**Instructors Notes for the Battle of Fallujah 2004**



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The Army Press

Combat Studies Institute

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-6900

**Battle of Fallujah Virtual Staff Ride**

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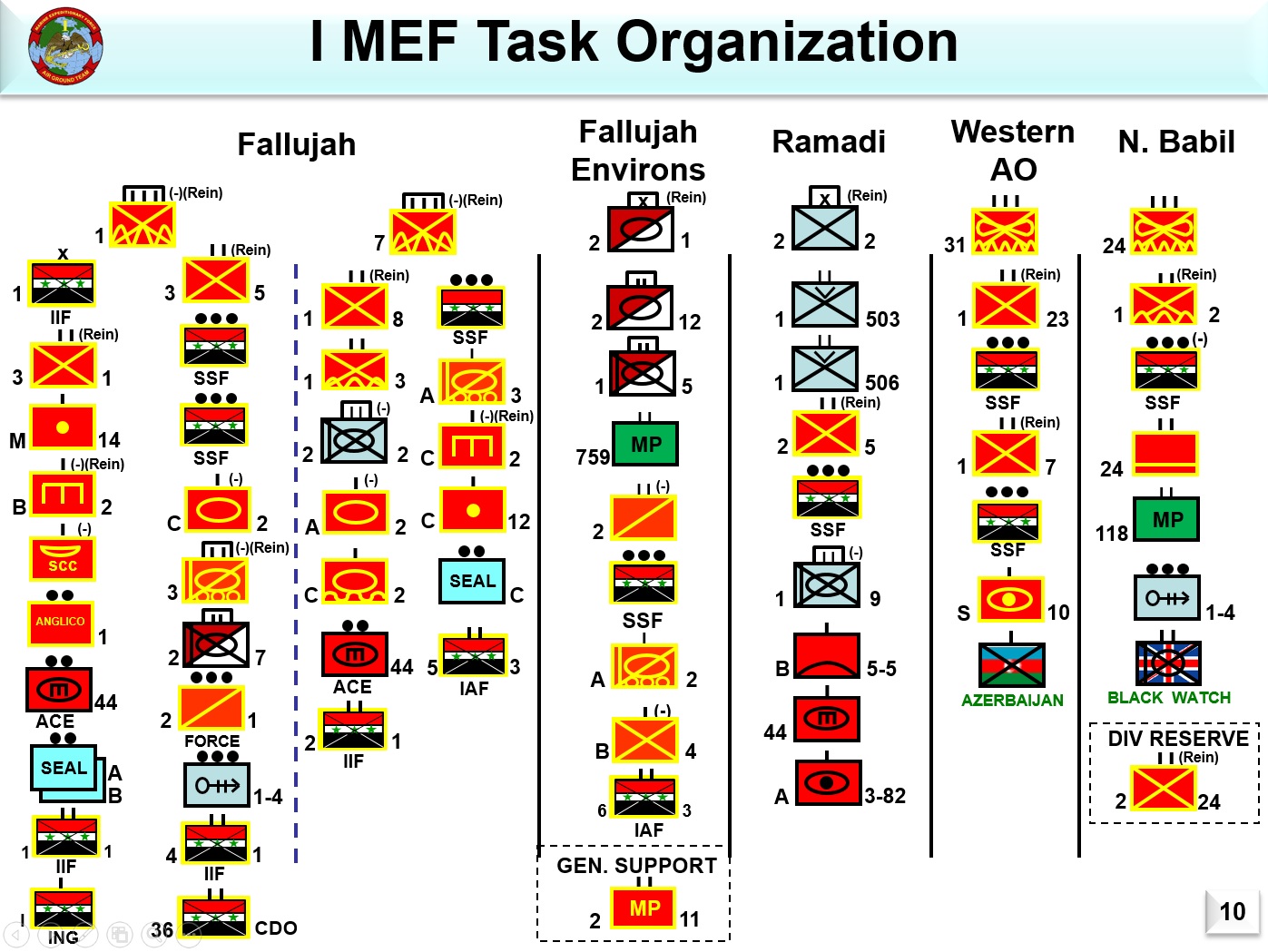
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**Task Organization:**

**Coalition Task Organization**



1st MEF: LtGen Sattler

3rd Marine Air Wing: MajGen Stadler

1st MARDIV (TF Blue Diamond): MajGen Natonski

1st RCT (Inchon): Col Shupp

3-1 Marines (Brahma): LtCol Buhl

3-5 Marines (Darkhorse): LtCol Malay

2-7 Cav (Army) (Ghost): LTC Rainey

1 IIF (Iraqi IN BDE)

1-1 IIF (Iraqi IN BN)

4-1 IIF (Iraqi IN BN)

1 ING (Iraqi NG Company)

3d LAR (-) (Wolfpack): LtCol Dinaur

36 Commando (Iraqi) (Kurd)

7th RCT (Ripper): Col Tucker

1-8 Marines (Hunter): LtCol Brandl

1-3 Marines (Bronco): LtCol Ramos

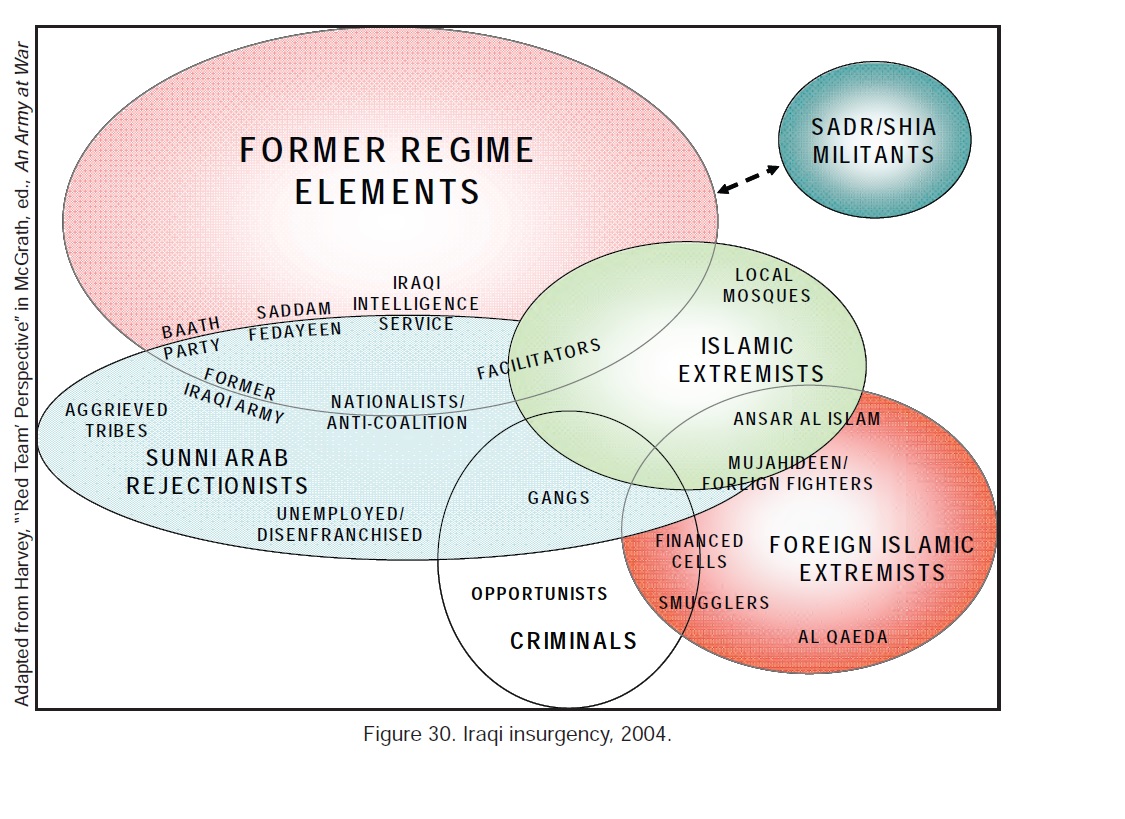
2-2 IN (Army): LTC Newell

2-1 IIF (Iraqi IN BN)

5-3 IAF (Iraqi Armed Forces BN)

**Insurgent forces:**

Approximately 4,500 fighters



**Stand 1: Fallujah Background**

**Directions:**

Refere to the Fallujah VSR Operators Instructions, beginning with the Master View of Fallujah

**Visuals:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Visual 2: Sunni Triangle |  |
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**Orientation:**

**I.** Visual 2: Sunni Triangle / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Fallujah second largest city in the Iraqi province of Al Anbar, located roughly 69km (43 miles) west of Baghdad on the Euphrates, and 51km (32 miles) east of the Al Anbar provincial capital of Ramadi.

B. Al Anbar province is the largest province in Iraq. It is 53,476 square miles in size, similar to the state of Florida which is 53,624 square miles.

C. The UN estimated the population of Al Anbar province in 2003 was approximately 1,230,000, compared to Florida with 19,890,000 in 2014.

D. The province shares boundaries with Syria to the north, Jordon to the west, Saudi Arabia to the south, and the provinces of Ninewa, Salah a-Din, Baghdad, Babil, Karbala, and An-Najaf the east. The Euphrates river cuts thru the northern third of the province.

E. The name Al Anbar is a relatively new to the province. Prior to 1976 the province was known as Ramadi and prior to 1962 it was known as the Dulaim province after the predominate tribal confederation.

F. The name “Anbar” is Persian for warehouse (allegedly in Arabic the word means “Granaries”). The city is on the main trade route between Saudi Arabia and Syria, and the residents have family and tribal ties to these two largely Sunni countries. These ties significantly influenced the demographics of the city.

G. Fallujah lies in the middle of the ‘Sunni triangle’ and at times has been the focal point of the Sunni insurgency against the Iraqi Government and Coalition forces. Under [Saddam Hussein](http://www.en.anarchopedia.org/Saddam_Hussein), Fallujah came to be an important area of support for the regime, along with the rest of the ‘Sunni triangle’. Many residents of the primarily [Sunni](http://www.en.anarchopedia.org/index.php?title=Sunni&action=edit&redlink=1) city were employees and supporters of Saddam Hussein's government and many senior [Ba'ath Party](http://www.en.anarchopedia.org/index.php?title=Ba%27ath_Party&action=edit&redlink=1) officials were natives of the city.

H. Under Saddam Hussein’s reign, people had to join the Ba’ath Party in order to go to college or reach a position of influence in governments or schools. As a result, while some joined the Ba’ath Party out of ideological belief, many joined to advance in society. In Jun 2003 the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, Paul Bremer, ordered the dissolution the Ba’ath Party and the formal disbanding of the Iraqi Army. This resulted in thousands of Iraqis losing their jobs, including the majority of the doctors, professors, school teachers, and government administrators. Thousands of the newly unemployed filled the streets of Fallujah. It was estimated that at one time there were over seventy thousand unemployed men in the city and according to intelligence sources, up to fifteen thousand of them supported the resistance in one way or another. (Camp, 20)

I. Smuggling is an ancient and prominent source of income to the tribes of the area. Saddam encouraged the illegal trade as a way to circumvent UN sanctions prior to the war. This history facilitated the flow of insurgents and material in and out of Fallujah.

J. Iraq is a Shia majority country that was ruled by Sunnis since the 1968 Ba’athist revolution. Broad segments of the Sunni population see themselves as the ‘rightful’ rulers/leaders of Iraq, and the Shia majority as incapable/’illegitimate’ leaders. The IIG had a proportional representation of the religious factions across Iraq, and as a result was 60-65% Shiite. The Sunni population (particularly former Ba’athists) saw the Interim Iraqi Government (IIG) as inheritantly illegitimate because of this, depriving the Sunni’s of their ‘rightful’ leadership position. Sunni’s also worried that the IIG would not respect their rights as a minority. Fallujah is also an early and established home of a puritanical Sunni movement known as ‘Wahhabism’, which has a deep hatred of the Shia, exacerbating the issue.

**II.** Visual 3: Fallujah Environs / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Fallujah is roughly 7.72 square miles (MNC-I C3 IO). The city proper is roughly two miles wide by about two and half miles deep. Fallujah’s position on one of the main roads and railroads out of Baghdad made it of central importance. The city was heavily industrialized during the Saddam era with the construction of several large factories located in the southeastern part of the city in the Sana’a District. A new highway system (Highway 1, MSR MOBILE), part of Saddam’s infrastructure initiatives, circumvented Fallujah and contributed to the city’s decline in national importance by the time of the Iraq War.

B. Baghdad was the Center of Gravity of Iraq, and Fallujah sits astride two major roads that lead eastward into Baghdad. Fallujah was a strong bastion of Sunni Arab tribesmen and considered a threat to the internal security of Baghdad. This resulted in the presence of Coalition Force troops stationed outside Fallujah as early as 2003.

C. The city grew from an unimportant town in 1947 to a pre-war population of about 350,000 inhabitants in 2003. The population at the time of the two operations is unknown but estimated at less than 200,000. Within Iraq, it is known as the ‘City of Mosques’ because of the more than 200 mosques found in the city and surrounding villages. (Gott, 91)

D. Smaller villages surrounding Fallujah were Saqlawya and Habbaniya to the west, Garma (Karma) to the northeast, and Abu Ghraib to the east. The tribal influence was stronger in these outlying villages, while inside Fallujah the influence in the clerics was more profound.

E. There were two major camps where Coalition Forces took up residence just outside and east of the city of Fallujah. The largest was Camp Fallujah, formerly the Mujahedin-E Khalq (MEK) Compound, used by the [U.S. Marines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Marine_Corps) from 2004 to 2009. [Mujahedeen-e-Khalq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Mujahedin_of_Iran) was an [Iranian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) dissident group and used the facility as a training camp, but turned it over to the U.S. Army [3d Armored Cavalry Regiment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3d_Armored_Cavalry_Regiment) on 11 May 2003 after the [Mujahedeen-e-Khalq surrender](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monafiqeen-e-Khalq_Surrender_(2003))ed. On 24 Mar 2004, the [1st Marine Expeditionary Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Marine_Expeditionary_Force) took over the facility and used it as a base camp. Camp Baharia (aka Camp Volturno) was the other major camp used by Marines and Soldiers. Prior to its occupation by Coalition Force troops, Camp Baharia was known as ‘Dreamland’ and was used as an exclusive resort for prominent members of the Iraqi Baath party.

**III.** Visual 4: Fallujah Key Terrain / Virtual Route 1: Key Fallujah Terrain / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah: Fallujah is laid out in a grid with a few wide boulevards; the six lanes of Highway 10 (MSR MICHIGAN) run for two miles straight through the center of the city. South of this highway were decrepit factories (Industrial area) while to the north were more spacious homes. The city was littered with heaps of garbage and wrecks of old cars. It contains more than fifty thousand densely packed buildings laid out in two thousand city blocks, averaging one hundred by two hundred meters on a side. The buildings were predominantly constructed using rebared concrete in the load bearing areas with the walls filled in with brick. The streets are narrow and lined with concrete walls of about six to eight feet high running around the perimeter of every dwelling.

1. **Quick Analysis:** What is your intial impression of the terrain? What challenges does it present? Consider vehicle trafficability, communications, and that each building is almost a ready made bunker.

B. Key Locations / Virtual Route 1: Key Fallujah Terrain

1. Operator Instructions #2: ‘Shark Fin’ hospital: The hospital sat on what was termed the ‘Shark Fin’. Immediately south of the hospital was the compound of a prominent tribal Sheikh. [Labeled 1 on the Visual]

2. Operator Instructions #3: North (Brooklyn) Bridge – The bridge where the mutilated Blackwater corpses were hung from the bridge to show the world what happens to foreigners when they enter the city of Fallujah. [Labeled 2 on the Visual]

3. Operator Instructions #4: South (Main) Bridge. [Labeled 3 on the Visual]

4. Operator Instructions #5: Jolan Park - Amusement park and later an objective. The Jolan district was the oldest section of town and was the most densely packed in terms of population. [Labeled 4 on the Visual] (Zoom in to Virtual View 1-3a, then back out)

5. Objective VIRGINIA [Labeled 8 on the Visual]

6. Operator Instructions #6: The Pizza Slice. [Labeled 5 on the Visual]

7. Operator Instructions #6: Government Center [Labeled 6 on the Visual]. *Build* 1: **Instructors Note:** point out the relative locations of the Ba’ath headquarters to city hall and the police headquarters. *Build* 2

9. Operator Instructions #7: Al-Hadrah Mosque [Labeled 7 on the Visual], adjacent to this mosque and further to the east was known as the Askiri district which was a wealthy neighborhood where many of the prominent and influential Ba’ath party leaders lived. (Zoom in to Virtual View 1-5a, then back out)

10. Operator Instructions #8: MSR MOBILE - Highway 1

11. Operator Instructions #8: MSR MICHIGAN - Highway 10

12. Operator Instructions #8: Clover Leaf – a large, four-spiraled interchange located on the intersection of Highways 1 (MSR MOBILE) and 10 (MSR MICHIGAN). It was a Marine control point for anyone entering Fallujah and it was the focus of insurgent attacks during the summer and fall of 2004. Follow directions on Operator Instructions #9 to:

13. Operator Instructions #10: Train Station

14. Operator Instructions #11: Apartment Complex Northwest of the city, which served as a command post for Regimental Combat Team 1 during Al Fajr.

15. Operator Instructions #11: Power Plant

16. Operator Instructions #12: Southeast over the city, showing near side observation for future breaching operations

17. *Build* 3: The red and yellow star marks the site where the Blackwater contractors were killed in Mar 2004. Follow directions on Operator Instructions #12 to Master View.

**IV.** Visual 5: Fallujah Area Tribes / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. The paramount Sheikh of the Dulaymi tribal confederation (Sheikh Amer Abd al-Jabbar Ali Sulayman al-Assafi of the Alwani Tribe) resided in a neighborhood on the southeast side of the Provincial Capital of Ramadi (32 miles away). His influence in tribal affairs within the province was not formalized in government directives, but was clearly felt within the undercurrent of tribal relations within the province.

B. The ‘paramount sheikh’ of the U.S. military forces in Mar 2004 was the Commanding General of 1st Marine Division. He placed his headquarters in Ramadi adjacent to the Provincial Government and it’s leadership.

C. *Build* 1: The visual depicts the rough tribal boundaries around Fallujah. The most influential of the Fallujah area tribes were the Albu-Issa tribe (highlighted in shaded red south of the city). The most hostile tribe in terms of its relationship with Coalition Forces was the Zobai tribe. The Zobai tribal area actually was divided between the MNF-W and MND-B areas of operation - with key leadership physically residing in the MND-B area.

D. The tribes were a significant influence in the areas surrounding Fallujah, but no single tribe exerted controlling influence within the city. Tribes intermingled within the city of Fallujah. This diffuse tribal influence within the city afforded the imams/clerics substantial influence, which was exacerbated by de-Ba’athification. This enabled the imams to consolidate power throughout late 2003 into early 2004, eventually becoming the strongest ‘voice’ within the city. Combined with the influence of Wahhabism, Fallujah was open to the influence of a growing extremist element.

E. Voices of ‘tribal moderation’ fled the province in early 2004. Most of the leading tribal Sheikh’s within the province chose to escape to Amman, Jordan or to Damascus, Syria for personal safety reasons - and would not return to the province until late 2007. Many had been threatened at gunpoint to side with the growing insurgent population in Fallujah. As a result, many of the younger tribesmen assumed proxy leadership of the tribes while the actual tribal leaders fled in self exile. These younger tribal leaders were in most cases co-opted by insurgent leadership.

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 6: Fallujah: Apr 2003 - Mar 2004 / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Fallujah during the Initial Invasion (OIF Phase III): 21 Mar – 9 Apr

1. Fallujah was one of the least affected areas of Iraq during and immediately after the 2003 invasion. It did not witness any major fighting as Iraqi Army units stationed in the area abandoned their positions, blended into the local population and left thier military equipment abandoned. The Iraqi military's desertion of the Ba'athist compound and the dissolution of nearby military units dispersed a large number of military and para-military personnel into the local Fallujah area population, along with significant amounts of military weapons and equipment.

2. While looters stripped government buildings and military bases throughout Iraq, the Ba’ath headquarters at the Government Center in Fallujah remained intact and most looting was confined to the industrial sector. Only the poor people who lived south of Highway 10 greeted the Americans with smiles.

3. On the evening of Saddam Hussein’s birthday, 28 Apr 03, a crowd of 200 people defied an American imposed curfew and gathered outside a secondary school used as a military HQ to demand its reopening. Shots were fired by unidentified personnel, and Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne stationed on the roof of the building thought they were being fired at. The Soldiers opened fire on the crowd resulting in the deaths of 15 civilians and the wounding of 50 to 70. (West, 12-13) **Instructors note:** Saddam Hussein was still at large at this time. He was captured on 13 Dec 03, imprisoned during Al Fajr, and executed on 30 Dec 06.

B. Fallujah during Phase IV (Stability) Operations Apr 2003 – Mar 2004

1. The shootings created widespread anger against the perceived occupation. Over the next year, various Sunni rebel groups, including foreign terrorists aligned to al-Qaeda, entrenched themselves in the city, using it as a command base and a symbol of defiance against the multinational forces and the Iraqi Governing Counsil (IGC).

2. During the summer of 2003, the US army decided to close down its last remaining base inside the city (the former Ba'ath party headquarters; FOB Laurie). As a result, all of 3rd ACR’s forces were stationed outside the city at Camp Baharia.

3. Between Apr 2003 and Mar 2004 four different units spread through six time periods (82nd Abn Div, 3rd ACR, 3rd ID, 3rd ACR, 82nd Abn Div, I MEF) had responsibility for the Anbar province. The constant rotation of forces hindered the ability of U.S. forces to influence control of the city. At one point, five battalions rotated the responsibility for Fallujah in five months.

C. There were several notable incidents between Sep 2003 and the attack on the Blackwater contractors in Mar 2004.

1. On 12 Sep 2003, in a ‘blue on green’ incident, Soldiers of the 82nd Abn Div fired on Iraqi policemen who were pursuing a carload of gunmen. Seven Iraqi policemen died and several others were wounded, and a nearby Jordanian Special Forces detachment guarding a hospital believed they were under attack and started engaging both the police and the U.S. Soldiers. The Americans returned fire with grenade launchers and .50-caliber machine guns resulting in the death of several Jordanians and the hospital being badly damaged. The reputation of the 82nd Abn Div was reaffirmed as a “trigger-happy and undisciplined unit” (also called ‘bou-bous’ AKA boogeyman) by the city’s inhabitants.

2. On 2 Nov 2003, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter was shot down outside of Fallujah by an antiaircraft missile. 16 American soldiers going on R&R died and over twenty were wounded during the crash. It was the heaviest death toll in a single action since the invasion of Iraq.

3. On 6 Jan 2004, two French nationals in Iraq working for US companies rebuilding infrastructure in and around Baghdad were killed in a drive by shooting when their car broke down near Fallujah.

4. On 8 Jan 2004, nine U.S. Soldiers were killed when their Blackhawk helicopter was shot down near the city by an insurgent firing an RPG.

5. On 13 Jan 2004, Operation MARKET SWEEP was the first successful raid of the downtown Fallujah arms market. The 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (82nd Airborne) confiscated more than 100 rifles, two heavy machine guns, 6,500 round of ammunition, 18 rockets, 244 grenades, 150 mortars and various explosive devices, including 17 pre-manufactured improvised explosive devices. During the operation more than 60 people were captured.

6. On 13 Feb 2004, while GEN Abizaid (U.S. CENTCOM CDR) was visiting Fallujah insurgents attempted to assassinate him using RPGs.

7. On 15 Feb 2004, insurgents attacked a police station and freed one hundred prisoners.

8. On 24 Mar 2004, the Army’s 82nd Airborne Division turned over responsibility for Fallujah to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). 1st MEF’s ground combat force is the 1st Marine Division (1st MARDIV), then under command of MajGen Mattis.

9. Approximately one year after the invasion, the city's [Iraqi police](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraqi_police) and Iraqi Civil Defense Corps were unable to establish law and order. Insurgents launched indiscriminate attacks, including attacks on police stations in the city, killing at least 20 police officers. Anti-American graffiti riddled the walls.

10. On 31 Mar 2004 – Insurgents in Fallujah ambushed a convoy containing four American private military contractors from Blackwater USA. Blackwater was providing security for food caterers, but had not informed 1st MARDIV of the convoy. The four armed contractors were shot, dragged from their cars, beaten, and set ablaze. Their burned corpses were then dragged through the streets before being hung over the North/Brooklyn bridge over the Euphrates. Photos of the event were released to news agencies worldwide, causing a great deal of indignation and moral outrage in the United States, and prompting the announcement of an upcoming ‘pacification’ of the city.

11. **Vignette:** Following the Blackwater ambush, the Marines moved to cordon off the entire city while inside the enemy was preparing for the inevitable assault. MajGen Mattis and LtGen Conway recommended restraint. The Assistant Division Commander, BGen Kelly, sought to temper America’s response in the Division’s daily report:

**Instructors note:** key elements are highlighted in **bold**.

“As we review the actions in Fallujah yesterday, the murder of four private security personnel in the most brutal way, we are convinced that this act was a spontaneous mob action. Under the wrong circumstances this could have taken place in any city in Iraq. **We must avoid the temptation to strike out in retribution.** In the only 10 days we have been here we have engaged the “good” and the bad in Fallujah every day, and have casualties to show for our efforts. **We must remember that the citizens and officials of Fallujah were already gathering up and delivering what was left of three victims before asked to do so, and continue in their efforts to collect up what they can of the dismembered remnant of the fourth.**

We have a well thought out campaign plan that considers the Fallujah problem across its very complicated spectrum. **This plan most certainly includes kinetic action, but going overly kinetic at this juncture plays into the hands of the opposition in exactly the way they assume we will.** This is why they shoot and throw hand grenades out of crowds, to bait us into overreaction. The insurgents did not plan this crime, it dropped into their lap. We should not fall victim to their hopes for a vengeful response… Counterinsurgency forces have learned many times in the past that the desire to demonstrate force and resolve has long term and generally negative implications, and destabilize rather than stabilize the environment.” (Lowry, 8)

**Analysis:**

I. You are the S2 of a unit responsible for security of the growing threat in your AO. What events stand out most in your assessment? What is your overall analysis of the situation in the Fallujah area?

II. Discuss the types of power bases found in civil society, the formal ones (i.e. official government) and informal ones (i.e. tribal and religious leaders). How did the disillusion of the Ba’ath party and the removal of governmental power affect Fallujah? How did various groups react to the power vacume created by the dissolution of the Ba’ath party? How did the interplay between these power bases create conditions for the insurgency? How did the Sunnis concerns over their role and place in to new Iraqi society impact the growth of the insurgency?

III. What is the impact of rotating so many units in a given AO within a short period of time as was done in the Fallujah area?

IV. Assess the blue on green incident on 12 Sep 2003. How does this type of event shape relationships and affect operations between coalition partners (Iraq police and Jordanian SF)?

V. What would you recommend the Blackwater ambush?

A. What the US public’s reaction to the seeing the incident on the news? What did the US public expect?

B. What was the Iraqi’s reaction? What was international opinion?

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 2: Operation Vigilant Resolve**

**Directions:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah |  |

**Visuals:**

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| Visual 7: Operation Vigilant Resolve |  |
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| Visual 8: Fallujah: Apr 2004 – Nov 2004 |  |

**Orientation:**

**I.** Visual 7: Operation Vigilant Resolve / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Following the Blackwater ambush, there was a “steady drumbeat from Washington to take swift action” despite Marine objection. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld directed GEN Abizaid and LTG Sanchez to begin planning for an immediate offensive into Fallujah.

B. Even though GEN Abizaid and LTG Sanchez (Coalition ground force commander) cautioned against an immediate attack, Rumsfeld disagreed and President Bush stated that he appreciated their caution, but he wanted “heads to roll”.

C. 1st MARDIV had responsibily for the area for seven days before the Blackwater incident, and was still developing their understanding of the area of operations. With the demand for immediate action, 1st MARDIV had very limited time to evacuate of civilians, collect intelligence, identify and target the perpetrators, or construct an effective information operations campaign to counter the expected media fallout from attacking a Sunni city.

D. The initial warning order, “Combat Operations to Re-establish Freedom of Maneuver in Fallujah (CJTF-7 FragOrder 555) was received by 1MEF on 1 Apr and immediately 12 checkpoints were established around the city. (Camp, 55-60)

E. Iraqi police dropped leaflets at mosques informing residents that a daily 1900 hours to 0600 hours curfew was in effect. On 3 Apr, 1st MARDIV received orders titles “Operation Vigilant Resolve” (CJTF-7 FragOrder 569), aimed at denying insurgent sanctuary in Fallujah and arresting those responsible for the Blackwater assassinations. (Camp, 63)

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 7: Operation Vigilant Resolve / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Concept of the Operation

1. 1st MARDIV planned to establish a cordon around the city while 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines (2/1), would move into the city from the northwest corner (The Jolan District) and 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (1/5), would begin clearing the city from the southeast.

2. The commander of Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT-1), wanted to trap the insurgents between these two battalions. Supporting 2/1 and 1/5, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion would screen to the south of the city.

3. The regimental commander’s overall goal was to seize the center of the city, including the government center, in order to establish an enduring presence in the center of the city and use that persistent presence to collect intelligence on the enemy. To get to the center of the city, RCT-1 would attack block by block, eliminate strong points, capture weapons caches, and kill insurgents who stood and fought.

4. While the battalions spent the day preparing to get into position, the RCT-1 commander met with the city elders. He hoped the meeting would avoid violent confrontation and deliver those responsible for the Blackwater ambush to coalition forces, but the elders refused to do so. When the city elders failed to deliver the individuals responsible for the attack to the coalition on 4 Apr, the Marines continued to establish their cordon around the city while small teams of special operators went into the city to try to capture “high-value targets”. (Ricks, 333)

B. Execution

1. On the evening of 4 Apr, 2/1 moved into the northwestern outskirts of the city. Augmented by one company of Iraqi commandos, 2/1 probed the city's defenses and drew contact from buildings on the edge of the city. As one company crossed the railroad tracks 300 meters north of the city, insurgents initiated a fusillade of machine-gun and RPG fire.

**Instructors note:** Visuals 8 & 9 will go in to more detail, but 4 Apr also marked the beginning of Muqtada al-Sadr’s upriding, and by 7 Apr the Sadrist uprising had spread throughout much of Southern Iraq.

2. On the morning of 5 Apr, 2/1 continued their attack into the city with two companies, while a third company held the bridges and the peninsula on the west side of the city. As 2/1 advanced, insurgents operating in groups of five to ten men rushed down the streets towards the Marines, firing wildly, then ducking off into alleyways and crowds.

3. At 0300 on 5 Apr, 1/5 advanced into the industrial district on the southeastern side of the city. By morning, two companies from 1/5 had pushed up to the south side of Highway 10 and spent most of that day fighting insurgents operating out of a mosque on the north side of the highway.

4. While two companies fought against the enemy to the north, 1/5’s Weapons Company conducted a thorough sweep through the buildings to the south of the battalion's lines. During that sweep, Weapons Company found large quantities of weapons that included mortars, rockets, dozens of machine guns, over a ton of explosives, bomb making material, explosive vests and belts.

5. The RCT-1 commander believed he had developed an understanding of how the enemy would fight, and that he needed attitional forces to accomplish his mission. MajGen Mattis initially requested forces from the Theater Operational Reserve, and when this request was denied, MajGen Mattis shifted 3rd Battalion, Fourth Marines (3/4), Second Battalion, Second Marines (2/2) from their normal areas of operations to reinforce RCT-1. Additionally, 2nd Battalion of the new Iraqi Army was directed to reinforce RCT-1. (Ricks, 333)

6. On 5 Apr the 2nd Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF) battalion departed the northern outskirts of Baghdad en route Fallujah. Insurgents ambushed the convoy. In the ambush the battalion suffered some casualties, command and control disintegrated, and the unit returned to Camp Taji. When a roll call was taken back at the base, over 100 soldiers had deserted. In the end, approximately 1/3rd of the battalion deserted or mutinied, and the battalion never participated in the combat in Fallujah..

**II.** Visual 8: Fallujah: April 2004 – November 2004 / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Through April, other events were happening across Iraq that would influence Operation Vigilant Resolve. The Sadr City uprising began 4 Apr, and by 7 Apr the Sadrist uprising had spread through southern Iraq. Fighting also broke out in Ramadi on 6 Apr, lasting through 10 Apr.

B. The emerging political crisis had several factors:

1. The assault on Fallujah and the military operations in Najaf against Radical Shiite Cleric Moqtada AI-Sadr and his Mahdi Army resulted in the resignation of Iraq's Interior Minister and Minister of Human Rights.

2. Additionally, a prominent Shiite member of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) had "suspended" his membership, several other prominent members of the council threatened resignation in protest of the coalition's operations. They denounced what they viewed as punishment of Iraqi citizens for the actions of a few, and they were particularly upset at the fact that they had not been consulted before U.S. forces launched their attacks.

3. Compounding these challenges was the fact that most of the reports covering the fighting in Fallujah consisted of Al Jezeera broadcasting from the hospital on the ‘Shark Fin’. Al Jezeera focused heavily on the human suffering within the city, shaping international opinion as well. The effect was largely anti-Coalition, eventually reaching the point were the British Foreign Secretary publically criticized U.S. actions in Fallujah.

C. Amb. Bremer believed that continuing in Fallujah would threaten the entire political process. Losing the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) would mean that the 30 Jun deadline to restore sovereignty back to Iraq could not be met. With no clear way to revive the political process or idea how long it would take, the White House's timeline for the drafting of the Iraqi constitution and the elections scheduled for Jan 2005 were now also in serious jeopardy.

D. Heavy fighting continued on 7 Apr and on the afternoon of 8 Apr, Bremer met with GEN Abizaid and LTG Sanchez directing them to cease offensive operations and withdraw from Fallujah. Following a heated argument, Bremer and GEN Abizaid agreed to cease offensive operations but not to withdraw from Fallujah under fire. LTG Sanchez informed LtGen Conway, who was dumbfounded and replied that the Marines “are right on the verge of breaking this thing wide open”. LTG Sanchez informed LtGen Conway that the political decision has been made due to Ambassador Bremer facing a full-scale political crisis.

E. At noon on 9 Apr, a unilateral “suspension of offensive operations” was announced by the Coalition in Baghdad. MajGen Mattis was furious, believing that the enemy would be defeated in a few more days. The insurgents lacked bunkers and ammunition and weren’t able to get additional supplies through the cordon that the Marines had established around the city. Thirty-nine Marines and U.S. Soldiers died in Operation Vigilant Resolve. MajGen Mattis told GEN Abizaid “If you are going to take Vienna, take fucking Vienna!”, expressing his concern over the consequences of failing to achieve the stated goals of Vigilant Resolve.

F. On 14 Apr RCT-7 was brought in to the Fallujah area from the west (vicinity of Al Asad airbase) to conduct Operation RIPPER SWEEP. This operation was a supporting effort, with RCT-7 tasked to sweep the areas surrounding Fallujah, in order to interdict enemy forces attempting to either flee from or reinforce Fallujah from the south and east. The operation lasted until 1 May.

F. Although ordered to cease offensive operations, the Marines didn’t immediately withdraw and they held their positions within Fallujah, and skirmishes continued until the end of April.

G. The Marines withdrew from the city in early May and turned responsibility over to the Fallujah Brigade, an ad hoc Iraqi Army organization led by a former regime Army general (Muhammad Latif). The Marines had few options once they were directed to cease operations, and the Fallujah Brigade seemed like the best course of action. Unfortunately, this transfer of responsibility allowed the insurgents to remain largely in place and enabled them to claim victory over the Coalition.

**III.** Visual 8: Fallujah: Apr 2004 - Nov 2004 / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. The Fallujah Brigade was never able to gain control of the city from the fundamentalist Sunni Wahhabis. By the end of the summer, the brigade had largely been co-opted into joining the insurgency. Within the city, civil control was centered in a new Sharia council dominated by Abdullah al-Janabi and Omar Hadid ‘the electrician’.

B. According to reporters who visited Fallujah in mid-summer, the city had become a sort of Islamist mini-state, with Sharia law enforced by ‘mujahedeen’ and warlords. The city became a source of IED and VBIED ‘factories’ targeting Baghdad and ‘kill and torture houses’.

C. Fallujah became the center of gravity for the Sunni insurgency and a symbol of the weakness of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) and its successor, the Interim Iraqi Government (IIG). Al Qaeda forces under Abu Musab al-Zarqawi used the city as a base of operations to plan and launch attacks through other parts of the country. The video broadcast of Nicholas Berg’s beheading by Zarqawi on 7 May reinforced Fallujah’s status as a center of the insurgency.

D. Due to the symbolic status of Fallujah, and the impact on Baghdad, the insurgents in Fallujah knew an attack was coming and continued to prepare. **Instructors Note:** the Coalition transferred sovereignty of Iraq to the IIG on 28 Jun 04

E. Between May and Oct, the flow of insurgents into the city increased the total number of enemy combatants to an estimated 4500, including many foreign Islamic extremists who were committed to fighting to the death. Convinced they had stopped the Marines in April, the insurgents appeared confident of victory.

F. As the summer progressed, the insurgents prepared extensive defenses. Coalition intelligence would later conclude that there were 306 well constructed strong points, most of which were reinforced with IEDs.

G. In late summer, LtGen Conway turned command of 1 MEF to LtGen Sattler while MajGen Mattis relinquished command of the 1st Marine Division to MajGen Natonski. While the division and regimental staffs were relatively stable, the four battalions involved in Operation Vigilant Resolve had finished their seven months tour and were rotateded in July and September.

H. From 5 Aug to 3 Sep Army and Marines units conducted a Joint operation to sieze Najaf from the Sadrists. This was the first major Joint ground combat operation of the war, exposing the Army and Marines to each others capabilities.

I. On 10 Sep I MEF received the order to retake Fallujah.

**Analysis:**

I. What is your overall analysis of the situation in Fallujah? What can/ must be done?

II. Discuss the Marine assessment of the enemy situation in Fallujah.

III. Did their tactical approach effectively meet that threat?

IV. Discuss the correlation of urban operations and the requirements for increased manpower in the attacking forces.

V. How well is 1st MEF resourced the fight?

VI. Discuss the political influence from US authorities in Baghdad and D.C. and the impact on tactical operations in Fallujah.

VII. Assess the performance of Iraqi Army forces during and in the aftermath of the operation. What are the 2nd/ 3rd order effects?

VIII. Identify critical issues encountered and how can these issues be addressed.

A. No political backing beyond the U.S. government (no Iraqi/international)

B. Lack of protected firepower and sufficient dismounted elements.

C. No time for an IO campaign, combined with Al Jazeera ‘telling the story’ from the hospital.

IX. What did we learn from other incidents during this time frame?

A. The combat operations in Najaf were characterized by intense and close combat. Infantry fought at close range through a huge cemetery, honeycombed with tunnels, crypts, and other concealed positions.

B. Even so, close air support and main tank direct fire enabled ground units to dislodge the Mahdi Militia from improved fighting positions in the cemetery and buildings around the mosques. During the entire 24 days of combat in Najaf, the 1st MEF suffered relatively light casualties but killed an estimated 1,500 of the enemy.

C. It was important to see that Iraqi security forces played a prominent role in the action and that some units could hold their own so future utilization was of importance.

D. The integration of USMC and Army units also proved easy and powerful. The two Army Task Forces integrated very well into the MEU operations. And most importantly, it was within the tight quarters of the cemetery and Old City of Najaf that coalition, combined arms tactics, and techniques really proved their viability.

X. How does transition of sovereignty to the IIG impact future plans for Fallujah?

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**Stand 3: Phantom Fury – Planning and Preparing**

**Directions:**

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**Orientation:**

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 9 Fallujah Defense / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Planning and Preparing for Operation Phantom Fury / Al Fajr (New Dawn). While negotiations with elements within Fallujah continued, national sovereignty was transferred to the IIG. When it became clear that negotiations would not remove the insurgent threat from Fallujah, the Coalition needed to gain the support of the IIG prior to resuming operations in Fallujah. The Arabic name was important in gaining this support. IIG support lent legitimacy to the operation, facilitated information operations, and garnered important support.

B. As in the April attack, the ground forces for the operation would be based on 1st Marine Division. Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) ordered 1 MEF to begin planning a new assault on the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah on 10 Sep. With the lessons of Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE and Najaf in mind, the 1st MARDIV staff began planning based on the following commander’s intent:

1. Eliminate insurgent activity

2. Set the conditions for local control in the city

3. Support the Multi National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) effort to secure approaches to Baghdad

A. There were an estimated 4,500 insurgents in Fallujah, but they came from multiple groups, with differing motivations and leaders. While the was no Unity of Command, the insurgents were united in their desire to defeat the Coalition’s efforts to liberate Fallujah.

B. Different insurgent groups demonstrated different tactics, based on their level of fanaticism and overall desired ends. Notably, the foreign fighters tended to be more fanatical, and more willing to engage in suicidal actions/stands.

C. Marine planners recognized that the insurgency deliberately prepared complex obstacles and defensive positions in anticipation of Coalition efforts to liberate Fallujah.

D. **Instructors note:** this graphic was taken from a post-deployment brief, but is representative of the intelligence preparation.

E. **Quick analysis:** How can the Marines impact insurgent defensive preparations during Phase I: Preparation/Shaping Operations?

**IV.** Visual 10: I MEF/1st Marine Division Task Organization / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. 1 MEF retained responsibility for the broader Area of Operations encompassing most of Al Anbar province, and would retain this responsibility during the clearance of Fallujah. With that understanding, let’s examine a baseline Marine Division.

B. **Quick Analysis:**

1. What capabilities does the 1st MARDIV bring to the Fallujah operation? A large amount of infantry.

2. What capabilities does the 1st MARDIV lack? Iraqi forces, armor, engineers, rotary wing support. Also, consider information operations, displaced persons, LOC security, and logistics support.

3. Does the 1st MARDIV have suffiecient capacity to meet all the tasks 1 MEF has assigned to the MARDIV? No.

C. Starting in September, the 1st MARDIV Commander identified the requirement for additional forces, specifically armor and Iraqi forces. (Matthews, 13)

1. Marine commanders had seen first-hand the value of Army armor and mechanized units in the urban environment while fighting the Mahdi army in An Najaf (Aug 2004).

2. 1st MARDIV requested additional armored support through I MEF. I MEF requested two battalions of mechanized infantry for the assault on Fallujah and a mechanized brigade to help cordon the city from the MNC-I Commander .

D. The main ground combat force for operations in Fallujah was based on the 1st Marine Division with additional capabilities provided by Army units, Navy and Marine SOF, and Iraqi security elements.

1. RCT-1 was designated the Main Effort. There were three maneuver battalions assigned to RCT-1, two Marine infantry battalions and the U.S. Army’s 2-7 CAV. RCT-1 was further augmented by a company of Marine tanks, a company (-) of AAVs, a company (-) of Marine combat engineers, an ANGLICO team, a Marine artillery battery, and a detachment from Small Craft Company (SCC).

2. RCT-7 was designated a Supporting Effort. There were three maneuver battalions assigned to RCT-7, two Marine infantry battalions and the U.S. Army’s 2-2 IN. RCT-7 was further augmented by a company of Marine tanks, a company (-) of AAVs, a company (-) of Marine combat engineers, and a Marine artillery battery.

3. Both RCT’s were augmented by Iraqi forces. Five Iraqi battalions from the Iraqi Army (IAF), Iraqi National Guard (ING), and Iraqi Intervention Force battalions (IIF) were integrated in to RCT-1 and RCT-7. Each of the assault battalions was partnered with Iraq Showani Special Force (SSF) detachments to facilitate the initial clearance of culturally sensitive locations.

a. There was concern over the quality of the Iraqi forces steming from the Iraqi battalion’s failure to participate in Operation Vigilant Resolve. In response to growing concern over the training and proficiency of Iraqi forces, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) was established under the command of MG Petraeus. MG Petraeus assured LtGen Sattler that Iraqi forces would be prepared for combat operations and would actively participate. To assist with this effort, all Iraqi units were partnered with a US Marine or Army unit.

b. Iraqi forces would assist with the detailed searches of buildings, help to identify foreign fighters, and clear the sensitive cultural and religious sites. Ulitimately, these units would take the lead in later phases of the operation as the coalition sought to return Fallujah to host nation control.

c. **Quick Analysis:** What are some of the challenges with integrating the Iraqi units? Language barriers, communications equipment, fire control measures, and logistical support are some topics to start discussion.

E. Regional Supporting efforts. Planners believed that once operations began in Fallujah the enemy would have two major responses. First, insurgents would attempt to converge on Fallujah, and second would be diversionary attacks throughout the region to divert attention and Coalition forces away from Fallujah. In order to counter these aniticipated insurgent activities, I MEF planned a number of regional supporting efforts.

1. 2nd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division was placed under the tactical control of 1st MARDIV. 2/1’s mission was to guard the movement of RCT-1 and RCT-7 into their attack positions north of the city, interdict insurgents, and act as a cordoning force isolating Fallujah from the south and southeast.

2. 2nd BCT, 2nd Infantry Division was tasked with securing the area in and around Ramadi.

3. The 31st MEU was responsible for securing the “Western AO,” which included the western portion of Anbar Province bordering on Syria and Jordan.

4. The 24th MEU was responsibile for securing North Babil. The UK’s 1st Black Watch Battle Group was shifted from Basra province to assist in this effort.

**VII.** Visual 11: Task Organization 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. This visual represents the doctrinal task organization of any of the four Marine assault battalions found within Fallujah. Marine infantry battalions are trained to be interoperable with any of the active component Marine infantry regiments.

B. There are approximately 875 Marines in an infantry battalion. Of the 875 Marines, 351 are infantrymen organized in 27 rifle squads (13 Marines each), providing the manpower required for urban operations. All Marine infantry battalions are composed of three line or rifle companies, one weapons company, and one headquarters and service company.

C. Each rifle company is commanded by a Captain and contains roughly 170 Marines. The company consists of three rifle platoons, a weapons platoon, and a small company HQ section. Each rifle platoon consists of three squads, for a total of nine rifle squads in a company. This amounts to a total of 117 riflemen in each company. The weapons platoon consists of a section of 3 x 60 mm mortars, a section of 6 x Mk-153 SMAW (assault rocket launcher), and a section of 3 x medium machine guns (M240G).

D. The weapons company is composed of an anti-armor rocket platoon with 8 x TOW wire guided rockets and 12 x Javelins missile systems, a heavy machine gun platoon of 6 x M2 .50 caliber HMGs and 6 x Mk-19 automatic grenade launchers, and a mortar platoon of 8 x 81mm mortars. The TOWs and M2s are usually mounted on HMMWVs and task organized as two Combined Arms Anti-Tank Teams (CAAT Tms). If split equally, each CAAT has 4 x TOWs and 3 x HMGs. The weapons company commander usually serves as the infantry battalion fire support coordinator during operations.

E. The Headquarters & Service company provides the headquarters infrastructure and organizational support needed to run the battalion. This includes each of the staff sections (S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4, S-6, etc.) and supply, motor transport, maintenance, communications, and medical care capabilities. Marine infantry battalions lacked armored CASEVAC capability. The unit scout sniper platoon of five sniper teams is found within the S-2 section of a Marine infantry battalion.

F. The heavier mobility of Assault Amphibious Vehicles (AAVs) and combat engineer capabilities are not organic to a Marine infantry battalion; they are attached or placed in a direct support role. This is an important difference compared to how the mechanized assets (tanks/BFVs) of an Army battalion are organic to the parent unit.

**VIII.** Visual 12: Task Organization TF 2-2 / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Starting on 3 Nov, TF 2-2 IN from the 3BCT/1D came under the tactical control (TACON) of RCT-7. 2-2 IN included 14 M1A1s tanks from A/2-63 AR, and 16 M2A2s Bradley Fighting Vehicles from A and HHC/2-2 IN. This doubled the number of tanks in RCT-7’s task force. 2-2 provided a rapid penetration capability with high survivability and firepower. A/2-2 was also task organized with engineers for breaching operations.

B. TF 2-2 also included F/4 Cav (brigade reconnaissance troop), and its HHC (-), consisting of Scout, Mortar and Medical Platoons. In addition, the task force received Raven UAVs, a military intelligence analyst cell, a liaison officer (LNO) from RCT-7, a tactical satellite, and an AN/TTC-48 (V) small extension node switch. Furthermore, the battalion brought an armored ambulance capability the Marines lacked.

C. TF 2-2 had eight rifle squads consisting of nine Soldiers each, totalling 72 infantrymen. This posed significant limitation in manpower intensive urban operations. Also, an Army mechanized battalion possesses significantly different logistical requirements than a Marine rifle battalion, which RCT-7 would have to account for.

D. TF 2-2 clearly outlined its capabilities and requirements to RCT-7. The battalion commander (LTC Newell) was convinced that “very few understood the power of a mechanized heavy battalion in an urban environment.”

E. 3rd BCT needed to maintain combat power and presence throughout their assigned AO while providing a battalion in support of PHANTOM FURY. As a result, the three maneuver companies task organized to TF 2-2 were coming from three different locations in the 3BCT AO.

E. An Iraqi Intervention Force (IIF) battalion (2nd BN(-)) would also be attached to the task force for the fight in Fallujah.

F. All these disparate organizations would link up at Fallujah just days prior to the fight; this meant that synchronization had to be done via email and at meetings during the commanders’ recons in Fallujah.

G. LTC Newell began coordinating with RCT-7 throughout the month of October, and sent a two-man LNO team to Camp Fallujah at the end of October. TF 2-2 received FRAGOs on the 7th, 11th, 20th and 28th of Oct, and published their battalion operations order on the 28th of Oct. Initially, TF 2-2 IN was tasked as a blocking force. Once 2-1 BCT was assigned the blocking force mission, RCT-7 re-evaluated TF 2-2’s assigned tasks. On 2 Nov the S3 and a few other soldiers from TF 2-2 went to the 1st Marine Division at Camp Fallujah and discussed future operation.

G. 2-2 IN recognize early on the need to send a liaison team to the RCT-7 tactical operations center (TOC). The TF 2-2 Fire Support Officer, CPT Cobb, assigned 1LT Lacour and PFC Romero to the TOC at Camp Fallujah. CPT Cobb assigned 1LT Lacour because “he was a stud; one of the smartest young officers I’ve ever worked with.” The LNO team built a relationship with the Marines and then “lived at the radio for 96 hours straight” once the operations began. (Eyewitness to War Volume II, 12). The LNO team was eventually augmented by 1LT JAger and some NCOs. Initially, the LNO team experienced some frustrations with the lack of compatibility between Marine and Army communications system (SIPR and phone service) but this problem was eventually resolved by the RCT-7’s S6.

I. **Instructors Note:** The following vignettes are illustrative of the challenges of integrating Joint forces. Not all of the vignettes need to be incorporated in to each staff ride, but are available to reinforce concepts.

1. **Vignette:** 1LT Jager observed how the Marines communicated and conducted com­mand and control while in the TOC. “I was able to figure out that they used chat to communicate from battalion to RCT. I don’t know what they used for bat­talion command and control, but their primary means of communication at the RCT level was SIPR chat. I understood that in the TOC by way of interaction with their watch officers and the battle staff. That’s how they conducted operations.”

2. **Vignette:** 1LT Lacour, who was also the assistant Fire Support Officer (FSO) for TF 2-2, found that combining Marine and Army fire support to be a straightforward proposition. “In­tegrating with the fire support assets,” 1LT Lacour recalled, “was pretty easy because the joint training the Marines and the Army go through makes it a lot easier . . . we all speak the same language, at least as far as cannon artillery goes.”

3. **Vignette:** As the major combat elements of TF 2-2 prepared to move to Camp Fallujah and linkup with RCT-7, LTC Newell, MAJ Reynolds (S3), and the TF 2-2 com­pany commanders took part in 1st MARDIV’s rock drill and maneuver rehearsal on 3 Nov. Perceptions of the effectiveness of the rehearsal varied among the Army company commanders in attendance. CPT Mayfield, Commander of F/4 CAV BRT recalled that although the Marines “used some different terms and acronyms, it was fine.”

4. **Vignette:** On the other hand, CPT Fowler, A/2-63 said that he experienced some problems with the “language barrier” between the Marines and the Army. “The Marines/Navy used some of the same tactical and strategic terminology that we did. However, it meant different things to them than to us.” “The biggest thing that . . . was disappointing,” CPT Fowler remembered, “was the plan was very disjointed and somewhat ambiguous.” The company commander was quick to point out however, that “with the TF rehearsal, which included the IIF and RCT-7 representatives, the company com­manders and team leaders got to talk/walk through their plans and contin­gency plans which was very helpful, because we used all of them.”

5. **Vignette:** Despite the differing perceptions of some personnel involved in the rehearsal, LTC New­ell believed RCT-7 and 1st MARDIV did an exceptional job in planning for Operation PHANTOM FURY. “I give RCT-7 and the 1 MAR DIV commanders an A+ in leadership, which is where integra­tion starts,” LTC Newell said.

6. **Vignette:** LTC Newell, a veteran of many operations, stressed that in his opinion the Marines’ planning process equaled that of the Army’s. “The RCT-7’s tactical planning was as good as any Army brigade I had been assigned to and in some cases surpassed that of my parent brigade. Most importantly was their willingness to listen and make changes based on our recom­mendations for our employment . . . I had no issues with their rock drills or rehearsals.”

J. By 5 Nov, TF 2-2 had fully assembled all of its assets at Camp Fal­lujah. On 7 Nov, RCT-7 issued its final order. The line of departure (LD) time for TF 2-2 was set. The task force would move out on D+1, 8 Nov 2004 at 1900.

K. **Instructors Note:** the platoon in A/2-63 represented by represents a platoon that was mounted in HMWVVs.

**IX.** Visual 13: Task Organization TF 2-7 Cav / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. The 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry regiment was an infantry battalion from the 1st Cavalry Division. For Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, it has been under the Operational Control of the 39th Enhanced Separate BDE (Arkansas ARNG). 2-7 had fought with the Marines in Najaf in Aug 2004, and had a considerable amount of experience in working the the Marines. As at Najaf, it brought an armored and mechanized capability that 1st MARDIV lacked.

B. TF 2-7 Cav consisted of two rifle companies (A and C/2-7) with 24 M2A3 Bradleys, and a tank company (C/3-8 Cav) with consisting of 14 M1A2 tanks and four M2A3 Bradleyss. This doubled the number of tanks in RCT-1’s task force. 2-7 provided a rapid penetration capability with high survivability and firepower.

C. TF 2-7 also included the forward support company and its HHC, consisting of its scout, mortar and medic platoons. The medic platoon included armored ambulances, another capability RCT-1 lacked. Attached to the HHC was a platoon of light infantry from 2-162 IN. Unlike 2-2 IN, TF 2-7 did not bring task organized engineer assets and would rely on the Marines to conduct breaching operations.

D. TF 2-7 had 12 rifle squads, bringing 108 infantrymen to the fight – a significant limitation in manpower intensive urban operations. Also, an Army cavalry battalion possesses significantly different logistical requirements than a Marine rifle battalion, which RCT-1 would have to account for.

B. At Najaf, 2-7 Cav had limited planning time before being committed to the fight, according to TF 2-7 S3 MAJ Karcher. When word began to circulate that 2-7 Cav would once again operate with the Marines, both MAJ Karcher and the XO (MAJ Jackson) began working directly with Army planners at the 1st Cavalry Division and MNC-I level to get information. By mid-October the battalion was authorized to conduct direct liaison.

C. MAJ Karcher immediately started to attend planning conferences with Col Shupp’s RCT-1. As Karcher explained, 2-7 CAV “got in at the grassroots of their planning, were able to shape their course of action a little bit, their concept, to something that was more in line with the TF’s capabilities.” RCT-1’s initial concept of a single-axis penetration by TF 2-7 down PL Henry. Base on 2-7 CAVs experience in Najaf, the commander (LTC Rainey) was able to influence RCT-1’s plan, resulting in 2-7 CAV attacking on multiple axis, with a platoon on each. LTC Rainey stated that “He (Col Shupp) listened to feedback and made a decision, just like good commanders do. The fact that he was receptive to listening and acknowledged the fact that we probably were the experts on how to employ mechanized assets impressed me very much.”

D. At the same time, Col Shupp claimed that “The whole time, Karcher and 2-7 are working like they had been with us all the time… everything from their language to their morale to their attitude, just fit in perfectly with the Marine regiment. They were complete professionals, and I think a lot of that was established by LTC Jim Rainey (TF 2-7 Commander) when he came down. Very aggressive, very good officers, knew their craft, and were prepared to go into combat and do the right thing.”

E. By 8 Nov, TF 2-7 was fully integrated and was ready to spearhead the attack into Fallujah.

**IX.** Visual 14: Plan for Phase III - Decisive Operations / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Concept of the Operation - The plan consisted of five phases:

B. Phase I: Preparation/Shaping (Sep – Nov 04) – Included the staging of forces, gathering intelligence, deception operations, raids and feints, and information operations

C. Phase II: Enhanced Shaping (D-Day, 7 Nov) – This phase consisted of 2/1 BCT isolating Fallujah and containing insurgents within the city. RCT-1 and RCT-7 would stage units in their attack positions for the main attack. The Marine’s 3rd Light Armored Reconnaisance (LAR) in conjuction with the Iraqi 36 Commando would secure the ‘Shark Fin’ peninsula and block the bridges over the Euphrates River.

D. Phase III: Decisive Operations

1. Phase IIIA: Assault – This phase centered on attacking to secure key objectives within the city. Operations were terrain oriented.

a. The Marines planned to make a rapid penetration of the city from the north with two RCTs abreast. The main effort (decisive operation) was RCT-1 in the west with RCT-7 as a supporting effort (shaping operation) in the east.

b. Army mechanized infantry battalions in both RCTs had key tasks utilizing their mechanized and armor assets to advance rapidly into the city.

c. For this phase, both RCTs were geographically oriented on PL Fran (Highway 10 / MSR MICHIGAN). For RCT-1, the main objective was the Jolan Park area (1st MARDIV OBJ 1), the geographical center of the insurgent resistance. RCT-7 had several important objectives: the Hadrah Mosque (a confirmed insurgent fighting position), the Fallujah Government Center (1st MARDIV OBJ 2), and PL Fran. MajGen Natonski and LtGen Sattler’s estimates were that this phase would take 48-72 hours.

d. Marine planners recognized that the fluid nature of the insurgency meant a location was only secure as long as it was physically occupied. This meant that every building would have to be cleared multiple times. Planners estimated each building would need to be cleared 3-4 times. With approximately 50,000 buildings, that is 150,000-200,000 individual building clearances. **Istructor’s Note:** how does this impact logistical planning and tactics? For example, can the Soldiers/Marines throw a grenade in to each building at the start of the clearance?

2. Phase IIIB: Search and Attack – This phase centered on systematically clearing the city of insurgents, a transition to enemy oriented operations. Upon completing Phase IIIA, units would conduct a more detailed and methodical clearance of the enemy. RCT-1 would focus on clearing the densely populated northwest quadrant of the city (the Jolan district), while RCT-7 would clear the remainder of the city.

E. Phase IV: Transition to an interim government. This phase centered on restoring essential services in order to help build the legitimacy of the Interim government in the eyes of the Iraqi citizens. Marine forces continue to clear the city and provide security to facilitate reconstruction projects and establishing an Iraqi government and police force.

F. Phase V: Transition to permanent, local government and security. This phase centered on transitioning authority within the city of Fallujah from 1st MARDIV to Iraqi governance.

**X.** Visual 15: Maneuver Control Measures / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. 1st MARDIV planners used imagery to number every house in Fallujah, and distributed this numbering system to all forward observers, pilots and personnel back at the combat operation center (COC), enabling fire support to be swift and accurate (LtGen Sattler interview, Field Artillery, Mar-Apr 2006). Additionally, maneuvering each battalion required the careful development of phaselines to delineate unit boundaries and control movement within the city. While the map looks complex, the planning that went into developing these control measures afforded the RCTs tactical flexibility in maneuvering units within the city. The maps with the control measures were reproduced at MEF level and distributed to all tactical commanders down to the platoon (and in some cases squad) level.

B. Logistics. The proximity of Camp Fallujah gave the Marines a good location to stockpile and push logistics. The 1st Force Service Support Group stockpiled 15 days of supply at the forward operating bases.

C. During Operation VIGILANT RESOLVE insurgents attempted to interdict resupply operations. To counter anticipated enemy attempts to interdict resupply opeations during AL FAJR, supporting efforts in the areas around Fallujah would assist in maintaining open supply routes to the other hubs of supply in the country, such as Taji and LSA Anaconda.

D. Refuel and rearm points would remain outside the city due to security concerns with bringing fuel trucks and establishing aid stations, etc. inside the city. During the battle the regimental aid stations were located immediately north of the Train Station adjacent to rotary wing landing zones. Both of the Army task forces provided mechanized CASEVAC to safely bring wounded Marines and Soldiers out of the city. With over 600 Marines and Soldiers wounded in Fallujah, this detailed casualty evacuation planning saved the lives of many of the more critically injured.

**Analysis:**

I. Why were operations terrain focused as opposed to enemy focused? What are the challenges of conducting enemy focused operations when there isn’t a unified enemy structure? With limited presence in Fallujah, how do you collect intelligence to differentiate between enemy groups to target each group appropriately? How do you transition from terrain to enemy focused operations?

II. What are the challenges on organizing and sustaining a Joint-Multinational, combined arms, coalition force like the one organized for this operation? Logistically, how do you account for different types of ammunition, consumption rates, repair parts and parts stockage levels, etc.

III. Identify the differences between the planning phase of Vigilant Resolve and Operation Phantom Fury (New Dawn). What are some of the improvements? What kind of support did the Marines expect the most from the Army? Look at manpower, time line, commander’s intent etc. How do planners identify transition ppoints from Phase III to Phase IV/V?

IV. Were LNOs important and how so? What is the mission of the LNO? Who would you send as an LNO? Did the examples that were given succeed in their missions? For more discussion and for doctrine, see FM 6-0, Command and Staff Organization and Operations, July 2019, Chapter 13.

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 4: Execution of Phase I – Shaping Operations**

**Directions:**

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| --- | --- |
| Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah |  |

**Visuals:**

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| Visual 16: Execution of Phase I- Shaping Operations |  |

**Orientation:**

N/A

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 16: Execution of Phase I: Shaping Operations / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. Phase 1 - Shaping Operations began in Sep and lasted through Oct. During this phase, 1st MARDIV conducted intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations to identify enemy positions, strength, and potential courses of action. 1st MARDIV conducted deception operations intended to deceive the enemy as to the coalition course of action, while also conducting information operations to weaken the insurgency in the eyes of the populace.

B. The enemy defenses were oriented toward the same areas where the Marines attacked from in Apr. To reinforce this belief, Marines conducted several feints while special operations forces conducted several raids in the southern end of the city. 1st MARDIV integrated intelligence and surveillance operations in to the deception operations, observing the insurgents reacted to the deception operations. This enabled the Marines to estimate how the insurgents planned to fight the upcoming battle and how the insurgents planned to use the terrain, refining the Enemy Most Probable Course of Action.

1. The Marines anticipated that the insurgents would operate as they had in April, in four to 20 man groups that moved towards where they believed combat was occuring. Insurgents in fixed positions would fight until the position became untenable, then retreat to an alternate fighting position. However, some of the more fanatic elements were willing to fight to the death from prepared positions. (West, 257)

2. Marine planners were also able to identify many buildings used as safe houses, and that 33 of 72 mosques in the city of Fallujah proper were used for military purposes. 1st MARDIV determined that the center of gravity for the insurgency within Fallujah was the Jolan district and the area south of it across Highway 10. (OP II, 348; West, 257)

3. Observation of insurgent responses to the feints conducting in Phase I revealed the locations of many insurgent C2 nodes and cache facilities. I MEF and 1st MARDIV targeting cells incorporated these insurgent facilities into a comprehensive targeting plan.

4. Information operations (IO) and other non-kinetic operations were also used to effect the insurgency. In one example, early in Al Fajr planning Maj Dietz, the RCT-1 IO planner, proposed a plan to solicit gravel laying contracts to mislead the insurgents of the direction which the eventual assault would come from. This plan was approved and over a period of weeks Marine civil affairs teams attached to RCT-1 announced the requirements of a contract to lay gravel within the sandy patches of roads leading up into the southeastern quadrant of Fallujah (into the Sana’a district/industrial area). This had the intended effect of getting the insurgents to dedicate a significant amount of time preparing defenses to guard against an ground assault into the city from that direction.

D. The goal of the information campaign was to decrease the legitimacy of the resistance and to keep the insurgents off balance.

1. The most important message to the people of Fallujah was to leave the city immediately, as the Coalition was planning to attack. By the time the operation commenced on 7 Nov, it was estimated that close to 80 percent of the population had heeded the warning and left the city. (OP II, 348)

2. Leaflets and other techniques were used to emphasize that the insurgents did not have a political goal that most Iraqis endorsed, while the network itself was composed of disparate cells united only by their disdain for the Coalition.

3. Also highlighted was that the insurgent activities had prevented the Coalition from investing up to $30 million in Fallujah’s infrastructure.

4. The deception plan also incorpaorate a series of raids and feints which contributed to the overall deception effort.

E. The Marines expanded Camp Fallujah southeast of the city where they could create a supply and training base. Logisticians began to stockpile the anticipated requirements for the upcoming operation.

1. This base was also used as a training and integration area for the Iraqi Forces that were involved throughout the operation.

2. Army artillery (M109A6 Paladins) supporting Al Fajr was also based at Camp Fallujah.

F. Also during this phase the supporting efforts in the region began their operations to maintain supply routes and engage the enemy in their respective areas of operation to prevent concentration in/around Fallujah.

**Analysis:**

I. What might be one of the reasons why the military was given so much time for Phase 1?

A. U.S. Presidential Elections in Nov

B. The Iraqi elections in late Jan and the Ramadan Islamic holy period (15 Oct-15 Nov)

C. Building of supply base Camp Fallujah etc.

II. Discuss the importance of shaping operations and conditions setting. How did lessons learned from Operation Vigilant Resolve and operations in Najaf influence the shaping operations?

III. What was the intelligence value of the various feints and raids during this period? Assess the enemy threat at this point?

IV. Evaluate the Coalition IO/ PSYOP (currently known as Military Information Support Operations or MISO). How much risk did Coalition forces assume in notifying Fallujah’s civilian population to leave before combat operations?

V. What major conditions were set with the establishment of Camp Fallujah that were missing from the first Marine attempt?

VI. Discuss the challenges of integrating Coalition forces within a US formation.

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 5: Execution of Phase II – Enhanced Shaping Operations**

**Directions:**

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| Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah |  |

**Visuals:**

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| Visual 17: Execution of Phase II- Enhanced Shaping Operations |  |

**Orientation:**

**I.** Visual 17: Execution of Phase II- Enhanced Shaping Operations / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. On 7 Nov, Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi announced a 60 day state of emergency across Iraq (except for the Kurdish-controlled north), allowing for curfews and other measures designed to curb the insurgency. This declaration was in response to several car bomb attacks in the Fallujah area which killed Iraqi army troops, Iraqi police, U.S. military members and Iraqi civilians.

B. The next day Prime Minister Iyad Allawi publicly authorized an offensive in Fallujah to "liberate the people" and "clean Fallujah from the terrorist". Allawi closed Al Jazeera’s bureau in Iraq, depriving the insurgents of the propaganda support they’d had in April during VIGILENT RESOLVE. This endorsement of a new offensive operation against the insurgents in Fallujah was critical in the wake of VIGILANT RESOLVE, when political pressures from the Iraqi government had forced the Coalition to cease its Apr attack.

**Description:**

I. At dusk on the evening of 7 Nov, the 3d Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion intiated the attack by isolating the peninsula known as the ‘Shark Fin’ from the rest of Fallujah. The 3d LAR consisted of a LAV company, a Marine infantry company and an Army company team (A/1-503 IN).

II. Immediately following the US combat units, two companies of the Iraqi 36th Commando Battalion and their Special Forces advisors in seven-ton trucks advanced to the Fallujah General Hospital on the northern end of the peninsula. The commandos quickly siezed the facility. The hospital search took less than an hour and resulted in the apprehension of five suspected foreign fighters, various weapons and propaganda material. The hospital was secure by 2300 and the west side of the North and South bridges by 0140 on 8 Nov.

A. The hospital was key to the insurgents during VIGILANT RESOLVE, both as a rallying point to hand out propaganda, and to muster public & international opinion against the Coalition.

B. By 1045 on 8 Nov, Marines from the 4th Civil Affairs Group completed a survey of the hospital and began unloading medical and humanitarian assistance supplies.

C. Thinking that the operations on the ‘Shark Fin’ were the main attack, small insurgent groups started to move toward the peninsula, revealing their locations. More importantly, their displacement moved them away from the actual location of the main attack.

D. Following the seizure of the hospital, the Marines seized the western end of the North and South bridges, and by 0140 on 8 Nov the peninsula was secured.

III. With the successful seizure of the hospital and the peninsula, MajGen Natonski ordered the main attack to begin on 8 Nov.

IV. 1st MARDIV initiated indirect fires and close air support (CAS) onto suspected IEDs, VBIEDs, and enemy fighting positions. Two AC-130 gunships were employed during the hours of darkness, one allocated to each Marine RCT. The AC-130s engaged enemy targets for two nights, from 1900 hours on D-Day (7 Nov) until the beginning of the main attack on 8 Nov at 1900.

V. Elsewhere in the area of operations, 2/1 BCT had assumed control of the blocking positions south and southeast of Fallujah. RCTs 1 and 7 moved into their attack positions north of the railroad station and rail lines.

VI. RCT-1 launched a shaping attack at 1052 on 8Nov, having 3/5 Marines seize the Saklawyiah apartment complex. This complex is located 200 meters north of the train tracks and about 600 meters north of the city (Ballard, 55-56), and would support the regimental breaching operation that set to occur later that night. RCT 1 also seized the adjacent electrical substation, enabling the Marines to cut power to the city just prior to the main attack.

A. The 3/5 Marines attack encountered fairly light resistance. By 1255 on 8Nov, the apartments were secure. Both 3/5 Marines and RCT-1 moved their CPs on to the rooftops for the coming operation.

B. During the attack there were still noncombatants present. About 250 civilians were rounded up, screened for gunpowder residue, and moved to a holding location several miles away. There, the noncombatants were give $300 compensation for their inconvenience.

VII. At 1420 four Marine F/A-18Ds led by the 3d Marine Air Wing (MAW) commander, MajGen Stalder, dropped eight GBU-31 2000 pound guided bombs at the planned breach site on the railroad berm and tracks. The bombs were intended to facilitate the planned breach, but in actuality they twisted the steel railroad tracks in to a more difficult obstacle.

VIII. Around 1800 hours, a team of Navy Seabees and 4th Civil Affairs Group Marines entered the power substation just west of the apartment complex and cut Fallujah’s electricity supply.

IX. Also on the evening of 8 Nov, six small-unit riverine craft (SURC) were launched on a waterborne patrol to inhibit the insurgents’ freedom of movement along the Euphrates River. However, after being ambushed several times, the small craft company stayed on the northwest outskirts of the city, just west of the sea grass islands due to being exposed to small arms fire from buildings in the city that fronted the river.

X. As the 1900 A-Hour approached, the conditions were fully set for the decisive operation.

**Analysis:**

I. Evaluate the final shaping operation on the peninsula. What impact did it have on the transition to decisive OPS?

II. Assess the overall shaping operations and their effect. Highlight those aspects that were not employed in the previous operation (fires).

III. What was the effect of having the Iraqi Government and Prime Minister’s public support for Al Fajr?

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 6: Execution of Phase IIIA – RCT-7 Assault**

**Directions:**

**Visuals:**

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| Visual 18: Execution of Phase IIIA: RCT-7 Assault |  |

**Orientation:**

**I.** Visual 18: Execution of Phase IIIA: RCT-7 Assault / Operator Instructions #12

II. The 1st MARDIV plan was to conduct a simultaneous attack from the north at 1900. RCT-1 was the main effort while RCT-7 was the supporting effort.

III. Looking south into the northern portion of the city. Orient the virtual view to the matching Visual. Point out the key locations below.

A. Hospital

B. North (Brooklyn) Bridge

C. South (Main) Bridge

D. Jolan Park

E. The Pizza Slice

F. Government Center

G. Hadrah Mosque

H. MSR Mobile- Highway 1

I. Phase Line Fran or MSR Michigan- Highway 10

J. Train Station

K. RCT-1 Breach Site

L. RCT-7 Breach Site

M. Objectives Lion, Leopard and Coyote

**Description:**

I. RCT-7 Concept of the Operation. RCT-7 planned to attack with three battalions abreast, each one penetrating the city along its own axis of advance. The battalions were to clear in zone to PL Fran and seize the Fallujah Government Center (1st MARDIV Objective 2). RCT-7 shared a boundary on its west with RCT-1. The boundary ran North to South along PL George to PL Donna, then ran westward along PL Donna to PL Henry, then turned south again along PL Henry. The battalions assigned to RCT-7 were aligned from west to east as follows: 1/8 Marines (RCT-7 Main Effort), 1/3 Marines, and TF 2-2 IN (Army). 1/8 Marines were tasked with siezing the Government Center.

II. On 8 Nov at 1900 hours, TF 2-2 IN’s lead company crossed the LD and moved into its support by fire position. The breach company fired its Mine Clearing Line Charge (MICLIC) at 1915. The initial detonation of the MICLIC resulted in several sympathetic detonations of IEDs the insurgents had placed around the city. Operator Instructions #14, then Operator Instructions #15

III. By 1925, A/2-2 IN (TF 2-2 IN) completed the breach and moved quickly through the gap, securing a foothold at the northern edge of Fallujah, OBJ Lion. Operator Instructions #16 *Build:* Click once for OBJ Lion to appear.

IV. At 2013, A/2-63 AR (TF 2-2 IN) moved through the breach, securing OBJ Leopard. The company continued the attack toward its third objective, OBJ Coyote, located near TF 2-2 IN’s boundary with 1/3 Marines, destroying enemy road blocks with 120-millimeter main gun rounds and destroying any obstacle in its path. *Build:* Click once for OBJ Leopard & Coyote to appear.

V.While under continuous fire, A/2-63 AR called for artillery fire from the supporting M109A6 Paladins, while tank main gun rounds and 25mm rounds from the Bradleys destroyed numerous VBIEDs and enemy fighting positions. Many insurgents, perhaps unaware they could be seen at night, were killed attempting to cross the streets and alleyways as A/2-63 AR advanced toward its second objective. Operator Instructions #17 then Operator Instructions #18

VI. A/2-63 seized OBJ Coyote at 2328. In a little over 4 hours, TF 2-2 IN conducted a deliberate breach and decimated the insurgent forces in northeastern Fallujah. More importantly, TF 2-2 IN’s attack was so rapid and ferocious that the enemy’s command and control apparatus was completely shattered. Operator Instructions #19

VII. Unfortunately, many of the insurgents fled west out of TF 2-2 IN’s sector because 1/3 Marines had not been able to conduct a simultaneous breach with TF 2-2 IN. This prevented the battalions from advancing abreast according to the intial RCT-7 concept. 1/3 Marines infantry was able to get across the breach site, but their armored support could not. The lack of armor support significantly slowed 1/3 Marines advance. Operator Instructions #19

A. 1/3 Marines planned a covert breach, attempting to blow a path across the tracks. The tracks were well built and didn’t break the first time. 1/3 Marines attempted to use armored bulldozers to reduce the dirt berm under the railroad track, but the first one got stuck. The backup bulldozer did not have a radio or night vision capability, and got lost. This left 1/3 Marines without any more bulldozers to reduce the berm, preventing 1/3 Marines armor from moving through the breach site in to the city.

B. 1/3 Marines delay also meant that several vehicles bunched up near the intended breach site. The insurgents took recognized this and fired three mortars, wounding four U.S. personnel when the mortar rounds struck two tanks and an armored troop carrier. TF 2-2 IN supported the adjacent battalion and sent an M-88 to pull the 1/3’s stranded bulldozer out of the breach.

C. 1/3 Marines battalion commander realized that 1/3 Marines could not complete the breach quickly enough to get back abreast of 1/8 Marines and 2-2 IN. In order to get his forces in to the city and attack along his designated axis of advance, the commander requested permission to use TF 2-2 IN’s breach to get his tank platoon into the city. The request was quickly granted and at 2351, the Marine tanks entered the city.

D. While its tanks were heading into Fallujah, 1/3 Marines used TF 2-2 IN’s breach site to evacuate the wounded.

E. After passing through 2-2 INs breach site, 1/3 Marines tanks and AMTRACs moved west to link up with Charlie Company and assist the company in gaining a foothold on the northern edge of the city. It took about eight hours to get the entire battalion into the city.

XI. 1/8 Marines had problems at first with their MICLIC, but after manually priming and detonating the MICLIC, 1/8 Marines successfully breached the railroad berm. They advanced in sector towards the battalion’s initial objective, the al-Hadrah Mosque. The mosque was a known insurgent command and control center and a weapons storage location. Furthermore, the minaret of the mosque provided observation of the entire city. All of these factors combined to make the mosque a key piece of terrain..

XII. After Charlie Company 1/8 Marines seized the area surrounding the mosque, an attached Iraqi Emergency Response Unit (ERU) entered and searched the building. By 0900 on 9 Nov the objective was secure. The subsequent clearance of the mosque uncovered sniper rifles, AK-47s, RPGs, hand grenades, IED making material, and a clinic.

XIII. By early morning, 9 Nov, A/2-2 IN and A/2-63 AR began clearing to PL Fran. The Brigade Reconnaissance Troop attached to TF 2-2 IN was already striking targets south of PL Fran. TF 2-2 advanced faster than anticipated, and by 9 Nov at 1410 TF 2-2 had outpaced the rest of the RCT. In order to prevent the gap along the boundary of TF 2-2 IN and 1/3 Marines from getting too large, Col Tucker ordered TF 2-2 to halt at PL Fran and back clear along their axis of advance. The back clearance was intended to secure the boundary between TF 2-2 and 1/3 Marines, preventing insurgents from shifting in to TF 2-2 area as they dispersed in the face of 1/3 Marines advance.

XIV. On 10 Nov 1/8 Marines began moving south from the al-Hadrah Mosque at 0100. At 0400 A Company 1/8 Marines, mounted in AAVs and supported by tanks and LAVs, attacked the Government Center. A Company completed the seizure of the Government Center by 1200. The other companies in the battalion fought for several more hours overcoming snipers and pockets of resistance as they seized their designated section of PL Fran. As night fell on 10 Nov, 1/8 Marines sent two rifle platoons to the al-Hadrah Mosque to prevent insurgents from re-occupying the mosque. Operator Instructions #20

XV. By the night of 10 Nov, 1/3 Marines completed their advance to PL Fran, aligning RCT-7’s three battalions. Operator Instructions #21

A. RCT-1’s advance, and the decisions resulting from both RCT’s reaching PL Fran ahead of schedule with more combat power than predicted, will be discussed in more detail in the next stand (Stand 7), but are summarized here.

B. The original plan called for RCT-7 to clear all of Fallujah south of PL Fran. But, based on the two RCT’s unexpected success, the 1st MARDIV commander (MajGen Natonski), ordered a change in plans, extending the boundary between RCTs south of PL Fran along PL Henry, and directing each RCT to continue to clear south of PL Fran within zone.

C. The Iraqi forces had performed well supporting the assault battalions. As the RCTs attacked south of PL Fran, the Iraqi forces would continue to secure north of PL Fran. This taxed the Iraqi’s capabilities, and command and control of the Iraq forces continued to prove problematic. To address these challenges, RCT-7 directed 1/3 Marines to remain north of PL Fran and work with the Iraqi forces to secure the northern section of Fallujah.

**Analysis:**

I. Discuss the fundamentals of Combined Arms Breaching Operations.

A. In 2004 did the Army and Marines have common breaching doctrine? No, they didn’t. In 2004, the relevant doctrine was FM 3-34.2, FM 3-90.12, and MCWP 3-17.3, all of which have been superceded by the Joint Army/Marine Corps publication – ATTP 3-90.4/MCWP 3-17.8, Aug 2011

B. In 2004, Marine doctrine outlined multiple types of breaches:

1. In-stride breach - In-stride breach is used to quickly overcome unexpected or lightly defended tactical obstacles.

2. Deliberate breach - Deliberate breach is used to cross a strong and/or well-defended obstacle in order to continue the mission.

3. Assault breach - Assault breach is used to penetrate enemy protective obstacles and continue the assault through an objective.

4. Covert breach - Covert breach is used to overcome obstacles without being detected by the enemy. It is used when surprise is essential to infiltrate tough enemy obstacle and fortifications, and when limited visibility and terrain present the opportunity to reduce enemy obstacles without being seen.

5. Amphibious breach - Amphibious breach is a type of deliberate breach specifically designed to overcome anti-landing defenses in order to conduct an amphibious assault.

C. Marines doctrine called for breaching by one of three methods: manual, mechanical, or explosive force against the obstacle system.

D. Marines seldom trained on breaching operations pre-OIF. How did this impact Marines breaching operations in Fallujah?

E. Prior to OIF, Army mechanized units regularly trained on mounted breaching operations. How did impact Army breaching operations in Fallujah?

1. The TF 2-2 operations officer recalled that “this was nothing new, we’d done this before. This was a mechanized operation. We knew how to open breach sites and secure breach sites, and then we supported our sister battalion to our right flank.

2. How often do Army battalions train in these type of breaching operations in 2016?

II. Was appropriate reconnaissance done prior to conducting breaching operations?

A. Was the railroad berm a consistant obstacle across the width of RCT-7’s frontage?

B. Richard S Lowry’s book *New Dawn,* Lowry describes the railroad berm in TF 2-2 IN area of operations of only being three to five feet high, while 1/3 faced a six to twelve foot berm plus a tank ditch on the far side (Lowry, 94).

III. 2-2 conducted a mechanized breach with a tank forward and a MICLIC being fired. Once the MICLIC was fired, there were 20 to 30 secondary explosions up and down the sides and the breach just had to be marked. 1/8 did the same thing as 2-2 while 1/3 tried to do a “covert” breach, where they put a platoon to the front and tried to probe the obstacle. (Eyewitness to War Volume 1, 214). Were these types of breaching operations appropriate for the operation?

IV. Discuss the breaching capabilities that the Army and USMC forces brought to the fight. Did this impact their respective breaches? How and why?

V. Discuss how the differences in training, choice of breaching methodology, equipment, and obstacle combined to impact the success or failure of 2-2, 1/8, and 1/3’s breaching operations.

VI. What were the heavy-light integration challenges once through the breach?

VII. How did the enemy react to coalition operations so far?

VIII. Assess continued Iraqi military operations supporting US forces.

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 7: Execution of Phase IIIA – RCT-1 Assault**

**Directions:**

**Visuals:**

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| Visual 19: Execution of Phase IIIA: RCT-1 Assault |  |
|  |  |
| Visual 20: RCT 1 Attack, 8-9 Nov 2004 |  |
|  |  |
| Visual 21: RCT 1 Attack, 9-10 Nov 2004 |  |
|  |  |
| Visual 22: Fighting Inside Fallujah |  |
|  |  |
| Visual 23: 1 Mar Div Disposition, Night of 10 Nov |  |

**Orientation:**

**I.** Visual 19: Execution of Phase IIIA: RCT-1 Assault / Operator Instructions #22

II. Looking south into the northern portion of the city. Orient the virtual view to the matching Visual. Point out the key locations below. Preferably from the apartment complex used as Regimental Command Post along with 3/5s forward combat operations center (COC).

A. Hospital

B. North (Brooklyn) Bridge

C. South (Main) Bridge

D. Jolan Park

E. The Pizza Slice

F. Phase Line Fran or MSR Michigan- Highway 10

G. Train Station

H. RCT-1 Breach Site

I. RCT-1 HQ at apartment buildings

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 19: Execution of Phase IIIA: RCT-1 Assault / Operator Instructions #23

A. RCT-1 Concept of the Operation. RCT-1, the division main effort, planned to seize the Jolan Park (1st MARDIV OBJ 1) by conducting a battalion penetration attack with TF 2-7 Cav. 3/1 Marines would follow and support, while the 3/5 Marines cleared in zone behind the other two battalions. Once the Jolan park was seized, 3/1 Marines would pass through 2-7 Cav and attack westward toward the Euphrates River. 2-7 Cav would continue the advance to PL Fran. On order, all battalions were to conduct detailed searches of every building to clear the area of operations of insurgents and contraband weapons and munitions.

B. *Build* 1. To facilitate the breach and the rapid attack of TF 2-7 Cav, 3/1 Marines was tasked to seize the train station. At approximately 1900, the Marines, with Iraqi National Guard in support, attacked the train station and secured it by 2034 hours.

C. *Build* 2. At approx. 1930, 3/5 Marines started the attack, utilizing a railroad overpass at the northwestern corner of Fallujah over to advance south of the railroad berm and seize the cemetary near the Ma’ahidy Mosque. Seizing the cemetary provided a foothold in the northern part of Fallujah and would provide far side security for RCT-1s breaching operations.

Operator Instructions #24

D. However, 3/1 Marines was having problems breaching the railroad tracks at the northern edge of the city. The intial plan called for engineers cross-attached from 1/4 Marines to create three breach lanes using D9 armored bulldozers at the site 3 MAW had bombed with 2000lb PGMs. However, the tangle of railroad tracks created by the PGMs prevented the bulldozers from creating the breach lanes. The RCT-1 commander (Col Shupp) ordered a MICLIC employed in an attempt sever the railroad track ball, but the MICLIC failed to sever the tracks. Until the mangled tracks were removed the bulldozers couldn’t reduce the earthen berm. Eveltually engineers moved forward and placed a four-pound stick of dynamite under each track and the resulting explosion finally cut the tracks free. The bulldozers were able to push the twisted metal aside and began the work of clearing the breach lanes.

E. Virtual View 4-2: Groundhug RCT-1 Attack Position: *Build* 3. TF 2-7 Cav waited in the dark for the breach to be completed**.** At 0130 hours on 9 Nov, almost six and a half hours after TF 2-2 IN breached/attacked in the east, TF 2-7 Cav crossed the LD.

F. Virtual View 4-2a: Groundhug RCT-1 Attack Position: Enter the city through the breach to the west of the train station

Operator Instructions #25

**II.** Visual 20: RCT-1 Attack, 8-9 Nov 2004 / Operator Instructions #26

A. 2-7 CAV, lead by C/3-8 AR, passed through the breach site without taking any enemy fire. As C/3-8 reach PL April, they turned east, reached PL Henry, and turned south to continue their attack. Operator Instructions #27 A/2-7 CAV was the second company through the breach site. When A/2-7 CAV reached PL April they split on to three avenues of advance and attacked south in zone towards the Jolan Park.

B. As C/3-8 AR turned south down PL Henry, they made contact with insurgents. The insurgents were operating in 3-5 man teams, and engaged C/3-8 AR with small arms and RPGs. The company engaged the insurgents with .50 caliber and coax machine guns, killing the insurgents and destroying IEDs encountered along their avenue of advance.

C. Following behind A/2-7 CAV’s mounted attack, 3/1 Marines conducted dismounted clearing operations as they moved towards Jolan Park.

D. Operator Instructions #28 - A/2-7 CAV advanced rapidly south toward Jolan Park. There was “very light resistance throughout the evening,” according to the commander, CPT Twaddell. “Although there were several folks that tried to go stand out in the middle of the street with an AK-47 and face down a Bradley, it ended badly for them.”

E. Col Shupp (RCT-1 commander) believed the delay at the breach actually worked out well for RCT-1. With the enemy focused on RCT-7’s attack in the northeast and on the bridge sites to the west, Col Shupp was convinced, “This is an area the enemy never expects anyone to attack in, and [we] are having tremendous success.”

F. Operator Instructions #29 As A/2-7 CAV closed in on Jolan Park and began taking fire, TF 2-7 CAV and RCT-1 suppressed enemy locations with CAS and 120mm mortars. “We were able to really leverage the fires,” CPT Twaddell recalled.Col Shupp would later point out that at about this time he met with TF 2-7 commander (LTC Rainey) and both men “were just shocked at the success we’re having.”

G. Operator Instructions #30 *Build* 1. With the sun coming up on 9 Nov, A/2-7 CAV attacked through Jolan Park. Their infantry dismounted and began to clear back north. The action “totally devastated the enemy,” LTC Rainey remembered. “They were still trying to get out of the way of the tanks and Bradleys and our infantry squads were on top of them.”

H. A/2-7 CAV received rocket, mortar, RPG, and small-arms fire in the Jolan Park area. TF 2-7 CAV remained in place and waited for 3/1 Marines. The plan called for 3/1 Marines to pass through A/2-7 CAVs position and attack westward toward the Euphrates. 3/1 Marines were not moving as quickly as planned, but the TF 2-7 commander was quick to point out that was due to the stiff resistance 3/1 faced:“3/1 still had a tough fight behind us rooting those guys out.”

I. *Build* 2. 3/1 Marines and TF 2-7 Cav accomplished a passage of lines in the daylight, while in contact – a complex operation. Though the passage of lines was originally planned for the hours of darkness, the delay at the breach site changed the timing of the passage of lines.

1. While the A/2-7 CAV commander focused on the fight, the TF 2-7 commander moved his TAC to Jolan Park to assist with the forward passage of lines of 3/1 Marines. The S3 of TF 2-7 Cav and the S3 of 3/1 Marines dismounted and worked through the friction of the passage together on site.

2. TF 2-7 Cav established four passage lanes and by 1230 (after about four hours) on 9 Nov, 3/1 Marines had completed the passage of lines and attacked west. A/2-7 Cav was then able to consolidate and complete securing Jolan Park.

**III.** Visual 21: RCT 1 Attack, 9-10 Nov 2004 / Operator Instructions #31

A. Though planners in RCT-1 thought it would take 24 hours for TF 2-7 Cav to secure the Jolan Park, the soldiers managed to secure the objective in 12 hours.

B. Move south from Jolan Park across the “Pizza Slice” and angle through the residential area to Objective Virginia.

C. Meanwhile, along PL Henry, both C/3-8 Cav and C/2-7 Cav secured the road as the TF’s line of communications. Dismounted infantry cleared the first rows of buildings on each side of the road, while tanks and Bradleys secured road intersections

D. *Build* 1. At about 2330 on 9 Nov, C/3-8 Cav continued its advance south along PL Henry and then attacked west, parallel to PL Fran (Hwy 10), headed for OBJ Virginia. The TF 2-7 CAV commander described OBJ Virginia as an “open schoolyard-looking piece of terrain.”

1. Once on OBJ Virginia, C/2-7 Cav took the lead and identified 10 to 20 insurgents fighting from a mosque on the northwest corner of the objective. With dismounts too close to the mosque, the battalion commander, S3, and troop were conflicted on how to proceed.

2. As the leadership of 2-7 CAV discussed how to proceed, the commander of 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment came up on the net. 1-227 AV was flying in support of RCT-1’s main ef­fort. The 1-227 commander recommended firing two Hellfire missiles into the mosque. The TF 2-7 commander concurred and cleared the area, allowing 1-227 to destroy the mosque, killing the insurgents inside.

E. 3/1 Marines were still engaged in combat with the insurgents in the Jolan Dis­trict and 3/5 Marines were still fighting in the northwest corner of the city. The TF 2-7 commander called the RCT-1 commander and reported taking his day two objectives in about 36 hours. The TF 2-7 commander requested guidance on whether to continue his attack, or consolidate. The RCT-1 commander ordered TF 2-7 to continue the attack.

F. Drive south from OBJ Virginia to PL Fran, turn right (west) on PL Fran to a point where you can see the south bridge. Turn right (north) and drive to the north bridge

G. *Build* 2. The TF 2-7 commander ordered A/2-7 to reconnoiter the eastern end of the two bridges spanning the Euphrates. On 10 Nov at 0900, A/2-7 left the Jolan park, advanced down PL Henry until they reached PL Fran, then turn west towards the eastern end of the South Bridge. Operator Instructions #32 When A/2-7 reached eastern end of the South Bridge, they turned north and maneuvered toward the eastern end of the North/Brooklyn Bridge. As they reached the eastern end of the North Bridge, A/2-7 encountered elements of 3/1 Marines approaching from the east. “We came nose to nose with a Marine company,” the A/2-7 commander (CPT Twaddell) recalled. “They were fighting from east to west and we were coming right up into their area from the south. So we did our recon as quickly as we could and got out of their hair . ..”

1. Darkness was approaching and two companies from two separate battalions were operating in the same area near the northernmost bridge (“old bridge” or “contractor/Blackwater bridge”), a key objective for the division.

2. To avoid the coordination problems and possible fratricide, the RCT halted both units for the night of 10 Nov. A/2-7 Cav was to overwatch the bridge from the south, while the 3/1 Marines were to consolidate their gains and overwatch from the north.

3. The dissemination of detailed graphic control measures discussed earlier, along with the distribution of a complete list of call signs and frequencies of units operating in RCT-1s area, enabled multiple units to close on a single location with minimal planning. Small unit leaders were able to directly coordinate their locations and fire control measures, preventing fratricide.

4. On 11 Nov, A/2-7 Cav effected a battle handover of the area to the 3/5 Marines.

**IV.** Visual 22: Fighting Inside Fallujah / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. It’s worth reinforcing what this urban fight looked and sounded like. While the roads form your life line to adjacent units they also confine your movments.

B. *Build* There’s an intensity unique to an urban fight. The conflict for the small unit leader is largely focused on the interior of a city block, were the noise of combat is intensified, making small unit engagements seem bigger than they actually were. Actions external to your immediate area feel remote and unknown, contributing to a sense of urban isolation.

C. *Build* The debris surrounding you inhibits movement and maneuver, while

D. *Build* the buildings bordering a city street or the walls of household courtyards channel you into dangerous engagement areas.

E. *Build* insurgents leveraged the cover and concealment provided by the complex urban terrain to attack the Soldiers and Marines.

F. *Build* Creating pathways to facilitate clearing operations required significant urban breaching operations.

G. *Build* Urban combat tends to isolate and ‘swallow’ entire units, and Fallujah was no different

H. Let look at actual combat footage to see how the Marines and Soldiers operated within the urban environment of Fallujah. What are you personal observations of what you just witnessed?

1. **VIGNETTE:** U.S. Marines in Fallujah Iraq Combat Footage

**2. (Optional) VIGNETTE:** TF 2-2 Infantry in Iraq

**V.** Visual 23: 1st MARDIV Disposition, Night of 10 Nov / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

A. By nightfall on 10 Nov RCT 1 had completed the initial clearance of their AO. According to the TF 2-7 commander**,** “The Marines [were] having a good but tough fight. They had some casualties but they’re rooting out the last pockets of the enemy in the 1st RCT sector . . . So it took them about 48 hours.”The battle proved costly for the Marines. The RCT-1 commander remembered 3/1 Marines sustaining 20 to 30 KIA in the first 48 hours.

B. To the east, RCT-7 had cleared to PL Fran. Overall 1st MARDIV had seized its objectives for the first 72 hours in about 48 hours.

C. In the early morning hours of 11 Nov, MajGen Natonski, the 1st MARDIV Commander, met with the commanders of RCT-1 and TF 2-7 on PL Henry. The original plan called for RCT-7 to clear the remainder of the city south of PL Fran, but MajGen Natonski wanted to revisit his options.

1. RCT-1 had reached PL Fran faster and with fewer casualties than expected. To exploit this success, MajGen Natonski wanted to discuss transferring forces from RCT-1 to RCT-7 in order to reinforce RCT-7 as they cleared the remainder of Fallujah. Specifically, MajGen Natonski was considering assigning TF 2-7 to RCT-7.

2. The TF 2-7 commander told MajGen Natonski “it was not easy to break contact, disengage get back and go get integrated in a new regimental combat team, so I offered the suggestion of just continuing the attack south along PL Henry.”

D. MajGenNatonski and the RCT-1 commander spoke briefly and MajGen Natonski decided to extend the existing boundaries to the south end of the city and have both RCTs continue to clear in zone. 1st MARDIV still needed to secure the terrain it had already seized, and continue detailed clearance operations. 3/5 Marines were partnered with an Iraqi battalion and remained north of PL Fran to conduct the security and clearance missions.

**Analysis:**

I. What was one of the major concerns/ dangers in regards to the RCT-1 and RCT-7 broad front?

A. Not being able to breach simultaneously and therefore creating gaps between the various units.

II. Why were the mechanized and armored vehicles critical to the MEF’s success in Fallujah?

A. The assault into the city was spearheaded by armored vehicles, mainly M1 Abrams and M2 Bradleys of the Army in both RCTs.

B. This allowed the rapid penetration to break up and get behind enemy defensive positions and break through the multiple layers of IEDs that were nested at key locations (Ballard, 101).

C. Building height impacts the utility of armor – Fallujah is only 2-3 stories, prevents top down shots or problems with elevating the main gun on tanks.

III. Discuss the teamwork of the Army - USMC key leaders on the ground and the critical decisions made under fire.

IV. Assess the risk of key leaders being forward in contact to make things happen at critical moments.

V. Again, discuss and evaluate the TTPs used in breaching the railroad berm along the LD.

A. Did the Marines need better breaching assets to expedite the breach?

B. Discuss how the delay actually facilitated progress later.

VI. How well did Coalition Forces leverage their advantage in CAS and CCA to facilitate their ground maneuver?

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 8: Execution of Phase IIIB – RCT-7 Search and Attack**

**Directions:**

**Visuals:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Visual 24: Execution of Phase IIIB- RCT-7 Search and Attack |  |
|  |  |
| Visual 25: Execution of Phase IIIB- RCT-7 Search and Attack |  |

**Orientation:**

**I.** Visual 24: Execution of Phase IIIB - RCT-7 Search and Attack / 8 Operator Instructions #33 & Operator Instructions #34

A. By 10 Nov, RCT-7 had achieved it’s PH IIIA objectives. RCT-7 needed to continue the detailed clearance of the northeastern section of Fallujah, while simultaneously setting the conditions to cross PL Fran and attack in to the southeastern section of the city (the Sana’a and Jubayl districts).

B. 3/1 Marines would remain north of PL Fran along with Iraq security forces to back clear the Askiri and Dubat sections of the city. TF 2-2 and 1/8 Marines were tasked with continueing the attack south of PL Fran.

C. TF 2-2 (see graphic) was assigned the eastern half of the offensive zone with 1/8 responsible for the western half of the zone attacking from north to south towards PL Katherine (the Limit of Advance).

D. On 10 Nov, A/2-2 IN continued its search-and-attack missions north of PL Fran, with a secondary intent of protecting the LOC, while A/2-63 secured PL Fran. On 11 Nov, TF 2-2 IN turned over its area of operations from the LD to PL Fran to 1/3 Marines and prepared to re­sume its attack south.

E. 1/8 Marines were in position near the Government Center in Fallujah. A/1/8 Marines would be the first elements of 1/8 Marines to cross PL Fran. A/1/8 Marines would make contact just south of PL Fran, in a major engagement that became known as the ‘Candy Store’ fight. 1/8 Marines would attack south along a fairly narrow frontage to advance into the Shudada district by 15 Nov.

**II.** Visual 25: Execution of Phase IIIB - RCT-7 Search and Attack

A. On 11 Nov at approx. 0330, a platoon from A/1/8 Marines attacked across PL Fran south of the Government Center in order to occupy a position that would protect the remainder of the A Company’s crossing. 1/8 Marines crossed PL Fran in the attack at 1500 hours with two companies on line, tanks in the lead, and AAVs following in support. They encountered the heaviest resistance they had faced up to this point. As the Marines crossed the highway, insurgents opened fire with automatic gunfire and antitank rockets. 1/8 Marines advance south was along a narrow frontage largely between PL Ethan and PL Henry. The attack south would halt for the evening of 11 Nov just shy of PL Grace.

B. On the eastern side of Fallujah, TF 2-2 advanced south of PL Fran at 1900 on 11 Nov, operating the eastern half of RCT-7s area, largely between PL Ethan and PL Abe.

C. TF 2-2’s attack was complicated by a COMSEC change that 1st MARDIV dictated in accordance with its SOP. Changing COMSEC in the middle of the operation created friction between TF 2-2 and RCT-7. Internally, TF 2-2 IN maintained its old COMSEC key until the tempo of the operation slowed. The COMSEC change did not have a critical impact on operations, but the TF 2-2 commander summed up the incident well: “Changing COMSEC fills in the middle of a fight (which the Marines did once) is just a bad idea.” (Matthews, 48)

D. On 11 Nov at 2000 hours, RCT-7 ordered TF 2-2 IN to halt at PL Heather and wait until 1/8 Marines could come up on line with TF 2-2 IN’s western flank. At 2300 hours, TF 2-2 received permission from RCT-7 to continue its attack south.

E. On 12 Nov at 0600 hours, TF 2-2 reached its limit of advance (LOA) on PL Jenna. RCT-7 informed TF 2-2 that any new attack south would be delayed until 1100 hours.

F. Meanwhile, 1/8 Marines attack had stalled near the Haj Musheen Abdul Aziz Az-Kubaysi mosque (between PL Grace and PL Heather). This devolved into a daylong fight which slowed further progress to the south. By evening of 12 Nov, 1/8 Marines furthest progress south was to PL Heather.

G. From 0900 hours on 12 Nov. to 1100 hours on 13 Nov, TF 2-2 conducted de­liberate clearing operations between PL Isabella and PL Jenna. By 1300 hours on 13 Nov, TF 2-2 was ready to continue its attack south from PL Jenna.

H. On 13 Nov, RCT-7 delayed TF 2-2 for almost two hours (from 1330 to 1500) to let 1/8 Marines reach PL Isabella. At 1500 hours TF 2-2 resumed their offensive to destroy the remaining pockets of resistance in its area of operations. 1/8 Marines encountered significant resistance in the Jubayl and Shuhada districts, with intense fire fights taking place during the deliberate house clearing operations. The areas 1/8 Marines were clearing were much more densely populated by insurgents than the industrial area TF 2-2 IN cleared. This difference at least partially explains the difference between 1/8 Marines and TF 2-2’s rate of advance. 1/8 Marines would eventually effect a visual link-up with 3/1 (in RCT-1s adjacent zone) late on 14 Nov in the vicinity of PL Isabella.

I. From 14 to 16 Nov, TF 2-2 conducted clearance and quick reaction missions in RCT-7s sector. On 17 and 18 Nov, TF 2-2 cleared the industrial sector of caches and IEDs. The task force conducted an attack to clear south of Fallujah on 19 Nov, and on 20 Nov, performed a battle handover (BHO) with 1/8 Marines. Following the battle handover, TF 2-2 withdrew from Fallujah

J. Although TF 2-2 encountered some heavy resistance in the southeast corner of Fallujah, they effectively switched from the attack phase on 15 Nov and commenced clearance operations in the interior of the city.

K. Combat operations did not cease with the occupation of the city, however, and die-hard pockets of resistance continued even as most insurgents sought to flee the city.

L. The reports of RCT-1 and RCT-7 on 20 Nov showed each RCT using two Marine infantry battalions in clearing operations. They encountering some defended houses, especially in the southern sectors.

**Analysis:**

I. Given the nature and disposition of the enemy during the Search and Attack phase, was clearing the building room by room truly the best solution?

A. The tactical surprise accomplished at Second Fallujah ranks as one of several remarkable feats of I MEF and the 1st Marine Division in a highly complex battle. The attack disoriented the insurgent defenses at the outset, and they never recovered their balance.

B. Although the Jolan district contained the heart of Fallujah’s insurgency, the rapid penetration into it forced insurgents from their positions and prevented a sustained defense. After the operation Coalition soldiers and Marines discovered the majority of safe houses and other insurgent sanctuaries in the area.

C. In the south, specifically in Nazal and Shuhaydah, the assault units found the staunchest defenses, including great numbers of prepared defenses, such as foxholes, spider holes, and tunnels inside and between fortified houses and insurgent billeting areas. Considerable caches of ordnance were found throughout the city.

II. Discuss the disruption in C2 during the Marine COMSEC change.

A. Was the change over in contact necessary?

B. What was the overall impact?

C. Discuss how 2-2 IN continued mission when it had no contact with its higher HQ.

D. What are the challenges to subordinate units in this situation, when it occurs unexpectedly?

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 9: Execution of Phase IIIB – RCT-1 Search and Attack**

**Directions:**

**Visuals:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Visual 26: Phase IIIB South of Phase Line Fran 11-20 Nov 04 |  |
|  |  |
| Visual 27: Phase IIIB South of Phase Line Fran 11-20 Nov 04 |  |
|  |  |
| Visual 28: Phase IIIB South of Phase Line Fran 11-20 Nov 04 |  |

**Orientation:**

N/A

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 26: Phase IIIB South of PL Fran 11-20 Nov 04 / Operator Instructions #35

A. On 10 Nov RCT-1 prepared to push thier attack south of PL Fran. The attack south would involve TF 2-7 CAV and 3/1 Marines. 3/5 Marines would remain north of PL Fran continuing the task of deliberately clearing the Jolan district alongside elements from Iraq Security Forces. TF 2-7 would lead the attack south using tactics similar to those employed in seizing the Jolan district during the initial invasion of Fallujah. 3/1 Marines would follow TF 2-7 CAV conducting deliberate clearing in zone.

B. From 11 to 13 Nov, TF 2-7 Cav continued its attack south, with C/3-8 Cav moving along PL Henry, and A/2-7 IN attacking south from PL Fran. C/2­-7 Cav remained north of PL Fran securing the TF LOC (PL Henry). The TF 2-7 commander noted that “this was not a clearance mission, but we did pick some zones where we thought the enemy was concentrated based on the terrain and intelligence.” TF 2-7 advanced south along PL Henry rapidly, attempting to unhinge the insurgents command and control in much the same way they had in the Jolan. The effectiveness of their rapid penetration into the Nezal district caused the insurgents to change their tactics. The insurgents began to try and draw the Soldiers and Marines into costly firefights within the interior of the densely packed homes in a fight to the death, as opposed to withdrawing to fight another day. The percentage of foreign fighters was higher in the Nezal district than in the Jolan district. This may have contributed to the change in tactics as well, since the foreign fighters tended to be more fanatical.

C. During their advance south, TF 2-7 Cav made “mini-thunder runs” to the west towards the Euphrates along major roads intersecting with PL Henry. Many of these ‘mini-thunder runs’ were used to establish salients jutting westward from PL Henry. From these salients, companies from 3/1 Marines would conduct deliberate clearing to the north and south.

D. 3/1 Marines attacked south on 11 Nov at 1600 hours, clearing a narrow zone between PL Henry and PL Isaac immediately behind 2-7 CAV. 3/1 Marines attacked with two companies forward and one company back. During the daylight hours of the 11th, the insurgents in front of RCT-1 withdrew south to regroup and attempted to reorganize their defenses.

E. Marines and Soldiers moved into the night, not making much contact. The cavalry screen secured the regiment’s eastern flank, with a section of either M2 Bradley fighting vehicles or M1A1 tanks at every major intersection.

F. On the morning of 12 Nov, the insurgents again engaged the Marines. At 1030 hours 3/1 Marines reported strong insurgent contact, receiving mortar and small arms fire about 500m south of PL Fran, near where TF 2-7 CAV was advancing. By 1640 the first elements of TF 2-7 CAV reached their limit of advance on the southern edge of Fallujah.

**II.** Visual 27: MSG Kasal at Hell House

A. The last major organized resistance encountered by RCT-1 came on 13 Nov at 1017 hours. 3/1 Marines fought squad-sized insurgent element in an engagement later called “Hell House”. (Estes, 60-61) Visual 28: Outside of Hell House

B. North of PL Fran, 3/5 Marines continued to conduct methodical house-to-house searches and uncovered tens of thousands of pounds of ordnance, which they systematically destroyed. During these operations, 3/5 Marines disconvered numerouss large weapons caches, a torture house, and enemy C2 nodes of significant intelligence value. Securing and exploiting these finds caused tactical units to lose momentum. To mitigate this loss of momentum, the battalion reorganized internally, created an element called “Task Force Bravo”. Led by the Battalion XO TF Bravo was task organized with intelligence and EOD Marines to categorize and inventory the caches and insurgent material. This freed the line companies to maintain the momentum needed while back clearing, bypassing caches after they were found. This concept was later replicated by 3/1 Marines in the south of the city.

C. 3/1 Marines successfully seized the southern portion of the RCT-1 zone. The Marines and Sailers of 3/1 Marines made great gains despite running into some of the stiffest resistance since the fighting began, including suicide attacks by suspected foreign fighters.

D. Enemy contact was heavy during the early afternoon of 13 Nov and continued at lesser levels through the night and into the morning of 14 Nov.

E. Marines and Soldiers of RCT-1 now entered a more dangerous period in the operation. An increasingly desperate and tenacious enemy used suicide attacks, snipers, and booby-trapped buildings to inflict more casualties. The Marines and Soldiers continued to dominate the “ten-second firefight” and effectively applied combined arms tactics to eliminate resistance.

F. As his regiment continued detailed clearance in zone, the RCT-1 commander crossed the south bridge over the Euphrates on 15 Nov, officially opening it for military traffic only. Navy Seabees assessed the north bridge as being in good condition and it opened shortly thereafter.

G. The next day, 16 Nov, shortly after noon 3/1 Marines reported that its sweep of the south bridge with dogs and explosives ordnance devices disposal teams located six improvised explosive devices. The removal of these came just before the symbolic crossing of the bridge by the commander of Multi-National Forces–Iraq (MNF-I), accompanied by the RCT-1 and 3/1 Marines commanding officers.

H. At times during the battle in the RCT-1 sector, TF 2-7 allowed Marine FSOs to use its 120-millimeter mortars. The TF 2-7 FSO remembered, “We used our mortars and also the Marines used our mortars quite a bit. Of course, the Marines only had 60mm mor­tars and 81s. So anytime 2-7 wasn’t using our 120s, we just passed them over to the Marines and let them shoot. We ended up, through the course of two weeks, firing almost 1,000 rounds.”The RCT-1 commander grew increasingly impressed with TF 2-7’s 120-millimeter mortars. “Our 60- and 81-millimeter mortars are great to go ahead and attack the enemy out in the open and hit him on the rooftops, but our Marines found out that when you take an Army 120-­millimeter mortar and drop it on the top of a building, it’s dropping the floor.” TF 2-7 Cav’s tanks, Bradleys, ar­mored ambulances, and heavy mortars provided significant capablities to RCT-1.

I. From 14 Nov until 19 Nov, TF 2-7 conducted attacks in support of 3/1 Marines. At noon on 20 Nov, TF 2-7 withdrew from Fallujah. During the fighting, TF 2-7 suffered two KIAs and the loss of six tanks and four Bradleys (damaged, not catastrophic loss according to Camp, 254).

**Analysis:**

I. What is MajGen Natonski’s leadership style? Did he make the right decision not to move TF2-7 into RCT-7’s sector? What was his decision based upon?

A. Rainey told Natonski “it was not easy to break contact, disengage get back and go get integrated in a new regimental combat team, so I offered the suggestion of just continuing the attack south along PL Henry.”MajGen Natonski and Col Shupp spoke briefly and made the decision to continue the attack south with TF 2-7.

B. MajGen Natonski held that a commander needed to be close to the action. “I believe I’d rather see my commanders in person and talk to them face to face rather than talk to them on the radio. I wanted to see how the troops were doing and the stress they were under. The only way you can do that is by being there.” Natonski went into the city every day, enabling him to keep his fingers on the tactical pulse of the operation. “I think that’s why I was able to make decisions as quickly as I did. I could talk to commanders, get their feelings, see either the stress or confidence in their faces and I would know what we needed to do.” MajGen Natonski’s leadership theory was that “you don’t have to be a squad leader clearing buildings but you need to be present so you can talk to platoon, company and battalion commanders as well as the troops to know what’s going through their minds. That’s just what you do as a leader.”

II. How well did he take LTC Rainey’s recommendation to continue the attack as planned?

III. Discuss the challenges of converging forces in contact in an urban environment.

IV. How do we deconflict movement and fire and mitigate the risk of fratricide?

V. Discuss the critical importance of unit basic load (UBLs) for units. Based on the experience of Marine companies running black on ammunition, how would you prepare for such a possibility?

A. Increased personal loads/ vehicle UBLs?

B. Rearming/ resupply plans in or out of contact?

C. How do you sustain a fight in contact?

VI. Assess the threat as CF continued to achieve success.

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 10: Phase IV & V - Transition**

**Directions:**

**Visuals:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Visual 29: Phase IV & V- Transition |  |

**Orientation:**

N/A

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 29: Phase IV & V- Transition / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

II. There was no clear-cut delineation between the end of offensive operations and the beginning of stability operations as the frequency and intensity of the fighting diminished. The assault battalions occupied assigned sectors of the city and crossed and re-crossed them in sweeps and house-clearing operations, using the attached Iraqi battalions to the extent that their abilities permitted.

III. RCT-1 reports noted increasing efforts at humanitarian assistance and civil-military operations in the last third of the month. RCT-7 noted the same by 27 Nov. and was able to begin rotating Marines by platoon back to base camps for 24-hour rest periods beginning on 29 Nov.

IV. TF 2-7 Cav completed its withdrawal to Camp Fallujah on 23 Nov.

V. Continuing discoveries of arms caches plagued the operation in its final weeks, creating security problems and also permitting renewed attacks in the city by surviving insurgents. By the end of Nov, 370 caches had been uncovered in Fallujah.

VI. MNF-I and the Marines had anticipated that the liberation of Fallujah would cause significant destruction in and around the city. The Coalition tried to avoid damaging key infrastructure, such as the electrical grid, the bridges over the Euphrates River, and the water supply. Even with Coalition efforts to minimize damage, 18,000 of the city’s 39,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed during the fighting.

VII. Civil Affairs teams and US Navy Construction Battalions (SeaBees) moved into the city to establish a civil-military opera­tions center and clear the streets of rubble. Other Marine teams cleared unexploded ordnance from buildings and began repairing the damage to electrical lines.

VIII. The goal of the I MEF and 1st MARDIV Phase IV (stability operations) was to establish competent Iraqi security forces in the city that would require minimal backup by U.S. forces. Civil affairs group teams and detachments from 1st Force Service Support Group operated with every maneuver battalion, assessing damage, and seeking to protect infrastructure wherever possible. As combat operations wound down, the Marine commanders focus shifted to restoring Fallujah’s municiple operations. The Marines priorities were: public health, public works and utilities (water, food, electricity, medical), infrastructure (communications and transportation), the economic infrastructure, emergency services, and finally the reevaluation of projects previously begun that might prove salvageable.

IX. Through the last weeks of Nov and the first two weeks of Dec, the 4th Civil Affairs Group staff worked with a variety of higher commands and the Interim Iraqi Government to develop a return and reconstruction plan for the city that would allow residents to return home while precluding insurgents from returning to the city. A new scheme of internal movement control was developed, using biometric identification technology, a variety of scanners, ID cards that had to be worn at all times, and a new series of movement control points.

X. Six weeks after the assault began, the Marines allowed some of Fallujah’s residents to return. The Coalition’s plan was to give the returning residents $2,500 as a form of compensation and condolence for their losses and suffering. This compensation only amounted to about 20 percent of the value of the damaged houses. There were problems implimenting the plan, and as of 14 Apr 2005, only 2,500 of the 32,000 compensation claims had been paid, according to an NBC report.

XI. Ten percent of the pre-offensive inhabitants had returned as of mid-Jan 2005, and thirty percent as of the end of Mar 2005. In 2006, some reports estimated that two thirds of the pre-operation population had returned and only fifteen percent remain displaced on the outskirts of the city, but these numbers are only estimates.

XII. During 14–16 Dec, the Army’s 2-1 BCT departed 1st MARDIV area, after transferring responsibility for the area outlying Fallujah to RCT-7. RCT-7 had departed Fallujah city on 10 Dec, leaving 1/3 Marines under the tactical control of RCT-1. RCT-1 conducted the occupation and stabilization of the city proper.

XIII. The RCT-1 commander conveyed the complexity of the change in mission:

“Our operational success depends on our efforts in this phase. At no time is the phrase “No better friend, no worse enemy” more applicable. This phase however, will be complicated with no clear beginning and probably starting as areas of Fallujah are cleared of enemy activity. Identified forces must roll into these tasks on the heels of our advance. We must keep the citizens of Fallujah informed through creative info ops that readily offer aid and assistance. We must reach out to the citizens to reduce their human suffering and quickly restore daily operations. We must introduce the Interim Iraqi Government as soon as possible and steadily transition to their control and operations. The citizens must be impressed with the power of Iraq's legitimate authorities and identify with the government as their benefactor and hope for the future. We must destroy any ties to criminal elements and seek the assistance of the people. Maintaining security is paramount to enabling all other operations, but it must not consume our focus.”

XIV. The overall stabilization plan culminated with the integration of Iraqi security forces into security operations to advance local control of security (Phase V). This consisted of giving internal security and policing responsibility to Iraqis and maintaining U.S. quick reaction forces to support security and civil military operations.

XV. As Iraq prepared for elections in Jan. 2005, Fallujah stood as a symbol of the Coalition and the IIG’s resolve to remove all obstacles from the path of political progress. However, the Sunni minority was enraged by the operation in Fallujah and the damage to the city. Insurgent activity surged across the country and widespread demonstrations followed. Sunni turnout was low in the important Jan. 2005 Iraqi election, and Sunnis began leaving mixed neighborhoods in Baghdad to move to enclaves like Fallujah.

XVI. Between 7 Nov and 31 Dec 2004, when sporadic resistance ceased, 83 Americans lost their lives in the fighting in Fallujah and over 600 were wounded.

A. USMC: The majority of the casualties were Marines who bore the brunt of the deliberate house-to-house clearing operations, with 76 Marines killed.

B. US Army: The two Army task forces suffered the loss of seven Soldiers, five in 2-2 IN and two in 2-7 CAV. The fighting in AL FAJR wounded another 72 Soldiers.

C. Iraqi Army units suffered as well. At the end of the first two weeks of combat inside the city, the Iraqis had lost six killed and 55 wounded.

D. Enemy: Of the approximately 4,500 insurgents in Fallujah, the Coalition forces killed 2,000, taking another 1,200 as prisoners. These casualty figures are striking, but given the historical record of battles in urban terrain, the numbers, especially for coalition forces, are relatively light.

**Analysis:**

I. Was the re-population of the city and the Civil Military Operations planned well in advance (with COIN on their mind?)

II. What are the challenges of identifying transitions at the tactical/operational level?

A. Discuss how CF began simultaneous CMO with final clearance operations.

B. How well were Iraqi forces employed in this situation?

III. Compare and contrast Phase IV operations in Fallujah with the US occupation of Baghdad in Apr 2003.

IV. Discuss the concept of restraint in the use of fires as demonstrated in Fallujah.

A. Key infrastructure left intact to facilitate Phase IV transition.

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**Stand 11: Fallujah 2005-2011**

**Directions:**

**Visuals:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Visual 30: Fallujah 2005-2011 |  |

**Orientation:**

N/A

**Description:**

**I.** Visual 30: Fallujah 2005-2011 / Virtual View: Master Overview the city of Fallujah

II. The second battle of Fallujah was seen as a victory for the Coalition Forces. The primary insurgent stronghold in Iraq was liberated and a clear message was delivered that Iraqi and Coalition forces would not allow safe havens for Anti-Iraqi / Anti-Coalition forces anywhere in Iraq. But Fallujah continued to be a focal point of events in Iraq.

III. Fallujah still bears the scars of war. Unemployment, lack of medical care, and the uncertain availability of basic services remain pervasive. There has been some reconstruction, but shortages of electricity and clean water are common. The overall mood in the city is one of anger, hopelessness, and fear according to Al Jazeera reports from 2012.

IV. In an effort to deliver consistent power to the city, in 2007 the deputy commanding general of MNF-W approved a $30 million power project designed to produce 30 megawatts of power. But the central government in Baghdad indicated that they would remove 30 megawatts of power from Anbar once this project had met completion—in effect the improvements to the power grid in Fallujah would result in a zero sum gain to the city. The project was dropped as a result, awaiting a national solution. This only served to increase frustrations Fallujans felt toward the central government.

V. In the aftermath of the offensive, relative calm was restored to Fallujah although almost-daily attacks against coalition forces resumed in 2005 as the population slowly trickled back into the city. From 2005-06, elements of the new Iraqi Army's 2nd and 4th brigades, 1st Division, occupied the city while the Marines maintained a small complex called "CMOC" (Civil Military Operations Center) at the city hall. The Iraqi units were aided by [Military Transition Teams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Transition_Team) (MTTs). Most Marine elements stayed outside of the city limits. By late 2006, the CMOC was moved to the east of the cloverleaf across the street from a hospital that had been established by a Jordanian NGO (pre-battle the hospital had been a meat packing plant).

VI. In late 2006, the tribal leadership formed an alliance with its former adversaries. The alliance, or Sahawa al-Anbar (Anbar Awakening) purged Al Qaeda from its ranks because of Al Qaeda’s harsh tactics. Al Qaeda had targeted Sunni tribal leaders and began taking control of money-making activities traditionally held by local tribes. The tribes formed local militias for protection. Its members were paid, equipped, and trained by the American military. The Anbar Awakening drastically reduced violence in the city and brought a resemblance of security to its residents. Significant Activities were drastically reduced in the city by Sep 2007.

VII. A significant complaint the tribes voiced in late 2006 and early 2007 was that their ‘sons’ were being recruited into the Iraqi army and police forces, but were taken out of the province to serve in other provinces around Iraq. The tribes predominantly objected to their ‘sons’ serving in Shia provinces. Community policing was a concept the tribal leaders clearly understood. They wanted their tribesmen to serve, but serve within the immediate community were they originated. As soon as assignments were modified by the Ministry of Interior (in the case of Iraqi Police Forces), the ranks of the local police swelled with tribesmen—who had ‘skin in the game.’ This had significant impacts on the security situation in Al Anbar.

VIII. According to journalist Michael J. Totten: “Hardly anyone even tried to start a fight now. Of all Iraq’s cities, only nearby Ramadi has experienced so many dramatic changes in so short a time.” (Camp, 295)

IX. In Jan 2007, the U.S. military increased its forces in Iraq in what was known as the ‘Surge’. A series of offensive operations focused on expanding the gains achieved in the preceding months in Anbar province. By mid-2007, the number of attacks province-wide were at the lowest point since 2004.

X. In Jun 2007, Operation Alljah (The Swarm) was launched by [coalition forces in Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multinational_force_in_Iraq), mainly U.S. Marines, to secure the neighborhoods of Fallujah. The strategy of the operation was somewhat based on a similar successful operation in [Ramadi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramadi) conducted in 2006. In both cases Joint Patrol bases were established and partnered operations between the Marines and Iraqi police forces were conducted.

XI. Fallujah was divided up into 11 sections managed by individual units of Iraqi policemen. U.S. commanders tried to keep the Iraqis in leading roles, with coalition forces in support. To separate the parts of the city so that each section would be easier to deal with, coalition forces set up barriers which left a limited number of access points to move between the districts of the city. This was intended to make it harder for insurgents to move throughout the city, and isolate troubled areas.

XII. Each precinct had a building set as a base of operations, where civilians could receive various services, including food and limited damage reimbursement. These buildings also served as recruitment centers and bases of operations for the Iraqi police in those precincts. The precinct headquarters issued ID cards, facilitating passage through checkpoints. The ID cards also made it easier to track suspects within the city.

XIII. In Feb 2008, Fallujah once again made international headlines by rejecting the new Iraqi flag due to its references to former president Saddam Hussein—surprising since the former dictator was a Sunni and had been relatively kind in his dealings with the arab tribes of western Iraq.

XIV. Reconstruction faced significant challenges. Despite Baghdad allocating $100 million for the city's reconstruction and $180 million for housing compensation, very little reconstruction occured. The Waste Water Treatment Plant project authorized by the Coalition Provisional Authority in Jun 2004 was initially set to cost $35 million, service 100,000 residents, and be completed by Feb 2006. The plant was handed over to the Iraqi Government in Jan 2012. It cost $107.9 million ($72.9 million over budget), is only capable of servicing 70,000 residents (30,000 less than planned), but is expandable to 200,000 residents. However, as of Jan 2012, only 6,000 residences were connected (approx. 38,400 people). The Iraq Government anticipates requiring another $87 million and three years of work to complete the project. The General Hospital in the city's Dhubadh (also written as Dubat) district was completed in 2008. It is a larger, more modern version of the former hospital, but this appears to be an exception to what most residents see as a trend of failed reconstruction projects in the city. Promises to rebuild destroyed schools, homes, mosques, and government buildings often went unfulfilled.

XV. The Marines departed the Al Anbar province in early 2010, turning over security advisor tasks to the U.S. Army. These organizations departed Al Anbar in late 2011. Since then, Iraqi security forces have assumed the sole responsibility for ensuring the protection for their citizens and maintaining the peace.

**Analysis:**

I. Assess the effectiveness of Operation Al Fajr.

II. Was the campaign a joint operations success? Why or why not?

III. What challenges between the two services were encountered during the course of the operation? Were they solved? How?

IV. What points of friction were not solved and potentially remain today?

V. If Al Fajr was such a successful operation, why wasn’t it repeated in Iraq or elsewhere since (Marjah, Afghanistan)? Marjah was liberated in Oct – Dec 2010.

VI. What are some considerations for conducting a joint operation at the BCT/RCT and below level?

VII. What does the Army bring to the fight that the Marines found useful?

(Mechanized infantry, tanks, armored ambulances, 120mm mortars)

VIII. What do the Marines bring to the fight that the Army found useful?

(A lot of infantry, responsive CAS, ANGLICO)

[**Stand List**](#StandList)

**INTEGRATION**

**Directions:**

N/A

**Visuals:**

N/A

**Orientation:**

N/A

**Description:**

N/A

**Analysis:**

I. How did the terrain help you understand the battle?

II. How will you apply the history studied today?