. Williams of the counterintelligence section remained with the SEALs after Task Unit North moved to Baghdad, and he found himself working in the offices of the interim Iraqi president. Operating quietly, in civilian clothes, he was known simply as "Dan." It was his job to vet all of the Iraqi civilians working in the executive offices, questioning, screening, cataloging, indexing, and reporting. His inquisitive mind and exceptional memory took note of everything around him, and he patiently sifted through it all. He devised a system of credentials and enforced the wearing of badges. Through his efforts, he identified two immediate and potent threats to the president: one, "a foreign national with suspected ties to state-sponsored terrorism," and the other, "an individual with known anti-coalition ties."<sup>38</sup>

Another counterintelligence Marine, Gunnery Sergeant William G. Parsons, shifted after the protective detail from supporting Task Unit Central to more general human intelligence activities in the Green Zone. He screened meeting attendees, did physical threat assessments, and handled interpreters. In mid-July, he was recalled by Major Jerry Carter and assigned as the task force liaison to the intelligence agencies' combined surveillance and reconnaissance section, taking the place of an Army major. Parsons began coordinating requests from every special ops unit across Iraq, as well as from some conventional units. He stayed there, in a billet several levels above his pay grade, until Task Unit Raider stood down and Det One redeployed to Camp Pendleton.

An important part of intelligence support to the task group was the operation of the detention and interrogation facility. As the task group special activities officer, Captain Christopher B. Batts was responsible for handling detainees. Since he had few Marines to assist him, it meant that he pitched in as necessary to actually handle the detainees. Some were compliant, while some were not. One in particular went through substance abuse detoxification during his detention, flinging himself around his cell and defecating uncontrollably. Batts and others had to restrain him and then clean him up.<sup>39</sup>

The proper handling of detainees was crucial in

several respects. For one, humane and proper treatment of detainees is required by law and policy. For another, interrogations of detainees were some of the most productive feeds to the intelligence cycle. Maintaining the “shock of capture,” as it was called, and getting a detainee to talk and give up information without overstepping boundaries is an art, and Batts and his Marines had the training to do it effectively. Once they were plugged into other government agencies and other task force units, they had the contacts to make sense of nearly everything detainees told them, and they were able to forward the results of their questioning to other interested parties. When detainees were brought in, Batts was there to meet them. They were checked for medical issues, given food or water as needed, and then photographed, fingerprinted, and questioned. Clever, effective, and timely interrogations more than once provided the primary actionable intelligence on key targets.<sup>40</sup>

### *The “One-Armed Bandit”*

Two weeks of relative inactivity for Task Unit Raider ended with two more operations on targets close to home. These two raids, on Objectives Relapse and Roadster, struck at more local insurgents who had been firing rockets into Camp Myler. The

sources were Iraqis who had been trained by Task Unit Raider’s counterintelligence Marines.<sup>41</sup> The primary source for Objective Relapse was an Iraqi developed and handled by Staff Sergeant Scott Beretz. “He had excellent English, a very intelligent guy,” said Beretz. The source began to bring in solid information on rocket launches, as well as promising informants of his own.

Beretz formed a plan, and he coordinated with higher headquarters for permission to proceed with it. He gave his source a vehicle and a global positioning system receiver. The source took one of the informants he had brought in, and together they went out and plotted three locations related to possible rocket launches. A few days later, Beretz sent them out again with a camera to photograph the locations. Through these efforts, the identity of the man who was behind the attacks finally surfaced. He would be easy to pick out, the source said, as he only had one arm; thus he became known as the “One-Armed Bandit.”<sup>42</sup>

The assault on Objective Relapse occurred at 0220 on 27 July. Task Unit Raider was assigned to hit two targets: the “One-Armed Bandit” and his two-armed associate, described as a welder who made rocket launchers. Task Unit Thunder was assigned a third

Photos Courtesy of Det One

## Det One Night Vision Devices



AN/PVS-17 Weapon Night Sight



AN/PVS-15 Binocular Night Sight



AN/PVS-14 Multipurpose Night Sight



PEQ-2A IR Laser Pointer



target. The unit that owned the battlespace was 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel J. Giles Kyser IV, the detachment's "godfather." The "Warlords" would provide the quick reaction force for the mission. The convoy, momentarily delayed by traffic coming in and out of Baghdad airport, proceeded to the targets with the AC-130 overhead, reporting on activity in the area. As the assault force reached the set point and dismounted, the gunship spotted two figures running from the one-armed man's residence. Marines from the containment teams gave chase across the adjacent field, grabbed both men, and dragged them back to the house. One was missing a forearm.<sup>43</sup>

By the time the containment teams returned, the assault teams had cleared the structure, and sensitive site exploitation was in full swing. Staff Sergeant Beretz was getting the customary evasions to his direct questions, but one of the young men under interrogation had a name that was related to that of the man for whom they were searching. At that moment, one of the assaulters uncovered a prosthetic arm, then the containment teams brought in the one-armed runner. The source positively identified him, and Beretz had his man.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to the "One-Armed Bandit," the raid turned up other damning evidence, including a detailed diagram of a main U.S. base and several military maps of Baghdad. On the search of the second objective, the GROM members also netted their target, along with 10 improvised rocket launch tubes complete with sights.<sup>45</sup> The raid was a dramatic success, and Major Kozeniesky was able to assess that "one of the active cells in the area has been decimated."<sup>46</sup>

Based on the intelligence gleaned from Relapse, the task group then initiated a mission on Objective Roadster, targeting the man who was supplying the 57mm rockets that the "One-Armed Bandit" was shooting. Task Unit Thunder again took part, and there was excellent close target reconnaissance done by Army Special Forces and *jundi* from the 36th Iraqi National Guard. Task Unit Raider brought along a new source who had offered to identify the rocket supplier.<sup>47</sup>

The assault on Objective Roadster proceeded in the early hours of 5 August, with the assault teams making a dismounted approach to the target's house. After the Iraqi source confirmed that the building was the target's house, the force breached, entered, and cleared it, while other teams were assaulting another structure. At this point, it was found that the residence was a more complex building than it ap-

peared, and Major Kozeniesky ordered his Marines to begin breaching and clearing the site until no room was left untouched. Several men were detained, and the source identified some as the target's relatives. The target himself was not there, and no items of significance were taken away.<sup>48</sup>

The general success of this series, despite the escape of Objective Roadster's primary target, highlighted the exceptional work of Staff Sergeant Beretz and validated Marine human intelligence abilities in the special operations arena. Beretz was able to pay his sources for their work and set them to further tasks. The chief Iraqi source became, in Beretz's words, "self-sufficient" and began to venture out to capture low-level targets on his own.<sup>49</sup>

Not only was Staff Sergeant Beretz having success in developing sources to counter the local indirect fire attacks, he was also becoming involved with sources for a much higher profile target, codenamed Rifle, a man who various organizations had been hunting for months. The assault on Objective Rifle grew into one of Task Unit Raider's hallmark operations, and one of its key features was the human intelligence operation run by Staff Sergeant Beretz.<sup>50</sup>

### *Al-Kut*

In August 2004, the Shi'a militias began to rise up again in areas south of Baghdad, engaging in open combat with Iraqi and Coalition forces. In al-Kut, an important Shi'a center, gunmen were surging into the city and the Iraqi police were under siege. In a compound immediately west of the city were stationed a Ukrainian brigade and an Army Special Forces team, with a Marine ANGLICO team attached, and a small number of U.S. Army military police. The Ukrainians were unable or unwilling to intervene. The Special Forces, the ANGLICO Marines, and the military police were left to stand with the Iraqis in an increasingly difficult position, but they did not have the combat power to engage the militiamen and still serve as advisors to the Iraqis. The loss of Al-Kut would have been a severe blow to the interim Iraqi government and would have given the Shi'a militants an important victory.

Task Unit Raider's al-Kut operations begin on 11 August when the special operations task force sent down an order for Marines to reinforce the Special Forces team. The task unit staff did a quick mission analysis and advised that the best course of action would be to send a task-organized sub-detachment of 16 Marines, covering sniper, SIGINT, forward air control, and medical capabilities. Captain Eric Thompson was in command, and the senior enlisted Marine

was Master Sergeant Charles Padilla. Within 12 hours of notification, that team, with two M113 humvees and supplies for 96 hours, was en route to al-Kut on a pair of MC-130 aircraft.<sup>51</sup>

Upon arrival at the Special Forces team's house, the Marines received a brief on the situation. The battle was clearly still joined. On the roof of the house, the Air Force enlisted tactical air controller attached to the Special Forces team was working targets in the city with the AC-130 overhead. The Special Forces troopers extracted the governor of Al-Kut from the city the next day—by small boat across the Tigris River, as all other avenues were closed—to meet with senior U.S. Army commanders. Det One Marines accompanied them to and from the landing site and got a firsthand look at the aggressive tactics of the insurgents. The soldiers and Marines had to engage cars that would not stop when commanded and posed threats to the convoy. Master Sergeant Padilla and Staff Sergeant Chad Baker disabled several cars with the Barrett .50-caliber rifle and M240G machine gun.<sup>52</sup> Padilla noted with approval that the Special Forces were working with good, permissive rules of engagement and were not shy about using deadly force.<sup>53</sup> The situation in the city was assessed as very serious, and the governor needed American help to regain control.<sup>54</sup>

That evening, 12 August, the Marines established two positions by the river to gain observation on the city. Both had sniper teams; one post held Captain Daniel Sheehan, and Sergeants David Marnell and Miguel A. Cervantes to control the AC-130 when it came on station, and the other post held three radio reconnaissance Marines, Sergeants William S. Benedict, Jason Leighty, and Christopher E. Haug. Their mission was to support the beleaguered Iraqi police, still holding on in their fortified position in the city. During the night, the two posts observed several fire-fights across the river but found it difficult to discern if the shooters were Iraqi police or Shi'a gunmen. The Marines were cleared to fire if the figures they saw were attacking the police station. Staff Sergeant Baker took one shot from his M40A3 sniper rifle at a target of opportunity; the range was 750 meters. He saw the shot strike home, but no one could determine the effects, and so it was logged as a probable kill.<sup>55</sup> Fire was going in both directions, with a steady volume of rounds coming at them from across the river.

A friendly fire incident occurred that night when fires from the AC-130 hit the Iraqi police station. A member of the Special Forces team not located with the Marines was controlling the AC-130 while Staff Sergeant Baker observed another group of insurgents

moving into position against the Iraqi police. In an effort to get a precise location on them and then engage them, Captain Sheehan designated the spot Baker identified with an infrared laser pointer and directed Sergeant Marnell to use the laser mark to produce the grid location. Unfortunately, the AC-130 saw the laser mark and mistook it for a target designation from the soldiers. The gunship fired, wounding several Iraqi police.<sup>56</sup> The same fire also stopped the insurgent attack for the night. The Marines shut down both posts and withdrew to the team house.

The heat at this time of the year was intense. The Marines preferred operating at night as much because it provided a small measure of relief from the heat. They also had the tactical edge because of their night vision equipment. They later noted, however, that thermal sights were degraded even at night because the ambient temperature was not much different from a human's temperature. Captain Sheehan remembered one day in al-Kut when the thermometer on his watch read 137 degrees.<sup>57</sup>

The next day, the Coalition forces once again retrieved the governor, and he began planning with the Special Forces leadership, the Marines, and the advance party of a U.S. Army Stryker battalion en route to provide the conventional force. The governor reported that the previous two nights of AC-130 strikes had turned the tide, and his forces were "90 percent" in charge of the city, but that a nearby town for which he was also responsible was still in the hands of the insurgents.<sup>58</sup> The group formed a plan to send the Stryker battalion across the river to retake the city, with the Special Forces team and the Marines occupying positions to support the assault. Operations in the other town, al-Hayy, were deferred pending action in al-Kut.

That night, the combined units moved into their positions. Four Marine snipers crossed the river with eight members of the Special Forces team and four of their ANGLICO Marines to occupy a clandestine position that gave them observation over much of the city.\* In place to cover them and to support the

\* The river crossing provided a brief moment of excitement when the engines on the Iraqi small boats cut out and the craft began to drift downstream. MSgt Padilla could see the event turning into a possible disaster; his first thought was that it was a set-up. He said to himself: "How am I going to explain this to Maj Kozieniesky? He's not going to like this." A special forces trooper broke the tension by quoting a line from a Snickers commercial: "Not going anywhere for a while?" Focused efforts restarted the engines and the boats made their way back upstream to an otherwise uneventful landing. SSgt Baker silently noted a lesson learned: "Marines need to plan and organize any water operation." Padilla intvw, 10Jan05 (MCHC); Baker intvw, 24Mar05 (MCHC).

Stryker assault later were eight Marines on the near side of the river, including the fires team and the radio reconnaissance team.

Once the Marines were in position across the river, Captain Sheehan began to prosecute targets. He directed the AC-130 onto one preplanned target, and for the rest of the night he coordinated the big gunship and a pair of Army OH-58D Kiowa helicopters as the Stryker units drove across the bridge into the city. It was later reported that he “described the situation on the ground to the battalion fire support coordination center and de-conflicted fires between the AC-130 and the friendly troop movements. The Stryker battalion rolled through al-Kut with no shots fired.” In the wake of the battalion’s movement, the Marines at the fires and radio reconnaissance position crossed the river in vehicles to link up with their fellow raiders and bring them out. The Marines then retired to the Special Forces detachment’s compound.

When 15 August passed uneventfully, on the morning of the 16th it was determined that no clear requirement existed to keep the Det One Marines in al-Kut for further operations, and the sub-detachment returned to Camp Myler.<sup>59</sup> The al-Kut operation was a significant feather in the detachment’s cap. Good mission analysis produced a balanced team to address an uncertain situation, and the resulting plan was rapidly executed. The careful application of precision fires, supported by tactical signals intelligence and effective command and control enabled the Marines to support both the Army Special Forces detachment and the Stryker battalion. The Stryker battalion, in turn, backed up the Iraqis in retaking the city. The al-Kut mission demonstrated that Det One could be a supporting effort as effectively as it could be a main effort, and that its conventional roots served it well in larger operations.

### *“Dry Holes”*

As the al-Kut sub-detachment was returning, Task Unit Raider was executing a direct action raid on Objective Roulette, another combined operation with Task Unit Thunder. The target of the raid was the leader of a large cell in Mahmudiyah, a consistently restive city south of Baghdad. The intelligence on the target was drawn from a previous capture incarcerated in Abu Ghraib and from Marine counterintelligence teams operating in al-Anbar Province. Mahmudiyah was in the territory of 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Giles Kyser. The “Warlords” again gladly stood up their quick reaction forces to support them and provided detailed information on the routes into and out of the target area.<sup>60</sup>

Intelligence sources had pegged two different buildings as the target’s residence. When no clear determination could be made on which was the actual residence, the decision was made to hit each one simultaneously. The mission launched at 0200 on 16 August. Task Unit Raider’s assault force numbered fewer than usual since Captain Thompson’s al-Kut Marines were not part of the force. The ability of the support section Marines to step up and join the fight was crucial in this operation. All the drivers and gunners in the convoy except one were from the headquarters and intelligence elements, and that one was Hospital Corpsman First Class Matthew Pranka.

The approach to the target was difficult, due to a rough road network, billowing clouds of dust, and lack of natural illumination. The detailed route reconnaissance from Lieutenant Colonel Kyser’s battalion, however, enabled the convoy to get through to the target. The Marine teams assaulted both structures in their target set, while Polish special forces took theirs down. Unfortunately, none of the individuals targeted in the raids was present. Sensitive site exploitation did reveal information that confirmed that the task force was correct to hit the sites, but the individual targets avoided capture. Major Kozeniesky concluded by noting that “egress back to Camp Myler was uneventful. Mission was a dry hole.”<sup>61</sup>

Three days later, Task Unit Raider executed a raid on Objective Resistor, the target being a former regime official running a large anti-Coalition cell, which was allegedly tied to terrorist mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. This hit was synchronized with an Iraqi special operations unit and Task Force 626, a unit hunting the most important targets in Iraq. The plan called for those two units to hit a pair of financiers associated with Task Unit Raider’s target; Raider was the supporting effort. The intelligence for this operation was derived from a 1st Cavalry Division report forwarded approximately one week before by

<sup>60</sup> One incident during the raid on Objective Roulette illustrated the strange things that the Marines sometimes found during the searches. The intelligence debrief from the raid noted matter-of-factly that, “One (1) woman was discovered sleeping outside.” Actually, SSgt Zachary A. Reeves, one of the radio reconnaissance Arabic speakers, discovered her by stepping on her. He called MSgt Hays B. Harrington over, and asked him what they should do. There was a blanket lying on the ground, and Reeves said that there was an old woman underneath it. Harrington thought Reeves was playing a joke on him—“wrong place and time for a joke”—because he had searched that area and seen nothing. Harrington he lifted up the blanket and there indeed was an old woman: “This face is peering out at me, I mean, she is hideous-looking, has to be at least a hundred and fifty years old... That was the scariest thing I saw over there.” Harrington decided just to leave her alone. Roulette operational summary; Harrington intvw, 13Jan05 (MCHC).

Major Carter to Gunnery Sergeant William Johnston in Baghdad. Johnston spotted the indicators that tied the Cavalry Division's target set to the higher-level target set and helped develop the combined, joint operation.

The target was a former Iraqi general and special forces operative. "Documents taken during the capture of Saddam Hussein identified the high value target as a key leader in Saddam's post-OIF I 'shadow government.'" Twenty-four hours before execution, the intelligence apparatus came to believe that their source in the target's group had been murdered, and they requested that Task Unit Raider hand off another operation then in progress to the GROM and prepare to execute Resistor on short notice. A new trigger for the target's presence was established by the officers from Baghdad intelligence cells, and all three forces planned to hit their targets simultaneously.<sup>62</sup>

In a convoy of six vehicles, with another slightly depleted force—the al-Kut team was back in the mix, but the first wave of Marines had gone to support operations in an-Najaf—Task Unit Raider moved out to the objective at 0200 on 19 August. Dismounting at the set point, the Marines assaulted the position on foot. One woman and five youths were found on site; the target of the raid was nowhere to be seen. Exploitation of the site yielded the target's identification card but little else. The major positive result of the raid was the opportunity to synchronize operations with the upper-tier Iraqi unit and Task Force 626. Major Kozeniesky stated that he thought the execution of the raid was based on a premature trigger, but he looked forward to getting another shot at the man later. As on Objective Roulette before it, he concluded, "Egress back to Camp Myler was uneventful. Mission was a dry hole."<sup>63</sup>

## Chapter 7

### An-Najaf, “Z,” and Home

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#### *An-Najaf: “A Full-On Fight”*

While Captain Eric N. Thompson’s Det One sub-detachment was in al-Kut, another, much larger fight was breaking out in the city of an-Najaf, about 100 miles due south of Baghdad and home of the Imam Ali Mosque. This was holy ground for all Shi’a, and the stakes in this battle were even higher than at al-Kut. The malefactors were, again, the Shi’a militiamen following Muqtada al-Sadr. The al-Sadr militia had fought the Coalition here before; in April 2004, they had attacked Coalition forces but had been put down after hard fighting by U.S. Army units. The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) was now responsible for the city and was being pressed hard by the large numbers of militiamen.<sup>1</sup> Multinational Force Iraq, the military high headquarters for the country, sent units to I Marine Expeditionary Force to reinforce 11th MEU (SOC); the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula was ordered to provide a contingent under 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, and Task Unit Raider was instructed to provide sniper support.

Nine Marines under Master Sergeant Terry M. Wyrick—seven snipers (under Gunnery Sergeant John A. Dailey), one fires Marine (Gunnery Sergeant Ryan P. Keeler), and one Corpsman (Hospital Corpsman First Class Robert T. Bryan)—were selected to go to Najaf. Wyrick initially reported to a SEAL officer, who was in overall command of the task group’s personnel. Wyrick’s team got sniper weapons from the returning al-Kut detachment and did a quick zeroing before departure. On 17 August, the Najaf sub-detachment mounted up in two hunekers, fell into an Army Special Forces convoy, and drove to Najaf.<sup>2</sup>

The 11th MEU (SOC) had been reinforced with 2d Battalion, 7th U.S. Cavalry, and it was to that unit that the task group’s element was sent. Immediately upon arrival, the SEAL officer and Master Sergeant Wyrick reported to the battalion commander and received an update on the situation. The cavalrymen were inside the city, occupying positions south and east of the Imam Ali Mosque, which the enemy controlled and were using as a base, having assumed that the Americans would neither fire into it nor assault it. Once he was told that the special operations units were

there just to support him, the battalion commander welcomed them with open arms. The SEAL officer and Wyrick did a quick planning session with the Army staff and came up with a workable plan to support their operations. By 0600 the next day (18 August), the Marines had a clear mission, an area of operations, and a base from which to work. The 10 Marines were sent directly to the battalion’s Company C, named Task Force Cougar, positioned close to the Imam Ali Mosque—and in direct contact with the enemy.<sup>3</sup>

The trip into the city was an education in the conditions of Najaf. “It was the wild, wild west,” remembered Master Sergeant Wyrick. “Rocket propelled grenades and gunfire were constant, and this was just on the outskirts of town.” While Wyrick remained at the Task Force Cougar position to provide command and control, the rest of the force under Gunnery Sergeant Dailey pushed in toward the Imam Ali Mosque and occupied two observation posts (OP 1 and OP 2) near Task Force Cougar’s forward platoons. While the Marines in these positions received “accurate but ineffective small arms fire,” they did not engage any targets. They used the time to survey the area and gain a sense of the atmosphere, identifying key terrain and locating known and suspected enemy positions. They pulled out from these positions the next morning to prepare for the next phase of the operation.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the day of 19 August, Wyrick and Dailey worked with Task Force Cougar to devise a plan to support the unit’s push north toward the Imam Ali shrine. When night fell, the soldiers’ Bradley fighting vehicles took Dailey’s Marines to another location, where they established their third observation post (OP 3).

At first light the next day, 20 August, the al-Sadr militiamen began to emerge from their positions. The Marines were already at work: Gunnery Sergeant Dailey and Sergeant Michael C. Mulvihill were on the roof of the structure, while the rest of the team was constructing covered and concealed sniper hides on the floors below. Dailey and Mulvihill began firing but were soon forced off the roof by enemy fire. During the day, they scored four confirmed and six probable kills. Gunnery Sergeant Keeler worked aviation support from every service, using his position’s ex-



Photo courtesy of Capt Daniel B. Sheehan

*SSgt Chadwick D. Baker mans a suppressed SR-25 7.62mm sniper rifle during the battle of an-Najaf in August 2004. Spotting for him is HM1 Matthew S. Pranka, and behind Pranka is SSgt Jack A. Kelly. Watching from the door are Sgts Miguel A. Cervantes and David D. Marnell. Although not apparent from*

*this view, this sniper hide is covered and concealed, allowing the Marines to wear only soft body armor in the extreme heat. Det One snipers, firing from hides like this one and using the suppressed SR-25, slew dozens of Shi'a gunmen during the battle.*

cellent fields of observation to find targets in and around the Imam Ali Mosque complex. At one point he had a laser spot on an enemy position inside the exclusion zone around the shrine and Lockheed F-16 Fighting Falcons overhead, but he was not granted permission to engage.

By the end of the day, the Marines' operations had already had an impact on the enemy. Reports began to come in that the gunmen's greatest fear was the "American snipers." Master Sergeant Wyrick said that from the excellent source operations the Army special forces units was running inside the mosque complex, the word was that the snipers "were just knocking the shit out of them, and morale was going down the tubes. . . . The sources were telling the Special Forces that there were piles of bodies inside the ring because of sniper shots." The Marines' own tally of confirmed kills bore this out.<sup>5</sup> As a result, a cease-

fire was called, and the Marines withdrew from OP 3 back to the Task Force Cougar command post.

On 21 August, the snipers spent their time refitting and operating in the vicinity of the command post, waiting for further orders as the cease-fire played out. Apparently, not all the enemy was in compliance, as Marine snipers engaged several gunmen attempting to infiltrate the Army unit's position.

That night, more help arrived from Task Unit Raider: Gunnery Sergeant Fidencio Villalobos Jr. to handle the fires coordination, and Sergeant Jason V. Brackley, the detachment's radio technician, to help man the radios. Master Sergeant Wyrick had seen that he was not going to be able to sustain operations as a one-man show at the command post. He also knew that he needed subject-matter expertise in fires. No Marine was more suited to that particular task than Villalobos, who, in addition to the special fires train-

ing he had by virtue of his service in ANGLICO and Det One, was fully capable of conventional fire support coordination at and above the regimental level. He began working with the company staff, Gunnery Sergeant Keeler, and Master Sergeant Wyrick to develop target lists and a comprehensive plan to shape the battlespace and support the company’s scheme of maneuver.<sup>6</sup>

The shaky cease-fire soon collapsed, and during the afternoon of 22 August, the snipers left the command post and went forward again to occupy a new position, called OP 4. Gunnery Sergeant Keeler moved back to OP 1 and began sending target intelligence back to Villalobos, who submitted nine preplanned targets. That night, four of the nine targets were engaged by the AC-130 under Keeler’s direction; one resulted in a secondary explosion, indicating that a quantity of munitions had been stored there. While these shaping operations were underway, Master Sergeant Wyrick attended a conference at the Army battalion command post to plan for the next phase of the assault into the city.<sup>7</sup>

Sergeant David D. Marnell from the fires element also arrived to reinforce Gunnery Sergeant Keeler, who, like Master Sergeant Wyrick, had been a one-man show in an indispensable job. While Keeler and Marnell were prosecuting the target list, they also looked for targets of opportunity. One such target presented itself at about 0120 on 23 August when Keeler observed enemy forces moving to attack Task Force Cougar positions. He directed the AC-130, with its superb surveillance capabilities, to relay information on the enemy, which he then passed to the Cougar commander. Once he had all stations fully appraised of the situation and the soldiers had broken contact, Keeler asked permission to engage. When he received word that the AC-130 was clear to hit the gunmen, he passed the approval to the plane’s crew. His efforts were rewarded with a precisely delivered strike that killed five militiamen in the open and destroyed four buildings where the attacks had been massing. Four secondary explosions resulted.<sup>8</sup>

The work of Gunnery Sergeant Villalobos in the task force command post, particularly his skill at coordinating and deconflicting the fires, was as critical to success as Keeler and Marnell’s presence and abilities on the frontlines. It became apparent that Villalobos could be even more effective in the battalion command post, and so he moved there. At the cavalry battalion headquarters, he virtually took over the fire support coordination duties for the unit, which did not have an air officer or terminal attack controllers other than Keeler and Marnell.

Villalobos, who knew fire support coordination measures and procedures intimately, began systematically planning to support the battalion commander’s scheme of maneuver. When aircraft checked in on station, he wanted to be able to push them to Keeler and Marnell with preplanned and preapproved targets so no opportunities would be wasted while securing permission to engage. Sergeant Brackley made sure that Villalobos had uninterrupted communications, more than once exposing himself to enemy fire when setting up or adjusting antennas. When Master Sergeant Wyrick arrived at the battalion command post for meetings, he frequently found Villalobos both coordinating fire support and conducting ad-hoc classes, with the staff clustered around the radios listening to the AC-130 engage targets while “Big Daddy” provided the play-by-play commentary.<sup>9</sup>

Dailey’s snipers remained in OP 4 throughout most of 23 August, slipping out at 2130 when Task Force Cougar pushed north to get closer to the mosque complex. The enemy contested the move, and the soldiers took three casualties. Hospital Corpsman First Class Bryan assisted in their treatment and evacuation. As a result of the attack, Dailey’s team occupied a fifth position, OP 5, and spent the rest of the night observing enemy activity, passing reports back to Master Sergeant Wyrick, and engaging targets with the AC-130. The Marines located one mortar position, which the gunship destroyed, resulting in four more confirmed kills.<sup>10</sup>

During this period, Gunnery Sergeant Dailey’s snipers also located and eliminated an enemy sniper. Gunnery Sergeant Travis W. Clark was the first to spot an unseen hand slowly and carefully removing blocks from a wall to open up a firing port. Dailey directed Keeler to call an air strike on the position, but higher headquarters denied the request because of its proximity to the mosque. Instead, he called for Staff Sergeant D. T. Krueger to lay his .50-caliber Barrett rifle on the target, and then—operating under the unassailable logic that if one .50-caliber rifle was good, two would surely be better—he asked an Army sniper team to bring its Barrett over as well. When Dailey saw the hand remove the brick “one last time,” the snipers hit the site with both weapons, each gun-

<sup>6</sup> For both Wyrick and Villalobos, the realities of being one deep in their positions meant long days and nights and very little sleep. Even after Villalobos and Brackley arrived to assist, Wyrick still found himself worn out. He would try to arrive for meetings 20 minutes early so he could crawl under the conference table and get a brief nap, which might be the only sleep he would get that day. Villalobos said that the mission in Najaf was “one big long Ranger episode—no sleep.”

ner emptying several rounds into the wall. Where a loophole had been, there was now a hole “you could drive a truck through.” It was impossible to assess the results of their fire with certainty, but the Marines felt confident that they had eliminated their adversary.<sup>11</sup>

Gunnery Sergeant Keeler also described the incident and its aftermath. “This,” he explained, “did two things: A) anyone who was in that room was dead; and B) it pissed people off, because we took probably another 45 minutes of nothing but mortar rounds on top of the building. So we all dropped down to the center hall and weathered it out.” Before they reached the inner core of the building, they had some close calls. Gunnery Sergeant Clark had left his uniform blouse in a room that faced onto an open shaft. A mortar round landed right in the shaft seconds after he left the room. The blouse was shredded, and Clark would have been had he not left when he did.<sup>12</sup>

Although most of the militia tactics were assessed as “basic and crude,” there was evidence from incidents such as the sniper episode to indicate that at least some of al-Sadr’s men had advanced training and good equipment, displaying “an elevated level of weapons proficiency.” But most were just armed males of various ages, generally clad in black and wearing green headbands. They used women and children to screen their movements or to scout the Coalition positions when it suited them, and they even rigged rocket launchers on donkey carts. They preferred to operate during the daytime and seemed to yield the night to the soldiers and Marines.<sup>13</sup> Within the walls of the shrine complex, they carried weapons and munitions openly, at least until Det One snipers and forward air controllers worked their way into positions and began to put an end to the practice.<sup>13</sup>

The stars of the show, in terms of individual weapons, were the .50-caliber Barrett and the 7.62mm SR-25. The Barrett rifle had the range to hit any target the Marines could see and the strength to punch through masonry walls. The relatively close confines of Najaf meant that the Marines could not employ the rifle at its greatest ranges, so the bulk of the work on open targets was done with the SR-25. This rifle had everything that the Najaf Marines needed: semi-automatic action, range, accuracy, compatibility with a variety of optics, and most important

<sup>11</sup> Marines also noted the probable presence of non-Iraqis in the enemy forces, including one “fair complexion male with blond hair,” and others whose descriptions matched intelligence reports on Iranian agents and Hezbollah members. Najaf debrief, 27 Aug 2004.

of all, sound suppression. In a properly constructed urban sniper hide, a Marine with a suppressed SR-25 could engage multiple targets in quick succession without giving away the position. More than once, the Marines struck down gunmen and then watched as others frantically scanned the area for the origin of the fire.<sup>14</sup>

By 24 August, the initial sub-detachment had been in action in Najaf for a full week. Recognizing that fresh troops were needed if they were to maintain the high op-tempo, Master Sergeant Wyrick requested that Task Unit Raider dispatch a relief force. Accordingly, eight more snipers and two fires Marines were sent by air, arriving at OP 5 in the early afternoon. Captain Daniel B. Sheehan III came as forward air controller with Sergeant Miguel A. Cervantes to assist him. Master Sergeant Padilla was in charge of the snipers. Wyrick remained on station as the command and control element, and Gunnery Sergeant Villalobos continued to run the fire support coordination at the battalion command post.<sup>15</sup>

Gunnery Sergeant Dailey’s original squad remained in place to allow Padilla’s Marines to familiarize themselves with the situation. As 24 August proved to be one of the busiest days in Najaf, the new Marines got a taste of what the others had been living with for seven days. “Once we hit that building,” said Staff Sergeant Chadwick D. Baker of their arrival at OP 5, “there was a full-on fight going on. . . . You ran in and threw your stuff off and crawled around avoiding all the windows.” The relief force got to work. Baker was engaging targets within an hour noting that “once we got in, we set up our positions and started shooting people.” The rules of engagement were clear, as Master Sergeant Wyrick had briefed the new arrivals. The Marines had identified several locations they suspected of being arms caches, and they were clear to shoot any armed military-aged males going in or out of those places. They were in their element. Padilla remarked that direct-action raids were one thing, “but I don’t think there’s anything like sniping.”<sup>16</sup>

The Marines took fire throughout that day, from small arms, rocket propelled grenades, and enemy marksmen. Captain Sheehan and Sergeant Cervantes joined Sergeant Marnell and Gunnery Sergeant Keeler; together they brought fire on several targets, including one mission with the cavalry battalion’s 120mm mortars. They conducted missions with whatever aircraft checked on station from Army, Air Force, or Marine aviation. In one incident, Keeler was controlling a section of Army Apaches when one of the aircraft experienced a weapons malfunction that put



a burst of 30mm cannon fire onto the Marines’ position. Dust and concrete and metal fragments flew everywhere, and the Marines dove for cover. The pilots came up immediately on the radio to make sure there were no casualties. There were none, but the close call had knocked the wind out of a few of the Marines. The combined force of snipers and fires Marines that day scored another three confirmed and eight probable kills. Later that night, under the protective overwatch and firepower of Task Force Cougar’s armored vehicles, they moved forward to another location, but they withdrew to OP 5 when they found the new position unsuitable.<sup>17</sup>

The Task Unit Raider Marines remained heavily engaged on 25 August. Master Sergeant Dailey and his Marines completed the turnover to the relief force and prepared to withdraw to the battalion command post for the trip back to Camp Myler. Before they departed, they took care of one last task, as Dailey’s snipers had identified another enemy sniper nest.

This time it was Staff Sergeant Alex N. Conrad who spotted the signs of the enemy marksman. Something he saw looked out of place; as he looked closer, he recognized the loopholes. Then he observed a figure dressed in black with a green headband, and he saw that militiaman poke a gun barrel out of one hole and fire. Conrad withdrew farther into the building in case the enemy marksman had seen him. Setting up a new position slightly offset from where he had just been,

*Three Marines (left to right: Sgt David D. Marnell, Capt Daniel B. Sheehan, and Sgt Miguel A. Cervantes) are shown in a Najaf schoolhouse, known as OP 5. With GySgt Ryan P. Keeler, they brought heavy but precise fires down on the Shi’a militiamen in and around the Imam Ali Mosque.*

Photo courtesy of Capt Daniel B. Sheehan



he trained the .50-caliber rifle on the loophole and waited for movement. Master Sergeant Dailey took up the binoculars and spotted for him. After 40 minutes, their patience was rewarded. When Conrad saw the militiaman start to plug up the hole, he fired through it. Then he put three more rounds into the wall around it and several more rounds into another part of the structure in case the man had somehow escaped the four heavy rounds delivered in rapid succession. Confirmation of the kill proved impossible, but this enemy sniper was not heard from again.<sup>18</sup>

Master Sergeant Padilla’s Marines kept the pressure on the enemy. Aside from the few and the proud among the enemy who had some training, Padilla thought they were “just a bunch of idiots” who virtually lined up to be shot. “We would take one guy out, and the next minute another guy was in the same spot trying to figure out what was happening.” Even after the first wave departed, the Det One Marines still had sufficient manpower to keep a fresh sniper on a weapon at all times and man several positions 24 hours a day. Staring through optics, especially at night, is fatiguing, and the Marines needed to rotate regularly. The brutal heat also sapped strength and energy, and staying hydrated took constant effort. As Gunnery Sergeant Jack A. Kelly noted, “You sweated all day long, all night long. You slept and you sweated the whole time. You couldn’t drink enough water.” They got so filthy that Padilla could not remember having smelled that bad since Ranger school, years prior. Fortunately, they also had the soldiers of Task Force Cougar supporting them with logistics as well as security, so they did not have to be too concerned with their own maintenance and defense and could concentrate on the enemy. The ability to keep going and man their weapons was a critical element to their success. As Staff Sergeant Baker observed, “that’s what killed the bad guys: they never got a break.”<sup>19</sup>

The building where the Det One Marines had established their observation post 5 was a solidly built schoolhouse, which provided them plenty of room to operate and afforded protection against enemy fire, which was continuous and sometimes heavy. “It was a three-story building,” said Gunnery Sergeant Kelly, “which allowed us multiple decks to observe from and shoot from. It got us about as close as we could possibly get to the shrine at the time without exposing ourselves completely, and we were able to observe and report on a lot of different activities.” The snipers could use the lower decks while the fires Marines could get up high for better observation.

That the Marines were in the building was never a secret, and the enemy certainly wanted to eliminate them. But the Marines' urban sniper tactics kept the individual hides concealed and covered, and they were able to operate without interference. The snipers engaged targets and reported back constantly, sending information to Task Force Cougar and the battalion headquarters to flesh out the operational picture and feed the targeting cycle.<sup>20</sup>

Captain Sheehan, Sergeant Marnell, and Sergeant Cervantes continued to rain fire down on the enemy, manning Keeler's post at OP 5 that gave them excellent views of the battlespace. They settled into a battle rhythm based on the enemy's actions and the assets they had available. "The AC-130 would check on station at about 2220," Sheehan said. "We'd run the AC-130 all through the night on targets of opportunity as they would pop up. Then about three or four in the morning, the AC would check off station and we'd get our heads down for a little bit." He noted that "generally, the fighting was pretty quiet at night, at least in the dead hours, and then right around sunrise it would kick back off again. You'd hear the call to prayer—we were definitely within audio range of the mosque—so we got all the calls to prayer throughout the day. In that mosque they were using the loudspeakers to rally the troops, and as command and control for the fighters in there." Throughout the day, the Marines would control the sections of aircraft that were pushed to them by Gunnery Sergeant Villalobos, mostly Army Apaches and Marine Cobras. As night fell, the big Air Force gunship would reappear, and the cycle would begin again. During the night of 25 August, the Marines maintained observation of the area, engaged targets, and controlled preparatory fires for the long-planned ground assault on the Imam Ali shrine.<sup>21</sup>

The ground assault on the mosque never happened. Coalition operations in and around the city had had their intended effect on the noxious al-Sadr, and he was forced into negotiations with the interim Iraqi government by the reclusive but venerated chief Shi'a cleric in Iraq, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hussein al-Sistani. The Iraqi government announced at 0200 on 27 August that a truce had been reached and that hostilities would officially end at 1000.<sup>22</sup>

The stunned Det One Marines, only a few hundred meters from the shrine, reported large numbers of Shi'a gunmen "coming out of the woodwork," moving about openly with arms and ammunition, but the now-strict rules of engagement prevented the Marines from firing. For the aggressive Marines, holding their fire was the hardest part of the operation; in fact,



Photo courtesy of Capt Daniel B. Sheehan  
*Capt Daniel B. Sheehan at his post in OP-5 in Najaf, August 2004. From this position he and the other fires Marines had excellent field of fire and observation on areas the Shi'a gunmen had previously enjoyed freedom of movement. The map and aerial photo taped to the railing was used for target identification.*

they had just shot a man right before the cease-fire went into effect. They figured that the gunmen were just resting and refitting for the next action in Najaf or elsewhere. The discipline and maturity of the Marines ensured that the cease-fire would not be broken from within their ranks. If they were prohibited from firing, they could still observe, and they duly reported everything they saw in case the negotiations broke down and Coalition forces had to assault the militia's stronghold.<sup>23</sup>

Despite expectations to the contrary, the cease-fire did hold up, and the negotiations eventually resulted in al-Sadr and his forces withdrawing from the city. Although reports stated that the gunmen had sustained thousands of casualties in and around the city, the humiliating withdrawal was even more of a reverse for them than the battlefield defeat. More importantly, the authority of the interim Iraqi government had been enforced and upheld. Najaf was no Fallujah stalemate; the Coalition had won, and the insurgents had lost. On 27 August, Det One Marines pulled back to the cavalry battalion command post and waited for further instructions. The next day, they moved to another base in preparation for the trip home to Camp Myler, but they were told to hold there for 24 hours, just in case they were



Photo courtesy of Capt Daniel B. Sheehan

*Det One Marines prepare to depart Najaf after the conclusion of operations there; SSgt Chadwick D. Baker mans an 50-caliber M2 machine gun while Capt Daniel B. Sheehan mans an 7.62mm M240G machine*

*gun. This humvee is one of the purpose-built ground mobility vehicles transferred from the SEALs to the Marines when Task Unit Raider was reconstituted as a direct action force.*

needed again. Finally, on 30 August they were released from further service in Najaf and traveled back to Baghdad by humvee and helicopter.

The actions of the Det One Marines during the battle of Najaf have no parallel in any other battle of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In a situation that called for a special operations force to completely integrate with a conventional unit as a supporting effort, Task Unit Raider's Marines shone brilliantly. The central theme was mutual support: Task Force Cougar soldiers provided security and support for the Marines, who in turn supported them, and more importantly, shaped the battlespace for their scheme of maneuver. Task Force Cougar led the 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry, and that famous battalion led the fight inside the city. Together they were responsible for constraining the enemy's freedom of movement in the Imam Ali Mosque and contributing significantly to a major Coalition victory.

Det One Marines bridged the gap between “conventional” and “special” because they were regular Marines, grounded in conventional operations but organized and intensively trained for special operations.

It is important to note that except for Captain Sheehan, the teams were led by staff noncommissioned officers. The senior Marines did the liaison work with higher headquarters, led the snipers, and made all of the decisions on the ground. Major Craig S. Kozeniesky wrote that “one distinct advantage MCSOCOM Det One personnel have over all SOF counterparts is their ability to coordinate and anticipate conventional force requirements and support.” He stressed that more detachment capabilities could have been employed there if they had been requested.\* Master Sergeant Wyrick agreed, noting that he wished they had had some counterintelligence and radio reconnaissance Marines to throw into the fight, and pointing out that the whole detachment could have been gainfully employed in the battle. Nothing in Najaf proved

\* The after action report from the Naval Special Warfare element also alludes to Det One's capabilities in a conventional environment. The report, while not explicitly mentioning the Marines, stated, “The conventional forces are significantly more mindful of the military rank structure compared to SOF.” No similar reference can be found in Det One after action reports. NSW AAR, 1 Sept 2004.

beyond the capabilities of the Marines of Det One.

### *Targeting "Z"*

While a large number of Marines were involved in operations in Najaf, preparations back in Baghdad were well underway to execute the boldest and most daring operation Task Units Raider and Thunder had yet undertaken. Objective Rifle targeted "Z," a notorious insurgent commander, involved in scores of assassinations, bombings and indirect fire attacks. He was much like the insurgent "X," except that he was more violent, more cunning, and even harder to catch. As he did on the hunt for that first major target, Major M. Gerald Carter turned the entire resources of the intelligence element to catching "Z."<sup>24</sup>

Carter knew of "Z" as early as the first month of the deployment, when he was making contacts with every agency in Baghdad to get targeting intelligence. Over the course of the operation, the intelligence element kept alert for any sign on "Z," but nothing of significance turned up until early August, when solid information finally came to its attention.<sup>25</sup>

Captain Christopher B. Batts's counterintelligence Marines were given control of a source close to "Z." That source brought in new information that pointed to the man, and the hunt was back on. Through their own initiative, they developed another source they called "The Kid." Initially, only Captain Batts and Gunnery Sergeant William G. Parsons had met with the original source, but as the operation progressed, they brought in Staff Sergeant Scott J. Beretz. He began to feed "The Kid" information for their quarry, setting him up as an insurgent from another part of Iraq interested in buying weapons and bombs. "Z" took the bait.<sup>26</sup>

Due to the man's excellent operational security and tradecraft, he had never presented a clear enough picture to allow the task group to fix him and hit him. He moved constantly, had several houses, and never let anyone in on his plans. It became apparent that "Z" had not grown lax in his operational skills, and he did not present a target that was conducive to normal methods of operations. Through the work of the sources, however, it looked possible to lure him into a predetermined location in Baghdad where the assault force could descend upon him. But there was a catch: the location would be a crowded restaurant, at noon, deep inside the city, surrounded by traffic and crowds. There could be no fast convoy, no silent foot approach, and no AC-130 overhead. If shots were fired on this objective, it would not be a single burst but in all probability a major engagement with civilian casualties.<sup>27</sup>

The situation called for a far more ambitious plan

than any the Marines had attempted before, and they were ready for the challenge. By the end of August, with a score of direct action hits under their belts, a stalwart force of Polish operators alongside them, and a relentless intelligence machine to pave the way, Task Unit Raider was on top of its game, and Major Kozeniesky argued persuasively for the chance to do the hit. Commander William W. Wilson approved the general concept and instructed them to proceed.

For the assault on Objective Rifle, almost none of the usual advantages were present, so the Marines and the men of Task Unit Thunder had to devise other means of stacking the deck in their favor. They needed to have some reasonable expectation that "The Kid" could deliver and could effectively trigger the assault. They needed to have a base of operations closer to the target area, since Camp Myler was too far away to launch a daytime convoy through congested streets. They needed air cover to replace the AC-130, which only operated at night, but which would also not seem out of place overhead at that time of day. And they needed an assault plan that was synchronized tightly enough to get the job done in a compressed time window but still allowed for flexibility as the situation dictated.

Staff Sergeant Beretz arranged through sources for "Z" to meet their source at a restaurant in one of Baghdad's better districts. The young man would pose as an up-and-coming anti-Coalition figure interested in buying weapons from "Z." He was given a cell phone to send text messages to the task force and a series of code phrases to transmit.<sup>28</sup> The trap was almost set.

The planners chose an American base close to the restaurant where units Raider and Thunder could wait for the trigger. The composition of the convoy needed to be addressed. Driving out of the gates at high speed in assault vehicles would alert the ever-watchful insurgency, and the planners had enough respect for the target's abilities to know that he would have surveillance out. They decided to use indigenous vehicles such as vans and panel trucks borrowed from the Special Forces, as well as some assault vehicles, trading the protection of the military vehicles for the anonymity of the Iraqi trucks. Up front would be dark-skinned Marines in native garb. Overhead would be Army OH-58D Kiowa helicopters, which had excellent surveillance equipment, carried weapons, and were usual sights in the skies over Baghdad. Task Unit Raider would handle the assault; Thunder would provide containment and backup force. Every man in each force who could possibly be spared was put on the raid force; with a dozen men

still in Najaf, the support section Marines again stepped up to fill gunfighting roles.<sup>29</sup>

On 30 August, the pieces for the operation were complete and the assault forces staged, with Task Unit Raider mounted in four humvees and three indigenous vehicles. In the cab of the lead Iraqi truck wearing a robe, a dish-dash, was Staff Sergeant Glen S. Cederholm, who had grown as much of a beard as he could after the return from Najaf. (Ironically, he and others had long advocated that some Marines should maintain facial hair for just such a contingency. He had a fairly good beard after a week in Najaf but had shaved it off before his return to Camp Myler.) The meeting was set for any time between 1100 and 1600. At 1132, the OH-58Ds checked on station and began to watch the target area. A quick reaction force from 3d Battalion, 82d Field Artillery, quietly prepared to go. "The Kid" sent a message to say that he was en route to the meeting.<sup>30</sup>

Shortly afterward, the message came from the source that "Z" was on site. Task Units Raider and Thunder left the gates and moved toward the objective. The approach was far more difficult than any they had previously undertaken. Traffic was heavy, the vehicles experienced communications blackouts, and at one point, an Iraqi male was seen watching the convoy and talking on a cell phone. The Marines were certain he was tipping off someone.

In the lead vehicle, the bearded Staff Sergeant Cederholm in his dish-dash navigated the force on its route. His disguise worked, and he never got a second look from any bystander. At one point, his computerized navigation system seized up because of the excessive heat, and it was only his excellent memory of the route that kept the force on schedule while the system reset. All during the approach, Master Sergeant Keith E. Oakes kept thinking that they would get compromised, but he knew that with his Marines ready for action and Task Unit Thunder alongside, "it would have been a wicked fight," but a fight they definitely would have won.<sup>31</sup>

The units did manage to avoid detection, though, and they soon were on the target site. The indigenous vehicles pulled up to the site, and the assault teams dismounted and ran toward the site while other teams from Raider and Thunder took up blocking positions. Staff Sergeant Cederholm jumped out, ripped off his "man dress," and took up a position in the cordon. With complete surprise, Teams 2 and 5 burst into the building just seconds after they exited the vehicles, with Captain Eric N. Thompson and Staff Sergeant Beretz carrying photographs of the targets. "These guys were just sitting at a table, drinking tea,"

Thompson recalled. None of the targets put up a fight; they never had a chance. The Marines seized several men, flexicuffed and blindfolded them, and took them outside individually to load them into different vehicles. The source was able to covertly identify "Z." No shots were fired, and no one attempted to interfere. The entire force remounted and returned to Camp Myler.<sup>32</sup>

Major Kozeniesky trumpeted this operation, with good reason, as a hallmark for the detachment as a whole.<sup>3</sup> He praised all involved, especially Task Unit Thunder, which selflessly joined the high-risk mission as a supporting element. The capture of "Z" was a real triumph, as he was an important insurgent figure in central Iraq, not just Baghdad. The operation illustrated the depth of the unit's capabilities and its willingness to alter its tactics, techniques, and procedures and accept a higher level of risk to take down a higher-level target. The preparation for it highlighted the ability of the counterintelligence section to operate at the special operations level with or without a designation, and it was Det One's own human intelligence Marines who placed and ran the source that gave them the trigger. Staff Sergeant Alex N. Conrad called it "the most exhilarating hit of them all."<sup>33</sup>

After Objective Rifle, the Task Unit executed a raid on Objective Ruby on 15 September. The target was a significant figure—a former Iraqi general, a cousin of Saddam Hussein, and a numbered figure on the famous Coalition blacklist. He was wanted for suppressing the post-Gulf War Shi'a uprising and for running major insurgent operations. Several incidents occurred during the execution of Ruby. A vehicle trailing the convoy had to be stopped by warning shots. The breach proved difficult, as a heavy metal grate prevented easy placement of the charge, but the lead breacher, Hospital Corpsman First Class Michael Tyrell, fully recovered from his gunshot wound in Objective Ricochet, quickly worked the charge onto the door. During the search of the house, Gunnery Sergeant Andre K. Bosier of Team 2 discovered what appeared to be a circuit board taped to a frying pan, which he immediately recognized as a bomb. He called the explosive ordnance disposal teams, which immediately cleared the building. When the device began emitting sounds, they destroyed it.<sup>34</sup>

The main house was a "dry hole," and Major Koze-

<sup>3</sup> Ironically, this operation, as risky as it was, was something that all of the reconnaissance Marines had practiced during work-ups for MEU (SOC) deployments, but never thought they would have a chance to execute. Part of the standard MEU (SOC) training package was the execution of a direct action raid in indigenous vehicles. Capt Thompson called the raid on Objective Rifle "MSPF 101."

niesky directed that the assault teams breach an adjacent structure. Team 5 accessed the roof of the building, breached, and entered it. It too yielded nothing. Interrogation of detainees found there indicated that the target lived there once but had not been seen for some time. Meanwhile, outside the house a commotion arose. There was an explosion some distance to the east, the nature of which was never discovered. The containment teams fired warning shots at two vehicles approaching the site, and as the force was re-embarking, an unknown person fired a burst from some weapon. None of the rounds hit the Marines, and no fire was returned. The raid force returned, intact but empty-handed, to Camp Myler. Objective Ruby was the last direct action raid mounted by Task Unit Raider.<sup>35</sup>

### *Departing Iraq*

Immediately following the execution of Objective Ruby, Task Unit Raider stood down as a direct action force, and the Marines of Det One began to reassemble in Baghdad. Squadron One was turning over with its relief, and those Marines who were either in direct or general support to the task group briefed their replacements. Task Unit Raider had no replacement, there being no “Det Two” following in trace, and the main task they had was to return the assault vehicles they had received in June. The Marines concerned themselves with packing up for the trip home, documenting the lessons learned from this landmark deployment, and planning for an uncertain future.

*Capt Stephen V. Fiscus talks with one of the members of the Polish special operations unit, the GROM, which formed Task Unit Thunder in the Naval Special Warfare Task Group. Every member of the task group, and especially the Marines, had the highest respect and admiration for the Poles.*

Photo courtesy of Capt Stephen V. Fiscus



Much nonessential gear had been shipped home over the course of the summer, and the only substantial additions to the movement plan were an abandoned humvee that Gunnery Sergeants Jaime Maldonado and Jaime J. Sierra had recovered, rebuilt, and added to the detachment’s table of equipment, and a small dog that Gunnery Sergeant Villalobos had adopted. The advance party flew home in mid-September. The first planeload of the main body departed on 27 September, and the last on 1 October. All Marines, save one, were back at Camp Pendleton, California, by 2 October.<sup>36</sup>

The one remaining Marine, Captain Stephen V. Fiscus, stayed behind in Baghdad to finish a job in progress. He had been asked to remain at his post with Task Unit Thunder in order to take part in a final operation west of Baghdad.<sup>37</sup> The target for this operation was a cell of major insurgent figures. Originally, the operation belonged to an Iraqi unit, but subsequent planning revealed that the target set was too large for this one unit to hit, and through the task group’s liaison in the Green Zone, Task Unit Thunder was asked to join the effort. Captain Fiscus, in his role as liaison officer and planner for Thunder, saw that the operation would also require coordination with an Army brigade, in whose area it would occur. Fiscus arranged to meet with the brigade commander and his staff and was pleased to find that they were fully on board and offered full support. Fiscus noted that the brigade commander “was a former Special Forces guy, and he understood the deal completely.” In fact, Fiscus remembered that when the general saw the target packages, “he stopped what he was doing, looked at me, and said, ‘I’ve been looking for these guys for a while. You’re damn right I’ll support you!’” The Iraqi unit was the main effort; Task Unit Thunder and the Army brigade were supporting efforts. All parties agreed on a concept of operations and a timeline, and Fiscus went back to task group headquarters to prepare for execution.<sup>38</sup>

When the operation kicked off, the various elements of the force converged on their targets. The brigade commander had turned out his entire unit for a supporting sweep of the area, recognizing the opportunity that the operation presented. Communications problems began to crop up, due probably to the extensive electronic jamming employed to thwart command-detonated bombs (a problem Task Unit Raider had also experienced), and Thunder was blacked out for approximately 15 minutes, during which time they did not hear calls from the Iraqi unit that they were delayed. Adding to the confusion, at one point the AC-130 mistook Thunder for the Iraqi

unit and began passing incorrect information.

Task Unit Thunder proceeded straight to its target location, stopped, and waited. After eight minutes—a near-eternity on an operation like this—the Poles still could get no communications. They assaulted the target as briefed and captured the individuals they were seeking. On the egress off the target, they picked up Commander Wilson from his post, where he had tracked the operation with the Army commander. Both of them were ecstatic at the overall results of the operation.<sup>39</sup>

Following that operation, Captain Fiscus detached

from the GROM amid much heartfelt praise from those warriors with whom he had lived and operated for months, and for whom all of the Marines had developed strong respect and admiration. The Polish operators made Fiscus an honorary member of the GROM, and he carried back to California several tokens of their esteem for him, and for all the Marines of Det One.<sup>40</sup>

Major M. Wade Priddy, the fires element leader and operations officer, summarized the deployment best with one understatement: “We acquitted ourselves pretty well.”<sup>41</sup>





## Chapter 8

# A Proven Concept

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### *Making the Case for the Future*

The majority of the Marine Corps U.S. Special Operations Command Detachment returned to the United States by 2 October 2004.<sup>1</sup> The Det One Marines wore their newly won laurels with pride, but they faced an uncertain future. Even while still deployed to Iraq, Colonel Robert J. Coates and the staff had been holding internal discussions on future courses of action, building their lessons learned, and planning to incorporate them into what they expected would be a new training cycle. They now had to submit those courses and recommendations to Headquarters Marine Corps and lay out their case. The formation and training phases had been challenging and difficult, the deployment even more so. But the post-deployment phase would prove to be the greatest challenge of them all.

Administrative and logistics matters occupied the detachment's time after its arrival at Camp Pendleton. The mountains of gear needed to be inventoried, checked, cleaned, serviced, stored, turned in, or sent up for maintenance or disposal. New equipment was coming in and had to be absorbed. Classified data and phone lines were being installed. A new training schedule had to be drawn up and implemented. In the absence of a clear decision from Headquarters Marine Corps on the future of the detachment, Colonel Coates chose to begin anew with the fundamental skills and improve the unit's capabilities by absorbing the lessons of the deployment. He also began an aggressive campaign of leveraging the solid relationships that the Det One Marines had built with units in Iraq, such as the Army's 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, to continue to improve their ability to operate with Special Forces units.

In October, Colonel Coates, Lieutenant Colonel Craig S. Kozeniesky, Major M. Wade Priddy, and Major M. Gerald Carter attended a "Way Ahead" conference at Joint Special Operations University, Hurlburt Field, Florida. The purpose of the conference was to develop courses of action for the upcoming USMC-SOCom Warfighter Conference scheduled for December. On 17 November, Colonel Coates and his primary staff, along with Commander William W. Wilson and his staff, presented their after action reviews to the commander of Naval Special Warfare Com-

mand, Rear Admiral Joseph Maguire, USN, at the SEALs' headquarters at Coronado, California. Lieutenant Colonel Kozeniesky, Major Priddy and Captain Stephen V. Fiscus began with a brief on the deployment and the lessons learned from it. The responses from the Navy side varied. Rear Admiral Maguire was openly "laudatory;" others chose to question the value of the Marine air-ground task force model and "expressed their opinions that the intelligence and fires sections were the only parts of the Detachment that should continue into the next phase."

Colonel Coates answered the points by stressing the value of the detachment's task organization. He emphasized that Det One brought capabilities that SOCom did not otherwise possess in a standing, stand-alone unit: the detachment could perform all six warfighting functions (command and control, fires, maneuver, logistics, intelligence, and force protection); had the depth to field effective liaison officers to varied commands and agencies; and could operate either as a supporting effort or a main effort with equal facility. Coates closed by alluding to higher-level discussions taking place on the same subject and declined to speculate on the future. The Commandant of the Marine Corps and the commander of SOCom are "locked in a room," he said, referring to the service-level discussions then underway. "We'll wait for the puff of white smoke or black smoke."<sup>2</sup>

Colonel Coates and Lieutenant Colonel Kozeniesky next presented the detachment's after-action brief to General Michael W. Hagee and General Bryan D. Brown during the USMC-SOCom Warfighter Conference in December. What emerged from the meeting was that the Marine and SOCom leadership did not see a future for the detachment beyond the terms of the current memorandum of agreement.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as Colonel Coates remembered it, General Brown stated definitively at the end of the brief that he did not see a requirement for Det One or any

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<sup>1</sup>RAdm Joseph Maguire, USN, was the head of Special Operations Command's Directorate of Force Structure, Resources, and Strategic Assessments when Col Paul Hand served there and was strongly in favor of greater Marine participation in special operations.



Photo courtesy of USMC

*Col Robert J. Coates and MGySgt Thomas P. Muratori furl and case Det One's colors at the detachment's de-*

*activation ceremony, 10 March 2006, Camp Pendleton, California.*

other Marine force contribution to SOCom.<sup>4</sup> The two generals owed a final recommendation to Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld in January 2005, and his decision would follow.

Back at Camp Pendleton, training resumed for Det One. In December, the Marines of the reconnaissance element validated a four-day selection test designed for the anticipated accession of new members. The by-name selection of the original detachment could not be repeated, and a tough but fair process was required to screen and evaluate applicants. Instead of an epic ordeal designed to cull a handful from a field of hundreds, they opted for a series of straightforward tests aimed at an already qualified and screened pool of senior Marines and Navy Corpsmen. Day one consisted of a standard Marine Corps physical fitness test, followed by a swim test, and then an eight-part test that measured more of an applicant's strength and agility as well as shooting skills. Day two included a five-mile run and then a 12-mile road march. It ended with a double obstacle course run and a pistol qualification course. Day three saw a day and night land navigation test that consumed more than half the day and rolled into the fourth and final day, with more land navigation. The whole event finished with a run with full pack.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most significant training events oc-

curred early in 2005. Beginning on 18 January, Det One reconnaissance and counterintelligence Marines participated in a month-long exercise with Company B, 2d Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, with whom they had worked so closely and successfully in Iraq. Some Marines were embedded in the operational detachments, giving them the opportunity to observe and absorb the soldiers' techniques and procedures for human intelligence collection. Others were embedded at the company headquarters and assisted in the coordination of the unit's overall intelligence collection plan. Reconnaissance Marines shared their expertise in close-quarters battle with the soldiers of the operational detachments.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Secretary of Defense Responds*

On 20 February 2005, Det One was scheduled to reach the end of its two-year existence as a proof-of-concept unit. At the USMC-SOCom Warfighter conference in December 2004, the detachment's leadership had been left with the impression that their unit's days were numbered. All hands anticipated a definitive answer on or about 20 February and prepared themselves for the order to deactivate. As January turned into February, the detachment's Marines waited to hear their fate, but the 20th passed without a decision. When no word came down, all began to have hopes that their

unit would live to fight another day.

Behind the delayed announcement were Pentagon policy discussions. General Hagee and General Brown did not see a clear requirement for Det One to continue. General Hagee favored the enhancement of the traditional role of the Marine Corps with respect to special operations: interoperability with the theater special operations commands, cooperation on research, development and acquisitions, as well as the addition of Marines to perform such duties as foreign military training in order to free SOCom assets to pursue more specialized tasks. He considered that the Det One experiment had proven the point, but the long-term value of the experiment lay in the ties that the unit had made with Special Operations Command operating forces, the lessons learned in equipment and tactics, and the enhanced interoperability that would result from all of the above. He and General Brown recommended to the secretary of defense that the Marine force contribution to Special Operations Command not be continued, but that the Marine Corps could and should provide certain other capabilities to the special operations community.

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's reply to them, dated 4 February 2005, began, "Subject: Marines Special Operations Command." In it, he told them to reassess the problem and "think through the idea of a MarSOC," giving them 30 days to report back on "what it might look like, how many Marines might be involved, where it might be located, and so forth."<sup>7</sup> Staff officers at Headquarters Marine Corps and Special Operations Command accordingly began to examine the problem and work up courses of action to be submitted to the secretary. The progressive versions of the briefs they prepared show a large and ambitious force contribution, numbering more than 2,000 Marines.<sup>\*</sup>

The detailed story of the rise of Marine Special Operations Command (MarSOC) is beyond the scope of this monograph. It is, however, necessary to mention certain facets of the discussion on the future of the Marine Corps and Special Operations Command following the experience of Det One. Two studies were written on the performance of the detachment and its future utility to Special Operations Command and the Marine Corps. One was written for SOCom by a team from Joint Special Operations University, the members of which traveled to Iraq and interviewed

Marines and SEALs on a variety of topics, including the effectiveness of the command relationships and the value of their training. The study, titled *MCSO-COM Proof of Concept Deployment Evaluation Report*, undertook a realistic assessment of the detachment's performance and its value to Special Operations Command.

While citing several questions concerning the basic requirement for such a unit, the nature of its command relationships, and the frictions associated with integration—notably what the authors saw as the large amount of time Commander Wilson needed to devote to handling Det One issues<sup>8</sup>—it concluded, "Research and analysis strongly indicate that the initial force contribution was an overall success and should be continued. The Marine Corps successfully demonstrated the ability to interoperate with SOF during combat operations."<sup>9</sup> Significantly, the study recommended that the Marine Corps maintain the Det One model, increase its size to 130 members to address shortfalls identified during the deployment, and increase the number of detachments in order to provide "continuous availability."<sup>10</sup> The study also cited comments by U.S. Army Colonel Michael S. Repass, commander of Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula, that Det One should have been an "independent unit."

At the same time, researchers from the Center for Naval Analyses in Alexandria, Virginia, compiled a study for the Marine Corps on the costs and benefits of the detachment. Titled *MCSOCOM Det: Analysis of Service Costs and Considerations*, it sought to answer the following questions: was the value of the detachment worth its price, and what courses of action should be pursued with respect to the Marine Corps and special operations? This study presented mixed views. While recognizing that the detachment brought significant capabilities to the task group in Iraq, it also questioned the validity of the deployment as a comprehensive test of the unit since it performed only one of the four missions given to it.<sup>\*</sup> The study cited the high price in resources and personnel involved in the detachment's creation and projected expansion and concerns about the Marine Corps' insistence on maintaining its hallmark air-ground task force model. The study observed that "the Marine Corps can make a valuable contribution in the SOF

<sup>\*</sup> Although the idea of a Marine Special Operations Command was moving above and beyond Det One, one of the early draft MarSOC briefs did use the Det One logo as the prospective MarSOC logo on the cover slide. MarSOC document binder, Marine Corps Historical Center, Quantico, VA.

<sup>\*</sup> That "one mission" was direct action, according to the Center for Naval Analyses study. Det One members, however, were adamant that their liaison work with the GROM as well as the missions to al-Kut and an-Najaf constituted Coalition support. The Joint Special Operations University study credited them with performing special reconnaissance as well.

realm, both at the unit level and by individual Marines supporting SOF units,” but it noted that the other lesson from the proof of concept was that “the Marine Corps cannot expect to operate completely on its own terms when supporting SOCom forces.”<sup>11</sup> It discussed several courses of action, echoing the Joint Special Operations University study’s recommendation of maintaining and expanding the Det One model, as well as others, such as providing a component-like command to SOCom without a large contribution and a formal structure, or simply leveraging existing Marine Corps units and capabilities to support SOCom missions.<sup>7</sup>

While the Center for Naval Analyses study’s final version was published on 18 February 2005 and made available to Det One, the Joint Special Operations University study was not released; it was finished in December 2004 but held at Special Operations Command. Det One knew of its existence, having worked with its authors during and after the deployment, but the Marines could not obtain a copy of the report during the first half of 2005 when Colonel Coates and the staff were trying to make the case for their unit’s continued existence. They finally received a copy on 12 December 2005.<sup>12</sup>

Colonel Coates and his staff saw the formation of Marine Special Operations Command itself as a significant and necessary step forward for the Marine Corps, but they saw in the organizational details some points with which they did not agree. In their opinion, the proposed MarSOC structure was not the task-organized model that they had formed and validated. As they saw it, they had the experience to recommend the right courses of action, having demonstrated that their unit produced a solution that minimized impact on the Marine Corps while providing a uniquely Marine capability to address Special Operations Command shortfalls.

Their proposed alternative course was a component commanded by a major general, with two or-

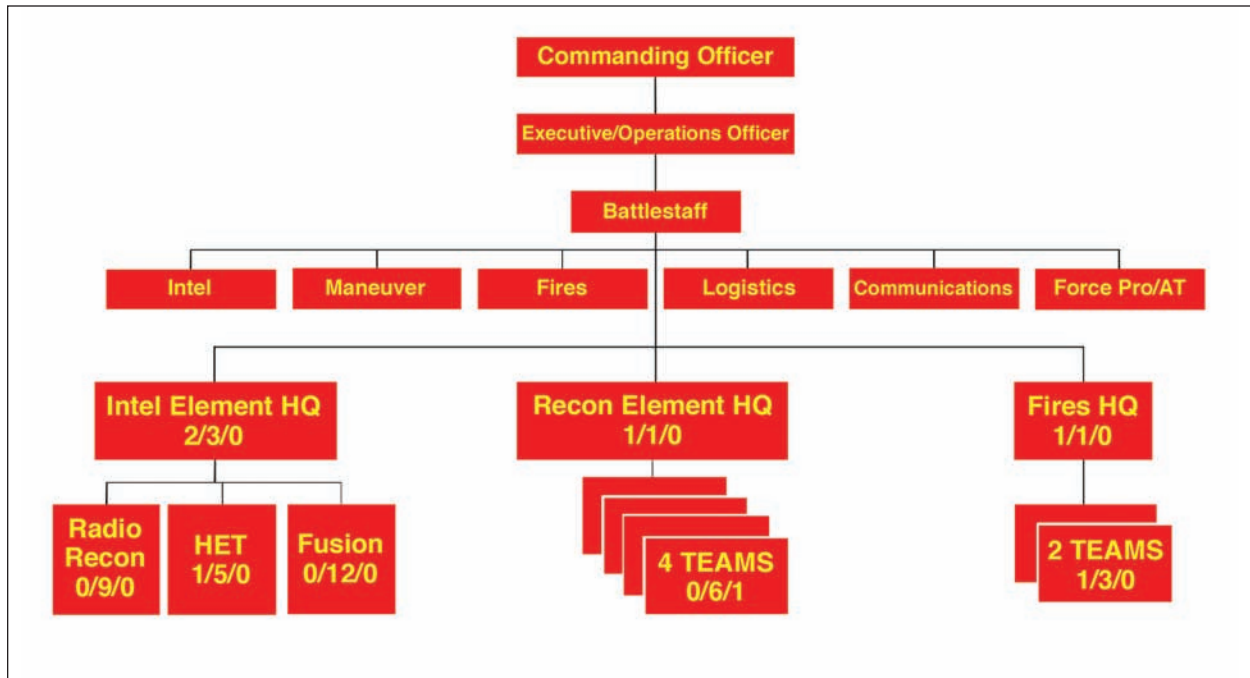
ganizations under it: a Marine Special Operations Group, and a Foreign Military Training Unit. As the Det One officers outlined it, under the Marine Special Operations Group initially would be two standing detachments, called Marine Special Operations Units, task organized to perform all warfighting functions and having the missions of special reconnaissance, direct action, coalition support, advanced special operations, and combating terrorism. Det One, with personnel augments, would form the basis for the first of the two units and would deploy again in January 2006. The Marine Special Operations Group would also be a deployable warfighting headquarters, and could form the core of a joint special operations task force. In this plan, the component would be ready for initial action in the second quarter of fiscal year 2006, a matter of months from the time they proposed it. An aviation detachment would come on line starting in fiscal year 2008, followed by third and fourth special operations units in 2009 and 2010, respectively. This plan, as the Det One staff designed it, carried with it the philosophy and integrity that the unit’s founders had built into it, namely a uniquely Marine contribution to an identifiable need, which also leveraged existing Marine Corps structure and returned value to the operating forces.<sup>13</sup>

As 2005 progressed, however, Colonel Coates and his Marines had less and less effective voices in the new command’s structure. The Det One plan did not find favor with the Marines working on the Marine Special Operations Command structure, and the detachment’s command chronology asserted that the proposal being worked by the action officers at Headquarters Marine Corps “was constructed with virtually no input from the detachment.” It would not be incorrect to say that from the Det One perspective, the debate inside the Marine Corps on the size and shape of MarSOC was acrimonious.

### *The Detachment Presses On*

For most 2005, the status of Det One took on a peculiar aspect, separate from but related to the frictions at the service level. Although it was no secret that the unit’s days were numbered, there was a lingering question on the extent to which it would provide, in part or in whole, the foundation for the new Marine component command.<sup>14</sup> Det One was not slated for further deployments. It could not take on more recruits. Its men were, for the most part, held on station. The only Marines allowed to transfer were those retiring, those who were slated for command, and a selected few others who were assigned to high-demand billets. Lieutenant Colonel Kozeniesky, pro-

<sup>7</sup> The Center for Naval Analyses study explicitly used the Det One model as the basis for examining options for a continued and expanded force contribution to Special Operations Command, from one detachment augmented to a strength of 130 (just as the Joint Special Operations University study did) and with the current command relationships, to four detachments, eight detachments, and finally a 2,500-Marine component command with eight “independently deployable detachments with an aviation combat element.”  
<sup>11</sup> In an email to the author on 12 December 2005, Maj Priddy wrote, “Amazing that it takes the subject of the study a year to get a copy of it. Haven’t had a chance to digest the whole thing, but overall seems to be a very favorable review, which probably explains why it’s taken a year to get a copy. Interesting conclusions and recommendations, but since they were completely ignored they’re probably also irrelevant at this point.”



*This diagram shows the original structure and manning levels for Det One. The unit was allotted 86 personnel, but due to shortfalls discovered during the*

*formation and training phase, it was augmented to approximately 100; the reconnaissance element was also reorganized from four teams to six.*

moted after return from Iraq, left to assume command of an infantry battalion. His place was taken by Lieutenant Colonel Francis L. Donovan, another veteran of 1st Force Reconnaissance Company under Colonel Coates. Donovan had played multiple roles in the formation of the detachment. While on recruiting duty, he helped reenlist some of the reconnaissance Marines who were out of the Corps, then as a staff officer in Special Operations Training Group, he had helped evaluate part of the Capstone Exercise in Nevada. Additionally, he had done some time with Special Operations Command and knew the SOCom realm well.<sup>15</sup>

This state of suspended animation put the detachment in a difficult position. It could train with what it had, but to what end? Colonel Coates chose to press on, regardless of the policy-level discussions, over which he had little influence and no control. He wanted to keep his Marines sharp, and even if the unit was to be disbanded, his intent was to hand over Marines who were fully trained and had skills no others had. If they happened to be called upon to deploy again, he was determined to be ready when the call came.

During 2005, training continued at a brisk pace.<sup>16</sup> Det One Marines attended several schools, including breaching, parachute, communications, and medical courses. The fires element Marines maintained their

joint terminal attack controller qualifications with live close air support training. The reconnaissance element and radio reconnaissance section worked on ever-greater integration, embodying the lessons they had learned in Iraq. In July, the reconnaissance Marines went to the wilds of southwestern Utah for a four-week sniper package. In September, the unit shifted to element training and returned to Bridgeport, California, for mountain operations, followed in October by more close-quarters battle training at Camp Pendleton and a week-long raid force exercise at a former U.S. Air Force base in southern California.<sup>17</sup>

By the fall of 2005, the detachment had again achieved a high state of readiness despite personnel shortfalls and an uncertain future. One proposal they brought up was deployment with I Marine Expeditionary Force as a “counter-intimidation task force,” reprising their role in Baghdad by providing a stand-alone unit solely dedicated to striking at the insurgent cells that were interfering with the nascent Iraqi security forces. The commander of Marine Forces Pacific, Lieutenant General Wallace C. Gregson, pressed for that and other options for the continued employment of the detachment and was one of its most vocal advocates among Marine general officers.<sup>18</sup> On 30 November, however, Colonel Coates was informed that the detachment would be deactivated.

Although he was not given a final date, Coates informed the staff, and they began to prepare a program of actions and milestones.

### *Deactivation*

On 7 February 2006, nearly one year to the day after Secretary Rumsfeld's memorandum, Det One got the official word on its fate. Captain Daniel B. Sheehan III forwarded a message to the author with the comment, "There you have it. The fat lady sang." Attached to his e-mail was the full text of Marine Corps Bulletin 5400, dated 6 February 2006. It directed the deactivation of MCSOCom Detachment no later than 1 April 2006 and laid out the subordinate tasks in detail. The manpower structure that was shuffled to create the billets for the detachment would be reshuffled to return each of the slots to the 42 commands from which they had come. The equipment would be transferred, after inventory and limited technical inspection, to Marine Corps Logistics Command. From there, service-common equipment would enter the pool for reissue to other units in the operating forces; the special operations-specific gear would remain in the hands of Logistics Command for use by Marine Special Operations Command.\* Personnel orders would follow; most Marines would be sent to units in the operating forces, and many of them would deploy to Iraq. Approximately two dozen Det One Marines received orders to Marine Special Operations Command units on the East and West coasts.<sup>19</sup>

On 10 March 2006, in between rain showers on a brisk afternoon, Det One held its deactivation ceremony. On the same spot where the detachment was activated nearly three years before, a much-reduced unit stood in a final formation. Among the guests present were the Commanding General, Marine Forces Pacific, Lieutenant General John F. Goodman, the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, Major General Richard F. Natonski, and Mr. Charles Meacham from the Marine Raider Association. Family, friends, and retired members of the detachment looked on from the stands. As the band played, Colonel Coates and Master Gunnery Sergeant Thomas P. Muratori cased the unit's colors. Then, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Donovan called out the command, "Dismissed," and the Marine Corps U.S. Special Operations Command Detachment ceased to exist.

\* Col Coates and LtCol Kozeniesky's .45-caliber pistols, serial numbers DET 1-001 and DET 1-002, went to the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA, along with an M4 carbine and its accessories.

### *The Legacy of Det One*

After Det One passed into history, Colonel Coates was assigned to the staff of I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) as the officer responsible for overseeing the training, equipping, and directing of the Iraqi security forces. Lieutenant Colonel Kozeniesky took command of 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and deployed with the 31st MEU (SOC) from Okinawa. Lieutenant Colonel Donovan took command of 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, within weeks of the deactivation of Det One.

Major Carter elected to do another joint intelligence tour. Major Priddy was assigned to a border training team in Iraq and left for a one-year tour at a fort on the Jordanian border. Major Thomas P. Dolan returned to a light attack helicopter squadron and deployed to Iraq, while Captain Daniel B. Sheehan III was assigned as an instructor in the helicopter training squadron at Camp Pendleton. Captain Christopher B. Batts, who had left active duty soon after the detachment's return from Iraq, went to work at an organization in Special Operations Command. Captain Mathew H. Kress returned to the Marine Corps Reserve, while Captain Olufemi A. Harrison stayed until the end and oversaw the transfer of the unit's facilities and equipment. Both Captain Eric N. Thompson and Captain Stephen V. Fiscus took command of infantry companies, and Captain Thompson deployed to Afghanistan in 2005.

Several Det One Marines retired, including Master Sergeants James R. Rutan, Joseph L. Morrison, and Terry M. Wyrick and Gunnery Sergeants Monty K. Genegabus and James E. Wagner. Staff Sergeant Victor M. Guerra left active duty and took a civilian information technology position with a Special Operations Command organization.

The Marines who stayed on active duty secured various assignments, some in the nascent Marine Special Operations Command units, others in conventional units. Master Sergeant Fidencio Villalobos Jr. was assigned to the fires section of I Marine Expeditionary Force and deployed immediately after the deactivation for a one-year tour in Iraq. Master Sergeant Charles H. Padilla remained on the West Coast as a special operations training group instructor; Master Sergeant John A. Dailey took a similar billet on the East Coast. Gunnery Sergeant Jack A. Kelly was assigned to Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific as an instructor. Master Gunnery Sergeant Thomas P. Muratori became the operations chief at 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, the West Coast operating unit of Marine Special Operations Command. Master Sergeant Mark S. Kitashima re-

ceived orders to Okinawa. Gunnery Sergeants Jaime J. Sierra and Jaime Maldonado both transferred to 1st Force Reconnaissance Company, which was destined to be part of Marine Special Operations Command. (The humvee they recovered and rebuilt is now in the outdoor museum at Camp Pendleton.) Gunnery Sergeant Chadwick D. Baker reported to the Ranger Training Brigade at Fort Benning, Georgia, to be an instructor.

Master Sergeant Bret A. Hayes became the intelligence operations chief at Marine Special Operations Command headquarters, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Gunnery Sergeant Kenneth C. Pinckard was assigned to the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity at Quantico, Virginia, where he was of great help to the author in the preparation of this monograph. Master Sergeant Hays B. Harrington was sent to 1st Radio Battalion and deployed to Iraq. Gunnery Sergeant James A. Crawford became the signals intelligence chief at Marine Special Operations Command, while Staff Sergeant William B. Parker went to the Defense

Language Institute to learn Farsi. The counterintelligence Marines remained in their community as well, in various capacities and different locations.

The founders of Det One had sought to ensure that the special operations experiences of the Marines in the unit would be fed back into the Corps at different levels by returning them to the operating forces. Ironically, the members of Det One, which were conceived as the modern descendants of the Marine Raiders of World War II, shared the fate of those Marines: their unit was disbanded, but they seeded other units with their experience and training. Although perhaps in a manner not originally intended, that is what Det One's Marines are doing: as commanding officers, instructors, staff officers, and team leaders, they are continuing the work they began in June 2003. This project is a testament to what they did, and what the Marine Corps can and will do when called upon to excel. They were, in the words of Major Priddy, "one of the most talented groups of Marines ever assembled."<sup>20</sup>





## Epilogue

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### *Where No Group of Marines Had Gone Before*

By the findings of various reports and assessments, the Marine Corps U.S. Special Operations Command Detachment proved the concept it was designed to test, despite, as both the Joint Special Operations University and Center for Naval Analyses studies pointed out, the lack of a clearly stated requirement. Det One conducted two of the four missions it was assigned: direct action and Coalition support, and, by one account, a third mission as well, special reconnaissance. The true value of its performance lies not in the statistics—this many raids conducted, that many sub-detachments deployed, or this many task group staff positions filled—but in the task-organized capabilities it brought to bear over the course of the deployment. It demonstrated the applicability of the Marine Corps warfighting approach to the special operations realm, and it proved that the Marines could field a special operations unit that had value to Special Operations Command but still remained uniquely Marine.

The combat actions of the deployment clearly validated the pre-deployment training plan. This is a significant point, as it demonstrated that Marines could develop and execute a plan to train themselves to special operations standards. In a similar manner, the deployment validated the selection of the Marines, although not necessarily the selection process itself, which was a singular event. Det One secured the right mix of individual Marines, some with special operations backgrounds, most without those experiences, but all with a solid Marine Corps background.

No less significant for the Marine Corps, then, is that Det One also validated the special operations-capable program. The discussions and debates of the 1984 Fleet Marine Force Atlantic working group ordered by General Paul X. Kelley had produced two results. One was a rigorous examination of what the Marine Corps could, should, could not, and should not do in the area of special operations. The second was the subsequent transformation of a standing organization—the Marine amphibious unit—into something that was neither a solely conventional force nor

an explicitly special force. With the success and value of the forward-deployed Marine expeditionary units taken as such an article of faith by Marines today, it is difficult to appreciate objectively how singular the emergence of that capability was within the Department of Defense, and the potential it revealed. Det One was a product of the maturation of the overall development of the training, equipment acquisition, operational philosophy, and practical experience that was the special operations capable program, and especially the maritime special purpose forces.\* If a Marine expeditionary unit is a conventionally organized force with certain special operations capabilities, Det One was a logical progression from it: a standing special operations task force that was fully grounded in conventional operations.

Since there was no “Det Two” and no follow-on deployment for Det One, questions will linger on what the outcome might have been had the circumstances of the deployment been different. What if, for example, Det One had been deployed as a whole, and its task-organized capabilities preserved to the greatest extent possible? What then would have been the result of its operations in Iraq? Unfortunately, what-if ruminations, even if cast into known parameters, do little for concrete evaluation. The fact is that the 20 February 2003 memorandum of agreement empowered the commander of Squadron One to task-organize his forces, and much of the detachment’s capabilities were accordingly placed in general support of the task group rather than in direct support of Task Unit Raider. In light of this fact, it is more useful to evaluate what effect those capabilities brought to the task group as a whole, and on the campaign in Iraq.

Clearly, the intelligence element dominated its field, having no peer in any other organization in Iraq, excepting only perhaps the high-tier Special Operations Command units, which are in a class by themselves.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Colonel Robert J. Coates regarded his intelligence capability as comparable to that of the highest tier SOCom units.<sup>2</sup> The radio re-

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\* It should be noted that Det One’s training in close-quarter battle tactics illustrated that one segment of the Marine Corps effort had not kept pace with the times.

connaissance and counterintelligence Marines proved themselves able to work in the SOCom realm, if anything lacking only a label. The Joint Special Operations University study mapped both of those specialties to special operations designations but did not note the key point: radio reconnaissance and counterintelligence are standard Marine capabilities, not “special” capabilities.<sup>3</sup> The individual intelligence Marines serving with the outlying task units certainly distinguished themselves and contributed skills and abilities that would not have been present without them. Likewise, the Marines of the fires element occupied a niche all their own in a SOCom unit, proving that basic combined arms thinking is as applicable in special operations as in conventional fighting.

What effect did Det One have on Operation Iraqi Freedom? Here again, the statistics, although impressive, do not tell the full story. The Marine participation in the close-in duties of the personal security detail lasted only a few days, and thus that episode does not provide much substance for evaluation. Their direct action missions, however, had a substantial effect in preventing the insurgents from being able to deal a death blow to the fledgling Iraqi government. Task Unit Raider, even when depleted by requirements in al-Kut and an-Najaf, formed a powerful striking force that hit insurgent networks relentlessly, alone and in conjunction with the men of the GROM whom they supported with a liaison cell, while the SEAL task units did the dangerous and unheralded work of the personal security details. It was neither the SEALs nor the Marines nor the Poles alone who protected the Iraqi government; it was the task group that won the day, and Marines clearly added significant value to Commander William W. Wilson’s

warfighting capabilities and his ability to accomplish that “most important mission in Iraq.”

At al-Kut and an-Najaf, the Marines provided timely capabilities to special and conventional units and in both cases materially contributed to the ability of the Coalition to hold the line against insurgent forces. Their actions enabled the emerging Iraqi government to enforce its authority, demonstrate resolve in the face of mortal challenges, and assert basic legitimate governance over glowering brute force.

Finally, what effect did Det One have on the organization and training of the Marine Corps? It is too early to answer that question fully; the exact ways in which the Marine Corps will operate in its traditional expeditionary role while achieving greater interoperability with Special Operations Command will emerge in due course as the Global War on Terrorism continues and Marine Special Operations Command reaches full operational capability. The acrimony attending the discussions on the demise of the detachment and the concurrent rise of MarSOC make it contentious to say that Det One was MarSOC’s direct lineal predecessor. Yet it is also difficult to say that Det One had no effect at all on the formation of that command, as Det One was certainly the first Marine unit ever to serve with U.S. Special Operations Command. This much is true: “They went where no group of Marines had really gone before, and they proved their worth,” said Lieutenant General Jan C. Huly, Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations. “It was a great proof-of-concept under some trying and actual combat conditions, and they did very, very well. And I think that the Marine Corps and the nation owe them a debt of thanks for what they did in blazing the trail for the Marine Corps component to the Special Operations Command.”<sup>4</sup>

# Notes

## Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Memorandum on Special Operations Forces, 3 October 1983 (hereafter SecDef SOF Memo).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Special Operations Command History and Research Office, *United States Special Operations Command History: 15th Anniversary* (MacDill AFB, 2002), 10.

<sup>3</sup> USMC, PP&O Information Paper, LtCol J. Giles Kyser IV, "History (Supported By 'Hard Data') As To Why The Marine Corps Did Not Participate In The Standup Of SOCom," 5 March 2003. This view is also asserted in similar language in Maj Robert E. Mattingly, USMC, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger* (Washington, D.C.: USMC History and Museums Division, 1989)

<sup>4</sup> SecDef SOF Memo

<sup>5</sup> Headquarters II Marine Amphibious Force, Special Operations Study Group, "Examination of Marine Corps Special Operations Enhancements," 19 November–17 December 1984, pp. 3–5 (hereafter II MAF Examination).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 24–25.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>11</sup> Headquarters Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, "Report of Examination of Marine Corps Special Operations Enhancements," 26 March 1985, para. 3.c (hereafter FMFLant report).

<sup>12</sup> II MAF Examination, 16.

<sup>13</sup> FMFLant report, para. 10.a.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, cover letter, para. 3.

<sup>16</sup> CG, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, "Marine Corps Special Operations Capabilities, Discussion with the Commandant of the Marine Corps," 27 April 1985 (briefing slides; hereafter CMC/FMFLant SOC brief).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> CMC, "Memorandum for the Record: The Marine Corps and Special Operations," 7 June 1985.

<sup>20</sup> CMC, "Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the Marine Corps and Special Operations," 22 July

1985; and USMC, CMC P4 to USCinCEur, CinCPac, CinCMAC, CinCLant, USCentCom, USCinCSO, USCinCRed; Subject: The Marine Corps and Special Operations, 220915ZJul85.

<sup>21</sup> Col Melvin G. Spiese intvw, 16 May 2005 (Marine Corps Historical Center [MCHC], Quantico, VA).

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Marine Corps, ALMAR 023/88, para. 2.

<sup>23</sup> 24th MEU (SOC) ComdC, 1 January–30 June 1995 (Gray Research Center [GRC], Quantico, VA).

<sup>24</sup> 24th MEU (SOC) ComdC, 1 January–30 June 1993 (GRC).

<sup>25</sup> 4th MEB ComdC, 1–31 January 1991 (GRC).

<sup>26</sup> LtCol J. Giles Kyser IV intvw, 25 May 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>27</sup> Col Paul A. Hand intvw, 26 August 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>28</sup> Kyser intvw.

<sup>29</sup> Hand intvw.

<sup>30</sup> Kyser intvw.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Hand intvw

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> MGySgt Joseph G. Settelen III 1st intvw, 3 August 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>35</sup> MSgt Troy G. Mitchell intvw, 12 August 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>36</sup> Kyser intvw.

<sup>37</sup> Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 12 April 2001 (as amended through 31 August 2005).

<sup>38</sup> The special operations section of Plan, Policies, and Operations had been pushed out of its Pentagon office and back into the Navy Annex after the damage to the Pentagon on 11 September 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Settelen-1 intvw.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Kyser intvw.

<sup>42</sup> Hand intvw.

<sup>43</sup> Kyser intvw.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Settelen-1 intvw.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Mitchell intvw.

<sup>50</sup> Kyser intvw.

<sup>51</sup> USMC, PP&O Information Paper, LtCol J. Giles

Kyser IV, "Marine Support To Special Operations Forces (SOF) And Contributions To Address USMC Expanding Relationship And Interoperability Concerns," 2 July 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Hand intvw.

<sup>53</sup> Kyser intvw.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> CMC P4 Message, First Marine Corps Force Contribution to the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), 281330ZOct02.

<sup>57</sup> 5400 MCBUL 040900ZDec02 para. 2B.

### *Chapter 2*

<sup>1</sup> LtCol J. Giles Kyser IV intvw, 25 May 2004 (Marine Corps Historical Center [MCHC], Quantico, VA).

<sup>2</sup> Sgt Victor M. Guerra intvw, 16 November 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>3</sup> GySgt James A. Wagner intvw, 12 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>4</sup> Guerra intvw.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> MSgt James R. Rutan intvw, 10 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>7</sup> Wagner intvw. The problems of creating and forming the new unit were occasionally relieved by minor gaffes. A unit is assigned various codes that serve as shorthand for the automated data systems, so that large numbers of orders can be efficiently cut for Marines to report in, check out of, or otherwise be detached from that unit. Det One was assigned a monitor command code of "1F9," naming its home station as Camp Del Mar, on Camp Pendleton. In the course of the stand-up phase, a large number of orders were efficiently cut for Marines to report to Pensacola, Florida. "1F9" was an old code, belonging to some unit that had not been in existence in years, but the data systems had never been updated to say, "Camp Del Mar, Camp Pendleton, California," instead of "Pensacola, Florida." MGySgt Joseph G. Settelen III intvw, 3 August 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>8</sup> Capt Eric N. Thompson intvw, 14 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>9</sup> MSgt Terry M. Wyrick intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>10</sup> MSgt Joseph L. Morrison intvw, 14 April 2006 (MCHC).

<sup>11</sup> MSgt Charles H. Padilla intvw, 10 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>12</sup> MSgt John A. Dailey intvw, 10 March 2006 (MCHC).

<sup>13</sup> MSgt Keith E. Oakes intvw, 11 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>14</sup> HM1 Matthew S. Pranka intvw, 10 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>15</sup> SSgt Chadwick D. Baker intvw, 24 March 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>16</sup> Maj M. Wade Priddy intvw, 13 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>17</sup> Maj Thomas P. Dolan intvw, 13 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>18</sup> GySgt Fidencio Villalobos Jr. intvw, 13 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>19</sup> GySgt Ryan P. Keeler intvw, 12 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>20</sup> LtCol Francis L. Donovan intvw, 24 March 2006 (MCHC).

<sup>21</sup> Maj M. Gerald Carter intvw, 13 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>22</sup> GySgt Kenneth C. Pinckard intvw, 14 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>23</sup> MSgt Hays B. Harrington intvw, 13 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>24</sup> Capt Christopher B. Batts intvw, 6 January 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> CWO2 Kevin E. Vicinus intvw, 23 June 2006 ((MCHC).

<sup>27</sup> 5400 MCBUL 040900ZDEC02, para. 4A.

<sup>28</sup> Capt Matthew H. Kress intvw, 18 November 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Carter intvw.

<sup>31</sup> GySgt Mark S. Kitashima intvw, 18 November 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> 20 February 2003 MOA, para. 5.

<sup>36</sup> MCSOCOM Det One Mission Training Plan, 1 March 2003, para. 3.a.(3).(a).

### *Chapter 3*

<sup>1</sup> MCSOCOM Det One Mission Training Plan, 1 March 2003, para. 3.a. (1), emphasis in the original (hereafter 2003 MTP).

<sup>2</sup> MSgt Charles H. Padilla intvw, 10 January 2005 (Marine Corps Historical Center [MCHC], Quantico, VA).

<sup>3</sup> Capt Stephen V. Fiscus intvw, 17 November 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>4</sup> Maj Thomas P. Dolan intvw, 13 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>5</sup> MCSOCOM Det One ComdC, 1 January–30 June 2003, Sect 2 (Gray Research Center [GRC], Quantico VA).

- <sup>6</sup> 2003 MTP, para 3.a (1).
- <sup>7</sup> 2003 MTP, Encl. 3: Detachment Training Packages.
- <sup>8</sup> Maj M. Gerald Carter intvw, 13 October 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>9</sup> Capt Eric N. Thompson intvw, 14 October 2004 (MCHC); MCSOCOM Det One ComdC 1 July–30 December 2003 (GRC).
- <sup>10</sup> Thompson intvw.
- <sup>11</sup> MSgt Keith E. Oakes intvw, 11 January 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> SSgt Andrew T. Kingdon intvw, 24 March 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>14</sup> GySgt Jaime Maldonado and GySgt Jaime Sierra intvw, 22 March 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>15</sup> GySgt Monty K. Genegabus intvw, 1 November 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>16</sup> MCSOCOM Det One ComdC, 1 July–31 December 2003, Section 2 (GRC).
- <sup>17</sup> Thompson intvw.
- <sup>18</sup> Col Robert J. Coates intvw, 6 May 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>19</sup> Dolan intvw.
- <sup>20</sup> Padilla intvw.
- <sup>21</sup> Dolan intvw.
- <sup>22</sup> LtCol Kozeniesky email to author, 5 April 2006.
- <sup>23</sup> Dolan intvw.
- <sup>24</sup> Thompson intvw.
- <sup>25</sup> Padilla intvw.
- <sup>26</sup> SSgt Alex N. Conrad intvw, 1 August 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>27</sup> Padilla intvw.
- <sup>28</sup> Dolan intvw; Thompson intvw.
- <sup>29</sup> Department of Energy, Nevada Test Site Web page ([www.nv.doe.gov/nts/default.htm](http://www.nv.doe.gov/nts/default.htm)).
- <sup>30</sup> Thompson intvw.
- <sup>31</sup> MGySgt Joseph G. Settelen III, USMC, 2d intvw, 24 February 2006 (MCHC) (hereafter Settelen-2 intvw).
- <sup>32</sup> Sgt Victor M. Guerra intvw, 16 November 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>33</sup> GySgt Kenneth C. Pinckard intvw, 14 October 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>34</sup> Padilla intvw.
- <sup>35</sup> HM1 Matthew S. Pranka intvw, 10 January 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>36</sup> Thompson intvw.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Settelen-2 intvw.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Cmdr William W. Wilson, USN, intvw, 24 March 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>42</sup> Settelen-2 intvw.
- <sup>43</sup> Pinckard intvw.
- <sup>44</sup> MSgt John A. Dailey intvw, 10 March 2006 (MCHC).
- <sup>45</sup> Settelen-2 intvw.
- <sup>46</sup> Pinckard-2 intvw.
- <sup>47</sup> Fiscus intvw.
- <sup>48</sup> Oakes intvw.
- <sup>49</sup> LtCol Kozeniesky email to author, 5 April 2006.
- <sup>50</sup> MCSOCOM Det One ComdC, 1 January–30 June 2004, 3–4 (GRC).
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> Oakes intvw.
- <sup>53</sup> LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky intvw, 15 October 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>54</sup> I Marine Expeditionary Force, “I MEF SOTG Tactical Evaluation of MCSOCOM Det One capstone Exercise,” 21 January 2004, para. 3.(2).c.
- <sup>55</sup> LtCol Kozeniesky email to author, 5 April 2006.
- <sup>56</sup> Dailey intvw.
- <sup>57</sup> MSgt Terry M. Wyrick intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>58</sup> Pinckard intvw.
- <sup>59</sup> Carter intvw.
- <sup>60</sup> Dolan intvw.
- <sup>61</sup> Kozeniesky intvw.

#### *Chapter 4*

- <sup>1</sup> Cmdr William W. Wilson, USN, intvw, 24 March 2005 (Marine Corps Historical Center [MCHC], Quantico, VA).
- <sup>2</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Daily Sitrep, 20 April 2004, para. 4.c (U) (hereafter Daily sitrep).
- <sup>3</sup> Daily sitrep 28 April 2004, para. 4.c.
- <sup>4</sup> Capt Matthew H. Kress intvw, 18 November 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>5</sup> Daily sitrep, 28 April 2004, para. 4.c.
- <sup>6</sup> Wilson intvw.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky intvw, 15 October 2004 (MCHC).
- <sup>9</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Deployed Weekly Sitrep 020 (hereafter Weekly sitrep 020).
- <sup>10</sup> Daily sitrep, 25 April 2004.
- <sup>11</sup> Deployed weekly sitrep, 021, para. 3.A.1.
- <sup>12</sup> Deployed weekly sitrep, 021.
- <sup>13</sup> MSgt Terry M. Wyrick intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>14</sup> MSgt Keith E. Oakes intvw, 11 January 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>15</sup> Daily sitrep, 4 May 2004; MSgt Charles H. Padilla intvw, 10 January 2005 (MCHC).
- <sup>16</sup> Padilla intvw.
- <sup>17</sup> Padilla intvw.
- <sup>18</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Operational Summary, Objective Racket.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Daily sitrep, 2 May 2004, comdrs comments.

<sup>21</sup> Daily sitrep, 6 May 2004, comdrs comments.

<sup>22</sup> Daily sitrep, 6 May 2004, comdrs comments.

### *Chapter 5*

<sup>1</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Operational Summary, Operation Raccoon (hereafter Raccoon opsum).

<sup>2</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Daily Sitrep, 17 May 2004.

<sup>3</sup> LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky intvw, 15 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>4</sup> Rambler opsum.

<sup>5</sup> Revenge opsum.

<sup>6</sup> MSgt Terry M. Wyrick intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>7</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Deployed Weekly Sitrep 024.

<sup>8</sup> Wyrick intvw.

<sup>9</sup> Wyrick intvw; Cederholm award citation

<sup>10</sup> SSgt Andrew T. Kingdon intvw, 24 March 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>11</sup> Tyrell award citation.

<sup>12</sup> GySgt James A. Crawford intvw, 13 January 2006 (MCHC).

<sup>13</sup> SSgt Daniel L. Williams intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>14</sup> Williams intvw and award citation.

<sup>15</sup> Sgt William B. Parker intvw, 3 August 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>16</sup> Williams intvw.

<sup>17</sup> MSgt Bret A. Hayes intvw, (MCHC).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Author's conversation with Capt Shannon Johnson, 23 April 2004.

<sup>21</sup> LtGen James T. Conway, press conference, 1 May 2004.

<sup>22</sup> LtCol John C. Coleman intvw, 3 August 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>23</sup> Author's conversation with Col Coates, 23 June 2004, as detailed in the author's official journal.

### *Chapter 6*

<sup>1</sup> Cmdr William W. Wilson, USN, intvw, 24 March 2005 (Marine Corps Historical Center [MCHC], Quantico, VA).

<sup>2</sup> Capt Eric N. Thompson intvw, 14 October 2004 (MCHC).

<sup>3</sup> MSgt John A. Dailey intvw, 10 March 2006 (MCHC).

<sup>4</sup> Wilson intvw.

<sup>5</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Deployed Weekly Sitrep 028 (hereafter Weekly sitrep 028).

<sup>6</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Operational Summary, Operation Radiate (hereafter Radiate opsum).

<sup>7</sup> Raven opsum and conops.

<sup>8</sup> Raven opsum and debrief.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Recoil opsum.

<sup>12</sup> Relinquish opsum and debrief.

<sup>13</sup> Deployed weekly sitrep 029, commander's comments.

<sup>14</sup> Recruit opsum.

<sup>15</sup> Recruit opsum and debrief.

<sup>16</sup> MSgt Joseph L. Morrison intvw, 14 April 2006 (MCHC); MCSOCOM Detachment One, Daily Sitrep, 30 June 2004 (hereafter daily sitrep, 30 June 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Republican opsum.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Weekly sitrep 030; Daily sitrep, 30 June 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Roundup opsum; Capt Christopher B. Batts intvw, 6 January 2005 (MCHC); SSgt Scott J. Beretz intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>22</sup> Roundup opsum.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Reform opsum.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Reflector opsum.

<sup>28</sup> Weekly sitrep 032.

<sup>29</sup> Coates-2 intvw.

<sup>30</sup> Coates intvw and award citation

<sup>31</sup> GySgt James A. Crawford intvw, 13 January 2006 (MCHC); Sgt William B. Parker intvw, 3 August 2005 (MCHC).

<sup>32</sup> Crawford/Parker AAR and intvws.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> SSgt Daniel L. Williams intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC); Williams award citation.

<sup>39</sup> Batts intvw.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Relapse opsum.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.; Beretz intvw.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Relapse opsum.

- <sup>46</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>47</sup> Roadster opsum  
<sup>48</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>49</sup> Ibid.; Beretz intvw  
<sup>50</sup> Deployed weekly sitrep 035.  
<sup>51</sup> Daily sitrep, 12 August 2004.  
<sup>52</sup> SSgt Chadwick D. Baker intvw, 24 March 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>53</sup> MSgt Charles H. Padilla intvw, 10 January 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>54</sup> al-Kut opsum.  
<sup>55</sup> Baker and Thompson intvws; al-Kut opsum.  
<sup>56</sup> Capt Daniel B. Sheehan intvw, 21 April 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>57</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>58</sup> al-Kut opsum.  
<sup>59</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>60</sup> Roulette conops.  
<sup>61</sup> Roulette opsum.  
<sup>62</sup> Resistor opsum and conops.  
<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

### Chapter 7

- <sup>1</sup> For an overview of the Marines' role in the fight for an-Najaf, see Francis X. Kozlowski, *U.S. Marines in Battle: An-Najaf, August 2004* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Marine Corps History Division, 2009).  
<sup>2</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Operational Summary, Najaf (hereafter [Name] opsum).  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; MSgt Terry M. Wyrick intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>5</sup> Wyrick intvw; Najaf debrief.  
<sup>6</sup> Wyrick intvw; GySgt Fidencio Villalobos Jr. intvw, 13 January 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>7</sup> Najaf opsum; Wyrick intvw.  
<sup>8</sup> Najaf opsum; GySgt Ryan P. Keeler intvw, 12 January 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>9</sup> Najaf opsum; Wyrick and Villalobos intvws.  
<sup>10</sup> Najaf opsum.  
<sup>11</sup> Keeler intvw; MSgt John A. Dailey intvw, 10 March 2006 (MCHC); SSgt Alex N. Conrad intvw, 1 August 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>12</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>13</sup> Najaf debrief and opsum.  
<sup>14</sup> SSgt Chadwick D. Baker intvw, 24 March 2005 (MCHC); MSgt Charles H. Padilla intvw, 10 January 2005 (MCHC); SSgt Glen S. Cederholm intvw, 12 January 2005 (MCHC); GySgt Jack A. Kelly intvw, 22 March 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>15</sup> Najaf opsum; Wyrick intvw.  
<sup>16</sup> Najaf opsum; Baker intvw.

- <sup>17</sup> Najaf opsum; Capt Daniel B. Sheehan intvw, 21 April 2005 (MCHC); Keeler, Baker intvws.  
<sup>18</sup> Najaf opsum; Conrad intvw.  
<sup>19</sup> Kelly, Padilla, and Baker intvws.  
<sup>20</sup> Kelly intvw.  
<sup>21</sup> Najaf opsum; Sheehan interview  
<sup>22</sup> Kozlowski, *An-Najaf*, 42.  
<sup>23</sup> Najaf opsum; Kelly and Baker intvws.  
<sup>24</sup> Rifle opsum.  
<sup>25</sup> MCSOCOM Detachment One, Deployed Weekly Sitrep 036 (hereafter Weekly sitrep [number]).  
<sup>26</sup> Capt Christopher B. Batts intvw, 6 January 2005 (MCHC); SSgt Scott J. Beretz intvw, 23 March 2005 (MCHC).  
<sup>27</sup> Beretz intvw; Rifle opsum.  
<sup>28</sup> Beretz intvw.  
<sup>29</sup> Rifle opsum; LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky intvw, 15 October 2004 (MCHC).  
<sup>30</sup> Rifle opsum.  
<sup>31</sup> Rifle opsum; MSgt Keith E. Oakes intvw, 11 January 2005 (MCHC); Cederholm intvw; Cederholm award citation.  
<sup>32</sup> Rifle opsum; Capt Eric N. Thompson intvw, 14 October 2004 (MCHC).  
<sup>33</sup> Rifle opsum; Conrad intvw.  
<sup>34</sup> Ruby opsum; GySgt Andre K. Bosier intvw, 24 March 2005; Tyrell award citation.  
<sup>35</sup> Ruby opsum.  
<sup>36</sup> MCSOCOM Det One ComdC, 1 July–31 December 2004 (Gray Research Center, Quantico VA). ComdC, 1 July–31 December 2004; Weekly sitrep 041.  
<sup>37</sup> ComdC, 1 July–31 December 2004.  
<sup>38</sup> Capt Stephen V. Fiscus intvw, 17 November 2004 (MCHC).  
<sup>39</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>40</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>41</sup> Maj M. Wade Priddy intvw, 13 October 2004 (MCHC).

### Chapter 8

- <sup>1</sup> MCSOCOM Det One ComdC, 1 July–31 December 2004 (Gray Research Center [GRC], Quantico VA). Although the command chronology states the final flight returned on 2 October, Col Coates remembers it as 6 October.  
<sup>2</sup> Author's notes on Naval Special Warfare Command AAR, 17 November 2004.  
<sup>3</sup> Det One ComdC, 1 July–31 December 2004.  
<sup>4</sup> Col Coates' emails to author, 22 August 2006, about manuscript draft 4. Det One's future might have been determined before the Warfighter conference. LtGen Jan C. Huly stated that "there was never a plan for

this unit to continue that I know of. It was a one-time proof of concept. . . . We put it up, we formed this thing, let's see how it will work. And it was never planned on it becoming a permanent entity in the Marine Corps that I know of." LtGen Jan C. Huly intvw, 31 July 2006 (Marine Corps Historical Center [MCHC]).

<sup>5</sup> Det One ComdC, 1 July–31 December 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Det One ComdC, 1 January–30 June 2005 (GRC).

<sup>7</sup> Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 4 February 2005.

<sup>8</sup> *MCSOCOM Proof of Concept Deployment Evaluation Report* (Hurlburt Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2005), App. C (hereafter JSOU study).

<sup>9</sup> JSOU study, conclusion, p. II.

<sup>10</sup> JSOU study, conclusion, p. III.

<sup>11</sup> *MCSOCOM Det: Analysis of Service Costs and Considerations* (Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 2005), conclusions, p. 55.

<sup>12</sup> Maj Priddy's email to author et al., 12 December

2005, with JSOU study attached.

<sup>13</sup> Det One ComdC, 1 January–30 June 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Huly intvw.

<sup>15</sup> LtCol Francis L. Donovan intvw, 24 March 2006 (MCHC).

<sup>16</sup> Det One ComdC, 1 January–30 June 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Det One ComdC 1 July–31 December 2005 (GRC).

<sup>18</sup> Col Coates' emails to author, 22 August 2006.

<sup>19</sup> 5400 deactivation bulletin, 060043Z FEB 06; Capt Sheehan email to author, 7 February 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Det One Final ComdC (GRC).

### *Epilogue*

<sup>1</sup> LtCol Francis L. Donovan intvw, 24Mar06 (MCHC).

<sup>2</sup> Col Coates e-mails to author, 22 August 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Special Operations University study, "Findings," 4-5.

<sup>4</sup> LtGen Jan C. Huly intvw, 31Jul06 (Marine Corps Historical Center [MCHC]).



# Appendix A

## Command and Staff List

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### Commanding Officer

Col Robert J. Coates 01 March 2003–10 March 2006

### Executive Officer

LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky 17 March 2003–15 April 2005

LtCol Francis L. Donovan 16 April 2005–10 March 2006

### Senior Enlisted

MSgt James R. Rutan 17 June 2003–31 March 2005

MGySgt Thomas P. Muratori 01 April 2005–10 March 2006

### Adjutant

GySgt Jeffrey King 20 June 2003–16 January 2004

SSgt Barrett M. Rhodes 17 January 04–06 July 05

SSgt Jesus Garcia 07 July 2005–10 March 2006

### Intelligence Officer and Intelligence Element Leader

Maj M. Gerald Carter 24 March 2003–10 March 2006

### Intelligence Chief

MSgt Bret A. Hayes 03 March 2003–10 March 2006

### Counterintelligence Officer

Capt Christopher B. Batts 19 February 2003–31 December 2004

### Operations Officer

LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky 17 Mar 2003–30 June 2004

Maj M. Wade Priddy 01 July 2004–10 March 2006

### Assistant Operations Officer

Capt Stephen V. Fiscus 01 July 2004–29 November 2004

Captain Eric N. Thompson 29 November 2004–31 December 2004

### Operations Chief

MSgt James R. Rutan 17 June 2003–30 June 2004

MSgt Thomas P. Muratori 01 July 2004–10 March 2006

### Fires Officer

Maj M. Wade Priddy 21 March 2003–30 June 2004

Maj Thomas P. Dolan 01 July 2004–31 December 2005

Capt Daniel B. Sheehan III 01 January 2005–10 March 2006

**Air Officer**

Maj Thomas P. Dolan  
Capt Daniel B. Sheehan III

01 March 2003–31 December 2004  
01 January 2005–10 March 2006

**Logistics Officer**

Capt Matthew H. Kress

01 March 2003–31 December 2005

**Logistics Chief**

GySgt Monty K. Genegabus  
GySgt Jaime Maldonado

07 May 2003–12 August 2005  
13 August 2005–10 March 2006

**Supply Officer**

Maj Ronald J. Rux  
Capt Olufemi A. Harrison

02 June–30 August 2003  
19 September 2003–10 March 2006

**Communications Officer**

GySgt James A. Wagner  
GySgt Ryan P. Keeler

09 June 2003–5 May 2005  
06 May 2005–10 March 2006

**Reconnaissance Element Leader**

Capt Eric N. Thompson  
Capt Stephen V. Fiscus

28 February 2003–29 November 2004  
29 November 2004–31 January 2006

## Appendix B

# Chronology of Significant Events

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### 2001

9 November 2001      Commandant of the Marine Corps signs a memorandum of agreement with the commander of SOCom to reestablish the SOCom/USMC Board to examine enhanced interoperability between the two forces in the wake of the 11 September attacks.

### 2002

22–24 January 2002      Lieutenant Colonel Giles Kyser proposes a Marine force contribution to SOCom during the meeting of the SOCom/USMC Board.

5–7 March 2002      Naval Special Warfare Command, as executive agent for SOCom, hosts a conference to discuss the nature of the Marine force contribution to SOCom.

4 December 2002      Commandant of the Marine Corps directs the activation of Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment for a two-year proof-of-concept operation with SOCom.

### 2003

20 February 2003      Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Plans, Policies and Operations signs a memorandum of agreement with the deputy commander of SOCom to delineate the scope and nature of the initial Marine force contribution to SOCom.

1 March 2003      Personnel for the command element begin to report for duty to Camp Pendleton, California; Detachment One headquarters are temporarily housed in the offices of I MEF Special Operations Training Group.

20 June 2003      Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment One is activated in a ceremony at the unit's new compound at Camp Del Mar, Camp Pendleton, California.

1 July 2003      Detachment One begins unit training phase.

14–26 September 03      Detachment One conducts its first full unit training exercise at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, California.

6–24 October 2003      Reconnaissance Element conducts close quarters battle training at Range 130, Camp Pendleton, California.

1 December 2003      Detachment One transfers from Marine Forces Pacific to the operational control of Naval Special Warfare Command in accordance with the 20 February memorandum of agreement and in preparation for deployment.

1–19 December 2003      Detachment One conducts its Capstone Exercise, evaluating the unit's full spectrum of operational capabilities at the Department of Energy's Nevada Test Site.

## 2004

- 13–16 January 2004 Detachment One senior leadership travels to Qatar, Bahrain and Iraq for pre-deployment site survey.
- 22–29 February 2004 Detachment One, as part of Naval Special Warfare Squadron, conducts a pre-deployment certification exercise at Edwards Air Force Base, California; personnel from the detachment staff and intelligence element augment the squadron’s capabilities; the reconnaissance element remains intact as a separate task unit.
- 6 April 2004 Detachment One deploys to Iraq, establishing a base of operations near Baghdad International Airport; selected personnel from the intelligence element are detached to serve with outlying task units and with other government agencies; the remainder of the detachment forms Task Unit Raider under Naval Special Warfare Task Group-Arabian Peninsula, and commences direct action raids and other operations.
- 28 May 2004 Commanding Officer Naval Special Warfare Task Group-Arabian Peninsula receives orders to shift operations and provide personal security details to the four principal figures of the interim Iraqi government; Task Unit Raider Marines are assigned to protect one of the two Iraqi vice-presidents.
- 3 June 2004 Commanding Officer Naval Special Warfare Task Group-Arabian Peninsula reconstitutes Task Unit Raider for offensive operations; a small liaison cell is sent to the GROM, the Polish special forces unit, which is then constituted as Task Unit Thunder.
- 8 June 2004 Task Unit Raider executes “Objective Razor,” the third in a series of three raids on a high-value target, in which the complete spectrum of the task-organized capabilities of the detachment were fully employed.
- 11–17 August 2004 Marines from Task Unit Raider reinforce U.S. Army Special Forces units in al-Kut, providing sniper, intelligence and fires support in operations against Shi’a militias; their support enabled coalition forces to help the governor of al-Kut rid the city of enemy forces and reestablish his authority.
- 17–30 August 2004 Marines from Task Unit Raider reinforce U.S. Army cavalry units in an-Najaf, providing sniper, intelligence and fires support in operations against Shi’a militias; their support enabled coalition forces to compel the Mahdi Militia to cease operations and withdraw from the key city.
- 30 August 2004 Task Unit Raider, in conjunction with Task Unit Thunder, executes a daylight raid into Baghdad to capture or kill a high-value target, “Objective Rifle,” who had been tracked for five months; the raid is successful and all forces withdraw without casualties.
- 2 October 2004 Naval Special Warfare Task Group-Arabian Peninsula stands down from operations; Detachment One reconstitutes and redeploys to Camp Pendleton, California; the unit commences sustainment training and examination of future employment options.
- 17 November 2004 Detachment One leadership briefs after action report and lessons learned to Com-NavSpecWar at Coronado, California.

1 December 2004 Detachment One leadership briefs lessons learned and recommended courses of action for the future at the USMC/SOCom Warfighter Conference.

4 February 2004 Two-year proof-of-concept phase expires; Detachment One continues sustainment training and examination of employment options.

## 2006

6 February 2006 Commandant of the Marine Corps directs the deactivation of Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment no later than 1 April 2006.

10 March 2006 Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment deactivates in a ceremony at the unit's compound at Camp Del Mar, Camp Pendleton, California.



# Appendix C

## Lineage and Honors

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### Lineage

2003–2006

Activated 1 March 2003 at Camp Pendleton, California, as  
Marine Corps U.S. Special Operations Detachment

Participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq, April–October 2004

Deactivated 10 March 2006

### Honors

Navy Unit Commendation Streamer

Arabian Peninsula  
2004–2006

Meritorious Unit Commendation Streamer  
2003–2004

National Defense Service Streamer

Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Streamer

Global War on Terrorism Service Streamer





## Appendix D

### Individual Awards

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#### **Bronze Star:**

SSgt Scott J. Beretz (w/V)  
HM1 Robert T. Bryan (w/V)  
Maj M. Gerald Carter  
Col Robert J. Coates  
GySgt James A. Crawford (w/V)  
GySgt John A. Dailey (w/V)  
Maj Thomas P. Dolan  
Capt Stephen V. Fiscus  
GySgt Ryan P. Keeler  
LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky (w/V)  
MSgt Keith E. Oakes (w/V)  
MSgt Charles H. Padilla  
Capt Daniel B. Sheehan III (w/V)  
Capt Eric N. Thompson (w/V)  
GySgt Matthew A. Ulmer  
SSgt Daniel L. Williams  
MSgt Terry M. Wyrick (w/V)

#### **Meritorious Service Medal:**

Capt Christopher B. Batts  
Maj M. Gerald Carter  
MSgt Victor M. Church  
Maj Thomas P. Dolan  
GySgt Monty K. Genegabus  
MSgt Hays B. Harrington  
MSgt Bret A. Hayes  
LtCol Craig S. Kozeniesky  
MSgt Joseph L. Morrison  
MGySgt Thomas P. Muratori  
GySgt Kenneth C. Pinckard  
Maj M. Wade Priddy  
MSgt James R. Rutan  
GySgt James E. Wagner

#### **Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal:**

SSgt Jason M. Bagstad  
SSgt Terry L. Beckwith Jr.

SSgt Chad E. Berry  
Sgt Stephen J. Bolden  
SSgt Glen S. Cederholm (w/ V)  
SSgt Benjamin J. Cushing (w/ V)  
GySgt Stephen C. Davis (w/ V)  
Sgt Benjamin J. Dreher  
SSgt Stuart C. Earl  
GySgt Monty K. Genebagus (w/ V)  
Sgt Victor M. Guerra  
GySgt Tyler M. Hammel  
Capt Olufemi A. Harrison  
GySgt Christopher E. Haug  
SSgt Patrick M. Hegeman  
GySgt William M. Johnston  
GySgt Jack A. Kelly (w/ V)  
GySgt Jason T. Kennedy  
SSgt David T. Kirby (w/ V)  
GySgt Mark S. Kitashima  
WO Michael L. Kuker  
Sgt Joseph B. Mooring  
Sgt Michael C. Mulvihill  
SSgt William B. Parker (w/ V)  
HM1 Matthew S. Pranka (w/ V)  
SSgt Barrett M. Rhodes  
SSgt Frederick L. Riano. III  
HM1 Michael D. Tyrell (w/ V)  
CWO2 Kevin E. Vicinus  
GySgt Fidencio Villalobos Jr. (w/ V)  
GySgt Sidney J. Voss (w/ V)

#### **Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal**

Sgt Russell T. Cook  
Sgt Christopher J. Houston  
SSgt David T. Kirby  
Sgt Frankie Lebron  
GySgt Jaime Maldonado  
Sgt Michael C. Mulvihill  
SSgt Jaime J. Sierra  
Cpl Oscar Vazquez  
SSgt Adam C. Wallman



## Appendix E

# Navy Unit Commendation Citation



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the  
NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION to

MARINE CORPS SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND DETACHMENT ONE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For exceptionally meritorious service in support of Combined and Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula from 19 April 2004 to 3 March 2006. The personnel of Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment ONE consistently displayed a high level of professionalism, while forward deployed to the Iraqi theater of operations, and during post deployment tactical experimentation for the design of a permanent U.S. Marine Corps component to Special Operations Command. Demonstrating tenacity and esprit de corps, unit personnel conducted a sustained and unprecedented demonstration of Marine Air Ground Task Force principles during a successful execution of a full range of special operations missions. Taking full advantage of their advanced skills, unique training, and specialized equipment, the Marines and Sailors of Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment ONE aggressively sought opportunities to locate and destroy an elusive enemy, inflicting significant damage on the Iraqi insurgent movement, resulting in the safe and expeditious transfer of authority to the Interim Iraqi government and safety of principal government officials. Detachment ONE's accomplishments proved conclusively that the Marine Corps could operate at the level of other special operations units and contributed directly to the Secretary of Defense's decision to add a U.S. Marine Corps component to Special Operations Command. By their truly distinctive achievements, personal initiative, and unflinching devotion to duty, the officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian employees of Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment ONE reflected great credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. M. ...", is written over a light blue background.

Secretary of the Navy



## Appendix F

# Meritorious Unit Commendation

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### COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the  
MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION to

MARINE CORPS SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND  
DETACHMENT ONE

for service as set forth in the following

#### CITATION:

For meritorious service from 20 June 2003 to 18 April 2004. The personnel of Marine Corps Special Operations Detachment One conducted operations of major significance to the national defense of the United States. During this period, Marine Corps Special Operations Detachment One activated and prepared for deployment in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II as the Marine Corps' first purpose-built force contribution to U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Detachment personnel overcame a lack of precedent and established doctrine, challenges in the arrival of personnel and equipment as well as their deployment schedule and method of employment and executed a very demanding Mission Training Plan, transitioning from concept to full operational capability in nine months. The Marines and Sailors of the Detachment demonstrated exceptional professionalism, innovativeness and a mission-oriented mindset as they developed and validated standing operating procedures and evaluated and fielded emerging technologies. Throughout the nine month pre-deployment training phase, they executed some of the most dynamic and difficult training ever undertaken by a Marine Corps unit. By their unrelenting determination, perseverance, and steadfast devotion to duty, the officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian employees of Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment One reflected credit upon themselves and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the Secretary of the Navy,



*M. W. Hayer*  
Commandant of the Marine Corps



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*Back Cover:* The device reproduced on the back cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points, the device has continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.

