

82. Has your platoon either at JRTC or training or in Kuwait ever rehearsed or discussed nonstandard evacuation, the use of any kind of civilian vehicles on the battlefield?
No. If we did it was short and I do not remember it.

83. Are your .50 cal gunners and your M240 gunners qualified on the weapons on the mount and on the HMMWVs or no?
No. Basically our 2 .50 cal gunners are 240 gunners on the regular MTOE, our 240 gunners on the truck are mostly saw gunners. 1 or 2 are designated marksman.

84. How much up-armored HMMWV training had your platoon conducted before getting into Iraq, driving training and stuff like that?
2 guys back at Campbell took about a 6-7 hour class basically on how to PMCS it and they drove an 1114 maybe about 50 meters. In Kuwait we did a convoy live fire, but there were no 1114's we used 1025's. We had one 1114 in Kuwait that we kind of shuffled through to kind of get the guys in it and so they got everybody to drive it once, you know like 2-3 minutes each, just kind of around in a circle. That is pretty much all of the training we got on it.

85. With regards to the control you conducted, looking back now, you mentioned some of these, what do you think you would do different, having kind of the ability to look back now?
One, I would have turned back when we did not have comms, I mean I know it is important. So, I would have turned back and figured out some other way to get over there, with either 1 vehicle, or taking everybody. Honestly, if I had to do it all over again, I would have just left the house, taken all 3 vehicles, getting as much fire power as I could out there and better communications.

86. Now that you have about 5 weeks of combat under your belt here in Iraq, if you could go back to home station or if you were training at home station now, what do you think you would do differently, where would you focus your training on?
A lot more, trying to acquire vehicles. I know I just told you the amount of training before we got there and basically all of our SOP's dealing with mounted stuff became from either Delta Company or speculation. They were pretty much all thrown out the window once we got there and saw how things were actually done. Just getting used to driving the vehicle formations, dismounting, clearing IED's with vehicle formations, things like that. I mean, it took us a few patrols to get that down.

87. In the HMMWVs that you have, do you have working headsets for the gunner, TC, driver and Vic 3 headsets, anything that lets you communicate with your crew and listen to the radio comms or are you using regular hand mics?
We are using regular hand mics.

88. Is there any Company internal graphical control measures that you use, you got all of the routes that you are using commonly referenced and your soldiers know that pretty well, but are you using any kind of checkpoints out there or any kind of other graphical control measures, you know restrict of fire lines, so when platoons are operating out there they know of each others battle space?

Negative, that one thing that I talked back here with my Dad. There was not. This might stay towards the latter part, before I left because patrols were overlapping potentially. You knew that when you left the wire, because you wondered when your relief was coming, but there was nothing in place to track those guys on exactly where they were and what they were doing other than if you get lucky and over hear them, communications back to Gate [REDACTED]

89. Have you used the FIPR messaging and stuff like that and if you were in trucks you could not get comms with your radios, would you go to your FIPR and send updates.
Roger.

90. One of the problems is that, lets say you are FIPR'ing away and giving good updates to the Company CP, but another section from another platoon is updating by radio, he is not going to see what you are seeing and you are not going to hear what he is hearing and as you mentioned you may not have as good situation awareness of who is out on the battle field?

Roger. Another thing we run into is we like to stay dismounted and I would be out of the trucks hours at a time and most of the time my driver would have the radio and kind of creeping behind us trying to keep up on communications. As far as keeping up with the FIPR on the other side, I would come back from being outside the truck for 2 or 3 hours and have 13 messages. I saw that as kind of a problem too, something I need to work on, just getting back to the truck and checking it.

91. As you were getting into the Bongo. I know you were feeling kind of light headed, did you give any special instructions to [REDACTED] or were they pretty much running the show at that point?

No, basically they asked me which way to go and I basically told them to make sure you take a right once we get out of this house and make sure you get on the northside road of the canal. Because I knew the southside road had berms and barriers down there that I knew we would not be able to cross. Basically once we cross on the northside road then we can get back on the southside road and that is pretty much all that was spoken.

92. In relation to where you are in the house and where the Bongo was going to pull out, do you think you had any AIF further east, you mention 12 o'clock, were you oriented east when you gave the 12 o'clock, 10 o'clock directions or were you orientated north?

We were oriented east.

93. If you think back do you think there may have been a couple of guys still out there, you know that as you were driving out in the Bongo, you were at risk, still making contact?

Yeah. Honestly, I do not remember, but basically I thought there was at that time. Looking back on it, I don't think there were because if they would have seen the situation we were in they would have been shooting a lot.

94. Do you recall if [REDACTED] was initially wounded, was he wounded by the time you got to the house or was he good to go?

No, I am almost positive that I was the only one that got hit, while we were in the house. Everybody else was friendly fire and the rest of mine were from friendly fire.

95. You did fire while you were up on the roof, you did fire some rounds at some AIF that were out there from the roof top as well, is that correct?
Roger.

Testimony of _____ (Telephonic Interview):
15-6 Investigation Friendly Fire Incident 23 Nov 05
A/2-502nd, 2nd BCT, 101st AASLT
Investigating Officer: _____

Version 2.0 9 Dec 05

1. How long have you been in the unit?

I have been in the unit since March 8, 2005.

2. Are you an 11B or 31 series RTO?

I am an 11B.

3. What is your background training experience with your platoon - JRTC? Platoon Live Fires?
We did quite a few live fires in Fort Campbell and we also did a rotation at JRTC. Before we left we did live fires, I mean that is all we did for almost a month and a half.

4. Were you an RTO with your Platoon Leader at JRTC or were you a rifleman?

I was a javelin gunner at JRTC.

5. So, you have only recently been an RTO since deploying, is that a true statement?

Yes Sir. I became an RTO when _____ took over the Platoon and the RTO that they had was not to standard.

6. What specific training have you had on communications (ASIPs, SINCGARS, Antennas, FBCB2 and Blue Force Tracker)?

Yeah, I have been to a combat comms twice, I think one was with Division and one with Battalion or maybe it was with Brigade and Battalion.

7. So, do you feel you have a pretty good handle on the radios and all of the crypto fill and all of that stuff?

_____, did not answer the question. The Corps CSM stopped by his room.

8. How many patrols had your section-platoon conducted prior to the 23rd of November, can you give me a rough number?

We were doing patrols every third day and we had been there since October. Anywhere from 10-20, I can't really even give you a rough estimate. When you start doing them, they just go by.

9. What was your understanding of the general enemy situation in your Company Sector?

You are going to be hit almost every time you go out. You are going to get mortared, IED'ed or small arms fire every time you leave the wire.

10. What do you believe was the VBIED threat in the area, were you briefed on that as being pretty high, medium or what was your experience?

VBIED was not high from what we missed. I have not seen one at all.

11. What did you understand was the VBIED threat in your AO? Had you experienced any VBIEDs to date?

Not to my knowledge Sir. We have had a lot of IED's and have found a lot of IED making equipment, but no VBIED's.

12. DO you keep a RTO loge during missions. What do you keep in the LOG?

Yes, Sir, I keep one in my rack, my chest next to my VS-17 panel.

13. So that stayed back here when your equipment was taken off of you, is that correct?

Yes, Sir. I have probably 3 different notebooks I keep information in.

14. What do you normally keep in there, key times, radio transmissions, stuff like that?

I keep names, times, grids, anything important like when they give us a 9-line to relay to somebody, UXO report to give to EOD or just pretty much any information that is relevant whatsoever, I write it down in there.

15. Do you find, operating in that particular sector, that you have to relay for other platoons and end up relaying to each other to get either to the Company or Battalion base station?

Yes, quite a bit because a lot of the times we get at the perfect time, for some reason we get down there and the time, I do not know if it changes or what, we have to do a lot of FREQ seeking to actually get our radios to work really well down there. And, once they are working really well, we normally have to relay for the other platoons. For some reason when we go down in the sector, we always have good comms with either [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

16. What do you understand is the general ROE and guidelines for EOF. In your own words, explain Escalation of Force as you would use it for an advancing suspicious vehicle?

Try to get it to stop by hand signals, I would yell. If they are too far off, a warning shot at the ground. That, right there would always stop them. If that did not stop them, I would ask for permission, I mean I would do whatever force necessary to stop them. Really, when you point your weapon at someone, they stop immediately.

17. Has your patrol, or have you been or any part of your section had to fire warning shots up to the 23rd at any time or did you think those worked?

They worked great. I mean a warning shot, if you actually have to stop somebody because they do not, and you point your weapon at them and they do not stop, because they can't see it because they are 200-300 meters out, you shoot a warning shot into the canal, completely away from him so it is not dangerous whatsoever, that will scare them so much, and they will actually tell you warning shots work pretty well.

18. What normally happens, when you are traveling in the vehicles as you come across vehicles moving in the other direction, or coming towards you, how do vehicles normally act. do they pull over, do they pass you by, what do you normally see with the vehicles out there when they run into a patrol?

They pull as far off the road as they can most of the time and if they are coming up behind us, they will keep their distance, like 100-200 meters back and a lot of times we will tell them to either turn around or go the other way if they are behind us, because we got a mission to do, so

we can't stop everybody that is behind us. If they look suspicious we will stop them and search them.

19. Do you have signs in the vehicles or on the back of the vehicles that say danger, don't come close or anything like that in the HMMWVs you use?

Yes, Sir, every HMMWV has it in English and in Arabic or whatever they speak and it says Danger, Stay Back, I think 100 meters, or you will be shot.

20. How often did you review ROE and EOF with your patrol? Explain how the platoon leader covers this with the Soldiers. Do you rehearse vignettes?

We always carry ROE cards on us, and they remind us of it pretty much all of the time and then before we go on a mission, they will say remember ROE.

21. Do you recall if you reviewed ROE and escalation of force before you departed on your original patrol on or around the 21st, 22nd?

The one when we got shot at?

22. Yes, before you started that patrol, do you remember that patrol briefing if you reviewed ROE or escalation of force?

Not right before the mission. I do not recall covering that, No.

23. On that mission that you went on, when you first started out and left the FOB, do you recall what the task and purpose of the mission was?

Yeah, we were supposed to go down to [redacted] and [redacted] and find a good, like a safehouse or something, that we could hold on to. A good place for the patrols to stay at night and kind of like a secondary FOB so we could go down there. You would not actually relieve them at the CP back at Camp Styker, you would go down to that house and relieve them there. We were putting sandbags up, we were digging defensive positions. We were making a field of fire in all directions, sector sketches. I think that was our mission, but we got a side mission that they had gave us and another side mission that was the one where we went off to the graveyard to look for a cache.

24. Do you remember what time the Platoon Leader received the initial mission on the 22nd or on the night of the 21st because you left on an initial patrol on the 22nd, do you remember when he went to the Company and got his first mission?

Negative, I do not know what time where he goes to the Company or whatever.

25. Do you remember when [redacted] gathered you all up and gave you the patrol order or warning order, do you remember what time that was?

I believe we left the wire at 1100, we found out about it around 0800 or 0900 in the morning. We knew we were going on a mission that night and we knew we were going somewhere tomorrow morning, but we did not know when.

26. So about 0800, 0900 he gave you the mission brief for the initial mission of the safe house? Yes.

27. What did you do that morning, did you do any rehearsals, did you do PCC's and PCI's? Yeah, we went over our PCI's for the trucks, set the radios up and put the new fill in, because we got a whole bunch of new trucks, so they had not been filled. So, we had just gotten them 10 minutes prior to when we found out we were going on the mission. That is what took us so long. We were supposed to leave the wire at 0900, but we did not leave until 1100 because they had just given us the trucks at 0900.

28. Were these different trucks from outside the Company or just transferred from another platoon, like 3rd Platoon? One was actually a new truck and the other one was one of our old trucks that had been getting fixed.

29. Did you receive a good intel update from the Platoon Leader before you pulled out of what to expect from enemies in the area? Actually, we didn't really get a briefing from him, because the way we did it is we always met down in sector, like we meet who we are relieving down in sector and we knew what to expect. We were relieving him for, he was watching a house that they were going to JDAM. We knew that we were going down there for that and we knew what the situation was down there. So, we did know a little bit, but we found out more when we got down to our sector.

30. So, you actually linked up with I think was patrol 34, was that correct? Yes.

31. Now, you mentioned that you actually SP'ed around 1100 is that correct? That is correct Sir.

32. Now were you briefed on by _____ on what specific routes you were going to take or what specific zones you were going to work in, do you remember that? Yes Sir. He always briefed us on routes before we go.

33. Now, did he mention any other patrols in the area at the time you would be out there? Any other patrols?

34. From the Company or Iraqi Army, did he say any friendly forces that would be out there? Negative. I believe he might have, but I do not recall.

35. But, you knew 34 was down there? Correct Sir.

36. And you believe the purpose of establishing that patrol base at that corner of Fatboy and Motorhead was to support future operations, is that correct? Yes Sir.

37. Had you seen a lot of enemy activity down there on _____? Yes Sir, that is we got attacked at, IED'ed, mortared, they believed a lot of indirect fire, everything was at that intersection of _____ and _____ so we wanted a good place where

we could oversee that intersection from a distance. What we had done is set up an M-24 sniper rifle and a 240 at the corner to overwatch that intersection.

38. Explain in detail the actions you remember from the time your patrol departed from FOB Stryker until you received a FRAGO via radio to conduct the Cache Search and you departed the forward | |

We went down the main road to route 4. We crossed route 4. We were not on route 4 for very long, we just crossed route 4 side road. We were down that road for a while and then we went on route 4. I am not sure the name. Anyway, we took a left on that road and we just dismounted for anything that looked suspicious. But we want to get down to relieve 34 so we were going pretty fast. As soon as we got to 4. There was a road at the top of 4 before you get to 4. here is a road right there that is the one we came down.

39. What time did you link up with 34, do you remember?

It was around 1600-1700 something like that before it got dark because we mounted NVG.

40. How long did 34 stick around before they pulled out back to FOB Stryker?

Until the next morning.

41. How much sleep did you get that night, did the 4 get that night pulling security on that house, do you remember?

He never gets much sleep. I do not know how much he got, but I got maybe 4 hours, because you are up for 2 and down for 4, because there are 3 of us pulling security.

42. Now the JDAM went off in that morning and destroyed the house is that correct, do you remember about what time that happened?

0640, at 0640 exactly.

43. Now, what happened after that, did you guys go check out the house or did you move straight to the patrol base?

No, I think either the Battalion or Brigade wanted us to go inspect the house to make sure there was nothing left. All that was left of the house was the roof. The roof was shifted off about 5 meters from where the base of the house was. So we just looked around, but there was nothing left, just a big crater. So, we just cleared around that whole area, maybe 300-400 meters in all directions, so we cleared out pretty far. We headed back to the trucks and waited until we were given the go ahead. As soon as they gave us the green light, we went down to our sector and the way we went was we went back road and we dismounted and the trucks followed us. We dismount everywhere we go.

44. Do you recall what time you pulled away from the building?

No, I do not Sir.

45. How much time do you think you spent around the building before you departed, 30 minutes, an hour?

At the most an hour. Maybe 45 minutes, because we turned around and walked down. That road was named Michelob, so we walked down Michelob all the way almost to [redacted] and we noticed a side road that was about maybe 300-400 meters before [redacted] going the same direction. We took a right on that because we were going to stop this bus that was coming that was full of people and then when we got up close, we noticed it was a school bus, but we still stopped it, let the kids on to go to school.

46. What time do you think you pulled in at the patrol base, you know the house that you were going to use as the patrol base?

It took us maybe an hour and a half to walk, so about 0830 or 0900.

47. What happened when you got to the patrol base, what did the [redacted] have you doing at that point?

We cleared the area around it, made sure there were no wires, no people, had a couple of puppies, checked all of the rooms and made sure they were all safe, made sure there were no booby-traps and we put people on top of the roof for guard, and set up, I guess you could say, a set of work orders that needed to be done, cut down trees, burning brush, stuff like that. So, we got right on it and it was amazing how quick time went by. We got so much stuff done so fast. One day we had all of the sector sketches done. We had almost all of the trees chopped down and I think we had all of the trees chopped down by the time we went on that mission.

48. Now, did you set up a bigger antennae off the vehicle or how was the commo situation? We set up a comm 201 off of the roof which was maybe 20-25 feet up in the air.

49. Did you run that off the power of the truck?

Yes.

50. Did you have good commo from there to the Company?

Yes we did. Actually what we did was got that hooked up and for some reason the wire part of it was all messed up. I remember it was fraying towards the end and I tried to fix it and it was not working too well, because the adapter. So, we actually pulled one of the trucks maybe 10 meters away from the building, the one that had really good commo with the Company and it actually got better comms than the 201. So I was going to have them next time bring down a 254, because that way we could stick it up a lot higher and get better comms. The 201's are great, but I prefer the 254 any day because we can get it a lot higher.

51. Did [redacted] give a FRAGO to either your dismounted elements or a 5 point contingency plan to those staying behind. Did he discuss timings, routes and when you were expected to return. What did he cover?

1100 or 1200 maybe. It was kind of early because we walked for 3 and a half hours to get there and it was not dark yet. It was maybe 1600, it was close to getting dark.

52. So he got the call around 1100 or 1200 and he moved down to the truck to get the mission, correct?

Yes.

53. Were you in the truck with him listening in or was it just him?
Negative. I was on the roof pulling security.

54. Do you know who gave him the mission, was it Gator directly or was it Gator?
It was higher up than that I believe. It was [redacted]. It might have been Gator. I am not really sure, I was not listening in Sir.

55. How long was it until he came out of that truck until he gave a mini patrol order, a modified patrol brief to the team before he departed with the dismounted element, do you remember?
He did it as soon as he got out, I mean he assembled the team, told us what we were doing and said we were walking a good ways. I mean I hear everything anyway, I knew we were going to search a graveyard and it was a good 5 clicks straight there. There was nowhere to walk straight to somewhere in Iraq, so it took us a long time to get there, because of the canals, you can't cross some of them, you just have to go around and around.

56. What kind of special instructions did he talk about, do you remember when he gave you that order?
Make sure you bring water and extra batteries for all of your equipment, because we are going to be out there a while.

57. Did you change out batteries in your ASIP radio, did you bring extra batteries?
Yes Sir. We had a total of 2 extra batteries and I put a brand new one in the mine detector and on in my radio and we had 2 extra ASIP batteries.

58. Did you do a final comms check before you departed?
Yes Sir. We had comms probably 85% of the way there, as soon as we crossed underneath these power lines, the comms died and that was right before the graveyard. So, we were so close. Everybody was saying that we are right here and I said we had no comms with anyone and I would have to go on top a roof to get comms. They decided that since we were this close, we were just going to go ahead.

59. Do you recall what special instructions he gave to [redacted] who was the senior man back, staying back with the safe house?
He gave him some special instructions on what to do, but I do not remember what they were. I was just worrying at that time about changing out batteries and getting ready to go.

60. How many ASIPS did you have with the dismounted crew, just yours?
Yes Sir, because there was only 6 of us and I was the interpreter.

61. If you could of, could you have taken another ASIP, could you have taken one of the truck radios and make it into a manpack load?
Yes Sir, because I always have an extra antennae. I could have just pulled it out and thrown a battery in it real quick, but I had an AMCU with me so I could have set it up incase it lost a fill or whatever when you pull it out.