taking about a couple of the rivers, a couple of bridges, the canal to the north and he was kind of located in the middle of those. I wanted to make sure we were talking about the same area. He said, "Yeah, we've got two bridges." You can see on the map there's the Euphrates and then the canal. There's two bridges up there. We said, you know…he's on the eastern side of the bridges, and kind of talked to him from there. He ended up being actually down into this vicinity over here, is where he was at. While he kept on talking…once again, I'm looking down and trying to find his positon when my wingman's taking a higher cover position and listenint to the over, the overall general picture. I said, "I'm not really sure where he's talking about. I believe it's over down into…" actually it's kind of more over in here, and Maj (b)(6) said…if he could to to him, and I said, "Yeah. Let's make sure we know what we're talking about." He requested the tactical lead, and you know…having flown with him for the past twelve years, I mean…I have no problem giving him the tactical lead. And, actually, I think it kind of makes it a little bit better. So, now I can kind of back off and listen and comprehend what I had actually been hearing. He talked to him, figured out…yeah, hey, we got it. And he said, "We've got a couple of rockets." He ended up saying, "Hey, what I'd like to do is kind of take it and shoot rockets no further south." I think then the 3-6 or somewhere in this area here. And "Is that OK?" to make sure we had the understanding that we could see those rockets, and MOUTH cleared him hot, as we basically came from here, he had a couple of HE, which didn't help out. My understanding is that point and time, by MOUTH clearing him hot, that he had full eyes-on where we were and had seen us.

COL (b)(6) And you were doing that to identify his position?

MAJ (b)(6) Well, what we wanted to make sure cause he had initially given us the 3-7 grid line, and we said, "OK, we want to make sure we understand where you are. We wanted to mark, basically in the field." He said, "Nobody is north of this road." That he knew…My understanding is, we wanted to mark and make sure we had him, and basically say everything north of those marks is what he was calling getting the firing from. We wanted to mak…There's the smoke, there's the line, we don't cross the smoke. And that's the concept. Unfortunately, there were HE rockets versus willy-petes. We were back into our wheel, basically stayed in that position and at this point and time…from…basically this area coming down, there was a couple of other helicopters that (b)(6) and I had picked up. They were Apache or…

COL (b)(6) Now, you're pointing just south of the canal?

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah, they were running the…southern edge of the canal, and ended up going off…

COL (b)(6) East to west?

MAJ (b)(6) I thought they ended up going out pretty much this way here, from what I recall.

CAPT (b)(6) So, they were going west to east, and they ended up going southeast?

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah. They left the whole target area…off into this vicinity here. We relayed all that information back to him,…to MOUTH, and said that you know, "Were you talking to these guys?" You know…They could've come in here, but I know they headed off into this vicinity. And shortly thereafter, I mean…during the time frame as we were talking and seeing the helicopters, one vehicle basically, when fire comes into this position up here, and now that one vehicle blown up on the ground, big black smoke running, and we're talking down to MOUTH saying, "Hey. Here's what we see on the ground right now. Here's where some fire came at. There's one vehicle burning. Do you see the smoke?" "Yes, I see the smoke."

CAPT (b)(6) Could you just point to the grid of that? Approximately where that was?

MAJ (b)(6) At about 22-39.

CAPT (b)(6) And this is a 1:15,000. I've also got some imagery her (b)(2)High

(b)(2)High

MA (b)(6) Right about…224 391, 2. Along there.

COL (b)(6) Did you see any other vehicles when you saw the one vehicle burning along with that vehicle?

MAJ (b)(6) We had one vehicle burning on the road. We had about three other vehicles down into…you've got the larger canal and you've got the center canal just in the vicinity of about 223 391, right in this V-section of the road and the small canal. There was about three vehicles there, and to the north there was about four or five vehicles on the western side of the road, and then there's about one or two just east of the burning vehicle in into this area here. It looks like…

COL (b)(6) You said you saw the Cobras going south. Did you associate the burning vehicle with the Cobras?

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah. At the same time something was fired in here is when these guys were leaving. So, I can't tell you if they fired. I cannot say. I assume at this point and time…you know…I couldn't tell if they were Cobras or Apaches due to being a little bit higher. You know…they were egressing the area, and they had a vehicle burning, and we hadn't laid down a single piece of fire yet.

CAPT (b)(6) Could you just describe what type of vehicles, or if there's any type of description you could give me of the vehicles?

MAJ (b)(6) You know…looking about 15,000 feet with probably (b)(2)High binoculars, the vehicles over in this particular corner appeared to be white, the small type of pickup truck that you see running around base all the time. This one, out into the field here, appeared to be another white single pickup truck. These to the north were a bit larger. To the best I could tell,

they were the truck style. You've seen the…kind of cab over, no nose to the truck. At least one of them, one or two of them was, with a long flat bed. I mean…kind of like what I walk by all the time by self-help. I mean one of the small Mitsubishi style trucks with a flat bed. It appeared to be dark in color. And those were these to the north here.

COL (b)(6) About how many total vehicles did you see?

MAJ (b)(6) Eight to nine.

COL (b)(6) Eight to nine?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Now that we had the burning vehicle right smack dab in the middle of the roads, I was talking to MOUTH. He said he could see the vehicle. As we were talking down he says hey, you know…he initially told us when we were trying to figure out where he was, and no one's north of the 3-7, he came back and said, "No one's north of the 3-8 grid." And no friendlies were north of the canal. So basically from this V…you know, we said, "OK. Nobody's north of this, nobody's north of the canal. Everything that we are seeing and the burning vehicle is north of the canal and north of the 3-8 grid line."

COL (b)(6) When you say the burning vehicle, could you see the vehicle or did you see the smoke from the vehicle?

MAJ (b)(6) We just saw the smoke from the…whatever was burning on the ground is all we saw.

COL (b)(6) Right. But did he see the smoke coming from the vehicle, or did he see the vehicle…in your mind?

MAJ (b)(6) I don't know if he had eyes-on it when it got hit, but he saw the smoke of that particular burning…if it was a vehicle. We assume it was a vehicle being on the road. I don't ever remember hearing anybody from MOUTH's side say cleared to shoot any vehicles, but all of a sudden it just happened. I mean, all of a sudden, when I research, of the finding of the friendlies, knowing where they were, and going back up here to go north of the canal,…at that point and time, now we've got a burning vehicle, and…

COL (b)(6) And how much time between that?

MAJ (b)(6) About 10 or 15 minutes.

COL (b)(6) 10 or 15 minutes?

MAJ (b)(6) But…by the time we checked out, before we ever expended was about 10 to 15 minutes. So, we wanted to make sure we had…you know…we got called to this emergency CAS, we wanted to make sure we know where he's at. Yeah, at that point in time, we're telling MOUTH what we say, and he's saying what we see, and he's basically cleared us to engage any

of the vehicles north of the 3-8 and north of the canal. And we kind of told him what we saw and the rough vicinity of where they were at, and at that point and time, we were cleared to engage those vehicles.

COL (b)(6) Did he tell you what type of CAS he was running, or do you know?

MAJ (b)(6) No. From everything that we had heard since we had it cleared hot call down here is that, and he was in the vicinity of seeing the target area with the smoke, you know, we thought we were under totally his control. There was nothing said cause we would call for "in and hot." We were getting, to the best of recollection we were getting cleared.

CAPT (b)(6) You had clearance each time?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes.

CAPT (b)(6) Would you do me a favor and just kind of using the maps to help you out, could you just draw a diagram of how the vehicles were sitting, and then where the…just kind of an orientation for, so we can kind of get an idea of where you were…?

COL (b)(6) ust kind of go down on the bridge and…

MAJ (b)(6) I can't tell you if they're…

COL (b)(6) Just from the best of your recollection of what you saw.

MAJ (b)(6) I think there was four or five up here, so that had us at about nine vehicles. Right in here in this particular part and right up in this vicinity here.

COL (b)(6) OK.

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah, at that point and time, our tactics were still with the threats in the area, and what we had was still under the shooter-cover role. So, over this whole time frame, my wingman's still (b)(2)High and at that point and time, I say, "You're i (b)(2)High (b)(2)High We both have eyes-on target. We feel comfortable, and we know where MOUTH is at. We had gotten up there north of the canal, north of the 3-8. He expended two MK82s, I believe, on the eastern…

COL (b)(6) Now, did you assume the tac lead at this point?

MAJ (b)(6) No, he still had the tac lead. I'm still the flight lead, but due to our timeframe and the stack which we were in, it was easier to keep him down and expend from that timeframe. We both had good SA from what we thought at this point and time. We had talked about it, and we'd…we evaluated everything, with the burning vehicle, and with MOUTH. We went after, I believe, the vehicle to the east. With a couple of MK82s, and as for sequence from here out, what he shot after that, I'd had to sit there and say…it may have been gun on his next pass, some more MK82s, gun…the Mavericks were saved at this timeframe. So we kind of

switched at some point and time, and I took a single bomb down into this area, with three vehicles on the south of the burning vehicle and just to the west side of the road.

COL (b)(6) To the east side of the road.

MAJ (b)(6) East. OK.

COL (b)(6) OK.

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah. My wingman took out the eastern target.

CAPT (b)(6) [redacted] that's east. Right here.

MAJ (b)(6) So, I went after these three down in this vicinity here. Came back with basically another single bomb. I whip it in there. Now we're getting to the point…we're in the target area, and it became more of, we weren't seeing any threats on the RWR. The vehicles were still all stationary at that point and time. We pretty much went into a cover, not a cover, but a wheel type of operation, encircling the area. Basically still…all of this was still done pretty much above…we were still in the (b)(2)High wheel block of which we were trying to…

COL (b)(6) Where were you bottoming out from on your runs?

MA (b)(6) ly particular runs, I was using abou (b)(2)High hich starts at about (b)(2)High feet and pickles ard (b)(2)High

CAPT (b)(6) e they HADBs and High Angle Strate to stay (b)(2)High

MAJ ANDERSON: Yeah. We were trying to do the best we can. We were looking (b)(2)High all…you know…basi (b)(2)High nstead of the (b)(2)High just because of the block and you've got tha (b)(2)High bot egress and their attitude block. And so basically doing that kind of thing. After being 10 or 15 minutes in there, so that, OK, I thi (b)(2)High ill work off the line-up card. The mils are all set up in the EGI. And, then…High Angle Strate pretty much at that point in time, would keep us abo (b)(2)High et looking at minimum…My particular thing, and I wish I had the tape, so we can say, "I was at this altitude." I think the MISREPs got…you know…because we spent our time coming back writing down on cards…you know…Here's what the tapes were saying times, and turn that into an Intel and actually reviewed it. So, once again I came back around here, and then from that point and time, it was kind of shooter-cover at all times during the wheel. I think he came back around on the third pass and maybe dropped his next two bombs, and I came around and finished off my last two bombs. I kind of went 1, 1, and 2 and he went 2 and 2. Now we get a call from MOUTH that …maybe another 15 minutes into this, "Hey. I'm looking north." And he's seeing…wants us to kind of go up into this compound up here and see and kind of tell him what we see. I believe this is…he says north to to the T intersection comes out on the east side. You see some sort of a compound.

CAPT (b)(6) K.

MA[redacted] (b)(6) We kind of looked there, and we're saying, "Hey, from what we can tell looking under the binos…you know…so, we had stopped actually and when we went up there…you know…still kind of went into the role here, one person down on the binos looking. All I could tell from my position was "Yeah, there's buildings down there." As to anything next to buildings, anything like that, I could not see.

COL (b)(6) Going back to the target, did you see what kind of BDA did you have on the target that you were striking initially, before you broke off and went up to the intersection?

MAJ (b)(6) The best that I could tell you is, under the first bomb, it went short. The second bomb…I guess if there's anything about the jet I kind of didn't like was it was a little bit cocked off from some of the offsets. So, now I'm kind of readjusting to that. The second bomb…and I know the two bombs went right…cut through it…I couldn't tell you what my wingman's BDA was…you know…my job at that point and time is to cover the whole area, and you know…say, "It looked like your bomb went a little bit short," or "You hit the target." I couldn't tell you if the thing was totally destroyed.

COL (b)(6) Did you see any troops while you were doing this?

MAJ (b)(6) No. So, after we kind of reviewed down into this area, the complex just south of the T intersection, is where we had the four to five vehicles, one vehicle was still remaining up here and about, from what I can recall. Four vehicles were now leaving this area,

making kind of a V shape straight to the road, and starting heading southbound into the city. This was the information that was relayed back to MOUTH. "Hey, you've got four vehicles from the northern target sector that we talked about, progressing into the city." And…you know…he said basically he needed those not to get across. So, I had two options from my position here. I can't tell you if I shot first or my wingman shot first. I believe, I thinl (b)(6) hot first and his first one overflew it. I know I came in from east to west running heading with (b)(2)Higl model Maverick. Th (b)(2)High ıd it appeared black. And the last picture I had in my mind of that vehicle is truck style, no nose, and kind of a top on it. So, I mean it was…what I picture as one of these small, truck size, white vehicles you see in front of self-help. With a canvas top over it or some sort of top over the back, giving it a pure box shape. At this point in time, by the time I was in position, had locked on the vehicle, the vehicle was on the bridge. I elected not to fire on the bridge, fire the Maverick just as it was crossing the south side of the bridge, and basically, it was impacting abo (b)(2)High later. I mean…the vehicle did not make it any farther than maybe…It was still in the open. So, still north of the 3-8, nowhere into this…I would have to say it is right in this vicinity here. So, what is that? Maybe one width of the canal south of the river.

CAPT (b)(6) OK.

COL (b)(6) And that was a direct hit?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, it was. The (b)(2)Highshot at was maybe about a width and a half south of right into the vicinity here, or maybe…I think it was actually right here, maybe two widths of

the canal south of the bridge, and it was stopped, and he came back around and fired a second Maverick. He used (b)(2)High Maverick at this point and time, and that was another direct hit. We had two of the vehicles that made it through, went around, and as for the exact location, I know they went down south, and actually kind of went off into a side street and pretty much pulled over right next to a couple of buildings. And at that point and time, we said, No. We're not going any further than this." We know that one…civilian collateral damage, and …you know…Their lucky day, or unlucky day. I don't know how you want to say these things, but…those which were not shot upon. During this whole time frame the comment from MOUTH came across the radio saying, "Hey, you're putting smiles on the guys' faces down here." Maj (b)(6) responded back, "Well, you've got a couple of Guard guys up here, trying to do our best." When that actually happened, I think it was during the bombing or strafe prior to the Mavericks coming off. We had one vehicle remaining in this area here. We're getting close to our…which would be the northern set of vehicles, where the four came out, five came out. And basically I was going to roll in, I still had some 30 millimeters. That one vehicle had no sign of any damage on it. It was either stuck or whatever…but we hadn't hit that area, and that vehicle was there, and I was rolling in from the west to east, and at that point in time is when the cease fire call was made, and I did not expend, and we both…you know…my wingman said, "Hey, did you hear that?" I said, "I'm off, dry. Come back into wheel. Set up the cover position." At that point and time, you know…we said, "What's going on?…Who called it? And what's going on?" There was no call sign association…you know, "Hey, this is MOUTH…" any of that. It was just cease fire, cease fire. We tried to figure out at that point and time what was going on. I talked to MOUTH, and he said, "Hey, we think we might have had a Blue on Blue, some guys up north at the river, but we're not sure. No one really knows." And we stuck

around for about another 5 minutes on our cover positions to see if there was anything else we could…you know…answer questions, look at. But I think pretty much at that time, we wanted to try and make sure what was going on, and we now physically had to bingo out due to low fuel state.

CAPT (b)(6) At any time during there, did you see any kind of markings that would identify friendlies?

MA (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) Any kind of reaction from the vehicles you were hitting other than the ones that started driving south.

COL (b)(6) (b)1.4a

MAJ (b)(6) (b)1.4a

COL (b)(6) ny tripel A while you were doing this?

MAJ (b)(6) No.

COL (b)(6) So, nothing coming in here at all?

MAJ (b)(6) No, and as the time went on, that's what allowed us to just go to a wheel type of engagement.

CAPT (b)(6) He did not mention anything more about friendly forces at all in that area?

MAJ (b)(6) No. We had no idea that he had any kind of problems. We were pretty much under his direct control up here.

CAPT (b)(6) On RTB, as far as any in-flight report, did you pass the possibility of…

MAJ (b)(6) To be honest with you…coming back, we tried the in-flight report on the Intel frequency. There was a lot of problems with that particular radio. I do not remember or recall if…you know…because I went through on our radio and said, "Here's kind of what I got," verified it wit (b)(6) and that was his responsibility to pass that report. He didn't, as far as I recall, my best recollection directions were he could not get a hold of them. We spent…I know I did..1 (b)(6) was with me at the time reviewing my tape and Intel at the debrief shack out on the line, and during this time, I know (b)(6) also made a phone call to…I forget the gentleman's name. It's in this…it's in the report.

CAPT (b)(6) Maj (b)(6)

MA (b)(6) : Yes, thank you. While I was reviewing the tape with Intel and said, "Here's what we got. Here's where the Maverick shot. Here's…you know…the bombs." And I turned my tape into the person who did the debrief. That was the last I saw of it.

CAPT (b)(6) K, and that was Lt (b)(6) by any chance?

MAJ (b)(6) I couldn't tell you. The MISREP actually had who did it at the bottom of it.

COL (b)(6) Going back to the engagement. Did you get an abort call at any other time during the engagement?

MAJ (b)(6) No. It was just that…we just got one call at the very end.

CAPT (b)(6) Was the person who took the MISREP perhaps a female?

MA (b)(6) can't remember. I mean, really, I don't recall that.

CAPT (b)(6) Is there anything you would like to add as far as…?

MA (b)(6) Yeah, I think…the important part about this whole thing…It's an unfortunate situation. I personally feel bad about having this happen, but under the situation that was presented at that time, on that day…you know…the calls that were made…you know…I

don't know what else, anybody else would've done, except respond to a guy. A US force guy saying he was under fire and needs help. You know…and being on that location at that time frame, I still think I'd go right…if he needed help, I'd go and say, "Hey, what do you need?"

CAPT (b)(6) Any follow up questions? Col (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) General, any questions?

GEN HODGKINS: No.

CAPT (b)(6) Maj (b)(6)

MAJ (b)(6) Just one question. You said you reviewed the tape with (b)(6)

MAJ (b)(6) That's correct.

MAJ (b)(6) Did you talk about this incident?

MAJ (b)(6) Now (b)(6) .when I found out that this was under investigation, I was here and Maj (b)(6) was in Tallil.

COL (b)(6) And when was that?

MA (b)(6) It was about two weeks after this whole time frame…you know…and then for the next two to three days…I…you know.. (b)(6) had kept his tape…Maj or Col (b)(6) I guess is the person that got called in since Col (b)(6) and myself were out flying that night. He got the information, passed it as soon as we got done. He said that he had gone and talked to (b)(6) over the phone at Tallil. He said he had the tape in his office, or in his locker, and …you know, wherever he had it, and at that point and time, I guess he accidentally used it at some other time. The next day, I…you know…went down to Visual Imagery and say, "Do you have this mission on this date." No. I say, "Where's the tape?" "I don't know," they say, "They get put in a box when they get here. Then when they're done, the get sent back over to Intel." I took a box of tapes that were in Intel, and just reviewed them to see if any were mine. That produced nothing. The next day a box came from the flight line to the Ops desk and I was the Top 3. I took the box, reviewed the tapes, nothing. So, I wish we had the tape. I wish the process had worked. You know…I can't say any more on that.

CAPT (b)(6) Any questions? Alright, just a quick closing statement. In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes.

30 April 2003
Follow-up Interview with Maj (b)(6)

Parties present:
BRIG GEN WILLIAM F. HODGKINS
COL (b)(6)
MAJ (b)(6)
MAJ (b)(6)
CAPT (b)(6)

CAPT (b)(6) This is Capt (b)(6) with Gen Hodgkins, Col (b)(6) Maj (b)(6) and M (b)(6) on a follow up interview from the 28th of April interview. Just to remind you of all the previous opening statements still apply. You're still considered under oath.

MAJ (b)(6) I acknowledge that.

CAPT (b)(6) The big questions we had, and there's just a couple of places on our…on the MISREP we have from your flight that day, we're just trying to get some clarification on. First of all, in here, if you want to look at it. We've got the Intel officer lists four different Maverick shots through here, but then in a narrative at the end, there's three.

M (b)(6) : Let me just look at this here. Can I write on this?

COL (b)(6) No. I don't know if we have another copy of that. Just tell us…if there's a problem there, just let us know.

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah. I me…just like we reported to them…I me…unless they're just going down GYRATE…OK, they just did GYRATE 7-3's and then GYRATE 7-4's. They didn't put it in the order of which they were dropped. I kind of made…we told them that. There was only three Mavericks. I'll tell you that.

CAPT (b)(6) We have a few listed down at the bottom and at the top of the second page.

MAJ (b)(6) This was a good Maverick, which would (b)(2)High I only see one for GYRATE 7-3…yeah. There is a mistake on the MISREP (b)(2)High (b)(2)High an (b)(6) did not have three Maverick missiles. He only had two. He (b)(2)High Maverick. So, they have added an extra one on there, and it's not mine because I came home with one Maverick. So there was only…

COL (b)(6) OK. So he dropped two and you dropped one?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes.

CAPT (b)(6) And the next thing, again, a point of clarification, we noticed here that she had listed something for a SAFIRE event.

MAJ (b)(6) No, we didn't see any SAFIRE. Small arms, automatic weapons, we didn't report that. You know…it seems like everything here is just kind of a straight canned 7-3, 7-4. But, no, as far as I can remember, to the best of my recollection, it is nothing that we saw.

CAPT (b)(6) Even in the narrative, it mentioned something about it. So, again, we're just trying to clear it all up.

MAJ (b)(6) You know…you could sit there and…I never saw any small arms coming up at me, you'd know whether…because in the very next mission that we did fly, that we did have triple A coming at us. You know, so…I don't know who did the next mission behind that one, but to the best of my recollection, you know…I know that I didn't see any that I remember, and I don't believe that…Maj (b)(6) did. I can't speak for him.

CAPT (b)(6) The next question that I have is just…the number of mission that you might have flown following the incident. Do you remember how many about, since, between that incident and our interview the other day? Do you remember the approximate number?

MAJ (b)(6) It exceeds twenty missions.

CAPT (b)(6) OK. Between then and now?

MAJ (b)(6) I would say I almost did thirty missions total since I've been here, since March 3rd.

CAPT (b)(6) So, at least twenty since, at least twenty since that day?

MAJ (b)(6) Easily. I think I just had my twenty-seventh OIF mission, or twenty-sixth OIF mission yesterday, dropping leaflets.

CAPT (b)(6) And you said you had, I think about four or five…?

MAJ (b)(6) Going through my 14 day report, I would say at least five minimum. I wish I had brought it over. It's on my computer right now. I'm just trying to…at least five or six, looking back at it now.

CAPT (b)(6) you're saying at least twenty. That's fairly accurate now?

MA (b)(6) Yeah.

CAPT (b)(6) Any further questions, Sir? We're going to try to minimize the number of follow ups that we do

MA (b)(6) I've looked at a couple of these MISREPS reports because they're, I don't know…they kind of got to the point of being so overwhelmed out there. The…to me it seemed like things were just kind of like, here's what they want, and I never saw what they wrote until afterwards. That's the best I can recall.

CAPT (b)(6) OK. Once again, please don't talk about the testimony you've given here today, thanks.

26 April 2003
Interview with Major (b)(6)

Parties present:
BRIG GEN WILLIAM F. HODGKINS
COL (b)(6)
MAJ (b)(6)
MAJ (b)(6)
CAPT (b)(6)

CAPT (b)(6) My name is Captain (b)(6) and under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

MAJ (b)(6) I do.

CAPT (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

MAJ (b)(6) Understood.

CAPT (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MAJ (b)(6) I do.

CAPT (b)(6) [redacted] the record could you please state your name and rank and your home and deployed units?

MAJ (b)(6) Major (b)(6) . 23rd Fighter Squadron, home base is Willow Grove Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Air National Guard. 23rd Air Expeditionary Squadron.

CAPT (b)(6) far as your flying history, how long have you been flying the A-10?

MAJ (b)(6) I've been in the A-10 about 12 years now.

CAPT (b)(6) How many hours, approximately?

MAJ (b)(6) 2200, 2300.

CAPT (b)(6) As far as experience in this theatre, ONW, OSW?

MAJ (b)(6) This is my third time to Al Jaber and _____ in December. Third time flying out of Al Jaber for OSW. Two OSWs now.

CAPT (b)(6) Any ONW experience?

MAJ (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) And as far as this campaign? How long were you here before it began?

MAJ (b)(6) Probably only about ten days. Ten days, two weeks.

CAPT (b)(6) Prior to March 23, how many mission have you flown, for Iraqi Freedom?

MAJ (b)(6) This was either the third or fourth.

CAPT (b)(6) Were you able to engage targets on anything prior to this?

MAJ (b)(6) Only…this would have been the fourth, and I engaged targets on the _____ peninsula the night prior.

CAPT (b)(6) You said you arrived in theatre about ten days prior, so about the ninth?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes. I actually showed up at Al Jaber on the 10th.

CAPT (b)(6) What type of schedule were you keeping? Day, night?

MAJ (b)(6) We went to a noon to midnight local schedule. And I was flying mostly nights. This, I believe, was my first day sortie.

CAPT (b)(6) In relation to that, when did the change happen, between nights and days?

MAJ (b)(6) That day. I'd flown the previous night, then turned to this afternoon…daylight sortie.

CAPT (b)(6) So, it was a double turn then?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes.

CAPT (b)(6) How much time did you have off in between the sorties?

MAJ (b)(6) I don't recall, exactly. I mean, it was well within crew rest.

CAPT (b)(6) Time to eat?

MA (b)(6) Oh, yes. Plenty of time.

CAPT (b)(6) ior to your night mission, did you get plenty of sleep, enough rest to…?

M (b)(6) Yes.

CAPT (b)(6) our relationship with GYRATE 7-1 (b)(6) Personal? Professional?

MA (b)(6) Excellent, we've been flying together since 91.

CAPT (b)(6) Were you guys combat paired?

MAJ (b)(6) We are not.

CAPT (b)(6) ow many times have you flown together?

MAJ (b)(6) That was our first time flying together here.

CAPT (b)(6) So you flew with somebody the night before and then turned to have a sortie with Maj (b)(6) ?

MAJ (b)(6) Correct.

CAPT (b)(6) In the squadron, was there any sort of an atmosphere of pressure, as far as going out to employ ordinance? Pressure to get the job done? Kind of maybe a competition or…? Weapons delivery?

MAJ (b)(6) : Quite the contrary. Col (b)(6) has done a stand up job with the objective of the squadron. I was briefed on every one of my sorties and I know either Col (b)(6) ..too…our mission is to support friendly forces, period dot. The only way to do that is to… _____The best I can say is quite the contrary. _____ People are tallying up what's going on…the fires and how many bombs have been dropped. _____-- squadron numbers would reflect a conservative _____ as opposed to a _____ number of bullets or Mavericks or something.

CAPT (b)(6) As far as the preparation for this campaign, what types of training were you guys working toward? Spin up sorties?

MAJ (b)(6) Code? Thunder. Code Thunder was the previous June. Code Thunder was designed for the first three, four days of the war, I believe. Back at Willow Grove, the Code

Thunder folks_____- so Code Thunder was outstanding training. I'd say even the trip to Baghram in December was a great kind of continuity if you will, procedural…way of doing business…checking in, checking out, just the day to day stuff that you might not do day to day at home_____.

CAPT (b)(6) How long was it from the time you left Baghram to the time you arrived here?

MAJ (b)(6) I was home for about six weeks.

CAPT (b)(6) Six weeks, OK. The immediate preparation…was there a huge shift in ops tempo from what you were doing at home versus what you were doing as soon as you got here?

MAJ (b)(6) There wasn't very much time. We…I actually was home about six weeks, but the rest of the squadron was home four weeks. I went home a couple of weeks early. My wife had a third kid, so it was a good reason to get out of Baghram a couple of weeks early. In the guard, we put all of our airplanes and packed up some people together to ? rainbow, so when we got back to Willow Grove, we were short a few airplanes so, there was…I'd say we were flying a four turn four. So, it was not a big spin up. Probably in large part due to a …well, they didn't have enough planes on the ramp.

CAPT (b)(6) Your personal schedule, from your noon to midnight shift, within that type of schedule, were you getting plenty of sleep?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes.

CAPT (b)(6) Were your roommates on a different schedule?

MAJ (b)(6) No, we were all…everybody in the squadron was on the same schedule so, that was not a factor.

CAPT (b)(6) As far as the training leading up to…what kind of fratricide type training and visual recognition training were…how much of that was going on?

MAJ (b)(6) We do it regularly at Willow Grove in the daily brief. The mass brief consists of threat of the day, weapon of the day, system of the day and _____. And part of Intel's portion of the mass brief is reccy, in addition to our unit training assemblies, where everyone is gathered together for one weekend a month for a rehash of _____ that kind of stuff. That was our_____.

CAPT (b)(6) Had you guys looked specifically at Marine vehicles? Marine type vehicles?

MAJ (b)(6) No. I wouldn't say we _____at Marines.

CAPT (b)(6) On the day in question, in preparation for the thing, anything unusual about anything? Out of the ordinary?

MAJ (b)(6) Nope. Everything from the _____- to Intel's brief, the GLO's brief being pretty standard.

CAPT (b)(6) When you took off were you assigned to go with the MAP, or did you think you'd be going to the fifth corps?

MAJ (b)(6) We were going to the fifth corps, 86 Alpha Tango, well north of Nasiriyah, and then got re-rolled via the…off the tanker, through the tanker updated to Alpha Tango. As soon as we…shortly after _____ and enroute to 86 Alpha Tango, the call on guard frequency for any CAS _____.

CAPT (b)(6) Weather that day? Can you describe for me what the weather was like?

MAJ (b)(6) If I recall it was sky clear…I'm not sure of the vis.

CAPT (b)(6) Any problems with the aircraft? Anything annoying or flying funny by any means?

MAJ (b)(6) Not at all.

CAPT (b)(6) [redacted]y chance, do you wear a high contrast visor?

MA[redacted] (b)(6) do not.

CAPT (b)(6) [redacted]o you wear sunglasses underneath your visor or anything? Anything? Just the normal dark tinted visor?

MAJ (b)(6) Just the visor.

CAPT (b)(6) On that day, were you carrying and using binoculars?

MA[redacted] (b)(6) Yes. Yes, Sir.

CAPT (b)(6) What type?

MAJ (b)(6) I think (b)(2)High binoculars.

CAPT (b)(6) Using GO or NO-GO pills at that time?

MAJ (b)(6) I was not.

CAPT (b)(6) guess at this time, if you could go ahead and let me…or I'll just let you talk…if you could just talk me through the mission flow and how things went from the time that you check in with _____onto when you…

MA (b)(6) OK. We actually didn't make it to _____. Punched in, we're talking to COMMA? Ran through the check in procedures and then we're just in there _____to the north. Call comes over guard looking for any CAS fire, I think was the verbage. He came up with here's the call sign, here's the frequency to get me, and here's where we need you to come.

COL (b)(6) Do you remember those?

MAJ (b)(6) I remember the call sign was MOUTH. I don't recall the frequency. I can't say with complete certainty that he said to go to An Nasiriyah. I think he just gave us a grid, or had maybe given the kill box and a keypad to go to. So we headed over to An Nasiriyah, which 84 Alpha Whiskey which was… you know, we were the obvious choice because we were pretty close by the timing of it all.

COL (b)(6) Do you know what time this was, approximately?

MAJ (b)(6) I don't…I want to say it was 1020-ish maybe. _____I don't remember the exact time. Went over, _____on MOUTH's frequency. We checked in with him, got into a wheel, over the top…the top of his position, the keypad he assigned us, and let him…checked in with him, here we are, what's going on? From there, I'm pretty sure I

remember him saying that he had a tank or a couple of tanks stuck in the mud. That's what I remember hearing, and that they were taking fire. So we, GYRATE flight are still orbiting overhead and for probably the first 15 minutes, I would say, we spent just trying to get fires on GYRATE…or on MOUTH. He at some point, I think, passed us some coordinates of where he was and I remember plotting him to the east of town, but I did not have eyes on his position. I could not see him. As we going around, looking at the details of where he was exactly, I think at some point in there he had to move, just cause of the amount of fire he was taking. But he stayed in radio contact with us as this was going on. I, at one point asked…I said OK, I said OK, I said to _____, I think I got an idea of where these guys are. Can I take the tactical lead and _____ to these guys, and see if we can get this, _____? So I take the tactical lead, talk to MOUTH. "I think I know where you are. Looking at the terrain and having, I think, tanks stuck in the mud, and the coordinates that he gave us, I pick an open, I'm not sure if I'm pointing at the map here correctly, but I said hey, I got an open field where I'd like to put down a couple of rockets, where I think is north of your position, but I can see it's an open field. There's nothing in it. I'll just put a couple of rockets down there, tell me if you see them. Unfortunately all I had was HEI rockets, fired those, and he didn't see them.

COL (b)(6) About what location did you fire those? Approximately?

MA (b)(6) East of the town, south of the canal. So…25 36, I'm thinking somewhere out here.

CAPT (b)(6) st for _____ I've got a 1: 15,000 here. Map number 941? For An Nasiriyah, just so you can have the scale.

MA (b)(6) It's east of the city, an open field, south of the main…the big canal, north of the river and…so I roll in, MOUTH clears me to put the rockets down. I put the rockets down. I put the rockets down. They're not usable. So we go back to hey look, talk us onto your position. He's talking and at some point gives us coordinates of where he is…and I want to say, somewhere around the 35 or 36 northing, gridline. Nobody was further north than that.

COL (b)(6) ????????????

MA (b)(6) I think he was saying…I'm not sure if it was 35 or 36 where he started out with, no friendlies are further north than this grid, and I want to say it was 35 or 36. So we continued talking with him, put this on the map, and kind of jotted a note on the map where he is, though we're still not eyes on. We're still just…kind of…seems to be… slowing down a bit there as far as what_____-an excessive amount of time to get eyes on the friendlies on that position. A couple of helos, I guess, Cobras, kind of crossed the canal. We picked them up crossing the canal, and then they head off to the southeast. I said hey, or I'm not sure if the flight lead asked him, do you see these helicopters that are heading south? I think he said yeah I got those guys in sight, they were working the target area.

COL (b)(6) And that was about the _____, the _____?

MA (b)(6) Roughly. I think that…canal down over here sticks? Just off this map a little bit.

CAPT (b)(6) Earlier you said they were moving south across the canal?

MA (b)(6) I saw them crossing the canal from north to south…and then they turned to the southeast. And then that was the last we saw them. I think they were RTB at the time. They were on their way out of the area at that time. A few minutes later, we're still trying to get eyes on MOUTH. A couple of minutes later, north of the bridge, 2239 grid, we pick up one vehicle on fire, on the road. Huge plume of black smoke pretty much going straight up. So I'm thinking, again, the weather is pretty good. The winds aren't….they're probably pretty calm. I asked? MOUTH…

COL (b)(6) About what position was that? Was it across the railroad bridge?

MAJ (b)(6) It's up in here. Probably 224, 223 _____. Somewhere up in here.

CAPT (b)(6) One other question. What altitude were you at at the time?

MAJ (b)(6) At this point, I think we were abou (b)(2)High

CAPT (b)(6) You kept at that altitude pretty much the whole time?

MA (b)(6) Yes. Intel had briefed that there was a Roland in the area and that was our biggest concern. Not the biggest concern, but a concern. Friendlies position, at this point, was our biggest concern. This vehicle was burning, a huge plume of black smoke and we ask MOUTH, "Can you see this smoke from the burning vehicle?" And he said that he can see that. So it' s great reference point. And we're now all working off it. _____ and I kind of reference him the burning vehicle. MOUTH somewhere during all this comes back to give us updated friendly positions. Says no friendlies north of the 38. And that sticks out in my mind, cause we've now moved 2 clicks to the north with the friendly positions. So 38 gridline sticks out in my mind, that there's nobody north of the 38 gridline. Also, I mean there's a lot of prominent landmarks here, the canal, the river, they both bend down to the south, this major road coming out of here, the bridge, major intersection up here to the north. So, as far as looking at stuff on the ground, and then having the burning vehicle with the black smoke going straight up and stayed burning for pretty much the whole time on station, I felt pretty comfortable with that we're all looking at the same thing here. He says he sees the vehicle and that that's the target area that he wants us to attack.

COL (b)(6) Did he say he saw the vehicle or the smoke?

MA (b)(6) I want to say he just saw the smoke. But I can't say with 100% certainty. So he said yup I see that. And then somewhere in there he says there are no friendlies…I can't remember if we asked him this or if he gives this to us on his own initiative, but no friendlies north of the canal.

COL (b)(6) Am I correct, you were talking to him at this time?

MAJ (b)(6) For the most part, and then at some point in here, we switched back cause I think somewhere in the point where I think I am still primarily talking to him. Again I can't remember exactly where we handed the lead back, the tac lead back to 7-3.

CAPT (b)(6) When you spoke to him, did you speak as GYRATE 7-3?

MAJ (b)(6) No. As 7-4. So, again, the latest I have is no friendlies are north of the 38 gridline. Now, no friendlies are north of the canal. This is all starting to build my SA.

COL (b)(6) And MOUTH said that?

MAJ (b)(6) MOUTH said no friendlies north of the canal. At some point, and again, at some point MOUTH gave us some coordinates for friendlies that were west of the position that we were thinking he was. In my mind MOUTH is down in this area somewhere. He's southeast of the city. His coordinates for friendlies are further west. I think at that point I just put them into the navigation system, into _____ and my technique is to type out the whole name and everything, so I know these guys are friendlies. So I had that in my head. So now I had nearest friendlies, with a line on my map, says nobody's north of the 38. This canal—there's nobody north of the canal. Those all make sense to me. I have coordinates in the GPS that indicate the same thing…that everybody, all friendlies…and I kept friendlies in the HUD through this whole engagement. Because we were able to use the smoke as a reference point for everybody. I gotta

say, by the time we got around to attacking the target, there's not an ounce of doubt where we have friendlies located, target area located. The Roland, we don't know where it is, but we're not getting any indications of him. And now we're…somewhere in there MOUTH says that we're clear to engage any vehicles north of town.

CAPT (b)(6) advance on vehicles, other vehicles other than the one that was burning?

MAJ (b)(6) Right. Vehicle's burning on the road, a couple, a couple more vehicles to the north of it and a …it looked like some revetment to the east of the burning vehicle, just on the east side of the road…

CAPT (b)(6) I'm sorry…I've got some imagery. I keep forgetting to bring this out. But there's some imagery, it (b)(2)High imagery of the target area. Would you agree that that's the target area?

MA (b)(6) I sure would.

CAPT (b)(6) OK.

MA (b)(6) : So we're all…we're working up in here.

CAPT (b)(6) And that grid's approximately?

MAJ (b)(6) 229.

CAPT (b)(6) Approximately the same location as the burning vehicle?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes.

CAPT (b)(6) OK.

MAJ (b)(6) That vehicle is right about here, again. 223..393 something, somewhere around there. Some vehicles are actually off the side of the road, to the left side and then what looked to be some vehicles…I actually thought there were some revetted…vehicles to the east. We'd been looking with the binos. We swapped back and forth, one guy at a time looking through the binoculars, looking for vehicles and because…I was in the lower block so I ended up rolling in first with MK82s.

COL (b)(6) [redacted] you could just stop for a second. How many vehicles did you see? Do you have an approximate number of vehicles?

MAJ (b)(6) About a half a dozen…eight.

CAPT (b)(6) And if you could…we'll give you some paper. Would you mind drawing a diagram of just where you saw the different vehicles? We've got a pencil there for you.

MAJ (b)(6) That's our road, our canal is here, bridge, burning vehicle down the road here. I think this kind of corresponds to…up in this area right here. I think I see…I recall a vehicle…I'm pretty sure they were north of the burning vehicle. Something like that, off on the west side of the road…and then some…probably another couple of vehicles, I can't remember how…how I remembered seeing them but I thought they looked like they were in revetments…to the east of the road, the vehicles that were over to the east…and this is what I rolled in on first…was a couple of vehicles further to the east of the burning vehicle. Again, we're referencing everything off of the smoke.

CAPT (b)(6) OK.

MAJ (b)(6) And my first roll in was MK82s on vehicles to the east of the road.

COL (b)(6) What kind of MK82s were you carrying?

MAJ (b)(6) MK82s with…I don't recall what kind of fuses they had.

CAPT (b)(6) You don't remember if they burst on impact?

MAJ (b)(6) I'm pretty sure everything was impact at that point. I don't think we were using air burst fuse. But again, I can't say for sure, absolutely. So, the rest of the sortie is we were trying to orient ourselves parallel roughly the canal and run kind of perpendicular across the…across this first _____. Frag considerations there, and friendlies.

CAPT (b)(6) Did MOUTH happen to give you any restrictions at all?

MAJ (b)(6) I don't remember, I don't recall getting any restriction from MOUTH, other than everything north of the canal. Really the only restriction I can say for sure…and that was for the targets north of the canal, was a valid target. From there we just go into…we shifted gears from concentrating on friendly positions, we now,…sorted that out in our minds and were confident that we had all friendlies located and now we're confident that there's no friendlies…MOUTH tells us there's no friendlies north of the canal. Any vehicle up there, you're clear to engage vehicle targets north of the canal. Now we shift gears, at least in my mind anyway, to target sorting and mutual support, especially with regard to the Roland that was out here somewhere. And then from there we roll into a couple of attacks and again I couldn't give you the exact sequence of attacks, but I know I came in from the west to east first with two MK82s, and then off to the north, and then 7-3, was, I believe, in next on the vehicles that he had picked up, I think, northwest of the vehicle.

CAPT (b)(6) What sort of weapons did he put on there?

MAJ (b)(6) I don't know. I don't remember.

CAPT (b)(6) Did you ever see any troops on the ground at all, during this time?

MAJ (b)(6) No. It was all just the vehicles, and then probably the biggest, the distinguishable thing I can remember seeing, was …at some point, this road comes up, this road follows up off this map…I see this intersection right here on the map that we're talking about up in around the 225 4, almost 410 grid. MOUTH says there's some buildings and some activity in the southeast corner of the intersection north of the burning vehicle. Take a look at that _____. So we take a look around up in this area here around these buildings_____ complex right here and we don't see anything. No activity, no troops, no vehicles.

CAPT (b)(6) The complex was at about 227 406?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes.

UNKNOWN?: ??????????????????????????????

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, I would say so. This was after we'd made a couple of attacks, so we were probably down a little bit lower, but we're still for sur (b)(2)High We went to take a look at that…and by the time we take a look at that, we don't see…we don't see any activity around…around the complex of buildings. At that time, we pick up three vehicles, that were further west of the road, somewhere out in here. I never even saw them until they came up, just about approached the road from the west. As they were approaching the road from the west,

they came, turned from west…they're still on the west side of the road, they just left the burning vehicle trying to merge onto the _____ road, and start heading for the bridge.

CAPT (b)(6) Do you know how many vehicles were there?

MAJ (b)(6) Three or four…I would say three. When I see them I'm east of the target area, I believe (b)(2)High 7-3, he is in the shooter-block and he is west of that position and we make the comment that we need to stop these guys cause it looks like they're heading into town. So our objective is now to stop these vehicles from heading from north to south down this road. We pick them up as they come out of the northwest of the target area.

CAPT (b)(6) Can you describe for me real quick the shooter-block versus the cover-block?

MAJ (b)(6) I don't remember what exact altitudes we used, we probably shifted. For the most part I think it was (b)(2)High And the (b)(2)High

COL (b)(6) Quick question. Did MOUTH tell you that this was going to be Type 3 CAS when you came on target?

MAJ (b)(6) No, Type 3 CAS... He did not.

CAPT (b)(6) Do you believe he had eyes on? Or just the smoke?

MAJ (b)(6) I believe…I was certain he had eyes on the smoke, which led me to believe…made me quite certain that he was eyes in this target area when he said cleared to engage the vehicles north of the canal.

CAPT (b)(6) OK.

COL (b)(6) The vehicles you engaged, what did you recognize those as?

MAJ (b)(6) I couldn't say that I recognized them as a…for the most part, they're wheeled vehicles, no track vehicles. But other than that I couldn't give you a whole lot of detail.

COL (b)(6) Did you see any markings on them, marking panels or anything?

MAJ (b)(6) No. And with the binoculars on, there were no panels on them.

CAPT (b)(6) Just the coloration of the vehicles…?

MAJ (b)(6) There were a couple of white vehicles, a little white pickup truck, kinda looking vehicles in there somewhere. But the vehicle that came out of this northwest area came from north to south down the road were dark or camoflage vehicles heading down the road and we're

trying to spot those. Again, I can't remember what 7-3 did for ordinance, as far as his attacks on those, I, at one point…

CAPT (b)(6) He attacked first?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes. And then when I came around for…he came off…now we set up a wheel where we were both…we were running west to east attacks on these, and when I come around, 7-3 said that he's off to the northeast and he's visual with me, he's got eyes on the targets and he's supporting me cause I'm now in a position to run in from the west to strafe these vehicles in an effort to stop them from heading back down.

COL (b)(6) So you used guns on them?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes. My first attack west – east with guns, a pretty long range shot…probably a (b)(2)High range shot with impacts right on top, of the vehicles. And then, and that did not stop them, so we came back and with Mavericks, and put the Mavericks on…locked these vehicles up, but at this point…When I came in with my first Maverick, they were south of the bridge, so in my mind I know that we're getting close to now, we're venturing back down to friendly territory, but there still is no doubt in my mind, because we saw where they came from. We followed them visually, up in this area northwest of the burning vehicle. My first Maverick…they come into town…just as he comes across the bridge, my first Maverick goes in and misses the vehicle to the east but impacts on the road. I believe 7-3 _____-here, 7-3 comes in with a Maverick and hit the vehicle…

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CAPT (b)(6) And where did that one impact?

MAJ (b)(6) Again, this is all right in this side of the road here, so it's 221 384. It's right in the tips of these…just as we're starting to get into…some you know…I little bit more of a, I'll call them, city blocks, for lack of a better term. So (b)(6) 7-3 has made an attack, hit a vehicle and I now come around and roll in with my Maverick and lock up and launch on the…I can't say for sure it was the same vehicle I'd locked up and missed, the Maverick missed. But that one, I came in on more of a, more of a northwest – southeast. Fired the Maverick on that one and it hit and destroyed the vehicle.

COL (b)(6) Now this was…he had destroyed one vehicle and this was a second vehicle that you hit?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I believe his Maverick…he was the first to actually destroy these vehicles once we got south of the bridge.

COL (b)(6) So he took out one and you took out the second?

MAJ (b)(6) Correct. Now we are down…these guys are…the remaining vehicles are again…so, there's two more vehicles that I'm looking at in this area. They're still going south down this road. They're kind of, they're spread out here a little bit. But there's two vehicles from the group that headed from the north there. One I can remember seeing pull into…off the

side of the road into…for lack of a better term, city blocks. Pulled up into here and in my mind that makes perfect sense. He's going to go and hide in a built up area. It just makes sense to me based on everything that we're hearing they're… you know working in and around not knowing _____ so, that's kind of the thought process in my brain at this point.

COL (b)(6) A quick question. During your Maverick runs were you aborted by MOUTH at anytime?

MAJ (b)(6) We were not aborted till later on. Out of this area and back up to the north and that's…I'll go back to this quickly. That vehicle pulled off and went to this built up area here. The other one came all the way down to this intersection here and turned off to the west and stopped, pulled up right next to a building right here on the northwest corner of that intersection. And we were like, OK….we can't attack those…

COL (b)(6) And you had two other burning on the west side of the bridge?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes. On the road, two burning down in there. Now, we go back up to the north, now we focus our attention back up here to the north to work targets and back to your question, Sir, being aborted on any of the Maverick passes. 7-3 still has one Maverick left and he's got a vehicle that he's locked up and he is actually rolling in, rolling out on final and a call comes up, check fire. I mimic that to him to abort his pass, 7-3, making sure that he heard that. He aborts his pass, comes out. 7-3 I think he says say the reason for check fire. And then that's when we get at some point there, I think we get a stand by, we're sorting it out….

CAPT (b)(6) I'm just going to stop and change the tape. This is tape one, side two. Interview with Maj (b)(6) for the An Nasiriyah incident. We were just talking about being aborted. About this time you were saying that GYRATE 7-3 was aborted off of a Maverick pass.

MAJ (b)(6) 7-3 was aborted off his Maverick pass. They called check fire and then we orbited overhead and try to sort out why we were aborted on this pass…and MOUTH comes back with there may be friendlies up there. I think it was there may be friendlies up there. At this point we've been expending ordinance out there, probably 10, 15 minutes attacking these targets. That's where the ordinance, you know, the weapons delivery is…ends right there. Now, as far as what's going on in the airplane. There's in my cockpit, I've gone from absolute certainty of what we were doing to one radio transmission and then…incredible amount of disbelief. I couldn't believe I heard those words. I didn't mention it earlier, but someone in the course of all this, it's in my statement that as we were attacking these targets, MOUTH goes, something along the lines of you Air Force guys are putting smiles on our faces. This is all…this kind of further validates, in my mind that we had a 38 gridline, we have a canal…so we got pretty good lines on the ground as far as friendly positions. We have a burning vehicle up here. Nobody's north of the canal. You're clear to engage targets in that area. Your attacks are putting smiles on our faces. They seemed to be…they're not taking fire, MOUTH is not taking fire, anymore. All these things kind of validating what we're doing. And then it ends with there may be friendlies up there.

CAPT (b)(6) And was that the first time, was that the only time you were told to check fire, or abort?

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah, and again, that was…I had dropped all my bomb…all four MK82s over the course of this 15 minutes or so, both Mavericks. It might show on the MISREP…I don't remember how many rounds of 30 millimeter, and my flight lead only had one Maverick remaining. I don't know how many rounds he had left, and that was the first _____ we'd gotten word of that.

CAPT (b)(6) In your MISREP, you also mentioned triple A. Do you remember seeing that?

MAJ (b)(6) I did not see triple A, only 7-3 saw it.

CAPT (b)(6) Did you see anything coming up from the area other that…I mean anything that might have been…give away that it might have been friendlies?

MAJ (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) [redacted] (b)1.4a

MAJ (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) Alright. Anything that would maybe resemble triple A or…?

MAJ (b)(6) Nothing.

COL (b)(6) Did you see a reaction from the targets that were down there?

MAJ (b)(6) No. I saw nothing. No return fire. No triple A. Nothing fired up. Again, no indications of _____ out there.

COL (b)(6) What altitude were you bottoming out on in your runs?

MAJ (b)(6) Probably about (b)(2)High

CAPT (b)(6) Is there anything I haven't covered? If we would talk with the Cobras at all would you see them saying anything at all?

MAJ (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) Once you heard there may be friendlies in the area what actions did you two take?

MAJ (b)(6) _____ up our switches, orbited overhead until we reached bingo fuel in hopes of sorting out, try to clear up some of the absolute astonishment.

COL (b)(6) Did any conversations take place between you and MOUTH at that point?

MAJ (b)(6) We just…I believe, 7-3, you know…I can't…I couldn't give you the exact verbage, but it was you know, again, there is not, I can assure you…there is not a shred of doubt in either cockpit while we were prosecuting these attacks, these targets. To hear that, I think….I said to ….I mean as soon as he said there may be friendlies there, I said you've got to be kidding, and that was interflight between us, between the A-10s. I think 7-3 is working with GYRATE to try to get some information. I don't remember how the conversation went, but we just orbited overhead. Radios kind of went silent for a bit. I assume that was MOUTH on his net trying to sort out the details of where are…no kidding…where are all the friendlies.

CAPT (b)(6) To comment on this, the inflight reports or any _____type communications or anything pass as far as this goes?

MAJ (b)(6) 7-3 passed the…our inflight reps and left me on AWACS frequency, he went off to the other frequencies to pass the inflight reps, but to the best of my knowledge, his inflight reps were…included all the standard inflight rep stuff…time on target, vehicles destroyed, attacked…and I don't know if he had passed…excuse me _____ about the possible friendly fire. I don't know that.

CAPT (b)(6) And when you got back to Al Jaber?

MA. (b)(6) We get back to Al Jaber, we go to the, we go into the Intel debrief…go in talk to Intel. And when we go into Intel. _____our tapes, look at our tapes…Intel's looking at our tapes with us, in particular the Maverick attack up here, my gun attack on the vehicle as it was coming down the road from north to south, and the bomb attacks. But primarily we're looking…We're mostly were concerned with the Maverick attacks down here. Of concern to me was why did my first Maverick miss with a valid lock in narrow field of view? We went through that. And even with the Maverick, you couldn't tell for sure what kind of vehicle it was. Other than, you know, it appeared to be a wheeled vehicle, but it…you couldn't tell if that's a no-kidding tank. It just wasn't…the video just wasn't good enough. I don't know if it was because of sometimes the player or the monitor that you're looking at, the quality just isn't as good as playing it on the smaller ones…I don't know. So we looked at… we viewed our tapes, debriefed all the information with Intel, all the standard stuff, the time on station, time on target, the weapons delivery, parameters, time, number of ordinance released, the _____-. Gave them the full debrief, to include the most significant event…the radio call at the end…there may be friendlies up there. I told (b)(6) GYRATE 7-3, I said I would like to call the GLO. Because we were turning to go back out for our next…for our second sortie. I would like to call the GLO and get this…this strikes me as very odd, that somebody would make that radio call, we come back here and nobody knows what we're talking about. That strikes me as odd, so I call the GLO. I said hey…I gave him the whole story…_____Maj (b)(6). Give him the whole story, ask him can you look into this…this is what happened, and then that's it. Go back out for the second sortie, come back from the second sortie, debrief, run into Capt (b)(6) I don't know his last name. He's got a last name that no one can pronounce, so we use his first name. Run into him and say…tell him the story, and oh by the way we called Maj (b)(6) over

in EOC there, and went in to ask him to look into it. Have you heard anything about this? He says yes, he mentioned that to me. He's looking into it. There's nothing anywhere, any MISREP, there's nothing, anywhere that indicates friendly fire. I'm trying to convey to him the magnitude of this and how we were so astonished from being so certain to hearing that radio conversation. How can that be? Capt (b)(6) said something along the lines of…there's nothing anywhere that indicates any of this. If you had engaged friendlies you'd know about it before you landed. That seemed to make perfect sense to me. And that was the last we heard of it until _____.

CAPT (b)(6) By any chance, did you use the first tapes for the second go…going into the second go?

MAJ (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) Do you know what happened to those? We're just trying help to build a picture and so we're trying to figure out what…?

MAJ (b)(6) We turned the tapes in. I…we.. (b)(6) turned his tape in. I looked at my tape. I asked Intel, can I keep this and turn it in later. I'd like to look at this tape later on. Go back out, fly the sortie, cause I want to run the whole tape from start to finish and see what…did I miss something. So I kept my tape, and now I think now from first sortie to second sortie…maybe not first sortie to second sortie…I got my tape back and I put it in my…I brought it back to put it in my life support locker…I want to keep this in my life support locker before I

turn it in, just because…just something _____ with that radio call. And then the thing that happened was maybe the next day or somewhere in the following sorties, I grabbed that tape and taped over it. That's what I think happened. I did not turn it into Intel, for just that reason. I wanted to review it. Went back out, flew that second sortie and then I think somewhere… I never reviewed it. Other than the review in Intel. I never got the chance to sit down, and I think…happened was I taped over it.

CAPT (b)(6) When you say you were going to turn it into Intel, would that have been L (b)(6)

MA (b)(6) No, it's just whomever. I don't remember who the Intel Officer was who debriefed us. But my hack at it was…just turn this back into Intel so that it can be digitized. Again, I think…I'm at fault…I taped over it.

COL (b)(6) Did you subsequently talk to your commanding officer about this incident?

MA (b)(6) I spoke with…I mean yes, I talked to the squadron commander and I believe it was the next night…it was either a night or two later, we had a squadron meeting—completely unrelated. We're now at day 3, 4, 5 of the war. Commander gets everybody together, hey I just want to make sure we're doing things right. Again, completely unrelated to this. And I say, hey I think…here's what happened to (b)(6) I…I want to convey this to the rest of the squadron, for no other reason than to open people's eyes that…again, I can't…I'm not convinced I'm doing a very good job describing the degree of astonishment on my part. So what I'm trying to do, is

I'm going to go explain to the guys, hey this is what happened to us. The highlights of the sortie…and we're absolutely certain we're attacking these targets, enemy targets…and that's all validated by stuff we're hearing from MOUTH and at the end of the sortie…hey there may be friendlies up there. The sole intent of that was to get the word out to the rest of the squadron. That this is big stuff that we're doing here.

COL (b)(6) So was there doubt in your mind at that time that this might have been a friendly fire incident?

MAJ (b)(6) There was some doubt…there was some degree of doubt, yes. Very small based on, I felt completely comfortable with the actions we took after the sortie to look into it. Asked the GLO, hey can you look into this for us? Come back the next day, talk to the other GLO, ask him about it, ask him if he heard anything about this. No, we haven't heard anything on it. We haven't seen anything on any reports about this. Oh by the way, if you're involved in a friendly fire incident you'd know about it before you got to ground. All this is easing my mind, but there is some degree of, something doesn't seem right. Then after several days go by, a week, two weeks go by…it's out of my mind. I'm now starting to go more into the category of when we were actually running the attacks, hey we are doing some no-kidding good stuff here for friendly forces, I mean this is troops in contact and we're stopping the enemy. This is good stuff. I was kind of leaning back towards that _____ .

COL (b)(6) When did you become aware of this…was a friendly fire incident?

MAJ (b)(6) I went, I was in Tallil, operating out of Tallil. Got a message to call back down here…can't remember…_____eighth or ninth of April. I think it was about the middle of the week we were in Tallil, we had a call. I get a message to call Lt Col -_____, one of our squadron pilots, -_____ happened to be a top three. This is when _____ (b)(6) and (b)(6) we think this may be a friendly fire. So that was, however many days later, I was up in Tallil, so…that was the first I heard of it then I went down the road of probably maybe not because looking at MISREPS indicating…there's nothing significant on that day or day either side I think. And then again, last week,…..

CAPT (b)(6) A little bit of follow up on your background. What kind of qualifications do you have right now?

MAJ (b)(6) I've been in the A-10 since 91, 22-2,300-ish hours. I've been _____ in the Air National Guard the whole time (b)(6)

(b)(6)

CAPT (b)(6) So, IP?

MAJ (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

CAPT (b)(6) Anything you'd like to add to the testimony you have already given?

MAJ (b)(6) Actually I think I _____---, the biggest point I can make, that stood out in my mind is to being so certain of doing…to be so certain of something…and then to be so uncertain of it in such a short amount of time was _____. How you could go from one end of that spectrum to the other. Cause I can assure you that based on everything we'd gotten, nobody's north of here, nobody's north of the canal, engage the targets north of the canal, you're putting smiles on the faces down here…all that kind of stuff…to where there is not an ounce of that.

CAPT (b)(6) Any questions for us?

MAJ (b)(6) I do not.

CAPT (b)(6) Anybody else have any questions?

CAPT (b)(6) I just have one attack real quick. You said that you'd been here for about three days, prior to when you started flying. Did you feel like that was adequate? That you had the right tools and everything to _____ quick to the time zone changes and everything like that?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes. I got in. Did the standard 48 hours on the ground before I flew an RSW with one of the Boise guys. I was on his wing so I got the local fam. Oddly enough, to look at the targets around Tallil and Nasiriyah. _____--couple of days before that, Operation

Southern Watch mission, so I think I flew two Southern Watches, three Iraqi Freedom before this so I was completely comfortable.

CAPT (b)(6) Did you have any trouble turning from the night prior to go into the first kind of day go? _____adequate rest?

MAJ (b)(6) Not even remotely.

CAPT (b)(6) As another re-attack, Capt (b)(6) again. I'm a little confused. You turned from a night sortie and then you were turning into a double turn?

MAJ (b)(6) Correct. I'd flown the night prior and went from a day mission to double turn to a night mission.

UNKNOWN: Can't hear???

MAJ (b)(6) I'd flown the night before, on the 22nd, and then turned to a late afternoon, daylight mission, and then the second mission of the 23rd was dusk into night.

CAPT (b)(6) OK. General?

GEN HODGKINS: I just have one question. Since we don't have the tape…there were no issues in terms of your aircraft or lead's aircraft with radios quality anything like that? Good radios for the mission?

MA (b)(6) Yes, Sir. No _____ comm. Issues, interflight or outside agencies.

GEN HODGK[redacted] Clarify for me again, you guys never spoke to the Cobras?

MAJ (b)(6) Never spoke to the Cobras.

GEN HODGKINS: Did you hear any reference to them?

MAJ (b)(6) No.

GEN HODGKINS: OK. And then as far as you guys observed …the ones you saw north and south_____you didn't see any others?

MA (b)(6) That's correct, Sir. North to south, picked them up coming over the canal. They turned to the southeast. Again, I think we asked MOUTH if he was working with them or if he saw them. He said he did. They went southeast and they were out of the area.

GEN HODGKINS: Was there any specific comm between you guys and MOUTH that referenced civilian vehicles, white vehicles, an SUV, anything like that?

MAJ (b)(6) No, Sir.

GEN HODGKINS: You guys considered yourselves, essentially sort of operating under a troops in contact scenario? You were asked the question on Type 3, which was never…Type 3 was not passed to you by the GFAC, by MOUTH, so you assumed either he had line of sight or it's a troops in contact type of situation.

MAJ (b)(6) I was thinking…I was certain he had sight of me for some portion of this, for some of the attacks. He cleared me hot on the rocket attack I talked about earlier trying to get eyes on friendlies, pick an open field hey let's put some willy-petes on here to try to help me get eyes on friendlies. He cleared me hot on that attack. That led me to believe that he was eyes on my airplane. And then the remainder of it was that he was eyes on the target area.

GEN HODGKINS: I guess the last one…You took the tac lead when you were trying to get eyes on MOUTH.

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

GEN HODGKINS: You guys have a positive change of command of tac lead back at some point? You were talking for a while and then 7-3 is back primarily for these attacks…

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Clear, concise, tactical lead changes over the radio.

COL (b)(6) When you were talking were you using lead's call sign? Were you using one call sign or…?

MAJ (b)(6) No, Sir. I always used GYRATE 7-4. When I spoke with MOUTH, I referenced, I always used GYRATE 7-4.

COL (b)(6) And GYRATE 7-4 was the…?

MA (b)(6) The wingman. 7-4 was the wingman, and that was me and I always said that this is GYRATE 7-4.

CAPT (b)(6) Thank you, Sir. In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, I do.

30 April 2003
Follow-up Interview with Maj (b)(6)

Parties present:
BRIG GEN WILLIAM F. HODGKINS
COL (b)(6)
MAJ (b)(6)
MAJ (b)(6)
CAPT (b)(6)

CAPT (b)(6) This is Capt (b)(6) with Brig Gen Hodgkins, Col (b)(6) Maj (b)(6) A follow up interview from the 28th of April interview for the 23 March An Nasiriyah incident. Just to remind you of all the previous statements still apply, so consider yourself under oath. One of the things we wanted to just clear up, and we did get some good words from (b)(6) on the number of Mavericks. It looks like there's a mistake on the MISREP. One of the other ones that we were curious about, just as a point of clarification, is on here…in your testimony you guys have not seen any triple A, but as we were looking through the MISREP, it kind of mentions that there's triple A in the target area. We're just trying to get some clarification.

MAJ (b)(6) Still, I didn't see any. I don't know if…I don't know how that got in there, but I certainly didn't say I saw any. Although, well (b)(6) was giving some of the Intel debrief. I was on the phone with the GLO, but I can't imagine that…

CAPT (b)(6) That's not something that you mentioned to Lt (b)(6) who took the MISREP?

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah…again, I didn't see it. I don't know if Andy forgot, or what, but I never saw anything from the ground, and...

CAPT (b)(6) OK.

MAJ (b)(6) I don't know.

CAPT (b)(6) One of the questions that we missed yesterday, two days ago, sorry, was we're just trying to get an idea of how many missions you've flown since the day in question. So, between your interview and the 23rd of March.

MAJ (b)(6) S, from the 23rd of March to the interview day?

CAPT (b)(6) Yeah.

MAJ (b)(6) How exact does this number have to be?

CAPT (b)(6) Approximate is good.

MAJ (b)(6) Probably eighteen-ish. Eighteen, twenty, somewhere in there.

CAPT (b)(6) Approximately twenty?

MA (b)(6) Yes.

CAPT (b)(6) Eighteen to twenty, I'll say that. I think that's all the questions I had to follow up right now. Anything else, General?

GEN HODGKINS: Yes. I'd like to confirm…for the record. The first issue, although I think we got a clarification from 7-3, was on the Mavericks where the MISREP listed four were fired. He had said that he had brought one back, so it obviously has to be a mistake. There could only be three. (b)(2)High So, just to confirm that in fact, you did fire two.

MA (b)(6) I did fire two and I think in my previous interview, I stated that he was in on Maverick pass…I think he said later, he told me that it was a gun pass. But, either way, he only fired one of his two Mavericks. I fired both…based on the information…I have today.

COL (b)(6) As far as the rest of the ordinance there, is it fairly accurate?

CAPT (b)(6) It looks the way she's done it is all 7-3, and then 7-4.

M (b)(6) Yeah…this…yes, generally. I mean I write down my weapons parameters from the LASTE…from the date of capture on the line up and at the end of the sortie. Again, if we had a tape…and I usually record that...

COL (b)(6) So, the only pass that's not accurate there is probably the Maverick?

MAJ (b)(6) I…would be 7-3's Maverick. He only got one Maverick off.

COL (b)(6) So, it was about…what eleven runs, maybe? I think there were twelve on that weren't there?

MAJ (b)(6) That's, yeah…probably about right.

CAPT (b)(6) Maj (b)(6) anything? Any questions?

TAB H

Tab H

FAC Testimony and Statement

Captain (MOUTH) Testimony.....H-3
Captain (b)(6) (MOUTH) Follow-Up Testimony.....H-21
Captain (MOUTH) Statement.....H-27

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26 April 2003
Interview with Ca (b)(6)

Parties present:
BRIG GEN WILLIAM F. HODGKINS, USAF
COL (b)(6) USMC
MAJ (b)(6) USAF
CAPT (b)(6) USAF
CAPT (b)(6) USMC
CAPT (b)(6) USMC, Defense Attorney

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) and under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) The other day I read you your rights…again, I read your rights the other day. If you have any questions…I'm re-reading them to you now. If you have any questions, we can take a moment break for you to ask those questions or speak with counsel. I am Maj b(6) member of the Air Force. We're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on or about the 23rd of March 2003, of which we suspect you of the offense of violating Article 92 of the UCMJ, in that you failed to obtain the proper authority to authorize Type 3 CAS to a flight of A-10s. I advise you that under the provisions of Article 31, UCMJ, you have the right to remain silent, that is say nothing at all. Any statement, oral or written, may be used as evidence against you in a trail by courts-martial, or on other administrative proceedings. You have the right to consult a lawyer, and to have a lawyer present during this interview. You have the right to military legal counsel free of charge, and in addition to military counsel, you're entitled to civilian counsel of your own choosing, and at your own expense. You may request a lawyer at any time during this interview. If you desire to answer questions, you may stop the questions at any time. Do you understand these rights?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) Do you want a lawyer?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) I note that your attorney's already present. Is that correct?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) Do you want to consult with him in private?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) That's all I have, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK, (b)(6) we've read your statement, the statement that you provided to the board. We also have some initial interview statements from some pilots, and what we're trying to do here is get a clear picture of the air situation on the 23rd of March. I've got 15 questions here that we'll go through and see if you can clarify for us things in your statement, things that might help us establish a better picture of what was happening from the air. The first question is, you mentioned in your statement that JENKE 78 was a single A-10 that checked in

with you on the 23rd of March. Could the aircraft's call sign had been GYRATE 7-3, and could it have been a section of A-10s vice one aircraft?

CAP (b)(6) GYRATE 7-3 does ring a bell, Sir. I was more sure of the number than the actual word of the call sign. There was no time to write down call signs that day, as we didn't have any pre-planned CAS. I wasn't sure who would be checking in, did not have access to an ATO as well, so all of the call signs were brand new to my ear. Rather than have aircraft repeat call signs over the radio and waste time, I just went with what I remember. I'm more sure of its being 7-8 than 7-3, although I know you mentioned that 7-3 was the one operating at the time and had a MISREP commensurate with what happened, and I was sure at the time it was a single. The only voice I heard back from the A-10s was the same voice. It could've been a flight lead talking for his wingman, but it was always the same voice, and the times I could observe the aircraft, it seemed like there was just a single A-10. I don't remember specifically, but I think he did check in as a single.

COL (b)(6) Second question…Did you control any other A-10s that day, earlier or later?

CAPT (b)(6) None earlier. I personally did not control any other A-10s. HAWK, the FAC with Tanks controlled A-10s here, if I may point it out. After the Battalion consolidated the city across the north bridge, we again consolidated about 4 or 5 hundred meters north of the north bridge. At that time the XO asked me to provide a wall of fire support. As we moved north, our objective, our final objective being the T intersection.

COL (b)(6) And what was the T intersection? What grid was that?

CAPT (b)(6) That's …225 410, approximately.

COL (b)(6) OK.

CAPT (b)(6) We had HAWK controlling the A-10s at that time. I don't know his call sign. He dropped MK82s across the road in front of us, about 600 meters away.

COL (b)(6) And where was that grid location, then, where he dropped?

CAPT (b)(6) Approximately 225 400, up in here, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK.

CAPT (b)(6) And then he also dropped bombs in a treeline where we thought there was a Delta 30 battery, over here, approximately 213 400, something right around there, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK.

CAPT (b)(6) Again, that was at nightfall. So about a month ago, that was probably about 1430Z time.

COL (b)(6) OK. Third question. What type of deconfliction measures did you establish?

CA[redacted] (b)(6) With the A-10, the only deconfliction measure I gave him was North of the Saddam Canal. I didn't give him any other lateral deconfliction or time or altitude deconfliction.

COL (b)(6) Fourth question. At any time, did you have eyes-on the target area that the A-10 was engaging?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Fifth question. You said in your statement that you got the aircraft time on station and ordinance. Do you remember how much time he had on station and the ordinance load that he was carrying?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. 45 minutes time on station. The ordinance mix was MK82s, Mavericks, and 30 millimeter gun. I don't remember how many of each he carried. He obviously carried quite a few _____.

COL (b)(6) OK. The sixth question. You said that you sent the aircraft north of the Saddam Hussein Canal to find targets. Did you pass the pilot any additional information with regard to enemy forces, equipment that he could expect to see?

CAPT (b)(6) Not specific equipment, Sir. I said I was worried about the enemy reinforcing the fight from the north. They had been reinforcing from the east. As we moved through the city, I had the Cobras running up and down the east flank of the city in salt flats. I was worried about the 23rd Infantry Brigade Headquarters and forces coming down from the north. I told him to go north and basically tell me what you see.

COL (b)(6) So, you didn't describe any targets to him?

CAPT (b)(6) He talked about vehicles. I asked for the grid. I got the grid back, and I think when he ????? air. I don't remember the exact numbers, but I remember plotting on my photo…I had a grid photo of the city that I was working off of. I remember it flying somewhere near here.

COL (b)(6) Let's go on to the seventh question here. You stated that JENKE 7-8 OR GYRATE found targets in the vicinity of the northern bridge. Did he describe those targets to you?

CAPT (b)(6) All he said was vehicles, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK. And the location of those vehicles, do you have?

CAPT (b)(6) I don't remember the number, but they plotted out somewhere around 225 387, right in here.

COL (b)(6) OK. That's really the answer to question number 8. How many passes…question number 9, how many passes did the A-10 make? Do you know?

CAP (b)(6) Five, Sir, that I remember. It was…I'll expound for you.

COL (b)(6) Yeah, do you…what was the ordinance he dropped on those passes in a sequence?

CAPT (b)(6) From my perspective, he dropped MK82s, either one or two, and I could see the top of the explosion above the city. At that point, or just prior, he stated talking about taking some Triple A fire, and that's in my statement as well. He then made what I thought was three gun runs, and my situational awareness was he's making those gun runs to suppress the Triple A that he was receiving. And, I believe I also wrote I've no doubt he's taking Triple A. We found the guns, and the guns were here, just to the west of this bridge on a, on like a little shack.

COL (b)(6) And what's that grid?

CAPT (b)(6) 223 385, approximately. Pretty close, and then just on the other side of the bridge as well, there's another ZPU1, 14.5 millimeter. And then, 300 meters down the river, right here where this road would intersect, a patrol found another ZPU1.

COL (b)(6) And that is grid?

CAPT (b)(6) 225 383 or 4, approximately.

COL (b)(6) OK, Question ten. Did you have…

CAPT (b)(6) I'm sorry. The last one was a Maverick shot.

COL (b)(6) Just one Maverick, that?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. The statement talks about him wanting to roll in from the north for that shot. But, I aborted him based on…Mavericks if they break lock, they'll go long, and obviously, we've got Marines and civilians in the city here, so I aborted him on that. He came around from the east to west and then it was basically a point blank Maverick shot.

COL (b)(6) And the runs that he was making, were all of them from east to west?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir. Some were from left to right, so that would have been west to east.

COL (b)(6) OK.

CAP (b)(6) Both ways.

COL (b)(6) Both ways?

CAP (b)(6) Just in the 270 090. I think that the Maverick shot was actually more from the west to east.

COL (b)(6) You stated the altitudes in your statement, but at what altitudes was he starting at? What was the lowest altitude you believe he got to?

CAPT (b)(6) He started at around (b)(2)High on what (b)(2)High was. I asked him what he would be rolling in from, and then he bottomed out…My sight picture on A-10s is not as good as, obviously, on other platforms, but it looked like abo (b)(2)High is where he was bottoming out.

COL (b)(6) The tenth question. Did you have Cobras working along the Saddam Canal during the times the A-10s checked in with you?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir. If they were working the Saddam Canal, it was against my wishes, because, again, my SA is that my Company fight that's in the city, and I didn't want the Cobras going too far north and getting shot down. They had been pressing targets all day long, hovering over treelines, getting shot up, getting some MISREPs back down of guys that came back with battle damage. There was no way I'd let them go all the way up there for fear that they would get shot down, and now we've got to do a rescue mission.

COL (b)(6) How far did those…to your knowledge, how far did those Cobras go up there? What was the closest they got to the canal?

CAPT (b)(6) I'd say no more north than the 373 northing.

COL (b)(6) OK.

CAP (b)(6) From my estimation, I could see them making their runs, so I could clear them. They were making runs and shooting at about the 37 northing, at targets that were up here along the canal.

COL (b)(6) Question eleven. You stated that you came upon a couple of Humvees, labeled TF2, Task Force Tarawa. Then, you called "abort, abort, abort" to the A-10s. Did you give the pilot a reason for the abort call?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I told him we'd come upon some friendlies, and I wanted to double check lead trace that…I didn't understand at the time why there would be Humvees in front of us if we were lead trace. So…

COL (b)(6) What grid was that? Where you saw the Humvees?

CAPT (b)(6) It was the 361 northing, right here, and we'd come out on one of these roads and made a left, and then the Humvees were right in front of us.

COL (b)(6) On the MSR?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir. They were in the street, like an alley way.

COL (b)(6) And what's that grid? Approximately.

CAPT (b)(6) It's either one of these streets here. Either the…you know… the 3215, 216, 217.

COL (b)(6) [redacted]oximately.

CAPT (b)(6) One of those streets there, yeah. And as we made that left, saw these Humvees…" abort, abort, abort." Asked for lead trace. I got 361 northing, which makes sense because we made that left turn and were turning west along that 361.

COL (b)(6) Subsequent to the abort call, what did you say to the pilots after you confirmed that you were lead trace with Bravo Company?

CAP (b)(6) I told them I've got friendlies. I'm checking on it. He came back and said, "Hey, all my targets are north of the canal." I said, "Roger that. Standby." I got the lead trace

back to the Company Commander as 361. It's in my statement. And I asked, "Is that our lead trace?" And they're like, "Yeah, we are lead trace," is what I get back from them. I gave that to the A-10s, and I cleared them again to engage.

COL (b)(6) How many runs had they made prior to the abort call?

CAPT (b)(6) I'm not sure, Sir. I'm not sure.

COL (b)(6) Do you know how many runs they made subsequent to the abort call? That first abort call?

CAPT (b)(6) No, I'm not sure.

COL (b)(6) About how long was the fight stopped during that time while you checked?

CAPT (b)(6) Probably about 5 minutes.

COL (b)(6) Question thirteen. During this exchange, what did the A-10 pilots say to you? Did they say anything to you?

CAPT (b)(6) Just that, "Hey, all my targets are north of the canal."

COL (b)(6) And when you cleared them back to re-engage, did they say anything to you at that point?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Question number fourteen. Did the pilots pass any BDA to you?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) So you didn't get any BDA at all from them?

CAPT (b)(6) : No. When I informed them that there may have been a friendly fire incident, they…they got my call sign.

COL (b)(6) What did they specifically say when you informed them? What did you tell them when you aborted the air? When you checked fire because you thought there were friendlies in the area: What exactly did you say to them, to the best of your recollection, and what did they say to you?

CAPT (b)(6) OK…I called, "check fire, abort, abort, abort," whatever I could do to get him to stop shooting. They did stop orbiting overhead.

COL (b)(6) Did they say anything to you at that point?

CAPT (b)(6) They inquired as to what…the reason. And of course, it's on me to give him the reason, you know. So, I grabbed my FSC leader and said, "Hey, what's wrong?" He says, "Hey, the Battalion thinks there may be some friendlies north of the bridge." And, that's when I informed the A-10s. I said, "Hey, we may have some friendly Marines north of the bridge. I'm checking on it now. I'm going to clear it up for you." Because, to my knowledge, obviously, there was no Marines up there. I, in fact, thought that there was some confusion, and the Battalion thought that the A-10 was firing on targets north of the Saddam…or the Euphrates bridge.

COL (b)(6) What did the pilot say to you after you told him that?

CAP (b)(6) The pilot said, "Hey, you know, we were cleared." And I said, "Roger. I'm checking on it now." And then they seemed pretty ready to RTB or move on to the next mission. So, they got my call sign, and I said "Hey, it's MOUTH." They asked if there was a number attached to that, and I said no. And then they…

COL (b)(6) Did they say anything else to you? During that time, do you recall?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) During the A-10 engagement did you witness any (b)1.4a or any (b)1.4a of (b)1.4a, or anything else from the area that they were engaging?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) That's all I have. Are there any other questions?

CAPT (b)(6) I do have a follow-up. I'm Capt (b)(6) pilot advisor to the board. Prior to them asking to make a run from the north, had you given them any kind of restrictions as far as run in directions?

CAPT (b)(6) Yeah, it's in my statement and it's east west only.

CAPT (b)(6) OK.

COL (b)(6) General, do you have anything?

GEN HODGKINS: Yes. I think in your statement there was a reference to a fight just to the west. I think that was in your statement, I'm not sure. But was there a fight, and were there any Cobras to the west? Are you aware of anything that was going on to the west that was another sort of separate fight?

CAP (b)(6) I have no…no recollection of any fights going on to the west at all…nothing I was in control of.

GEN HODGKINS: Another question. Did you hear in any of the RT with the Cobras or the A-10s, a reference to white civilian vehicles or SUVs?

CAPT (b)(6) believe some of the targets that the Cobras were shooting at were SUVs that they deemed to be hostile. Either technical vehicles with machine guns or whatever. I don't…they solved…the Cobras were solving the positive hostile criteria there.

MAJ (b)(6) A quick clarification question, Maj (b)(6) here. Did you do two abort calls?

CAPT (b)(6) Right. One for the HMVs. One for the …Maverick that was coming in from the north and then the final one after we…so, three total.

MAJ (b)(6) hat's all from me.

COL (b)(6) n closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

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30 April 2003
Follow-up Interview with Cap (b)(6)

Parties present:
COL (b)(6)
MAJ (b)(6)
CAPT (b)(6)
CAPT (b)(6)
CAPT (b)(6) Defense Attorney

CAPT (b)(6) Capt (b)(6) with Col (b)(6) Maj (b)(6) Capt (b)(6) and Capt (b)(6) regarding the 23 March An Nasiriyah friendly fire incident.

MAJ (b)(6) I just want to remind you, we've read you your rights earlier and would you like me to re-read your rights under Article 92?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) Do you need to consult with your attorney in private?

CA (b)(6) No, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) And are you willing to answer questions?

CAP (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

MAJ (b)(6) Thank you very much.

CAPT (b)(6) Would you please, as a follow-up, just describe the type of CAS that you were employing with the A-10s? Describe the method and which you were working the A-10s.

CAPT (b)(6) OK. When they checked in, I sent them to the Saddam Canal to look for forces that were possibly reinforcing the fight that we were in. When they found the vehicles north of the bridge, north of the Saddam Canal, I gave them Type 3 control to engage those targets. I told them make their runs east west so as not to allow ordinance to spill over into the city. I did not turn them loose. The FAC always retains the forward authority. I continued to monitor their attacks. I told them specifically, I could not observe them or the target area. In reality, I could observe them on some runs. I continued to monitor them as best I could.

COL (b)(6) Did you clear them for each pass?

CAPT (b)(6) No. No, Sir.

CAPT (b)(6) So, in relation to that, did you hear them call in hot for each pass?

CAPT (b)(6) I don't specifically remember hearing in hot from GYRATE and I'm not even sure the call sign was actually GYRATE. On some runs he did make _____ CAS calls—in from the east, or wings level. It seemed like he did not understand that those calls are only required during Type 1 and Type 2 control. On these runs, however, I did respond with cleared or cleared hot in order to ensure that he got his bombs off. I did not think there was time

to get into a discussion on close air support doctrine or communications. I was comfortable that he understood my clearance restrictions, except on the one where he did call in—in from the north. I specifically told him east – west. Called in from the north with a Maverick and I aborted him. That's in my statement. He seemed…he just seemed confused about the comm not the actual clearance. On the runs where I could observe him, he was pointing safely away from the city and obviously the friendlies and civilians. I was also confident that there were no friendly forces ahead of me, so I continued to allow him to engage even though his comm was non-standard. In other words, to sum it up, he was operating his aircraft correctly he just wasn't talking correctly.

CAPT (b)(6) Do you remember having an A-10 verify your position by employing some rockets?

CAPT (b)(6) Negative.

CAPT (b)(6) You don't remember that?

CAPT (b)(6) No.

CAPT (b)(6) Can you tell me just your background, as far as controlling air?

CAPT (b)(6) I'm an F-18D WISO with almost five years, 1000 hours in _____. I'm a FAC-A certified via the _____ FAC-A syllabus since February of 2001, roughly 40 aerial

controls. I've been a FAC since October 2002, with roughly 25 controls from the ground. I was school trained at the Tactical Air Control Party Course, Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Atlantic. I'm a MOTS-1 certified Air Combat Tactics Instructor on the F-18D. Mission Commander. I'm a graduate of the Fighter Weapons School. I've been a Battalion FAC for five months. My last controls in training were roughly one week prior to An Nasiriyah and I've been to three combined arms exercises.

COL (b)(6) As a FAC?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir. They were all as an aviator. As a FAC-A. Two as a FAC-A, one as just a CAS player.

CAPT (b)(6) During the entire battle, I guess more importantly, at the time that GYRATE, the A-10s that you were talking to checked in, where was your battalion CO located?

CAPT (b)(6) I don't know his exact position. I do know that based on the plan, based on doctrinally how we employ mechanized battalions he was behind me. I never saw him pass. I never heard a word that he was, in fact, in front of me. So my SA was that he was about 600 to 700 meters to our south in the city.

CAPT (b)(6) So he crossed the bridges then?

CAPT (b)(6) He crossed the Euphrates bridge and stayed behind us as we moved to the city.

CAPT (b)(6) And when you say stayed behind us, you mean Bravo Company—Team Mech?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, behind Bravo Company.

CAPT (b)(6) Had you worked with A-10s before prior to this campaign?

CAPT (b)(6) Just a couple of years ago in an air to air engagement, not a CAS environment.

CAPT (b)(6) Anything in this campaign?

CAPT (b)(6) Negative.

CAPT (b)(6) You mentioned the A-10s talking about suppressing triple A in your statement. Did they actually say they were being shot at? Or were they just trying to suppress? Did they just mention suppressing?

CAPT (b)(6) They mentioned taking fire. They mentioned suppressing that fire. I have no doubt that they were. We found the guns a couple of days later, and the Cobra pilots said that

they saw triple A, air bursting triple A along the canal. I'm sure, if you don't have those statements from them, they'd make the same statements. So I am positive, he was, in fact, taking fire. He mentioned it and he mentioned suppressing.

COL (b)(6) Do you remember what he said to you when he mentioned it?

CAPT (b)(6) He said they're shooting at me, and I'm going to have to suppress.

CAPT (b)(6) After I gave you the questions, I kind of came up with a couple more, if you want to _____ these please? Can you tell me your understanding of who is the approving authority for each type of the CAS, according to the op ord?

CAPT (b)(6) I would request…stop and get the questions…

CAPT (b)(6) You want me to stop? OK. In closing, I just want to remind you that this is your sworn testimony and please do not discuss it with…outside of the group…of the board or your lawyer. Thanks.

STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN (b)(6)

I, Captain (b)(6) of 1st Battalion 2nd Marines, after being placed under oath, hereby state that I was acting as the forward air controller for Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment of Task Force Tarawa. I had been a member of the battalion since 15 November 2002, having graduated from Tactical Air Control Party School in October. I am an F/A-18D Weapons and Sensor Officer.

On 23 March 2003, my company was ordered to attack to seize the northeastern bridge of An Nasiriyah. We had been planning such an attack for over one month. The plan changed almost daily and rapidly devolved into a "Be prepared to..." mission in case the overall war effort required it. We were tasked as the main effort and organized as "Team Mech" consisting of two mechanized rifle platoons, a platoon of tanks, and an attachment of Javelin anti-tank teams. As the main effort during the attack on the northeastern bridge, we would be given priority of fires, meaning I would have control of any air assets, and the rest of my Fire Support Team (FiST) would have control of indirect fires. The plan was for Team Tank (task organized as two tank platoons and a mechanized rifle platoon) to lead us into the town to the southeastern bridge of An Nasiriyah (over the Euphrates river). Once there, Bravo would press ahead and seize the northeastern bridge as the main effort. Alpha company would take the southern bridge and be relieved by follow-on forces (2nd Battalion, 8th Marines). Charlie Company would be the supporting effort. Commander's Intent was to rapidly seize both bridges in order to facilitate follow-on forces of I MEF to move north towards Baghdad. The order of march was to be Team Tank, B Co, the Forward Command Element, A Co, then C Co.

We had no preplanned Close Air Support assets scheduled to assist in our attack. All air assets would be immediate CAS and required immediate air requests from our air officer. He informed us that fixed wing and rotary wing air would require 15-30 minutes of advance notice. I read through the pilot-controller handbook, marked my charts appropriately, but had no assets to plan for. This meant that our FACs would have to make due with any airplanes that could be diverted from other missions.

We staged for the attack about 40-50 kilometers south of An Nasiriyah at a highway cloverleaf we had been guarding to facilitate Army units moving north. My Company Commander briefed us four suspected enemy grid locations in the city including a suspected artillery battery, commando unit, the 23rd Infantry Brigade headquarters, and another unit. We knew the enemy composition, as we had been briefed all along by our S-2. What we had no information on was the enemy's disposition. We did not know where mortar, infantry, air defense artillery, tank, and indirect fire positions were. We were executing a movement to contact.

As we approached the city at approximately 0500Z, Team Tank began to take light small arms and mortar fire VIC PV192231. Our 81mm mortar platoon dismounted and began firing for Team Tank. After about an hour, Team Tank began to move north again along the Main Supply Route (MSR). At this time, we had a single UH-1 helicopter overhead that we just happened to raise by cycling through frequencies. He was lightly armed, and

I deconflicted him from our 81mm mortars and enemy fire by holding him south of the 16-northing gridline three kilometers to our south. Our air officer began trying to get immediate air support, with little success. We then asked the UH-1 to radio Jalibah FARP and get us help. The air officer did not have comm with the FACs from Team Tank or Alpha Company, so I worked as the Air Officer, passing arriving aircraft to Team Tank, where they were needed most in the fight. I then passed Battle Damage Assessment reports back to the air officer via the Tactical Air Control Party –Local (TACP-Local) net. Tanks shortly became engaged with more enemy units VIC Umm al Hujil (PV185260). They stumbled upon an Army convoy that had been ambushed and taken a large amount of enemy fire. Trucks were shattered and burning on the MSR. They rescued four soldiers and were concerned about more friendlies in the tree line west of the MSR. AH-1 Cobra helicopters began to show up from Jalibah. They began destroying trucks, 2 ZU-23 AAA systems, tanks, and personnel VIC PV198290.

The Team Tank FAC was in control, and I was relaying to the air officer who had no Tactical Air Direction (TAD) net UHF communication capability all day long. No one was able to raise him via UHF until the next day. This is the frequency range we use to talk to aircraft. Normally, the air officer monitors this net and approves or disapproves missions as appropriate. He did not have this capability. I had to relay what was happening because I was the only FAC he was able to talk to via TACP Local (a VHF Encrypted Frequency Hopping net). I lost TACP Local while in the city a few hours later. In retrospect, if I had clear communications with the air officer, I could have received immediate approval or disapproval for each mission I was running in the city.

All of these targets were pop-up targets found well inside the maximum effective range of threat weapons systems. We were not getting any reconnaissance or intelligence up ahead of us. The Cobra pilots already were beginning to exhibit some of the bravery that would eventually carry the day and help save the battalion. They hovered over tree lines teeming with enemy to deliver withering gun, rocket, and Precision Guided Munitions and allowed us to proceed north to our objectives. This engagement lasted from about 0530Z to 0630Z.

Unfortunately, the tanks ran out of fuel due to the 40-50 kilometer movement and all of the off-road maneuvering during the fight. They moved to the refuelers in the rear of the column and the fight was passed to B Co. This means that control of all fires belongs to Bravo Company. I immediately began to control a flight of AH-1 Cobras, their calls signs were either "Orken-07 or Orken-25." Our company was moving two hundred meters north along the MSR at this time. I ordered the Cobras north to screen our movement and scour the western tree line for enemy troops, alerting them to the possibility of friendlies in the area (the ambushed soldiers). They found nothing in the tree line. but then found three tanks VIC PV198290. They shot 3-5 Hellfire missiles and killed three tanks.

Nails-61 (a flight of two F/A-18Ds) checked in with limited fuel. I quickly employed them on the three "dead" tanks in order to assure destruction and allow the battalion to keep moving north. They dropped a single MK-83 bomb with success, and then finished

with another group of two bombs. We were approximately 1500 meters southwest. The Cobras had no remaining ordnance and returned to Jalibah. I asked them to re-arm, refuel, and return with more assets.

The engagement died down and the battalion consolidated on the MSR. I dismounted to remove my warming layer shirt and pack night vision equipment. I ran over to the Command Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAVC-7) to brief the Air Officer and the S-3 Officer (Operations) about the fight, battle damage reports, and the possible friendly soldiers. Then I ran back to my AAV and we almost immediately moved out. The Air Officer told me about his lack of UHF comm and his limited VHF comm. I thought he would get it fixed later or we would continue to work around it. The work around we did during this first engagement was very painful, as we had two or three FACs and the aircraft on the TAD net and no control from the Battalion. We moved out with our Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT) squad in four Humvees in front, followed by B Co 1st Platoon in three AAVs, and my AAV. I was the fourth AAV in the column, about 150m from our lead vehicle (lead trace). A tank platoon of four M1A1s was supposed to lead our company, but had run out of fuel.

My vehicle contained the Company Commander, the Weapons Platoon Commander (who acted as the FiST leader), myself, my radio operator, the artillery forward observer, the artillery scout, the artillery radio operator, the 60mm mortar forward observer, and the 81mm mortar forward observ (b)(2)High leader. My radio operator sits underneath and helps me to monitor the nets. We stand on benches with our heads exposed in order to see the battlefield. The AAV platoon commander attached to B Co commanded the AAV.

At about 0700Z, C Co moved out into the open plain on our left flank and A Co was in the rear (following in trace). We found the shattered army convoy VIC PV188285. The Cobras returned on station and immediately destroyed enemy trucks VIC PV186309. Upon check-in, I tried my best to give a quick friendly and enemy situation update and held the rotary wing south of the 16 (later 20) northing. This kept them about four kilometers south of the fight. The Cobras were screening our flanks. I had witnessed their bravery and was reluctant to let them go very far forward into enemy held territory. An aircrew rescue (TRAP) mission would have been difficult. even during this relatively quiet period of the battle. Our working TAD frequency w (b)1.4a We moved quickly past the army trucks and as C Co crossed the 30 northing we made contact. As C Co did not have a FAC and did not have priority of fires, I had to control air overhead their formation as well. The Cobras were having much success with PGM munitions on trucks. A large, but unknown, number of trucks, weapons, and enemy positions were destroyed less than 1000m in front of C Co during their assault toward Qaryat at Mudayji. B Co stayed on the MSR abeam C Co and moved towards the railroad bridge south of An Nasiriyah.

An Rocket Propelled Grenade was fired at an AH-1 and I called "SAM (Surface to Air Missile) Launch.....No factor!" over the TAD net. Days later I realized that this was an unguided RPG, and not an SA-7 SAM as I had feared. The Cobras continued to press

hard against targets in front of C Co. At this point I have eyes on C Co. There were operator monitor the net, as I was on TAD continuously for ten hours. He monitored TACP-Local, as we weren't getting any luck raising anyone on that net. The PRC-113 (UHF) is bulky, and I had to hold it above the metal vehicle to assure continuous communications with the aircraft. The radio fell to the floor of the vehicle numerous times, as we would lurch forward trying to get north. Our company was receiving enemy fire. At many times we would stop and orient at a 45-degree angle relative to our direction of travel to get a better view for the fire support team. Observation was difficult as turrets, packs, antennae, and equipment surround the top hatch.

I also gave control to Orken-25 at one point. This passing of control was for approximately the same amount of time and for the same reasons mentioned above. This particular call sign returned to the fight at least 3 times and was present as late as 1900Z. between 6 and 8 Cobras on station and I deconflicted them using the MSR, keeping some on the relatively quiet east side, with most performing attack runs for me on the west side. As they ran out of ordnance, they proceeded back to Jalibah. I did not have any comms with the air officer at this point and was forced to maintain control of both the battlefield and the flow of air support. However, the situation was still under control. If it had become out of control, I would have called off the air. I believe the Cobras were flying back to the battle on their own accord as I heard many of the same voices and call signs all day and into the night. I do not know if we were receiving help from higher in getting that air support. Many pilots that day checked out with me saying, "Mouth, I'm going to Jalibah and I'll be right back."

At one point of the battle, I gave FAC (A) control to a Cobra pilot as it was becoming difficult to see the whole battlefield. He ran the fight for about fifteen minutes firing five Hellfire missiles and then gave the fight back to me. During this time, I was organizing call signs, air space and targets. The difficulties of controlling aviation from a moving, firing armored vehicle are manifold. I have to hold a map and two radio handsets while writing down information and surveying the battlefield. Good comm flow lightens the workload. But during that fight, it was so busy that I could not afford to let my radio As we crossed the oil pipeline in the vicinity of the 30 northing, the contact became closer. Our AAV screeched to a halt and our CAAT vehicles reported enemy tanks 300-500 meters in front of them, on the other side of a small railroad bridge. We had unknowingly walked into a mechanized ambush. The CAAT vehicles and a Javelin gunner in 1st platoon killed 5 of the tanks. Enemy fire increased, but we were not yet taking casualties. I ran the remaining Cobras on enemy machine gun positions supporting the tanks. They were located between oil tanks VIC PV211311. They destroyed the machine gunners with 20mm gunfire and flechette rockets. We began engaging dismounted enemy troops VIC PV192320 with .50-caliber fire. The enemy retreated to the safety of a mosque that was indicative of the tactics they would employ throughout the day. I personally saw four destroyed tanks VIC PV206322.

At this point, I lost sight of C Co. There was no other way to get into the town other than following us across the railroad bridge and the subsequent Euphrates Bridge. C Co fell in behind our company. The whole column began to work north along the MSR. A Co was

in trail, but I don't know their order of march. On the far side of the railroad, we entered dense palm tree country. I thought the intensity of the ambush would increase, as it was impossible to see into the forest for more than a few meters on either side of the vehicle. Personnel inside our vehicle began firing their weapons at enemy Fedayeen forces. I saw a number of enemy troops in civilian clothes carrying AK-47s. I also saw a number of Fedayeen surrounding a mortar position along the south bank of the Euphrates River VIC PV210342. I called the Cobras in, but the enemy scattered, and the Cobras did not fire. To the Cobras, these Fedayeen would appear as a group of civilians loitering on the south bank of the Euphrates River, but they were actually firing mortar rounds at us before they scattered. Our speed was increasing as we crossed the river, so I passed up the mortar target. We needed the Cobras for the city fight.

I had no comm with my air officer or higher headquarters and was primarily focused on fighting our way to the northern bridge. For clarification, Ambush Alley is the four-kilometer section of the MSR between the southern Euphrates Bridge and the northern Saddam Canal Bridge. Our plan was to make an immediate right turn off of the MSR (Ambush Alley) and sweep north on the salt flats 2000m east of the built up area around the MSR. This was to be done under the cover of Team Tank (still refueling behind us).

As we made the right turn, the firing increased rapidly. Our vehicle and personnel did not take any hits, but enemy rounds cracked overhead and two RPGs missed the vehicle by a few feet. The Fedayeen would use civilians as shields and fire from homes filled with noncombatants so we couldn't just target the buildings. They would also force civilians out in the streets to choke off our fields of fire and then pop out of doors and windows to fire at us. Target acquisition was extremely difficult. I ran the Cobras up and down the salt flats and they engaged a number of enemy machine gun vehicles and positions. I never let them go too far north for fear they may get shot down. A TRAP mission now became absolutely impossible and their bravery was bound to get them in trouble. They never went north of the northeastern bridge (our objective). I remember flashes of what they engaged. At one point they shot so close to our formation that I thought I would be showered with spent shell casings as they poured from their guns. This was not a problem because I would not let them shoot until they were past lead trace. They also fired rockets and PGMs at Fedayeen positions and vehicles. I do remember them asking to engage unmanned D-30 howitzers VIC PV2535, but as they were unmanned and not an immediate threat, I felt we needed their ammunition on live targets.

At some point early in the city fight, there was a break in the air support for about a half hour. The timeline now will suffer from the effects of time compression. My FiST leader called for "weapons up" as we were entering a densely populated sector. AAVs and freshly arrived tanks were becoming bogged down in the city's muddy alleys. Sniper fire increased. My radioman and I switched places so he could employ his M-16A2. I let him up and withdrew into the bottom of the AAV. About 15 minutes later, I finally got a call on TACP Local from the air officer. He said, "Mouth, I need you to get on guard and get any air support you can get." I knew this was serious because guard frequency is normally only used for peacetime emergency operations. But, as we had received little

air support from higher agencies, I pulled my radio operator down, jumped up and made three transmissions: "On guard, on guard, on guard, this is Mouth in the vicinity of An Nasiriyah. We have troops in contact and need immediate air support. Contact me on (b)1.4a An RPG flew over our AAV and exploded overhead, brushing back the artillery forward observer.

Almost immediately, fixed wing aircraft began checking in. I stacked them and waited for a FAC (A)-capable F/A-18D or F-14 Tomcat to check in. None did. My intention was to send them north of the bridge to find and destroy enemy reinforcements or enemy waiting to ambush us as we got to the bridge. A single A-10 checked in. I remember his call sign as something close to "Jenke-78." I got his on station time and ordnance and sent him north of Saddam Canal to find targets. I told him our situation and that the city fight was a rotary wing fight and I wanted to use fixed wing to prosecute deeper targets.

Jenke-78 found targets in the vicinity of the northern bridge. He told me his targets were north of the Saddam Canal. I had him pass me a grid and asked him to standby while I checked on lead trace, or the location of our lead vehicles. My situational awareness at the time was that A Co was at the southeastern bridge and that C Co was somewhere behind us. My FiST leader asked the Company Commander for lead trace via the AAV internal communication system. The Company Commander replied 361 Northing, which he believed to be the battalion's lead trace. I referenced my gridded overhead photo of the city and compared the two locations. The targets were approximately 3000m north and on the other side of the Saddam Canal. At some point he reported that he was taking fire. I do not doubt this report as a few days later, I found two ZPU-1 14.5mm anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) guns at the bridge, and a patrol found another gun 300m east of the same bridge.

I informed the A-10 that I could not observe him or the target area. I told him "I cannot observe" and I said this multiple times. We were in a maze of streets and two story structures. He reported vehicles and moments later he began taking fire. As he was already in an overhead "wagon wheel" attack, a Nine-Line CAS Brief was not necessary. Based on the Rules of Engagement, we were not allowed to use unobserved fires in urban environments. An artillery strike would have been out of the question. I gave the A-10 Type III control and cleared him to engage targets north of the Saddam Canal. I forced him to make his runs East-West so as not to endanger Marines or civilians in the town to the south.

As I could not observe the target area, I could not solve the "positive hostile" requirements of Positive Identification (PID) criteria. This requirement is that we only engage targets that have a hostile intent or commit a hostile act. I carefully satisfied the "negative friendly" requirements with the information I had. First, the order tasked us as the Main and Lead Effort. Second, I was briefed that there were no friendly units forward of us during the attack. Often, we place reconnaissance assets forward, but on 23 March there were none. Third, all of the other battalion maneuver elements were behind us as we crossed the Euphrates. Fourth, I did not see any of these forces pass us in the city. Finally, I asked for friendly lead trace from my Company Commander and received

a lead trace 3000m south of the intended target area. Marines were in extremis and I made a time critical decision to give the A-10 Type III control to engage targets he observed and deemed hostile.

At any second, I felt that our company would break free from the maze of streets and sprint for the bridge. Communication with the battalion was nonexistent for me and intermittent to nonexistent for the Company Commander. I did not want the Company Commander to stop the column in the middle of an ambush. I also did not think there was time to find a clear channel to the Battalion Commander to explain the situation, then ask for approval for the fires. I understood the Battalion Commander's Order, but, based on my understanding of his Commander's Intent and Marine Corps Mission Orders, I cleared the A-10 to engage in order to satisfy Commander's Intent. Close Air Support Fires are "use it or lose it" by nature. They are flexible and lethal, but very fleeting. Based on the information I had at the time, I believed my company was minutes away from the anvil of a mechanized ambush. I felt that if I did not act, Marines would die.

The A-10 began to make his runs. His first run was with MK-82s. He dropped one or two. I saw the explosions from those hits and visually picked up his airplane as he employed defensive flares after dropping the bombs. I saw the explosion, but still could not observe the target. He was rolling in from approximately (b)(2)High et and bottoming out somewhere between (b)(2)High feet. His next two runs were with his 30mm cannon. He told me he was using that to suppress AAA fire. I was able to observe him intermittently.

As we moved west in the city, we came upon a couple of Humvees labeled "TF-2." I immediately called "abort abort abort" to the A-10, thinking someone had passed us, and lead trace was in front of us. We were having some trouble making our way through the city. I held the A-10 and again asked for lead trace. The Company Commander reported 361 northing. Then I asked again if that lead trace was the battalion's or ours. My FiST leader asked the Company Commander, and he responded, "We are lead trace." I again cleared the A-10 to engage.

During a Maverick run, the A-10 called "In from the North." I called "abort. abort. abort" and said I needed the runs from east to west. (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

(b)1.4a He changed his run in and released the Maverick.

After the Maverick hit, my FiST leader told me to "check fire" the A-10. I told the A-10 to "check fire" and asked the FiST leader for an explanation. He said battalion reported that there may have been Marines north of the Canal. I disagreed, but informed the A-10, telling him that we may now have friendlies up north and I would clear it up. I believed that someone had gotten the bridges mixed up and thought the A-10 was north of the southeastern (Euphrates) bridge. The A-10 pilot told me that I had cleared him, and I did not want to get into a debate on the radio. Soon after, the A-10 departed and got my call sign. He asked if there was a number attached to "Mouth." I told him "negative." That was the last I heard from that call sign. My game plan was initially to run Type I control

through a FAC (A). Since no FAC (A) aircraft checked in, I was forced to run Type III with the single A-10. Other aircraft (unknown call signs) were stacked overhead but never used.

To my surprise, the battalion stopped and consolidated in a vacant lot VIC PV223371. At that time (approximately 1200Z) I was running rotary wing CAS aircraft and stationed two UH-1s over the stuck vehicles now about 1500m south of us in the town. They kept the enemy at bay during the vehicle recovery and sanitization/abandonment effort. They gave me regular reports. The Company Commander, FiST leader, and I got out of our vehicle, sat behind a 60mm mortar, and assessed the situation.

Almost immediately, the battalion executive officer asked for our assistance. I was still confused about the "check fire" call and sought some answers...no one had any. For the moment, I focused on the XO who ordered me to again call for more air support to support our push north across the bridge in a half hour. At that point, I learned from the A Co FAC that C Co had sprinted north via Ambush Alley. Team Tank, prior to the battalion consolidation, sprinted north as well. I could see this as we were within 100m of Ambush Alley at that time. I was in the town, but I could see up the road. A Co also pushed north to help, but my knowledge of A Co movements is limited. They were supposed to be at the southern bridge waiting for 2/8.

A Co's FAC was busy running CH-46 MEDEVAC missions to evacuate C Co's wounded. He relayed to me that there were Marines still trapped on the roof of a two-story building 200m south of the northeastern bridge. I relayed this information to the battalion XO. I saw one burning AAV in Ambush Alley in the vicinity of the bridge and realized then that the fighting had been bad for C Company. The rooftop Marines were picked up prior to our movement. We climbed aboard our vehicle, I instructed the Hueys, we boarded our vehicles, and the rest of the battalion sprinted north. Our FiST leader called in an artillery strike along the West side of the Alley to protect our movement. The time was approximately 1300Z. We were very worried about daylight. The stuck vehicles were still mired in the muddy streets to our south.

We had a platoon commander from C Co aboard our AAV during the consolidation. I asked him if he thought anyone was hurt by the A-10. He said he didn't know, but thought they had taken some casualties from artillery. My situational awareness at the time is that C Co got north of the bridge after the A-10 strike.

When we consolidated north of the bridge, that platoon commander informed me that he believed that the A-10 may have indeed caused some friendly casualties. I was devastated. I saw the Company Commander and First Sergeant from C Co. They looked like they had been through hell. The Company CO was covered in blood. I did see one AAV that had been completely destroyed. They looked like they may have been delivered from an aircraft. Later in the week, I walked the battlefield by myself. I saw the vehicle (which had been moved) and looked at the bullet holes in the road. Less than ten feet from the holes was an (b)1.4a

I knew, however, that the fight was not over and we would need air support to get us safely to our objective, protect us once there, and protect the stuck vehicles in the town. I had been buttoned up until 400m north of the bridge VIC PV224395.

The FAC from Team Tank ran an A-10 (unknown call sign) on the tree line VIC PV215405. He dropped two MK-82s, and then dropped two more 800m north of us VIC PV224403. We wanted to run an artillery series in support of our 1000m movement to our consolidation point at a road intersection VIC PV225410. Because the A-10 was being controlled by the Team Tank FAC who had no comm with battalion, we had to cancel artillery for fear that the A-10 would be hit. I was keeping the Hueys over the stuck vehicles until those vehicles finally sprinted across the bridge with a single M1A1 tank.

I ran two more sections of "Orken" Cobras to secure our perimeter. It was now dark and approximately 1600Z. I used my Infrared laser to mark our position and sent them around our defense. The Company Commander and I were distraught over our role in the possible friendly fire incident, but we both went to the Battalion Commander with the news. The Battalion Commander asked that we both continue to do our duty as the fight was far from over.

I monitored my PRC-113 throughout the night. As flights of Cobras checked in, I would mark our position and give them instructions. They stayed overhead all night long. A Co FAC also controlled the aircraft.

The next day, communications were a stark contrast to the day before. I had solid comms with my Air Officer via UHF and VHF. His comms with the other FACs weren't as good, so I had to relay information again. He could approve, disapprove, or modify all of my missions. This normal channel of requests was not available the previous day. The work around the previous day going through the FiST Team Leader to the B Company Commander to the Battalion Operations Officer to the Battalion CO was either saturated or not working well. I successfully ran numerous rotary wing and fixed wing attacks to destroy counterattacking and re-supplying Fedayeen troops, vehicles, and compounds. My Company Commander who had little to no comms (b)1.4a (b)1.4a with the Battalion CO the previous day, now had clear channels. We could get approval on all levels for each attack.

What was still contributing highly to our friction was our lack of preplanned air support, and our Air Officer's limited comms with Regimental Air and the DASC. Aircraft would show up with limited amounts of playtime, having been diverted from other missions. I tried to use them, but often had to scramble to put together a safe mission.

I never knew that C Co had made the dash for the bridge. I would have known had our communications been working. In the absence of communication, I acted to achieve the Commander's Intent. The picture painted for me was that reinforcing enemy units were lying in ambush on the far side of the bridge. This perception was based on my discussion over the radio with the A-10. We had been fighting continuously for almost 6

hours against a determined enemy whose disposition we did not know and whose will to fight had been underestimated. We had basically done a movement to contact, through an urban area, with no reconnaissance and no planned air support. Every single target I destroyed that day was a "pop-up" target and we were always well inside the enemy's engagement range when we fired. I was not ready to continue to fight this way and allow my company to be annihilated as we attacked the bridge. Our intended maneuver would have offered clear, devastating flanking fire to the enemy across the canal.

I acted with the information I had to ensure the safety of the men I served. I did not believe there was time or communication capability to get approval from the Battalion Commander for Type III control. I knew he was busy fighting to get the battalion out of the ambush and believed that the time it would have taken to get approval via an already limited net would have cost us lives. We needed those fires.

I would like to take the opportunity to include my thoughts on other possible contributing factors to this friendly fire incident. First, and foremost, was the lack of clear communications across the board. My own communication problems have been detailed above, but the battalion as a whole was having difficulties. This was caused by the stuck (later abandoned) Command and Control AAV and the line-of-sight challenges posed by an urban environment [redacted] (b)1.4a (b)1.4a [redacted] do not know if these systems were operational during the fight.

Second, I feel that C Co needed a FAC. As the lead unit in the regiment and the mechanized battalion, we should have been given another FAC. Each company should have had one in addition to the Battalion Air Officer. Normal allotment is two FACs and one air officer. There are many trained FACs in CONUS who would have been available. During their attack on the northern bridge, C Co did not have priority of fires. That still belonged to B Co. C Co could only rely on organic fire support assets (60mm mortars). Had we been alerted to their drive down Ambush Alley, we would have discontinued all fire support and passed control to them. I could have met them in Ambush Alley and controlled aircraft in support of their attack.

Third, we were not given any preplanned air support for our attack. No targets were serviced prior to our movement. There were many enemy positions that day which should have been destroyed earlier. The lack of preplanned close air support forced us to scramble throughout the day to provide protection for the Marines. Moreover, a preplanned fixed-wing FAC (A) could have controlled the fight at the northern bridge and would have had the responsibility to identify enemy targets prior to ordnance release. When we have preplanned air support, I can influence the Company Commander's maneuver to better be supported by air. When that A-10 checked in, I had to use those fires rapidly or lose them.

Lastly, I believe that it should have been possible for the A-10 pilot to see an AAV and identify it as friendly. At the start of his run (b)(2)High it would be impossible to tell the difference between friendly and enemy. However, after each run he bottomed out at a

low enough altitude to see what he was targeting. An AAV is large and looks like no other vehicle in the enemy's inventory. (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a Lastly, the green star clusters fired should have also alerted the A-10 to the presence of friendly forces.

I want to do my utmost to honor the memory of the Marines who died that day. I do not want to shirk any responsibility for what happened. The truth about this incident is the most important aspect of this entire process. I am truly saddened by the loss of our fellow Marines during the Battle of An Nasiriyah. I will carry their memory with me forever.

(b)(6)

Captain, USMC

Signed and sworn before me this 23d day of APRIL 2003

(b)(6)

Investigating Officer's Name and Position on Accident Investigation Board

(b)(6) MAJOR, USAF

LEGAL ADVISOR.

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TAB I

TAB J

Tab J

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Interview with Lt Col (b)(6), (b)(3)

COL (b)(6) State your name please.

LT CO b(6), b(3) Lieutenant Col [redacted] (b)(6) Staff Judge Advocate at 1st Battalion, social security number XXX-XX-XXXX.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT CO (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) (b)(3) Would you please relate to me…I understand that you have some knowledge of the incident based on information you got from your deputy, who conducted the investigation. Would you please relay to me what you know and understand?

LT COL (b)(6) Sir, basically 23rd March, 1/2 was trying to secure some bridges in An Nasiriyah. And the scheme of maneuver, from what I understand, was Bravo Company was supposed to be in the lead and Charlie Company was supposed to be in the rear. Alpha Company had secured the southern bridge and were trying to push forward to secure the northern bridges. Bravo Company was under fire and they tried to go around the bridges on the side and got stuck in the mud. Charlie Company pushed forward. The FAC…there was no FAC with Charlie Company. There was a FAC with Bravo Company, I don't recall the Captain's name. It's in the preliminary inquiry that my deputy did. Anyhow, Charlie Company pushed forward. The A-10 came on station. The FAC did not know that another unit had pushed forward. He cleared the A-10….from what my deputy tells me…from where he was located from the forward bridges was about…over a 1000 meters apart. So, he could not see as well as _____.

COL (b)(6) Was Charlie Company taking fire any time during and just prior to the A-10 arrival?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Throughout the whole period they were engaging the enemy, the enemy was firing with mortars, firing with RPGs, firing with small arms and heavy machine guns.

COL (b)(6) As they moved toward the bridge?

LT COL (b)(6) They were moving the entire time. It was a movement to contact, and they were firing the entire time. And that was one of the reasons why Bravo Company, from what I understand, went the other route, to try to avoid the intense enemy fire, then got stuck and Charlie Company just punched through. The A-10 cleared and started engaging, from what I understand, the AVs, based on the preliminary inquiry.

COL (b)(6) Do you know the call sign of the A-10?

LT COL (b)(6) No, Sir. I believe that information may be maintained by our ASE. At the time, we had to do a preliminary inquiry, the ASE forward who holds that information had punched for another mission, so we were not able to get that information to meet the deadline they had for the preliminary inquiry. They had 48 hours to get it done. So, they may have that information now. Anyhow…so what happened was…The A-10 engaged the AVs, from

what…the report of the preliminary inquiry and they made 8 passes. I believe, by the 3rd pass, they were trying to call it off, but there was no FAC. There was an FO.

COL (b)(6) You say there was an FO?

LT COL (b)(6) There was an FO, a Forward Operator. The Forward Operator was with Charlie Company, Lt (b)(6) Witness statements indicate that Lt (b)(6) alled back to the FAC. The FAC tried to call them off several times, the A-10s. (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

COL (b)(6) (b)1.4a

LT COL (b)(6) No, Sir. I do not.

COL (b)(6) OK.

LT C (b)(6) From my understanding, the A-10 fired off his chaff. He thought it may have been an anti-aircraft SAMs or _____, and kept on engaging them, making passes, about 4 or 5 other passes. Lt (b)(6) unfortunately was killed by the A-10. Witness statements indicate that he was obliterated by 30 millimeter fire. And that's basically_____.

COL (b)(6) Following the incident, what transpired? When did you first hear about the incident?

LT (b)(6) I first heard about the incident about the 25th.

COL (b)(6) And you were here with Task Force Tarawa then?

LT COL (b)(6) Not currently at the location we were at. We were near Jalibah.

COL b(6) OK.

LT COL (b)(6) Moving up to An Nasiriyah, because we were about to engage and there was very heavy fighting, because where the 3rd ID was supposed to secure An Nasiriyah, it didn't really happen. They bypassed An Nasiriyah , so there was not a lot of shaping. There was very intense fighting in An Nasiriyah.

COL (b)(6) So, it wasn't until two days after the event that you first found out about it?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. When I first found out it was "no kidding" a friendly fire. And then we moved our main. We had movement day. We had set up day and then that's when we started getting the preliminary inquiry.

COL (b)(6) OK. So you started a preliminary inquiry after you set up again on or about the 25th, probably? The 26th?

LT COL (b)(6) Maybe on the 26th or 27th.

COL (b)(6) The 26th or 27th you started the preliminary inquiry.

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) And you sent your deputy down onto An Nasiriyah with a team, or?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. What we did was, not really. Just himself and he took a digital camera and he went to 1/2, to their CP and started interviewing witnesses. He interviewed several witnesses. He got the names of several witnesses that for whatever reason were on patrol or spread out throughout the companies, and he was able to make some inquiries as to what occurred. He also tried to interview with the FAC. The FAC invoked his rights. From what I understood, the FAC broke down and was visibly upset.

COL (b)(6) OK. So, you didn't get up to the site yourself, but he was at the site. Do you have the pictures?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. We do have digital photographs of the AVs. There were several AVs that were destroyed. We don't know which ones were destroyed by the A-10. My deputy does know. He actually got 30 millimeter rounds out of one of the AVs, and he obviously could point to which one of the AVs got damaged from the A-10.

COL (b)(6) Do you know how many casualties were caused by enemy fire?

LT COL (b)(6) I would say…KIAs?

COL (b)(6) KIAs that were wounded by enemy fire vice the A-10.

LT COL (b)(6) I'm more certain about the KIAs. I'm not too sure about the WIAs _____. We had so many WIAs, I can't count. I've kind of lost track, but…

COL (b)(6) KIAs?

LT COL (b)(6) I think we had 11 by enemy fire, and…

COL (b)(6) This was in this incident?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. 11 by enemy fire, and I believe,…by friendly fire, 8. The total was 18 or so, something… The total was 18 KIAs, 17 KIAs ___- total, from the incident. The majority were by enemy fire, and I think 7 or 8 were by friendly fire.

COL (b)(6) Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

LT COL (b)(6) No, Sir. That's it.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, I do.

COL (b)(6) Thank you very much.

Interview with Col (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) ate your name please.

COL (b)(6) Co (b)(6) XXX-XX-XXXX, Chief of Staff, Task Force Tarawa

COL (b)(6) y name is Colone (b)(6) nder the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

COL (b)(6) Yes.

COL (b)(6) inally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

COL (b)(6) Yes.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

COI (b)(6) I do.

COL (b)(6) I understand that you visited the An Nasiriyah incident site somewhere between 2, 3, or 4 days after the incident. Can you please walk me through what you saw when you first arrived on the scene, the damage that you saw to the vehicles, the position and location of the vehicles, and any other information that you can remember regarding what you saw on the damage during the afternoon you were there.

COL (b)(6) I was sent… myself and a small team was sent by the commanding General out to the site in order to do a preliminary investigation into what was then an alleged Blue on Blue incident. My team and I traveled up through the eastern bridges of An Nasiriyah. There's two bridges, a southern and a northern bridge, about a 4 kilometer corridor between the two. As we crossed over the southern bridge, there was a destroyed Amtrack sitting in the center of the road. The claim is this Amtrack had been hit by an RPG on its way back taking medevac people out. We proceeded down the corridor all the way to the northern bridge. Sitting just next to the northern bridge on the right hand side of the road was a catastrophically destroyed Amtrack. At the time I was told that was the Amtrack that had been struck by the A-10. We then crossed over the northern bridge, over the Saddam Canal, and proceeded down the road towards the CP of 1/2. As we proceeded down the road, on the left hand side of the road was another catastrophically destroyed AAV and another damaged AAV, which I didn't pay any attention to at the time. I

just kept on down the road. The investigating officer who was with me was left at the BLT Headquarters to take statements and to visit with people. Myself and the Regiment's XO, and a small security team then returned back the way we had come. We did not look at the two vehicles that were short of the bridge, as the Regimental Officer was under the impression, as was I, that it was the Amtrack on the other side that had been hit by the A-10. We crossed over the bridge and approached the AAV that was sitting on the side of the road. It was split down the middle, burned out on the inside, catastrophically destroyed. We only go within a few of it, and it became apparent there was still (b)6 Unfortunately, also scattered about was any number of unexploded ordinance, grenades, mortar rounds, all types of UXO, which made being around the vehicle extremely hazardous. Also scattered about in the area were a number of Marines packs that were strewn across the road and sitting everywhere. What we did then is we proceeded to try and identify the number (b)6 carefully looking through the rubble as best we could. I believe…I think we identified six, although there was no way to tell that some of them were (b)6

(b)(6) About that time, there became a fair gathering crowd of curious people starting to press up on both sides. This was just two days after the fight. It was still considered a pretty hazardous zone. Convoys were still taking fire as they were passing through this area. At that particular time, because we only had a few security people with us, we backed up to the bridge, waited for reinforcements, got a few…got a Mech Company came up on the bridge, and came back down to the site, again, still believing that this site was the site that had been struck by the A-10. At that time, we called in an EOD team in order to clear away enough of the UXOs to actually start recovering the (b)(6) that were scattered about this and inside this AAV. At that particular point in time, I left that business to the Regimental XO, proceeded back over the bridge, and reported to the _, to the MEB Commanding General what

we had found. He didn't know at that time that we had found any bodies. I don't believe that the BLT or the Regiment knew that there were any bodies left there at that time either, like I said. It was a hot zone, nobody had gone back out and actually dismounted to look around until we had gone back out. We got back over to the Regimental. The MEB Commander was visiting BLT 1/2 CO at the time. I got over there and started talking to him, and was informed that that was not the AAV that had been struck by the A-10. So, the Battalion commander said it was the AAV that was ditched on the other side of the bridge. So, we proceeded back to that AAV, the team and I, and looked it over. We found no (b)(6) but I did find a pretty well shot up AAV. Although, it was very difficult to tell…we didn't see any A-10 ordinance. I'm not sure I'd have known it if I saw it. There were no real identifiable bullet holes on that vehicle because it was just shattered to pieces. We looked around that for a while, took pictures, and then as we were leaving, we had gone down to check out with the BLT, we were coming back. We stopped beside two other AAVs. These AAVs had been pulled in for kind of a maintenance. They were sitting looking like they were doing some maintenance on it. So the CG wanted to stop and take a look at them. We stopped and looked at those vehicles, and we crawled up on them…we were walking around them actually, and one of the young Marines said, "Oh, yeah, this thing's been hit by the A-10 too." I said "Well show me." He took me up on top of the AAV. Standing on top of the AAV, I could count four, what looked like bullet strikes or shell strikes, but I'm not expert enough to know if they were the right millimeter that comes off an A-10. They were clearly something of a fairly large caliber. Two or three in the front turret and maybe one in the rear deck, but not catastrophic, just random hits. I came down off that AAV, and we're getting ready to go when the commanding General pointed to the side of the second AAV. It looked like the same kind of hit on the turret on the side of that AAV. Kind of a…shell strike. But again, none of us were expert enough to know that those were A-10

strikes. Neither of those two AAVs were castastrophically destroyed. They had been hit by something obviously, but that was it. That's about the size of it. After that, we left and came on back to the CP.

COL (b)(6) How many total damaged AAVs were there?

COL (b)(6) One...let's see...1, 2, 3...there were three that were pretty much catastrophically destroyed, and then the two that we looked...that I personally saw...and then the two that were damaged that were being worked on. Whether they ever brought those back to working order, I have no idea.

COL (b)(6) So that's seven that had some type of damage?

COL (b)(6) There were seven total, but we didn't see all seven because some of the ones that were damaged they turned off to the right when they first came across the bridge, and were shot up over there. We never got over to see those. As I understand it, when the BLT came across the bridge, the lead company came across the bridge and bore right in an attempt to avoid this road that ran down through an open area. That company got bogged down in some very thick mud and bad terrain and got stuck. Not all of them, but a portion of them. At that particular point in time, the second company, which was Charlie Company, which was the company we believe was struck by the A-10, were told to come across the bridge and continue the attack. The AAVs, at least on the far side, were those Charlie Company AAVs.

COL And there were five of those?

CO (b)(6) There were four that I saw, and…

COL (b)(6) our that you physically saw?

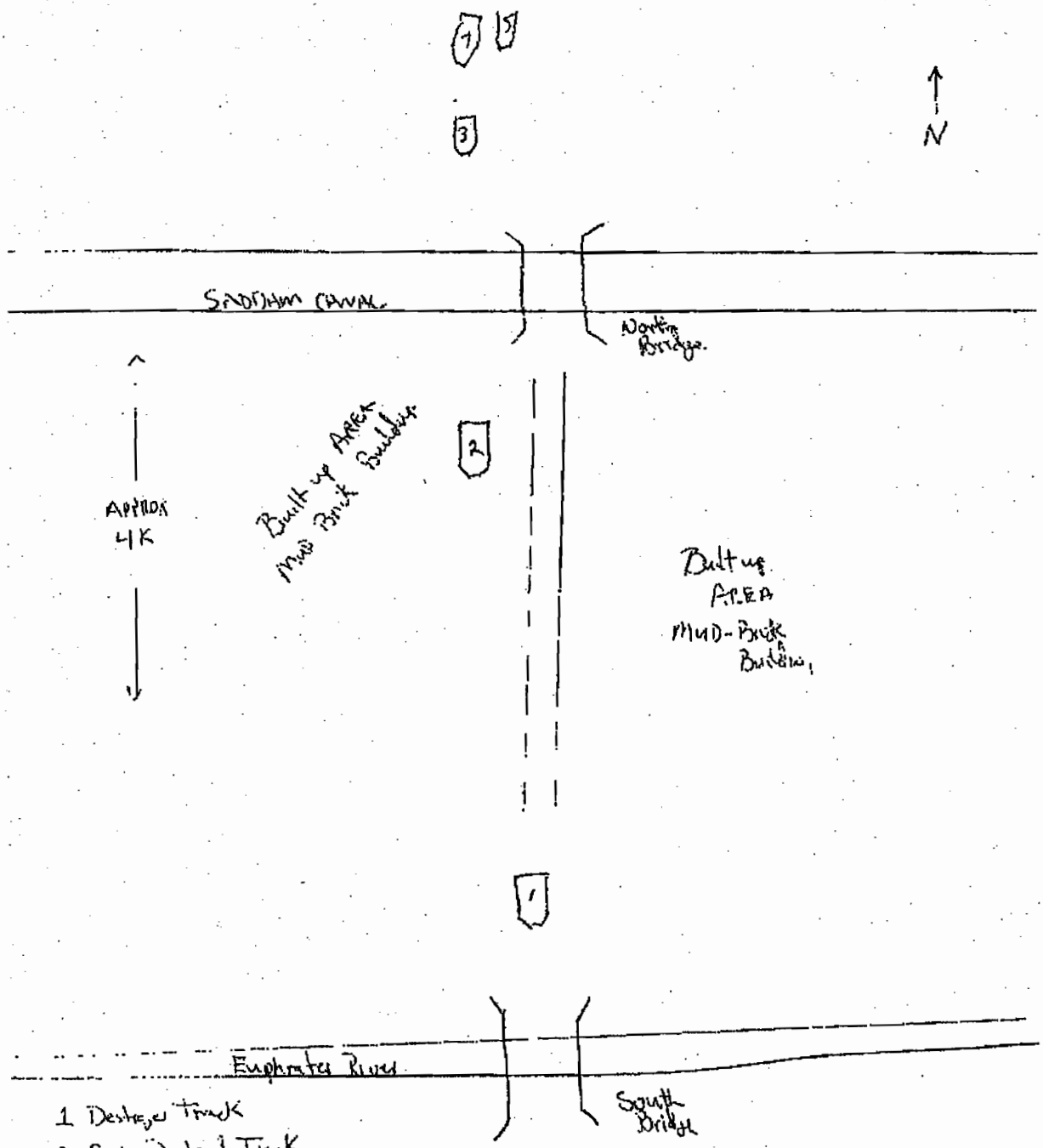
COL (b)(6) There were four of those. The two were catastrophically destroyed, one on each side of the bridge, and the other two were shot up, but not blown apart.

COL (b)(6) Col (b)(6) I'll ask you to provide me, if you could, a diagram of what you saw there, and if possible, the locations of those vehicles relative to the bridge and the urban area.

COL (b)(6) I'll be glad to.

COL (b)(6) closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

COL (b)(6) I understand.



1 Destroyed Track
2. Cat. Destroyed Track (Bodies found)
3. Cat. Destroyed Track (Indicated by Bet as hit by A-10)
4 Damaged Track (noted round strikes)
5 Damaged Track (noted round strikes)

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Interview with Lt Col (b)(6)
10 April 2003, 1600

COL (b)(6) State your name please.

LT COL (b)(6) Lt Col (b)(6) XXX-XX-XXXX

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) [redacted] you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) I understand that you were responsible for combat ID of the vehicles within the Regimental Combat Team.

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I was in charge for the entire task force, Tarawa Task Force. I was in charge of procuring the combat identifications specifically. (b)1.4a

[redacted] (b)1.4a

really more for the M-1s then they were for the vehicles that we're looking at. Additionally,

(b)1.4a [redacted] understand this was a daytime incident. So, I believe it won't be an issue.

COL (b)(6) How were the vehicles? Was there guidance on how the vehicles were supposed to be marked?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. The guidance was…

COL (b)(6) Was it written?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. It is. It was written. The guidance that was prescribed was that each vehicle that they called shooter plus, which a shooter plus is any vehicle that would be forward of the line that would be anticipated in combat operations. (b)1.4a a

(b)1.4a They tried to get enough…getting these was a challenge the whole time. However, we did gather enough to outfit the task force for the shooter plus. (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

COL (b)(6) (b)1.4a

LT CO (b)(6) I don't know if they had those, Sir. We tried to again…I don't have the exact numbers of what we had at the task force. (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

COL (b)(6) [redacted] (b)1.4a

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) For (b)1.4a of the AAV?

LT COL (b)(6) Well, the way it's…everybody was supposed to have it set up…in the AAVs, I know that we're able to do this. (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

(b)1.4a As I understand, this incident was a daytime incident. So (b)1.4a and I don't know in the daytime if he would be usin (b)1.4a they would be useless.

COL (b)(6) Right.

LT CO (b)(6) The CFLCC guidance, which I know a lot of people had a hard time with, was that (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

COL (b)(6) (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

LT COL (b)(6) : On the vehicles? Yes, Sir. Right now, what we started to see is the (b)1.4a I'm not sure. I know in An Nasiriyah, those guys had a pretty hard time in the beginning. So, I can't…I would be guessing if I tried to tell you what condition I though (b)1.4a would have been in. Again, considering this was a daytime thing, (b)1.4a

COL (b)(6) (b)1.4a

LT COI (b)(6) Yes, Sir. But to get back to your question. They (b)1.4a I've seen, most of them actually work (b)1.4a They're being (b)1.4a but I know that people could (b)1.4a They weren't thinking, or they were resting or something along those lines.

COI (b)(6) Do you have anything else you need to add here?

LT CO (b)(6) No, Sir. That pretty much addresses what.. (b)1.4a I guess the biggest issue I had was the same thing that everybody did…was th (b)1.4a (b)1.4a (b)1.4a I assume that the thought is…you know…you'd be more concerned about…you know, you got day time, you ought to be running vis ID anyway, regardless of any type of combat markings.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

LT CO (b)(6) I understand.

Interview with Major (b)(6)
11 April 03, 0600

COL (b)(6) Go ahead and state your name for the record, and your social security number, and your MOS and your job here.

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Major (b)(6) Social security number XXX-XX-XXXX, MOS 4402, I am the deputy Staff Judge Advocate for Task Force Tarawa.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir, I do.

COL (b)(6) if you could, please walk me through when you first became aware of this incident, and the subsequent actions that you took related to this incident, and I understand that you wrote the preliminary inquiry. Is that correct?

MAJ (b)(6) That's correct, Sir. Sir, on the 23rd of March, we heard that 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines took some heavy casualties taking the northern bridge on the eastern side of An Nasiriyah. About two days later on the 25th of March, word filtered up to the headquarters it might have been an incident with an A-10. At this point, the Task Force Headquarters was about 20 miles south of An Nasiriyah. On the 26th, we moved up to An Nasiriyah. We got there too late in the day to go forward to 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines position. So on the 27th I was taken up to 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines Headquarters on the northern side of An Nasiriyah to conduct the preliminary inquiry. While there, I met with the Battalion Air Officer, the Battalion Fire Support Coordinator, who was also the weapons company commander. I spoke with the SJA Alpha. I had a brief talk with the Forward Air Controller, call sign MOUTH, at the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines.

COL (b)(6) And his name is?

MA (b)(6) That, I don't have, Sir. I have none of their names at this point, Sir. I also spoke to the Company Gunney for C company 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, who was also was on the northern side of the bridge. From those interviews, I gleened that the Battalion's course of action they chose was to have, they were a mechanized company all on AAVs. Their Alpha Company secured the southern bridge with their Bravo Company to lead to the northern bridge followed by Charlie Company. When they came across the southern bridge, Bravo Company maneuvered off to the east and became stuck. Charlie Company was ordered forward. Charlie Company went up and across the northern bridge, at which point they were engaged by enemy indirect fire. It was at that point, from what the witnesses said, an A-10 started to roll in on them and made approximately eight passes on their position. After the first or second pass (b)1.4a

[redacted] (b)1.4a The Battalion Air Officer, his radio was physically broken, so he had very little situational awareness as to what was going on. Bravo Company had the Forward Air Controller, call sign MOUTH, who was…because he was supposed to be in the lead, but he was about 5000 meters back…Charlie Company did not have a Forward Air Controller with them.

COL (b)(6) You subsequently did interviews with these gentlemen?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. It was the S-3 Alpha, the weapons company commander and the Air Officer sitting down in 1/2's room with me, and they effectively told me the Battalion's plan that day and what happened that day from their perspective, which I summarized in my preliminary inquiry.

COL (b)(6) Do you know the FAC's name from Charlie Company, or Bravo Company?

MAJ (b)(6) Sir, if I had a copy of investigation…

COL (b)(6) You don't have it with you?

MAJ (b)(6) I don't have it with me, Sir.

COL (b)(6) What was the state of mind of the FAC when you spoke with him? The Bravo Company FAC.

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. The Bravo Company FAC, call sign MOUTH, when he came in to see me, he started off…he was standing in front of me and said, "Sir, I don't want to make any comments now. I've seen too many people get crucified on CNN for their actions. I'm not comfortable speaking without talking to an attorney first." At which point, I sat him down, tried to calm him down, and he became extremely emotional at that time. And for approximately 10 to 15 minutes, cried…feeling the burden of what he may have been involved in, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Did you…subsequent to this…Did (b)(6) who was the Bravo FAC, say anything to you? Did anybody else? Did he talk with anybody else? And do you have knowledge of anything he said to anybody else?

MAJ (b)(6) Sir, about two or three days after my interview up there, I ran into the Battalion Executive Officer, I don't have the name off the top of my head, who said that he had some

essential information and I let him know that the investigating officer would be down at some point to talk with him. I don't know if it's anything more than the S-3 Alpha had already provided or not, but...and then the Company Gunnery Sergeant provided a statement, and the Platoon...the Amtrack Platoon Sergeant also provided a written statement. It came in a little bit later. It basically said that he saw an A-10 roll in and he's indicated on the inquiry one of the people that should be contacted.

COL (b)(6) Do you have anything else you want to add at this time?

M (b)(6) No, Sir. I don't.

CO (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MA (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I do.

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Interview with Major (b)(6)
11 April 03, 0653

COL (b)(6) Go ahead and please state your name, rank and your social security number for the record and billet for the record.

MAJ (b)(6) (b)(6) , XXX-XX-XXXX, Senior Air Director, Air Support Element Forward.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

MA (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MA (b)(6) Yes, Sir, I do.

COL (b)(6) If you would, would you walk me through the Command and Control procedures that have gone on out here with air and how air is tasked.

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Basically, the Air Tasking Order comes out that describes how all the aircraft…who they work for and their specific duties. That comes out early in the morning. We get that, we look at, and then we make that ATO work for the day. (b)1.4a (b)1.4a That's our primary job out here in the Air Support Element. (b)1.4a (b)1.4a Primarily Forward Air Controllers and Air Officers out there, and then we fill those requests, not only JTARs, but also Assault Support requests and medevacs from that Air Tasking Order. But if we're not able to meet those needs from that Air Tasking Order, we go to higher, whether it…it would most likely be the TAC center, Tactical Air Command Center, and request from them to divert air from, whether its ASOC or from other elements out there on the field. Primarily that's what we do, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Now, does all air come through the DASC to you, and you pass it on, or has air been directed straight from the TACC down to the FAC level?

MA (b)(6) The best way to address that question is…academically, there's one DASC on the battlefield. Out here for this operation, there's one DASC with 1st Marine Division, and then you have an Air Support element, which does DASC functions with the UK. Then you have an Air Support Element with the Task Force Tarawa, which does DASC functions. Aircraft, if they're going to go work in one of those sectors, they take off, and they primarily go through TAOC and then to one of the ASCs for the DASC for work. Unless we divert aircraft, they don't talk to the DASC or the other ASC. They basically go for the positive control agency, like TAOC or AWACs and then come straight to us for work.

COL (b)(6) What about… Are there any instances where air will be…aircraft out there looking for targets of opportunity will contact FACs directly?

MA (b)(6) There have been some instances of FACs picking up aircraft or having aircraft jump over the DASC or the ASC, and go work directly for them.

COL (b)(6) How are the aircraft able to do that? How are they able to get the frequencies?

MA (b)(6) lot of times the frequencies…they get those from running previous missions, or they also get those from the TAC Center at times.

COL (b)(6) Can you tell me what air…Do you have any record of air that ran down to 2nd Marines on the morning or afternoon of the 23rd of March?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) What was that?

MAJ (b)(6) I had several sections that got diverted that day.

COL (b)(6) We are looking at the log book for the ASC.

MAJ (b)(6) Sir, how far back do you want me to go on this log book?

COL (b)(6) Start about 1000.

MAJ (b)(6) here, Sir? About 0953 1-2 crossed the first bridge, they're in An Nasiriyah, got a report of troops in contact at 1023, casevac at 1024…at 1105 Zulu at CAOC Air, divert 2 A-10s, call sign JODA 6-1 over to us with an estimated time of arrival of 1145 Zulu…at 1119 had NAIL 6 and 7 headed to 1/ 2 to work, reported troops, artillery, and a ZSU-23-4 in the vicinity Papa Victor 207 309…at 1123 had a REDBACK 5-5 work with OPA 7-1. OPA 7-1 was UH-1s, on JTAR 23-11. NAIL 6-7 at 1134 went to the tanker, then after that he went immediately back to 1/2. And then at 1147, 1/2 reported a mass casualty at Papa Victor 209 348.

COL (b)(6) How many casualties?

MAJ (b)(6) They said approximately 50 at the time. I don't have any other amplifying information on that. And, that is when we requested additional support from the DASC and the UK through the close battle cell. And that's when we received a JTAR at 1203, JTAR 23-13 from the Regiment was assigning NAIL 6-5, which was two F/A18s and ROMAN 11, that's two F-14s, to an unknown target, location in An Nasiriyah…Do you want me to proceed on down a little farther, Sir?

COL (b)(6) Yes. Anything that has to do with casevacs after that period, would you go ahead and see what we've got.

MAJ (b)(6) Roger that, Sir. At 1253, received medevac from 2-3 TAC Echo at PapaVictor 199 213…2 casualties, one listed as urgent…then at 1254 received medevac 2-3 TAC Fox at Papa Victor 230 395…that's 14 casualties and 12 listed as urgent… At 1304 had 2 A-10s, call sign *MINNUNO*? 5-1 went to work with the Forward Air Controller, call sign DUCK…Then at 1416 received medevac 2-3 TAC Golf, vicinity Papa Victor 199 213 with four casualties listed…At 1432, receive JTAR 2-3, TAC 1-5, suspected Scud launcher, this was from 3-2, that was at Papa Victor 182 452. There was assigned two A-10s, call sign NEEDLES 5-7…and at 1458 the DASC-A broadcast on guard for all casevac aircraft to come up _____FSC-4…and that is basically it all the way up to 1530. And from…at 1610 got a battle damage assessment from NEEDLE 5-1, that's mission 65-51…Troops at Papa Victor 201 405, 8 MK82s expended, no known BDA. That's about it Sir, for the afternoon.

COL (b)(6) In you give me your general impressions of what transpired, what kind of battle was transpiring in the An Nasiriyah area?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. What happened was, our troops went up to go take the bridges in the vicinity. They had a western bridge and also they had a northeastern bridge. On that morning, as the troops went into contact, they got into an armor ambush. When that armor ambush took place, immediate call came back for casevac work. From my point of view, when we heard there was casualties, we immediately started looking at where the troops were that were called in that casevac, where they were in contact, and started to get air immediately flowing to them, especially since there was an armor engagement.

COL (b)(6) t the same time, enemy armor?

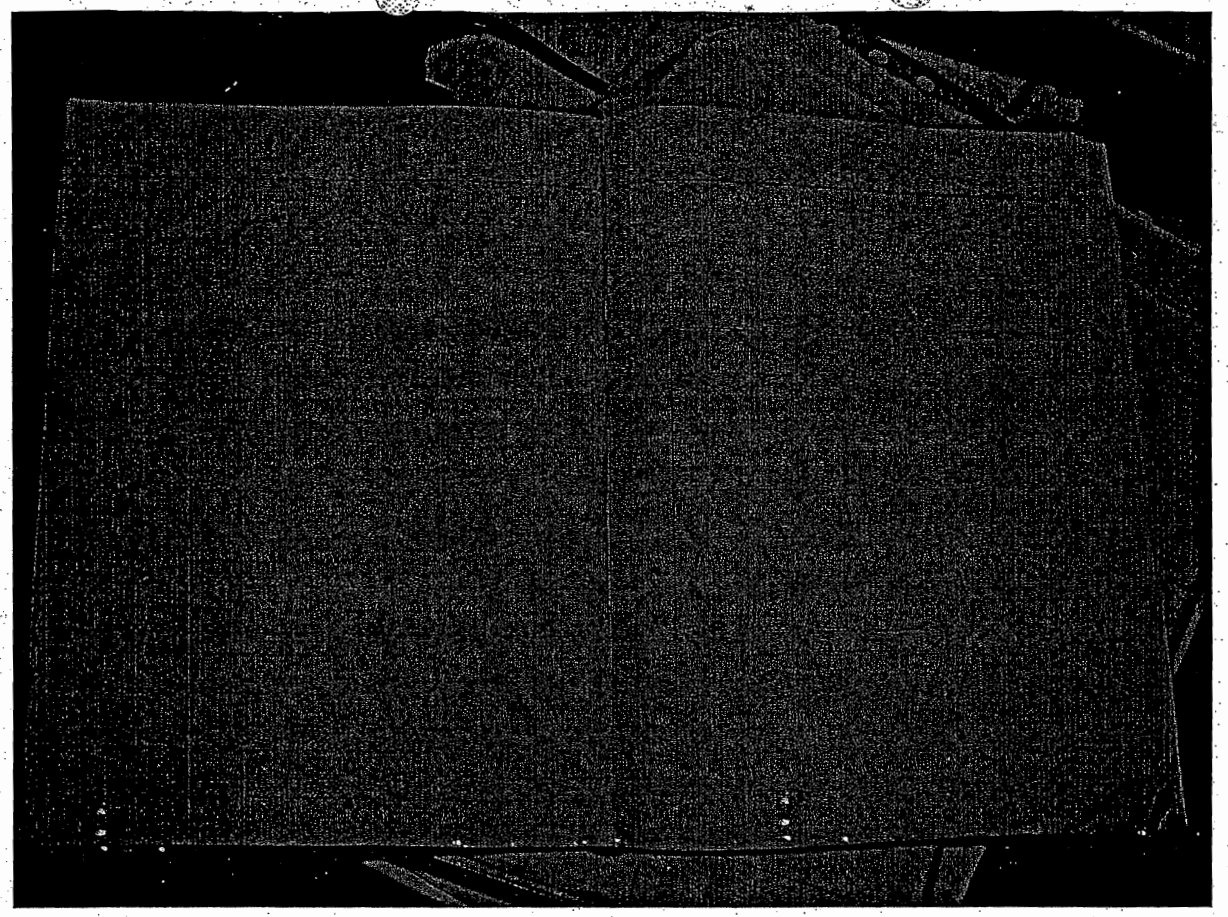
MAJ (b)(6) Enemy armor. Yes, Sir. Our armor went up there and got ambushed by enemy armor up there. So, we were also looking at getting the casevac bird up there. So we had two issues at the time. I know, from my point of view, we were getting ready to launch casevac, and they actually moved a triple A piece, a ZSA2-3, TAC-4 within one kilometer of the landing zone where the casevacs were going to be moved to. So, they were actually looking to do an ambush on our casevac aircraft. It was very dynamic. A lot of air was flowing in there that day. I did not hear about this Blue on Blue until several days afterward. It wasn't confirmed until I actually talked to the MEB JAG about it. But up until then, it had just been basically scuttlebutt. I did not hear anything about it that day, air flowed in, air flowed out. But on that day, we had a lot of troops in contact and we had a lot of medevacs.

COL (b)(6) Do you have anything else that you would like to add (b)(6)

MA (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MA (b)(6) Yes, Sir.



Interview with Lt Col (b)(6)
11 April 2003, 0956

COL (b)(6) ate your name please.

LT COL (b)(6) Lt Col (b)(6) XXX-XX-XXXX.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) Under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we are investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) inally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) we've got a map in front of us that I will provide. Would you please walk us through the disposition of friendly forces on that day, your scheme of maneuver? I understand that you captured an enemy prisoner and he had some information on their disposition of forces and what their intent was.

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Early on the 23rd, we launched out of our defensive positions in Jalibah. We staged on the main MSR heading north toward An Nasiriyah. We lead with tanks, followed by Bravo Company, who was a Team mech, followed by the forward. Behind the forward was Alpha Company, followed by Charlie Company. We were going to approach the city in a, basically, a column formation and move to seize the bridges, the eastern bridges of An Nasiriyah, which originally was a "be prepared to" mission that we found out about the night before, was going to be the actual mission that we had up there. Originally, our mission was to follow in trace and go up the Route 1 and assist in keeping Route 1 clear. But, with An Nasiriyah, the eastern bridges being a "be prepared to" mission from the MEB (TFTARAWA). We got that mission clarified the night before. The next morning, very early, we launched out, staged, and we began movement to An Nasiriyah. About 10 clicks south of An Nasiriyah, we

came under artillery and mortar fire along the route. We also took machine gun fire and small arms fire. It was at that time, and this was about mid-morning, that we were in the process of trying to clear some buildings that were on both sides of the MSR that we had thought that some of the small arms fire had come from. We could see out in the distance where the mortar fire was coming from, and we were trying to prosecute that with our artillery. At one point, if I remember right, our artillery engaged enemy artillery in the city, "Red Rain" counter battery fire that they were picking up. It was at that time, sometime around 9 local, that Gen (b)(6) and the Regimental Commander, (b)(6) approached our position, and it was explained to me that we needed to seize the bridges, that the small arms fire, we could bypass that and continue, because there were two RCTs waiting behind us to pass through the eastern side of An Nasiriyah and head up Route 7 toward Baghdad. We began our movement. We started to bypass the small arms fire to get our movement, picking up the momentum, when Team Tank had encountered about seven US Army survivors from a convoy earlier that morning, who went up the same route we were on. They had been ambushed by forces inside the city. Tanks had retrieved those individuals and found that there were five additional wounded soldiers forward. So, when we found out about that, we pushed tanks forward to retrieve those individuals. And when tanks came back with them, they had to go back and refuel because they were pretty much below half a tank. We didn't want to go into the fight without tanks up front. After that is when Co (b)(6) and Ger Natonski showed up. It wasn't before that. It was after that. One of the concerns was that the General had mentioned that there were twelve others still missing that they are hearing about from higher headquarters. As we're pressing on the bridges to be looking for these individuals, And, we had to have that in the back of our minds. So, it kind of picked up our momentum to push forward as quickly as possible. One, to seize the bridges, which was the

intent of the commander, and it was my intent to rapidly seize the bridges. And two, to see if we could find any of the survivors that might still be along the road. As we got closer to An Nasiriyah, we found remnants of the Army vehicle convoy that had been destroyed. One vehicle was still intact, and we retrieved that on…we still have today. But as we got closer to the city, the southeastern side of the city, we came upon the first bridge, which was a railroad bridge. It wasn't the bridge that goes over the Euphrates. It was not an objective, but when we got to that bridge, that was the trigger point that if our tanks hadn't refueled, we were not going to go any farther. We were going to stop there, consolidate until we could get armor up front. We were starting to receive heavy small arms fire southeast of the city, and it was at that point that our AAVs and Team Mech, Bravo Company, saw T55s. They backed off. We pushed CAAT forward. CAAT saw the T55.

COL (b)(6) What's CAAT?

LT COL (b)(6) Combined Anti-Arms Team. A combination of heavy guns, vehicles, tow vehicles. The tow vehicles pressed forward engaged the T55s. In the southeastern side of this city, by that railroad bridge, there were a total of nine T55s engaged. Some of those T55s had been drug into position, had no engines or transmission in them, but they had ammo in the turrets, and there were numerous secondary explosions when they were engaged. There were also…the ammo was still visible. I think Ge Natonski nd his Ops O, Co (b)(6) were crawling around the some of them and verified that. So, some of these tanks were not operational other than the fact that they appeared to be just stationary pill boxes. But, about the time that we were on this railroad bridge, I was talking to my Ops O saying, "Hey, if we don't

get tanks up here, we're not going any farther." I was talking to my XO, Maj (b)(6) in the rear, who was with the main, by the log trains?, and we were pushing him to get the tanks back up to us. Three tanks from Team Mech arrived that had been refueled. One of their tanks broke down at the refueling site and was unable to join us, but they had pushed forward. It was at that point, we were not taking any heavy fire other than the small arms. The T55s were observed, some of them moving, some of them stationary, and we decided push for the bridge, the southern bridge, and we did rapidly. We got on the southern bridge. Team Mech took the lead because tanks were still back refueling. Team Mech, followed by the forward, followed by Alpha Company, and then Charlie Company behind them. We got over the first bridge with no fire at all. It was…you know…there was absolutely no fire whatsoever once we got on the first bridge. Alpha Company, which was behind me, occupied the bridge as Team Mech continued the lead. And part of plan up here was to go down and take a side street to the east and outskirt or outflank this built up area here. We were trying to go through the back side of the city, and come in here and establish a support by fire position with the mech company, Team Mech, which was Bravo Company, and the tanks, to support the seizure of this northern bridge. Charlie Company, who was right behind the forward…

COL (b)(6) Moving to the east?

LT COL (b)(6) Moving to the east, following in trace, was going to also pass through and seize that bridge. As it turned out, we got back into this area here, where you see that trail, and it was nothing but a mud flat. No intel suggested that it was like that. It was a…

COL (b)(6) That was just over the southern bridge?

LT COL (b)(6) Over the southern bridge about…

COL (b)(6) Started to proceed to the right?

LT COL (b)(6) Actually it was right where that trail is right there that you see.

COL (b)(6) OK.

LT COL (b)(6) That goes off. So, it was about maybe a third of the way up, a little less than a third of the way up the main MSR there. It took a right, got right back in here where you see that angle is, and that's where our first tank just sunk to the axle. The dirt on the ground looked like this. We thought it was going to be more of a paved road back there and it wasn't. But, underneath that dirt was nothing but soft, wet mud and sand. It was there that Bravo go bogged down, couldn't move forward any farther. Charlie was behind us and at some point was alone. Charlie Company commander made the call to push straight across and seize this bridge.

COL (b)(6) What orders did you give for him?

LT COL (b)(6) The order for him was follow in trace, pass through, and seize the bridge. Based on the commander's intent to rapidly seize the bridge, knowing that we were

stuck here, he took his own initiative and pushed forward to seize that bridge. At this point, we had lost comm with Charlie and Alpha Company back here. It was intermittent.

COL (b)(6) And you were with…?

LT COI (b)(6) I was behind Bravo.

COL (b)(6) You were behind Bravo.

LT COI (b)(6) Yes. I was trying to call him because he, I was going to tell him to push to the second bridge vice following trace, because we weren't going to go anywhere. We had vehicles stuck up here. We ended up taking Bravo and moving down the side streets here with the exception of the C-7 and P-7 chase, two Hummers, and a tank that got stuck. Everything else was able to move down the side roads, and we were coming down through here. Now, we came under heavy fire here, all through this alley…

COI (b)(6) C-7s and P-7s are AAVs?

LT COI (b)(6) AAVs, yes. That where the forward was in. I was following the C-7 in my Hummer and my Ops O was in his Hummer. And we were…as it turned out, we ended up moving with everybody down the side road. We ended up getting this tank out later in the day, and one of the Hummers, but we were unable to retrieve the C-7 and the P-7 because they were stuck so badly. And there was still pretty much a lot of fire down here. Then Charlie, at some

point shortly after we got stuck, launched out here. It was about, maybe 40 minutes later, 30 to 40 minutes later that I found out. Because I was trying to call him and tell him don't sit here, move. He had already done that, and I found out that he'd done that, and he had not stopped at the northern bridge. Apparently, he had moved down and consolidated forward of the bridge on the northern side. And we ended up getting down here to this point later in the day, and we had already passed tanks through. Alpha Company, who had the southern bridge, had launched up here to assist Charlie Company in their consolidation. When Alpha linked up with Charlie, pretty much the fighting stopped at that point. And, we came through with Bravo, through this portion of the city and linked up and had all the combat power on the northern side of the bridge. 2/8 was supposedly on the southern side of the southern bridge making an attempt to link up with Alpha Company. But Alpha Company got a call…actually, the Charlie Company XO came back to the bridge and said we need additional help with medevacs forward, and that's when Alpha Company CO pushed. He was on the bridge waiting for link up with 2/8. That link up never took place, and the reason why was 2/8 was back on this railroad bridge thinking they we're on the southern bridge, and they weren't. So, he again pushed forward, and that's when pretty much this fighting here stopped. And then later in the afternoon, we all, on the other side of the bridge, linked up.

COL (b)(6) Talk to me about…you say some folks had surrendered to you on the 23rd. And the 23rd Brigade, was it…the Republican Guard?

LT CO (b)(6) No. They were regular Army.

COL (b)(6) Regular Army. Tell me what you learned from them about the disposition of enemy forces within An Nasiriyah.

LT COL (b)(6) The first night that we were consolidated on the northern side, we had an ambulance approach from this direction, take a hard left…

COL (b)(6) Which direction was this?

LT COL (b)(6) This was from the east. OK, you can see down here on the canal…

COL (b)(6) So, it was north of the canal on the MSR.

LT COL (b)(6) East on the northern side of the canal. But,…this is where the 23rd Brigade headquarters was at. There was an ambulance that was approaching. This would have been about, 0800 Zulu…was approaching…I'm sorry. Not 0800, but about 1000 local in the evening, 2000.

COL (b)(6) 2200?

LT COL (b)(6) 2200. I'm sorry. From the east and…because we did not have a road block here established as of yet, he got down through here. The ambulance…I think the Marines saw the ambulance and they didn't fire on it because they thought it was…

COL (b)(6) And this was after the fight, after you consolidated, that these folks came up to you?

LT COL (b)(6) Right. They came down here and our tanks stopped them right here. That turned out to be the CO of the 23rd Brigade who was masquerading as a paramedic with one of his other officers and then a wounded officer in the vehicle and they were trying to get back into the city. When we took him under that night as a EPW, he had told the HET Team that they didn't expect us to come through the eastern side and they were even more confused when we tried to go around the eastern side, because they had two forces of two opposite directions that were hitting them. And so that kind of confused them. He was shuttled back to the rear very quickly and we didn't have a chance to talk to him. A week later, the…

COL (b)(6) That was on what date?

LT COL (b)(6) This would have been on the 23rd that we had him. And the,…I'd have to go back and look it up.

COL (b)(6) But the 30th or so?

LT COL (b)(6) It would have been about the 30th or the 1st. It was the day that we got the orders to leave An Nasiriyah, and the next day we left. But the day before we left An Nasiriyah, we…the executive officer of the 23rd Brigade surrendered to us. We sat down with him for about two hours and talked their disposition and composition and what they were

thinking. He drew this out for us, but…the 23rd Brigade was defending north of the city. 1st Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Battalion here. The 504th Brigade was in the city, as well as a lot of their artillery and mortars, and there were artillery and mortars out here on the northern side as well and in positions over in here. Then, they had another brigade, I think it was the 47th, that was down to the southeast. That was who we ran into the very first engagement with the mortars and artillery and machine gun fire.

COL (b)(6) About how many forces would you say were in the city and around the city?

LT COL (b)(6) The brigades were averaging between…according to him now, and I have not been able to verify this, about 1600 men each. Their brigades are smaller than our brigades. As far as Fedayeen in the city, he was not sure. He thought between 5 to800 Fedayeen fighters in the city. He did not know how many Baath fighters or Baath party members were in the city.

COL (b)(6) How many brigades did they have?

LT COL (b)(6) Three.

COL (b)(6) Those were brigades about 1600 each, plus Fedayeen and other folks?

LT COL (b)(6) Republican Guard, he was not sure how many Republican Guard officers were in the city. I know over here, we killed a total of five Republican Guard officers.

COL (b)(6) That was just north of the southern bridge?

LT C (b)(6) The southern bridge. As we rolled in here, we were,…as we came back in here, they were just kind of like standing out there and were engaged, and when I dismounted, my first thought was…you know…were these guys police, or were they regular army. Our S-2 went out, ended up taking some of the epaulettes off the uniforms, confiscated the weapons, and described them as Republican Guard.

COL (b)(6) There were substantial forces in and around the city then?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes. Very much.

COL (b)(6) Armed with?

LT COL (b)(6) RPGs, AK-47s, light machine guns, and mortars, and artillery.

COL (b)(6) Let me go through some of the questions I've got here and see if we can answer some of them. Then we'll talk specifically about the incident on the 23rd with the A-10s. What were the weather conditions during that day?

LT COL (b)(6) It was a warm day and clear,…no clouds. It was pretty much that…

COL (b)(6) Unlimited visibility?

LT COL (b)(6) Unlimited visibility.

COL (b)(6) Are there FSC G-3 logs for 23 March?

LT COL (b)(6) Say again, Sir?

COL (b)(6) Are there logs for 23 March?

LT COL (b)(6) We have logs, yes, Sir. And the FSC was able to keep his yellow canaries, and he transposed those yellow canaries into a log book, which because of the events that were going on as we were moving through the city, he was only able to keep yellow canaries. Log book entries were secondary, but at the end of the day, and the next couple of days, he took those yellow canaries and caught up the log book.

COL (b)(6) Yellow canaries are yellow notes, basically for message notes?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) e'll obtain copies of these logs. Now, the battalion air officer and the FSC were co-located, and the air officer's radio was damaged and he couldn't talk with higher headquarters. Who could he talk to?

LT COL (b)(6) He was unable, once in the city, to talk to anyone except for MOUTH, who was the FAC. I believe that's who he was talking to, but he was unable to talk to anyone else outside. Now, I talked to the FSC on my radio, cause he was unable to go out to Charlie Company or anyone else and talk to them.

COL (b)(6) But he was in contact with MOUTH throughout the battle?

LT COL (b)(6) The FSC was in contact with MOUTH on and off throughout the battle, yes, as I was explained.

COL (b)(6) What calls from DASC or Task Force Tarawa came in with regard to handoff of aircraft inbound?

LT COL (b)(6) As far as I know, prior to coming into the city, my understanding is that the FSC had requested through the air officer as much air as we could receive. As we got to the southern bridge, the railroad bridge, we were told that there were fixed wing assets on station. At that point, it was..we wanted to keep the rotary wing, because that's what was having the most effect. We had no cleared targets for fixed wing yet. So, the fixed wing was pushed north of the city. From my understanding is that went back to VIKING, which was Regiment,

that they'd pushed the air north of the city. We don't need it here, the fixed wing here, what we need is the rotary wing, which was having the biggest effect on enemy targets as we were moving up through the city.

COL (b)(6) And at that particular time, you hadn't crossed the bridges yet?

LT COL (b)(6) We were on the southern bridge, that first bridge. Not the one that was the objective, but the bridge that was going over the railroad tracks, about 4 clicks south of the first objective, which was the southern bridge here on the Euphrates. The bridge here, and then back here about 4 clicks, right here at the edge of this map was another bridge that was a railroad bridge, or goes over a railroad track.

COL (b)(6) So, the aircraft were pushed north. Do you have the call signs of all the aircraft that came into contact?

LT COL (b)(6) I don't. But the air officer probably does. I don't know if he remembers those at this point or not.

COL (b)(6) Would he have them written down?

LT COL (b)(6) I'm not sure if he has them written down or not.

COL (b)(6) We'll check on that. Did the FSC coordinate or talk with higher headquarters?

LT COL (b)(6) Up to the time we got into the city, he was talking to VIKING, but after getting into the city, and we got stuck on the northeast side, his comms apparently were not working properly to where he could talk to VIKING.

COL (b)(6) When Charlie Company was engaged, then he wasn't talking to higher headquarters?

LT COL (b)(6) Not that I know of, no.

COL (b)(6) Battalion Air also told companies to coordinate air as best they could. When did this happen, do you know?

LT COL (b)(6) I don't know if that happened at all, with Battalion Air Officer telling companies to coordinate their air. I think he had a conversation with MOUTH, and at some point, the air was pushed to MOUTH to use.

COL (b)(6) The air was pushed to MOUTH by?

LT COL (b)(6) The Air Officer.

COL (b)(6) Battalion? By the Battalion Air Officer?

LT COL (b)(6) By Battalion Air Officer.

COL (b)(6) Was the Battalion aware that A-10s were coming on station?

LT COL (b)(6) think the FSC was aware of that. I was not aware we had A-10s on station until that afternoon when it was briefed to me. Actually, I was aware of it when I got a call from Lt (b)(6) over the TAC net, asking that we turn the air off, because they were being engaged by friendly air. And that's when I was trying to get on the net with VIKING and FSC to get them to turn off the air. The FSC, from my understanding, was also aware of that, because he had heard the conversation. He was trying to come up on the nets…getting the Air Officer on the nets trying to get the air off.

COL (b)(6) Who called to turn off the air? Charlie Company?

Charlie Company. One of the LTs.

COL (b)(6) Was he talking to Bravo Company Air Officer?

LT (b)(6) No. The Bravo Company FAC.

COL (b)(6) The Bravo Company FAC. So FSC heard the call. Did they attempt to get in contact with Bravo Company FAC?

LT COL (b)(6) I think they did, but they were unable to at that point.

COL (b)(6) They were unable to get in touch with the Bravo Company FAC to turn off the air. Was anybody able to get in touch with Bravo Company FAC?

LT COL (b)(6) I don't believe so, no.

COL (b)(6) Do you know what time Charlie Company called? When that call was made?

LT COL (b)(6) No, I don't. At that point, there was no contact with the Battalion. Basically, we were fighting our way through the eastern side of the city. Charlie was on the northern side consolidating, and we were just trying to make our way toward them.

COL (b)(6) Charlie Company was taking fire. When were you aware that they were taking fire? What types of fire were they taking prior to the air?

LT COL (b)(6) You know, really, at the time, I was trying to get a hold of Charlie because we were stuck. We were receiving small arms fire and RPG fire. We did not have any

idea that they were under fire until I heard Lt (b)(6) call saying that he was under…he was under fire, not an A-10, but he was under fire from friendly air.

COL (b)(6) Did he say A-10?

LT COL (b)(6) I can't remember whether he said A-10 or whether he said it was friendly air. But, I do remember at that point becoming aware that they were in a fire fight up there against friendly air as well as…you could hear the fire. You could hear the small arms, explosions, from where they were at. Also at the same time, I was getting calls from Alpha Company saying they were under intense enemy fire and again small arms, RPGs. He was wanting permission to push to the next bridge, and I told him no, hold right now until we make the link up with 2/8, well 2/8 was back on the other bridge and not on the bridge we thought he was not on our bridge. And he was talking…2/8 was talking to me, and trying to conduct link up. I was talking to WARPARTY, who was 2/8 actual. He was reporting that he was on the southern bridge and that he was moving to conduct link up and I was wanting him to conduct the link up so that we could get Alpha moving to the other side to reinforce Charlie. As it turned out, 2/8, I believe was still on the bridge that goes over the railroad tracks, about 4 clicks south of the bridge that was going over the Euphrates, which was our first objective. There was some confusion as to what bridge I believed they were on. Now, I say that because Charlie never physically saw 2/8, or rather, Alpha never physically saw 2/8 anywhere on the bridge. Although WARPARTY 6 was telling me he was on the southern bridge, and he was trying to conduct link up, and I think that he was down here on this bridge.

(b)(6) Who is WARPARTY 6?

LT COL (b)(6) That's 2/8's actual. So, and the reason why I believe that is because Team Mech, who we had leading, originally reported to me that he had seized the first objective. That's when we first came up on that southern bridge, and I looked at my map and I said, "No, you've go about 4 more clicks to go, check again." And he said, "Roger." He had just made…you know…he thought he was on the bridge that was going over the Euphrates. And again to…It was there that we waited for the tanks to show up, and then we began to push forward. But, we had the initial engagement down there on that southern bridge, and then got over the first objective bridge, which was over the Euphrates, with no contact, turned right, came up through the streets, we got stuck. And then Charlie pushed shortly thereafter for this bridge here. Alpha was already on this bridge securing it, because they just stopped behind us and occupied hasty defensive positions to secure the bridge, and Charlie passed through them and was supposed to follow us around, but instead kept going north, after they realized we were stuck.

TAPE ENDS

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COL (b)(6) think this is where I stared asking you questions. The weather at the time was clear and visibility was unlimited?

LT COL (b)(6) It was unlimited visibility. There were some clouds in the sky, but not enough to block or restrict visibility. It was good weather.

COL (b)(6) FSC logs and G-3 logs we'll check and see what you've got on those. Battalion Air Officer and FSC were co-located. The Air Officer's radio was damaged, and he couldn't talk to higher headquarters. Who was he talking to?

LT COL (b)(6) He was talking to his FSC. And the FSC was talking to me on TAC. He was relaying back and forth to me on TAC net what he was doing.

COL (b)(6) Were you talking to Bravo Company? Was the FSC talking to Bravo Company?

LT COL (b)(6) Yeah. I believe he was. I was not monitoring the conversations on his nets with Bravo, but I was able to talk to Bravo from my radio because I was right behind his vehicle, and I could hear him. He was probably 2 or 3 vehicles up from me, but I could hear him from my vehicle on and off. There were times when we couldn't talk because he was talking on his Company TAC and having to switch back and forth, because he was fighting through the eastern side of the city trying to get all his people through to this location down here, which is a large open lot, and we ended up consolidating…

COL (b)(6) Just to the south of the north bridge.

LT COL (b)(6) Yeah.

COL (b)(6) What calls from DASC or Task Force Tarawa in regard to handing off of aircraft?

LT CO (b)(6) You'd have to get up with the FSC and the Air Officer.

COL (b)(6) OK.

LT COL (b)(6) I do know that as we were up on the first bridge that goes over the railroad track, as we were approaching it from the southern side of the city, the FSC had requested air because we were starting to meet heavy…because we were starting to get engaged. And then when we got to that southern bridge and started engaging tanks, he was requesting as much air as he could get. It was shortly thereafter that fixed wing and rotary wing, Cobras, that showed up. Talking to the Air Officer, not the Air Officer, but the FSC, it was at that point that he said, "Hey, we don't need the fixed wing, cause we…you know…we're getting good effect with the rotary wing, and we were comfortable with that." So the fixed wing was pushed north of the northern bridge. I'm not certain at this time whether it was pushed by VIKING or if it was pushed by our FSC.

COL (b)(6) So the Fire Support Coordinator…did he talk to higher headquarters?

LT COL (b)(6) He was, yes, but as we got into the city, he started losing comm with higher headquarters. Outside the city, when we're not in the built-up area, his comms were good. Once we got inside, his comms became intermittent, and in some cases was unable to talk with higher headquarters. That was one of the reasons I wanted to go around all this, so we could have a better comm shot. Our main was going to be back here, the forward was going to be up here, and we were going to have that link. Once we got into this side of the city, there was a lot of built-up sprawl around here that we weren't aware of. And that's when we began to lose comm. We had intermittent comm with the main. We were able to talk back and forth. I was talking with the XO, I was talking with VIKING on occasion from inside that area there. Because he was back, their forward was not too far behind us. In fact, they were behind my Charlie Company, not following in trace. So they were somewhere back in here by that first bridge, and we were up here. And I was able to talk to VIKING, because when we found out the second bridge had been secured, I reported that in to VIKING, and VIKING had been a little bit surprised that we had seized both bridges so rapidly. Like I said, I remember that conversation with VIKING 6, that we had the second bridge. As I told you earlier, when we got stuck in here, My first thought was I've got Alpha…I've got Charlie Company sitting out here in the middle with nowhere to go, and I was trying to get him on the net so I could push him down here, cause ther was no place for him to go but straight ahead. He read that before I could get in touch with him, and he launched for that bridge. He got down here on this bridge and I had comm with him for a little while asking him, "What's your location?" And he was telling me, "I'm on the second bridge." And I asked him…I remember clearly. I was standing beside my vehicle on the TAC and I thought, he says he's on the second bridge, but I bet he's still on that first bridge. So, I said, "Clarify was your location." And he said, "I'm on the second bridge." And I believe it was

at that time my FSC came over the TAC nets and said, "Hey, Sir, he's on the…" It was either the FSC or the Ops O. I can't remember which one it was. He said, "He's on the second bridge, the northern bridge." I remember hitting the ground saying, "Great, we're on the bridges. We got em." And then I reported that to VIKING shortly thereafter. We had both bridges secure, and I think…I'm pretty certain they got it, because we talked later about it, and they acknowledged that they had been surprised that we had both bridges, because they were going back to Gen (b)(6) cause he was asking what's the status of the second bridge? He knew we had the first bridge, but what was the status of the second bridge? And he was able to go back quickly and tell him we had both bridges.

COL (b)(6) The Battalion Air Officer told the companies, according to the preliminary inquiry, to coordinate air as best they could. When did this occur? And, the Battalion Air Officer and the FSC were unable to contact companies until after Charlie Company's assault on the northern bridge.

LT COL (b)(6) I think the only air, the only FAC…Charlie Company didn't have a FAC. The plan was as we got up here to establish a support by fire position on the eastern side of this bridge. Team Mech would control the indirect fires and the air if needed, and they had a FAC, which is MOUTH.

COL (b)(6) So, MOUTH was with Team Mech?

LT COL [redacted] (b)(6) Yes, he was with Team Mech, but Charlie was going to come up and seize the bridge and then consolidate on the other side. We were going to pass through Alpha once he got relief in place by 2/8, he was going to come around the same way and go through. Then he was go up to the first objective, which was the T, and then we were going to spread out establish the forced bridge head line. So, the only FAC that the Battalion Air Officer, Capt (b)(6) could talk to was the FAC in Bravo Company. But I think that's why he passed the air to him eventually, when he realized he still had air on station. The air had already been pushed north of the bridge and I think you're going to find this out, and you may be asking why didn't we talk about this and get together, because you're going to be getting different stories of how this unfolded. We didn't want to skew anything before this investigation. We wanted everybody to come in with what they saw and how they saw it. Let me back up there a little bit. We did talk briefly yesterday about…OK, what did you see? What did you hear? Everybody's got a different story to this in what they'd seen and heard. But I think what you're going to find out is that, in talking to MOUTH and talking to others, is that MOUTH was able to talk to the A-10s. He was the only guy able to talk with them on the TAC.

COL [redacted] (b)(6) Was MOUTH talking with the Battalion Air Officer or the FSC?

LT COL [redacted] (b)(6) He was for a while, but then he wasn't. I know that the Battalion Air Officer lost comm with everyone at a certain point, when they got bogged down over there.

COL [redacted] (b)(6) Were the FSC and the Battalion Air Officer…were there different nets or one net?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, the Air Officer's got his TAD…his TARHAR nets. The Battalion FSC has got the 81 conduct of fire and the arty conduct of fire. So he's got reps talking on them. He sits right next to the…he's also got a TAC net right next to him. That he can listen in on and hear what's going on. But when asked him if he was talking to Bravo Company, he was saying that had trouble getting comm with Bravo Company as well. And this again, you'll have to find out when you talk to MOUTH, that MOUTH had explained to me the first night when he brought this to my attention, that he had received a call from the pilots, the A-10 pilots saying that they could observe enemy forces moving into the city and wanted to know what they should do. And that's when…you know..MOUTH apparently cleared them, according to his words to me, to engage which was Type 3 CAS. The pilot could observe and verify the enemy target. He just ended up acting as the FSC, which in retrospect, he was not supposed to do that. Because in the order that was written, Type 3 CAS can only be authorized by the commander, which is me. And he never attempted nor did he go through his company commander to try to contact me on TAC to get that permission to do so.

COL (b)(6) Walk me through, please, the Type 1 CAS, Type 2 CAS, and Type 3 CAS.

LT COL (b)(6) Type 1 CAS, as I understand it is that the FAC on the ground sees the target, sees the pilot and engages the target. Type 2 CAS, and again, I've always worked with Type 1 CAS for…you know…FAC has positive control. In fact, when I heard we had three different types of CAS, I said we're only going to use the one that we're trained to, and that's what we had at the CAX (Combined Arms Exercise). But, my understanding of Type 3 was…

COL (b)(6) What was Type 2?

LT CO (b)(6) Type 2. I think is if, to be honest with you, I don't know what Type 2 was. The definitions, I just said we're only going with Type 1 because that's what we had trained to and that's what we knew.

COL (b)(6) Is that what you directed down to the companies?

LT CO (b)(6) It was in the Op order.

COL (b)(6) It was in the Op order that you would only use Type 1 CAS?

LT COL (b)(6) It was in the Op order that Type 3 was not authorized unless I authorized it. No one would use it unless I authorized it, and it's still in the Op order. You can see that when you get a copy of it. But uh..there was no uh…I wasn't going to mess with any of those because they were confusing, and I wanted to keep it simple, and have FAC's that could see targets and engage them. I think, I am not certain, but I think Type 2 was if you've got somebody on the ground like a STA rep or whoever sees it, and they can clear, but I am not certain, the definitions at this point.

COL (b)(6) id MOUTH…and MOUTH is Captain…?

LT COL (b)(6) Capt (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) No, MOUTH is who? Who was MOUTH? That's the FAC, right, in Bravo Company?

LT COL (b)(6) Oh ****t. I've got a brain fart going right now.

COL (b)(6) as MOUTH Capt (b)(6)

LT COL (b)(6) (b)(6) yes

COL (b)(6) MOUTH is…

LT COL (b)(6) (b)(6) I'm sorry.

COL (b)(6) , MOUTH is Capt (b)(6) and in the conversation he had with you, did he tell you that he directed Type 3 CAS?

LT COL (b)(6) He told me that uh…that night…that he thinks he…and I'm going to paraphrase right now…but he came to me with his company commander and said, "I think I ***** something up." And I said …

COL (b)(6) What exactly did he tell you that night?

LT COL (b)(6) He told me that he authorized the engagement of the A-10's and based off the situation, the confusion, that he probably didn't follow the procedures that were in place. And so I told him at that point, I said, "OK. I'm going to have to notify higher headquarters. We'll probably have an investigation. Right now, I need you to focus on what's going on around us. We make horrible mistakes in combat, and we'll just see where this goes." But right now, I need him back in the fight. And to his credit, he got back in the fight, and the next two days we were continuing to be engaged and…he did well.

COL (b)(6) He didn't have eyes on target then, when he cleared them?

LT COL (b)(6) I think he could see the A-10s, but he could not see the target. He was relying on the A-10s to tell him what they were seeing and they just gave him an accurate description of what was out there. There was no doubt there were Mech forces on the ground, moving back to the city. Those were medevacs trying to get back to the southern side because they trying to get air to come in the northern side. And basically we were telling them…I was telling them, hey look, it's too hot up where you're at. Because we were hearing about medevac requests. You could hear the gunfire, and I don't know if this took place before (b)(6) conversation with me about coming over the TAC net explaining that he was being engaged by friendlies or afterwards. But, I remember saying, "You've got to get them back to the southern bridge if you can, or hold them in place because it's too hot where you're at." What I think happened was Mech vehicles that were being loaded up with casualties, I believe there were

three of them. There were a total of four vehicles that went south. Three of them had medevacs and one of them was the Company XO.

COL (b)(6) Moving south back across the bridge were the medevacs?

LT COL (b)(6) Across the bridge, into the city. I think that's what MOUTH heard. The A-10 pilots explaining to him that they had Mech forces moving toward the city. And that's why he probably…I think he went ahead and authorized them to go ahead and engage.

COL (b)(6) When did you hear the call to cease air, to stop air, to abort the air?

LT COL (b)(6) Again, the exact time, I don't have it.

COL (b)(6) How did you hear that, over what?

LT COL (b)(6) It wa (b)(6) He came over the net.

COL (b)(6) (b)(6) was with?

LT COL (b)(6) With Charlie Company. I think he was the element, the lead platoon that went over. As soon as they got on the other side, they started receiving intense small arms again, RPG, artillery fire. There was 57 millimeter recoilless rifle on the bank that we recovered after the fight. They received fire from that as well. As you can see here by the description of

the 23rd XO, there was a battalion on this side of the bridge. You'd have to see the terrain, but on the southern side of the canal, there were bunkers and embankments that were built in there. And that's where they were at. There were also artillery pieces, 105s, 120 millimeter mortars out in here.

COL [redacted] About a click and a half north of the…north, northeast of the northern bridge.

LT COL (b)(6) Yes. And once they got over on the other side, they started taking intense fire there. That's probably where the hardest fight was at, with the exception of right here on this northwestern side of the city. Which was called the Martyr's District. An Nasiriyah was like Jacksonville. Everybody who lives there is in the military, or works for the military. There's compounds all over the surrounding area of the city, on the outskirts, that are military warehouses, headquarters, things like that. I don't think anybody knew. There certainly was no intelligence about the city as far as being, you know…I mean…Out in here where we were consolidated, there was complexes in here…

COL (b)(6) And you're pointing to the northeastern, or just across the bridge…the northern bridge.

LT COL (b)(6) Yes. I believe this was an old facility, but there was a fairly new facility up here on the western side of the T where the route 7 and this east-west MSR meet. There were facilities on the outskirts of the city. I mean, we had seen some of these facilities on

the maps and we were asking for clarification on them, and we never got any information as to what they were other than, hey, it's a military compound. We're not sure what's there.

(b)(6) Getting back to the call to abort. So, you heard the call to abort. The FSC and the Battalion Air Officer heard the call to abort?

LT COL (b)(6) The FSC heard the call. I can't remember whether he was getting it from me or he overheard (b)(6) But, my understanding was he was trying to turn it off. I was trying to get a hold of VIKING to get them to try to help us to turn it off, because I had no comm with the aviation.

COL (b)(6) Did the FSC or Air Officer have comm wi (b)(6) at this time, the FAC in Bravo Company, to get him to try to turn off the air?

LT COL (b)(6) I asked him about that and he said he did not.

COL (b)(6) Asked who?

LT C (b)(6) The FSC, and he did not, if I remember right, and…

COL (b)(6) Did you talk to (b)(6) about that? Did he receive any calls to abort the strike?

LT COL (b)(6) No. Because at that point, we were unable to get a hold of Bravo Company. And again, I was talking to the Bravo Company TAC or not Bravo Company TAC, but Battalion TAC, and at that point was unable to talk to the Bravo Company commander. It was shortly after that request to turn it off that the air had gone off station, and it was gone.

COL (b)(6) Did you see (b)1.4a that were fired?

LT COL (b)(6) No, I did not.

COL (b)(6) Were were you in relation to Charlie Company at the time?

LT COL (b)(6) At about the time, we were somewhere in the middle, in this built up area here.

COL (b)(6) About how far from…about how far from the bridge?

LT COL (b)(6) About three clicks from the bridge and probably four clicks from where Charlie was trying to consolidate at.

COL (b)(6) So, about seven clicks away in the built up area?

LT COL (b)(6) Well, no. I'm talking about from here…1/2..

COL (b)(6) About five clicks?

LT COL (b)(6) About four to five clicks.

COL (b)(6) Four to five clicks in the built up area?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes.

COL (b)(6) So you couldn't see the (b)1.4a or anything…?

LT COL (b)(6) No, Sir. I could not see any (b)1.4a, nor was there any mention of them on the radio that they were being fired off.

COL (b)(6) Calls for the cease of fire. How shortly after that did the mass casualty call come?

LT CO (b)(6) There were…I don't know how shortly after that, but we were getting calls to medevac, to get medevac birds on the northern side of the city, up here. Because of the fire fight that was going on up here, the instruction was to try to get them back to the southern bridge if at all possible and hold in place until…There was no way we were going to get aircraft in there with the fire that was going on. At that point, the small unit leaders were putting guys in mortar variants, AAVs that had mortars. They were carrying the mortar men, 60 millimeter mortar men, and began to take three tracks back to the south, four tracks back to the south, three

of which were medevacs. One of them was the company XO. I saw two of those tracks heading back to the city, and I knew they were trying to get them back at that point. Again, comm were on and off. I think a lot of the comm problems may have been from the company commander being on his company TAC and not up on the Battalion TAC. He was fighting the fight from his end. So, he was not readily available all the time on my TAC, because, he, like I said, I think he was switching back and forth to his company TAC and fighting his company at the time. But, I do know that they ended up getting two of those tracks back. One of them was a medevac, one of them was the XO of the company. Later on we found out he'd moved back. There had been some confusion on the northern side, apparently mortar men had piled back into the vehicle when they saw medevacs being put in there. And started heading back, and he went back to try to get some of those guys back on the northern side, but also…

COI (b)(6) To secure the northern side?

LT COL (b)(6) Well, the northern side…there was still a fight going on on the northern side, but he ended up going all the way back to Alpha Company who was on this bridge here and told the company commander, "We're going to need some help up forward." And that's when the company commander from Alpha went ahead and launched forward, which I think in hindsight was a good idea, because we would never have made a link up with 2/8. From my position, 2/8 was telling me he was on the southern side of the bridge, and he was looking for our forces and we were telling him ours are on the northern side, he's got to go over the bridge. But we didn't realize, and I think if we talk to him, he was still on the railroad bridge thinking he was on the bridge that was the objective. So (b)(6) pushed got to the…

COL (b)(6) (b)(6) was?

LT COL (b)(6) …Was Alpha Company CO. They got up here and that's when everything just stopped all the fire.

COL (b)(6) the enemy fire stopped, friendly stopped?

LT COL (b)(6) All the enemy fire and everybody went back into the city.

COL (b)(6) So, he was the first one on site up there?

LT COL (b)(6) On site, yes. And then…we also had tanks that went with him forward and we came in about a half and hour after that, because we had gotten all of Bravo. We were trying to get the vehicles back here unstuck. It was getting dark. We finally made the audible OK, let's push. We put a prep fire on this Martyr's District here. We came up here. We ended up stopping in the street because we had a downed track, and we recovered a KIA out of that track, and then we pushed forward to consolidate. We had the whole battalion on the other side.

COL (b)(6) What did you see when you got on the other side, as far as damage to vehicles?

LT COL (b)(6) We had one vehicle that was a catastrophic kill. That had been hit by, and described by Marines on the ground, the company staff out of Bravo Company, excuse me, Charlie Company Staff. It was being hit by multiple RPGs and what they thought may have been artillery. We think it may have been a 57 millimeter recoilless rifle, because it was just too accurate for artillery to have multiple hits on top of it. It was obviously…there was nothing but a shell. It wasn't even burning. It was just a gray shell left. There was another vehicle a little bit farther north that had both treads blown off, and the description was originally that they had been hit by mortar fire and RPG and blew the treads off. But…we weren't certain what had destroyed that tractor. It didn't look destroyed. It looked like it had been a mobility kill. It wasn't until later that we crawled on top of that track, after finding out about the A-10, not the first day but the second day that we saw some what appeared…I could see one hole up forward of the turret that looked like it may have been a 30 millimeter shell. And that was the only signs of visibility, and that would have went down into the engine. That was the only signs of visibility from that track that there was an A-10 strike on it. The other track that was, like I said, a catastrophic kill on the northern side. No one remembers, at least that I've talked to , that it was hit by an A-10. Everybody remembers that one being hit by something direct. Now, again, I don't think we know because that thing…the whole top of it was pretty much gone. There were three vehicles on the southern side that were…

COL (b)(6) he southern side of?

LT CO (b)(6) The northern bridge.

COL (b)(6) Of the northern bridge.

LT COL (b)(6) ...that were destroyed. The one that I told you that we stopped at to pick up the (b)6 that was still inside. We searched it to see if there was anybody in it. We...and there was (b)6 in that vehicle. We recovered (b)6 I learned later that that vehicle had some indications on top that it had been hit by 30 millimeter, two or three holes. I never saw that vehicle and ...or saw the holes that were in it. There was another vehicle just farther to the north on the southern side of the bridge that had mortar ammo and it had WIAs in and also had some mortar men that got hit by RPGs. Everybody that was in those three vehicles...There were some that saw it. Lt (b)(6) claims that he had saw it. He believed it ws an RPG round that hit that and ignited that mortar ammo, and that was...I think you saw that one. It was pretty much destr...There was no doubt about that one. It was the worst damaged vehicle we had out of all of them. And then, there was another track down on the southern bridge that had made it all the way down there, that took an RPG round once it got down there. He had also been hit by RPG enroute, which blew his back hatch off, and when he got down to the southern bridge, he got hit again as they were trying to get casualties off, to get the helicopters in to take them out, and got hit again. When that happened, the company commander from Alpha Company had called me and said he was receiving intense fire and was taking casualties. At that point I thought he was taking casualties as well. As it turned out, he thought it was his vehicle but it wasn't. It was Charlie Company's vehicle as they pulled in, and it got hit by an RPG shortly after they were trying to get people off that vehicle.

COL (b)(6) So, there was still firing going on after the A-10s departed?

LT C[redacted] (b)(6) Oh, yes, yes. I mean there was fire going on in that city all day long, and on the second day, out here in the northern side. But the majority of the fire was coming from this area here, the Martyr's District. It was called the Martyr's District. This was an officer's housing complex we found out later.

COL[redacted] (b)(6) Just to the south of the northern bridge.

LT COL[redacted] (b)(6) [redacted]ust to the south of the northern bridge.

COL[redacted] (b)(6) Southwest of the northern bridge.

LT CO[redacted] (b)(6) We came over the southern bridge with the 1st Company pretty much unscathed and Charlie also passed through those to continue north. Alpha got here shortly after they had consolidated. It may been…it would have been minutes. It may have been 10 or 15 minutes.

COL[redacted] (b)(6) Just over the southern bridge?

LT CO[redacted] (b)(6) Over the southern bridge. He started coming under heavy intense fire from here, on this side of the street.

COL[redacted] (b)(6) To the west of the…

LT COL (b)(6) The northwest of the southern bridge.

COL (b)(6) orthwest of the southern bridge.

LT COL (b)(6) We got back in here. We started coming under fire from buildings that were in here, and like I said, there were five enemy soldiers killed here, and…we began to move up here. That took us a couple of hours to get through to this spot here.

COL (b)(6) Moving to the north, just to the east of the MSR?

LT COL (b)(6) Right. What's known as Ambush Alley, and this is what it was termed. But, we got up here, and that's where we were able to talk to everyone. We were trying to ensure that we had everybody on the northern side, and then we had planned an artillery prep…not a prep, but a group on this Martyr's District, cause that's where we were taking all the RPG rounds, and …or the majority of the RPG. And we knew that we had a vehicle down here that…was not sure whether there were still Marines in it. So, because we had most of Bravo Company's tracks and a lot of our own thin skin vehicles, we formed up two columns. We were going to use the tracks on the western side of the MSR. We were going to put the thin skin vehicles on the eastern side, use the tracks to cover, and…and move down. We were going to stop in front of the track that was here, that was down. Trackers would get out, check that. Marines would get out and check that to see if there were any remaining Marines in there still alive or wounded. As it turned out, the Marines that had been in this track went to the second

floor of a building that was right beside them, with the exception of one dead. They went to the top with their wounded, and they were picked up by tanks who came through with Alpha Company earlier.

COL (b)(6) Let's talk about the dead and wounded. What were the…do you know the number KIA?

LT COL (b)(6) At that point, we had what we believed were 12 KIAs and MIAs for a total of 18. And, as it turned out, our KIAs dropped to 9 and then we had 9 missing. And, it wasn't until after the third day when the fighting had stopped pretty much around us, and the north, that…we were able to get back in here and (b)6 in that vehicle I told you had been hit by RPGs and was carrying mortar round ammunition. There were (b)6 in there. The second day, we went back, based off of a local man who lived in An Nasiriyah who knew where there were a couple of (b)6 not too far from that track. He led us down there and we found them. We were beginning to search the vehicle again, and we could still find (b)6 what we believed (b)6 that were in there. We're not certain if they may have been part of th (b)6 hat were recovered the day before or additional (b)6 but…right now we're waiting for the (b)6 to come back and confirm that we had recovered all (b)6 But we're just not certain right now. I think we got most of them, definitely (b)6 But at this point, (b)6

COL (b)(6) So, confirmed KIAs right now are, killed in action, are 9?

LT COL (b)(6) No, right now 12.

COL (b)(6) So, 12 people.

LT COL (b)(6) But, we're still waiting.

COL (b)(6) 12 confirmed, we're still waiting because there are another 6 that haven't been accounted for?

LT COL (b)(6) We're waiting for the (b)6 to come back for the remaining, the remaining KIAs.

COL (b)(6) You have any final thoughts (b)(6)

LT COL (b)(6): Well, you know, everyday we go back and we try to think of how we would do this again, over. And I don't think there was any way to get in there, unless we would have done as the …three days later when we started passing remnants of the first Marines through there, putting in series right down that street. They had a series plotted right down the middle of the street. And as units came through, they just opened up on the left and right, suppressing everything as they drove through. We know that because saw it and heard it and had we been able to have done that on the first day, which we wouldn't have been able to do that because it was a….An Nasiriyah was a restricted fire area when we went up there. I think intel…everything played into the fact that…you know, most of the regular army had…you

know, was trying to capitulate or they had already deserted, and that…there may be small arms up there. The bridges weren't rigged to be blown. It looked like they were lightly defended, and the intent was to rapidly get up there and seize the bridges. Our indications were that if we had to go up there, it was going to be in a non-permissive environment, that bridges were not going to be defended, that were going to go in there and just seize them and we were going to open that route. That intel I don't think was accurate. And I'm not throwing stones or spears at any individuals or any specific level of command, but I think there's a lot of people above us that would admit, and I've talked to a lot of those people that have admitted that the intel picture was not probably as good or as accurate as everyone thought. No one expected that level of a fight in An Nasiriyah. No one. And the other thing that stands out is, as we were making our way through the center of the city on the eastern side of that MSR, and later in the evening, talking to the company commanders, and to this day…What I saw and getting feedback from others to what they saw, not one Marine or sailor broke under fear, or…you know…panic. If they had panicked we would have had a hell of a lot more problems than we did. But, everyone of them…it was…I remember up there on this corner, looking around at the Marines as we were gathering up, there were women and children in the streets walking in front of us knowing that we were receiving fire from two to three buildings back on the western side. They were part of this defense. They were walking through the streets and looking at us, and smiling and waving and they knew what they were doing. They were being used as shields. The Marines were holding their fire because they could not see targets, and they were calm…there was no sign of panic on any of them. It was like, you know…they were too busy thinking about surviving, but they weren't panicking. My first thought as we got into that is, "Jesus Christ, you know. If we have guys starting to panic, we're going to have a real problem on our hands." And I was talking

to (b)(6) who was visibly upset on the radio, trying to calm him down, and he had reason to be upset, because he was catching hell up there. And…everybody was trying to stay calm and collected and they did. That will stay with me for the rest of our life, is how those Marines responded under that condition. And, like I said, I don't think anybody realizes the fire fight that was up there. I think a lot of people have speculated that it was something else, and that maybe this was all blown over and what not. You need to go down there and walk that terrain. This bridge here…the girders, handrails, the steel railings on the side of that bridge, underneath it, there's not one railing that does not have the impact of small arms fire, or the bullet impacts coming up through it. You can see that clearly. And…so if anybody out there tries to say that this wasn't a serious engagement or that this was a cakewalk that went bad, they're buffoons, because they weren't here. They didn't see it. They didn't live through it, and…

COL (b)(6) Well, you guys did a hell of a job and it's a real tribute to your leadership. In closing here…

LT COL (b)(6) It's not a tribute to my leadership. It's a tribute to the small unit leaders here, because that was a small unit leader fight, and that was the last thing. There were no big blue arrows here. We had a plan, the plan changed dramatically once we crossed the line of departure, because there was no place to put our support by fire positions. Everything that we wanted to do, we couldn't do. This turned into a small unit leader. Corporals putting wounded or dead Marines on tracks and taking the initiative to get them back. Company commanders deciding, Hey, the intent was to rapidly seize the bridges and pushing on their own. There was a lot of small unit leader battles out there, and that's the story that needs to come out here, not

what the company or battalion did, but what the Marines that were fighting their way through these streets. And what Charlie did on the far side up there was a lot of heroes on that day from those Marines that were up there.

COL (b)(6) I'm sure that will all come out, but it's still a tribute to you.

M (b)(6) Sir, before you close, this is (b)(6) Sir, I don't believe we initially had this on tape. You had mentioned earlier that you had learned from the XO of the enemy brigade that something may have inspired the Iraqis to fight, Sir?

You know…we had an opportunity to sit down for two or three hours with the Brigade XO from the 23rd Brigade who was, had these three battalions up here to the north, and again, this is just his word, but I had the HET team and the interpreters there, and we asked him what they were thinking when they saw us come through. And , he told us that when you first came through…you came through…"looked like you were disorganized, you didn't even know we were there. You didn't fight back and you were easily overpowered and you came in weak." And I was looking at my XO, and I'm thinking, "Weak. I mean shit, we couldn't come in any harder than we did short of firing artillery prep and suppressing the whole city." And then I thought, "You know what, I bet he's talking about the maintenance convoy that came through earlier. The Army convoy that had gotten ambushed in An Nasiriyah. And I asked him, "Are you talking about the maintenance convoy that came through?" And he kind of shook his head through the interpreter. He said, "Yeah, they had refuelers and they had trucks, but they didn't fight when they got engaged, and they were trying to get out of the city. And they finally

stopped most of them back at the railroad bridge. I think like two or three vehicles got out." Which was accurate. It was an accurate description. And then he told us Fedayeen took the ones that were alive prisoners and he didn't know what happened to them after that. What he said though what made this interesting was that when that happened later that morning, it emboldened all his soldiers that he still had in the fight, and the Fedayeen and the Baath party reps, as well as the tribal leaders that were in An Nasiriyah. This is what he's saying, not what I'm saying,…one officer, and the head guys were there capturing all this. It emboldened even the tribal leaders to fight the Americans, because if this is the best they've got, then why not be on the winning side. I'm kind of paraphrasing what he said…And I asked him about that, and he said, "When you are fighting the Regular Army. Always come in hard and heavy, because they will break and they will run. In this case, they came in weak." But, understand, it was a maintenance convoy that was lost. They didn't know they were in An Nasiriyah until they started getting shot at I think. And, according to him, they made it all the way up to that T. They had turned around and started getting fire.

COL (b)(6) To the north of the southern or the northern bridge?

North of the southern bridge, and we found gear, gas masks and helmets up there when we were consolidating, and we turned it into the HET. We took it back to the rear of the guys who were in that convoy. One of them had gotten out alive, of the convoy, and we found gear up there on the side of the road. And, initially, we thought they may have taken them northeast, because a lot of the Baath party guys were coming up here to a village that was up here to the northeast outside our sector. But…as it turned out, I think it was just falling off the vehicles as they were

trying to get out of there. But…they obviously got too far North, turned around and…He felt it gave his soldiers confidence to take on the Americans. And…

MAJ (b)(6) He had, Sir, about three brigades of troops at about 1600 a piece?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, according to his estimates, he had the 23rd Brigade, which was in the north. He had the 504th Brigade, which was in the city. That wasn't his brigade, but it was another brigade commander and then they had the 47th. I believe is what he had down here in the southeast. He also had a regiment of artillery and mortars, heavy mortars that were dispersed throughout the city. They had tanks dispersed throughout the city, but mostly to the south of the city. I asked him about all the T55s in the south, because visibly, you could see some of them, T55s looked like they were inoperable. And he confirmed that. He basically said most of them, though were usable, and later on, you were able to get into the turrets and see that there was still ammo in the turrets. And I think they were using some of them by that southern bridge, the railroad bridge. There were two on each side of those bridges. They were basically dug in like pill boxes. But we had visibles on four tanks that were physically moving that were engaged and destroyed. And there were also tanks that were observed, turrets rotating. So, somebody was in them. We're not certain who, but the CAAT guys and the tankers just took them out.

(b)(6) Did he talk about the paramilitaries, Sir, that were in the city?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes. He said that…OK, I think I wrote that down here…he said Fedayeen, there were between 500 to 800 Fedayeen Freedom Fighters in the city. He was not

sure how many of the Baath. And he did tell us that he didn't think there were any Republican Guard officers in the city. We knew that wasn't true because we were catching Republican Guard trying to get back into the city, because they had their IDs in their uniforms. We had killed five, two of them which I saw, on the eastern side, three more in front of the tank that got stuck. That was apparently engaged by the tank. One of their machine guns here 7.62 killed them, cut them down as they were running across in front of them. There were later on five Repulican Guard across the berm up here, on the second day of the fight, and…we were being engaged by what appeared to be these two battalions on the left and right probing. These guys pretty much went into the city. But these two guys stayed out where they were at, and they were hitting us on the second and third day. And we killed five Republican Guard officers up here in the north. And at least that's what I have now. I never saw those guys, physically, but…the HET had confirmed that they were Republican Guard. But, we were catching Republican Guard officers going back through here, and we were catching them…actually, this is where most of the thick traffic was going.

COL (b)(6) Where was that?

LT COL (b)(6) Right here, Sir. Coming through here.

COL (b)(6) Through the T north.

LT COL (b)(6) Through the east west and north T…of the route 7. And we put a road block over here guarding this bridge. We had a roadblock guarding the northern bridge. We had

a road block to the east. Most of our EPWs were intercepted here, at this eastern road block and here and they were trying to get back into the city.

COL (b)(6) This was after the incident?

LT COL (b)(6) This was after the incident, yes, Sir. This was on the second and third day. The first day, we captured the Brigade CO, who was coming back in an ambulance along this eastern MSR, and then he turned left and got stopped right at the bridge by our tanks.

COL (b)(6) Let me close this, before I run out of tape here. And then we can talk. In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

LT COL (b)(6) Yes, Sir, I do.

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11 April 2003, 1426 L
Interview with Maj (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) Your name?

MAJ (b)(6) (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) Social Security number?

MAJ (b)(6) XXX-XX-XXXX.

COL (b)(6) And your billet?

MAJ (b)(6) My billet is the Operations Officer for 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) and under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire incident and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir, I do.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) would you please walk me through your knowledge of what transpired on the 23rd of March?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes Sir. We were using a 1 to 15,000 graphic map of An Nasiriyah.

COL (b)(6) As we go through this, if you would use terms that could be understood when we trancribe the tape as much as possible.

MAJ (b)(6) We had driven all night from Jalibah, which is approximately 60 kilometers south of An Nasiriyah with the purpose of securing two bridges, one crossing the Euphrates and one

crossing the Saddam canal. As we moved up toward An Nasiriyah, several kilometers south of the city, we started taking indirect fire from what we believed at the time were enemy mortars. At that time, we engaged with our 81 millimeter mortars. What we observed on a building in the distance we thought to be an FO. And then closer in there were several buildings that we started receiving sporadic small arms fire from. That we sent our CAT Teams, and that's comprised of our anti armor systems, our tows and our heavy machine gun team, which are M-19s and 50 caliber machine guns. They engaged individuals in several of the buildings, individuals who then withdrew, and we continued to receive sporadic indirect fire and small arms fire. We continued moving north along route 7/8 up toward An Nasiriyah, and we received more indirect fire. At that time we received a report from our lead company, at that time was Team Tank. Team Tank was comprised of Alpha Company 8th Tanks, with the addition of a platoon of infantry from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines. One platoon of tanks and Alpha Company 8th tanks had also been sent over to Bravo Company to form what was known as Team Mech. So, at the time, the battalion had four maneuver units, up inside the maneuver units, there was Alpha Company, a mechanized infantry company, Charlie Company a mechanized infantry company. Alpha Company 8th tanks, now know as Team Tank, and Bravo Company 1/2 now known as Team Mech and that's how I'll refer to them. We were leading with Team Tank. Team Tank was notified that came upon individuals from the Army who said that their column had been ambushed and that they still had individuals left in or near the city. At that point Team Tank was engaged, and we had also pushed up Alpha company, which was second in order of movement…exuse me…Bravo Company, Team Mech, who was in second in order of movement, to engage the hostile forces. Team Tank pushed the individuals from the Army to the rear, and they came up to us and told us that they still had friendlies within the city. So, that while we were engaging with Team Mech and Team Tank I also push Alpha Company forward

and then Team Mech and Alpha Company primarily handled the engagement closest to us while Team Tank pushed forward and extracted, I believe, four individuals from what I later learned was a site right by the railroad bridge, which led into An Nasiriyah. Now those individuals were, some of them had been shot. They were brought back to our CP, which had been established just south of An Nasiriyah, and from there I was coordinating movement of the companies. What happened at that point was, because of all the racing back and forward, most of the tanks ran out of fuel, or were low on fuel. So, we had to send them back to refuel. Sometime during that Gen Natonski and Col (b)(6) arrived at the CP. At this time (b)(6) was forward of the battalion, was forward with I believe Company A and Team Mech. He asked me what was going on, if I had recommendations. I recommended that one of the other battalions come up on our left and that we push forward using route 7/8 as a boundary between the two units, and that we push south into the city. The General then said that it was important that we seize the bridges, and I informed Col (b)(6) of that. I got up with Col (b)(6) I pushed forward. I let him know what the General said. He told me he had spoken with the General and that a determination was made that we had to push forward with our plan to seize the bridges. One thing of note is that we had always been briefed both ay Regiment and by MEB that we would not seize the bridges if we were engaged. We would only seize the bridges if there was no hostile fire and we were able to go across the river.

COL (b)(6) Who briefed that?

M (b)(6) That was briefed by RCT, and I believe it was also briefed by MEB. This was several weeks prior, and during all of our planning at no time were we told that we would seize the bridges. In fact, it was stressed that we could not seize the bridges if we were receiving fire.

And that, instead, we would establish defensive positions south of the river and block enemy forces so that the Army and Marine forces could use Route 1 moving along the south.

COL (b)(6) So that was briefed by the Regimental Commander or the 2nd Regiment, and the Task Force Tarawa Commander?

MAJ (b)(6) I know for a fact, we were briefed by RCT 2, by the Regiment Commander, and the Operations Officer. The Operations Officer from RCT2 told me that he had been specifically briefed that by Task Force Tarawa and their higher. I'd have to check my notes, but I believe that was also briefed at a meeting that I was at, and that was briefed by Task Force Tarawa higher. As a result of the engagement we had earlier, I now had Bravo Company leading, minus their tanks because they had gone back to refuel. I had Alpha Company following in trace of Bravo Company, and because we'd seen some movement off to our left flank, I had pushed Charlie Company to our left flank and Alpha and Charlie were moving forward in a bounding over watch, in trace of Bravo. Our intent then was to go with our original order of movement and bring Charlie in behind Bravo. But, because of the terrain, we ended up leaving Alpha behind Bravo so that as we approached the railroad bridge, Bravo was in the lead, Alpha immediately behind them, and Charlie still on the left flank of Alpha. So, what ended up happening was…we ended going in Bravo, Alpha, Charlie. The original mission called for Team Tank to establish a support by fire position south of the Euphrates River, so that Alpha Company could seize the bridge. At which point, Bravo Company would pass through Alpha, push north and establish a support by fire position and pass through objective 2, or provide support by fire for Charlie Company as they seized objective 2, and then Bravo would push through and seize objective 3 at the T intersection north of the northern bridge.

COL (b)(6) Where was Team Tank then?

MAJ (b)(6) Team Tank, all the platoons were back refueling. So they weren't forward to establish the support by fire because of the earlier engagement. We pushed Bravo Company up, and as we approached the railroad bridge, we started receiving more and more direct fire, and that was also when we started receiving reports of tanks to our front. I witnessed TOWs engage. I think at least three engagements on tanks, and I saw one Javelin engagement on a tank. It was at the railroad bridge, I came upon the wreckage 2021 grid square, 2031 to the northeast corner of the 2031 grid square. At that point I saw the wreckage of what I believe was an LVS that was burning. It belonged to the Army. The Bravo Company was receiving fire on the bridge. They had passed forward of the bridge, and they still had some vehicles on the bridge. We were there several minutes engaging several tanks. I believe they were receiving direct fire from heavy machine guns. We pushed over the bridge. I was just in trace of Bravo Company. So I was just to the south side of the bridge, and the battalion gunner was with me, my vehicle was right next to the Battalion Commander's vehicle, so we were able to witness most of this engagement. I followed in trace of them over the railroad bridge, then the fire is slackened somewhat as we moved to the Euphrates River bridge, the southern bridge. Alpha Company followed in trace and as Alpha Company cleared out of the way, Charlie Company came up in trace behind left. We pushed over the southern bridge with Bravo Company. They halted for a short time on the southern bridge because they were receiving fire, mainly direct small arms fire and heavy machine gun fire. I think primarily from their west. We continued pushing up the street, some of those vehicles were halted. I was driving my driver and I were in a Humvee and I also had Lt (b)(6) in there. There was a considerable amount of small arms fire passing from both sides of the street. My impression at the time and afterwards was that there was a lot of small arms fire,

but it was inaccurate. I think that was the only saving grace, was that whoever was shooting at us was very inaccurate with their fires. I witnessed at least one RPG land and bounce about 10 feet in front of my vehicle as we were moving down the road. The original plan was to have Bravo Company establish a support by fire to the eastern side of the northern bridge. So, what they did was they came up and moved north past the first apartment buildings on the left. We took a right hand turn and moved adjacent to some buildings and our goal being to push up to the open area to the eastern side and establish support by fire to support Charlie Company's seizure of the second bridge. Or originally Bravo Company provides their own support by fire and they seize the second bridge. Or, the alternate plan was, they provide the support by fire for Charlie Company to seize the second bridge. At grid 2-2-1, 3-5-7. That's where we encountered the mud. There was no ground reconnaissance at any level prior to going in here. There had been no ground reconnaissance of the city, itself, or of the canals. We had previously submitted a request for information PIRS and IRs pertaining to crossing sites on the Euphrates River, crossing sites on the south canal, enemy positions within An Nasiriyah, enemy positions south of An Nasiriyah on the canal and on the Euphrates river. None of those requests for information were ever filled. The only information we received was that there were several tanks within the city and that a battalion heaquarters for artillery was located somewhere to the north vicinity of the T intersection. There was no detailed information on enemy disposition, other than they believed several battalions were in the area, and that they were Fedayeen and other irregular forces within the city. The emphasis at every level and every briefing that we went to was that the enemy forces within the city were capitulating. When we got to 2-2-1-3-5-7, as I came up, I saw that there were several tracs stuck in the mud at almost half the trac level. I dismounted my Humvee, and that's when I also started experiencing comm problems. There were several power lines in there so it was difficult getting comm. I walked through to where the tanks were, and

walked my vehicle and CDI vehicle on a path so we could try to get around. We then started receiving fire from within the quadrant of where we were. It was sporadic small arms fire. In an effort to get the tracks out, because we had our C-7, our P-7. the chase P-7 for the C-7 were both stuck in the mud, and there were two tanks and I believe one Humvee stuck in the mud. They attempted to extricate them. It was taking awhile. I talked with the Battalion Commander and made a decision that we needed to pull his vehicle and my vehicle out of there to a place where we could establish comm. We only had sporadic comm at that point within the battalion. We pushed up and then went down several side streets, and I'm not sure of the exact grid where we ended up. I think it was probably, either here, either in the _____ about 2-1-6-3-7-6 or 2-1-6-3-7-8, but on a corner by an intersection where there were some buildings in an open field. We had a number of other vehicles with us, by that point a mix of tracks and most of the forward vehicles forward Humvees. We waited in that position, we got some better comm. Most of the comm we had at that point was with Alpha Company, sporadic comm with the main. He was enroute to that position, as we were moving between 2-2-1-3-5-7 in a position where I could get better comm and I heard L (b)(6) on the radio calling for an abort on air. I repeated that call, but I'm unsure if anybody heard me.

COL (b)(6) : Who did you repeat it to?

MA (b)(6) I repeated it over battalion TAC 1, net ID 694 several times. I did not get a response. And that was part of the problem the entire day. As far as command and control went, our original plan called for the forward to be established south of the southern bridge, and then move in trace of Bravo Company. When the C-7, P-7 with the main would take their place in order to facilitate the relief in place. That way we would have a command and control element

forward and one back, and ideally that would facilitate command and control at the bridge, and we would be able to talk to each other, and over the 4 kilometers we'd have taken no more than 2 kilometers from command and control vehicles. Comm just wasn't there. We really weren't able to talk to each other. I stand several hours, next to that field, while we coordinated. We, at that point, knew that Charlie Company had secured the northern bridge. I'd heard that there were casualties, but I was unsure how many. I did not know that an A-10 had presumably attacked them. I only knew that there had been a call for an abort on air. As I looked down the street to the north, towards the southern bridge, I could see an Amtrack in the middle of the road. I heard that one had been hit and presumed destroyed. I also heard, I think, that another one had been hit, but I wasn't quite sure. And, I'm not quite sure what time, several hours before dark, I saw a number of vehicles from…we had coordinated with Alpha Company because we wanted them to move forward and reinforce Charlie, but once again, sporadic comm. I know at some point they did, and they were able to reinforce Charlie Company on the northern bridge, which is what I and the battalion commander wanted…but we, I don't know if, at that time, they received that message, and I don't think they did. And then several of the forces from our area went and then rejoined them. Then the issue was extracting our force…having been there for several hours, we had started receiving some sporadic heavy machine gun fire from our southwest. The other thing we heard up in the northern portion of the city, coming from the northwest…everytime a vehicle went by there, there was heavy small arms fire coming from what we later learned was the Martyr's building area. We developed a plan to employ artillery fire on the Martyr's building area. As we moved up, we created a shield of AAVs that the Humvees could stage behind. We pushed up to the Amtracks because we had heard that there was several Marines that had been seen on top of a building and we saw the Amtrack there, so we wanted to take a look and see what was in there. I think there was more than one Amtrack

there. One was burning. We looked in one. We extracted one wounded and one dead. We did not receive fire when we went up there, at that point. They checked the top of the building, did not see any Marines up there, and then we pushed across the northern bridge. As we approached the northern bridge, we had used artillery fire to prep the Martyr's building area before going in there. We had Marines go out and search the two Amtracks recovered, (b)6 and pushed across the northern bridge. As we crossed the northern bridge, I looked to my front and I saw out on the bank of the canal, there were several dug in positions, one of which had a, I believe an 82 millimeter mortar, another which had a 14.75 machine gun. As I looked to my rear, I saw other dug in positions with the same. They were clearly visible as we pushed across. I later learned that the entire bank on either side, the north and south side of the Saddam canal, extending all the way down on either side, just had dug in positions throughout the entire length, and that the enemy's main defensive area was just forward of the northern bridge. We pushed beyond the northern bridge. I got up with Charlie Company. We pulled the rest of the battalion through, established them in a hasty defense, basically a 360. Most of them within the 2240 grid square. The T to the north, we were several hundred meters south of the T, and we were on both sides of what had been the 23rd Command post. The following morning, we reoriented our defenses. We pushed Team Tank, Panzer south to cover the northern bridge. Company A was pushed to cover an intersection within the 1941 grid square. Charlie Company and Bravo Company pushed out from either side of the T intersection. Throughout the day, we received direct fire from enemy force in the area, and indirect fire. Alpha Company…I'll have to check the exact time that they secured that intersection. The purpose for that was to ensure that the route from the northern bridge up to the T where we established a traffic control point down to the next T, which is where Alpha Company established another traffic control point was clear so that we could push our 1st Marines forward. The first night we did spend there, a British recon

team of, I think, two vehicles came up to us and requested passage through our lines because they wanted to recon Route 7. They were gone several hours, came back and they said they had pushed north on Route 7 and been fired at. Everytime they stopped by a village, they said very heavy small arms fire the entire way. And they came back and stayed with us that night, and then pushed south to link back up with their unit. We established control of the route and then pushed the 1st Marines through us, at which point, they fired at us and inflicted another casualty on us. And that's pretty much it, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK, when Charlie came across the bridge here, they turned left. Is that correct?

MAJ (b)(6) Yeah, I know they had some forces that pushed to the west. But that was…

COL (b)(6) Along the canal?

MAJ (b)(6) The canal is here, and that was just tributaries. I think that was mainly just to find a place to get out of the indirect fire. It's my understanding that they were receiving very heavy indirect fire.

COL (b)(6) Was it possibly this along here?

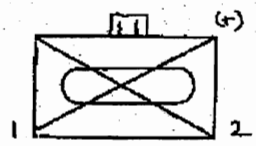
MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK, anything else?

MA (b)(6) No, Sir. That's about it.

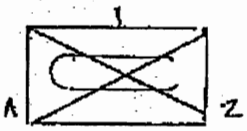
COL (b)(6) Thank you (b)(6) I've got a closing that I need to review. In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview, and direct that you not discuss your testimony without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MA (b)(6) I understand.



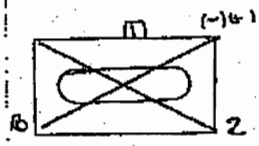
MO 64 | 7 1064 | ME 155 | NO 3 | NE 55

1ST BN 2d Mar: 3 Line Companies (A,B,C) 1 WPNS CO & H&S CO. Reinforced with A CO 8th TK B, A CO 2d AAV BN, 1 HET TM, 1 SST TM, 1 EAG TM. While at An Nasyria We cross-attached units between A CO 8th TK (1 PLT) and B CO 1/2 (1 PLT) to Form A TEAM MECH & A TEAM TANK



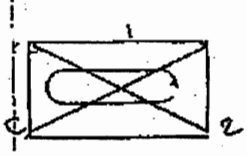
MO = 7 ME = 155 NO = 0 NE = 6

A CO 1/2: A Mech Pure company. Seized Southern Bridge and the reinforced CO C at Northern Bridge FAC Attached



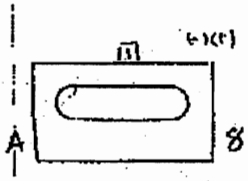
MO = 7 ME = 155 NO = 0 NE = 6

B CO 1/2: TEAM MECH. Had one Tank Platoon (from A CO 8th TK) ~~and~~ attached. Detached one mech inf PLT to A CO, 8th TK, FAC Attached



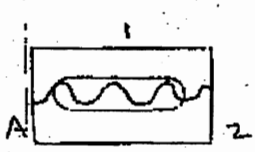
MO = 7 ME = 165 NO = 0 NE = 8

C CO 1/2: Mech Pure CO. Followed in Trace of CO B across Southern Bridge. Seized Northern Bridge after B CO Became Bogged down in city



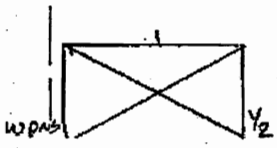
A CO 8th TK: Team Tank. One ~~tank~~ Mech inf PLT attached one tank PLT detached to B 1/2. FAC attached

MO = 4 ME = 64 NE = 2



A CO 2 AAV BN: 1 PLT Attached to each inf CO

BN	MO = 1	ME = 38	NE 1
AAV	MO = 6	ME 9	NE 0



Comprised of 81 PLT, CAAT - HMG/TOW, AA PLT - Tuvel

	MO	ME	NE
81	1	61	3

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12 April 2003
Interview with Cap (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) Please state your name, rank, social security number and your organization.

CAPT (b)(6) Captain (b)(6) US Marine Corps, Social Security number is XXX-XX-XXXX, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, Air Officer.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)6 and under the direction of board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation which may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you understand that you're being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

CAP (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I do.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CAP (b)(6) I do.

COL (b)(6) Where were you located on the 23rd of March 03?

CAP (b)(6) I was located in the Command and Control variant in the C-7 in the forward command post.

COL (b)(6) Whereabouts in relation to Nasiriyah?

CAPT (b)(6) We were in the vicinity of Phase line Slim at the point when we first took fire and that would be the first indirect fire that we took at that point.

COL (b)(6) I understand out here that you're using three types of Close Air Support. Would you please describe these for me?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Type 1 is pilot direct control, which used to be a pilot forward control. I could see the aircraft. I could see the target, make sure he's not pointed at me, make

sure he's pointed at the target, and then I can clear him hot to engage those targets. (b)1.4a

(b)1.4a

(b)1.4a That's Type 2. Type 3 we, essentially, give the pilot an area to work in to give him a clear to engage call based on the targets in that area.

COL (b)(6) understand that there's a battalion ops order that has indicated that the only type of CAS that you're authorized to use is Type 1, unless the commanding officer directs Type 2 or Type 3 CAS to be directed. Is that true?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. The way the order is written is Type 1 pilots direct control can be used on approval and has to go through me and the fire support coordinator. The Type 2 can also be approved by me and the fire support coordinator. And then Type 3 requires battalion commander's approval.

COL (b)(6) OK. We'll get right to the heart of this. On …the incident on the 23rd. Well, let's step back a minute. This ops order, was this verbally briefed to yourself and to all the FACs?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I was briefed in the operations order which they were all present at.

COL (b)(6) So, they were all present when… (b)(6) present when this ops order was briefed?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. All the officers in the battalion and all the staffs were present when the ops order was given. The only exception may be was Ma (b)(6) because he was late join FAC that was going with Tank Company later on. I had briefed him separately on the procedures that were in the approval process that takes place for Types 1, 2, and 3.

COL (b)(6) OK (b)(6) in there on the 23rd of March. Do you know the call sign of the aircraft that he called in?

CAPT (b)(6) No, I don't.

COL (b)(6) Do you know what type of CAS (b)6

CAPT (b)(6) No, I don't, Sir.

COL (b)(6) You were currently located with the FSC, and your radio was damaged and you couldn't talk with higher headquarters on the 23rd of March. Is that correct?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Who could you talk to?

CAPT (b)(6) The only person I could talk to was…I had comm with my FACs initially. After the first T55 engagement that we engaged with Cobras, I had lost comm with all my FACs.

COL (b)(6) What were the call signs of the Cobras?

CAPT (b)(6) I don't recall, Sir. I didn't know the information that was getting from higher at that point was we had a section of Cobras coming. I had no UHF capability, so I didn't hear them coming. They said they didn't know the call sign, I said have them contact MOUTH on the TAD net that we were working on that day, and….they pushed them in automatically. I had no idea what the call signs were of the aircraft that showed up all day.

COL (b)(6) So, you didn't have communications with MOUTH during this. Did you have communications at different times?

CAPT (b)(6) Initially, I had up to the first mortar engagement, and then slightly after Bravo Company took the lead for the battalion. As I continued to move up just after the southern railroad bridge. Before we got to the bridge over the Euphrates, I lost comm with MOUTH or (b)(6) and I had never got comm with again after that.

COL (b)(6) So you didn't talk to the A-10s that came on station.

CAP[redacted] (b)(6) No, Sir. I didn't talk to any aircraft from the....actually, I couldn't talk to any aircraft at all with the exception of one huey that showed up just after the tanks took indirect fire, and the very first engagement that we got when went troops in contact. I contacted a huey that happened to be on the net ID. I think the net ID was [redacted] I can't remember off hand. They came in. I think they were a C-2 variant. I didn't have very good comm with them, and MOUTH was actually talking for a little bit on that same net.

COL[redacted] (b)(6) nd MOUTH is [redacted] (b)(6)

CAPT[redacted] (b)(6) Yes, Sir. And I didn't have comm with any other aircraft after that. At least not talking to the aircraft directly. My UHF radio wasn't working. The TARHAR was working back to VIKING and CHIEFTAIN at that time.

COL[redacted] (b)(6) VIKING is Task Force Tarawa?

CAPT[redacted] (b)(6) VIKING is the regiment and then...they were actually helping me request the air since I didn't have good comm with CHIEFTAIN all the time. I had good comm with VIKING for a while.

COL[redacted] (b)(6) What was CHIEFTAIN?

CAPT[redacted] (b)(6) CHIEFTAIN is the AFC that's co-located with Task Force Tarawa. That is who you request the air from. As we continued to push up after Bravo Company took the lead

and Charlie Company and moved up next to them. As we continued to move up, I had comm with MOUTH. I had no comm with the aircraft. The information that I was getting over the TARHAR net at that point, since I still had comm with VIKING, was that hey, we got a section of aircraft … the section of aircraft coming in happened to be a section or division of Cobras coming up at the time. At that point, they were doing some engagements. Bravo Company actually had a face to face with [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] tell him the plan, and that the deconfliction plan is to engage targets that you see that are hostile, a click and beyond us so that we could have some deconfliction with the tracks and things like that. That's right when Charlie was basically handling both companies since we didn't have a FAC with Charlie Company handling the fire support for the air piece of this as we were moving up. As they moved into, over this railroad bridge, at least based on the posid that I was getting on my maps since I didn't have much visibility outside because I was inside the C-7. As they moved over the railroad bridge, I had lost comm with CHIEFTAIN, or with VIKING on my TARHAR net, and I called MOUTH and said hey MOUTH I need you to get on guard and contact any aircraft you can and get us some help, because I can't do anything for you right now. Shortly after that, I lost comm with him, and obviously I had no UHF capability, so I don't know what air showed up on station after that. I have no recollection of it. I have no knowledge of the aircraft showing up on station after that point. Other than what I saw flying around when we were stuck in the city in the mud.

COL [redacted] (b)(6) [redacted] Fire support coordination, the fire support coordination officer didn't have contact with anybody…

CAPT (b)(6) He was talking with VIKING fires, and they were telling us intermittently when aircraft were coming, but I'm not sure if they were giving us the full air picture. Like I said, I have no knowledge of what was showing up at that point.

COL (b)(6) When did you first become aware that there was a problem with A-10s on Charlie Company?

CAPT (b)(6) I didn't, Sir. I didn't know until after we got evacuated out of the city that night, and we actually stayed at Bravo Company's position. And I had talked him out, and …he was pretty heart broken from what I could tell. I asked him what was wrong and he thought there might have been a Blue on Blue, and that was the first time I had heard of it.

COL (b)(6) What did (b)(6) say to you? Did he say anything to you about the incident?

CAPT (b)(6) I don't recall, Sir. We were both kind of dumbfounded from the whole incident. I was really taken back. He said that…that, you know…I saw the A-10 and …he got some intelligence that there might be a mechanized unit coming down from the north and had them engaged, and that was pretty much all I remember from the conversation. It was pretty tiresome and…I hadn't slept much the night before, and I'm not sure if he had either, but…

COL (b)(6) That's a tough situation. When did you start getting cas-evac calls?

CAPT (b)(6) When we were stuck in the mud, I actually started picking up comm on the TARHAR net from CHIEFTAIN and I heard people talking over the fires net requesting fires to VIKING, or requesting medevacs. I heard that over one of the nets using battalion TAC 1 or Regimental TAC 1 or Regimental fires or the TARHAR. But that's when we started hearing the medevac calls for Charlie Company. I wasn't sure that there had been any incident with aviation hitting anybody at that point. I just knew we had casualties. I was trying as hard as I could to try to get comm up and to at least facilitate getting medevacs in with the information that I knew.

COL (b)(6) Do you have anything else that you want to add?

CAPT (b)(6) I'm not sure what else I can say about the incident, Sir. I didn't really have much knowledge of what happened that day. Once I lost my radios, I really didn't…couldn't really talk to anybody, and everything else is hearsay. The things that I've heard, from my knowledge of that day, everything that I knew basically stopped as soon as I lost comm, and I have no knowledge of any other aircraft other that what (b)(6) ad told me about a section of Cobras and a section of A-10s checking in on station. I did have contact with (b)(6) who is the assistant FSC and I told him that hey, we've got a section of Cobras and a section of A-10s checking in on station. I don't know what time it was. We were taking fire, and I think an RPG hit nearby us. So at that point, I think we were more concerned…we didn't have the fight at that point in terms of fires and the FSC…with the FSC, I'm not certain that we were actually doing anything. I think we mainly had to fight at that point, and we were really trying to get out of the city, and we were looking for recovery.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I do.

Interview with Maj (b)6

COL (b)(6) Please state your name, rank, social security number and your billet.

MAJ (b)(6) My name is (b)(6) Major, XXX-XX-XXXX. I'm currently assigned as a Forward Air Controller to Alpha Company Tanks, who is currently attached to 1/2.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation which may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

MAJ (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I do.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you're being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire incident and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

MA (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I do.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MA (b)(6) So help me God.

COL (b)(6) I understand that there's an operations order covering the three types of CAS that will be used out here. Is that correct?

M (b)(6) Yes, Sir, there is.

COL (b)(6) Can you explain those types of CAS please?

MA (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Type 1 CAS is eyes-on, traditional CAS as I call it. Type 2 CAS is reasonable assurance, such as they have the target, they have the SA, they can describe the target. I may not have the exact eyes-on, but they can drop. Type 3 is they're basically on their own to conduct CAS.

COL (b)(6) understand according to the operations order that the Type 1 CAS was primarily to be used. Type 2 CAS, direction for that use had to be by the fire support coordination center, and Type 3 CAS was only going to be released by the commanding officer…Is that true, to your knowledge?

MAJ (b)(6) That was verbally briefed to me. You have to understand, Sir, that I joined two days before we stepped across the line. I had none of the briefings prior to that. It was pretty much grab your stuff, get on the tank and let's get going type of…

COL (b)(6) Who was it that briefed that to you?

MAJ (b)(6) It was briefed to me by COCO.

COL (b)(6) And who is COCO?

MAJ (b)(6) : COCO is the Air Officer.

COL (b)(6) OK, so you were verbally briefed on that. To your knowledge, were all the other FACs briefed on it?

MAJ (b)(6) It would be an assumption.

COL (b)(6) Where were you on the 23rd of March relative to the An Nasiriyah fight?

MAJ (b)(6) Well, Sir, I'll start…the fight for me, it was…a start well south of An Nasiriyah. Our exact location, I'll call it south of the garbage dump. Probably 4 clicks south of the garbage dump. We were leading a road march which we had not refueled the tanks, and we

were going to move straight from the road march, straight into an attack on An Nasiriyah. We had requested rotary wing support. We requested rotary wing support to provide an overwatch and rotary wing was supposed to have shown up, I believe, if memory serves me, 0300 Z. We were in the road march moving across the LLV and the rotary wing support was not there. We continued to press, and I was riding in the XO's tank, which is the FAC tank for our company. I noticed off the left side that there was a white pickup truck, with some man ushering women and children into it, and they were quickly getting into the pickup truck to take off. About 30 or 40 seconds later as we pulled up a little bit closer to along side a small dwelling or dwelling complex, we began taking mortar fire and small arms fire. We went into…it was an ambush…we then actioned and returned fire first with the 240s and then the coaxial gun and then with main gun. As we…as that was concluding, we basically, we're off…the tanks were coming back on the road, take a deep breath, about ready to step off again and then press with the attack. A Humvee came screaming up at us. It was literally smoking. I mean the tires were on fire. It came up and as we got a little bit closer, we could tell it was all shot up, and a soldier came out yelling that they had been ambushed up further north. At that time, one of the sections of the tanks sprinted forward. I told the XO I had to get to lead trace to support. Because we had gone troops in contact, we now had air showing up. So about the time we started to sprint forward, the air was showing up, because we had…

COL (b)(6) What air showed up?

MA (b)(6) Two Cobras.

COL (b)(6) Do you remember the call signs?

MA (b)(6) No, Sir. I'll be honest with you, we had so much air show up, I had to revert to Cobra, Harrier. I mean that's a debrief all in itself. So…Cobra showed up and we pressed forward, set up the blocking position north of the Army convoy and that was in the garbage dump area. We rolled up just right behind them and set up the blocking position. I then began running air against another small housing complex, and then deeper air against a treeline and T55 and two ZSUs and basically we were starting to run into their defensive positions. I don't know how detailed you want me to be as far as…

COL (b)(6) Let's go ahead a little bit. Did you hear, on your radios, any calls from (b)(6)

MA (b)(6): OK. I mean, let me, I guess I do need to proceed on the timeline. We sat there and prosecuted air targets and while we prosecuted targets with air, with rotary wing and with some Harriers until we were able to extract the soldiers. And there were some medical issues and other…the tracks moved up, so that took some time. At this time, we're now going low on fuel…I mean now we were in a critical state of fuel. So, we then…pull the tanks back to the head of the column, and we're informed that our tanks can only get (b)1.4a (b)1.4a So, we start cycling tanks and tanks through this process. I don't know how the decision…I mean, the decision I guess was then made to go ahead and press the attack. And now we're not following. It's not the Team Tank in the lead. It's Team

Mech going to the lead. And so Team Mech proceeds forward and I'm kind of plugged in on what's going on. We're trying to get the debrief…

COL (b)(6) Who was the FAC for Team Mech?

MAJ (b)(6) I believe that would be COCO….

COL (b)(6) And COCO is?

MAJ (b)(6) Alpha Company. I don't know my call signs.

COL (b)(6) OK.

MAJ (b)(6) So, Team Mech proceeds in, they action right down the street. They come over the bridge. They go to the right, and they go right into a sewage bog area. I mean, literally bog down 3 tanks immediately. I guess they were called by the C-7. So, they're now in a problem. I don't know about that at this time. I'm still back waiting to get fuel. And then, Charlie Company goes. Team Tank is sitting back here still waiting to get fuel while the rest of the battalion is moving forward. I don't have the details. I understand Charlie Company then went straight across and not Alpha Company, and they lost a tank. The tanks and their infantry dismounted. That was the first time I'd seen the FAC on the ground. They then came under fire. Then, Charlie Company presses forward to go take the northern bridge. There's still no Team Tank. And they come under fire and they dismount their FAC as well. It was an ambush…

became a victim of the firefight. We're getting word at that time, and I'm not on the tank, we're getting word now, we hear basically a desperate call. You guys gotta get in there. I can't tell you time, or even who was talking to who at that point in time. So, I'm back up on the tank, we're moving forward and I'm trying to talk to the Air Officer. He's not on the net. Somehow, I get information from…I mean nobody's on the net, and then Battalion TAC 1 is just a, for all sense of the word there was no Battalion TAC 1 was just a bunch of chatter, not making any sense. So, I get word, somehow we're…grid coordinates pop out to me of the location where everybody's in the bog. And it just keeps mounting, like who's in there. I see a section of Cobras that are approaching the city, and I just basically flagged them down, and I told them I wanted them to go and position themselves on top of the tanks that were…on top of them. I asked if they had a FAC-A on board, and they did have a FAC-A on board. At that time I basically….

COL (b)(6) m sorry, they did or they didn't?

MA (b)(6) They did. They did have a FAC-A on board. To be quite frank with you, Sir, even if they didn't have a FAC-A on board, we were in a mess. So I positioned the Cobras on top of the bog. Pretty much for the rest of the fight, the rest of the day, no matter what else I was doing, I was ensuring we had Cobras on top. It was kind of a …we kind of used that as an entry point for divisions that were checking in. They'd go there and find that first, and then we'd siphon them off, one or two to go into the city. So, we're still approaching. As soon as we started to march, CO's tank went down, so I had to jump tanks and that was an additional delay. We're approaching at about 5 KPH but we're building our SA as the CO catches up. We

bumped up (b)(2)High hei (b)(2)High thei (b)(2)High Now we're coming to the northern part of the garbage dump. As soon as we turned the corner, now we're engaging T55s. So, we're on the main gun battling T55s. We'd come across the first bridge, north of the garbage dump, I guess. We're continuing to engage targets. We come over the south bridge of An Nasiriyah. As soon as pulled over the south bridge of An Nasiriyah, at this point the only thing talking to me is the Cobras on top of everything else that was going on. I can hear MOUTH and COCO or KOOLAID. I was able ascertain that they were dismounted. They were in the streets and they were in a firefight. We came over the bridge, the south bridge, and we could see a lot on fire, you could see burned out tracks. You could see Alpha Company, first you could see parts of Charlie Company further down. You could see…you know…lots of things going on. Once we were over the bridge, the first street and just hard left and just planted it right in the street. I'm still talking to the section over the bog, and there was a ….I do recall an A-10 that informed me that he was in the area, and this is as I was approaching the city. And I already had Cobras there that I didn't have any use for the A-10. Basically, I think I told him to stay up there if we need you…

COL (b)(6) Do you remember the call sign?

MAJ (b)(6) No, Sir. There are no call signs that I remember. Call signs were…first off they were hard to understand, they were constantly changing and didn't mean anything to me, and it was my entire day. I'm going to have to apologize, Sir, because I can't remember your call sign. So, we end up now it's a tank fight against dismounted troops. We're …RPGs are getting shot at us, small arms getting shot at us. We're trying to figure out what the troops need.

So, we're trying to yell to the troops and they start pulling out of places, and we just start putting impact rounds and collapsing buildings. In that particular area,...started to...that was the initial action, and we had Charlie Company further down and that was having a problem. We pulled out...this was the CO and the XO's tank. We pushed further down to Charlie, and the section that was right behind us supported Alpha. So, we went down basically, did the same thing for Charlie. I'm still only talking to the helicopters, and I'm starting to talk to MOUTH again, MOUTH and KOOLAID more, because they're now needing helicopter support. My vantage point, from on top of the tank. I knew what we had around. So we're syphoning some off, and in that time we had 3 FACs, one TAD net, multiple sections of Cobra in there. We were using Cobras...they all went home Winchester...before they ran out of gas. In fact, there were times when we...I had Cobras who I would say are heroes. Cobras were going back over the bog when they were Winchester just to keep the sound of rotor blades, because when everybody would leave, people would start to close in on that. We...at this time, I still had no battalion guidance on the net and any type of anything out of that. The fight's at a company level. It's pretty much a fight for survival at the company level and lower. We pushed on down to Charlie and pretty much start doing the same thing. And Charlie gets enough people into, gathered back into tracks and then we go for the northern bridge. The CO hung back a little bit. So, we had tanks, tracks and the CO. We pushed up the northern side of the bridge, halfway between the bridge and the T. And we stopped in the middle, some of Charlie we could see as we come over the bridge, there was another burned out track from Charlie in the ground area, and we just...we pushed forward, and set up basically the FiST team.

COL (b)(6) The FiST team was?

MA[redacted] (b)(6) Well, we set up a FAC and the XO. And we didn't have the FO with us. The FO and CO were busy going back, traversing and putting wounded Marines on their tank, and basically ambulancing them out of the city. So we're sitting in the middle of the road…and it's just like…best described like swatting flies. There were mortar rounds landing, artillery rounds landing, small arms fire. I could not, for the life of me, figure out where it was coming from. I mean, it was…I couldn't see any…it was frustrating. But you could hear the report…There was an A-10 on top who checked in with me, and, that A-10…he had 1.5 hours time on station, so I think he was new to the game. So, best thing to me was the A-10 all day long. So, he was very helpful, because he was helping me start to spot flashes. He was helping me find the places where we're getting arms fire. Now he was too high to see the mortar positions that were in the fields to our left and right, but he could see in the treeline. He picked those up. And let's see if I can remember the sequence of events there…we bombed the treeline, which as it turned out was artillery positions and we had a van going back and forth dropping off combatants and ammunition. And we hit him with the coaxial gun, and he just started to go across a field. He took off to the north and I rolled the A-10 on him, and he was still with weapons. He blew up. I used the A-10 to get some Harrier and Hornet pilots SA up while I was…I mean I'm still talking back to the guys that are over the bog, and then the Cobras started pushing forward as well. So we ran air on the treeline to the west. We ran air on some mortar positions. He got shot at by triple A. He dropped (b)1.4a on that. So, but that was…you know...We took out the van. We dropped on the treeline at the end of the T. Cobras came on station and we started hitting point targets, some of their mortar positions. And, there's a whole row where they had dug in mortar positions. What I think these mortar positions were just pre-dialed in. All people had to do was

just go pick up the ammo that was pre-stationed and just drop it. They weren't adjusting. There was nobody spotting or adjusting or anything like that. So the Cobras came in and did a lot of work. It was just target, clear, target. And then, all of a sudden, everything went quiet. It was just, you know, you hear that, people say that, sound, that deafening sound of silence. It was just quiet all of a sudden. There was still some arms fire from back in the city, but in our particular area, it was just quiet. We started to get some tracks roll through. I had one track roll past me, so I was no longer a lead trace, and we had to get that coordinated. I knew I had a bunch of mortar positions still out in the fields, but they weren't exactly…they weren't engaging. And I had Harriers and F-18s on station, but really at that time, I didn't see a need to continue. I could've used a lot of ordinance out there, but it was…we were very much trying to go by the rules of engagement. We even talked about, the XO and I, talked about the van. Hostile intent, you know. When he discharged the first 4 people in black get out. Women, they're not shooting at all. And then they start putting,…the gunner could see what he said were weapons in, ammo in the middle of the street, so that's when we engaged him. So, we were very much concerned about the rules of engagement. We didn't want…I knew there were probably farm houses out there and things like that. But, everything went quiet. And that was pretty much the extent of it. I mean..

COL (b)(6) That's a great summary, (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

MAJ (b)(6) : Yes, Sir, I do.

11 April 03 12:46
Interview with C (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) Go ahead and please state your name, rank, social security number and your billet.

CAPT (b)(6) Captain (b)(6) Social Security number is XXX-XX-XXXX. I'm a forward air controller for Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines.

COL (b)(6) OK (b)(6) my name is Colonel (b)(6) nd under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation which may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you're being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire incident and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

CAP (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CAP (b)(6) I do, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK (b)(6) understand that there's an op order out here, that delineates specifically three types of close air support. Would you go over those for me please?

CAP (b)(6) Yeah, you've got your Type 1, which is what we're all used to, which is forward air control where you can see them. They can see the target; I mean that's what we practice at TACP school and all that. Then, you've got your Type 2, which is more for where you have a problem acquiring the aircraft, or a…the Type 2 is much like the first, except you can't pick up the aircraft, but you see the target as the forward air controller. And then, Type 3, being the final one, which is way deep in the battle space where you actually can't see the target, and probably can't see the aircraft and you're just pushing it forward into like a kill box and maybe forward to the FSCL to attack the target up there.

COL (b)(6) Now this operations order has been briefed verbally, and it's a written ops order that's been briefed verbally to all the FACs and the Air Observers.

CAPT (b)(6) Yes.

COL (b)(6) Was (b)(6) present at the brief when this is given?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes.

COL (b)(6) Was there any discussion between you and any of the other FACs regarding type control, Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3?

CAPT (b)(6) Yeah, we all talked about it in general. The big thing is we kind of got like an impromptu brief really with the types of control, because the order wasn't out when we were getting ready to deploy. So that was a big thing with the Air Officer…you know…he started saying, we didn't even know, you know, if they're going to be calling Type 1, 2, or 3 when we first came out, until we were actually on the boat coming out, and you know, stopped at Camp Shoop, and we stayed there for several weeks. At one point, the air guys came down and said, hey, have you guys gotten this brief on Type 1, 2, 3 that's what we're going to in kill boxes, which is more of an Air Force style of doing it. We were like, hey, we've been talking about it amongst ourselves and we all had a good understanding of what it was. But as far as getting a formalized brief, we hadn't done that yet. And they did it quick at that time, you know, just kind

of ran through it. That was how we got to know about Type 1, 2, 3, mostly on our own, and a quick review when all the wing guys and the MANTS guys came out to Camp Shoop.

COL (b)(6) I understand in the ops order, it has Type 2 CAS can only be directed by the Battalion Air Officer, and Type 3 CAS can only be directed by the Commanding Officer. Is that correct?

CAPT (b)(6) By the Battalion CO.

COL (b)(6) And everybody understood that? Is that how you've been operating?

CAP (b)(6) That's how we've been operating, as far as, I mean, when you say, "Is that how we've been operating?" It wasn't really an issue. I mean it was something that, you know, they came out with this ops order that they did, and we were all briefed on it and knew about it, but it didn't really become an issue until An Nasiriyah as far as…we hadn't done any CAS until that point. But that is how we operate now.

COL (b)(6) What can you tell me about the events that happened at An Nasiriyah? If you would walk me through where you were during the battle? What comm you heard over the radios, what aircraft you heard, and any calls as the battle progressed.

CAPT (b)(6) As far as where I was, in the lead were the tankers, with Maj (b)(6) up front, HAWK, and then (b)(6), MOUTH was the next FAC in line, being with the Bravo

Company, and then I was in the next battalion with Alpha Company as their FAC and we were pushing up into the city. Initially we had been told, hey it's going to be a permissive environment, you know, blah, blah, blah…We started pushing into kind of the southern areas of An Nasiriyah, and at that point we started getting….we heard something about an Army unit kind of coming through here. The comms were pretty good initially, but they continued to break down as the day went on. But, we heard about an Army unit that was pinned down. At that point we requested some air, and actually…I think that was kind of what got the air started pushed in our direction, because at first they had kind of been thinking that maybe there wasn't going to be that much going through, and so air was going to be like an on-call thing. I think that was actually a good thing, because it got the air coming our direction. I mean it wasn't a good thing that they got hit, but…it got the air coming our direction. Then we continued to roll up, and I could hear once the air started getting on station, I could hear HAWK and MOUTH kind of controlling it. I was further back in the column. HAWK was like the primary lead trace. He had like the…the...

COL (b)(6) Where was HAWK?

CAPT (b)(6) He was in a tank. He was in the other tank. So he had kind of the lead trace as we were south of the city. So he was like the lead FAC, if you will, to kind of control the air as we were heading up. They started prosecuting targets, hitting…

COL (b)(6) What company was he with?

CA (b)(6) He was with tanks, now he's with Charlie Company, but now he's with tanks. He's still officially with tanks, but now they've broken us into three Mech. Before it was Team Tank and Team Mech, now it's just a regular Amtrack company.

COL (b)(6) You said you heard them working the air. What were the call signs and types of aircraft that they were working, do you remember?

CAPT (b)(6): I remember the types of aircraft and some of the call signs. To be truthful, by the end of the day, it was probably 200, or I mean it seems that way anyway. Thinking back on it, I actually thought those 2 days were 3 days when they were over with, just they seemed so long. Initially, it was Cobras on station.

COL (b)(6) Do you remember their call signs?

CAPT (b)(6) Uh....

COL (b)(6) Do you have it written down anywhere?

CAPT (b)(6) I don't think I have it written down. I'll have to look and see. No, call signs just elude me. We had a lot of call signs.

COL (b)(6) Do you remember the A-10s call signs?

CAP (b)(6) I don't. I did hear the A-10s flying around, but don't remember what the call sign was.

COL (b)(6) Did you hear the call that (b)(6) made to the A-10s?

CAP (b)(6) I heard an A-10 check in, and I heard like one call with the A-10 when it first checked in looking for work, looking for COCO. Actually, maybe he wasn't looking COCO, I just heard him check in looking for work and after that I don't recall any other, just....you know what I mean...comm with him. That was at the point where we kinda when we pushed forward into the city and the lead got stuck in mud on the east side of the road there, and then we pushed forward, and I couldn't get comm with anyone except the helicopters. Actually, I had good comm with HAWK in the front. He was actually in the tank and he came back. He was pretty close to our positions; and maybe that had something to do with it, as far as distance. But, there were a lot of, ...some powerlines in the area and stuff, and I don't know if that was contributing to it or what.

COL (b)(6) Did you have comm with MOUTH at all?

CAPT (b)(6) I had comm with MOUTH for about...for probably half the time that we were in there, because we were all working the same TAD net on the 113s and 148s. We were working all the rotary wing together. Initially, at that point, we had like maybe two sections on station and they were trying to cover HAWK's tanks that were stuck in the mud and they were getting

sporadic fire on those and then coming over to help us, because we were on kind of the main mall that went down into An Nasiriyah.

COL (b)(6) Did you hear MOUTH talk to the A-10s?

CAP (b)(6) I heard the one call when they first checked in. They said, hey, we're here on station, and I heard him say, hey it's street to street fighting up here, and we can't really use you here. I remember hearing that call, but that's the only call that I…I might have heard other calls, but I don't recollect them under all the other ones, because we were, at that point, we were busy with the fighting that was going on right in front of us.

COL (b)(6) Did you talk to Capt after this?

CAPT (b)(6) Briefly. I actually didn't see…we set up our position, and then after we pushed through, we kind of went to the T at the end of the road there. I took the west half, and he took the east half, and then, it got really busy all the next day. Then around noon or 2 o'clock the next day, we moved all the way to the west into the other intersection and covered that other bridge, and I really didn't see him again for another week

COL (b)(6) Have you talked to him since then?

CAP (b)(6) I have talked to him since then, but not about this incident. I know that (b)(6) (b)(6) said that you guys were conducting interviews about it, so I really didn't talk to (b)(6)

(b)(6) about this. I didn't know if…I assumed that I probably would be interviewed, but I didn't talk to (b)(6) about this specific…And at the time…I hadn't even really know that there had been a friendly fire incident until late in the day on March 23rd. Or, you mean we came in and to do the medevac for Charlie?

COL (b)(6) Yeah, Did you hear the mass casualties called?

CAPT (b)(6) The mass casualty? Which call? No. The…the big thing…my…with, where we're at, I was only monitoring the UHF frequencies, because the TACP local…I didn't have any good comm with (b)(6) the Air Officer on TACP local. The big thing with Charlie is that they didn't have any UHF radios, but they would have had…I think they would have a least had had a forward air controller with them, and it would have been totally avoided.

COL (b)(6) Did you hear the cease fire call or abort the air call? Probably didn't then, that Charlie Company made?

CAP (b)(6) : No, not until, no, I heard a …I do recall now hearing an abort, abort, abort call, and the aircraft did abort. Uh…I can't remember what the circumstance, but I believe it was an A-10.

COL (b)(6) It was an A-10, or…?

CAP (b)(6) It seems like there was an A-10 call; they said abort, abort, abort. But then they reset and continued, you know what I mean? I don't remember. But, I remember that it wasn't…It was just for…it was something…I'm not sure what the deal was. But I do remember hearing abort, abort, abort. But it wasn't in relation to Charlie Company that I heard of. It wasn't in response to Charlie Company making the call.

COL (b)(6) You and your company moved up to the bridge and across and went east…west I believe, right?

CAP (b)(6) Yes, west.

COL (b)(6) What did you see when you got up there and climbed over the bridge as far as damage and injuries?

CAPT (b)(6) I know we had been waiting for 2/8 to come and relieve us is why we were in the city so long, and at a certain point, (b)(6) said hey, you know… We had a track that was burning right behind us from Charlie Company that had come back and we'd actually medevaced them. I think…I don't know…JODA 53 was one of the 46s that came through. That's not something we'd worried about, they did the medevac of the Marine that was in the city right by us. We pushed north, so we had the burning track that was right behind us, which was closer to the south bridge. We pushed through. I saw a couple of Humvees. I think they were weapons company Humvees, and another track burning on the road south of the bridge. I don't know…maybe 500 meters south, I want to say. I can't remember exactly.

COL (b)(6) South of the north bridge?

CAP (b)(6) Yeah, and then, right when we came over the top there was another AAV just a short distance on the north side of the north bridge, burning. It was still smoking and stuff as we pulled off and took a block position on the eastern side. And that's when I saw all the casualties at that point. That's when we started working the medevac again.

COL (b)(6) How many casualties did you see?

CAP (b)(6) There were…I mean…I know now it was close to 25 or 30 Marines total, but they were all just lined up, you know what I mean. It was hard to tell. I know they came…I think it was the first load that came through were 14, and then we did an additional group right after that, so…

COL (b)(6) Anything else you want to add?

CAP (b)(6) I would like to add that…kind of…we spent a lot of time on the ship planning…We kind of knew that An Nasiriyah was going to be our first step, first possible tasking. We went through a lot of courses of action and everything, and it seemed like…We had a big push—just to go. To push through the city, I mean, there was a point where hey the heavy tanks need to refuel, and you know, there was like a big push that…Hey, in all our planning was like tanks going to go first, go through, then it's going to be Bravo Company…Alpha

Company's going to go through the southern bridge. Southern bridge, which is where I'd be at. Bravo Company was going to push forward, and eventually Charlie Company was going to come up once the southern bridge was secure and go up and take the northern bridge. At some point it came..I mean…I don't have the whole big picture because I've been down in Alpha Company for a while, but it seemed to me that everything kind of fell apart as far as like our planning goes, the tanks needed gas so, so we pushed forward without the tanks. I don't know the whole reason for that, but rather than waiting however long as it takes to refuel, and there was a big push to go and take the bridges. Even though going from the southern end of the city up to the first southern bridge was not the permissive environment we….I mean, they told us before, they said, hey, if you go in there, you're not going to send one regiment into a city of 300,000 people. You know, if it's not going to be a permissive environment. And so, I don't know what happened, but it seemed like we were pushing really fast, and I don't know why…all the planning we did, detailed planning for months…a month…was, hey tanks you're going to go first, you're going to do this, then we're going to roll in once we secure the bridge. It seemed like, once we got close, it all just went out the window, and they're like hey we're going to roll, roll, roll. Get the bridges, you know, hurry up kind of thing. You know, tanks were sitting back there and we were in the city for, again, time-compression, I don't know, but it seemed like an hour and a half with no tanks…you know…tracks getting blown up and all this stuff, and then the tanks finally show up and I truthfully didn't even know that Charlie had gone past us. We were still focused on that western…you know…where we were taking fire from. I mean, I was surprised that Charlie was up there. I didn't even realize that they had gone on up there. You know…our plan was to secure the bridge, and then Charlie would go up. At least, that was my understanding of it. I don't know. It was a surprise to me anyway, that they were that far north.

COL (b)(6) I've got a closing statement. In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct you to not to discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

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12 April 2003, 1530
Interview with Cap (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) I'm interviewing Capt (b)(6) the CO of Bravo Company. Go ahead and state your nam (b)(6) for the record, your rank, social security number and your billet.

CAPT (b)(6) (b)(6) Captain, US Marine Corps, XXX-XX-XXXX, Bravo Company Commander, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) and under the direction of board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation which may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just told you?

CAP (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you're being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire incident and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

CAP (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CAP (b)(6) I do.

COL (b)(6) OK (b)(6) on the 23rd of March, Bravo Company CO, I understand that coming through the town your folks made a right hand turn and got bogged down. Where exactly were you?

CA (b)(6) Sir, we went through An Nasiriyah, we went over the railroad bridge, we went over the southern bridge, which goes over the river, the Euphrates. Immediately over the bridge, we were to head east and take a route out to the east and swing up toward the northern bridge so we didn't go straight up Ambush Alley. Shortly after we took that right, we got into an urban type area and we got stuck. We had 2 P-7s stuck, a couple of M-1s, C-7/P-7 chase got stuck in the battalion forward and there were a lot of vehicles stuck.

COL (b)(6) Now Charlie Company had pressed ahead in the attack and they had gone over the bridge and they were on the northern side. Did you receive any calls indicating that Charlie Company was on the northern side of the bridge?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir. I didn't. No, Sir, but you have to keep in mind that battalion TAC 1 was clobbered. I think a lot of information that probably should have been passed that day, never made it on the TAC 1.

COL (b)(6) Where was your FAC when you were in this position? Was he with you?

CAPT (b)(6) Sir, he was in the back of my P-7.

COL (b)(6) And your FAC is?

CAPT (b)(6) MOUTH (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) Did (b)(6) get any air to work during the time that you were bogged down there?

CAPT (b)(6) He did, Sir. He got a, I know he got a, pulled an A-10 in, and some Cobras earlier, prior to that.

COL (b)(6) Do you know what the call sign of the A-10 was?

CAPT (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Was it one A-10 or two?

CAPT (b)(6) I think it was one.

COL (b)(6) Did he, when that A-10 came in, did he talk to you about where he should run that A-10?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Absolutely.

COL (b)(6) And where did he want to run the A-10?

CAPT (b)(6) We wanted to run it…what we knew of the enemy situation initially, that there were four, we were given four grids, they were all north of the bridge, mainly up at the T corner. We had fire support plan in place to cause some destruction up there, but we wanted to be up closer to the northern bridge to be able to run that, but we didn't expect to be under so much fire in An Nasiriyah, either. As soon as he could get A-10, I told him to start working north of the bridge.

COL (b)(6) OK. Now he didn't have. What type of CAS was he going to run north of the bridge? Type 1, Type 2, Type 3?

CAPT (b)(6) It would be Type 3, Sir, cause he didn't have eyeballs up there.

COL (b)(6) So he was going to run Type 3 CAS? Did you or he coordinate with the commanding officer for approval to run Type 3 CAS north of the bridge?

CAP (b)(6) No, Sir.

COL (b)(6) You know that's in the op order, that you would do that?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Did you have communications with the commanding officer at that time?

CAPT (b)(6) Like I said, TAC 1 was really clobbered. I had actually done a face to face with the CO right initially when we got back down and then we were both out in the streets, and my First Sergeant grabbed me and threw me back in the vehicle, and I learned later, grabbed the CO and threw him back in his vehicle. And then my First Sergeant coordinated getting all the vehicles out of there. Looking back on it, I probably would have had the opportunity if I would have jumped down and did a face to face with him. At that time, given the circumstances, I didn't.

COL (b)(6) So you were near him, but you didn't have an opportunity to talk to him. You were unaware there were friendly forces north of the bridge.

CAP (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) There were calls that were made to cease the air, to stop the fires. Did any of those come into your pos?

CAPT (b)(6) They did not, Sir. I didn't hear that all day.

COL (b)(6) So (b)(6) ran the air and the air checked off station without any idea where he was running?

CAP (b)(6) You, know, Sir, when that A-10 was done, I think that MOUTH said something about there was possibly some friendlies in the area. At the time, it didn't make a lot of sense. Later that day when we eventually did get the battalion to the north side of the bridge, the CO pulled all the commanders together and I stood there looking at Capt (b)(6) and he was real dirty and bloody and I,…you know, it was confusing cause I didn't know what he had gone through. And then they had direct and indirect fires basically all around them on the northern side of the bridge. They were stuck in the middle of a fire sack. Then, even later in the day, sun was down by this time, different things that I started to hear people say like Charlie Company got shot by an A-10. Different comments by various folks. It wasn't until probably midnight that night, that I realized…it started coming together, thinking I'm the one that's responsible for that.

So, I grabbed MOUTH and said I think we may have been responsible for what happened to Charlie Company. He said yeah, I think something bad did happen there. So we went immediately to talk to the Colonel and I voiced that concern to the CO at that time.

COL (b)(6) Do you know if (b)(6) mentioned anything to the aircrew about that?

CAPT (b)(6) I don't, Sir. I don't.

COL (b)(6) Do you have anything else you want to add?

CAPT (b)(6) You know, Sir, the CO said you know I mean at the time, given the environment, the conditions, circumstances what not, he said hey you did what you had to do. I don't think, he....we didn't fully understand that the Type 3 CAS, you know, I don't think he fully understood that at that time.

COL (b)(6) About what time did that A-10 come on station? Do you recall?

CAPT (b)(6) You know, Sir. It would have been in the early to mid afternoon. Local time, it would have been about 1300, 1400. Because it took us a little while to get up. By the time we were fully staged, we had the battalion main and the forward and all the Bravo Company in an area to get up over the final push over the bridge, the northern bridge. At that time, it was about 1600 local, and this probably would have happened about an hour before that, maybe.

COL (b)(6) Did (b)(6) say anything else about this incident?

CAPT (b)(6) That night, Sir? Or since then?

COL (b)(6) Well that night… since then.

CAPT (b)(6) You know, Sir, we have talked about it. Cause he was asking me who lead trace was? I tried to call TIMBERWOLF and find out what lead trace was, but like I said TAC 1 was clobbered.

COL (b)(6) TIMBERWOLF's the CO?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. TIMBERWOLF is the call sign for the battalion. TIMBERWOLF 6 would be the CO. Normally the operations officer tracks where everybody is, but TAC 1 was clobbered, this A-10 was on station. The pilot claimed to be taking triple A fire from the bridge, at the time and I was confident that based off the scheme of the maneuver, Bravo Company was the main effort, we were leading the way and there wasn't anybody in front of me. I couldn't get lead trace on the battalion. I told MOUTH we're lead trace my northing is 361 and the bridge was at the 4-0 northing.

COL (b)(6) And you cleared him to fire beyond the 4-0 northing.

CAPT (b)(6) Basically, Sir, that's the way I look at it. I wouldn't…that's the way I look at it. I don't know that I really cleared him to fire. But I gave him lead trace for the battalion, and he gave that to the aircraft.

COL (b)(6) You were co-located with the battalion CO at the time?

CAPT (b)(6) Sir, we were kind of in a convoy type…in the same…we were relatively close to each other.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

CAP (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

Continuation of Tab J

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12 April 2003, 21:46 L
Interview with Capt (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) State your name, rank, social security number and your billet.

CAPT (b)(6) Captain (b)(6) XXX-XX-XXXX. I'm with 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, Charlie Company, CO "C" Company.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) nd under the direction of board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation which may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you're being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CAPT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. I do.

COL (b)(6) OK, (b)(6) would you please relate to me the incidents as you remember them. You're CO of Charlie Company on the 23rd of March in An Nasiriyah, Iraq?

CAPT (b)(6) Alright, Sir. Where do you want me to begin? I mean…the beginning of the attack, or north of the bridge, or where do you want me to start, Sir?

COL (b)(6) Why don't you start at the beginning of the attack when you…you originally were supposed to be a follow-on force and you were supposed to proceed in trace of the tanks. What transpired to get you in a position to where now you were lead?

CAPT (b)(6) So what we had was, we had two objectives. There was a southern bridge and a northern bridge. Alpha Company, which Capt (b)(6) is in charge of, had the southern bridge. Their task was to seize to allow follow-on forces, being ourself and Mustang, which is Bravo Company, to get around and to seize the northern bridge. Alpha Company was the main effort to the south. Team Mech, which consists of a tank platoon and a mechanized company was to go around to the eastern side of the city, to go up and set up support by fire position on

the northern side of the bridge. And we were going to attack and seize the northern bridge securing the southern and the northern part to allow Mustang to go through, Bravo Company, that would go through to the north and to refuse our northern flank. From there were supposed to be two battalions that were to our north were briefed enroute up there. So, that was…we'd war gamed that, talked about that, and acknowledged them on the 30 days leading up to…I'm sorry…the 30 days on ship. What actually had transpired that day was our tanks had gotten in a fight early on, and had used a lot of gasoline during the road march. They got called back to refuel. So, at that time, Alpha Company and Bravo Company were sent forward, and there was still firing that was going on near our ___ to the south of the city. Alpha Company started to clear some buildings. They called us to go up and support Bravo Company. As we started doing a movement to contact south toward the southern bridges. We're all…both companies were all on line. We didn't have any contact and we continued to push to the south. Lt Col (b)(6) came over the net, hey, we need to start pushing. We started going quicker because we were doing a bounding overwatch, moving up towards the southern bridge, which we're southwest of the southern bridge, at this point. So he said, I want you guys to get out. We're going cross-country at this point. He said, I want you guys to get on the main MSR, and be prepared to go north. We're in a hurry here. We need to keep pushing forward. I think he was worried the LAR was going to push up and go around us rather than allow us to be able to accomplish our mission. So we pushed over the main MSR. The order of march was Bravo Company was the first in order. They didn't have any tanks at this point. Alpha Company had followed in behind them. It took us a while to get off the train and so we had three mechanized companies in a row, stacked and ready to go over the southern bridge. We held up to wait for the tanks refuel. We weren't sure how long that was going to be, but all our tanks were to the rear. At that point was when Mustang, Bravo Company, first…saw a T55 in front of them and engaged. We also had

aircraft that were flying, but first saw the tanks that were coming at them. They fired a Javelin and killed the T55 in front of them. At that point, the tank battalion commander called back to Team Tank and asked when the tanks were going to be refueled. They were pushed up to the front. I believe Mustang stepped off, Bravo Company stepped off with 3 or 4 tanks, rushed to the front of our column, and we started pushing for that southern bridge. The original plan was all of Team Tank was going to have a support by fire position to the south and going to provide that support by fire for Alpha Company seizing the southern bridge. But all that went out the window because we had to push. So, we basically had 3 tanks. I may be wrong, it was 3 or 4 tanks that were up front with Mustang that were pushing up towards that southern bridge and they killed, I believe, 2 or 3 T55s as they were moving up there. And, it was chaotic on battalion net trying to figure out exactly what was going on. Everybody was jamming it because we had multiple units that were in contact with us. Bravo Company was being fired upon. Alpha Company, behind them was taking small arms fire from the left and right, and we were behind them. I was just in receive mode trying to figure out what was going on. So, Mustang pushed up and went over the bridge. I heard that on the TAC, and…

COL (b)(6) The southern bridge?

CAPT (b)(6) The southern bridge. And then Alpha Company went up and they did exactly what they were supposed to do. They seized that southern bridge, and they set up in the western, just west…north and west of the southern bridge in a blocking position to ensure that the rest of our forces could get up and around. There's a decision point that ws there that was going to be decided by the battalion commander. In our original plan where we were going to do one of two things. If there was not a whole lot of contact, we were going to go straight through

what we call Ambush Alley, which is right through the middle of the town. So, if there was light contact, we were going to do that. If there was heavy contact at that point, we were going to go around to the east, which is where Bravo Company ended up going. As I came up and over that bridge, you couldn't see the far side of that river. I saw Alpha Company was in place. They were supposed to be in one block that was to the northwest. Well, they were spread well into the city. So, I was looking at that, trying to call and figure out what the status of Bravo Company was. The TAC was completely filled. I couldn't get a word in edgewise. I looked to the east to see if I could see Bravo Company start to move around to the east and we're talking, it was supposed to be about a click to the east and then moving out to the north, and then coming around with an envelopment. I couldn't see Bravo Company anywhere. I tried to call MOUTH on the net, and basically we had to make a call, because we were under fire. So, I saw Alpha Company pushed all the way in there. I thought, OK, we're going with the sequel or the branch of the sequel in this. Bravo Company must have pushed up right behind Alpha Company, and they're pushing straight to that northern bridge with those tanks in the front. They're going to seize that northern bridge. So, I went under the impression that Bravo Company was already in front of me. I couldn't get them on the net, so I started pushing right through Ambush Alley. We started taking heavy fire. RPGs, I visually saw 2 RPGs whiz by my track. I was the fourth tractor back. A lot of small arms fire. Our Marines were engaging with everything they had, short of small _____ on top of the track. But, we were (b)1.4a (b)1.4a going through that area. We hadn't lost any tracks…I could see the northern bridge. We're pushing across. We're still looking for Bravo Company. I couldn't see them, but at this point, I had assumed that they had pushed to the northern part of the bridge. And all we were going to do was secure that…the north bridge from the south and the north, and then the rest of Team Tank was going to come through and would be able to pass the rest of the

battalion at this point. I got up on the bridge and our first tractor got hit by an RPG. How I knew that was…I didn't know it at the time, but I saw a tractor on fire, and we all pulled up on line at the 392 northing, which was about 300 to 400 kilometers north of the north bridge. _____ gave the signal for our entire company to get on line and all my company had pushed to the northern side of the bridge, because we were trying to get out the frag pattern that was back there in the city. So, we got everybody out in a line, didn't really realize we were taking a whole lot of rounds at that point. We weren't taking a whole lot of rounds at that point, so everybody's starting to get out. I knew that the one track had been hit, and we started dealing with four medevacs. I called up to Lt Col (b)(6) and spoke to him personally. I said Charlie Company has seized the northern bridge at the 392 northing and we're halting. I said I have four medevacs. I got the roger back from Lt Col. My company starts to get on line, because we thought the main focus of…the biggest thing we were worried about from the intel was two battalions…

COL (b)(6) You didn't see Bravo Company at this point?

CAPT (b)(6) Didn't see them.

COL (b)(6) You had figured out they were behind you?

CAPT (b)(6) Yeah. At this point, they were behind us. But the biggest thing I was concerned about was these two battalions or brigades rolling from the north and to the south, and one was commando which was supposed to be extremely well trained. The other was a mechanized, I believe. So we were focused on the north. So we got our mortars set up. We're

on both sides of the road. We had the one track that was on fire and having secondary explosions in the middle of the road, north of the bridge, 300 meters north of the bridge and we're dealing with those medevacs. I tried to call an air medevac in, and it ws too hairy. They asked whether they could get a 46 in and I said no. So, I said, hey, we're going to hold up and we're going to be in a casualty collection point up here and we'll be waitning for the lead traces for Bravo Company coming up behind us. And I mean…what we have right now is, we had three units that were in contact. We had us that was in contact. We had Bravo Company that, little did I know, had gone around to the east and was stuck in the mud and what-not, but were also in contact. Alpha Company was in for the fight of their life. And the main, I have no idea where the main or the forward was right now.

COL (b)(6) Where was Alpha Company in relation to the bridge?

CAPT (b)(6) They were on the southern bridge.

COL (b)(6) On the southern bridge?

CAPT (b)(6) But they had pushed up further north than they had initially, that we had always talked about, you know, we thought they were going to go on the one block, because they want to get decisively engaged in an urban fight. But they had pushed up probably another, I would say, 1,000 meters or maybe 5 or 600 meters north of that southern bridge. They're trying to get dispersion between their tractors and what-not. So they were quite a ways up into the city themselves. So got started getting everybody off on line, got our mortars fire capped and there was a 23rd ID building, was about 7 or 800 meters to the north of us, and we could see people on

top of those buildings and we could see that they were firing at us, and that was the only place I could tell that we were taking fire at that time. Although, obviously we were getting some from the backside too. Our mortars started setting up, started firing. I dismounted out of our track, because the last place I wanted to be was with these RPGs and what-not was in the track, and most of the company got on line at that point. Got…we started controlling fires up there on the 23rd ID building calling for artillery. Continued to try to call back to the battalion and asking, where's lead trace behind us, because we're taking heavy fire from the Martyr District, is what it's called southwest of the bridge. And, we were wanting to run a fire mission into there, but I was unsure of where everybody else was, and whether we could do that or not. So, I continued to call and like I said they were in a fight and they couldn't…

COL (b)(6) Small arms fire this time? RPGs? Mortars?

CAPT (b)(6) We're taking artillery, RPGs. We're taking mortar rounds. They're hitting as close as 15 meters behind. We've got the four medevacs that are in bad shape. (b)(6) (b)(6) Basically all from that RPG. We're taking a lot of direct fire across this road. The road is elevated. I don't know if you've been there, Sir. What you have is a kill stack that they made. They had two berms on either side of the road there. They were approximately 100 meters, maybe 150 meters on either side of the road. So, you couldn't get off and maneuver. These berms were probably 15 or 20 meters high, so you couldn't go over them in an Amtrack. The road was elevated, so there was some low ground, which was good for us, because we could actually get in the low ground and not be engaged by small arms fire. But if you tried to run over that road, there would be pretty well aired 5.5, 7.62, whatever they were firing at us coming from back inside the city to where we were at. So, we're set up there, we're

fighting, trying to get comm. with the other platoons. They're in the fight of their lives, because they're taking fire from the north and the west, and we're split up as a company on both sides. To be honest, the only way we could get effective fires on them 5.56, they were out of range. 7.62, maybe we could suppress a little bit, but we couldn't do anything effective on them. So our mortars and our FSC team were the only thing we could effect the fight with.

COL (b)(6) The FSC team is?

CAPT (b)(6) Fire Support and Coordination team. Our Fire Support Team. Consisting of an 81s FO and artillery FO, FAC, which we did not have. We did not have a FAC, because we were not expected to push up that far. There are only two FACs in the battalion and I'm 3rd Company. And then we had a 60s FO mortars in there. My FSC Team Leaader was a 1st Lieutenant, who was a weapons platoon command, myself was an air FAC, as well to control those fires. We were starting to get some pretty decent suppression on there, still taking a lot of fire, and this happened…when we called this in it was right around 10:30 in the morning, was when we first were engaged or when we first go to the northern side of the bridge. And when this entire ordeal ended is was about 14:30. So we were there for about 4 hours fighting. Continued to try to call back and see where lead trace was, getting absolutely nothing back from the battalion. And I don't think that they knew at the time where they were, and I don't blame them. But they were all in a different fight. We had three different areas. Alpha was here, Bravo was here, and we were up there. But…continued trying to call back and was getting nothing, and we had to…the VT was starting to adjust on us pretty effectively, and I had a couple of Marines that were hit by shrapnel. So, we pushed up from one side of the road, from the eastern side of the road, to the western side of the road. The lowest ground that was over on the

western side of the road was like a river, or an irrigation ditch. We slipped into the irrigation ditch because it was the lowest part that we could find and mortars, everybody jumped up and jumped to that other side of the road. By the grace of God, we didn't have anybody hit by direct fire when we're pushing up and over. So, we're in there and a lot of our radios are now failing because we're in water with radios. Not a good thing, but that was the lowest point we could get to. Basically, they kept controlling fires. There was obviously someone observing us, which we couldn't figure out where it was from. But you sit here, and you see one hit off to the left, one hit to right and then you immediately know you have to move to the other side of the road. We're like ants moving around this battlefield. So at that point, some people went back over the road. We're split as a company, and I'm sitting there next to the FSC Team Leader, and a couple of our tracks pick up and go on the road and they start moving south across the bridge. As it turns out, unbeknown to me, was…I saw two tractors do it, went back over with the casualties, some casualties that were in it, and it went back south to try to link up with one of the forces coming north through there.

COL (b)(6) How many dismounted troops did you have with you?

CAPT (b)(6) We were about 176, Sir. 176 in the company when we went across the bridge. I know of the four casualties that were…would have been urgent medevac.

COL (b)(6) When the tracks were going south, they would have had medevacs on them, or casualties on them?

CAPT (b)(6) : They did. They did, Sir. And I didn't have comm. with them. It's embarrassing to say as company commander, but what was made was a small unit leader made a decision that we couldn't get an air medevac and these guys were not going to live long enough to be there…and like I said, I was sitting there next to FSC Team Leader and I turn around and I see these vehicles going back south across the bridge. And I'm thinking oh, my God. Because we're trying to call for fire back there, and there's no way in hell I would ever want to send any of my guys back across the bridge. Not mention that our mission is to hold the northern bridge. So, now in hindsight, I know that five tracks went over there, and of those five tracks, three of them were catastrophically killed by RPGs, A-10s, whatever hit them. I can't speak to that because I was on the northern side of the bridge. What I do know, Sir, is laying on the side of the road there, taking VT, I mean we're taking all sorts of stuff, I didn't hear an A-10 flying in or anything, but I do know what an A-10 sounds like. I went to school at the University of Arizona. I've dealt with and…and Davis Mothan's there, the A-10s there. The big range is down there. I've worked with A-10s as an FSC Team Leader. I know what that main gun sounds like on an A-10. I hear an A-10, that distinctive noise of an A-10 going off, and in my mind, I'm thinking, thank God. A-10s are here and they're going to take out that entire Martyr's block back in there, and we're finally going to get some good suppression on there. Almost the same time I heard that go, the entire world goes black on me. All I see is dirt fly everywhere, all around us on the side of the road. And, I just remember I had my hands in front of my face, and I couldn't believe that I wasn't hit or killed. I was just trying to do a self-assessment. And I had a sergeant that was my…machine gun section leader who got (b)(6) (b)(6) At that second, if you would of said, hey, we just got strafed by an A-10, I wouldn't have been able to tell you that. And I can't tell you that to this day, because I heard it go, I saw a reaction that I'd never seen before, you know. I've never

seen so much dirt kicked up in my entire life. And we started assesssing. SSgt (b)(6) who was there, who was seriously hit. We were dealing with that, and at that point, I was trying to continue calling back and trying to get any type of comm. as possible, Sir. That's all, that's definitively all I know about the A-10. They said that he had made multiple runs by. I can't speak anything to that, Sir. I know that another one of our tractors was hit by an A-10. I heard that people pulled out a 30 caliber. I did not go up there and do that myself, but they actually pulled it out of there. But…all I know was I had another track that exploded up there on the road and I heard that there were two others that were hit about the same time when they were crossing, south across the bridge.

COL (b)(6) While they were crossing south?

CAPT (b)(6) Yeah, well, they were going back into the city. After talking to people…I don't want to comment on it…what I've heard is that…is that…Mustang's FAC did not get the word that we were up at the 392…

COL (b)(6) Mustang's FAC was?

CAPT (b)(6) : Cap (b)(6) And…the only thing you can do as a Marine in a situation that's chaotic like this is, you can do the best that you can with the information you have at the time. And I knew that I'd passed that back to the battalion commander and knew that he had that information, and I didn't have comm. with anybody else. So, I assumed everybody knew that we were at the 392. Capt (b)(6) made the best call with what he had, and apparently the A-10 said that he saw an armored column, which would make sense with the intel report, moving south

toward the road cause some of our tractors had turned around and were rolling back south into the city, was moving in to reinforce and he made the best call possible, saying I need you…there's nobody north of the bridge. That's when he got from his company commander, Capt (b)(6) when he got a posrep from the FSC or whoever Capt (b)(6) talked to. And the A-10 pilot said he was taking anti-aircraft fire, and he saw a column moving back in. So Capt (b)(6) said, hey, run on those guys. That's the people who are coming to reinforce, and to hit the rest of the battalion. So, that's all I have to say on it, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Let me just read the closing statement…but before I close, it was said that (b)1.4a Was that by any of your folks?

CAPT (b)(6) It was not by me, Sir. I believe 1Lt (b)(6) was the one who (b)1.4a (b)1.4a As I said, as embarrassing as this is, I expect to be held accountable for this, Sir. I did not realize at the time that those A-10s were running on us. I heard it going, I saw something I had never seen before. I immediately started dealing with Sgt (b)(6) on the ground there, but until it was all over, and you had everybody's input in there, and Lt (b)(6) who was a bronze star winner in the Gulf War, and had A-10s run on him before, and he came up to me and said, you know that those A-10s…that was friendly fire, Sir. And when he said that to me, that's one of those things that hindsight's 20-20, when you look back you put 2 and 2 together you say Holy Christ. I cannot believe I didn't know that at the time. But I can definitively say that I did not know that at the time.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

CAPT (b)(6): I do, Sir.

12 April 2003
Interview with Lt (b)6

COL (b)(6) I'm interviewing Lt (b)(6) Go ahead Lieutenant. State your name, rank, social security number and billet, please.

LT (b)(6) (b)(6) XXX-XX-XXXX. Charlie Company, 3rd Platoon, Rifle Platoon Commander.

COL (b)(6) OK, (b)(6) my name is Colonel (b)(6) and under the direction of board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation which may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT (b)(6): Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) inally, do you also understand that you're being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

LT (b)(6) : Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK, (b)(6) If you would review for me, please, as we mentioned earlier, the actions that occurred after you crossed the northern bridge, where you were relative to Charlie Company that was there and when you first became aware that there was a friendly aircraft running on you, any damage, WIA, KIAs that you were aware of due to that incident or damage to vehicles and any information about the A-10 as far as ordinance that you witnessed or thought you witnessed, running headings of the aircraft, and any actions you or anybody else took to stop the air or get it off you including radios or anything else that was used.

LT (b)(6) : Yes, Sir. To describe where it was, I have to back up to Ambush Alley. We had done a bump plan south of the south bridge, so we had doubled up into two tracks. We were moving through Ambush Alley receiving small arms and RPGs at the time. I was in the lead track of our platoon and we were the second platoon back moving through. We received an RPG hit to our Amtrack, right rear. The track was then on fire. Just by looking I saw people (b)(6) everywhere that we had several casualties in the back. Lost comm immediately, continued to hit the driver on the head and we pushed over the north bridge into a safer area, what I thought was a safer area, pulled down, track was then engulfed in flames. Pulled down probably 500 meters

north of the north bridge, at the time, maybe a little bit further, maybe 800. Proceeded to get everyone off the track, including the wounded, off to the east side of the road. Told the machine gun team to go to the west side, took the remainder and put them on the berm on the east side. Probably used seven Marines to load the casualties into First Sergeant's track, who had then pulled up. Turned the names over of the four Marines who were injured from the RPG attack to the First Sergeant. Then I took all the Marines that had helped load the casualties across to the west side of the road now, to assist that machine gun team. By the time I got over there, there was a platoon just to the south of us and several squads to the north of us, possibly a whole platoon. They started assault to the west, to that marshy area out there. We were receiving indirect and direct fire at the time, and we began our assault west through that area. I had no comm at the time. It was destroyed in the RPG attack. My RTO was also hit at the time. He was already gone with the First Sergeant. As we assaulted forward we kept inbound with the Marines who were left and right of us assuming that they were platoons. We assaulted forward probably a good 300 meters, maybe 200-300 meters. I then realized that they were pulling back towards the tracks. Kind of confused at the time, cause I didn't have comm. Just started looking back and started seeing people waving us back towards the tracks. The Marines to my left and right were already loading onto the tracks. We started making our way back toward the track. These tracks were now, possibly four of them, off the road to the west side. They were also providing overhead fire for us and all that. We started making our way toward the track. We were just getting to the back of one of the tracks or getting to one of the tracks and was trying to talk to someone up there in one of the hatches up there to find out what was going on, why we were reloading. And that's when the first strafe hit. I don't know if that was the first overall strafe, but that was the first strafe that affected us. All the Marines that I was with, we were

scattered about…a little bit scattered about. First strafe hit, it was coming from the west, the southwest direction.

COL (b)(6) From the west to the east?

LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. Took out several of my Marines right then. LCpl (b)(6) was killed instantly. Cpl (b)(6) was hit, LCpl (b)(6) LCpl (b)(6) myself, and a couple of others may have been hit. At that time I thought the entire track had also taken some damages, and then loaded all of the casualties onto the track with the assistance of some of the other Marines. Also the deceased loaded them on the track. I ran up to the TC again, to another track that was sitting there…

COL (b)(6) TC?

LT (b)(6) The commander, the driver's hatch of the track. Started screaming up to them to put (b)1.4a Almost immediately after (b)1.4a I then ran back, helped continued loading some casualties and the strafing continued. I don't know how many there was at that time. I'd say at least three or four. We just kept hitting the deck and… A track just to the south of us was hit then. Killed Cpl (b)(6) who was in the back of the track.

COL (b)(6) Do you know what it was hit by?

LT (b)(6) A-10, Sir. I'd been strafed eight times during Operation Desert Storm by an A-10. I know exactly what they sound like. Of course you hear the rounds first and then you hear the chain…the gatling gun, whatever the hell it is on there. I remember looking up for it possibly once, twice to find it in the air. I knew exactly what it was though. I couldn't believe it was happening again. I then saw a second platoon which was just to the north and started hauling ass over to them cause I saw an antenna in the air. Snatched up their RTO, got on the radio put it on the battalion freq, which is battalion, I can't remember if it was TAC 1 or 2. But I put it on the tank freq, called straight for TIMBERWOLF 6, and started calling check-fire, check-fire.

COL (b)(6) Who is TIMBERWOLF 6?

LT (b)(6) CO. Started screaming check-fire, check-fire, check-fire. I don't know how many times I said it. The response…

COL (b)(6) From who?

LT (b)(6) TIMBERWOLF 6. They kept asking, where are you at? What's going on? We're receiving friendly air north of the north bridge, I gave a buffer in there. I said our location is 1,500 meters north of the north bridge. The strafings continued in the same time we were receiving arty in, and direct fire still so, there was a difference. You knew when that strafing was hitting and they were a hell of a lot more accurate. I believe the strafing then began to move more south of us toward the tracs that were toward the bridge at the time, affecting those tracs down there.

COL (b)(6) When you talked to TIMBERWOLF, were you talking to the actual…? You were talking to the actual.

LT (b)(6) : Yes, Sir. Soon after that, within a couple minutes, I'm sure, seemed like forever, the friendly air fire did cease. I'd say, I don't even know about the time after that, a bit after that though, the indirect ceased also. Still receiving small arms, that was pretty much it for the air portion of it. I then called up PANZER 5.

COL (b)(6) Who's PANZER 5?

LT (b)(6) Tank XO. He had HAWK, in fact, which is there FAC and talked to PANZER 5, didn't talk to HAWK at all, and proceeded to call them up and tell them where friendlies were located and they drove awhile, and crept over the bridge and I signaled to them two or three times and they finally made it up to my pos and they sat there and blocked the road to the north, then the rest of the battalion pretty much moved up there after that. That's pretty much it, Sir.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

Interview with 1Lt (b)(6)
12 Apr 03

COL (b)(6) Please state your name, rank, social security number and your billet, please.

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. (b)(6) irst Lieutenant, AAA Platoon Comander, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines.

COL (b)(6) OK, (b)(6) y name is Colonel (b)(6) nd under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

1LT (b)(6): Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) if you would for me, relate in your own words the events that transpired with Charlie Company after you crossed the northern bridge in An Nasiriyah on the 23rd of March.

1LT (b)(6) Charlie Company made it to the bridge before everybody else. Alpha Company was involved in a fight in the city oriented to the west, and Bravo Company had gone to the right, so we went between the two. Passed behind Alpha Company and pushed across the bridge. As the AAV commander, I had visibility on all my tractors that we got across the bridge.

COL (b)(6) How many tractors did you have?

1LT (b)(6) We had twelve. Eleven crossing the bridge. Charlie 209 broke prior to the southern bridge. As we crossed the northern bridge, Charlie 211 was on fire, the aft starboard corner was on fire. Originally, looked to me like it'd been shot by tracers or something that caught the packs on fire. In reality, and PRG had hit the track, causing some casualties on the inside. We pretty much herringboned off the road. To the right of the road, as you're facing

north, to the right of the road was a nice big berm which gave perfect turret defilade. So we pushed all the tractors against the berm there. On the left side came down off the road…

COL (b)(6) And the left was the left side?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, the west side. There was a creek with a slight berm.

COL (b)(6) How many vehicles did you have on each side, do you know?

1LT (b)(6) I know that there was three oriented west, I'm sorry north. I can't say exactly…how many were on each side. I was down on the right oriented to the east with my mortars tractor was the closest one to me. 211 was on top of the road to my left burning. And that's actually why we had to stop the defense there. We had to stop and circle the wagons, so to say, cause we were getting casualties out. We started to call the medevac.

COL (b)(6) Which one was 211?

1LT (b)(6) The one that got hit as it crossed the northern bridge. So as it crossed the northern bridge came flying, stopped in the middle of the road, started to bail people out.

COL (b)(6) Do you know what it got hit with?

1LT (b)(6): It got hit with an RPG. So we had to pretty much circle the wagons. We were oriented, everyone on the right side of the road, the east side outboard, same on the west side outboard then first section was in front oriented to the north.

COL (b)(6): Where were you?

1LT (b)(6): I was about halfway up the berm on the right side. Two tractors behind it, and another couple behind me. We were taking fire from small arms from the...

COL (b)(6): Before you begin, there were how many tractors oriented toward the north?

1LT (b)(6): I know that there were three, but after getting the picture of what was going on we started taking small arms so I got down in the turret. So I kind of lost track of…so like I said, we were taking small arms from the sides, well that was the only place I was sure we were taking them in the beginning. I dropped down in the turret started to engage building off to the right, spanning all the way from…

COL (b)(6): To the east.

1LT (b)(6): Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6): From?

1LT (b)(6): From my…the tractor was oriented directly east, so from about my eleven to my five northeast to southeast, I was engaging buildings and things along there. Couldn't really see where the fire was coming from, but we could see people jumping out of the buildings and taking some pot shots. 211 kept burning. We got all the Marines off it. And First Sergeant was triaging them, figuring what was going on, and trying to call in a bird.

COL (b)(6) Who is First Sergeant?

1LT (b)(6): First Sergeant (b)(6) He called the medevac. We set the mortars and the Captain got off to talk to his FiST team leader on the mortars and get them started. The squad from 211 came shuffling down in a little trench between my vehicle and Charlie 211 which is the one burning on the road, and all piled into my vehicle. I dropped down out of the turret and asked them what the heck they were doing in the vehicle. They were supposed to be out there on the berm. 211's going to go up here in a minute, and just about that time, ammo started to cook off. The fuel cell exploded. I told them that that was a good point, they were right, but as soon as that thing stopped cooking off they were going to get their asses back on the berm, and set up a defense and at that time the mortars started coming in. I can't really say how long this was. If you'd asked me at 1400, I would have told you we were there for 20 minutes.

COL (b)(6) And about what time was this?

1LT (b)(6): To the best of my knowledge, Sir, we crossed the bridge 1100, 1130.

COL (b)(6) I know you were taking fire before you crossed so it's difficult.

1LT (b)(6) : When the mortars started to hit, that's when command and control all went to hell. Vehicles started to move on their own to get out of the mortar fire. In hindsight, we were in a great spot if we were the enemy. The big road, easy target, big berm on the right, eeasy target, big creek on the left, easy target. So the infantry, for the most part, was on the ground. I had a tractor full of Marines from 211, and we still had to maneuver. We pushed north about 300 meters to try to be moving targets. Eventually crossed the road back over to the east side, where first section was on line, first section on line was doing a real good job popping guns and section leaders were doing a really great job of ADVAC, and things like that. When we got up there they were still doing that. But like I said, mortars were starting to land and panic was starting to set in across the board, the infantry and everyone else. At that point, I decided that I needed to find someone who wouldn't be mad at me for making the decision. So I got off the track to go find a Captain to assist me. We needed to get our heads together to figure out what was going to happen. I ran down the side of the road, between the road and the creek, trying to look for the Captain. Which left first section up north, oriented to the north, left my mortars track back in their original position on the southeast corner and some others interdisbursed, I don't remember who maneuvered to where to get away from the mortars which is what I was doing. Got down to the creek and I found the fifth team in the creek with the First Sergeant.

COL (b)(6) Which side were you on relative to the bridge at this point?

1LT (b)(6) : I'm on the west side, moving back south towards the bridge to find the CO. They've now loaded, they've loaded the wounded…the bird couldn't come in it was too hot. So they loaded the wounded into my platoon sergeant's tractor. My platoon sergeant and the First

Sergeant ride in the same vehicle. That's our medevac tractor. So they loaded the original casualties from Charlie 211, which I don't think were much more than burns and smoke inhalation and things like that, into that tractor and we were trying to figure out how we were going to get these guys out of there.

COL (b)(6) Do you know how many people, total, were in that tractor?

1LT (b)(6) From Charlie 211, again I don't know for sure, I would say five. In the interim while I was screwing around up north crossing the road and coming back down south, the mortars were taking their toll on a bunch of guys and our casualties skyrocketed from the mortars, or artillery whatever was landing, cause I couldn't really tell. So we had two or three tractors worth of wounded guys and I found Gunney (b)(6) walking north as I was running south and his tractor which was full of casualties had been hit by a couple of mortars and RPG. The RPG went through the transmission, through the front of the transmission and knocked out all the solenoids and gears, so it couldn't move. So now we had a tractor full of wounded that couldn't move. As we were talking by the creek, by the FSC team and a mortar landed right next to us and I don't know how it happened, it blew my pocket off my trousers. He ended up on top of me, rolled off and ran away. I figured out I was still around and did the same. It was about that time that I saw a couple of the other tractors on the road heading south. I got up on the road and tried to wave them back, didn't know what was going on. They ended up being full of casualties. They were trying to get those guys back to the south, but I figured we needed to stop those. It was in the interim, I was running south, I was in the creek, that the plane started to make some runs. I was on the west side…

COL (b)(6) So you had vehicles moving south when you heard the plane make it's first run?

1LT (b)(6) The first time I heard it…I can't say for sure. I can say where, in relation to the road, I was…but I don't think they started to move south yet. I think I, I think we were still trying to corral the FiST team. Gunney (b)(6) my platoon sergeant, and I were…

COL (b)(6) How were they oriented?

1LT (b)(6) The tractors?

COL (b)(6) Yes.

1LT (b)(6) A cluster up north. We probably only spread out about 500 meters, I would say 500 meters from the road. I'm sorry, from the bridge.

COL (b)(6) Were they headed toward the bridge, or were they oriented toward the bridge?.

1LT (b)(6) We had, I know we had at least three that were oriented outboard on the side, and we had two oriented outboard on the top.

COL (b)(6) Outboard relative to the bridge?

1LT (b)(6) To the main MSR, and the bridge. East, west and north. My biggest concern was there was going to be this brigade attack coming down from the T intersection, that's what we were briefed the day prior. So they were pointed north, that was our biggest threat, in my mind.

COL (b)(6) You were talking about the first time you heard the A-10.

1LT (b)(6) I knew it was an airplane. And coming east to west. I saw it high…I'm sorry, the first time I heard it, all I heard was the gun. You don't hear that till after thing till after things are hitting the ground, so the first time I heard that I looked up and it was coming east to west.

COL (b)(6) Were there any tractors taken out shortly before you heard the gun?

1LT (b)(6) Other than 211, Charlie 203 was the next one to go down.

COL (b)(6) What was hitting your position, before the aircraft gun went off?

1LT (b)(6) I know that there was mortars, I don't know if anything bigger than mortars were hitting..it was loud. I couldn't tell you what a 60 sounded like hitting next to me or a 105. There was definitely incoming. There was also RPGs. I would take a step back. When I was oriented east, I had Cpl (b)(6) my comm…guy, standing up in the back, looking at the houses and sighting targets and Cpl (b)(6) my driver, my crewchief, he was doing the same. What was that? ____ don't know, but something just came skipping over the ground. I said oh Christ. As I turned you could see RPGs coming from southwest from the other side of the river now. They're

shooting across the river at us. So there was RPGs, there was mortar fire, small arms that I know of. I'd say there were bigger things than mortars, cause it was pretty loud but...

COL (b)(6) Let's go back to the aircraft. First time you heard the aircraft and the gun.

1LT (b)(6) First time I heard it, it came east to west and at that time, it was a new ammunition that started to go off. I didn't know what it was at the time. It looked like little sparklers going off about 20 feet in the air. I don't know if that was time fuse, arty, I don't know what it was. I actually said to myself, man, that's kind of cool, it looks like a bunch of little sparklers. And then you see them bounce off the road. So the next time you saw sparklers, you dove, but I didn't know what it was. So those were the four munitions that I know were hitting the ground. Do you want me to say what I saw from the plane, or do you want me to go on and tell the story?

COL (b)(6) Just tell the story. And your actions and what you did subsequent to that.

1LT (b)(6) As I ran down the road north to south on the west side, trying to find the CO, there were Marines coming back from the swamp, back from the line and getting on the tractors. I didn't know what the hell that was about. Now I'm on the ground. One of the instruction I gave (his driver) as I laid my hands like this…come pick me up, and he told me he thought it was a pretty stupid idea. He just gunned it, when the mortars starting getting real close again, he just gunned it all the way south and ended up right by the bridge, that's where the track ended up standing the whole time, actually. I was in the creek with Gunney, I was running down, running

back and forth, got some water and gave it to some guys. Got my two quart off my tractor, ran back, gave it to Gunney and he and I sat there drinking it for a minute or so.

COL (b)(6) Were there more aircraft passes at this time?

1LT (b)(6) I know of three. The first one, and the two that hit 203. Cause Charlie 203 was parked on the east side, I'm sorry, parked on the west side, the north west side. Oriented inboard, so it was oriented right on the road, like he was using…cause the road was elevated…like he was using the road as a berm, shooting back to the east. I don't know if that's what he was doing. I don't know if when the mortars hit he started to run and that's where he ended up.

COL (b)(6) Did you do anything to try to stop the air?

1LT (b)(6) I didn't personally, no.

COL (b)(6) (b)1.4a

1LT (b)(6) No. But (((((((((…little tap, so I'm not going to say that people told me, they say they did it.))))))) When I heard the burp of the gun, my face was in the dirt, so…I did not see (b)1.4a up and I didn't shoot any. I didn't get issued any. When I jumped off the track, I didn't even have a helmet on. I didn't shoot any.

COL (b)(6) In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) We're back with Lt (b)(6) You understand all the statements I made initially are still in effect. Tell me about what you heard, the conversation you just relayed to me.

1LT (b)(6) I couldn't find the CO. I knew the FO was killed, and the FiST was damned near, so I decided to get back on the radio. I jumped up in my tractor. Got in my turret, and I was just southwest of the bridge. I could have thrown a rock and hit the bridge from where I was sitting. I put my helmet on…the 3 Alpha…

COL (b)(6) Who was the 3 Alpha?

1LT (b)(6) The Alpha 3 is (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) Is he still here?

1LT (b)(6) Yes. He was reporting…he was telling someone, and I don't know who he was talking to…but he said, air reports triple A threat north of the bridge. So I got on and I said, (b)(6) this is (b)(6) ..he's a frocked Captain, took a liberty or two… when I said…

COL (b)(6) Now where was he when he said this?

1LT (b)(6) I don't know. I don't know who was controlling the fight…

COL (b)(6) And what's his job again?

1LT (b)(6) He's the 3 Alpha …so from what I gathered later the C-7 and the P-7 got themselves in a fight, and got themselves stuck. I think that's where the 3…

COL (b)(6) And this is after the A-10s had already been there?

1LT (b)(6) Right. That's correct. My five tractors had already gone south and one got blown up on the bridge.

COL (b)(6) Did you say to…

1LT (b)(6): I said (b)(6) this is (b)(6) I'm north of the bridge. I said I'm north of the north bridge. There is no Triple A threat for Amtracks. His response was surprised, as I remember. That might be me making that up. But as I remember it, he hadn't know that. I don't know if he said, excuse me for swearing, I think, as I remember it, he said, holy shit. But I don't want to put words in his mouth. So that was my first actual panic.

COL (b)(6) Was air still running at that time? Do you know?

1LT (b)(6) No, because my tractors had gone south. Things were still falling. I don't know where they were coming from, but it wasn't as mad a panic as it had been, a couple of minutes in the past.

COL [redacted] Thank you, Lt (b)(6)

Interview with 1Lt (b)(6)
11 Apr 03 17:16 L

COL (b)(6) Go ahead and state your name, rank, social security number and your billet.

1LT (b)(6) (b)(6) 1st Lieutenant, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines. My Social Security number is XXX-XX-XXXX.

COL (b)(6) And your billet?

1LT (b)(6) Charlie Company XO.

COL (b)(6) My name is Colonel (b)(6) and under the direction of the board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation that may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Finally, do you also understand that you are being interviewed as a witness in this friendly fire investigation and acknowledge that no promise of confidentiality has been extended to you?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir, I do.

COL (b)(6) 1Lt (b)(6) would you please review for me where you were in the Company and as you started crossing or proceeded to cross the northern bridge at Al Nasiriyah, when you came under fire, when you began taking casualties, and walk me through what happened as you crossed the bridge, and the events that transpired after that push?

1LT (b)(6) Alright, Sir. The best that I can recall, we started pushing through the city. We were pushing past Bravo and Alpha Company's position. I believe it was somewhere around 12:30…12:15 to 12:30 local, is the best time I can remember. As soon as we passed through Bravo Company and Alpha Company's lines where they were stopped that's when we started taking direct fire.

COL (b)(6) Where were you located then?

1LT (b)(6) : I was in the, I believe I was in the 7th vehicle. I was…

COL (b)(6) th back?

1LT (b)(6) The 7th back in Charlie Company's column. I was with the 3rd Platoon. We started taking direct fire. About halfway through the stretch of the city, the vehicle just in front of me took and RPG hit, and the side of it that was on fire. The packs and what-not were on fire and it was smoking. All the way through the city we were still taking direct fire and lots of RPG fire. The Marines in the track were actually shooting out of the top of the track back at the direct fire and RPG fire.

COL (b)(6) How fast were you traveling?

1LT (b)(6) Initially, when we came through, we were kind of slow, I'd say probably 15 KPH, and we started taking fire. We knew we had to push on through. We stepped it up to probably…I don't know.. (b)1.4a We started going pretty fast once we started pressing on. Like I said, right about in the center of the city is where that vehicle took an RPG hit. It started on fire. That was the only RPG hit that we took at that time. The whole company kept pushing. We approached the north bridge, and as soon as we came over the top of the north bridge and got on the northern side of the river, we started taking direct fire from behind us and from both of our flanks…I'm sorry, let me come back…from both sides of the bridge behind us, from my direct right and front, which would be the east side. And then, on our direct flank on the west side. That's where we were taking direct fire from.

COL (b)(6) What kind of direct fire?

1LT (b)(6) It was RPG fire and small arms fire. We pressed on. We pressed on through. And like I said, we'd just topped the northern bridge, and we pushed the company out on either side of the road. Like I said, I was with 3rd Platoon. 2nd Platoon and 1st Platoon was in front of me, and they went off to the…I can't remember the numbers of vehicles that were on each side of the road. A good deal of the company was on the western side of the road, and on the eastern side of the road was,…I know the mortar section and their vehicle, the CO and his vehicle, and I think there were one or two other vehicles. The trac that go hit with the RPG was in the center of the road at that time. It was burning. Lt (b)(6) who was the 3rd Platoon commander had been on that trac, and they were busy getting casualties out of that trac. As soon as we got the company off the road, I heard the CO call over the battalion TAC telling…just calling TIMBERWOLF, and that's what we do. We call TIMBERWOLF. There's no specific person. We just call TIMBERWOLF and the forward element of the battalion. Whoever is controlling the fire is supposed to answer out. So, the CO called TIMBERWOLF. We are on the northern side of the bridge. A little bit of time passed. Probably 15…no, not that long, probably 5 minutes or so, and then lots of indirect fire would begin. We were taking mortar fire from the north, and we were taking artillery fire from the west and southwest, lots of artillery fire. Most of it was variable time. It was landing or exploding above the deck. Some of it was point detonating or exploding on the road. When I got on the radio at that point, I was trying to find, trying to talk to everybody. The battalion TAC was pretty jammed up with radio traffic. Again, I got on the battalion TAC and said that we were taking heavy indirect fire on the north bridge, and that we needed some help from the battalion at that point.

COL (b)(6) Did anybody answer you?

1LT (b)(6) Somebody. I don't know who. I don't remember the voice or whatever, but I heard a roger over the net. That's what I heard.

COL (b)(6) What net was it?

1LT (b)(6) I was on the battalion TAC.

COL (b)(6) Battalion TAC?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. We had a few casualties. I'm not certain of the numbers of casualties at this point. But we had some casualties that came of it. We had some casualties off of that vehicle that initially got hit with that RPG. There was radio traffic among the company about hey, we've got to get our casualties out of here. We've got a....we need a helo or we need to get a whatever. So, I talked to the First Sergeant, who handles our casualties, and he already knew we had casualties. He started to begin to orchestrate the casualty plan. But that's when I believe it was too hot to get a helo in there. The Marines were scurrying getting Marines out of the track that was burning, and there was a couple of other casualties. Most of the casualties at this point were on the east side of the road, which was the opposite side of the road from me. The CO, I knew was on that side. I could not cross the road. I tried to get to the other side, and I couldn't get across there. Somewhere in this time is when I saw...I didn't see a plane initially. I saw a

burst come across the road. It was mostly on the west side of the road, just north of the bridge. I believe that's where the first burst went across.

COL (b)(6) Now, between the time you said there was indirect artillery fire, but it was like DCIPM?

1LT (b)(6) I believe it was VT.

COL (b)(6) VT?

1LT (b)(6) I don't know if it was DTICM. I know there was lots of VT. _____ bombs exploding…

COL (b)(6) How long between that and the first gun run by the A-10?

1LT (b)(6) It was probably…I don't know…If I had to…I would say probably about 30 minutes. Probably about 30 minutes.

COL (b)(6) OK.

1LT (b)(6) I'm not sure on that. I know the whole thing lasted about 3 hours, although it seemed like it was about 15 minutes. But the best I can recall, it was about 30 minutes. Nonetheless, the rounds went across the road and mostly on the western side initially. At that point, I didn't realize that it was a plane. I thought it was still more indirect fire. A few minutes

later, there was another burst, and that's when I saw on the second time, that same burst came across, that I realized that it was a plane above us.

COL (b)(6) Were they still firing the air-burst artillery?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir. There was still indirect fire.

COL (b)(6) Indirect fire, OK.

1LT (b)(6) I did not realize that it was an A-10. I knew that it was a plane, and I knew that it was…I realized it was a plane on probably it's second run, but I did not identify the type of aircraft it was. At this point, we had the Marines pushed off. The Amtracks were probably about 15 meters off the road. The road was up high, and then on both sides of the road, it dipped down into a ditch and then a berm on both sides of the road. So the Marines were pushed out in front of the Amtracks. There were probably…they were probably about 100 to 150 meters off the road and they were firing on both sides of the road. Somewhere, and this is the whole company level, we're trying to figure out where this came from. But, somewhere…let me back up. The Marines were pushed off…off the vehicles. I got off my vehicle, ran up and down the line, checked who I had on my side. I never saw 2nd Platoon. They were north of me. I was about in the middle on the west side with the 3rd Platoon. The 1st Platoon was kind of inter-mixed in there with…with 3rd Platoon. So, I ran up and down the line to find out what was going on, and I went back inside the track because that was the only radio I had. I went back inside the track and got on the radio and started calling again and saying we needed some help back here. I again gave our location.

COL (b)(5) Did you tell them to abort the air?

1LT (b)(6) I don't think I…I didn't say anything about the air at that time.

COL (b)(6) OK. But you knew it was air after the second run.

1LT (b)(6) Yes. I knew it was an aircraft. I didn't know what type. I knew it was an aircraft, but at that point I did not call out over the radio. Somehow over that period in the conflict there, somebody, somewhere along the company or with the AAVs initiated and said that we need to get on the tracks and push. From listening, it didn't come over our company TAC. It didn't come over the Battalion TAC. It came over the AV net, which on the Amtracks, we had…each AAV has the Amtrack net that they monitor, and we also have Company TAC or Battalion….or, we have several different nets.

COL (b)(6) So, when the A-10s first…you saw the first laydown, it looked like…whatever it was…When you knew it was an aircraft laying down fire, the Amtrack at that time was stationary on the road?

1LT (b)(6) No. They were off the road. Initially, as soon as we came over the bridge, we pushed off the road, along the east side of the road.

COL (b)(6) Right. But were they stationary?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

COL (b)(6) OK.

1LT (b)(6) They were stationary on either side of the road.

COL (b)(6) OK.

1LT (b)(6) Somewhere, like I said, we don't know where it came from. Somebody, a small unit leader said, hey we've got to push. I don't know where the call came from, but somewhere it came that we need to move.

COL (b)(6) ow the Amtracks were faced…the direction they were faced?

1LT (b)(6) They were facing outward. So, they were facing…the ones on the east side of the road were facing east and the ones on the west side of the road were facing west. At that point, Marines started loading up on the Amtracks. And, unbeknown to me, I was down inside the Amtrack, I didn't have intercom with the driver or the crew chief. I was inside the track talking on the radio, and at this time I could hear the aircraft coming over and I could hear the runs. Some of the vehicles loaded up. I believe there was 5 of them that loaded up Marines on the Amtracks. I seriously though that we were going to push north, because that's where the enemy was, so I thought we were pushing north. And as I popped my head out of the vehicle , of the TC hatch, we were facing south right on the edge of the bridge. And, that's when I could see the bird again come across our frontage, at that point.

COL (b)(6) Which direction was it flying?

1LT (b)(6) At that time, it was flying from…as we were facing south, it was above us flying either east to west or west to east. I was flying perpendicular to the road. I can't remember which direction it came from.

COL (b)(6) What time?

1LT (b)(6) This was probably…after we had been up there…this was probably about 2 hours and a half maybe into our time on the northern side of the bridge.

COL (b)(6) Did you see anybody…Did anybody (b)1.4a

1LT (b)(6) That's when some of the vehicles were staged up to go south, and after I realized we were about to go south, back through the city. I saw one (b)1.4a from the company area, and it was a…I think it was (b)1.4a I think it was a (b)1.4a that went. Somewhere in there, I can't remember what can't remember exactly what time it was, but I did see a (b)(6) (b)(6) Nobody on my side of the road (b)1.4a but I know a (b)1.4a

COL (b)(6) Did you see any (b)1.4a

1LT (b)(6) I didn't see any (b)1.4a No, I didn't, Sir. This was…there was a lot of confusion that happened in the area. I realized at that point we had medevacs, and that's why the Marines were going south, because we had medevacs. They were going to take the medevacs back because they couldn't get the helo in. We started south, and that point, that's as much as I can speak of the bird itself, because we started pushing south. As we started going south, just after we got over the bridge, heading south at this time, about in the center of town again, the track behind me…it just exploded. And that was the track that had the medevacs on it. The medevacs were spread over two tracks and they were…on second thought, it was five tracks that were going south, and two of them had medevacs on them. In that one track that had medevacs on it was a track with mortars. It had all the mortar ammo on that track. That was about the center of town that that track exploded. It was the track immediately behind me. I mean…it exploded. I don't' know. Because the flash went up and the explosion, there was a lot of sympathetic explosion from the mortars.

COL (b)(6) Are you inside the one in front?

1LT (b)(6) I'm inside the one in front, but I had the hatch open, so I'm just sitting in the troop commander's hatch. I was probably up head high, so I could see.

COL (b)(6) So, you saw it.

1LT (b)(6) So, I was…the hatch was open, so I was sitting up where I could see out. And that was the track immediately behind me. And, this is probably…I don't have the location, but it was a few hundred meters, maybe even 1000 meters south of the bridge into town. And that

track behind me exploded. By the way, the explosion came up and the sympathetic explosions, I don't know if it was something from the air or something from an RPG. An RPG could've ignited the mortars. I don't know. It just burst. The track did. Then there was another track that was with it when it got hit by an RPG. It pulled off the side of the road.

COL (b)(6) : Are you sure it was an RPG?

1LT (b)(6) : No,...no, I don't have...I don't have a factual basis on that. I don't know that. I misspoke that, because I don't know that that was an RPG. That track did continue rolling. It was inoperable, but it continued rolling. So, as soon as the track behind me exploded, we pulled out, and then track behind me exploded, we pulled off, and then the track behind me, the one that exploded, which was two behind me, rolled past me off the side of the road. We stopped at that point. We loaded as many Marines as we could onto the vehicles we had. We only had two vehicles left at that point. We loaded as many as we could and this was just a matter of a couple of minutes. We loaded as many as we could, and we had some of the Marines run inside the building. I yelled to those Marines. It was a tough decision right there. I yelled at those Marines, and I said,...in my mind, the only thing that I could do was to...I could see Alpha company in front of me. They were probably 800 meters in front of me. I could see them in front of me. So, I told them to set up their position right there. I'm going to get Alpha Company and come back. So, with those two vehicles loaded up with as many people as we could, those Marines stayed there. We pushed on to Alpha Company's position. When we got to Alpha Company's position, Sgt (b)(6) he's one of the air trackers, he and I got together. I said, you go to tanks. I'm going to Alpha Company. So he ran over to tanks and said, hey, we need some help on the north side of the bridge. I ran to Alpha Company and linked up with Capt (b)(6)

Capt (b)(6) asked what was going on, because again, periodically through this, I was trying to get comm and trying to talk to people on Battalion TAC, and there was so much traffic on the net that we couldn't. We couldn't get anything. So, like I said, Sgt (b)(6) went to the tanks. I went to Capt (b)(6) in Alpha Company and told him what was going on. I said, hey, the company is getting schwacked on the northern side of the bridge and I've got one squad in the center of town. I said, we gotta go. He was waiting on 2/8. 2/8 was supposed to come and relieve him. He was at the northern end of the south bridge. 2/8 was supposed to come and relieve him and then he was going to push. And he told me at that point, he said you know, we're just going to.... He said I don't know when they're coming. We gotta go. He told me, you go to the other side, grab all the vehicles, all the AAVs on the other side. I'll grab the AAVs on this side, and we'll leave in 15 minutes. We looked at our watches. Local time was either...I keep trying to remember this...It was either a quarter til 3, so that would have been 1445 or 1345. I know when I looked at my watch, the minute hand was on the, so I knew it was a quarter til something, and I don't remember if it was a quarter til 3 or a quarter til 2. I don't remember. So, at that point, we loaded up. We loaded up in Alpha Company's tracks. All the Marines I had with me, simultaneously, while I was talking to Capt (b)(6) our medevacs saved the ones that were on the mortar side. They called a helo for them, and they were able to get them out with a helo. We loaded up everybody on Alpha company's tracs, and the one other trac that we still had left from Charlie Company that had gone down. And then we pushed back to the north. A tank and one of the AAVs and some of the CAT sections stopped to get the Marines out that were in the center of town. So, the rest of us pushed north. When we got back up there, almost immediately when we rolled over the north bridge with our...the fire lifted from up there. Like I said, I'd been separated from it for probably 45 minutes. From the time I left the north end, went and talked to Capt (b)(6) and came back, was probably about a 45 minutes span there.

Nonetheless, when we rolled back over the north bridge at that time, the fire had stopped or was lifting at that point. And that's pretty much it from my side.

COL (b)(6) I've got a closing statement I'll read. In closing, I want to remind you that this is an official interview and direct that you not discuss your testimony with anyone without the board's permission or until the report has been officially released to the public. Do you understand?

1LT (b)(6) Yes, Sir.

UNCLASSIFIED

12 April 2003, 21:46 L
Interview with 2Lt (b)(6)

COL (b)(6) State your name, rank, social security number and your billet.

LT (b)(6) 2nd Lieutenant (b)(6) XXX-XX-XXXX. First Lt Commander, Charlie Company, CO "C" Company.

COL (b)(6) OK, (b)(6) my name is Colonel (b)(6) and under the direction of board president, Brigadier General William F. Hodgkins, we're investigating a friendly fire incident that occurred on 23 March 03 near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. This investigation, conducted under DOD Instruction 6055.7 is separate and apart from any other investigation which may have been conducted concerning this incident. The purpose of this investigation is to produce a publicly releasable report on the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and gather and preserve evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative proceedings and for all other purposes. Your sworn testimony to me may be used for any proper purpose and may be released to the public. Additionally, the chain of command will review the final report. Do you understand what I have just read to you?

LT (b)(6) I do.

COL (b)(6) Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LT (b)(6) I do.

COL (b)(6) OK, (b)(6) would you please relay to me what occurred relative to the friendly fire incident when you crossed the northern bridge in An Nasiriyah, on the 23rd of March?

LT (b)(6) As I crossed the northern bridge, I was in track 201, which was the very first track to cross the bridge, the lead element. I called out lead trace twice before that, going through the city…

COL (b)(6) To whom?

LT (b)(6) …to my company commander over the company TAC. I don't remember the specific northings but…that's what you call the traces.

COL (b)(6) Right.

LT (b)(6) …36 northing, 37 northing…I called that out. As we went over Lt (b)(6) in 3rd Platton, his tractor got hit going through the city. He actually pulled up almost on line to us, north of the bridge. He had taken a casualty. One of the Marines got hit. He had also taken a couple of RPG rounds in his track. He said, we need a medevac, we need a medevac. At that point my tractor pulled about, I want to say 4 to 500 meters past the bridge and went off on the left-hand side, but we're oriented back towards the road. So we were actually oriented toward the east. At that point all the tractors in the company from what I saw from my angle, had made